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## **KANNYWOOD AND THE CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC CONTESTATIONS ON HAUSA FILMS**

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to complete the doctorate from the Faculty of Arts and Humanities  
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by

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## DEDICATION

The work is dedicated to my parents, Alhaji Ibrahim and Hajiya Amina. My mother, Amina, died when I was about to finish primary school. I wish she were alive today to pluck the fruit she planted. May the Almighty God reward both handsomely, amin.

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## ABSTRACT

Kannywood, an emerging Hausa film industry in northern Nigeria, struggles with several issues, some bordering on religion, culture and language. This study explores how Kannywood filmmakers conform to some exacting religio-cultural demands and language ideologies that favour particular interpretations of the Islamicate state and a section of the audience. Unlike similar works, which are still few, the research engages the filmmakers, the hegemonic religious and cultural stakeholders, and, significantly, the audience for reactions and answers. Thus, it deploys Audience Reception Theory, the Encoding/Decoding Model, and the Language and Economic Model as theoretical tools and uses empirical field research methods. Using primarily three films as examples with reference to other related films and events, we discovered that internally, Kannywood filmmakers are grappling with some cultural and religious views and projecting and promoting certain linguistic identities. Researchers in the film industry often overlook language; Hausa is one of the largest African languages, with speakers of the different dialects across various countries numbering millions. However, we found that Kannywood prefers a single variety, the Kano one. This preference leads to the peripheralisation of the Sokoto sub-regional dialect and commodification of the non-ethnic Hausa ‘broken’ variety of the language. We also discovered that Muslims, the dominant religious group in Kano, are not monolithic, courtesy of several, often conflicting, doctrinal differences and multiple interpretations of Islamic religious texts. Thus, it is challenging to satisfy all its faithful-cum-audiences. Lastly, we found that Hausa culture is also plural, hybrid and heterogeneous due, primarily, to social mobility and the rising impact and effect of globalisation. Therefore, there is no end to the incongruities in Kannywood films, nor to the contestations about them.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Background

According to many scholars, “[t]he development of film industries throughout the African continent occurred both later and to a more limited degree than in many parts of [the] world – as in Asia for instance” (Gray 2010: 92). But that is not surprising, as film was not invented on the continent. In Nigeria, the first film exhibition took place in 1903 (Diawara 1992; Ekwuazi 2018; McCall 2018; among others). McCall (2018: 2) further narrates that the film was screened by a Spanish film unit that “travelled the coast of West Africa screening short films from a mobile cinema. Records indicate that they made it to Lagos.” McCall goes on to report that “French documentarian Jean Rouch recounts that 1905 marked a turning point for West African cinema” (ibid. 02). The exhibition continued and spread to other parts of the region, including Dakar, Senegal. Haynes (2011:68) states that “cinema arrived with colonialism and as a tool of colonialism”. He further notes that:

Almost from the moment of cinema’s invention, Africa has been inserted into its global system, but on the most unfavourable terms: it has been the dumping ground for second-run “B” movies from Hollywood, Bollywood and Hong Kong, films that are often racist and always estranged from African realities and purposes, while the formidable technical, infrastructural, and capital requirements of making and distributing films made it nearly impossible for Africans to respond in kind with their own films (Haynes 2011:67).

In British, French and Belgian colonies, Africans were prohibited from making independent films. Diawara (1992: 22) records that France made a law in 1934 called *Le Decret Laval* ('the Laval Decree') "to control the content of films that were shot in Africa and minimise the creative roles played by Africans in the making of films". According to McCall (2018:3), "Film was seen as a powerful tool for indoctrination, and the colonial regimes feared the subversive power the medium could have if used in opposition to colonial dominance." However, there were instances of resistance, especially in stage drama and later through the press and the radio waves (Dovey 2009: 45-50). The British colonial government, in particular, used the film medium all the more. First, they established the Bantu Educational Cinema Experiment in 1935 and, subsequently, the Colonial Film Unit (CFU) in 1939, across the continent. They produced films suitable for African audiences. Later on, they opened a film school in Accra, Gold Coast (present-day Ghana) in 1949, to teach the "natives" the art of filmmaking. They were, however, never trained to be entirely in charge (Diawara, 1992: 1-3).

The British colonialists later introduced filmmaking technology and skills into Nigeria through its protectorate branch of the CFU. They produced "documentaries and propaganda, [...] but refused to give any encouragement to Nigerians to make fictional feature films before or after the country's independence in 1960" (Haynes 1994:89). The film unit of the Northern Region took over the CFU years after. While in Francophone Africa, the French government supported filmmaking for cultural and political reasons; the same was not the case in most Anglophone regions. The first independent feature film, *Kongi's Harvest* (1970), based on the Nobel Laureate, Wole Soyinka's play of the same title, was co-sponsored by an American company, Herald Production (Ekwuazi

2018:72). Even though the cinema is an imported colonial medium, “Africans appropriated it to tell their stories from their own perspectives” (Sawadogo, 2019: 10).

Other films produced at that time were mostly state-sponsored as “cinema everywhere depends on state support” (Haynes, 2011: 67). This may explain why they were devoid of what one might consider “a foreign idea” in their thematic focus and, to a lesser degree, in their presentation style. The films celebrate and, thereby, try to bond people to the Empire. However, later, some attempts were made to create what Haynes (1994: 99) calls “a less intellectual cinema” whose films are influenced by “American action or Blaxploitation, urban in setting and dealing with crime or political violence.” In the long run, the Nigerian cinemas did not last, due to the advent of digital technologies, corruption, plus the economic, social and security crises that bedevilled the post-independence Nigerian state. Thus, more and more cinemas closed shop (Haynes, 2011: 3). Decades later, films returned, though in new forms and styles – more commercial and entertaining, and less ideological (Sawadogo, 2019: 9).

Globalisation did not start in the 20<sup>th</sup> or even 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, the information and communication technology (ICT) of today gave it a boost, making the world more of a village, the flow of cultures and cross-cultural exchange smoother, quicker and, mostly, uncontrollable. Barber (2018: 142) concludes that “no national entity has succeeded in controlling [the Internet] anywhere in the world”. Consequently, the influence of more dominant cultures on the others around them became more overwhelming. Therefore, some scholars equate globalisation with Americanisation, due to the remarkable successes of American multinational companies and corporations, including,

of course, Hollywood (Storey 2003). Although Storey (2003:109) considers this a “reductionist” view, the author further adds that scholars like an American sociologist, Herbert Schiller (1979) claim that this Americanisation, supposedly if not effectively, destroys indigenous cultures and imposes an American way of life on “local” populations in many parts of the world.

Adamu (2014:6) notes that “The Hollywood film industry, from whatever cultural perspectives, provided the first early role model for other film industries to copy”. Teo (2010:413) also argues that Hollywood achieved this status “by setting up studios, implementing the star system, and making films that employ conventional formulas”. Teo (ibid.) further describes how “the Hollywood paradigm is held to be the universal standard; it is modified by the diversity of cultures and economic regimes around the world creating a phenomenon epitomised most obviously by the term ‘Bollywood’”. The Nigerian “Nollywood” and “Kannywood” film industries, mainly situated in the southern and northern regions of the country, respectively, follow the same path. The imitation goes beyond the branding of their industries to employing Hollywood strategies of telling stories. Several other filmmakers, who do not necessarily belong to Nollywood, “recycle and plagiarise” both local and foreign films (Anyanwu 2008: 126-138).

The above practice, however, often becomes problematic in two respects in the case of Kannywood audiences: first, the perceived incongruity of what is copied with the religion, culture, norms and values of the people for whom these films are primarily intended, especially in culture-bound places. The second issue is copyright infringement, although this is difficult to pursue. Most of these films that copy (or “adapt”, as the filmmakers argue) foreign films, are low-budget productions and by less well-known filmmakers (Ibrahim 2015). In most cases, the more known,

if not more committed, filmmakers whose films are screened in the U.S., UK, Canada and Europe do not risk “appropriating” stories carelessly. But, as an emergent film industry, the “adaptation” and “appropriation” continue (Inuwa 2019).

### **Kano: The Birthplace of Kannywood**

Kano, the most populous state in Nigeria, comprises the largest Hausa speaking state in the world. Kano is the birthplace and the epicentre of Kannywood film industry. Kannywood films, especially during the VHS, CD and DVD era, could be found all over the Hausa speaking world, chiefly in northern Nigeria and parts of the Niger Republic, northern Ghana and Cameroon. Kannywood also has quite a following among Hausa people living in Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirate and other Middle Eastern countries. However, there is no better place to study the cinema's ideological, political, social, cultural, linguistic trajectories than Kano. Islam was the state religion even before the (re)introduction of Sharia in 2011<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, the rejection of anything perceived as “alien” goes far and has an overarching effect. McCain (2012: 360) notes that the Hausa film industry’s video films, alias Kannywood, along with Hausa popular novels (more on this later), ignite tension in contemporary Hausa society. She observes that:

A particular source of tension in contemporary Hausa society from the early 1990s has come following the rise of popular novels and video films alongside political agitation for Shari’ah law, and the competing claims of popular artists and their conservative critics to Islamic authenticity. The video films, which deal with the tensions of contemporary life and are influenced in structure and theme by Indian, Hong Kong and American films, are read as being a challenge to attempts to re-establish the rule of law modelled both on the historical governance of the Fulani jihadists and modern Islamic states like Saudi Arabia.

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<sup>1</sup> Nigeria’s return to democracy in 1999 brought an unprecedented change to the socio-political and religious sphere of its northern region. Twelve of its nineteen states, including Kano implemented Shari’ah law between 2000 and 2001.

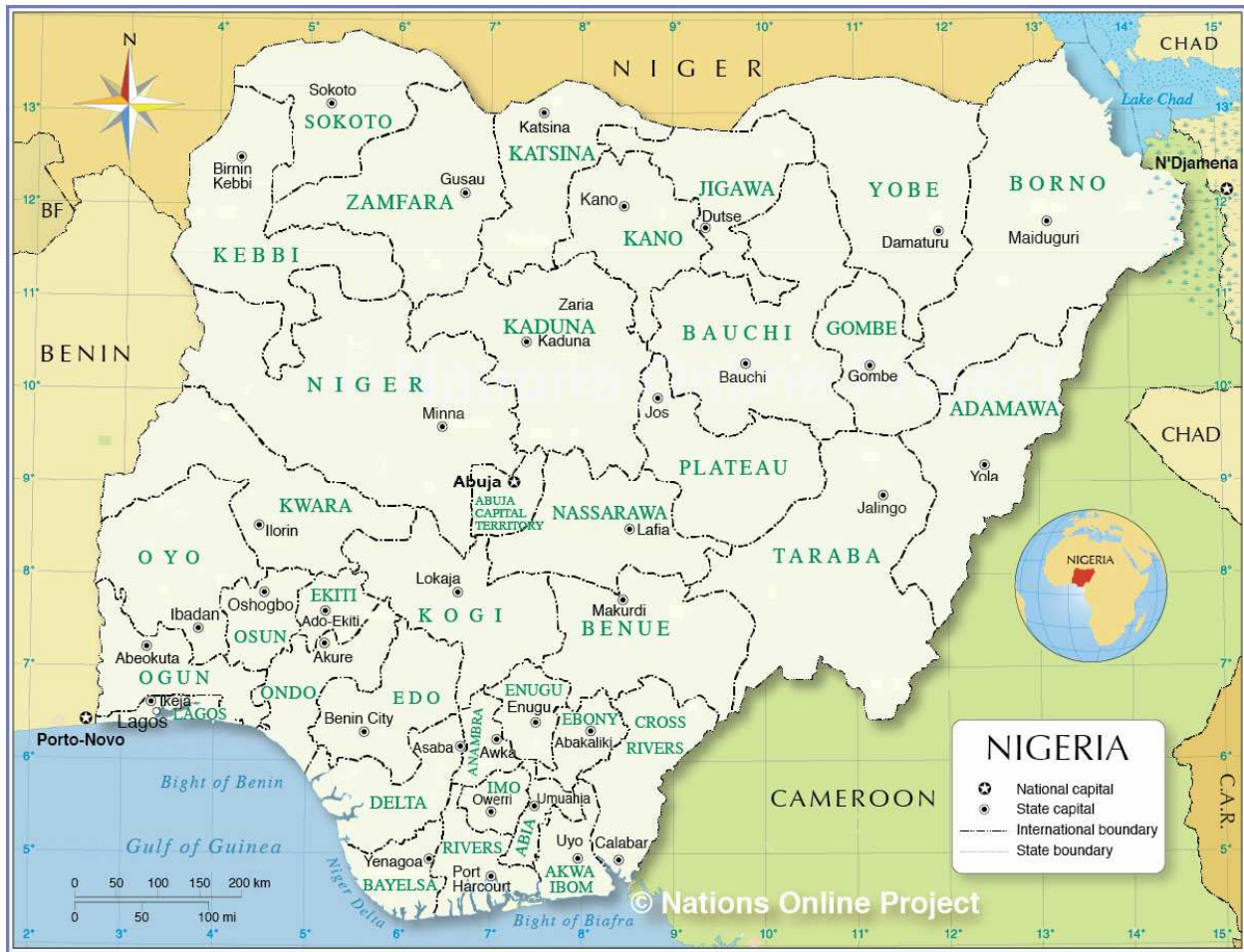


Figure 1: Map of Nigeria

It is noteworthy that public opinion in a vast state like Kano is not and can never be uniform. As Hashim and Walker (2014: 129) note, “Though Kano is a centre of Islamic scholarship in Sahelian West Africa, since the beginning of the twentieth century, it has had an influx of non-Muslims who live and do business in the city.” No doubt people refer to the state as “*Tumbin Giwa*”, literally, ‘the belly of an elephant’, to describe its being a mixed bag that contains multiple entities from within and outside Nigeria.



The influence of the non-Hausa immigrants in Kano may be dated back to centuries ago. Kano people were mostly pagans before Islam. According to the legendary Kano Chronicle, Greenberg (1966), among many other scholars, the Wangarawa Muslim preachers from the Mandingo Kingdom of Mali brought the Islamic religion to the state during the reign of Yaji at Kano (1349-1385). Greenberg (1966: 6) describes how “Yaji, who was king of Kano at the time of their visit, was converted to Islam”. The Jihad of Usman Dan Fodio (1804-1806), a Gobir Fulani preacher, centuries later was the second watershed moment for Islam in Nigeria. Since these two significant epochs, many things have never been the same. The culture, religion, architecture, leadership, food and virtually everything else has changed. The influence of Islam lives on.

As the commercial capital of northern Nigeria and the home of the regional cinema, the federal government proposed in 2016 to build a Film Village in Kano, to train and retrain filmmakers and provide them with a more enabling environment for their business. However, the hegemonic religious clerics and many others, mainly Islamist activists on social media, stood up against the project. They claimed that it would “promote immorality”<sup>2</sup> and, thus, corrupt their culture and religion. Their collective, persistent opposition forced the populist government to rescind the idea. A few other individuals backed the project, though, notably the deposed ultra-modern Emir of Kano, Muhammadu Sanusi II (2014-2020) during a keynote speech at the Kaduna Investment Summit in 2017<sup>3</sup>. Arguably, the Emir lost his throne for lending support to such causes, which many people consider anathema to Hausa culture and Islam. The government did not bring it back.

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<sup>2</sup> ‘Nigeria shelves plans for ‘Kannywood’ film village’ from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-36883949> (accessed on 24.02.2021).

<sup>3</sup> ‘Emir of Kano, Sanusi Lamido Sanusi at the Kaduna Investment Summit (Keynote Speech)’ from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k5HZUfPOZiw> (accessed on 24.02.2021).

Several Kannywood stakeholders, including Ali Nuhu, were furious about this<sup>4</sup>. President Muhammadu Buhari, a fellow northerner, who had several meetings with these stakeholder during campaigns in 2015 and 2019, pledged to boost the film industry to realise its potential and create more jobs, among other reasons.

Due to the above tension, some Kannywood producers, directors and artists were, at different times, arrested and prosecuted on various charges (see McCain 2014 and Ibrahim 2018). Often, especially in recent years, Kannywood was and still is “locked in tense negotiations with various cultural authorities about what is permissible” (Haynes 2007: 5). The filmmakers are in constant negotiations with the regulatory body, the censorship board, and a section of the public, on what to show and what not to show. As will be further discussed later on, such contestations have led to several clashes.

Another emerging problematic issue within Kannywood is the question of identity in their films. Language is at the centre of this new and challenging trend. The filmmakers deploy language to create “other societies” (Said 1993) in a similar case to the African American usage of the non-standard English language in Hollywood classics like *Gone with the Wind* (dir. Victor Fleming, 1939). Often, the non-indigenes’ persistently poor grasp of the Hausa structure, phonology, phraseology, and other linguistic tropes distinguish them from society’s mainstream, imperialistic culture. The character of Dan Gwari or the variant, “Bagwari”, defined by R.C. Abraham (1962: 58) as an “ignorant” person, is a household representation of such a person. Baban Chinedu

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<sup>4</sup> See footnote number 2.

(Chinedu's father) is also an Igbo character, acting a Shylock-like role in several films. This "Othering" characterisation does not stop with these two typecasts; other Hausa people from other states than Kano are also portrayed in questionable roles. For instance, in some Kannywood films, a person from Sokoto is often shown as incredibly foolish and, sometimes, engaged in womanising activities. Arguably, Kannywood filmmakers are not sure of how to sell a Hausa man's identity to the world.

It is amidst this confusion and contestation that some directors who claim to be concerned about the constant bashing of people from Northern Nigeria in the entertainment industry re-introduced films in the English language in Kannywood. However, many critics reject these films, arguing that only movies made in the Hausa language qualify for categorisation as Kannywood films. The proponent of Kannywood films in English defend their position by claiming that language is only a medium; the content and form make a film what it is. A key figure in promoting the English genre, Kabiru Musa Jammaje said that was yet another strong effort to uplift the image of the embattled film industry<sup>5</sup>. He argues that there are films produced under the umbrella of Indian Bollywood in English. The Mira Nair-directed award-winning drama *Monsoon Wedding* (2011) is an example.

## **1.1 Problem Statement**

True, no culture is an island, and "all creativity is derivative" (Sunder 2011: 8). However, copying other, mostly foreign, films without restraint brings a transcontinental ethos into local movies such

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<sup>5</sup> Jammaje, Kabiru Musa, interviewed by the author, Kano, 12.02.2018.

as those of Kannywood (see Krings 2005). For instance, for Bollywood, many critics accuse them of copying Hollywood, while others acquiesce in the practice. Conversely, for the northern Nigerian Hausa filmmakers, the popular claim, according to various researchers (see Adamu 2014; Inuwa 2019), is that they imitate Bollywood and other films. This does not sit well with their Hausa-Muslim majority spectators (ibid). Adamu (2018) also concludes that two strands led to the conflict between the Kannywood filmmakers and the cultural establishment. These are the exposure of what is perceived as a private sphere, the family conjugal space, to the public and the re-enactment of women's sensual elements in song and dance routines that have become almost compulsory for the success of commercial Hausa video films.

Since the colonial period, Bollywood has a long history of acceptance in the region. Still, not everyone appreciates mixing its ethos (such as music and dance) with Hausa people in Hausa films. This leads to fierce ideological contestations and confrontations with thousands of audience members, the government, and the state's hegemonic religious institutions. Controversies become the reason that frequently brings Hausa films into the limelight, and the contentions continue. Despite everything else, many among the filmmakers, on various occasions, have defended their occupations and the way they make films. Their argument (see McCain 2014; Adamu 2017) may be categorised and expanded thus: **I**) dance and song routines, the practice often cited as the principal point of departure from the people's culture and religion, could be as a universal ethos and is not actually foreign, **II**), that the same "blighted" dance and song routine, among other things, is what sells their films as the audiences like them, **III**), that being Hausa is not a monolithic identity; thus a few people should not force their regional, scriptural and traditional beliefs onto

others, and **IV**) therefore, art should not be unnecessarily censored and repressed, as doing so affects the aesthetics of films.

## **1.2 Rationale**

This study's rationale originates from the fact that *Kannywood*, the name given to the "local" Hausa film industry with Kano State as its epicentre, is a distinct and autonomous film industry in Nigeria, alongside the well-known *Nollywood*. Based in the south, the latter has mainly Christianity and Western-influenced motifs as themes and produces films mainly in English, or other major, mostly southern Nigerian languages but never in Hausa. For Kannywood, however, Islam is arguably the trademark, and the East remains their primary source of influence and inspiration.

The Muslim-North is primarily a didactic and arguably a Shari'ah-abiding region. Kannywood films are thus often seen as a way of debasing their Arab-Islamic inclined culture. It is believed that much of what is portrayed in Hollywood does not align with that culture; however, in more ways than one, Bollywood shares affinities with the Hausa's in areas like family values and relationship. The same is true of the Hong Kong films (for instance, *Ibro Dan Chana*, dir. Hamisu S/Ruwa), though that was copied mainly in the first decade of Kannywood (1990-2000). Thus, Kannywood filmmakers adapt several motifs from foreign films, including the *dance and song routine*. However, many people and the Kano State Censorship Board frown on such practices (McCain 2014: 281-282). The hostility is growing every day between the filmmakers, the government, the religious institutions and the public. Empirically speaking, though, not everyone

among the public rejects such a presentation. Being Hausa and Muslim is not (or is no longer) a fixed identity (Al-Azmeh 2009). Perhaps that is why even in Kannywood films, there are always, supposedly, non-Hausa or “less-Hausa” characters who speak Hausa wrongly to demonstrate their “minority” status in the society.

The choice of Kannywood was informed by the fact that it is rarely studied, especially by Nigerian scholars, perhaps because of Nollywood, which is now the second-biggest film industry in the world (see UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2009) *International Survey on Feature Film Statistics*). It is probably ignored due to its use of the “local” Hausa language, the shortage of professionals, and, above all, the (mis)perception that it caricatures Bollywood – and other foreign films. But cultural appropriation is an old thing that “travels in multiple directions” (Sunder 2011: 280) and that “cultures tend to thrive on mutual enrichment” (Owomoyela 1985: 43). Therefore, the song and dance routine, the Karate combat, and other practices often accused of replicating an alien ethos might be located within Hausa culture and tradition, an argument that only a thorough study could establish or refute.

### *1.2.1 Kannywood: Another “Kano Market Literature”?*

Stage dramas, Indian films, as well as other foreign films, and significantly the so-called *Adabin Kasuwar Kano* “Kano Market Literature” (Malumfashi 1994) or the “Hausa Literary Movement” (Adamu 2002) are the major precursors to Kannywood as a film industry. There is little literature written for stage dramas in northern Nigeria. No doubt, this is because the Soyinkas, Osofisans, Clarks, Yerimas, and other renowned Nigeria playwrights are not from the north region. On the

influence of Bollywood films on both Muslim-Hausa films and their culture, Abdalla Uba Adamu and Brian Larkin, among others, have written copiously. Likewise, Yusuf M. Adamu and Graham Furniss have written on the transitioning of some writers to filmmakers in Kano. The School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London University, also has a list of Hausa writers from 1987 to 2002 on its online database. However, what is missing is much regard for the “market literature” within the northern Nigerian academic circle. After all, the books are romantic pulp fiction or “*Soyayya Books/Love Stories*” (Furniss 2003: 2) that promote “immorality” and “shamelessness”. Romance in Hausa culture is considered a private affair, rarely shown or discussed in public. According to Gidan-Dabino (2011: 5), the Hausa man expresses his romantic feelings only between himself and his wife. Therefore, many people reject the idea of documenting that in books.

In 1980, Hafsat Abdulwaheed wrote *So Aljannar Duniya*, the first novel written by a woman in Hausa using the Latin script (Musa, 2019:27). Whitsitt (2002), McCain (2014) and Musa (2018), among a few others, have written on Kano Market Literature. However, in 2017, the writers, most of whom are women, gained more recognition with BBC Hausa’s launch of “*Hikayata*” (My Story), a yearly short-story writing competition exclusively for women. For many years, though, the novels were read on radio programmes in Kano, Kaduna and a few other states in the north. Surprisingly, though, Adamu (2002: 204) observes that the role played by those programmes in making Kano Market Literature popular is often neglected, including radio stations like “then Radio Nigeria in Kaduna (with the programme *Shafa Labari Shuni*), Radio Kano (with *Kunnenka Nawa?*)” (ibid.), Express Radio, Kano (*Rai Dangin Goro*), among others, also broadcasts such

programmes. However, BBC Hausa's being an international radio station of repute gives the books and their upcoming writers a vibrant boost.

Moreover, there is a growing rise of interest in these novelists' works in schools as students write their dissertations on them (Musa 2018). Still, this has occurred only recently and is scanty considering these writers' impact or effect and their writing volume. The reason for this is not unconnected to the status of the books in the broader society. The books, as well as their writers, are more often than not looked down upon and criticised for spreading what is perceived as immorality, anti-Islamic ideology, and "occupying themselves with sagas of love and marital relationships" (Whitsitt 2002: 119). In 2007, the Kano state government burned hundreds of such books, describing their content as pornographic and immoral in the traditions of northern Nigerian society<sup>6</sup>. Kannywood as Kano Market Literature faces the same threat: derision.

According to Adamu (2018: 10) and others, the Kannywood film industry, as will be more thoroughly discussed in this work, was inaugurated in 1990 with the production of a film entitled *Turmin Danya* (dir. Salisu Galadanci). Two years later, in 1992, *Living in Bondage* (dir. Kenneth Nnebue) began what later became known as Nollywood (Haynes 2011: 71). However, due to Kannywood's struggle for acceptance and recognition from local and foreign scholars and corporate bodies, as well as their infighting, among other factors, it is nowhere close to the glorious

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<sup>6</sup> "Why I Set Books Ablaze As Kano Governor — Shekarau, Education Minister" from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/167208-video-why-i-set-books-ablaze-as-kano-governor-shekarau-education-minister%E2%80%8E.html> (accessed on 27.07.2019)



stories that characterise Nollywood today. Arguably, it is faring no better than Kano Market Literature. Thus, my work intends, among other things, to change this tide, for I believe the film industry is very significant and instrumental as a cultural production medium beyond the shores of Hausaland.

### **1.3 Justification**

For the last two decades, there has been a steady rise in interest in studying Kannywood. Admittedly, some of the issues I set out to interrogate here have already been written about. However, none of the writers such as Larkin (2008), Adamu (2018), McCain (2014), Chamo (2012) and Ibrahim (2018) have approached the film industry from the perspective I will take. For instance, except Ibrahim (2018), the rest did not engage the audience in most of their studies. Ekwuazi (2018: 142) laments that “Film audience research, ironically, has remained something of an untrodden ground in every film culture”. I will fill in this gap with Kannywood film in focus.

Moreover, as per my findings, nobody has yet researched the way “broken” Hausa language is deliberately commodified in Kannywood and used as an “artful game” (Storch 2013: 79) to create “group boundaries” (ibid. 79). Chamo (2012: 9) is the only one who focused his study on language. However, he approached it from a purely sociolinguistic perspective or what he calls “language and social behaviour”. But my work will explore the inconsistencies inherent in the religion, culture and language (Hausa) presented and represented in some selected Kannywood films. It will also involve the filmmakers (and, of course, their movies), audiences, experts on the Hausa culture and Islamic clerics in this journey.

The films were carefully chosen as representative of the contradictions and tensions the thesis intends to cross-examine. The movies are *Hafeez* (on culture), *Alhaki...* (on religion), *Dan Gaske* (on language). Each will be thoroughly studied, watched along with an audience and their opinions sought in a Focus Group Discussion, and eventually analysed. I will also use several other related films and possibly, also watch these with my research participants. Therefore, I believe the approach is novel and will yield exciting results that will extend the frontiers of knowledge on studies of Kannywood and on African languages, cultures and media industries more generally.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

- i. What role does Kannywood play in the presentation and representation of the “acceptable” Hausa culture?
- ii. How does the use of religion by both the filmmakers and their critics affect the art of films in Kannywood?
- iii. How does language play a role in the construction or deconstruction of the Hausa person’s identity?

#### **1.5 Aim and Objectives**

- i. To explore the role(s), if any, played by Kannywood films in the presentation and the representation of the “acceptable” Hausa cultural practices;

- ii. To examine whether or not the use of religion by both the filmmakers and their critics affects the art of films in Kannywood;
- iv. To evaluate how language plays a role in the construction or deconstruction of the Hausa person's identity.

## **1.6 Scope and Delimitation of the Study**

Although a relatively new film industry, Kannywood is already a big African cultural industry entangled in several issues worth writing about. The religio-cultural and linguistic contestations this work intends to explore are but a handful of the plethora of concerns around the cinema. They, too, are broad and encompassing. For this reason, the scope of this study is delimited to the presentation and representation of culture, Islam and the use of Hausa by both Hausa speakers (from Sokoto) and non-ethnic speakers of Hausa (such as Dan Gwari and Baban Chinedu characters) in selected films. Although some examples will be cited in the analysis of the chosen films and beyond from other movies and works, the discussion in this thesis and the thrust of the argument will be delimited within these films as they reflect the tensions and contradictions that this thesis intends to explore. The discussion does not cover all the contestations there are in and around the industry in its entirety. Therefore, the research findings may not be enough to generalise about the entire film industry, Kano or the Hausa people.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL APPROACHES**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter engages with conceptual and empirical works of literature and the theoretical framework of the research work. It begins with the related concepts of the research, focusing on the religion, culture and language of the Hausa people. The empirical data traces the emergence of Kannywood as a Hausa film industry in northern Nigeria while also exploring the works of other scholars about the primary concerns of the research. These concerns include cultural, religious and language debate in and about Kannywood. Lastly, a brief discussion of the theoretical framework of the study follows.

#### **2.1 Conceptual Literature Review**

This section of the literature review provides the conceptual definitions, descriptions and explanations of some important terms related to the study. These include the analysis of scholarly definitions and debates related to the Hausa language, religion and culture.

##### ***2.1.1 Hausa Language***

Hausa is phylogenetically a member of the Chadic language family (Greenberg, 1963) and is widely spoken in several West African countries, predominantly in Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Ghana

and some parts of Cameroon and in the Blue Nile area of Sudan (Newman, 2000). Due to a lack of accurate demographic data, the exact number of Hausa speakers is not specified, but Newman (2000: 1) estimates the native speakers to be around 35 million, while Ethnologue's 2019 projection says the figure is more than 60 million speakers. However, several scholars, especially the native ones, see these figures as too conservative. For instance, a communique of the 2016 Colloquium organised by the Department of African Languages and Cultures, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria, suggests that the number of Hausa speakers has reached 120 million.<sup>7</sup>

Newman (2000: 1), among other scholars, has attested to the dramatic spread of the Hausa language across West Africa and beyond. Jaggar (2000: 1) notes that "Hausa-speaking colonies are also to be found in large cities in North Africa, e.g. Tripoli (Libya), and Equatorial Africa, e.g. Bangui (Central African Republic), and Brazzaville (Congo)". The language is not only widely spoken in and around Africa, but it is "the most important and widespread West African language, rivalled only by Swahili as an African lingua franca" (ibid.).

In northern Nigeria, Hausa is the common language of communication in several hitherto non-Hausa speaking areas such as Bauchi, Gombe, Kaduna, Potiskum and Borno. Newman (2000: 1) discovers that Hausa is spoken by the inhabitants of those places and used as a mother tongue for many of them. He further notes that "if it is not replacing the indigenous language(s), it is at least being used on a day-to-day basis as a lingua franca" (Newman 2000: 1). Therefore, it is likely that

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<sup>7</sup> Hausa Speakers in Nigeria now 120m – Communique <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2016/12/hausa-speakers-nigeria-now-120m-communique/> (accessed on 08.03.2020).

such a language will have dialects with many variations, which Bargery (1934) broadly categorised into two: eastern and western. Chamo (2019: 363) explains that “the categories are based on geographical location and [the] close similarity of lexicons used by the speakers of each region”. Jaggar (2000: 2) rightly adds that the regionally-based Hausa dialects have variations in phonology (including tone), lexicon, grammatical morphemes, and dialectal forms.

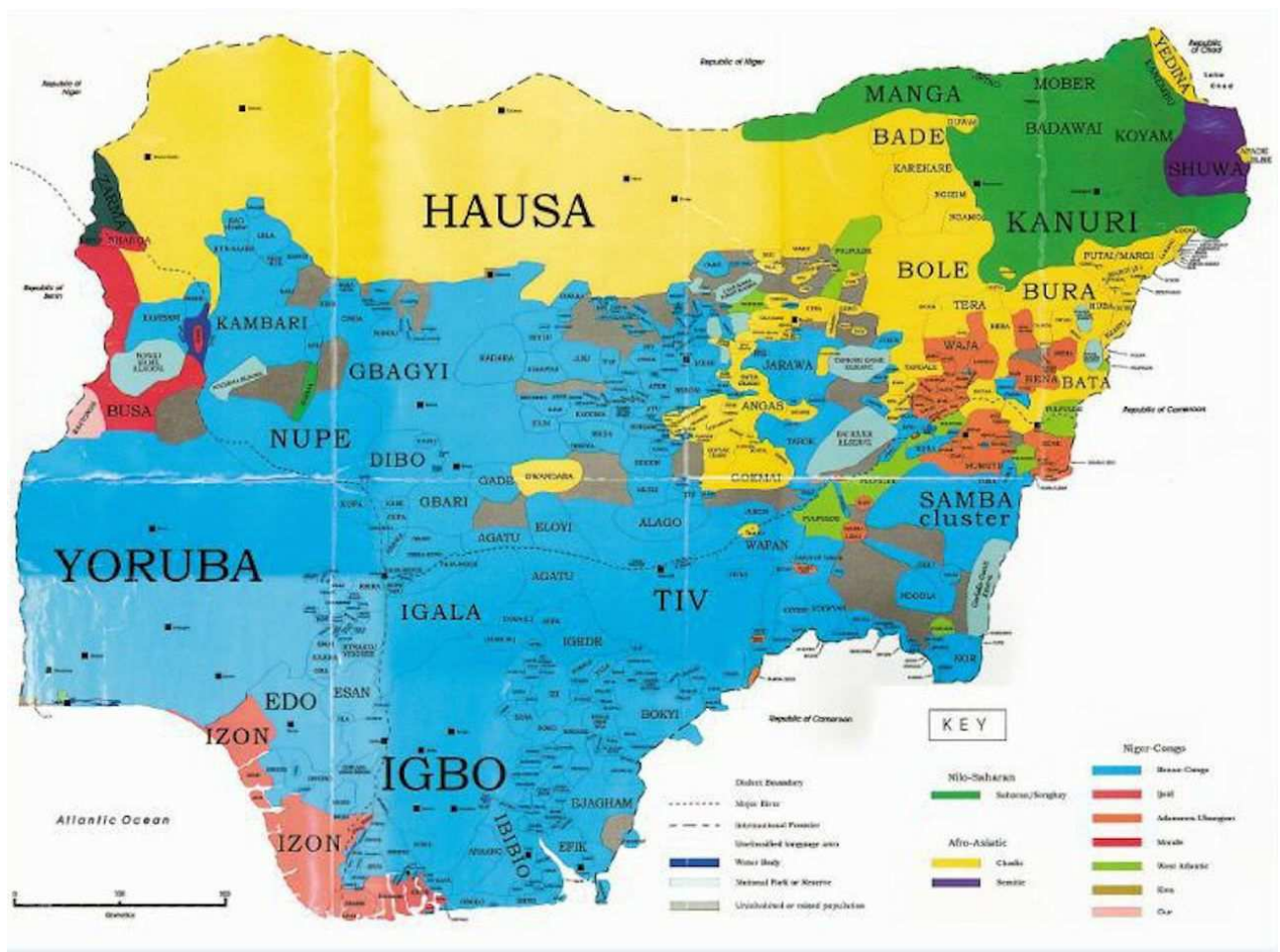


Figure 2: Nigerian Ethnic Map

As dialects are forms of the same language, they are mutually intelligible (Edwards 2009). The same is the case with the Hausa dialects. It is also possible to identify the geographical location of a speaker (Chamo 2019). For instance, the eastern dialects consist of *Kananci* (Kano dialects), *Dauranci* (Daura dialect), *Zazzaganci* (Zaria dialect), among others. The western ones include *Katsinanci* (Katsina dialect), *Sakwkwatanci* (Sokoto dialect), etc. Nevertheless, Newman (2000) and Jaggar (2000), among other many scholars, consider the Kano dialect the closest to the “standard” Hausa. Jaggar (ibid. 3) further adds that it “is the variety normally used in the print and broadcasting media, as well as in Hausa grammars, dictionaries and teaching manuals”. However, beyond the identification of these dialects and the possible identification of the geographical locations of their users, they are assigned hierarchies in some contexts. For example, Chamo (2019: 367) remarks that “Sakwkwatanci differ from standard Hausa in some areas of phonetics, phonology and lexical variations.” The Kannywood filmmakers not only share Chamo’s view on the Sokoto dialect but also continually use it to portray its speakers uniquely in several movies.

### *2.1.2 Hausa Religion*

The word “Hausa” refers not only to a language but also to a people. Several jigsaws related to the linguistic diversity of West Africa or Nigeria in this context, particularly the northern region of the country, make it difficult to establish what might be called “Hausaness” (Furniss 1996; Lange 2008; Sutton 2010), and the precise definition of who is Hausa is a contentious issue (Ahmad 2004: 143). Recently, as Haour and Rossi (2010: 24) conclude, “‘Hausaness’ involved considerable negotiated and situational aspects”, for the language is widely spoken as either a first or a second language by millions of people.

In Northern Nigeria, Hausa people are especially dominant in Kano, Katsina, Sokoto, Zaria and Daura and beyond. Lambu (2020: 1147) opines that “[t]he boundaries of Hausa ethnicity and Hausa culture are language, *religion*, social values, dress, and historical status” (my italics for emphasis). Religion is essential in the life of millions of Africans (Palmborg 2011) and much more significant in that of the Hausa people. It is Islam that has come to define a Hausa man’s identity. Haour and Rossi (2010: 14) note that “Islam has certainly been influential in all spheres of social and political life in some of the major Hausa centres since at least the fifteenth century”. Paden (1973), as cited by Lambu (2020:1148), describes how “Christianity has its initial history in Kano beginning in 1905 with the advent of colonialism.” As Kano is one of the densest Hausa-speaking societies in the world (Mortimore 1975), the interval between the coming of Islam and then of Christianity shows how established the former was before the arrival of the latter among the Hausa people.

In many instances, religion becomes and is an identity marker. Beyers (2017: 1) points out that, “the relationship between religion and culture is an old and an on-going debate”. As mentioned above, the religion that characterises and even defines Hausa religio-cultural identity is Islam – for obvious reasons. For hundreds of years, Hausa culture and identity have been tied to Islam. McIntyre (2010:86) correctly argues that “while the assumption in West Africa that, if you speak Hausa you are a Muslim, is, strictly speaking, inaccurate, it is not unfounded. Only a small percentage of Hausa are Christians, and an even smaller percentage are *ãna* or *maguzawa* (‘pagans’).” In other words, Hausa and Islam are considered synonymous in that part of Africa just



as Arabic and Islam are in most parts of the world. However, the Hausa people had their own traditional religions before Islam and Christianity.

Nevertheless, according to Mu'azu and Shehu (2016: 291), "Traditional religion is one of the oldest practices of the Hausa people that has a strong place in Hausa culture, ditto superstitions". These authors add that "Traditional religion [*Bori*] appears to be the first and the orthodox religion of the Hausa people which used to be practised by virtually everybody in Hausaland" (ibid. 293). Other scholars such as Bunza (2006), Chamo (2006) and Gobir (2011), among others, have written quite extensively on Hausa traditional religion (*Bori*) and other forms of superstitions. These works and more corroborate the claim that faith has always been vital in the Hausa people's lives, even before the advent of Christianity and Islam. Thus, religion is one of the most recurrent themes in Hausa films.

*Bori* is both a medicine and a religion of worshipping spirits. Abdalla (1991: 40) reports that "Religious ritual and *bori* practice were closely intertwined in pre-Islamic Hausa society". Other scholars also describe *bori* as the first religion in Hausaland before the coming of Islam. Like most places around the world today, the advent of organised religion has displaced such traditional faiths. In an interview with a journalist, Dr Muhammad Tahar Adamu, a.k.a Baba Impossible, perhaps the leading authority on *Bori*, remarks that "*Bori* is a form of traditional religion". He goes on to conclude that:

The advent of Islam in Hausaland virtually abolished *Bori* the Religion, but *Bori* the Cure still exists. We have among Muslims in Hausaland people practising *Bori* the Cure, declaring the oneness of God, Allah, saying their five daily prayers, going on pilgrimage to Mecca, marrying according to Islam, but they are '*Yan Bori*. But among the Hausa people, the Maguzawa (heathens) still exist practising *Bori* the Religion, worshipping the spirits.<sup>8</sup>

### ***2.1.3 Hausa Culture***

Palmberg (2001: 199) points out that “culture is by nature complex”. Given the evident breadth of the term ‘culture’ (Baldwin et al. 1999), it is a Sisyphean task to attempt to define it here. However, for the purpose of this work, Raymond Williams’s definition is relevant. The legendary cultural analyst sees culture as “a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period or a group, or humanity in general” (Williams, 1983: 90). From a cultural perspective, Hausa people are easily identified in places far away from Hausa land through their farming and Islamic practice (Paden 1973). In other words, what people do, their way of life becomes their culture. Concerning Paden’s view, notably his mention of Islamic practice, Adamu (2001) summarises the codes provided by Kirk-Greene (1974) and Alhassan et al. (1982) describing what constitutes “*tarbiyya*” (good upbringing) of Hausa people into eighteen canons, thus:

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<sup>8</sup> “Bori: Hausa Cultural Practice Being Spirited Away” from <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/bori-hausa-cultural-practice-being-spirited-away.html> (accessed on 27.11.2019).

Table I: The English Translation

<b>Kirk-Greene</b>	<b>Alhassan et al.</b>	<b>Common</b>
1. Trust (also referred to as strict friendliness)	7. Sociability, friendliness	15. Truth
2. Open-handed generosity	8. Solidarity	16. Bashfulness
3. Patience	9. <i>Religiosity, Piety</i>	17. Scrupulous
4. Good sense	10. Gentle, sensitive	18. Courtesy
5. Self-esteem	11. Tactfulness	
6. Wisdom	12. Reserved, serious	
	13. Industrious, gainfully employed	
	14. Fortitude, courage, bravery	

Source: Adamu (2001)

Although culture is dynamic, one thing is clear from the above table; the binding relationship between the Hausa culture and religion (Islam). This is so because the religion deals with both the spiritual and the earthly life of its adherents. As no culture is an island, the mixture of Islamic and traditional Hausa culture is not a surprise. Ibrahim (2019a: 116) points out that “Northern Nigeria has been a melting pot of transnational cultures more especially from the Arab and Western world”. Several factors bring about cultural changes such as contact with people from other cultures through trading, migration, conquest and other forms of voluntary or forced mobility. These agents of change are everywhere, and their impact or effect can be profound. Baldwin et al. (1999: 15) explain that “cultures adapt, change and mutate into new forms”. For good or otherwise, the

aphorism that no culture is an island remains as valid as ever. Hausa is no exception in undergoing such cultural changes.

As mentioned before, Islam has permeated the life of the Hausa people for centuries. As cited in Lambu (2020: 1148), the Islamic religion arrived in Kano as early as 999 and became significant around 1380 (Adamu 1999, in Adamu 2018: 3). The religion has since then been accepted by a large percentage of the Hausa people far beyond Kano. Hashim and Walker (2014: 128) remark that “Hausa ethnic identity is intimately tied to being Muslim; the non-Muslim ethnic Hausas are identified by another label – *Maguzawa*”. Further, the 1804 Jihad of Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio instituted Islam as a state religion in most of Hausaland, which eventually brought about many changes to the Hausa kingdoms and people (Last 1967).

Although Hausa and Fulani are two distinct ethnolinguistic groups, the two are often put together and hyphenated as “Hausa-Fulani”. The Jihad, led by the Fulani leader (Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio) and his commanders, most of whom are also from the same Fulani clan, resulted in the Fulani conquest of the ancient Hausa States and brought about the establishment of emirates in today’s northern Nigerian states, each headed by an emir descended from the Fulani conquerors. This changed the feudal system that was in existence before the Jihad and the cultural system as a whole, including the religious and social landscape across the whole region. In the present day, many people identify as Hausa-Fulani due to prolonged intermarriages between the two groups. Fulani people are not the only ones who interact and marry with Hausa people; other Nigerians and West Africans have also been in close contact with them, due, chiefly, to their trading and hospitality. Therefore, as the appellation changed, many other identity-related constructs have also changed.

Ibrahim (2019a: 116) succinctly associates the genesis of this change and other ‘foreign’ influences in Hausaland due to globalisation, thus:

The impact of globalisation and media on the culture of people in this region cut across all aspects of human endeavour – religious, political, economic, and social. Media as facilitator of globalisation allows transregional flow of religious ideas and ideologies which saw the emergence and proliferation of socio-cultural and politico-religious movements with moderate and extreme ideological agenda borrowed from ‘outside’ with profound impact on the people of northern Nigeria, particularly the Hausa population.

## **2.2 Empirical Literature Review**

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa. There is no consensus regarding the actual number of its inhabitants as the last census took place in 2006. However, according to one of the most recent projections by *Statista* 2019, Nigeria’s population will surpass 200 million people in 2020<sup>9</sup>. The North is predominantly Islamic, while the significant ethnic group is Hausa or Hausa-Fulani, as the two are blended for their close affinity in region, religion and intermarriage. The South is arguably mainly Christian and is populated by Igbos in the South-East, Yoruba in the South-West, while the so-called minority groups are mainly in the South-South geopolitical zone. From these sketchy demographics, one can visualise the plurality that is Nigeria. Parallel to this, Nollywood and Kannywood, Nigerian “English-language films in the South and Hausa-language films in the North” (Larkin 2008: 172), respectively, reflect the existing dissimilarities of its people in their mode of presentations, stories, style and much more. This empirical review begins with a sketch

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<sup>9</sup> Nigeria: Total Population from 2014-2024: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/382264/total-population-of-nigeria/> (accessed on 12.03.2020)

of the history of Kannywood. The remaining two sections under this sub-heading review the language, cultural and religious debates concerning the film industry.

### ***2.2.1 Kannywood, the beginning***

Film in northern Nigeria, like elsewhere in Africa, dates back to the colonial period. Abdul-Rasheed Na'Allah (2004: 54-55) states that modern film and cinema in Northern Nigeria date back to colonial times. Film is thus one of the lasting legacies of colonialists in Africa. Na'Allah further illustrates that:

[the] colonial administration, all over Africa, used the cinema as a propaganda machinery purportedly to educate the colonised population...Mobile cinema was used largely at village squares or city centres, people gathered to see films on different topics and titles, largely determined by the colonial masters. [...] This tradition continued in western education schools in Northern Nigeria, especially high schools, where mobile cinema basically on European (British) themes or authors like Shakespeare were circulated from school to school and often made popular among students, in particular literature and drama students.

An interesting fact is that film reached the southern region much earlier than it came to the North. As mentioned in the previous chapter, McCall (2018) states that the first film exhibition in Nigeria took place in 1903 in Lagos. Liman (2008: 29) also says that the modern film, among other colonial cultural forms and values, came to southern Nigeria before it went to the North. Therefore, Liman (2008: 29) concludes that “the celluloid film has been in existence in the Lagos area for about three decades before it is finally introduced in Northern Nigeria”.

As Na'Allah (2004) claims, high school graduates and others passionate about drama performance formed drama troupes across Northern Nigeria, which later became what Chamo (2012: 13) describes as the “root of Hausa home video production”. But before the advent of the home video, foreign films, mostly from America, India and Hong Kong, were shown in the cinemas built and left by the Colonial Film Unit (CFU) and others, primarily Lebanese entrepreneurs. On this note, Larkin (2008: 80) argues that “Commercial cinema in Nigeria is part of the history of the rise of urban modernity and the new forms of leisure and spectacle that accompanied that rise”. However, for a combination of reasons, from around the mid-1970s, according to Na'Allah (2004:56), “the television became an alternative for those who might not want to go to cinema houses. Hausa and pidgin English plays suddenly became rampant from both national network and local television stations”. Since “cinema houses showed almost entirely foreign [American, Indian and Chinese] films” (Na'Allah 2004:57), the television, staged dramas and, eventually, the home videos are all influenced by those films.

In his pivotal paper, *Brief History of Drama in Northern Nigeria*, Danjuma (2004: 15) records that foreign films did not influence the earlier films in northern Nigeria. They were not even feature movies but more of like docu-dramas to educate and enlighten the general public on many issues, primarily farming. He finds that:

The epoch-making film in Northern Nigeria was *Baban Larai* (1955), produced by Ahmed Joda, who was the then Chief Information Officer, Northern Nigeria Ministry of Information. The leading character was Abdullahi Song, also of the Northern Nigeria

Ministry of Education. The target audience was mainly farmers, and the main purpose of the film was to educate farmers about farming groundnut, cotton as well as cattle rearing. Interestingly, *Baban Larai* gave birth to more productions.

The above motivated the authorities to incorporate Hausa folklore (*Tatsuniya*) and colonial plays into the formal educational curriculum, which led to the formation of several drama troupes in northern Nigeria. As Danjuma (2004) highlights above, after *Baban Larai*, more productions followed. Perhaps the most significant one concerning the emergence of Kannywood was in 1990 when a drama troupe called Tumbin Giwa Drama in Kano produced *Turmin Danya* ('The Draw', dir. Salisu Galadanchi). Adamu (2018), among several scholars, consider this production as the first Hausa feature film that inaugurated "Kannywood". However, Ali (2004) finds that *Hukuma Maganin Yan Banza* and *Auren Dole*, two other very early Kannywood films, were adaptations of a Chinese movie depicting [the] Chinese mode of fighting and an Indian film depicting [the] Indian form of dancing and songs, respectively. This opened a floodgate of negotiations and contestations among its predominantly Muslim Hausa audience, the government, and the state's hegemonic religious institutions.

There has been no thorough audience research on Kannywood that I have come across. McCain (2012), Ibrahim (2018) and Inuwa (2019), among others, wrote about related issues, but none of them has conducted any detailed audience study as such. Perhaps only Krings (2005: 191), whose work, too, mostly relies on interviews with the Kano State Censorship Board officials, finds that local critics disparage women and men dancing together, calling it "inappropriate within Hausa culture and everyday life". Another argument from the critics, again mentioned by Krings



(2005:191), is that “since Bollywood’s song-and-dance routines are rooted in Hindu religious worship, Hausa filmmakers, who ‘copy’ these routines, advocate idolatry”.

However, Bollywood is under relative criticism for the same ‘wrongdoing’ from a section of its own public. Orfall (2009) and Shah (2012), among others, observe that globalisation and Westernisation have influenced Bollywood into assuming that imitating Hollywood can translate into financial success. Western culture has had a significant role in shaping the stories and themes of Bollywood movies (Acharya 2004). The accusations usually emanate from “non-Indian audiences, as well as Western critics, [who], have often found Bollywood’s attempts to mimic Hollywood’s American coolness difficult to accept, often rejecting them as cringe-worthy and unconvincing” (Wright 2010: 165 in Adamu 2014). Thus, according to Desai and Dudrah (2008: 5), several charges of plagiarism were, and continue to be, lobbied against Bollywood for its borrowings. There is, meanwhile, a shared belief among many Bollywood filmmakers that “once something is in the public domain, it is fair game.” Many of them “think nothing wrong of being ‘inspired’ by a particular film” (Ganti 2012: 31-32 in Arjun 2012: 454) from other cinema industries (e.g. from Hollywood, Hong Kong, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, or Soviet cinemas) in their remakes of famous films such as *A Star is Born* as *Abhimaan* (‘Pride’ 1973, dir. Hrishikesh Mukherjee) or the Korean movie *Oldboy* as *Zinda* (‘Alive’ 2006, dir. Sanjay Gupta), among many others.

Chinese cinema, too, is not spared from this penetrative influence of Hollywood. (see: Lent 2008; McDonald and Wasko 2008). Although the Chinese government only allows a selected number of

foreign films into the country, Hollywood films still find their ways in. Lent (2008) confirms that “Hollywood influences seeped into Chinese films with so many American films available and the existence of joint business operations.” That is, perhaps, why the government has now begun to invest much more in the film industry. The mega-production of *The Great Wall* (dir. Zhang Yimou 2016) is a clear example.

That practice of copying from foreign film industries, unlike in India and perhaps elsewhere, is mostly unwelcome in Kannywood’s domain (Ibrahim 2015). As I mentioned before, until now, there has been a significant paucity of Kannywood audience research to find out their real thoughts about this matter. Instead, scholars (such as Larkin 1997, 2008; Maikaba 2004; Haynes 2007; Adamu 2014; Inuwa 2019) have sketched how Kannywood takes Bollywood styles such as song and dance routines, among other things, as its creative templates at the expense of its local circumstances and creativity. Maikaba (2004:102) is very categorical as he concludes thus: “it is abundantly clear that the Hausa home video industry was influenced more than any other section by Indian Cinema Industry”.

Since the 1950s, Indian films have enjoyed considerable acceptance among audiences in northern Nigerian, primarily with the Muslim-Hausa population (Larkin 1997). The films were first introduced into the region by Lebanese exhibitors and later on by entrepreneurs who established viewing centres in strategic locations across the conservative part of the country. As part of “the technologising of urban public space” (Larkin 2008: 50) by the colonialists, cinema, among other infrastructures, made Hausa societies more cosmopolitan (Adamu 2011). Indian films soon

became popular due, chiefly, to the perceived similarities between the Hindu and Hausa cultures (Larkin 1997). Adamu (2011: 67) makes it more evident that the Hindi films “became popular simply because of what urbanised young Hausa saw as cultural similarities between Hausa social behaviour and mores (e.g. coyness, forced marriage, gender stratification, obedience to parents and authority, etc.) and those depicted in [the movies]”. The dressing is another point of confluence, for both Hausa and Indian cultures are heavily influenced by Arabic if not Islamic traditions.

Perhaps more significantly, the Hindi music soundtracks, the songs, and the dance routines appeal to the urbanised youth. However, as Adamu (2011: 67) among many other religious and secular scholars, argues, the songs and dance routines “do not have ready equivalents in Hausa traditional entertainment”. Like their counterparts in Bollywood cinema, the Hausa filmmakers produce movies, especially the old ones, with themes about fantastical love relationships. Larkin (2008: 172) concludes that Kannywood filmmakers “borrow heavily and sometimes copy explicitly” from the Indian films.

Since Bollywood also inspired the “Kano market literature” (see chapter one), the same thematic preoccupation spills over into their texts. Furniss (2003), Adamu (2002), McCain (2014), Ibrahim (2018) and Musa (2019), among other scholars, have discovered that the influence of Hausa novels is enormous on Kannywood. Therefore, “following the exceptional success of *Turmin Danya*, some Hausa authors joined the Kannywood industry at its initial stage. They started transforming their love stories into low budget video films” (Ibrahim, 2018:106). Ado Ahmad Gidan-Dabino, a

veteran Hausa novelist, is among such writers. Elsewhere, Gidan-Dabino mentions that books about love, first and foremost, became the only selling stories in the saturated market. This implies that their readers, most of whom are urbanised young men and women like those of Kannywood, prefer such stories. He adds the following:

The fact that the writings of these authors concern love, and most of their readers are young; thus, you will mostly find young men and women buying the books in the market. And the booksellers themselves prefer Love Stories because they are well received by their customers. If one brings them a book which is not a Love Story, they are not so pleased and will not welcome it with open arms because, if it is not a Love Story, it does not sell so well (2011: 25).

Gidan-Dabino went on to adapt his two novels, *Inda So Da Kauna* and *Wani Hanin Ga Allah*, into films with the same titles in 1993 and 1994, respectively (Ibrahim 2018). Soon, other writers followed suit. Adamu Muhammad, the author of *Kwabon Masoyi*, produced a film based on his novel and with the same title; Dan'azumi Baba Chediyar Yan Gurasa, Bala Anas Babinlata, Balaraba Ramat Muhammad and Nazir Adam Saleh, among others, all did the same (Adamu 2002). In the south-eastern region of Nigeria, Igbo filmmakers also looked at the Onitsha Market Literature for inspirations (while the Yoruba filmmakers in the south-west get most of their inspiration from Yoruba folklore). Adesokan (2004: 194) describes how “[w]riters such as Adewale Maja-Pearce (2001) and Onookome Okome (2002) have made this connection, citing the [Igbo] films’ preoccupation with themes of love, money, and the cruelty of the city as points of intersection with the Onitsha pamphlets”. However, the Igbo filmmakers, as well as their Yoruba counterparts, are no longer entirely focused on love but also on other diverse issues (Okome 2010).

In contrast, Abdalla Uba Adamu, a professor of Media and Cultural Communication and the foremost scholar on Kannywood, once told BBC Hausa that he alone had more than 150 Kannywood films that were ripped-off from Bollywood (BBC Hausa programme, “*Gane Mana Hanya*,” November 15, 2014). In other words, he had Kannywood movies that are based on simplistic, predictable Indian romantic films. Today, Kannywood even plagiarises Nollywood. For instance, *Nai Miki Uzuri* (dir. Ali Gumzak 2016) explicitly caricatures, *Kokomma* (dir. Tomrobson 2012). In a separate situation, Adamu (2006a: 43) adds that due to the rampancy of ripping off other films, “the Hausa video filmmakers fall over themselves in copying a Hindi film. For instance, *Nagin* (1976) a Hindi film (which itself was ripped-off by Bollywood from a Pakistani film of the same name) was copied into *Macijiya* (snake) and *Kububuwa* (cobra) by Hausa filmmakers.” The trend goes on unabated.

Elsewhere, Adamu (cited in Liman 2008: 192) also opines that the filmmakers were not the first to have copied Indian films. He believes that “even older singers such as Mamman Shata, Abdu Yaron Goge and Ali Makaho have variously copied Indian modes of musical expression even before the emergence of the new Hausa popular culture that is ostensibly characterised by cross-cultural influences”. Adamu’s argument is in line with what Sunder (2011: 280) says about cultural appropriation being an old thing that “travels in multiple directions”. Owomoyela (1985: 43) also points out that “cultures tend to thrive on mutual enrichment”. Thus, there is a need for more in-depth research to discover the roots of these ethoses within Hausa culture and tradition, and that is what this research work sets out to do.

### 2.2.2 Kannywood and the question of culture and language

Baldwin et al. (1999: 66) claim that “language and language use are political”. For this reason, language and language use in Nigerian film industries play crucial roles in presentation and representation of the country’s different ethnic groups. The work of Edward Said (1993) covers such territory when he illuminates “how writers from metropolitan countries have, through their language, created an image of ‘other societies’ which is a product of language” (Baldwin et al. 1999: 67). For instance, Hausa people have been featured in Nollywood films for years and in varied roles. Films like *Faithful Betrayal* (dir. Ikechukwu Onyeka, 2008) *Holy Law* (dir. Kingsteam, 2000), *Oga Alhaji* (dir. T. I. Ezendigbo, 2013) are a few examples. However, they are consistently represented as subordinates or simpletons, and rarely as serious characters. A Hausa man may be a simplistic guardsman who speaks the worst broken English, or a foolish cobbler, a beggar, a corrupt politician with a bulging stomach also speaking heavily-accented English, or a randy old sugar daddy chasing female undergraduates, amid an aristocratic, wealthy, cultured and educated world of southern people. In Zukogi’s (2014) words, the message, borrowed from Said (2003), is that: whether implicit or explicit, the southerner is the ‘Self’ and the northerner is the ‘Other’. In Marks’s (2000: 5) words, the (mis)representation is sometimes “narratively thin but emotionally full.”

As a subtle reaction, which could also be a subconscious description of the marginalised, the usual depiction of the southerners, or even of some minorities within the north in Kannywood films, is sometimes also nothing short of a travesty. Zukogi concludes thus:

In some of these films, the style [of non-Hausa casts] is comic and the tone un-serious, but the social meanings are quite evident. To generalise: the Gbagyi [*Dan Gwari*] is constantly portrayed as a heathen who eats pork and gleefully drinks his local gin and is dull in his social interactions and poor in his mastery of the dominant language, Hausa; the Igbo is the quintessential Shylock, one who is mean and grasping in business and money matters; the Yoruba, for his part, plays the clown, the talkative, rambling character who repeatedly interferes in matters that do not concern him. The playful comedy does not disguise the deep-seated portrayal of characters with an inherent cultural deficit when compared to the superior values of the dominant Hausa culture. (2014: 6)

Storch (2013:79) states that “the question about one’s linguistic identity is very important” in some parts of Nigeria, such as the Jos Plateau and the adjacent Benue Valley. The same is true, if not more so, in the Nigerian film industries. To borrow from the eminent scholar Ruth Finnegan, actors and other artists “[do] things with words” (Finnegan 2007), and, if I may add, with tones and accents in Kannywood – and Nollywood. It began with the hierarchizing of dialects and languages in northern Nigeria, as well as in other parts of the world. We may compare what happens in the Hausa film industry with regard to the presentation of minority casts to what is the case in other African communities. Storch (2013: 78) cites a case where “speakers make choices all the time about the way they speak [...] and at the same time are socially and culturally encouraged and trained to make such choices.” Therefore, these characters portray the minorities; even though they are Hausa in real life, their ‘multilingual’ skills are their repertoires and part of their professional lives. In some cases, this linguistic skill is their *only* selling point.

In one of the few works on language in Kannywood, Chamo (2019), in his article, “Dialect Usage as a Means of Identity in Hausa Film Discourse”, discovers that characters’ communication

methods in Kannywood reveal their identity, social status, and geographical location. The paper also shows that some of these actors use their own dialects instead of Standard Hausa, which is usually used in film scripts, when they are angry, disappointed or are expressing romantic feelings. He concludes that the actors' 'failure' to conform to the written scripts may be an indicator of their "low academic qualification and old age" (Chamo 2019: 362).

Muaka (2020:127-148) argues that African languages were not accorded ranks before. He states that colonialism first devalued African languages and then granted them different statuses. I must admit that he mainly based his findings on African languages in relation to the European ones. However, elsewhere, Jaggar (2000:3) and Newman (2000:1), among others, regard Kano Hausa as the closest to the "standard". Therefore, this is the variety generally used in books, schools and government functions – and films.

In film after film in Nigeria and, perhaps, elsewhere, language politics plays a significant role. Ibrahim (2019b: 88) observes that:

For Nollywood, the cornerstone is always the English language. There is a geographical essentialist stereotype that the northerners, most of whom are Hausa and Muslims, as mentioned earlier, are the worst speakers of English in Nigeria. This is in connection to the widespread Arab-Islamic scholarship decades before the colonial takeover in 1903. Even today, some people reject the so-called Western education ("*Boko*") and declare it as *haram* or forbidden. Thus, such Nollywood movies lend credence to such misperception by showing Hausa casts using accented English. At the same time, in other instances, they speak the most miserable variety of Nigerian pidgin. Theirs is best described as broken English as they are the least educated or utterly uneducated in the films.



Today, the Hausa language is deliberately commodified in Kannywood and is used as what Storch (2013: 79) calls an “artful game”. Baldwin et al. (1999: 76) say that “the creativity of language explores the opportunity to negotiate meaning in representation and communication”. This, perhaps, enables Baban Chinedu, Dan Gwari, and other typecasts to commodify their usage of Hausa. Although scholars have not written on the nexus between these linguistic variables and economic variables in the acting style of those actors, this study proposes to do that. To borrow from Muaka (2020:131), the ‘broken’ Hausa that these actors speak can be viewed as a commodity that can be highly-priced and therefore unaffordable to some producers. At the same time, “normal” Hausa remains cheap and therefore readily available to both filmmakers and the audience.

### *2.2.3 Kannywood and the question of religion*

Nigeria’s return to democracy in 1999 brought an unprecedented change to the northern region’s socio-political and religious sphere. Twelve of the nineteen northern states, including Kano, of course, implemented Shari’ah between 2000 and 2001. Krings (2005), McCain (2013), Ibrahim (2018) and Adamu (2018), among others, claim that since the establishment of Shari’ah as a legal code, filmmaking remains one of the practices most affected under the law. The Kano state government established a censorship board in March 2001. In conjunction with the dominant religious establishments, the board has banned and then negotiated film practices repeatedly. Some Kannywood producers, directors and artists have been arrested and prosecuted on various charges. Haynes (2007: 5) concludes that today, it is common knowledge that Kannywood is “locked in tense negotiations with various cultural authorities about what is permissible.”

Adamu (2018: 10), among other scholars, nonetheless challenges the actual Islamic practices of these northern Nigerian states. He describes the region as “Islamicate”, rather than “Islamic”. The Shari’ah, in most situations, spares the wealthy and other VIPs. For many years and in many places such as Iran and Saudi Arabia<sup>10</sup>, people have associated cinema with immorality, prostitution, hooliganism and everything negative. In northern Nigeria, children were told scary stories about the purported cause of a fire accident at the El-Duniya cinema in Kano in 1951 that killed 331 out of the 600 in the audience (Larkin 2008: 141). People alleged that the accident occurred because the film being shown contained the Prophet Muhammad’s image, a taboo in Islam. However, as Larkin further noted, the government inquiry established that “the fire began in the projection room with flammable nitrate films”. After the introduction of Shari’ah in 2000/2001, some state governments demolished some cinemas and closed several others (Ibrahim 2018: 26).

But Ibrahim (2016: 139) recounts that historically, the relationship between cinema and the orthodox religious institutions is often marked by uneasiness if not outright hostility. From the beginning, specifically in 1939, when the British imperial government established the Colonial Film Unit (CFU) across Africa, cinema was never welcomed in Muslim-majority parts of northern Nigeria. In Kano, for instance, cinema was, and largely remains, a flashpoint for much religious and cultural debate. Larkin (2008: 135) suggests that the early Hausa names for cinema – *majigi* from ‘magic’ and *dodon bango*, literally, ‘evil spirit on the wall’ – tell us a lot about how

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<sup>10</sup> Saudi Arabia to allow cinemas in Kingdom after 35-year ban: from <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/12/11/saudi-arabia-allow-cinemas-kingdom-35-year-ban/> (accessed on 19.03.2020)

the Hausa people received the new technology. It was regarded as a form of *shirk*, which is, in Islam, the unpardonable sin of associating Allah with a partner in worship.

In his edited volume, *African Theatre in Development*, Osofisan (1999: 12) describes the Muslim Hausa people of northern Nigeria who “had resisted western education and missionary influence...” as conservative. From this, and from the activities of Islamic insurgent groups like Boko Haram, it is clear that Hausa-Muslim northern Nigerians still resist any spill-over from other religions and cultures, especially from the West, in their daily endeavours, not to mention from films. Krings (2005: 188) notes that according to some local debates, “Hausa video films deviate from the current discourse of religious and cultural ‘purity,’ which advocates cultural closure and the exclusion of the other (that is, all things considered un-Islamic, like Western dress and lifestyle).” The argument almost always revolves around the public-private debate, representation of the female body and gender roles in the films. Regarding this constant debate, Adamu (2018: 19) notes that:

Muslim Hausa would have to negotiate these core prohibitions about the sacredness of the private, and often, conjugal sphere. This was more so because by 2000, and under a global media snowstorm, Hausa filmmakers had started exploring various globalised configurations of behaviour that have what was seen as direct diluting influences on core Muslim Hausa mind-sets.

There are several such films. Adamu (2018) himself briefly analyses four, viz. *Alhaki Kwikwiyo*, *Malam Karkata*, *Saliha?* and *Jahilci Ya Fi Hauka*. Others may include some said to be ‘inspired’

by foreign films like *Masoyiyata Titanic* (dir. Farouk Ashu Brown, 2003), and *Romeo da Jamila* (dir. Yakubu Muhammad, 2013), among others. These films are obviously influenced by *Titanic* (dir. James Cameron, 1997) and Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, respectively. As Inuwa (2019) discovers, many other Kannywood filmmakers mix several foreign films to (re)make one. This practice is similar to what Desai and Dudrah (2008: 5) describe for Bollywood, as an "omnivorous and elastic appetite [which can] be better understood as a strategy of accommodation, indigenisation and hybridity as well as of a strong sense of cinephilia than simple copying".

However, both Bollywood and Kannywood filmmakers have always maintained that they are doing nothing wrong, for Hollywood, too, *adapts* ideas from other sources. It draws much from the French filmmakers, in particular, and from many remote parts of the world. Madhavi Sunder, a professor of Law, University of California, Davis, opens with a note in his paper titled: "Bollywood/Hollywood", thus:

Free flow of culture is not always fair flow of culture. A recent spate of copyright suits by Hollywood against Bollywood accuses the latter of ruthlessly copying movie themes and scenes from America. But claims of cultural appropriation go far back, and travel in multiple directions. The revered American director, Steven Spielberg, has been accused of copying the idea for *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* from legendary Indian filmmaker Satyajit Ray's 1962 script, *The Alien*. Disney's *The Lion King* bears striking similarities to Osamu Tezuka's Japanese anime series, *Kimba the White Lion*. (2011:275)

An entertainment lawyer, O'Donnell (1992), in an interview with *The New York Times*, also observes that: "Idea theft is a cancer in Hollywood. In an industry where imagination and creativity is the key to success, idea theft is grand larceny. And it is prevalent." However, I think it is worth noting that the 'theft' is not as prevalent as in Bollywood and Kannywood.

For Kannywood, for instance, the government of its home state, Kano, had to intervene to curb the practices seen as anti-cultural and anti-religious. In his paper, "Muslim Martyrs and Pagan Vampires: Popular Video Films and the Propagation of Religion in Northern Nigeria", Krings (2005: 186) also states that "Authors and filmmakers have been accused of 'destroying' Hausa culture and of spoiling their audiences with foreign lifestyles.". Therefore, the Kano state government established a formal code of practice called the Censorship Board in 2001 to monitor the activities of filmmakers and more. The tsar of the board, ex-Director General, Rabo Abdulkareem, proclaimed that "there was a confusion, or rather mix-up of cultural values which was largely attributed to foreign influence and the weird culture of blind copycatting of foreign cultures by most of the Hausa filmmakers which results to public outcry in the 1999-2000 of then Kano" (Koki 2009). Ibrahim (2013) also adds that the arrests and prosecutions of several filmmakers and actors [that followed] and later a complete ban of the activities of the film industry have further deteriorated the government/filmmakers' relationship. Haynes (2007: 7) reports that the filmmakers were accused of "offending Hausa culture and Islam".

Ibrahim (2018) notes that the filmmakers have also made numerous efforts to rectify and debunk the (mis)conception that their films are not copycats of Indian cinema. They thus take a leaf from

their southern Nigerian counterparts by making films with religious themes. Okome (2004: 8) notes that “[t]here has been a spate of [hallelujah video films in Nollywood] and the main motive is to use the power of the visual medium to drive home and sell religious truth”. In such films, the solution to any problem or the cure for any illness, misfortune or magic is always found at the church. In Kannywood as well, Krings (2005:197) proposes a name, “conversion genre”, to refer to films that attempt to sell Islam. Kannywood producers recently turned to the Muslims’ holiest book, the Qur’an. They adapted the story of As-Habul Kahfi (“The Companions of the Cave”, “The Seven Sleepers” or other variants) narrated in the 18<sup>th</sup> chapter into a film with the same title (dir. Aminu Saira, 2013). Others made similar films that audaciously tried to proselytise for Islam and to uplift the face of Muslims and Hausa people in films such as *Yankin Imani* (dir. Imran S.I Ashir, 2013) and *Ana Muslim* (dir. Abubakar S. Shehu, 2014), among others. However, due to the ‘sensitivity’ of Hausa people on almost everything relating to Islam, these films, too, are never free of criticism concerning their handling of Islam.

However, film critics and scholars such as the legendary Andre Bazin believe that art does not only reproduce life but explains it. Thus, for instance, some Hausa filmmakers are not the custodian of their culture; they are businessmen and women, who produce films to sell. Bazin (1967: 50) further explains that “the flesh and blood of reality are no easier to capture in the net of literature or cinema than are gratuitous flights of the imagination”. Relatedly, Braudy and Cohen (2009: 1) share a similar opinion asking:

[...] is the primary aim of art to imitate nature? And if it is, what role remains for the other arts when film achieves it so simply and perfectly? An anti-realist tradition therefore denies that the goal of art is the imitation of nature. Some anti-realists

have argued that to create a work of art is not simply to copy the world but to add another, and very special, object to the world. This object may be valuable because it offers an interpretation or an idealisation of the world, or even because it creates another, wholly autonomous, world.

The Kannywood personnel have often maintained that they are merely moving with reality. Regarding this claim, Adamu (2007: 72) concludes that “the transgressions of local norms of privacy by Hausa video filmmakers have both created and revealed tensions between media globalisation and Hausa Muslim culture”. There is a constant tension between Islam and film. Lyden (2015: 83) notes that “Movies made in predominantly Muslim countries [...] have to deal with state censors” due to the religion’s stand against many things readily accessible in films. Thus, as Adamu (2007: 72) highlights, these tensions have resonances with broader issues in the wider Islamic world. However, as the works of McCain (2012) and Ibrahim (2018), among others, have established, nowhere is a film industry more censored than in Kannywood.

### **2.3 Theoretical Framework**

Several factors, such as context, cultural values and institutional structures (Thwaites, Davis and Mules 2002: 215), among others, determine how consumers of any media content attribute meaning to it. Thus, in media and cultural studies worldwide, the audience occupies a significant position and has also become an important research area for scholars (Hayward 2000: 19). While considerable work has been done on reception theory (ibid. 19), as I mentioned before, much less has been done with Kannywood in focus. The audience is an active producer of meaning.

Therefore, he or she negotiates or contests the meaning the filmmakers encode. As Stuart Hall aptly captures it, the encoded codes and decoded codes may not be in perfect alignment (Hall, 1980: 117-127). For this reason, Audience Reception Theory is chosen as the primary theoretical framework for this research work.

Based on the concept of semiotics, the theory, according to Childs and Fowler (2006:197) “moved away from intrinsic accounts of an individual reader’s response to consider the communal ‘horizon of expectations’ against which any work is received”. Illustratively speaking, it is by this means that a Kannywood audience expects, perhaps, to see a wedding being conducted through their perception of traditional Hausa milieu. In contrast, the wedding process begins and ends with dance and song routines in what several critics describe as ‘Indian style’. In clear contrast to the critics, the filmmaker may have another intention in his or her mind other than merely ‘corrupting’ Hausa cultural practices. As per Hall’s theory of coding and decoding, the audience assigns meaning to media content based on its social, political, religious, cultural and other related worldviews.

Hall (1980:125) introduces the Encoding/Decoding Model to connect the audience with their reception of media content. Therefore, he hypothesises three possible decoding positions. The first is the *dominant-hegemonic position* which implies that the viewers take the connoted, the intended meanings of, say, a film, “full and straight” (ibid.). Hall further expounds that when viewers do that, they operate within the dominant code. The second position is the *negotiated code*. As the name implies, it is a mediated version of the dominant position. Viewers here may acknowledge



the existence of the authorial meaning while offering their own. In other words, they may accept or reject the encoded meanings based on their socio-cultural, political or religious backgrounds. In the end, viewers reconstruct the encoded meaning and attribute ‘fresher’ meanings to a given content. The third and last position is called the *oppositional code*. This type of reading happens when viewers grasp both the literal and the connotative inflexion given by discourse but choose to decode the message in a completely contrary way (Hall 1980). We can add that this is further away from negotiating intended meanings, and instead involves assigning alternative, contrary ones. Like the negotiated meaning and, perhaps, all other kinds of meanings, the viewers’ experiences and worldviews play a vital role in assigning new, contradicting meaning to media content.

Eagleton (2005: 65) believes that texts – and, of course, films – “do not exist on bookshelves: they are processes of signification materialized only in the practice of reading. For literature to happen, the reader is quite as vital as the author.” In other words, for a film to happen, the audience is quite as vital as the director – while taking the *auteur* film theory for this illustration. A text is not considered nor studied in isolation but as something thoroughly embedded in its context and the audience, and in constant interaction and interchange with other components inside the network of institutions, beliefs, and cultural power relationships, practices and products. Therefore, a Kannywood film works with such elements as Hausa culture, Hausa religion and, of course, language.

Cinema is tied to the culture like a computer to its screen, and people are identified by their way of living, which invariably means their culture (Williams 1983). That is why the Frankfurt School

invented the term “culture industries” in the 1930s to refer to film industries (Kellner 2013). They coined it, Kellner further explains (quoting Horkheimer and Adorno 1972), to signify the process of the industrialization of mass-produced culture and the commercial imperatives that constructed it. Miller and Stam (2004: 88) also note that “culture-bound attitudes do indeed inflect the content of film narratives, along with their stylistic visualisation, at the point of production and, again, through the inferences viewers draw from those narratives”.

Regarding its relationship with religion, cinema has always maintained a “symbiotic relationship with ideology” (Miller and Stam 2004: 89). That has been the trend in Kannywood (Ibrahim 2018). Cultural theorists outline how “readers’ cultural roles, attitudes, and values, as well as the larger cultural, historical context, shape responses” (Beach 1993: 9). Understanding and analysing the rationale behind the reactions to my ethnographic field research requires an understanding of the cultural forces that shape a ‘typical’ Hausa person’s way of thinking. Thus, I will employ what Michel Foucault (1980), cited in Beach (1993: 127), calls “discourse”, “discursive formation” or “practice”. Beach (1993: 127) further explains that “discourse [... also] serves to limit the definition of language to ways legitimate only for that speech community”. Hall (1980: 121) also argues that “[t]he televisual sign is a complex one. It is itself constituted by the combination of two types of discourse, visual and aural”. Therefore, as a discourse on the Kannywood films and their interplay with religion, culture and language, reception theory was selected.

I will also deploy the Language and Economic Model to examine the relationship between language and economics more deeply. Scholars such as Kamwangamalu (2016), Wolff (2016) and Muaka (2020) have expounded this model in their various works on the commodification of

language. In short, within this framework, Kamwangamalu (2016: 18) says that linguistic products such as language, language varieties, utterances, and accents are seen not only as goods or commodities to which the market assigns a value but as signs of wealth or capital which receive their value only concerning a market, characterized by a particular law of price formation (Bourdieu 1991: 66–67).

Although all the scholars referenced consider language economics as regarding the language policies mainly in African schools and other official domains, I shall reframe the model here with the Kannywood film industry in mind and focus. In both instances, one or another language or dialect is seen as prestigious while the other is not. Therefore, the model can serve as a guide that will enable me to cross-examine the usage of Hausa by the Kannywood minority typecasts of Baban Chinedu and Dan Gwari, among others. I will also use the model to study the characters using the Sokoto dialect to verify Hudson's (1996: 46) claim "your dialect shows who (or what) you are", but in Kannywood, to answer the question of whether or not language plays a role in the construction or deconstruction of a Hausa person's identity. In considering this, discourse analysis as an assisting methodological tool should be employed.

# CHAPTER THREE

## METHODOLOGY

### 3.0 Introduction

The empirical field research for this study took place in Kano, Nigeria. It is the epicentre of Kannywood and is thus named after it. The name tag is one of the new entries from Nigeria added into the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) in 2019. The OED defines it as “the Nigerian Hausa-language film industry, based in the city of Kano.”<sup>11</sup> According to the Nigerian National Population Commission official census conducted in 2006, Kano, with 9,401,288 people, was the most populous state in Nigeria (NPC 2006). However, the most recent projection of the state population found on its official website<sup>12</sup> claims that there are over 20 million inhabitants (still the highest in Nigeria) in Kano. In addition to its high population, Kano has been a regional nerve centre of commerce and Islamic scholarship for several decades. The state influences what goes on in other northern states and beyond, affecting other Hausa speaking communities as far away as other West African countries. Therefore, there was no shortage of diverse opinions among the population focused on in this study.

It is noteworthy that the name, Kannywood, also encompasses films made elsewhere in northern Nigeria. For instance, Kaduna and Plateau (Jos city, in particular) states both have quite vibrant film industries. However, they produce all their movies under the umbrella of Kannywood.

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<sup>11</sup> ‘Kannywood’ to ‘rubbing minds’ – Oxford Dictionary adds 29 Nigerian words and phrases: <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/01/29/africa/nigerian-words-added-to-english-dictionary-scli-intl-gbr/index.html> (accessed on 04.04.2020)

<sup>12</sup> <https://kanostate.gov.ng/about> (accessed on 07.04.2021)

Therefore, the research is limited to Kano for this reason. Other reasons are security threats. I had attempted to travel to Kaduna and Jos to meet some audiences, filmmakers and other stakeholders, but I rescinded the idea.

### **3.1 Research Design**

The study adopts a qualitative approach, following the guidelines of the interpretive tradition within social science. It is a tradition that was developed as a response to the nineteenth-century positivist tradition. The positivists, as Deacon et al. (2007: 3) discover, “assert that investigating the social and cultural world is no different, in principle, to investigating the natural world, and that the same basic procedures apply to both.” Citing Angrosino (2007), Elinwa (2020: 4) notes that ethnographers look for probable patterns that appear in everyday lived experiences by attentively and painstakingly observing and participating in the lives of the study group. Doing so is necessary because several scholars such as Lewis (2002), have found that if we are concerned with the meaning and importance of popular culture in our modern society, we need to recognise not just media texts but also how the audience understand or receive them. Furthermore, Marsh (2009: 263) affirms that “it has been recognised for some time in film studies and in interdisciplinary work related to film that theoretical speculation about actual audience response has to be backed up with evidence of what viewers themselves say, believe, and do.”

As “positivists favour recording relevant ‘facts’ in terms of *quantities* or numbers that can be processed using statistical techniques” (Deacon et al. 2007: 03), there is not enough hard data to work with (Marsh, 2009). Thus, it is an oversimplification to assume that “yes/no”, “when”, “how

often”, etc. questions can yield any objective result. This approach casts the audience as too passive and also ignores the fact that media impacts can only be adequately grasped within the context of everyday life (Deacon et al. 2007). Ruddock (2001: 119) concludes that “communication is culturally specific and as such can only be understood as a process from the point of view of the people involved”. He is, in essence, calling for in-depth audience research.

Unlike the positivist tradition, the interpretive tradition does not rely on numerical facts to conclude any media research issue. Instead, its advocates “place particular emphasis on the ethnographic practices developed by anthropologists, where the researcher immerses herself in a particular social setting, getting to know the people intimately, observing how they organise their everyday lives and talking to them at length about how they see the world and themselves.” (Deacon et al. 2007: 5-6). In other words, the researcher ought to embed herself within the community with which she works. While it is indisputably significant for ethnographers to spend some quality time with the participants to build rapport, scholars such as Schensul, Schensul and leCompte (1999: 72) highly recommend that they “always remember that they are researchers and remind the study participants of their identity as researchers, even at times when they may be acting as friends, counsellors, providers of information, helpers, and cultural brokers.”

Often, scholars (see Weber 2004: iii-xii) place interpretive and positivist traditions against each other and argue endlessly as to which one is better than the other. Thus, one’s research aim and objectives should be a yardstick towards the choice of one over the other. In essence, I was an emic researcher working on culture, language and religion in an embattled film industry, which

some people do not want to be easily associated with. Therefore, I found the guidelines of the interpretive tradition more convincing and more fitting for my research questions and objectives. For instance, I know some participants in my research personally, as I am from Kano state, from the culture I study, I speak the local language, etc. Thus, I am, almost by default, already immersed in the setting. Nonetheless, I ensured that all those participating in the research were well aware of the purpose of my research so that we would not lose focus.

### **3.2 Population of the Study**

Populations usually comprise human beings, but they can also include objects, organisations, programs, animals, places, and anything else. According to a definition by Deacon et al. (2007: 43), “populations are not necessarily made up of people; they can be aggregates of texts, institutions, or anything else being investigated.” Schensul, Schensul and leCompte (1999: 231) remark that “historically, ethnographers sought to study entire populations”. But that is no longer feasible for several reasons such as time, finance, access and many other factors. Therefore, “researchers must engage in sampling” (ibid. 231).

Generally, this research population includes all active audiences of Kannywood films, selected Kannywood filmmakers, selected Hausa language cum cultural scholars and another set of selected religious/Islamic scholars, all based in Kano state, Nigeria. How or where they watch the films is not within the focus of this research. Therefore, I met some after watching movies at the cinema (cinema-goers) and some at home (mostly using DVD or TV channels); I watched the films with a few others. In some instances, some of the audience claimed that they watch movies for one

reason or another, such as academic, ‘preaching’, and so on. In all this, Wright (2009: 107) notes “that cultural studies is interested in practices and objects, and in the uses people make of them – the individual and collective meanings (including religious ones) that are circulated in the production and reception of artefacts (including films).” While Angrosino (2007: 48) states that “there are recognised canons for determining the size of a population to be sampled in a purely quantitative study”, I relied on Wright’s guide in the selection of the population of this research.

### **3.3 Sampling Technique**

In essence, research populations are defined by specific research objectives and alter in direct relation to them (Deacon et al. 2007: 43). Thus, samples are taken from the population. Sampling is traditionally associated with quantitative research, but it is crucial to qualitative research as well. Brewer (2000: 79) succinctly describes sampling as a “means to select the case or cases for study from the basic unit of study where it is impossible to cover all instances of that unit.” On this note, Ruddock (2001: 133) also states that guidelines for sampling within ethnographic research are consequently more flexible and situational than those used in mass communication studies. The sort of people gathered depends on the research questions at hand. Participants’ choice is determined by the criteria appropriate for a specific study, rather than the field in general. For this reason, I used the “criterion-based selection technique” (Schensul, Schensul and leCompte 1999: 235), whereby I chose my participants because they possess characteristics relevant to the study’s central questions. The questions concern the Hausa culture, religion and language. Therefore, the respondents are either Hausa people or those living among Hausa people, and they understand the language and culture of their immediate community.



As an ethnographic researcher, I went to film shooting locations, on several occasions where I observed and took note of many things related to the research questions and objectives. Regarding the study's participants, I sampled fifteen active audiences of Kannywood, twelve filmmakers, two religious and two language-cum-cultural scholars. In total, there were thirty-one participants, three main films (and an unspecified number of relevant others) and several secondary sources for the research. As Ruddock (2001: 133) counsels, citing several scholars in the famous Glasgow Media Group, a group of participants should have "greatest degree of ideological variation possible" to access the full range of possible decoding that texts might have. That is why I chose to hear from the filmmakers themselves, not only from the audiences and their other critics, such as cultural and religious scholars. In specific terms, my sampled group comprises professors, holders of PhDs, master's and bachelor's degrees or equivalent, secondary and primary school certificate holders and individuals who are barely literate. The participants are also from both urban and rural settings.

This sample size was guided by the point that "in qualitative research, the assumption that 'big is beautiful' is challenged most directly" (Deacon et al. 2007: 45). Qualitative research is less concerned with generating a broad perspective than with providing intensive insights into complex human and social phenomena in specific circumstances (Maykut and Morehouse 1994: 56). It was not always easy to access some of the participants, especially among the filmmakers, due to their schedules or their coldness towards researchers like myself. Stokes (2003: 100) has already cautioned us that "One of the hurdles we have to overcome in researching culture industries is the scepticism of people in the industry regarding media and cultural studies". Therefore, I tolerated any unfriendliness, which was, at times, costly.

It was also not possible for me to meet one significant Kannywood filmmaker even after we had scheduled a meeting. We had planned to meet several times earlier. He always had one excuse or another. On one fateful Sunday, he said he was willing to meet me. Thus, I cancelled my other less crucial appointments. I left home to go to our meeting point ahead of time. I waited for a while and then called to inform him that I had arrived. His response was one of the things I will never forget from my three-week stay in Kano at that time. At the top of his voice, he asked where I was. I answered that I was at our meeting point, which was quite far from where I lived. He started apologising, adding that he was right now at Kura local government area, several kilometres away from Kano metro, on his way to Abuja. He further told me that he came before I arrived (a lie) and, in his words, completely forgot who he was there to meet. Thus, as soon as his friend asked him to join him on a brief trip to Abuja, he accepted. Remembering what Stokes (2003) said, I moved on. Also relevant is Ruddock's (2001: 133) conclusion that "smaller samples do not necessarily lead to weaker or less useful work".

### **3.4 Data Collection**

Qualitative methods in the social sciences constitute a broad range of different ways of collecting data. As Rasmussen, Ostergaard and Beckmann (2006: 93) remark, "A characteristic of these methods is that they are non-numerical". Instead, the methods emphasise the significance one derives from the data. The instruments deployed for this research included semi-structured and unstructured interviews, focus group discussions, participant observation, films and secondary sources. The secondary sources range from television and radio interviews to newspaper articles,

and even to social media reactions, particularly to some scandals and controversies generated by Kannywood filmmakers, actors and their associates. The following sub-sections will discuss each of the primary instruments.

### *3.4.1 Fieldwork*

Ethnographic research is almost synonymous with fieldwork as it requires one to be in the field both physically and socially, to observe, and sometimes to participate in activities. Fieldwork involves going to the site, program, institution, setting – the field – to observe the phenomenon under study (Merriam and Tisdell 2016: 161). Moreover, this technique requires more than *observation*. According to Schensul, Schensul and leCompte (1999: 7), ethnographers “must hear what community members have to say” in face-to-face contact. Thus, participant observation is the primary technique in ethnography in which the researcher enters the field and participates in the setting (Brewer 2000). I went to Kano, which was the field for this research work, well prepared.

In addition to the physical fieldwork, the films under study (*Alhaki...*, *Hafeez* and *Dan Gaske*) and all the discussions and debates both on and offline are equally part and parcel of the field. Social media have become some of the most vibrant platforms for socio-cultural and linguistic discourses about – and beyond – filmmakers. While I disclosed that I was gathering data for a research project in some instances, I did not do that in others. What goes on there is akin to what occurs in reality. Therefore, I deployed the methodology of naturalistic observation.

For various reasons, some of which I mentioned in the background to the study, I had to limit the geographical space of this research to Kano. Nigeria's current security situation, especially in the North-Western region, where I conduct my research, was deteriorating. Although I am an archetypal and bona fide member of this setting, the rising insecurity situation during the field research period made it very risky to travel by road to other states in the region. Therefore, several people, including family, friends and some potential participants in the study, advised me against going to certain places. I heeded their advice.

I went to Kano twice, for a total length of five weeks, in February 2018 and February to March 2020. As I did my master's degree on a related topic and have quite a large following (more than 20,000 friends and followers) on social media, I know many potential critical research participants. Therefore, there was little or no need to build rapport with most of them. Nonetheless, at least five others I met, later on, through referrals or through what Schensul, Schensul and leCompte (1999: 269), among other scholars, call "snowball sampling", refused to talk to me. There were two main reasons attached to their refusal. First, in Kano, several people do not want to be associated with anything Kannywood. I have been attacked from both ethnocultural and religious standpoints for my decision and desire to study the 'pariah' film industry<sup>13</sup>. I came from a very traditional family. On countless occasions, friends, family members and students have advised me to change my focus and research a 'worthier' topic. For this reason, I was unable to gain the maximum cooperation of some people that I had hoped to work with. The second reason is simply what Stokes (2003: 100)

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<sup>13</sup> 'You work for Kannywood!' from <https://www.facebook.com/muhsin2008/posts/10218600451392479> (accessed on 24.02.2021)

aptly describes as the “scepticism” of people in the industry towards researchers of media and cultural studies. I saw this first-hand.

Moreover, a renowned Islamic cleric, Sheikh Yusuf Ali, who is known for his controversial opinions about Kannywood, most of which are, nevertheless, in Kannywood’s favour, insisted that he would only talk with me if I presented an application letter from my university. I did not have it; therefore, the interview did not take place. One of his disciples, who is my friend and a Kannywood aficionado, Sani Garba intervened. However, it was too late as I was leaving Nigeria the next day. Therefore, we agreed to talk via WhatsApp. As soon as I came back to Germany and got settled, I contacted him. To my sheer amazement, he only answered my salutation, “*Assalamu Alaikum*”, with “*Wa’alaik Salaam*” and refused to say more.

Sheikh Ali was not the only vital informant I could not meet. My meeting with the famous actor and producer, Baban Chinedu, did not happen as he was hiding from the authorities during my trip (I had a phone call with his close associate on 19.02.2020). He and the executive secretary of the Kano State Censorship Board, Alhaji Isma’il Na’abba Afakallah, had a misunderstanding over the purchase of furniture for the daughter of the ace actor Rabilu Musa a.k.a Ibro (d. 2014), who got married when I was there. Traditionally, the bride goes to her matrimonial home with all the furniture needed for the house. In appreciation of her father’s outstanding contribution in Kannywood, the state government purchased the new bride’s furniture. Baban Chinedu alleged that the censorship boss misappropriated the money. Alhaji Afakallah denied all the charges and threatened to arrest Baban Chinedu if he did not retract them and apologise. In brief, this was the

genesis of the rift. Therefore, my efforts to meet him were abortive, and he also did not return my phone calls.

As a participant observer, I went to the filming sites to which I was invited with my “fieldwork journal” (Merriam and Tisdell 2016: 152), which is an introspective record of one’s experiences in the field, including fears, confusion, facial reactions, gestures, postures, and so on. I also watched a few movies at the cinema, and a few more with my informants before our Focus Group Discussion (FGD) in Brigade quarters, Kano. I purposely chose the Brigade area because it is one of the most heterogeneous quarters in the state. It is part of the *Sabon Gari* (the new town) area, which comprises people from all over the country and beyond. These include Christians, Igbos, Yorubas, Egbira, Igalas, Tivs, and members of all other so-called minority ethnic groups. Although members of the FGD are mostly linguistically Hausa, others that I met were non-Hausas and non-Muslims.

The ancient city used to be known for its people’s conservative, perhaps ultra-orthodox views and intolerance. According to Hashim and Walker (2014: 131), “Between 1966 and 2014, there have been 12 instances of widespread religious violence in Kano”. However, since then, there has been relative peace between the Muslim majority and the Christian minorities, thanks to the state government’s measures. The rise of social media has also brought about radical changes in both public discourse and in the conduct of thousands of Kano people on and off the internet (Edogor, Jonah and Ojo 2014). Therefore, what was hitherto perceived as ‘anti-culture’ or ‘anti-religion’ keeps changing.

The most recent incident happened during the 1441AH/2020CE Eid-el-Fitr festivals. A Hausa social media influencer organised a dance contest for wealthy, fashionable married women. As per the contest rules, a woman has to have a large parlour, and wears a gold necklace and bangles and a particular type of gown while the husband sits on a couch or chair. The women dance to a specific Kannywood ‘sentimental’ song titled “*Jaruma*” by a famous romantic singer, Hamisu Breaker. Although some religious clerics preached against the competition in their Friday prayer sermons<sup>14</sup>, several people welcomed the development. Some people I talked with believed that the contest was unprecedented and attributed such a cultural change to multiculturalism. Nonetheless, a few others saw nothing wrong in the event, saying that it was modernity and a way for the women to show their love to their husbands. The issue generated heightened debate for several days on and off social media across northern Nigerian Muslim-Hausa communities.

Following the above incident, another, perhaps more controversial one happened in July 2020. Hausa people traditionally bow down before an older person as a show of reverence. That, too, has been discouraged, especially recently, in response to preaching by *Jama’at Izalat al-Bi’a wa Iqamat al-Sunna* (Society of Removal for the Innovation and Reestablishment of the Sunna). Izala, as the name is popularly shortened, is a Salafi movement established in the late 1970s in northern Nigeria (Kane 2003). Thus, many people shake hands even with their bosses and in-laws, among others. Gradually, this practice is becoming the norm. To the shock of many, as per the reports,

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<sup>14</sup> Dr. Abdallah Usman Umar Gadon-Kaya, a renowned Islamic preacher and Imam, delivered a scathing sermon on 29.05.2020 against the women dancing for their husbands. He argued that the dance was, in itself, not un-Islamic. However, releasing the videos on social media, to the public, was wrong.

social media outcry and religious sermons, a young Hausa man knelt before his girlfriend to propose.<sup>15</sup> Many believe that this is alien to the Hausa culture. They further argue that, as Muslims, it is wrong for the prospective couple to hold hands while putting on the engagement ring and then to embrace as the Western tradition demands. A famous Facebook personality, Fahad Danladi Ibrahim, wrote a protest letter to the Kano State Censorship Board and to the Hizba, which is the moral police<sup>16</sup>. The letter went viral.

However, like any controversial issue, a few other people said nothing was wrong with the prospective young couples. They believe that the young people were moving with the current global trends. In other words, they consider westernisation as sophistication and civilisation. Therefore, they argue, Hausa cultural practices, like many other cultures around the world, are changing rapidly and no one can stop that from happening.

### *3.4.2 Interviews*

Ethnographic research relies on several data collection techniques. Interviews, which are of different kinds, are central to these techniques (Brewer 2000). I basically used two types: semi-structured and unstructured. I used the former during my pilot research fieldwork in February 2018. Many qualitative researchers deploy semi-structured and unstructured interviews for their increased levels of flexibility and lack of structure. According to Edwards and Holland (2013: 29),

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<sup>15</sup> BBC Hausa (2020). "Bidiyon da saurayi ya tsugunna wa budurwa don neman aurenta a Kano ya tada kura" ['The video wherein a young man knelt to propose to his girlfriend in Kano generated outcry']. <https://www.bbc.com/hausa/labarai-53419405> (accessed on 25.07.2020).

<sup>16</sup> 'Open Letter to KSCB and Hizba on Preserving Hausa Cultural Heritage' from <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=3693329977350775&set=a.317189938298146> (accessed on 24.02.2021)



“In a typical semi-structured interview, the researcher has a list of questions or series of topics they want to cover in the interview, an interview guide, but there is flexibility in how and when the questions are put and how the interviewee can respond.” While this is true, my pilot field research result showed that the semi-structured interview was not the best for my research questions. The participants hinted that they lacked more options, more freedom to articulate their thoughts and feelings in their responses. Therefore, I had to abandon this interview style for an utterly unstructured one.

Edwards and Holland (2013: 30) further described the unstructured interview as when “the researcher clearly has aims for the research and a topic of study, but the importance of the method is to allow the interviewee to talk from their own perspective using their own frame of reference and ideas and meanings that are familiar to them.” I used this technique constantly when interviewing my key informants, who included the Kannywood audiences, filmmakers (scriptwriters, producers, executive producers, directors), and cultural, religious and language scholars, among others. I did not interview actors or other artists as they are not decision-makers in film production. I also interviewed several crew members, with the same aim to “ensure validity and reliability” (Schensul, Schensul, and leCompte (1999: 84).

Generally, I encountered manageable challenges. Only a few key informants refused my request to interview them, as I mentioned earlier, including a famous cleric, Sheikh Yusuf Ali. Another one was a popular actress, producer and executive producer, Nafisa Abdullah, who turned down my request to meet her in London in December 2019. Apart from these three rejections (including

the unnamed producer mentioned earlier), no key informants refused to meet me. Other experiences worth recalling were some people's scepticism to open up during the interview. When you announced that the meeting was over, they brought up more issues, often more relevant than those they had mentioned earlier. However, the usage of my fieldwork journal came in handy. I hardly ever missed the opportunity to note down such golden 'postscripts'.

Finally, all the interviews (and the focus group discussion, which I will discuss in the next subsection) were conducted in the Hausa language except for two conversations during my pilot fieldwork. The first was with producer and executive producer, Kabiru Musa Jammaje, a prominent English language teacher. The second was with Ali Nuhu, the ace Kannywood actor, director, producer and executive producer, who also does many Nollywood films. While these two were clearly comfortable with the English language, other participants might not have been. Therefore, I chose to use Hausa, which is the language of the film industry and, of course, the *lingua franca* all over Kano and northern Nigeria. To be sincere, I believe that even Messrs Jammaje and Nuhu would have been much more at ease speaking Hausa than English.

Additionally, the use of the Hausa language, particularly regarding its accent and the dialects spoken by non-Hausa and Sakkwatawa characters in Kannywood films, is an aspect of the research work. (see Appendix 3 for a sample of one of the responses to my questions on the Sokoto dialect). This, coupled with other reasons mentioned above, made Hausa the best language for my study.

### *3.4.3 Focus Group Discussion*

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) is one of the most popular means of analysing media audiences, especially in qualitative research. According to Deacon et al. (2007: 57), an FGD involves bringing small groups of people together to discuss issues identified by researchers. Ruddock (2001: 119) also suggests that communication – film, in this context – is culturally specific and as such, can only be understood as a process from the point of view of the people involved. For this reason, among others, I carefully selected ten active audiences of Kannywood from my demography for the discussion. I arrived at this number of respondents because Rasmussen, Ostergaard and Beckmann (2006: 105) recommend that a focus group should usually consist of 6-10 people. In addition to time spend watching clips from various Kannywood films, the informal yet guided debate lasted for a full one hour (see Appendix 3).

The group comprised people with substantial ideological, political and educational variations, among other differences, to establish the validity and reliability of the data to be obtained. It took place in a relaxed setting, in a tailoring shop, with the respondents sitting and standing casually. As a moderator, I asked questions and then encouraged everyone to have their say, regardless of their opinions. I used a lot of probing to avoid what Ruddock (2001: 137) fears, namely that “Ethnography requires participants to make personal feelings public. As a result, not surprisingly, there is a considerable tendency towards self-censorship”. While I might not have avoided that entirely, I made sure it did not happen to too great extent. Naturally, some of the members of the group were more outspoken than others. Thus, I did my best not to allow any single member to dominate the discussion. After the debate, I gave some of them money to show my appreciation

for their participation. My gatekeeper told me, later on, that they really appreciated that gesture and wish to meet me again.

#### *3.4.4 Secondary Sources*

Since a few other researchers and several non-researcher individuals have attempted to address similar questions to those asked in this work, I believe it is appropriate to use their materials as secondary sources. Therefore, I used other printed (published and non-published) and electronic sources such as newspaper articles, magazines, debates by Muslim scholars and others on radio and television programs about the filmmakers, and social media reactions. All of this is used with due acknowledgement.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

The chapter presents and discusses the data gathered during my empirical field research in Kano, as well as other relevant sources, as explained in the previous chapter. It is also significant to recall that I used the “criterion-based selection technique” Schensul, Schensul and leCompte (1999: 235). I chose my participants because they possess characteristics relevant to the central questions of the study. The questions concern the Hausa culture and its (re)presentation or otherwise in Kannywood films, religion (Islam) and the art of filmmaking in the same film industry, and, lastly, the politics and poetics of the Hausa language in these films. Therefore, the respondents are mostly Muslims, either Hausa people or those living among the Hausa people, and they understand the language and their immediate community's culture. I conducted all but two of the interviews in the Hausa language.

Thus, the chapter is divided into three main sections, each for a particular research objective, with a few other section to address related issues within the primary sections. As a guide during the comprehensive data collection, especially during a focus group discussion in the Brigade quarter, Kano, the respondents, and I watched some selected Kannywood films at the venue of the discussion. In other instances, the respondents were already familiar with the movies in question and other Kannywood productions. Therefore, it is pertinent to give the plot summaries of the films, with little or no analysis by the author, to enable readers also to follow the discussion more accurately.

## 4.1 Plot Summaries of the Selected Films

*Hafeez* (dir. Ali Nuhu, 2019)

Like most films named for a character, especially in Kannywood, *Hafeez* revolves around the life of the eponymous central character, a spoilt adult (acted by Umar M. Shareef). The film also has the mark of its director, Ali Nuhu, all over it, for it is modelled on a boy-meets-girl, rich-boy vs. poor-girl paradigm, with six spectacular song and dance routines, among other elements.

Since his return from study overseas, Hafeez, the only son of a wealthy family, snubs many beautiful, posh girls who dream of tying the knot with him. His lovability is infectious to the extent that two sisters fight over him, his secretary loses her job for her persistence in trying to attract his attention, and a (female) cousin rejects her (male) cousin's proposal, among other cases. Interestingly, he chooses another girl, Safna (Hassana Muhammad), from an impoverished family with a hot-tempered father (acted by the film's director, Ali Nuhu). While the girl loves him in return, he has serious issues to settle with the father or else the marriage will never see the light of the day.

The film's sub-plot contains a moralising and strong message: the vanity of the material world. Hafeez does what he likes when he likes it. Nevertheless, his father's affluence fails to buy him a wife, or, at least, the particular one he selects. Thus, he has to eventually surrender all the

arrogance, wealth and more in an unlikely situation to realise his dream. The thematic concerns thus touch on love and respect for elders and humanity in general.

*Alhaki Kwikwiyo* (dir. Galadima, U. S. A. 1998)

The film *Alhaki Kwikwiyo* is an adaptation of Balaraba Ramat Yakubu's famous novel with the same title. It was directed and produced by two American-trained personnel, U.S.A. Galadima and Abdulkareem Mohammed, respectively. It tells the story of a wealthy businessman called Alhaji, who is, initially, happily married to Rabi, with whom he has daughters – but he wants sons – so, he brings in a second wife. Unfortunately, that brings an end to the peace in the house.

The second wife, Delu, vows to force Rabi out of the house. She achieves that after doing something much worse, causing the death of Alhaji's mother. She also cheats on him with two people: an older man and a houseboy. But her failure to conceive worries Alhaji. So he marries again. Despite Delu doing everything to get rid of the third wife out, including going to fortune-tellers and intrigues on the nights the husband is in the bride's room, the bride gets pregnant. For her part, Rabi has moved on. She has opened a restaurant, which, by the day, grows more significant and more prominent. One of her daughters marries a well-to-do man.

Finally, things fall apart with Alhaji. Fire razes his house, including several bundles of money he kept in a safe, as well as other valuables. His pregnant wife dies in childbirth. He also discovers that Delu is cheating on him with their houseboy. To add insult to injury, Rabi, who's now affluent

and happy, refuses to come back to his house when he begs her to do so. Delu becomes a beggar. *Alhaki Kwikwiyo*, means “*Sin is a Puppy...that follows you home*”. In other words, karma has caught up with Alhaji and Delu.

*Dan Gaske* (dir. Gumzak, Ali. 2015)

The eponymous film, *Dan Gaske*, is one of the many comedies of the late Rabilu Musa, aka Ibro. Like the rest of them, this one, too, revolves around his antics. He inherits massive wealth and becomes a spendthrift, spending most of his money on women, who are brought to him by his PA, Sarkin Yaki (acted by Mustapha Naburaska), so that he can choose the most beautiful among them. One day, his mother comes to his house and gives him an ultimatum to marry in two months.

Meanwhile, Alhaji Tambai is a wealthy but miserly and foolish businessman from Sokoto, who speaks the sub-regional dialect. He has some disagreements with his wife. He falls in love with a pretty lady, Safina, who accepts him on the condition that he divorce his wife. He does so unhesitatingly. However, before the relationship goes much further, Dan Gaske snatches her by showering more money on her and her greedy father.

After their marriage, Dan Gaske, unsurprisingly, goes bankrupt. He starts selling his assets to be able to eat. He tries to trick his mother into giving him part of her inheritance. When that does not work, he begins to look for a job, but to no avail. In the end, he attempts to rob a shop using a toy gun. Some real robbers with genuine firearms turn up to do the same thing and cart money away



from the shop. Later on, an investigation reveals Dan Gaske as one of the suspected robbers; he gets arrested and almost gets executed. During Dan Gaske's trial and travails, Alhaji Tambai, with Sarkin Yaki's connivance, makes moves to convince Safina to elope with him. She refuses. After his release, Dan Gaske repents and goes to stay with his mother.

#### **4.2 Hausa Culture and the Question of (Re)Presentation in Kannywood Films**

Talking about culture is, for many reasons, problematic. As several cultural scholars reiterate, culture is dynamic. Therefore, a discourse on how identity is constructed and presented in cinema is even more complicated. As Hall (1989: 68) rightly argues, "identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps, instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished historical fact, which the new cinematic discourses then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a 'production', which is never complete, always in process, and always within, not outside, representation." Another poignant problem here is the identity of the person who speaks about others himself, and who are the 'others'? I already established in the preceding chapters that I am an emic researcher.

Additionally, I have attempted to 'do justice' to my subject by engaging all parties involved in the research questions. Therefore, the following will present, discuss and analyse Kannywood filmmakers' responses (particularly directors, producers and screenwriters who, I believe, decide on what the audiences watch), as well as those of the audiences and of cultural and religious scholars.

It is pertinent also to mention that our scope covers both the material and non-material culture of the Hausa people. The film, our primary reference source, is audio-visual, which entails the presence of both physical objects (costumes, settings, props, the entire *mise-en-scène*) and abstract ideas (themes, characters' roles, their dialogues, postures, gestures, etc.). It is noteworthy that this *sharp* division of culture is problematic in itself. Morgan (2010: 70) argues that “things are social”. For instance, the things we refer to as physical objects in the definition of material culture “exist within spaces of value, the cultural marketplace of desire”. In other words, the materiality of material culture is beyond physical presence. Morgan (2010: 73) explains this thus:

Material culture consists of the things, the practices of using things, and the forms of directing their uses on which we build and maintain the worlds about us, and thereby encounter and value ourselves and others. The three dimensions of material culture are things, uses, and paradigms. Material culture is not just objects, not just architectural foundation or jewellery or paintings because, as we saw above, things are more than things.

The above overlaps between material and non/immaterial cultures make it challenging for me, too, to draw any dichotomy between the two. Therefore, the following data and its analysis are based on that premise. Most of my respondents could not differentiate the two, which was not even an issue during the fieldwork. I begin with the filmmakers, the creators of the contents that set the whole debate in motion.

Out of the dozen Kannywood stakeholders of various age, educational qualification and experience whom I interviewed over a period, not a single one agreed with the supposition that the films presented an unacceptable, distorted Hausa culture. Hamisu Lamido Iyantama, an elder and veteran filmmaker, shares the same view expressed by Ali Nuhu (below). He said that “Hausa

films present Hausa culture, mode of dressing, socialisation, manner of speech, good behaviours, modesty and protecting their nudity. I must add that some films do not do that<sup>17</sup>.” According to him, at the beginning of Kannywood, their films presented one hundred per cent authentic Hausa culture. Things have changed now, however. Therefore, “religious and traditional leaders as well as elderly people used to patronise those early Kannywood movies and watch them with their family members at home and even sometimes took their TV sets outside their houses to watch together with their neighbours, who couldn’t afford to have the TV because they saw a representation of their culture in the movies.” These representations include proverbs, the way of courtship, etc. He added that one could watch such films, even in the presence of children, without hesitation. “I’m one of those who produced some films recently which represent the Hausa culture like modesty and coyness, unlike the contemporary ones which do not represent Hausa man like the earlier ones”. Others, as it will be clear further below, insist that even today, Kannywood films do the same.

Ali Nuhu, described as the face of the industry, unequivocally told me that “Kannywood represents and presents acceptable Hausa culture because most of the things portrayed in a typical Hausa movie are found across the terrain where the Hausa people live.” He cited three things: language, dress and behaviour, and concluded that “everything is Hausa-like. The Kannywood movies really represent the Hausa people.”<sup>18</sup> Another much younger but quite influential filmmaker, M.M. Haruna, said that the thought about projecting the Hausa culture comes to him and his

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<sup>17</sup> Hamisu Lamido Iyantama. Interview by author. Phone recording. Kano, 15.02.2018.

<sup>18</sup> Ali Nuhu. Interview by author. Phone recording. Kano, 12.02.2018.

contemporary colleagues “subconsciously.”<sup>19</sup> In other words, they care about the culture by default, for they are ‘Hausawa’. He further said that “we care to show our culture in such a way that our people would be proud of our works”.

Nevertheless, M.M. Haruna’s submission about the ‘Hausaness’ of these films and the filmmakers is not incontrovertible. For two decades or more, some critics of Kannywood have questioned the identity of the film industry members. Arguably, this reveals a lot about the plurality of being Hausa. One’s claim is evidently not enough to make one an ethnic Hausa. Haour and Rossi (2010: 24) have already told us that “‘Hausaness’ involved considerable negotiated and situational aspects”. But Ibrahim Sheme, a renowned bi-lingual author, journalist and publisher of the single surviving Kannywood magazine, *FIM*, told a researcher that “most of the actors, actresses, producers and directors of Hausa video films are not ethnic Hausa” (Liman 2008: 200). It is also relevant, once again, to quote the contention of a particular observer in the April 2000 edition of a film magazine, *Tauraruwa*, that:

Whenever you mention Hausa home video, it is assumed these are videos made by the ethnic Hausa...The ethnic tribes that overrun the Hausa home video industry include Kanuri, Igbos and most significant of all, the Yoruba ... About 42% of the Hausa home video producers and artistes are of Yoruba extraction, 10% are Kanuri, 8% are Igbos ... Only about 40% are true ethnic Hausa. (Adamu 2005: 13 in Ekwuazi 2007)

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<sup>19</sup> M.M. Haruna. Interview by author. Phone recording. Kano, 14.02.2020.

Before we come to the audiences' opinions, Iyantama and his younger comrades' divergence reflects the transformation of the Hausa youth around the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. If we can recall, Larkin (2008), and Ibrahim (2019a), among others, wrote extensively on the emergence and proliferation of 'unorthodox' socio-cultural and politico-religious movements in northern Nigeria that have brought many changes to the 'conservative' region. Thanks to globalisation, the same has occurred elsewhere, such as in the Arab world (Abu Shariah, 2018: 17-28).

Like M.M. Haruna, famous scriptwriters Fauziyya D. Sulaiman and Nazir Adam Salih expressed the same desire to project the Hausa culture in a positive light. The former said that she could not decide how filmmakers interpret and film her stories; she always makes sure she writes what is 'positive' and avoids what is 'negative'. Salih sometimes doubles as producer and executive producer. Hence, he has more control over filming specific stories. While still aware of the culture, he clarified that "Culture changes from time to time. The culture of the Hausa man in 1930 is different from that of 2020. Looking at this, a film's setting determines the choice of its culture and even religion."<sup>20</sup> Lambu (2014; 2020: 1146) corroborates Salih's submission that "Nigerian, African, and even global cultures experience transformation. One modification begets another with complication and intricacy based on the complexity of the culture itself". Such modifications are visible in people's language, costume, marriage rites and naming ceremonies, among others.

Ahmad Alkanawy, a renowned Kannywood stakeholder, disagrees with the almost-universally accepted notion of culture's dynamism. He argued that only '*tada*', not '*al'ada*', changes. Newman

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<sup>20</sup> Nazir Adam Saleh. Interview by author. Phone recording. Kano, 17.02.2018.

(2007: 193) defines ‘*Tada*’ as “not doing something out of custom, tradition, superstition”, while ‘*al’ada*’ is generally defined as culture. Alkanawy cited examples that “No Hausa man will ever argue with his father or mother-in-law; none will go to his in-laws and refuse to bow down in reverence; none will go to the ‘*majalisa*’ meeting point of the elders of his local community, even if his father is not present, and misbehave.”<sup>21</sup> According to Alkanawy, all these are fixed, unchanged because they are part of the culture. He added that he always pays particular attention to these ‘pure’ Hausa cultural practices after his religion (of Islam) whenever he comes to do a film. Hall’s (1989: 69) first observation (of two primaries) of people who define “‘cultural identity’ in terms of the idea of one, shared culture, a sort of collective ‘one true self’, hiding inside the many other more superficial or artificially imposed ‘selves’, which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common” resonates with Alkanawy’s view. Otherwise, the dynamic nature of culture among people, unless they are an isolated community somewhere in the Amazon, is not subject to dispute. As per Lambu (2020), Haour and Rossi (2010), among other scholars who have written on *being and becoming Hausa*, (which is part of the title of Haour and Rossi’s book), Hausa people are not immune from undergoing cultural modification.

However, it is not only Salih who sees culture as dynamic; others, except Alkanawy, take the same view. The writer-cum-housewife Fauziyya, who is in her forties, is also not oblivious to these changes, she told me. She gave a few examples. Two stand out. Firstly, she talked about the means of communication between intending couples some years ago and now. She used to communicate with her then boyfriends using “written letters.”<sup>22</sup> Today, everyone uses mobile phones, especially

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<sup>21</sup> Ahmad Alkanawy. Interview by author. Phone recording. Kano, 25.02.2018.

<sup>22</sup> Fauziyya D. Sulaiman. Interview by author. Phone recording. Kano, 17.02.2018

social media, to communicate and maintain relationships more than any other means. Secondly, she mentioned how people go about their lives in general; “how our parents lived is different from ours, and our children will do differently from ours. *Zamani* (time, epoch) changes”, she concluded.

As mentioned above, the writers and many others in Kannywood avoid ‘controversial’ or ‘negative’ topics. Traditionally, filmmakers approach the writers with an idea of a story. The writers then develop the concept and write a comprehensive film script based on it. In some instances, they write the script themselves and sell it to an interested filmmaker. But that does not happen frequently for several reasons, such as lack of adequate budget, interest, etc. Therefore, if the concept is the filmmaker’s, Fauziyya told me that she had rules and red lines, which, if any idea crosses them, she will not accept. These are based on her perception of what is in accordance with the acceptable Hausa culture and religion. Some welcome her ‘corrections’ of their ideas; others do not and, therefore, look for other writers who, in most cases, also refuse to write the script.

Specifically, Fauziyya added that “I decline stories that will fetch me abuse, insult or even threat” because of their controversial nature. The filmmakers argue that those ‘controversial’ stories sell better – they are ‘blockbusters’, one filmmaker told her when she rejected his idea of an incest story. When I asked her if that doesn’t happen among the Hausa people, she could not say no. However, she suggested that she could consider changing the end of the story to show that the

person responsible for the pregnancy is not the lady's father but her stepfather, to reduce the 'negativity'. Muslim-Hausa northern Nigeria has tabooed several topics related to sex, death and body parts. That is why the emergence of popular culture has thrown the region into a severe moral panic (Ibrahim and Yusuf 2020; Furniss 2003).

The self-censorship goes beyond Fauziyya, Salih and other writers to directors. As early as 1998, a US-educated Abdulkareem Mohammed, with fresh knowledge of the new U-Matic video format, wanted to set an example for an aesthetic Kannywood production. He also wished to show his mostly unprofessional colleagues how to adapt a literary work. Thus, he started with a famous book on family conflict, especially among co-wives, titled *Alhaki Kwikwiyo* ('Sin is a Puppy'), by Balaraba Ramat Yakubu. As a loose adaptation, Mr Mohammed filmed the novel with quite a few additions. For instance, the film contains scenes of a man and a woman in bed, of a man touching a woman as foreplay for sex, which is considered 'explicit' in Kannywood. Hafizu Bello is another old and renowned director in Kannywood. He told me that "it's not a Hausa man's culture to cuddle his wife on a bed until they sleep. It's a white man's habit; thus, you see the same in their films."<sup>23</sup> Bello added that "touching a woman is not a Hausa culture in its entirety". He clarified that any sexual relationship between a husband and wife occurs at night and in the dark. The bedroom scenes in *Alhaki Kwikwiyo* caused an unprecedented backlash, which reached a crescendo when the author of the book disowned the movie. Mr Mohammed today regrets presenting the story that way. He said to me that "youthful exuberance and the thought that you were merely creating a

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<sup>23</sup> Hafizu Bello. Interview by the author. Phone recording. 17.02.2020.



fiction led me to do the film as it was.”<sup>24</sup> But, now, “sense has come” – he was more mature, more responsible. Hence, he would not do another film like it.

Perhaps to correct such ‘mischaracterisation’ of her books, the author of *Alhaki Kwikwiyo* delved into films herself in later years. It did not end well for her, though. Balaraba Ramat Yakubu wrote and co-produced *Juyin Sarauta* (dir. Falalu A. Dorayi) in 2017. It is a high-budgeted, lengthy period drama for which she had to borrow money from the Nigerian Bank of Industry (BOI), as well as sourcing donations from other individuals. She alleged that the audience shunned the film as it did not have the preferred flavour of Westernised or Indianised song and dance sequences, among other elements. Until now (January 2021), the film has only been shown in the cinema to a very few spectators. Mrs Yakubu openly lamented being bankrupt because of the film. During the Kano Indigenous Language of Africa Film Market and Festival (KILAF) in Kano in November 2018, she complained about being forsaken by those who always encourage Kannywood filmmakers to promote Hausa cultural heritage (and Islam) in films.

One may argue that the criticism that followed Mr Mohammed’s *Alhaki Kwikwiyo* in 1998 and beyond was more religion-based. That may be true, as we shall see under a different subsection on Islam and Kannywood; however, the whole culture, as well as topics worthy for film, is now divided into two: good and bad. First, issues like that of incest, which Fauziyya refused to write about, are considered controversial. During my interview with Hafizu Bello, he lowered his voice and looked around to make sure no one heard him except me when mentioning lesbianism. He told

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<sup>24</sup> Abdulkareem Mohammed. Interview by author. Phone recording. 24.02.2020.

me, “Look at lesbianism. Isn’t it getting rampant in northern Nigeria? [He stuttered]. If you want to do a film about it, you will face many challenges.” Despite their relevance in the community, avoiding such topics is what Mr Mohammed called “social responsibility”. On this note, a celebrated director and producer, Yaseen Auwal, differentiated culture from what people actually do in their lives. He perhaps forgot the famous definition of culture as “a complete way of life”. He told me that the Hausa people do many things that are not part of their culture, like incest and lesbianism. When asked to specifically mention a ‘cultural’ motif or theme in his films, he responded with an example that does not arguably show the Hausa man in any better light:

My film, *Matar Mutum*, exposes indiscriminate marriages. You see... Islam allows you to have up to four wives but on conditions. Even the Qur’an cautions that if it is only one wife you can cater for, that is enough. If more, then you may add. However, you will see a Hausa man marrying anyhow, deviating from the religious injunction. He does not care about the wellbeing of his children. You will see a man with four wives, each in a rented apartment. Some of the wives would have to give up on him feeding them, so they engage in trading to take care of themselves and their kids. So, this has become a Hausa culture<sup>25</sup>.

Moreover, another famous director, Kamal S. Alkali, told me that filmmakers were discouraged from making films about the “bad” aspects of Hausa culture. But he does not care. Consequently, he has movies on *Bori* (trance) and gambling, among other negatively viewed religio-cultural practices. “I did a small film entitled *Kartagi* [a fictional name for a master-gambler]. The central character put his wife as a price, which someone won. A fight broke out between them, which compelled him to flee the town”<sup>26</sup>, he added. However, many Kannywood audiences frown at it. Alkali’s other movie, *Sumayya* (2018), was met with criticism. It is about the supremacy and

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<sup>25</sup> Yaseen Auwal. Interview by author. Phone recording. Kano, 20.02.2020.

<sup>26</sup> Kamal S. Alkali. Interview by author. Phone recording. Kano, 15.02.2020.

potency of traditional medicine of (*Bori*) over the more conventional, more sought after Islamic medicine (*Ruqya*). In contrast, the prolific director, Ali Gumzak, told me that he was always conscious of the implication of directing some scripts. Like Fauziyya, he also rejects stories if they go against his religio-cultural beliefs. “My religion and culture are my priority”<sup>27</sup>, he explained.

Alkali is also among the few Kannywood filmmakers who believe in song in the Hausa culture, and argue that the same should be shown in Hausa films. He gave examples of *dandali* dance (a dance staged nightly by youth in rural areas, especially in the past) and the socio-political and religious-themed songs of the independence nationalist, Mudi Spikin (d. 2013). When I asked about the song and dance routines in Kannywood films today, Alkali said that they were not part of the Hausa culture. They were Kannywood film culture. All but two of his colleagues that I interviewed expressed the same opinion. The two exceptions were Hamisu Lamido Iyantama and Ali Nuhu. It’s interesting to note that these two, arguably, belong to relatively different generations in the film industry.

#### 4.2.1 On the “blighted” song and dance routine in Kannywood

It is pertinent to briefly explain how this song and dance sequence occurs in Kannywood films. First, it is quite pejoratively called *Nanaye* film music. According to Adamu (2019: 172), “the word ‘*nanaye*’ refers to the chorus of traditional Hausa girls’ playground songs in a style referred to as *gada* (handclapping)”. It is, as several Kannywood filmmakers told me, a film culture adapted from Bollywood – though some expressed other views. As in Bollywood movies, the “music is

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<sup>27</sup> Ali Gumzak. Interview by author. Phone recording. Kano, 23.02.2020.

often used as a transformative medium accompanying moments when the protagonists achieve illumination and enlightenment, particularly during traumatic events or turning points in their lives” (Sarrazin 2016: 91). Adamu (2019: 173) further adds that:

[*N*]anaye songs do not have to relate to the storyline of any particular film, they are inserted at any point in a film where the director needs a song-and-dance sequence. The CD of the song is then taken to the location where the actors – who have learned the lines of the song by heart – mime the song while the finished recording plays in the background. The first Hausa video film to incorporate this process of *nanaye* mixed-gender miming was *Badakala* (dir. Dan Azumi Baba, 1997). The lyricists rarely contribute to the musical structure of the songs, leaving decisions about the beat and the rhythm to the studio musician.

The issue of *Nanaye* filmi music deserves special treatment, for it is the main flashpoint between Kannywood filmmakers and their critics. Other forms of criticism follow behind this one. As already seen in the preceding paragraph, there is no consensus among the filmmakers on this tradition, although it defines Hausa films in the modern era. Except for Iyantama and Nuhu, all the rest categorically told me that there were no song and dance sequences in Hausa culture. Ironically, apart from one person (Kabiru Musa Jammaje), all the rest put music and dance routines in their films. Nonetheless, they do so sparsely or, in other instances, differently from the way their colleagues do.

Ali Nuhu, a household name across Hausa speaking world and beyond, for his many years and many films in Kannywood, has never refuted the allegation that he copies Bollywood films. According to Adamu (2006a: 56), “Ali Nuhu, the Hausa-speaking actor, and later producer and director [...] pioneered the Hindi-to-Hausa [film] cloning” of films. Mohammed, Alkanawy and

the rest credited Bollywood as a lone influencer of song and dance in Kannywood. Ali Nuhu strongly agreed, saying that “films with song and dance sequence sell better because of our audiences like that.” He gave examples of popular films like *Sangaya*, *Wasila* and a more contemporary one, *Rariya*. He features in all three of these.

Furthermore, Nuhu’s company, FKD Productions, has a slogan, “Home of Family Entertainment”. His target audience, he told me, “are mostly families: women, children, youth and teenagers from the age of sixteen to about thirty-something. These people are usually into entertainment, and into listening to songs, so I make sure most of the songs I use in my movies are songs that end up becoming super-hit.” M.M. Haruna also agrees that the songs have their origins in Bollywood, and believes in using them in few instances in his films. He added that “I make sure the actresses dress modestly like in my film, *Husna ko Huzna* (dir. Falalu Dorari 2017) when they sing and dance.”

Unlike Ali Nuhu and many other filmmakers-cum-participants, Iyantama located song and dance within the Hausa culture and Islamic practice – the Sufi branch of Islam, in particular (Ibrahim 2018). His lucid argument deserves a direct quotation, thus:

Dancing and singing are rooted in Hausa culture. Kalangu<sup>28</sup> songs were sung during the wedding of our parents and those of the Islamic preachers. Read history; it is there. I visited a preacher who told me that his father said to him that sabada (a kind of kalangu dance by women) was performed during his wedding celebration. All sorts of singing and dancing, including *Tasani* and *Ajo*, were performed at the Hausa people's early time. Hausa man has *Taushe* and *Gurmi* music and the songs of Dan Maraya, Haruna Uji, Dan Kwairo, Shata and Wazirin Danduna. Hausa singers are of different categories, and each of them is a Hausa singer. Songs were sung for our past traditional rulers and warriors. Remember,

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<sup>28</sup> In Newman’s dictionary, “Kalangu” is defined as a “hourglass-shaped double membrane variable-tone drum, ‘talking drum.’”

Haruna Uji sang *Jimmai 'Yar Makaranta*; it was a love song. His songs at that time were love songs. They were not stigmatized. Nobody said they were wrong. The song was even the favourite song of the youth of that time engaged in love, and they considered the songs as love boosters to them. But now, because of the change of time, singing and dancing were modernized. Nothing between the earth and space that does not glorify Allah. When you beat the drum to the tune of Allah is one, it will sound Allah is one. There is nothing wrong with drumming because it also glorifies Allah. There was drumming and singing even at the time of the Prophet's companions, but it is only the dancing Islam frowns at; therefore, going by the provision of the Qur'an, it is the dancing that is not permissible and so, should be stopped<sup>29</sup>.

Educated in both Saudi Arabia and Egypt, Ahmad Alkanawy supported Iyantama's position in various ways. He said that young men in the past, who are now in their 70s, 80s and above, wrote love songs for the women they loved. Their Arabic studies inspired them to do so – the same way the weekly Indian Bollywood films on the local television stations influenced the current Kannywood filmmakers. However, these youths of the past did not follow the women to sing the songs. The women sometimes responded in kind. Thus, Prof. Bello Sa'id compiled these songs into a book titled *Dausayin Soyayya* (1982). Along with other Arabic scholars like Malam Yusuf Ali and the late Malam Lawan Maiturare, he wrote more about this appropriation of Arab culture<sup>30</sup>.

Mr Mohammed credited Bollywood for the song and dance sequences of Kannywood and said that he would not do that in his films. However, he suggested that when used, the songs should be contextualised as there are similar forms of celebrations in the culture like *kidan kwarya* (water-drumming or calabash-orchestra), *Kalangu*, etc. On his part, Hafizu Bello believes that the influence of Bollywood (and other 'foreign' film cultures) goes beyond northern Nigeria and

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<sup>29</sup> Hamisu Lamido Iyantama. Interview by the author. Phone recording. Kano, 15.02.2018.

<sup>30</sup> In conversation with Ahmad Alkanawy. Phone recording. Kano, 25.02.2020.

Kannywood. He states that Yoruba filmmakers also imitate Bollywood films and, thus, use song and dance sequences, a claim I could not verify after several attempts. Bello pointed out that another subtle but significant influence is how the court and prison settings are shown in Nigerian movies. India does not have prison wardens; the police manage everything. While the Nigerian system is different, filmmakers fail to realise this difference and show the police running the affairs of the court, prison, etc.

#### *4.2.2 Hausa Culture and 'Incongruities' in Kannywood's Re/Presentation*

The crux of the whole debate of this subsection is the perception of the audience. In this regard, I extensively engaged three categories of them during my empirical fieldwork – traditionalists, religious scholars and mainstream spectators. A dedicated discussion of the religious discourse and Kannywood will follow. The following paragraphs, however, will dwell more on the reactions of the traditionalists and the general audiences. Some of the responses included are from online sources, sermons and so on.

As an analysis premised on the coding/decoding model, some interpretations given may sound far-fetched. However, being an active producer of meaning, there are no boundaries as to what the audience can think of or say about any text (film). Therefore, he or she can negotiate or contest the meaning encoded by the filmmakers from their unique point of view. Hall captures the fact that the encoded and decoded codes may not be in perfect alignment (Hall 1980: 117-127), and, in some instances, they are not, which makes room for the contestations this thesis sets out to bring out to the fore.

Elsewhere, Hall (1989) argues that each community has a “shared culture”. However, as the rapid technological advancement of this century heightens the effects of globalisation, the transportability of cultures, norms and values from one place to another makes it more challenging to dichotomise what is ‘cultural’ and what is not. Ang (1996 in Storey 2003: 154–5)) points out that “what counts as ‘local’ and therefore ‘authentic’ is not a fixed content, but subject to change and modification as a result of the domestication of imported cultural goods”. Said (1993 in Storey 2003: 117) also observes that “All cultures are involved in one another; none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated, and unmonolithic.” However, I began my exploration of what the filmmakers consider more “acceptable” Hausa culture (different from the ‘rebellious’ tendencies of Kamal S. Alkali’s *Kartagi* and the ‘social responsibility’ of Yaseen Auwal’s *Matar Mutum*) vis-à-vis that of the audience, traditionalists and others.

The answers to my question as to what constitutes Hausa culture (both material and non-material) revolve around the eighteen codes provided by Kirk-Greene (1974) and Alhassan et al. (1982) mentioned in chapter two. They include trust, open-handed generosity, patience, good sense, wisdom, sociability and friendliness; solidarity, religiosity and piety. Only two respondents expressed different opinions and examples. First, the director, Ali Gumzak, told me that “I show Hausa culture in the costumes (of kaftan and caps) my actors wear”. Alkanawy, however, does not bother about costumes. He gave me an example scenario: even if a man is wearing a suit, on coming back home from work, he or someone else will open his (house) gate and drive his car in. As soon as he sets foot inside his sitting room, furnished with modern furniture, his child will come, bow down in deference, collect his briefcase and tell him “Welcome back home Daddy.”



The moment you see this sequence; you don't have to be told that this is a typical Hausa culture. The culture is not about a building (or any object). If the child was sitting on a chair (before his father's return), he will now sit on the ground.

As established previously, the matrix between the Hausa culture and Islam is centuries old and substantial. Therefore, some of the arguments my respondents presented are closer to Islam than to the Hausa culture. In several instances, the traditionalists also found it quite challenging to stay in the cultural lane without derailing into religious discourse. From the onset, Dr Ahmad Magaji, a senior lecturer in the Department of Nigerian Languages, Bayero University, Kano and a renowned culturalist, told me point-blank that to be Hausa is to be Muslim. Any other person who speaks Hausa as their mother tongue and does not practise Islam is *Bamaguje* (someone who belongs to a traditional non-Islamic Hausa group). He concluded that there was no Bahaushe (Hausa person) before Islam. He also differs significantly with Gumzak on physical objects as signifiers or conveyors of Hausa culture. For instance, he told me that eating at a dining table with spoons, forks and knives is not Hausa culture: "There is a proverb that says wash ten and dip five."<sup>31</sup> The proverb suggests that before eating food, you should wash your two hands (ten fingers) and use one (five fingers) to eat from your bowl.

Dr Magaji opposed practices in Kannywood films such as song and dance routines, and the mode of dressing of female actors, of whom he said that they "don't cover their body as per culture and religion". He praised old films, arguing that they present Hausawa better. Ashiru Hassan, alias

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<sup>31</sup> Ahmad Magaji. Interview by author. Phone recording. Kano, 26.02.2020.

Malam Dalibu, an Islamic cleric, said the same about earlier films in Kannywood. His contention against modern films is their choice of the subject matter. “Why does it have to always be about incest, rape and other illicit topics? Why not about, say, co-wives’ rivalry, neighbours’ disagreement, and related motifs?”<sup>32</sup> It is worth bearing in mind that the filmmakers interviewed (Fauziyya, Nazir Adam Salih, Hafizu Bello, among other) also avoided topics such as incest, rape, etc. in their films. However, a few filmmakers produce movies around such topics, for no other reason, they happen, and they are also sensational.

Coincidentally, another Islamic scholar and a university lecturer of Hausa language and culture, Dr Muhammad Sulaiman Abdullahi, criticised the thematic preoccupations of Kannywood films. To Dr Abdullahi, “concerning theme, there is no focus in Kannywood films.”<sup>33</sup> He also faults their mode of dressing from both a religious (more on this later on) and a cultural point of view, as well as the song and dance sequences and, more significantly to him, the mixing of opposite genders. He argued that “In Hausa culture, men and women are enjoined to be separate wherever they are to the extent that certain things are allowed in Islam, but the culture forbids it. For instance, you can barely see a typical Hausa man holding the hands of his wife, his sister or his mother in public. Should he do that, people will tag him *dan iska* (scoundrel). And, doing that is not sin in Islam, but it is in the culture.” The Hausa film actors do that, he concluded. I should add that they used to do that in the early days of Kannywood until the Shari’ah period in 2001. Films showing such behaviour rarely pass through the censorship board today. John Campbell, the former United States

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<sup>32</sup> Ashiru Hassan [Malam Dalibu]. Interview by author. WhatsApp voice call. Cologne, 8.04.2020.

<sup>33</sup> Dr. Muhammad Sulaiman Abdullahi. Interview by author. Phone recording. Kano, 21.02.2020.

ambassador to Nigeria, noticed several changes in the religio-cultural atmosphere of Kano stating that:

In Kano, most women are now covered, though not veiled, and, unlike in the late 1980s, no Muslim woman would shake hands with me. Pork has disappeared from restaurant menus, and alcohol is available at only a few venues that have a Lebanese character or ownership. I saw praises of Osama bin Laden stencilled on walls. After the police went home at 6:00 p.m., traffic was directed by Muslim militia, the *Hisba* (Campbell 2007: 44).

Like most of my other respondents during the focus group discussion we had, Yakubu Magaji Azare, a Hausa language and culture professor at Bayero University, Kano, found fault with the mixing opposite sexes in Kannywood films. He called this a “desecration of Hausa culture.”<sup>34</sup> He added that in the Hausa culture there is bashfulness, respect for elders and a sense of responsibility – all of which such a (re)presentation negates. He explained that “you will see boys and girls that have reached puberty in a house, sometimes even in the same bed. This is a misrepresentation of Hausa culture, even the modern one. For, once a child reaches seven years old, he will be circumcised and separated from his female siblings.”

On *Bori*, Prof. Azare says that a Hausa film should not promote it or any non-Islamic practices. His reason is that nations develop; the Hausa community, too, has developed by accepting Islam hook, line and sinker. By doing so, the Hausa people have realised that they were wrong in the past. Now that film has come, it is wrong to glorify that “bad past”. In a somewhat surprising turn, he believes that songs may be used in movies as Hausa people have their own that are found in folktales or sung in *dandali* dramas. Thus, these could be used in films, to teach the younger

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<sup>34</sup> Prof. Yakubu Magaji Azare. Interview by author. Phone recording. Kano, 26.02.2020.

generation the moral and linguistic skills these songs contain. The songs used in films should never be in the Bollywood style, for that is unique to their culture while the Hausa people have their own (in folktales, etc.).

As stated earlier on (see chapter three), the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was held at a tailor's shop in Brigade quarters, Kano State, Nigeria, on 28.02.2020 and lasted for an hour. The area is known for its multiculturalism as its dwellers come from all parts of Nigeria and beyond. However, as the study, particularly this subsection, is about Hausa culture, only Hausa-speaking viewers were invited for the exercise. However, they are still from diverse socio-economic, regional and educational backgrounds and of different age groups. We watched several scenes from films such as *Risala*, *Dan Adam Butulu*, *Kara'i*, *Hotiho*; we watched larger portion of two films: *Alhaki Kwikwiyo* (1998) and *Hafeez* (2019). Most of them had seen these films already.

Starting with *Hafeez's* first sequence, the eponymous Hafeez, on his mother's directive, comes to see the daughter of her friend. The aim is to get them married if they find each other attractive as both belong to the same class of wealthy families. This is an old, common cultural practice among Hausa people. Right from the beginning, his mode of dressing became a talking point among the audience. He wears jeans, a cardigan over it and a bow tie, and an undercut hairstyle. The girl wears a long black abaya and a headscarf, which does not cover her hair at the back. Her sister, who, interestingly, loves Hafeez but does not say it out loud, has quite a skimpy top and a long skirt. Simultaneously, their middle-aged mother was dressed in the famous African fabrics called

*atampa* in northern Nigeria and *ankara* in the south. Only the younger sister puts on a veil after Hafeez leaves. She says “Hi” to him and then sits.



**Figure 3:** Hafeez in *Hafeez* (dir. Ali Nuhu, 2019)



**Figure 4:** Mother (left) and her two daughters in *Hafeez* (dir. Ali Nuhu, 2019)

A barely educated, elderly member of the audience named Muhammadu Afaku said that although the girl's dress appears initially more Arabian than Hausa, it's accepted and has become a part of the Hausa culture. Others agreed with him, except Fahu, who is 32 and a university graduate. He criticised Hafeez's entrance and clothes, as well as what happens during the meeting. First, he believed that youths do wear similar attire, but they don't go for courtship, especially for the first meeting, wearing such a dress. It is culturally and socially if not morally unacceptable. Also, the "Hi" salutation and her 'failure' to bow down even slightly when saying it (if she cannot do the 'proper' salaaming) is wrong, he argued. However, Hafeez, too, calls her out for that, asking "Did you live abroad"? In the end, the conversation does not go well. He walks out of the room after slapping her hard in the face. For Anas Musa, a university lecturer and a cultural enthusiast, there is absolutely nothing Hausa at any point in the scene. In his words:

Despite the so-called modernity in place, a lady will not treat a suitor in that manner in a Hausa custom. Also, whatever she does to him, as a Hausa person, he should not slap her. What she has done to him here does not call for a slap. No Hausa man will go to a house as a guest-cum-suitor and do that. The mother too, even though old, should not come out without a veil whatsoever. No matter how old a woman is or how young a suitor is, there is bashfulness between them in our culture. Thus, she should don a veil. – Anas (33-year-old male)

Afaku disagreed with Anas, pointing out that the culture has changed with the changing times. Nowadays, he further argued, children of the wealthy, including some low-income families, may come out to a suitor in the sitting room like that – referring to the actress's choice of clothes. "They do that to show you that they have breasts, hips and so on, to be sure that she's beautiful. When next you come, she may cover her body". They all laughed. Anas retorted by asking if Afaku would allow his daughter – and he has one – to do that, to which he fumbled when answering.

After a while, Afaku said grudgingly: “it depends on how I see them”. Anas censured the hairstyle of Hafeez, too.

Sani, another college graduate in his late 20s, called everyone’s attention to something we had missed, namely the fact that Hafeez has studied in Europe and so he must have ‘lost’ his Hausa culture. When I asked if studying in Europe debases one’s culture, he evaded the question and, instead, said that “Dressing that way is normal to him. Also, the girl’s dress is okay, for she is from an affluent family”. The issue of dress code for both men and women is complicated. El-Solh and Mabro (1994: 11) state that “The discourse on the veil is rendered more complex when one takes into consideration that it is largely if not exclusively an urban phenomenon in the Muslim countries in which it has been manifesting itself.” These respondents’ views indicate no less.

While more discussion on the veil will follow, it is appropriate to clarify the actors' sartorial choices as per the above debate. In similar ethnographic fieldwork in Katsina, which is another “core” Hausa state in northern Nigeria, Pittin (2002: 84) finds that with regards to women’s dress code, “the extent and form of ‘appropriate space’ [for women’s dress] are continually being revised and redefined. Technology is changing the concept of space, literally and figuratively.” For instance, though it is in a film here, inside the home is, arguably, no longer a private sphere but public. Using Habermas’ (1989) concept of *intimisphäre*, Adamu (2018) explains the dilemma the filmmakers face in Muslim-Hausa northern Nigerian settings when shooting. There are two significant factors at hand. First, as Adamu (ibid.) notes, an issue arises when “translating Hausa oral culture to Hausa visual culture” and adapting a folktale to television or film. The second issue

is about the audio-visual nature and verisimilitude of the film medium. So, they grapple with balancing between “protecting the sacredness of the female conjugal intimisphäre”, which is the room or the entire household, and (re)presenting things as they are shown in other film industries.

Consequently, a lively section of the audience, the religious and traditional establishments always contest how the ladies should dress and how their conduct ought to be. Equally, the debate on poor vs. rich family values is very relevant in Pittin’s seminal work. Following a thorough investigation, she argues that “The new location for members of the elite is in the former Government Residential Area (GRA) outside the walls of the city, and in the most heavily wooded location in Katsina. Thus, the new elite is literally and figuratively hidden from the traditional watchers, and the traditional mores of the old city” (ibid. 84). With this and Hall’s Encoding/Decoding Model in mind, we can understand how and why my research participants’ responses differ remarkably.

The second film we watched was *Alhaki Kwikwiyo*. The first scene that sparked debate was where a shirtless man (Alhaji) embraces his bride (Delu) in a bed. Fahu began: “No one felt anything when we watched that at that time”. Salim, 35 and a graduate of Islamic studies, had another view on this. He said that: “it was due to the innocence of children then; most of us could not interpret what was happening. Unlike now, the new technology (of mobile phone, etc.) has exposed children to a lot of things”. Afaku was more direct. He added that most kids today watch pornography and other adult content. Therefore, they will interpret everything the moment they see things like that. When I asked what was precisely wrong with seeing Hausa people doing what everyone else does, they all responded that it was not our culture. If we can recall, the director, Hafizu Bello, said the



same thing earlier. Fahru explained that “We know what the Indians and Americans do in their films is not our culture. Come home, Nigeria; the way members of other ethnic groups (he used the derogative word “*kabilu*”, ‘others’) wear skimpy dresses does not fascinate me in any way close to what I would feel if it were a Hausa lady.” Salim corroborated this more bluntly: “Honestly, we don’t worry as we have this view of associating non-Hausa folks with lack of religious devotion. For instance, a Yoruba man’s religion is his culture – 50/50 [meaning half of his religion is his culture]”. Ishaq, a tailor in his late 30, concluded that “A Yoruba man’s culture is his religion”.

As we shall see in more detail further below, committed Muslim is almost taken for granted as part of one’s cultural identity among Hausa people. Therefore, most Hausa people can barely differentiate between what is cultural and what is Islamic. Add this to Nigeria’s infamous ethnic jingoism: The Hausa consider themselves the ‘purest’ Muslims in the country. Yoruba is the most heterogeneous ethnic group in Nigeria, families have both Muslim and Christian members who shelve their religious identities during cultural – or each other’s religious – celebrations. Some mix the two religions in what is called the ‘Chrislam’ movement (Janson 2016). This fact gave birth to the above opinions.

There was more debate on all the scenes where men and women come into physical contact, either for affection or assistance. Fahru argued that he had never seen his parents doing that for any reason. Anas added that he could not touch his wife in the presence of a third party. Salim differed with Anas’ view, saying that he took his wife [to a labour room] in the presence of many people

when she was about to give birth. That was an extreme situation, Anas argued, and still said that if there were another woman around, he would have requested her to do that – instead of touching and holding his wife.

Regarding the much-talked-about song and dance sequences, opinions differ. Musbahu, a barely educated, unmarried hawker of fruits from the rural area, was in support of songs without dancing in Kannywood. He cited a famous actor, Ibrahim Maishunku, as his favourite, for his refusal to dance in films. Fahru, too, loved Kannywood songs and bought many audio CDs to play in his car. However, he did not support the song and dance routines in Kannywood films. Anas' views stand out. He gave conditions for the inclusion of song and dance routines, thus: "First, they should continue, for they are the trends. I believe in the dynamism of time. Who will say *Ki Yarda da Ni* song is not melodious? It's about context like the one we watched [in an overtly moral, religious film, *Risala*]." Salim, although he agreed with him, pointed out that most of the songs would have to be rejected because of the actresses' "indecent dressing". Soon, the discussion switched to the dressing code.

Ishaq, Fahru and a few others believed that Kannywood influences how their audience dresses, while Abubakar and Anas disagreed. In addition to how it affects young people's style of dress, some accuse Kannywood actors (via films and social media platforms) of teaching vulgar language and mariticide. When Ishaq mentioned "mariticide", many laughed and, at least one or two persons said the name: Maryam Sanda. Mariticide is today synonymous with Maryam Sanda, a housewife involved in a high-profile murder of her husband, Bilyaminu Bello, by stabbing on November 18,

2017. She was convicted in January 2020 and sentenced to die by hanging (Paquette 2020). When it happened, Nigerian cyberspace erupted with a multitude of posts and hashtags. Some people found and shared a screenshot from a popular Kannywood film where the actress, Aina'u Ade, wields a knife against the actor, Ali Nuhu. They alleged that Ms Sanda was influenced by such films.



Figure 5: A Scene from a Kannywood film, *Da Kishiyar Gida* (dir. Ali Gumzak, 2013).

Anas disagreed, backing up his argument with the example of shisha 'joints' (bars) in Kano. To him, smoking shisha is more injurious than watching Kannywood films. Not only that, the proliferation of shisha smoking lounges has nothing to do with the film industry. "If I asked you [referring to Fahru, Ishaq and the rest] to show me a single film where they show shisha, you cannot bring forth any." No one mentioned any. Therefore, he continued, "The films without shisha smoking scenes are way more than those that probably have. Several children are exposed

to it, but where did they learn about it? Some in rural areas who barely watch films in general still smoke shisha.” He concluded that Kannywood’s problem is their claim to teach *tarbiyya* (character training). Thus, everyone finds fault in their work and criticises them. “They ought to stop that pretence. If it’s culture, let it be; religion, let it also be so. But they are mainly doing business.” He gave more examples of state-sponsored series and serials broadcast on state-owned TV stations like ‘*Hana Wani, Hana Kai*’ in the 1990s. They were non-commercial and thus promoted culture, religion and other government propaganda.

This debate is akin to the old, unresolved dispute between the proponents of Technological Determinism (TD) and Cultural Determinism (CD). According to Straubhaar, Larose and Davenport (2012: 54), TD supposes that “changes in society and culture are driven by advances in media technology and by the content of the media to a large extent.” On their part, CD counter this supposition, contending that it is the “culture [that] determines the nature of the media and their content” (ibid. 54). As the founders of these theories have yet to have to find any common ground in this debate, it is futile to attempt to find one here. The argument continues.

The preceding debate proves that culture is multiple and subject to various interpretations, depending on other variables such as one’s socio-economic, religious and political background. Hall’s (1989: 70) second position [on cultural identity] “recognises that, as well as the many points of similarity, there are also critical points of deep and significant *difference* which constitute ‘what we really are’: or rather, since history has intervened – ‘what we have become’.” Over time, Hausa

culture changed, adapted, and mutated into new forms (Haour and Rossi 2010). Hall (ibid. 70) concludes on this that:

Cultural identity, in this second sense, is a matter of ‘becoming’ as well as of ‘being’. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous ‘play’ of history, culture and power.

Going back to Hall’s model of coding and decoding, there is no wrong and right in all the above debate between Kannywood filmmakers, their audiences, and the traditionalists. As a final note, I requested my respondents to score the filmmakers’ (re)presentation of acceptable Hausa culture. The overall score was 40 per cent.

### **4.3 Religion (Islam) in Kannywood and the Arts of Filmmaking**

Chamo (2011: 117) states that “Islam is the natural background for the film stories in Hausa” and lists films such as *Gagarabadau* (dir. Suleiman Ali Uban Kudi 2007), *Kaddarar Rayuwa* (dir. Alasan Kwalle 2007), *Ibtila’i* (dir. M.J. Saulawa 2008) and *Nagari na Kowa* (dir. Ashiru Nagoma 2008), among others as examples. All these movies, Chamo concludes “explore the symbols of Islamic religion to show the accepted norms of behaviour in everyday life [of Hausa men].” (ibid. 117). However, Chamo uses “Islam” as a single entity, a monolithic faith with no differences between the interpretation of its sects. Of these, there are quite a few in existence in Kano, the epicentre of the film industry, as there are in other parts of the world (see Gregorian 2003; Al-Azmeh 2009; Gulalp 2003). El-Solh and Mabro (1994: 5) remind us that “there is no universal interpretation of Islam.” With direct reference to northern Nigeria, Mustapha and Bunza (2014: 92) state that:

There is not one homogeneous Islam in northern Nigeria, neither do we have a single Islamic response to the challenges of modern life. Instead, traditionalists, modernists and radicals, organized in different sects and groups, compete for followership and influence. In the process, they have converted the sacred sphere into something akin to a market.

This absence of a single, universally-accepted interpretation of Islam is responsible for the ‘incongruities’ this sub-section sets out to explore. In his article, “Conflict and Violence at the Crossroad of Religion and ‘New’ Media: Periscoping Faith-based Crisis through the Eyes of Camera in the Sharia-age of Northern Nigeria”, Ibrahim (2017) exposes how sectarian differences among the Islamists in charge of the Kano State Censorship Board cause contestations over film contents, sometimes, leading to the imprisonment and persecution of filmmakers. So much relies on the understanding of the members of the state religious and cultural establishments. As I will show in the following data, the film actors always claim to project Islam positively. Scholars such as Chamo (2011; see above) agree with this claim, while others, like Murtala (2019), do not. Opinions also differ among the audiences. One can argue that Islam is not something given; it is, in Foucauldian discourse, “a discursive construct”. Therefore:

There will be discernible differences in the ways in which for example, traditionalist, modernist or fundamentalist Muslims perceive these sources. Traditionalists believe that the injunctions laid down in the Qur’an and in the different schools of Islamic jurisdiction should be followed unquestionably, and are not subject to any new interpretation. To the modernists, Islam is a religion consistent with common sense, and its ‘regulations and commandments are to be the objects of interpretation (*ijtihad*) which brings out the values and principles of which they are expressions’. Finally, fundamentalists ‘understand Islam as a social order’ and as the ‘natural religion’ laid down by God and therefore unchangeable. But whereas the traditionalist tends to ignore the blurring of boundaries between custom and religion, the fundamentalist resorts to rational arguments to demonstrate how the divine law of Islam has been tainted by alien customs (El-Solh and Mabro 1994: 6).

I will not classify the respondents as being traditionalist, modernist or fundamentalist Muslims, as to do so is beyond the scope of this thesis. Nonetheless, their expressed perspectives may reveal the categories they fit into. Again, the responses prove the applicability of Foucault's (1984) theory. As with the other sub-sections, I will begin with the presentation and analysis of the filmmakers' responses, followed by those of the Islamic scholars, and finally, of the audience.

In Nollywood, the Pentecostal Church is actively involved in the production and circulation of religious ('hallelujah') films within and outside Nigeria (Pype 2013). In contrast, most Islamic clerics do not want to be associated with Kannywood. Apart from several, frequent sermons against Kannywood filmmakers, some of the clerics declined to honour my requests to interview them during my fieldwork. Hence, the Kannywood filmmakers do their "conversion genre" (Krings 2005: 197), where the overall aim is to convert audiences to Islam, independently. Nevertheless, all those I interviewed reiterated their desire to project Islam in their films, or even to proselytize the religion (Islam). In line with Chamo (2011), M.M. Haruna<sup>35</sup> told me that he shows the superiority of Islam over all evils in his movie, *Husna ko Huzna*, by using the Qur'an to exorcise a devil-possessed woman. He also places the Arabic language above English in his film *Hangen Nesa*. He is, ironically, an English language teacher.

Kamal S. Alkali, the director of *Sumayya*, the single film that goes in the opposite direction of *Husna ko Huzna*, said that he produces film for profit. However, as a devout Muslim, born and raised in a Muslim-majority place like the Kano metropolis, one cannot avoid promoting Islam as

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<sup>35</sup> M.M. Haruna. Interview by author. Phone recording. Kano, 14.02.2020.

others do. When I asked him about the usual Islamic captions at the end of most Kannywood films, “*Bismillahi*” (‘In the name of Allah’) at the beginning; “*Alhamdulillah*” (‘Praise be to Allah’) at the end; and “*masu fadakarwa*” (‘preachers’) in place of “cast”, he answered that that is just the editors’ template. “And it is challenging to ask them to remove them”. Alkali, quite bluntly, added that religion affects the aesthetics and the market of their films. Were there no censorship, no rise of Islamism and no potential adverse reaction from the audience section, he would make his films differently, as they were done in the nascent days of Kannywood (where a man touches a woman with little or no backlash) or as in other industries, he added. Daringly, he concluded with what he said his colleague says: “*fim sai arne*” (‘only non-Muslims do films as it is’).<sup>36</sup> Admittedly, this saying is quite common among Hausa-Muslim viewers of Kannywood films.

While most others did not tell me anything like this, the opinions of Ali Nuhu and Jammaje chime with those of Alkali. Both answered in the affirmative to my question on whether or not Islam affects filmmaking in aspects like verisimilitude, song and dance sequences, body contact and the rest. Contrary to their “yes” responses, Gumzak, Auwal, Fauziyya D. Sulaiman and Salih believe that films can retain their quality without violating religious teachings. In almost the same diction in separate places, the duo of Auwal and Gumzak told me that if you know how to shoot, you don’t have to bother about bedroom scenes, scenes that may need body contact between the sexes and the like. Furthermore, both are committed to not compromising their understanding of the religion, which forbids the mixing of males and females who are not *mahram* (men other than woman’s father, father-in-law, brother, son or nephew), even in films.

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<sup>36</sup> Kamal S. Alkali. Interview by author. Phone recording. Kano, 15.02.2020.



However, Alkanawy, who studied Shari'ah in Saudi Arabia and Egypt, and Iyantama shared a different view from the above. It is noteworthy that both are older and have been in Kannywood longer than Gumzak, Auwal and others. Therefore, they were active in the film industry when actors of opposite genders were 'allowed' to touch, hold hands, etc. That happened, mostly, before the implementation of Shari'ah in 2001 and afterwards – before the Hiyana phone-porno scandal. Iyantama argues that:

The film is admonishing. There are things involved in it: its specificities as a film, religion, and government (censorship board). Each needs to be treated accordingly. For instance, if I come out from home, as an individual, not an actor, and I see my neighbour's wife suddenly falls, is it permissible for me to quickly take her into a car and rush her to the hospital or not, provided if I leave her she will die? Action is judged according to intention. The sole purpose is to save her life. How can you even satisfy your desire from a woman in a critical medical condition with blood gushing from her body? Saving her like this way is permissible according to our Islamic scholars. The scholars say that understanding religion is subjective; therefore, we side with those who support helping a woman in need of help, to save her life, regardless of your right to touch her or not<sup>37</sup>.

Iyantama further explained that the Hadith (i.e. the prophetic saying that “actions are judged as per one's intention”) says it all. “Islam permits eating even carrion if that is the only way one can save one's life, just like in this case where touching a strange woman will save her life”. He concluded that “The film teaches the audience how to rescue a person in such need, without thinking that the religion forbids doing so. Islam is a religion that encourages being merciful to the needy and helping them.” He added that he sided with the scholars who see nothing wrong with touching a woman in films for the reasons mentioned earlier.

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<sup>37</sup> Hamisu Lamido Iyantama. Interview by author. Phone recording. Kano, 15.02.2018.

Alkanawy, who, by qualification and training, deserves the title of *Malam*, told me that he even made a film that contains such a scene recently. “When I went to censorship with it, they declined to certify it. I told them to reason one thing: unless they don’t want us to continue doing the film, they should let us do it the right way. Instead, the way you want me to do it will portray a Hausa man as a heartless, stupid husband who doesn’t know what is appropriate and what is not. How can your wife fall and you then go out, looking for neighbours? To come and do what for you?”<sup>38</sup> After a fierce argument, they asked him to reduce the length of the scene where the husband carries the wife to the hospital emergency room and, eventually, issued the film a certificate. “So, if you want to do a film, do it. If you don’t want to do it, don’t.” Alkanawy’s reasoning is like Iyantama’s. He explained that “In Shari’ah, whoever releases semen due to other causes beside pleasure is not mandated to take a bath.” In Islam, a man must take a spiritual bath if he releases semen due to sexual pleasure or in his sleep – or for other reasons, according to some schools of thought.

There was no censorship in 1998, and that was when Abdulkareem Mohammed produced *Alhaki Kwikwiyo*. There was – and is – also no classification of films in Kannywood. In other words, there is no parental guidance (PG) in place yet. Along with *Saliha?* and *Malam Karkata*, according to Adamu (2018: 9), *Alhaki Kwikwiyo* “came in direct collision with both the religious establishment and the public and was seen to make the sacred – the Muslim female private sphere and chastity – profane (revelations in the public domain).” Adamu (ibid. 12) adds that “It was in the way the principal character [Alhaji] interacted with his wives and the fact that their *kishi* [envy] was

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<sup>38</sup> Ahmad Alkanawy. Interview by author. Phone recording. Kano, 25.02.2020.

explored principally through their competition for his sexual attentions that earned the film the label of *batsa* (obscene).” Other similar films met the same or harsher public censure, to the extent that they could not be released after a brief time in cinema.



**Figure 6:** Alhaji with his two competing wives in *Alhaji...* (dir. Galadima USA, 1998)

Mr Mohammed received criticism from many angles, including from the author of the book he adapted, who, in protest, disowned the story. Sotto voce, Mohammed told me that “Whoever does any work in his life should put religion in it”. While the censure raged on, the International Institute of Islamic Thought, a US-based think tank with branches globally, including in Kano, met and reoriented him on the need to integrate Islam into his works. “I was delighted afterwards. Why? Because you would see articles and other publications on how one can Islamise his trade. My interaction with them was very influencing and convincing.”<sup>39</sup> Regarding the audience’s outcry, he told me that that too was an issue. “If you make a film, people may refuse to patronise you.

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<sup>39</sup> Abdulkareem Mohammed. Interview by author. Phone recording. Kano, 25.02.2020.

However, above all, religious admonishment is more as it is what one goes to sleep and wakes up thinking. So, it influences me much more”.

Hafizu Bello finds a midway to go about filming Islam without hurting either the audience (by, for instance, being too religious or not religious enough), the government or the religious establishment. As I mentioned previously, some filmmakers lament that films with so much religious and cultural content flop. Thus, Bello suggested this:

Some people mistake religious messages in a film, saying one has to have a film wherein Qur’anic verses are recited or quoted. That is not religion. For example, if you want to portray a Muslim character, show him praying *Magrib* as he has arrived when everyone is praying everywhere in the city. You depict that it is a Muslim-majority city, he’s Muslim, and the film is for the Muslim audience<sup>40</sup>.

Based on what the filmmakers generally do, only a few agree with Hafizu Bello’s suggestion. For instance, the film *Risala*, whose title implies a direct connection with the famed 1977 biopic of the Prophet Muhammad, *The Message* (directed by Moustapha Akkad) is utterly religious and moralistic. When writing about it for the *African Studies Review* (Ibrahim 2019c), my findings revealed that many audiences found it boring. Other films, accused of being otherwise (anti-religious), are too many to name, as some influential scholars consider filmmaking and everything related to it to be forbidden. According to this school of thought, “filmmaking is based on lies that one is being portrayed as a cripple or deaf (e.g. *Dan Kurma*) while he is not in reality. An actor and actress may also be described as rich or poor while in the actuality he or she is not. Also, actors

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<sup>40</sup> Hafizu Bello. Interview by author. Phone recording. Kano, 17.02.2020.

and actresses use other people's names and hide their actual names and those of their parents” (Murtala 2019: 264).

#### *4.3.1 Islam and 'Incongruities' in Kannywood Filmmaking*

Since the film industry known as Kannywood produces films, and, as many observers have pointed out, has come to stay, many religious scholars and critics consider it “*larura*” (‘dire necessity’)<sup>41</sup>. Thus, instead of saying it is *haram*, as the above school of thought asserts, they and some audience members see ‘incongruities’ in these films. As in the case of culture, we shall now see what these gaps are.

Dr Muhammad Sulaiman Abdullahi, an imam, told me that everyone, regardless of their status, watches Kannywood films. It is something one can hardly avoid in one way or another. It has become, he said, “commonplace.”<sup>42</sup> He also watches films for research purposes as he teaches Hausa language and culture at a university. However, our interview looked at the film industry more from a religious perspective.

Dr Abdullahi complained more about Kannywood's recurrent theme of love, the mode of dressing and the song and dance routines, among other issues. I began by asking him if there was no romance in Islam. “No, there is. There is a hadith where Nana A'isha [Prophet Muhammad's favourite wife] stepped on the Prophet's back to see something at a distance. There is nothing

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<sup>41</sup> In conversation with Dr. Muhammad Sulaiman Abdullahi. Kano, 18.02.2020.

<sup>42</sup> Dr. Muhammad Sulaiman Abdullahi. Interview by author. Phone recording. Kano, 21.02.2020.

wrong in expressing your affection to your spouse and all that.” He pointed out, however, that the Hausa culture, which I discussed in the previous section, frowns on the public display of romance. Regarding “indecent” dressing in Kannywood films, he said that there should be no compromise. “In Islam, there are certain things one should never joke with”, referring to wearing, say, short, revealing clothes to act as a prostitute. “Things like manumission of a slave, pronouncing divorce and renouncing one’s faith”, he added. During our Focus Group Discussion (FGD), my informants debated the same issue hotly. Fahru, in particular, was discontented with the presentation style of one film, *Kallon Kallo* (dir. Aminu S. Bono 2016), which he accused *Arewa24* TV channel of repeating several times, in which a chauffeur impregnates both the wife and the daughter of the man he works for. The film’s dialogue is racy and the two women in the cast dress in a ‘sexually attractive’ manner to seduce the chauffeur. Other participants at the FGD all seemed to agree with Fahru’s views on this film.

Reports say the United States Department of State, through Equal Access International, sponsors *Arewa24* station. Its drama, *Kwana Casa’in* (‘90 Days’) has been trendy since its premier in 2019. Co-funded by the MacArthur Foundation, *Kwana Casa’in* is a socio-political series that critiques the people and the government of a fictional state called Alfawa in a northern Nigerian setting. It unmistakably aims to provoke reflection and introspection and to spark conversation and action within and outside the corridors of power in Nigeria. Two scenes from the first episode of the newly released third season in April 2020 sparked criticism and outrage. In both, male characters held two actresses’ hands on different occasions – during an assault and a forced eviction. Subsequently, the Kano State Censorship Board banned the series for going “against the norms, values, religion and culture” (see Appendix 1) of the Hausa people.

The series soon became the subject of heated debate among its viewers and other individuals both on and off social media. According to another statement released by the Censorship Board (see Appendix 2), the TV station's Board of Directors met the officials of the censorship board. They resolved to "remove the scenes immediately before re-airing". However, the scenes are still there at the time of writing this (November 2020). As per my independent investigation, the Censorship Board realizes that it does not have the legal jurisdiction to close the channel or to prosecute its authority for the said violation. According to a media specialist, Sanusi Bature Dawakin-Tofa, the ban demonstrates the agency's lack of knowledge about international satellite television regulations. In a viral Facebook post, which I verified, he adds that

*Arewa24 TV station hosts its programmes in Jordan and broadcast to the world via satellites, if at all the so-called government agency would keep going this wrong direction, then it would have to stop the shows from MBC Action, Zee World, Action Movie, Telemundo, Brasstv, etc..... can they? (Dawakin-Tofa 2020, April 7)*

Although the issue ended here, the case confirms that there is no end in sight to the negotiation and contestation over what is permissible and what is not, both in Kannywood and in other media content produced in the Muslim-majority, Hausa-Fulani states of northern Nigeria. The television station, in general, is subject to several forms of criticism. While Fahu, Ishaq and Salim unequivocally expressed their condemnation of the channel during the FGD, other participants seemed to agree with them, by either nodding or saying something that indicated their support. Adamu (2011: 75) observes this conundrum in Kannywood when he says:

“A necessary problem faced by the home video filmmakers in Muslim northern Nigeria is the reconciliation of the radically different modes of storytelling they adopt for their societies. A typical film storyline carries with it elements of conflict and ways of resolving the conflict. For the message to come out clearly, “unpalatable” scenes must be created, and as the story unfolds, contradiction and conflicts are sorted out.” (2011: 75)

Abubakar, a newly-wed man in his late 30s, thought such a presentation was acceptable for, after all, “*fadakarwa suke yi*” (they are preaching) against the behaviours they are exposing. Dr Abdullahi and many other Islamic scholars disagree with this view. Malam Ashiru called it the “devil’s whisper” and the “mischief of some ungodly clerics that tell the filmmakers false “*fatawa*” (‘religious opinion’).<sup>43</sup> He also cited an example from *Kwana Casa’in*: “Why do the ladies have to wear sleeping dresses when going to bed as if they are not being shot on camera and the whole world will see them like that?” Malam Ashiru expanded the scope by explaining that even enjoying a woman’s voice (not only admiring her body) is also *haram*. According to this view, an entire woman’s body is “*awra*” (nudity) except her face and palms; only her *mahram* should see anything beyond those parts, while her husband can, of course, see everything. This is a general view throughout the Muslim world – and beyond – where the *purdah* system works. Some scholars go further by saying that those who see a woman’s nudity, which Kannywood has ‘normalised’, commit “*zina*” (any form of extramarital sex) with their eyes. For instance, Sheikh Bazallah Nasiru Kabara, a Kano-based Islamic scholar, told Ibrahim (2018: 136) that:

Islam says a woman is entirely *awrā* except her face and her palms. You will see [a woman] in Hausa films playing with her voice to sexually lure a man. This is against sharia. Exposing hair is against sharia. Showing uncovered shin, legs, arms of a woman, and her chest are all against sharia. However, it is difficult to watch a Hausa film from beginning to the end without seeing one or all of these; and they keep repeating it.

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<sup>43</sup> Ashiru Hassan [Malam Dalibu]. Interview by author. WhatsApp voice call. Cologne, 8.04.2020.



Sheikh Bazallah, Malam Ashiru, Dr Abdullahi, and the rest do not explicitly declare filmmaking as *haram* like those mentioned by Murtala (2019). However, they do give some conditions. For instance, according to Malam Ashiru, a film:

“should avoid mixing opposite genders. Also, whatever a woman wears must comply with the Islamic dress code. She should also avoid vulgarity. Likewise, they should not do song and dance sequences. You remember there was a time the government banned music and dance in the films, and people didn’t stop patronising them.”

Before moving on to the controversial issue of music and dance, we can see that the veil issue, for all of my respondents except for one person (Abubakar), remains a paradox. In contrast, as the earlier data indicate, most filmmakers believe that they promote Islam; some added that the religion is their *raison d’être* in Kannywood. On this juncture, there is a need to recall Foucault’s discourse. El-Solh and Mabro (1994: 8), citing Sherif (1983: 130) and (Kusha 1990) also observe that:

Countering the notion of the veil as the *sine qua non* of Islam is particularly difficult given the fact that the historical origin of the dress code remains the subject of much controversy. Thus, while both Muslim traditionalists and fundamentalists will point to the Qur’anic verse which enjoins women ‘to cover their ornaments’, and ‘draw their veils over their persons’ as God’s unequivocal command to conceal their physical attributes, modernists will tend to invoke the Qur’anic verse which specifically refers to veiling in relation only to the Prophet’s wives, as an argument against the rigid adoption of this dress code in contemporary Muslim societies.

Nothing has been more contentious than the issue of song and dance sequences. As the Director-General of the Kano State Censorship Board between 2006 to 2011, Malam Rabo Abdulkareem enacted a prohibition of music and dance. A few films have songs but there is no dance in films released in those years (e.g. *Jamila Da Jamilu*, dir. Aminu Saria). There were struggles, intrigues,

politics, contestations, negotiation and even persecution due to this ban. However, those are not within the scope of this research. Ibrahim (2018), among other researchers, dealt with that topic in detail.

There is a slight disagreement between *Izala* (Salafi) and *Dhariaqa* (Sufi) scholars regarding songs and dance. The latter permit it to an extent, as they consider it as part of their religious practice. Iyantama, as we read earlier, sided with this view. The former group (*Izala*), known for their Islamism (see chapter two), do not allow it in any way. The same debate came up with my respondents during our FGD. Salim opined that “From an Islamic perspective, the song and dance routine in this film [*Risala*] too cannot get a nod. Wearing traditional costume without a veil, shooting in a traditional palace, etc. are not enough to make it *halal*”. Anas disagreed with Salim, arguing that “the song is okay in Islam. I am not a scholar, though. It is *Izala* that forbids all this; I swear it is not the religion”. What does religion say, according to the scholars’ point of view?

Malam Ashiru’s view is already known: that Kannywood filmmakers must avoid song and dance sequences. Murtala (2019), like many others, such as Sheikh Aminu Ibrahim Daurawa, the immediate former boss of the Kano State Hizba Board, Dr Muhammad Muslim Ibrahim, a former university Deputy Vice-Chancellor, and Dr Abdullah Usman Gadon-Kaya, the chief imam of ‘Uthman Bin Affan Mosque, Kano, among many others, say that it has no place in Islam. Their sermons and preaching are well-known in and beyond Kano (see Ibrahim 2018). Dr Abdullahi expressed a slightly different opinion. He told me:

There is a song in Islam. The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) had a singer called Hassani Bin Thabit who sang several songs. However, the song and dance sequence we see in [Kannywood] films are no way like those songs. So, while I cannot give you any proof for dance in Islam, there is evidence for the song even though unlike the ones we do now<sup>44</sup>.

Almost all my respondents believe that Islam prohibits song and dance sequences, as seen in Kannywood films. Only the filmmakers differ in opinion. However, generally speaking, several respondents applaud Kannywood's handling of Islam. Hafsat Abubakar, a housewife, PhD candidate and university lecturer, told me that "Indeed, Kannywood producers are doing well in presenting Islam positively. However, they do that more in speech than action. For instance, they show a man admonishing his son or wife."<sup>45</sup> She mentioned *Ga Duhu Ga Haske* (dir. Aminu Saira 2010) as an example of a film that promotes Islam excellently. Adam A. Zango, the central character in the movie and a leading star in Kannywood, has repeatedly extolled this film as one of his best. He said that at least two people embraced Islam after watching it. The film features Zango as a non-Muslim man who falls in love with a beautiful Muslim-Hausa university student (Zainab Indomie). Because of their love, and her father's disapproval of his being non-Muslim, he converts.

Hafsat went on to criticise the mode of dressing and diction of many other films, citing three famous comedians, the late Ibro, Sulaiman Bosho and Musa Maisana'a, as actors who use foul language. Rabi Marshall, another housewife, generally praised the way Kannywood treats Islam, adding that we may excuse some of their errors as they are mostly young and averagely educated.

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<sup>44</sup> Dr. Muhammad Sulaiman Abdullahi. Interview by author. Phone recording. Kano, 21.02.2020.

<sup>45</sup> Hafsat Abubakar. Interview by author. WhatsApp chat. Cologne, 27.07.2020.

“They also come from different background. Some do not even care about projecting the religion to their audience.”<sup>46</sup>

Coincidentally, in his interview with BBC Hausa on August 26, 2017, Boshu explained that “Kannywood films used to promote Hausa culture and Islam. However, the filmmakers today care only about their money and how to profit. Therefore, they go to any length to do that.”<sup>47</sup> He was, in other words, deflecting the criticism from people like Hafsat Abubakar. Kannywood is not the only film industry where the desire for profit influences its actors and actresses’ performances. Stokes (2003: 101) says that “market forces and economics are the most significant forces determining what is done” in film industries worldwide. According to Anas, one of my primary respondents, doing that is not wrong, even though “Kannywood filmmakers must associate their films with the Hausa culture and Islam as long as their audiences remain Hausa people.”

#### **4.4 Towards the De/construction of Identity and Commodification of the Hausa language**

The dominant language of Kannywood is Hausa, with the exception of a very few films produced in the English language. There is a single filmmaker, Kabiru Musa Jammaje, who produces movies in this foreign language. He is a renowned English teacher, radio presenter and author of several pamphlets and books for English language learners and instructors. During our several meetings, and the interviews he granted to the media,<sup>48</sup> Jammaje stressed his reason for making films

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<sup>46</sup> Rabi Marshal. Interview by author. WhatsApp voice message. Cologne, 6.04.2020.

<sup>47</sup> ‘Yan Boko Haram basu taba yi min waya ba’ [Boko Haram elements have never called me] from <https://www.bbc.com/hausa/41043759> (accessed on 25.09.2020)

<sup>48</sup> Arewa24. Kundi Kannywood, Episode 93, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XQBU0zRZsik> (accessed on 07.03.2019).

differently as an effort to rescue the sinking industry and project a better – or filtered – image of his people, the Hausa-Fulani, of northern Nigeria. Additionally, he avoids song and dance routines in all of his films, for he does not consider that part of his culture<sup>49</sup>. Another English teacher and radio presenter, M.M. Haruna is currently making a new film in English. He will be the second person – after Jammaje and the producers of *Wasila* (2000, dir. Ishaq Sidi Ishaq), initially in Hausa but later on dubbed in English. The dubbing was, reportedly, an experiment, which failed.

When making films in the global language of English, many people worldwide consider Nollywood as “the default” Nigerian movies (Adesokan 2011: 99), while Kannywood remains mostly in obscurity. Jedlowski (2011: 16) notes that “[the] English-language films were the ones that travelled the furthest and were most popular abroad”. Some writers consider Kannywood as part of Nollywood, which it, clearly, is not. Witt (2017: 53) calls Kannywood a “Nollywood’s Hausa-language industry based in Kano”. In her assessment, McCain (2013: 30) points out that “In most scholarly discussions of Nollywood, Hausa films are footnoted as an ‘other’ to Nollywood...” Thus, the ‘marginalisation’ goes on. Recently, Netflix has purchased several Nollywood films and sponsored one – *Lionheart* (dir. Genevieve Nnaji, 2018), the first of its kind from Africa. Jammaje and now M.M. Haruna want this to change, for, after all, Kannywood is older than Nollywood. The editor of *Tauraruwa* magazine, Sunusi Shehu, coined the name ‘Kanywood’ (with a single “n” before several authors later on added the second “n”, the version that is more recognised globally today). It appeared in the magazine’s August 1999 issue, while “Nollywood” appeared for the first time in a *New York Times* article titled “Step aside, Los Angeles

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<sup>49</sup> Kabiru Musa Jammaje. Interview by author. Phone recording. Kano, 12.02.2018.

and Bombay, for Nollywood” by Norimitsu Onishi in September 2002. The Nigerian newspaper, *The Guardian*, republished the article a few days later. As Haynes (2007) pointed out, the tag quickly became irresistible for the more local press and for fans, who started using it ubiquitously.

A few other Hausa filmmakers also try to bridge the widening gap between Kannywood and Nollywood via the English subtitles in their films. Another way is to sell their movies to the Africa Magic Hausa channel on the South African-based DSTV satellite. According to Lere (2014), the channel was established to accommodate a wider non-Hausa speaking viewership across the continent. Nevertheless, the subtitles are mostly incorrect, with broken tenses and phrases. In many instances, the grammar is inferior, the spellings error-ridden, and this, ultimately, destroys the objective of the subtitles and, instead, creates a false idea of the movie to non-Hausa speakers. The language used can best be described as “*Engausa*”, a hybridised English and Hausa language, not anything close to Standard English (Ibrahim and Yusuf 2018: 207).

In contrast to Jammaje, others do not see the point in making a Kannywood film in any language other than Hausa. For instance, Yaseen Auwal emphatically said that:

“After my religion, I love nothing more than my culture, language and country. I love Nigeria and Kano State. I love the Hausa language. I love no other language more than Hausa. I value it a lot. Thus, I do everything to promote it in my films to the global audience. Suppose anyone speaks English better than us, no problem. Likewise, you can do your films in the language, no problem. You know where and how to market your film.<sup>50</sup>”

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<sup>50</sup> Yaseen Auwal. Interview by author. Phone recording. Kano, 20.02.2020.

When I pressed him on whether or not he would make a film in English, Yaseen Auwal responded that he would instead make an *Engausa* one, after acknowledging that English, as the Nigerian national language, is part and parcel of our daily vocabulary. Most of us code-switch and code-mix and “we have been doing that even now”, he added.

Ali Gumzak shares similar views to those of his colleague, Yaseen Auwal. Interestingly, he co-directed one of the first movies that brought actors from both Kannywood and Nollywood together. The film, *Karangiya* (2012), features megastars like Rabilu Musa Dan Ibro (died 2014), Chinedu Ikedieze and Osita Ihome (a.k.a Ake and Pawpaw), among others. The ‘non-Hausa’ characters speak English, Pidgin and faltering Hausa (more on the commodified Hausa later on). Despite that, Gumzak argues that those who use only English in their films in Kannywood are, perhaps, only half-smart, thinking they would hit the saturated market successfully. He concluded that “Honestly, I rather do films in my language than any other, for I believe that wherever any film goes, the one in Hausa, too, can go. Wherever a film festival is taking place, if you bring one in Hausa, it can be recognised and recommended for any award better than the one you do in another language even if it’s English. Take a look at Genevieve Nnaji’s film, *Lionheart*. The Academy Awards organisers disqualified it because of too much English dialogue.”<sup>51</sup>

The Academy Awards panel did indeed reject *Lionheart*, which “is the first-ever Nigerian submission for the best international feature film in 2019.”<sup>52</sup> However, the rejection sparked

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<sup>51</sup> Ali Gumzak. Interview by author. Phone recording. Kano, 23.02.2020.

<sup>52</sup> BBC Africa (2019). *Lionheart: Nigeria's Oscar choice disqualified over English dialogue.* <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-50300862> (accessed on 15/09/2020).

criticism from its director-cum-actor, Ms Nnaji, and many other people around the world. They argue that the film's predominantly English dialogue and a mixture of a little Igbo and Hausa (there is no dialogue in Yoruba) among its characters reflects the nature of how people in Nigeria, a former British colony, speak.

In a clear departure from the above two, Hamisu Lamido Iyantama does not consider films in any language other than Hausa as belonging to Kannywood. He speaks the minds of many fans of the industry<sup>53</sup>. When BBC Hausa requested me to write about the top twelve Kannywood films of the year in 2017, and I included Jammaje's *There is Way* (dir. Falalu Dorayi 2016), many criticised that choice<sup>54</sup>. To them, Kannywood is for Hausa people and films in the Hausa language. Whose decision is that? Which variety of Hausa? The following paragraphs will attempt to answer these questions and more.

Although Hausa is unarguably the lingua franca in northern Nigeria, there are numerous languages, now seen as minorities, in use in the region. Whether or not they are 'minorities' is subject to debate, which is also not within the scope of this work. As Pietikäinen and Kelly-Holmes (2013: 1) argue, the minoritization of languages is part of the peripheralization of the speakers of those languages. In today's northern Nigeria, speaking Hausa is equivalent to being at the centre. To some observers of the regional linguistic landscape, Hausa poses a threat to all other languages spoken in the region and, "in the near future, all things being equal, Hausa is going to dominate

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<sup>53</sup> Hamisu Lamido Iyantama. Interview by author. Phone recording. Kano, 15.02.2018.

<sup>54</sup> "Fina-finan Kannywood 12 da suka shahara a 2017" from <https://www.bbc.com/hausa/labarai-42449668> (accessed on 01.10.2020).



the entire nation” (Lambu 2020: 1152). While that may not really be likely, the other point he mentions is conspicuously happening. Lambu (2020) asserts that:

The Hausa-Fulani nomenclature is a cultural deception used to console the swallowed Fulfulde by allowing them to assume some existence. The beginning of the Dandal Kura radio broadcast in [the] Hausa language is a signal for Kannuris’ voluntary surrendering to Hausa captivity. Many settlers from Yoruba, Igbo, and others, despite their attempt to resist the culture, have children who are almost 50% likely to become being Hausanized (Lambu 2020: 1152).

Moreover, speaking a particular variety, the Kano dialect, is associated with more prestige. However, this does not go unchallenged. Pietikäinen and Kelly-Holmes (2013: 4) further argue that this “centre-periphery relationship [between languages, regions, people, etc.] is thus always constructed and subject to [a] complex, socio-political and economic process and practice.” Therefore, many users of those ‘downgraded’ dialects express anger against this move, including, first and foremost, early Hausa scholars and now Kannywood filmmakers, among others.

In Kannywood, the Kano dialect is the standard for the dialogues regardless of the film’s setting. Characters use any other variety differently or, as what Kamwangamalu (2016:18) calls “goods or commodities to which the market assigns a value but as signs of wealth or capital.” For instance, Baban Chinedu, an Igbo typecast, who is ethnically Hausa, deploys a funny accent to imitate Hausa L2 speakers from the Igbo ethnic group. Monday Abuh, an Igala man, who was born and raised in Kano, speaks Hausa like a native. He told me that Baban Chinedu’s and Sani Dan-Gwari’s roles in Kannywood are both good and bad. He added that these characters reflect the general stereotypes shared among Nigerians of seeing their fellows as either this or that – Hausa as illiterate, Yoruba

as troublesome and Igbo as greedy<sup>55</sup>. Monday pointed out that Kannywood should give such roles to the people from those ethnic groups. Chinonso Akabueze Caleb, an Igbo man, born and raised in Kano, largely shares Monday's opinion<sup>56</sup>. Ahmad Alkanawy, who is an expert on the Hausa culture, as mentioned before, shares a similar perspective concerning non-Hausa people in Kannywood. He told me that "to be fair to those ethnic groups, give these roles to their people who, however, speak Hausa"<sup>57</sup>. He engaged Igbos when shooting a US Embassy-sponsored multicultural film. They corrected Baban Chinedu's costume, which had been misused in mainstream Kannywood movies for ages. He used to wear a particular traditional cap worn only by royals and acted, as he always does, foolishly, miserly.

In contrast, Rabi Marshal, who is an educated, business-oriented Hausa mother, sees absolutely nothing wrong in these characters. Regarding Dan Gwari, she said that he was a "wonderful actor"<sup>58</sup> through whom she identified the real Gbagyi/Gwari ethnic people when she travelled to the Nigerian capital, Abuja, which is – or used to be – their native area. Baban Chinedu, too, "portrays the sheer love of money of Igbo people", she added, with the caveat that these roles are comical, and should not be taken seriously. Hollows (2016: 178) claims that "Media texts play a key role in defining the meaning of identity. They shape our sense of who we are and they also shape how other people view us." Perhaps Mrs Marshal forgot the famous Hausa saying that "*wasan Bahausha, gaskiyar sa*", loosely meaning that the Hausa man means what he says in the form of a joke. The role may be comical, but the messages they deliver may not be as in Falalu

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<sup>55</sup> Monday Abuh. Interview by author. WhatsApp voice message. Cologne, 17.03.2020.

<sup>56</sup> Chinonso Akabueze Celeb. Interview by author. WhatsApp text message. Cologne, 6.04.2020.

<sup>57</sup> Ahmad Alkanawy. Interview by author. Phone recorder. Kano, 25.02. 2020.

<sup>58</sup> Rabi Marshal. Interview by author. WhatsApp voice message. Cologne, 6.04.2020.

Dorayi's film, *Ibro Hotiho*. One may conclude that the “broken” Hausa spoken by these two is doubtless selling well.

The following is a dialogue from the film *Gwari Gwari* (dir. Aminu Mirror, no-date), between the legendary Rabilu Musa a.k.a Ibro (d. 2014), and Sani Dan Gwari. The English translation is only an attempt to give the meaning of the viral dialogue. I am afraid that its deeper, layered meaning is contextual. As usual, Dan Gwari commits several grammatical errors, mixes genders, mispronounces many words and exhibits crass ignorance of simple cultural knowledge. For instance, he says “*sayasa*” [politics] instead of “*siyasa*”, “*kere*” [dog] instead of “*kare*”, “*lago*” [ram] instead of “*rago*”. He also responds to an insult where Ibro tells him that he will sleep with his mother by saying “Who are you to do that? Only my father does that”, among other foolishness.

Excerpts:

Dan Gwari: *Mun fito daga wajen maganar mai unguwa ne...* [We are from the Ward Head's house]

Ibro: *Toh...* [Okay]

Dan Gwari: *Matan mai unguwa muna yin addu'a saboda ka san sayasa... Hmm sayasa...* [People at the Head's house prayed, you know politics. Hmm... You know politics...]

Ibro: *Siyasa!* [correcting the pronunciation: “Politics”.]

Dan Gwari: *Dama ayi magana za bamu kere, shi ne muyi magana, mu ce toh, za'a bamu alede, a gaba jamiya. Shi ne na ce to naga kaima kuna tara jama'a ana yi maganaaa uhhh sayasa.* [It's said that we will get a dog, oh, a pig. I also remember that you are also a man of the people and you know politics]

Ibro: *Eh, siyasa ba...!* [correcting him for the second time: “Politics”]

Dan Gwari: *Ihin! Shi ne na ce zan zo wurin ka adan za'a bani wani kamasho, menene kamasho na?* [Yes. So, I said that I would come lest I could get more commission, or what is my commission?]

Ibro: *To in an baka kai me za ka yi?* [What would you do if you get it?]

Dan Gwari: *Aha! Tunde ze ka ba ni aledede adai an ba ni kamisho na ba sai in cika in saya kare ba?* [Since I will get a pig, then I will top the money and buy a dog now]

Ibro: *Ni in dauki kudi in ba ka ka sai kare?* [How could I give you money to buy a dog?]

Dan Gwari: *A'a? Ku ba kwa sayan rago?* [Huh? Don't you (plural) buy a ram?]

Ibro: *Ha'a to da rago da kare daya ne? Dan uwa ka! Karen banza, ya ci uban sa karen.* [What? Can you compare a ram and a dog? You are stupid! The dog is a worthless animal and to hell with it!]

Dan Gwari: *Kai ma ragon banza yaci uban shi rago, daga ayi magana, ko keren nawa rago naka ya zama dole abinci wani ya zaman na wani ne? Ha'a! Akuya kafa nawa ni?* [I also say to hell with the ram! If someone talks... Take your ram and I my dog. Must we have the same values? See, how many legs has a goat?]

Ibro: *Kafa hudu ce.* [Four legs]

Dan Gwari: *Lago kafa nawa ni?* [How many legs has a ram?]

Ibro: *Hudu ne.* [Four]

Dan Gwari: *Kare fa?* [And, dog?]

Ibro: *Ban sani ba!* [I don't know!]

Dan Gwari: *Ha'a duka waye ya halita su?* [Aha! Who creates them?]

Ibro: *Allah ne.* [It's Allah]

Dan Gwari: *To ba duka nama, nama ne ba, ze ka yi magana banza a wurun ha'a.* [You see, meat is meat. Don't tell me nonsense here.]

Ibro: *Aladen banza!* [To hell with the pig!]

Dan Gwari: *Kai ma ragon banza! Mun ji tsoron zagin rago ne, shi da yana da kaho ma, an yanka za sha wahala.* [I also say “to hell with the ram”! We will not be afraid to insult the ram; it has horns, so slaughtering it is hard.]

Ibro: *Bammi ma ta ci uban ta, bammi!* [To hell with your palm wine.]

Dan Gwari: *Bammi?* [Palm wine?]

Ibro: *Eh, bammi ma taci uban ta.* [Yes, to hell with it.]

Dan Gwari: *Kai ma kunu zaki yaci uwashi, ehe! Se ayi magana ku ce ku ba sha giya ha'a.* [And to you, too, I curse your sweetened gruel. Yes! If one talks, you argue that you don't drink beer.]

Ibro: *Burkutun banza!* [To hell with your locally brewed beer!]

Dan Gwari: *Kai ma kokon banza! Koko ba dawa ne ba? Shima burkutu ba dawa ne ba? Duk ka na yi dabara kuna hadawa da kose saboda kar a bugu, meye bamu sani ba?* [To hell with your gruel! Is it not made from sorghum? And is our beer not sorghum? You are only tricking people by drinking it with beans cake, but we know everything, don't we?]

Ibro: *Allah ya tsine bammi, bammi Allah ya tsine bammi.* [May God curse palm wine! May God curse palm wine!]

Dan Gwari: *Allah ya tsine kunnun zaki, sai kai dan rainin wayo.* [May God curse the sweetened gruel. Half-smart!]

Ibro: *Kai! Dan gwari, dan gwari ina.... zan ci uwar ka.* [Dan Gwari, Dan Gwari... I will sleep with your mother!]

Dan Gwari: *Allah ba ka isa ba, baba mu ne yana ci uwar mu, kai ba ka isa ba, ka yi keremi a wurin, Allah ya sini maka!* [You dare not! Only our father sleeps with our mother. You cannot; you are too small. May God curse you!]

Several experts from within and outside the ‘other’ ethnic groups have criticised how they are depicted. More relevant here is the Sokoto dialect issue, which has been commodified by some Kannywood actors who are not from that region of Hausaland. In their effort to sell their

commodity, the Sakkwatanci, they produce what actual users of the dialect describe as “errors” and “stereotypes”. Dr Mus’ab Isah Mafara is an academic and a Kannywood enthusiast who follows and writes about the goings-on of the film industry. In September 2017, he initiated a Facebook post to discuss the issue along with his friends. He began thus:

In all the Hausa films I watched where someone with Sokoto dialect is (rarely) featured, he was always given a role as an uneducated, a clown, an irrational person or a security guard. To make matters worst (sic), they always give the role to someone that has no idea whatsoever how Sakkwatanci (Sokoto dialect) is spoken. It is obvious that the producers/directors in Kannywood, most of them from Kano, portray Basakkwace (someone from Sokoto) in their movies based on how they, and perhaps many people in their locality, think a typical man from that region behaves or what he is, which is grossly unfair to us. And although I have good friends from Kano who show me so much love and kindness, I also have had a fair share of condescending comments on my wall from the people of Kano in some posts I made in my dialect. So while people from the North are accusing Nollywood of showing them in bad light, our film industry is guilty of doing the same thing to people of one of our sub-regions. If Kannywood is the one’s only source of knowing how Sokoto people behave, then he will conclude that these are the most backward of people from the North of Nigeria. (Mafara 2017, September 17)

Mafara’s other friends from the region (comprising Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara states) agreed with him. One Abdurrahman Islam complained that “I cringe every time I see their portrayal of Sakkwatawa (when I used to watch some of their material). They create, recreate and reinforce stereotypes. I’ve seen these stereotypes play out in real-life scenarios.” (ibid. 2017). Another one added that when watching these films, he felt “seriously misrepresented and ridiculed at the same time” (ibid. 2017). What I may call the most relevant response to our topic here came from Abdullahi Abduljabbar. He asserted thus:

The richness of language is mostly expressed in poetry and poems, [the] majority of renowned Hausa singers and poets were from the Sakkwato [Sokoto] axis because there is no Hausa dialect that is richer than Sakkwato [Sokoto] dialect. [The] Kano dialect had a historical advantage in the sense that when the colonial masters sought to have a uniform dialect for formal communication, Kano dialect took precedence. The reason being that western education was more embraced in the Kano axis than the Sokoto axis. Sokoto being the Headquarters of the Islamic caliphate was the last to be defeated by the colonialists, so they had already established their structures in most of the major northern cities before the fall of Sokoto (Mafara 2017, September 17).

As I mentioned above, most of the actual speakers of this dialogue are not happy with actors representing their region in Kannywood films. Also, there is no teasing relationship (“*Barkwanci*”) between people from Kano (Kanawa) and those from Sokoto (Tukur 1999). More disturbing is the dialect in use in the films, for several people, including some scholars, have testified that the Sokoto dialect is richer than Kano. It is the centre-periphery relationship that has given birth to the current situation. The more preferred Kano dialect has more words that are not ‘originally’ Hausa, courtesy of the state’s being the melting pot of diverse ethnic groups from all over Nigeria and beyond. Gradually, the dominant language is getting influenced by other languages spoken in the city. For a breakdown of some dialogues in the movie *Dan Gaske*, I reached out to Aliyu Yazid, an expert on the Hausa verities and an indigene of Zamfara State, for more details.

Aliyu began by pointing out that the actors misapplied tones in many instances. For example, “*mun zaka tun daga kwarya*” instead of “*mun taho tun daga kurya* (‘We have come out from inside the room’).” The word “*Kurya*”, meaning “inside, usually of a room”, has a falling tone, not a rising one. Also, the term “*zaka*” is archaic. The dialect speakers use “*taho*” (a form of the verb “*tafi*”, meaning ‘to go/come’) today. Aliyu further told me that saying “*to, in za ki yi batutuwan kwarai, ki rika hwaɗa min*” should, in a typical Sakkwatanci, be “*in za ki yi maganar kwarai...*”;

“*Maganar kwarai*” (honest talk) is different from “*Batu*”. They use the latter in reported speech, telling someone about what another person said. The actor may also utter “*kai min dumin kwarai*,”; “*dumi*” in Kananci (the standard, Kano dialect) means “*zafi*” (heat or mildly hot). The same word in Sokoto dialect means “*magana*” (speech)<sup>59</sup>.

In his words, Aliyu added that

If you pay attention to Alhaji Tambai’s [the Basakwkwace character] lines, he repeatedly says “*aradu*” (‘loud thunderbolt’ used with “*sha*” as a swearing word)”. The word has quite a different connotation in genuine Sokoto dialect. It is also rarely uttered. Instead, we use “*walla*” (a corrupt version of *Wallahi* [‘I swear by Allah’]). Seldom, Fulani speakers of Sokoto dialect use the word, which he (Alhaji Tambai) is not.

Yusuf Sani was more categorical in his response to the portrayal of people from the Sokoto sub-region. He established that “it did not start with Kannywood or whatever they call themselves; it is a pervasive stereotype that IS [emphasis intended as is in the original] the very foundation of our folklore. These showbiz guys are just conveyors of prevailing stereotypes (Mafara 2017, September 17).” After clarifying that he too used to denigrate the same people before his university education at a university there, he broadened the whole matter, thus: “We are all victims of the stereotypes, even at the risk of generalisation, I submit that a typical northerner thinks of Kano man as money worshipper, crook and dishonest. I know some friends that were denied the hand of girls from other states, in the north, on account that “*Kannawa ba sa rikun aure*” (‘The marriages of Kano people don’t last’; my translation).

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<sup>59</sup> Aliyu Yazid. Interview by author. Facebook Messenger. Cologne, 16.07.2020.



Concerning the identity question, Yusuf succinctly concluded that “Only when we begin to take these disgusting stereotypes, that are prevalent in our everyday humour and folktale, for what they are, a means of insulting others, that we can begin to address the issue.” Hollows (2016: 178) adds that “Media representations of identity are powerful because they can limit and constrain how people think about themselves and others.” From the preceding, we can understand that Kannywood is deeply involved in the reconstruction and deconstruction of the Hausa man’s identity today. I randomly asked many other people about this issue, both on and off social media. Admittedly, I was surprised to find out that most of those people do not have views of Igbos, Gwari and Sokoto people, culture, and conduct any better than what Kannywood shows in its films. The audience has bought the commodities (such as the broken Hausa and distorted Hausa accents) sold to them by the Kannywood filmmakers and actors. People talk with their accents and, in most cases, no one cares to ‘exotify’ that in real life; the reverse is often the case in these films.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### LANGUAGE IDEOLOGY AND COMMODIFICATION IN KANNYWOOD

#### 5.0. Introduction

Language has always been an issue in contemporary arts in Africa. The disqualification of Genevieve Nnaji's *Lionheart* by the panel of the Academy Awards, as discussed in the previous chapter, suggests, among other things, that English, as a commodity, does not belong to Nigerian users. Instead of using the language to function as a means to connect and foster relations among at least the commonwealth countries, it is used to exclude, alienate and otherise Nigeria. It is difficult to say who owns the language or any language; however, the panel's decision ascertains that Nigeria is not the owner. Thus, the jury rejected *Lionheart* for its dialogue track in this 'foreign' language, instead of in indigenous Nigerian languages. But can there ever be a Nigerian film with national coverage and worthy of the Academy Awards nomination that uses a local language?

The commodification of the Hausa language also goes beyond the use of its 'broken' variety (as spoken by the members of the so-called minority ethnic groups in northern Nigeria) or other varieties such as the Sokoto dialect in Kannywood. It is commodified in many more ways. For instance, the argument of some Kannywood stakeholders (see chapter four) that their film industry is exclusively for the Hausa medium and for Hausa people rejects not only other languages, particularly English, but also the varieties of Hausa spoken outside Kano. Consequently, actors from non-Hausa speaking places are forced to learn the language to feature in Kannywood films.

As Tan and Rubdy (2008: 1) say in a similar context, it is “the brave new world where languages are learnt to gain economic advantage”.

### **5.1 The globalisation and marketisation of the Hausa language**

Several scholars have written on language and globalisation (e.g. Blommaert 2010; Calvet 2006; Coupland 2003; Fairclough 2006; Pennycook 2007; Cameron 2012). The Hausa language is also significantly affected by globalisation. To borrow from Cameron (2012: 2), “the increased transnational mobility and migration, the growth of global communications via new digital media (the internet, satellite TV, etc.); and the ‘marketisation’ of culture and discourse” are very relevant and noteworthy in this regard. Muaka (2020: 139) adds that “in the discussion of African languages in the twenty-first century, it is inevitable to talk about globalisation and its impact on African languages. [Globalisation] has put enormous pressure on African languages and cultures”. Given the preceding discussion (especially in chapters two and four), the Hausa language and culture are no exception. For a long time, Kano has seen an increase in transnational mobility and migration to the state due to its commercial successes. The growth of global communication, as I will explain further below, has also boosted the market value of Hausa as both language and culture.

According to Philips (2004: 79), “[Hausa] was the colonial administration language of Northern Nigeria, one of the few African languages used by any colonial regime as an official language. Hausa was set to be the official language after independence. However, the language policy of Northern Nigeria continued to diversify after World War II.” The Hausa popular culture’s globalisation began a bit earlier, in the 1930s, with the appropriation of Arabian, Asian and

European tales by Abubakar Imam into *Ruwan Bagaja* and *Magana Jari Ce* through the “Imamian paradigm” or *Imamanci* (Adamu 2006b: 7). The process started with the British colonial government’s replacement of Hausa written in Arabic script called *Ajami* with Roman letters in Northern Nigeria. They founded The Translation Bureau at Zaria under the supervision of a colonial officer, instructor and writer, Mr Rupert East. The Bureau organised creative writing competitions to develop instructional material in Hausa for teaching in schools. As Alidou (2002: 54) narrates:

The 1933-34 competition marked the beginning of a more secular tradition in Hausa writing with the publication of five novels that set in motion the stylistic standards of contemporary Hausa literary production in Roman script. These include Abubakar Imam’s *Ruwan Bagaja*, Bello Kagara’s *Gandok’i*, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa’s *Shaihu Umar*, Muhammadu Gwarzo’s *Idon Matambayi*, and *Jiki Magayi* written by John Tafida and Ruppert (sic) East.

Adamu (2006b) further describes how this practice soon found favour with subsequent Hausa prose fiction writers of the 1940s and 1950s, who, due to their exposure to Arabic sources, were able to find stories here and there – thus media availability became an important factor – and recast them as Hausa tales. This transformation gave birth to subsequent literary developments, and to music and video films such as Adamu Halilu’s adaptation of *Shaihu Umar* in 1976. Subsequently, it gave birth to the commercial cinema, which is today called Kannywood in Northern Nigeria.

Another strand of globalisation in Hausa popular culture came chiefly with the establishment of *Arewa24*. The channel promotes hip-hop music on its two weekly programmes, “*Zafafa Goma*” (‘Hot Ten’) and “Hausa Hip-Hop”. Like other African cultures, Hausa has traditional musicians,

most of whom, however, have died, along with their arts. None of the renowned old-style singers such as Ibrahim Narambada Isa (1875–1960), Muhammadu Bawa Dan Anace (1916–1986), Muhammadu Sarkin Taushin Sarkin Katsina (1911–1990), or Hassan Wayam (d. 2020), among others, has a successful successor today. The new singers, pejoratively called *Nanaye* – singers for Kannywood movies – occupy the centre stage. They sing in either Hausa or *Engausa*, which is a hybridised English-Hausa language. Hausa vocabulary has to be part of the lyrics as this is the medium of the channel. In Bourdieu’s terms, this trend has increased the Hausa “linguistic market” significantly.

Moreover, most of these singers have YouTube channels with many subscribers, courtesy of cheap and easily available Internet data packages and the COVID-19 lockdown. Despite their liberty to talk more freely than in mainstream Kannywood productions, even on YouTube they cannot say certain “tabooed” words and phrases. In a famous interview with a documentary filmmaker, the former Director-General of the Kano State Censorship Board (KSCB), Rabo Abdulkareem, cautioned these modern singers not to dare “translate motherfucker into my vernacular” or they would be punished (Adamu 2020: 1).

Director Gumzak’s earlier argument that films with Hausa dialogue can sell globally signals his belief about the marketability of films in the language. Although the Kannywood market outside Nigeria is not vibrant, as I will explain later, the film industry attracts people from other ethnic groups within and outside Nigeria. However, regardless of where they come from, they must learn Hausa to feature in most Kannywood films. When renowned Nollywood actors such as Nkem

Owoh, Juliet Ibrahim, John Okafor (Mr Ibu), Jim Iyke, Chinedu Ikedieze and Osita Itheme (Ake and Pawpaw) featured in Kannywood, in some cases they had to speak faltering Hausa. Here, the Hausa language “constitute[s] a saleable commodity with regard to business and marketing, whilst for the clients they represent an investment in cultural capital which can then be exchanged within the global labour market” (Rassool 2007: 148).

The stories of two famous Kannywood actresses, Amina Muhammad, a.k.a. Amal, and Hadiza Aliyu Gabon are typical examples of the Hausa language’s market value. Both had to learn Hausa to feature in Kannywood films. Born and raised in Cameroon, Amina comes from Hausa’s closest ally, the Fulani ethnic group. As she told a reporter in a March 2019 interview with the *Guardian* (Nigeria) newspaper, she grew up with the dream of acting in films. However, there was no vibrant cinema in her country of origin. The religio-cultural affinity with the Hausa people inspired her to start watching Kannywood films. With her poor Hausa, she understood a bit and soon became immensely interested in acting in their movies. However, the Hausa language became her only obstacle to venturing into the film industry, even after she made an adventurous journey to Nigeria to meet her favourite actor, Adam A. Zango. It took her months to learn enough Hausa to debut in a film titled *Amal*, from where she gets her screen name<sup>60</sup>.

Hadiza Gabon, as she is popularly known, is not a Nigerian either. Although one of her parents is a Nigerian, she was born, raised and educated in Libreville, the capital of Gabon. Miss Gabon,

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<sup>60</sup> “Inspiring story of Kannywood’s shining star, Amina ‘Amal’ Muhammad” from <https://guardian.ng/saturday-magazine/celebrity/inspiring-story-of-kannywoods-shinning-star-amina-amal-muhammad/> accessed on 28.10.2020.

who came to Nigeria for the first time to stay with a relative in Kaduna, wanted either to set up a non-governmental organisation to assist Gabonese citizens residing in Nigeria or to become a diplomat of her country of birth. Nevertheless, after some efforts, doing either of these things became highly unlikely. In response to that, she chose to act in Kannywood, which is another way of becoming famous and earning enough money to do humanitarian works. Like Amal, the Hausa language became her only barrier to realising her dream. In an interview with a newspaper, Gabon says that:

Well, honestly I did not had (sic) it easily, but because I also wanted to act in Kannywood, in which I must speak Hausa fluently, I went to Kano and stayed briefly with HRB, the popular Kano based film producing company, learning Hausa and also appearing in films from time to time<sup>61</sup>.

In addition to Amal and Gabon, other non-Nigerian, non-Hausa actors now speak only Hausa in Kannywood films. According to Adamu (2013), most successful Hausa filmmakers are non-Hausa. However, most Kannywood films are in the Hausa language. This fact makes it more evident that the Hausa language has attained a remarkable market value in Nigeria, with Kannywood and the emergent hip-hop music industry as drivers. The Kannywood language ideology and hegemony favour Hausa and the Kano (*Kananci*) variety. According to Suarez (2002, in Mpofu 2021: 42), “linguistic hegemony plays a role when dominant language groups create a consensus by convincing others to accept their language norms and usage as standard or pragmatic”. In Kannywood, many audience members are not happy because there are non-Hausa filmmakers in the film industry. Therefore, the use of Hausa in these films is under censorship

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<sup>61</sup> “Nigeria: I Had to Learn Hausa to Feature in Kannywood - Hadiza Gabon” from <https://allafrica.com/stories/201312300834.html> accessed on 28.10.2020

because of religious and cultural concerns. Thus, a great deal of contestation and negotiation goes on about the use of the language in both films and music (see Adamu 2020).

## **5.2 Language Ideologies: Hausa as a language of Islam and Muslims in Kannywood**

According to Bassiouney (2009: 201), “the term language ideologies refers to the belief system that is prevalent in a specific community about language and language use.” Ideologies may be the ‘cultural constructs’ that Wright (2004: 276) talks about when he says that all language policies:

rest primarily on other conceptual elements – belief systems, attitudes, myths – the whole complex that we are referring to as linguistic culture, which is the sum totality of ideas, values, beliefs, attitudes, prejudices, religious stricture, and all the other cultural ‘baggage’ that speakers bring to their dealings with language from their background.

Bassiouney (2009: 202) further adds that “these beliefs influence language practices and motivate them”. The two anecdotes above (on Hadiza Gabon and Amina Amal) demonstrate such ideologies in Kannywood. Although there is more than one language ideology in most film industries, one ideology is usually dominant, and, in Kannywood, it is the Hausa-Muslim, Kano dialect. Spolsky (2004: 15) posits that “language ideology is language policy with the manager left out, what people think should be done. Language practices, on the other hand, are what people actually do”. Where people use a language is essential in its maintenance. Thus, there are domains for language use such as the home, workplace, places of religious worship, government offices, schools and so forth (Spolsky 2004: 43). Kannywood is one such domains – a repository of Hausa.



The nexus between the Hausa people and Islam does not require any further elaboration. The two have been inextricably linked for centuries. Islam has been in the Hausaland, and in 1804 the Jihad of Usman Dan Fodio instituted Islam as a state religion in most of Hausaland. Islam, as might be expected, heavily affects the way Hausa people speak their Hausa language. According to Adeleke (2005: 107), “Islam and the Hausa language have become the most distinguishing features of the Hausa cultural category”. Reinforced by Shariah, the Kano State Censorship Board and the self-appointed guardians of the Hausa language and culture among the public monitor the language used in Kannywood films. As we saw in the previous chapter, the filmmakers, too, try to avoid trouble by deploying euphemisms and metaphors or rejecting any subject matter that may compel them to use ‘disapproved’, ‘tabooed’ or ‘racy’ language. Nevertheless, this does not always work.

Allan and Burrige (2006: 238) distinguish between individual censoring of language and institutional public censorship of language. Society enforces the former through political correctness. It compels people to speak and act in a manner deemed acceptable in the community or “run the risk of being lumped together with true bigots with malevolent motives”. On the other hand, the latter is exercised by the government “as a means of regulating the moral and political life of their people, controlling the media and communications between citizens against language deemed to be subversive of the common good”. This is why governments in various places, like Kano State, set up censorship boards to control the flow of media information so that what is regarded as violating the moral and religious etiquette of the society is censored. However, the proliferation of popular culture seems to put a severe dent in the work of such censorship boards (Ibrahim and Yakubu 2020: 171).

In 2016, a Kannywood film entitled *Ana Wata Ga Wata* (dir. Ali Gumzak) caused serious controversies both online and offline<sup>62</sup>. The actress, Rahama Sadau, who was earlier banned for life for “cuddling” a male Christian singer, was also at the centre of this controversy<sup>63</sup>. In the trailer for the film, Ms Sadau says that her husband’s best friend (acted by Aminu Sharif, a.k.a. Momoh), who is also her paramour, knows “*hakan rijiya*”, meaning, literally, “digging a well”, better than the husband. The phrase is a double entendre, suggesting that the secret lover has better sexual stamina than her husband. The film is generally about the infidelity going on between a wife and the husband’s best friend. The duo (of Rahama Sadau and Aminu Sharif) have fun before Aminu meets his tragic end. His wife, Fati Washa, who already suspects something going on between the two, puts poison in his food when she visits Rahama’s house and discovers that her husband is in the house. However, after its release, that scene and others considered too crude were censored. The KSCB ordered them to remove these scenes, and the filmmakers complied<sup>64</sup>.

Obscene language in Hausa is always characterised by the mention of the most sensitive parts of the body, such as cunt, penis, vagina, waist, buttock, breast, etc. As Allan and Burrige (2006) argue, tabooed topics centre on the organs and acts of sex, micturition and defecation. Often, a mere mention of these body parts in public will instil anxiety and embarrassment among most

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<sup>62</sup> “Kannywood Film: Ana Wata Ga Wata” from <https://www.facebook.com/muhsin2008/posts/10209886876398550> accessed on 01.11.2020.

<sup>63</sup> “This ‘immoral’ hug got a Nigerian actress banned from acting” from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/10/04/this-immoral-hug-got-a-nigerian-actress-banned-from-acting/> (accessed on 01.11.2020).

<sup>64</sup> Ali Gumzak. Interviewed by the author, WhatsApp, 2.11.2020.

people in northern Nigeria, where Hausa is either a native language or a lingua franca. Concerning this issue, Wardhaugh (2012: 219-220) explains that:

Cultural values determine the way we use language... The culture of a people finds reflection in the language they employ: because they value certain things and do them in a certain way, they come to use their language in ways that reflect what they value and what they do.

The above reason may explain why Hausa people do not approve of using obscene language in public; some shun it completely. In Kannywood, only a Hausa variety that conforms with this perception is 'acceptable'. Any other variety does not have market value. Thus, the 'Muslim's Hausa' is the default, preferred medium of communication in Kannywood. While that binds together communities where the language is in use, it excludes other Hausa users who practise a different religion or have no religion.

The case of Muneerat Abdulsalam, who although not a Kannywood actress, is a significant figure in northern Nigerian Hausa-Muslim cyberspace, is an example. She is a very popular YouTuber-cum- "sex therapist" who currently (in November 2020) has 180,000 subscribers and 360 videos, with more than 36 million views.<sup>65</sup> Ibrahim and Yakubu (2020) find that Ms Muneerat is unique for being more open and upfront, and from a minority ethnic group. Consequently, she uses an accented Hausa language mixed with English. This usage of Hausa enrages her Hausa-majority audience all the more. She recently converted to Islam and promised to continue her "sex

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<sup>65</sup> Muneerat, A. YouTube channel: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOsjZ-aOKBX\\_4Ehbf3UF-Bw/featured](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOsjZ-aOKBX_4Ehbf3UF-Bw/featured) (accessed on 1.11.2020).

education” videos but in an Islamic “compliant” manner. A few months later, she renounced the religion, citing a lack of support from her Muslim brothers and sisters. She added that, instead, many people continued abusing, insulting and cursing her. However, she then came out to retract her speech again. In a moving, lengthy video rant, she explained that she had renounced Islam out of frustration, but that she was Muslim and would die as one<sup>66</sup>.

Ms Abdulsalam’s predicament corroborates Bassiouney’s (2009: 198) assertion that “it is indeed true that the power of language reflects the power of its people.” An Islamic scholar and Hausa lecturer, Dr Muhammad Sulaiman Abdullahi, believed that had Ms Abdulsalam been using her own language or English, her Hausa audience would not have wanted to dictate how she lives her life<sup>67</sup> – almost the same way as they want everyone in Kannywood to be Hausa-Muslim or risk being cast in some ‘toxic’ manner. Beyond the casting issue, according to Fakuade (1999: 59 cited in Adewale and Oshodi 2013: 30), “Hausa has posed [a] serious threat to minority languages in [the] north”. Concerning this, the typecast of Dan Gwari, a member of a minority ethnic group in central Nigeria, is an excellent example. As mentioned in the previous chapters, Dan Gwari is a perpetual abuser of Hausa pronunciations, who also speaks comical, accented Hausa and fails to understand the Hausa culture and Islam. There has never been a film where this particular character has generally behaved like the rest of his colleagues.

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<sup>66</sup> “Maganar Fitana Daga Musulunci [Concerning my renouncement of Islam]” from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zmd421eM3rl> (accessed on 25.02.2021)

<sup>67</sup> Dr. Muhammad Sulaiman Abdullahi. Interview by author. WhatsApp. Cologne, Nov. 14, 2020.

### 5.3 More Impacts of the Commodification of Hausa in Kannywood

Beyond the ethno-religious and artistic issues, as discussed above, the commodification of Hausa in Kannywood and Hausa popular culture has an enduring linguistic implication. A particular dialect – of Kano, the birthplace of the film industry – is preferred, at the expense of other dialects such as the Sokoto one, which are mocked. As it stands now, in film after film like in *Dan Gaske*, *Ibro Hotiho*, *Babban Yaro*, ‘minority’ characters are cast in a negative light. They are never like the rest of the characters in those films. Moreover, this reflects the geopolitics of language in northern Nigeria. Kannywood’s ‘language policy’ supports the Hausa-Muslim cum Kano dialect because all “ideologies are closely tied to politics” (Bassiouney 2009: 203).

However, the story is remarkably different in the music industry, especially the hip-hop genre. Freestyle, code-mixing and code-switching are not only allowed but are also the norm. Hip-hop artists like Ado Abdullahi, a.k.a. Fresh Emir Mai Bakin Aku, deliberately ‘breaks’ his Hausa in order, as he says in an interview with BBC Hausa, to create his unique niche.<sup>68</sup> The late young superstar, Little Amir a.k.a. Lil Amir, and Aminu Abba Umar, a.k.a. Nomiis Gee, among others, did the same. It is pertinent to add that they (Fresh Emir, Lil Amir and Nomiis Gee) were born and raised in Kano's inner city. However, Bala Muhammad, the former director of the Kano State Societal Re-Orienting Directorate (*A Daidaita Sahu*), cautions that although the directorate allows rap, the artists must avoid insults *in Hausa* (Adamu 2020; italics added). The identity of the majority of the population in Kano is predicated on Hausa and Islam.

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<sup>68</sup> BBC Hausa (2020). Mawakin Hausa Hip Hop Fresh Emir ya bukaci shugabannin Najeriya da su rika yin adalci. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d39yMeiQx28> (accessed on 31.10.2020).

The Hausa language did not have much – if any – economic clout in any cinema or in the entertainment industry more generally before Kannywood, and there is no record to suggest to the contrary. But, unlike, say, the English language, which has recognised, even standardised, varieties that are innocuously used in film industries around the world, the Kano dialect, at least in Kannywood, remains the only acceptable variety. Named globally after the most significant Hausa state, Kannywood is a bastion of Hausa speaking people from across Africa, a Hausaphone empire. However, a contradiction creeps in when the varieties of Hausa spoken in those other areas outside Kano are unrecognised in the cinema. Except for the commodified Sokoto dialect or particular types of Yoruba (often acted by a character called Baban Milika), Igbo (performed almost solely by the typecast Baban Chinedu) and Gbagyi/Gwari (acted by Sani Dan Gwari), the rest have no place in Kannywood. Therefore, we can conclude that the linguistic market of Hausa in Kannywood begins and ends with only the ‘standard’ Kano dialect and the varieties mentioned above.

It is pertinent to state that Kannywood’s preference for the Kano dialect has a historical origin. According to several scholars (such as Skinner 1977; Bello 1992, among others), *Kananci* is the closest to the standard variety. Additionally, as mentioned at the beginning of this research (see chapter two), some scholars categorically put the Sokoto dialect below others. For instance, Chamo (2019: 367) remarks that “Sakkwatanci differs from standard Hausa in some areas of phonetics, phonology and lexical variations.” It is worth repeating that the Kannywood filmmakers share Chamo’s beliefs about Sokoto dialect and continually use it to portray its speakers uniquely, if not pejoratively, in several movies, such as *Dan Gaske* and *Babban Yaro*, or even in series like the

soap opera *Dadin Kowa* soap opera. Recently, in Dan Gwari and Baban Chinedu's style, an actor with the screenname "Dan Sokoto" emerged<sup>69</sup>. Although Mustapha Muhammad Malo is from the Sokoto region, he now caricatures the dialect speakers. In other words, the objectified, 'downgraded' dialect is his commodity.

Ironically, for reasons beyond the scope of this work, Kannywood movies are not popular in neighbouring West African countries today<sup>70</sup>. However, anecdotal evidence such as the audiences' comments under Hausa films on YouTube indicates that people in the Gulf countries watch these movies. Several years ago, films like *Daham* and *Ibro a Makkah* were set in Dubai and Makkah, respectively. Except for India, whose cinema, Bollywood, has inspired and influenced Kannywood more than anything else (see Larkin 1997, Maikaba 2004), Kannywood's connection with non-African countries is religious, linguistic and commercial. It is linguistic because there are Hausa-speaking people in Saudi Arabia, thanks to the centuries-old Hajj pilgrimage journey to the Kingdom. Kannywood filmmakers may change the position of Kannywood in West African countries when they welcome artists from there who also retain and portray their identities in films. Nollywood does that, with, at least, Ghanaian and South African actors seamlessly appearing in many movies as either Ghanaians, South Africans or Nigerians. Here, English binds these countries together.

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<sup>69</sup> Irin Gwagwarmayar Da Na Sha Kafin Na Kawo Inda Nake A Yau [My Struggle Before My 'Stardom']" from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5f143RoN58o> (accessed on 04.03.2021).

<sup>70</sup> In conversation with Hamisu Lamido Iyan-Tama, WhatsApp voice call, 02.03.2021.

## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.0 Introduction

This chapter concludes the dissertation. The summary recaps the substantial issues discussed in the entire research work. The conclusion discusses the notable findings, significant contributions and implications of the research project to the existing theories and literature on the matrix between the Hausa language, culture and Islam in the Kannywood film industry. As no research work is perfect, the limitations expound the limits of this work. Although the researcher tried to overcome most of the constraints, they still existed. The last part of the chapter offers some suggestions, especially for future researchers, and also for policymakers in Nigeria. The recommendations are based on the findings of the study.

#### 6.1 Summary

The research work was organised and presented in six chapters. Each chapter discusses relevant, interconnected issues, beginning with an introduction to the entire research problem. Overall, the aim was to explore the nexus and disruption between religion, culture and language, and the Hausa person's identity as presented and represented in Kannywood films. Although examples were drawn from several movies and related events, three specific ones were selected and particular samples were extensively analysed. These were *Dan Gaske*, *Alhaki...* and *Hafeez*.



Therefore, the research sought answers in the ongoing debate that says I) dance and song routines, the practice often cited as the principal point of departure from the Hausa culture and religion (Islam) in Kannywood, could be a universal ethos and not foreign; II) that the same “blighted” dance and song routines, among other things, is what sells Kannywood films, as the audiences like them; III) that being Hausa is not a monolithic identity; thus a few people should not force their linguistic identity, and their regional, scriptural and traditional beliefs onto others; and therefore IV) art should not be unnecessarily censored and repressed as doing so affects its aesthetics, content and context. Consequently, the research explored the conceptual frameworks of culture, religion and language. It also deployed three theoretical frameworks, namely as Audience Reception Theory, Encoding/Decoding Model and, finally, the Language and Economic Model.

The study gathered data using an intensive empirical field research technique in Kano State, Nigeria. I was an emic researcher working on culture, language and religion in an embattled film industry, which many people do not want to be easily associated with. Therefore, I followed the guidelines of the interpretive research tradition, which were suitable for my research questions and objectives. For instance, I know some participants in my research as I am from Kano State, from the culture I study, I speak the local language, etc. Thus, I am, almost by default, already embedded in the setting. The research participants – selected Kannywood active audiences and filmmakers, Hausa language-cum-culture scholars and religious/Islamic scholars – were well aware of the essence of my research, which allowed us not to lose focus.

As I mentioned earlier, the overarching research problems centred around culture, which goes hand in hand with religion. Language is also very close to culture; it is, in fact, the carrier of the culture and an identity marker. Therefore, the conceptual framework expounds on the Hausa culture and Islam, the Hausa people's dominant religion, and the Hausa language itself. It was discovered that there was much debate, contestation and negotiation concerning what is Hausa culture and what is not. It was evident that no culture worldwide is single, pure and unaffected or uninfluenced by other cultures around it. Islam is both the traditional and 'official' religion of the Hausa people in northern Nigeria, if not the entire West African region and beyond. But the faith is itself not monolithic, courtesy of several, often conflicting, doctrinal differences and multiple interpretations of its religious texts, such as the Qur'an, the Hadith and other scriptural sources.

Consequently, some believe that there are acceptable song and dance sequences in Islam, while others claim that the religion does not approve such practices. The same argument, or a similar one, takes place concerning the place of song and dance routines in Kannywood films. Some, among both the filmmakers and the audience, agree that dance routines exist in the Hausa culture; others disagree and pontificate that they are alien. To some, song and dance routines are only part of the film culture, adding that the same is the case even in India; nobody sings and dances with their spouse in the streets of New Delhi. Besides, before the advent of Islam in Hausaland, there were traditional belief systems. However, these have been almost obliterated by the 'new' religion and, therefore, are barely promoted in Kannywood films. Scholars, both cultural and religious, discourage those who attempt to endorse any traditional spiritual practices in their movies.

The language issue is yet another source of contention in the film industry. However, the point is mostly, if not entirely, left unexplored. There is a general assumption that Hausa, especially the so-called standard Kano dialect, is the most recognised choice as the linguistic medium in Kannywood. But a few other filmmakers do make films in the English language, a development that some Kannywood stakeholders reject; to them, movies in any language other than Hausa do not belong in the Kannywood film industry.

Another unmapped territory is the portrayal of characters acting as belonging to non-Hausa ethnic groups or speaking non-Kano dialects. The depiction of such characters is, at best, a form of othering. Here, the findings revealed two significant issues — the commodification of both ‘broken’ and ‘standard’ Hausa and the peripheralisation of the speakers of those dialects. While the non-ethnic Hausa and speakers of the Sokoto dialect use the commodified ‘broken’ variety, the rest use the objectified ‘standard’, the default Kano dialect, to exclude the former group. The Kano dialect also has to conform with the particular, often censored, Muslim variety. Kano, a Shari’ah state since 2001, is seen as both an Islamicate and an Islamic state (depending on one’s view of the law). Therefore, the moral police and the state censorship board reject any language variety deemed religiously and culturally offensive or inappropriate. To navigate this tide, the filmmakers deploy many euphemisms, cues and metaphors or, conversely, entirely avoid topics that may compel them to use such ‘tabooed’ words and phrases. Perhaps this explains why some filmmakers choose to use the English language as a medium in their films. However, like their counterparts in Hausa hip-hop, where using at least a mixture of English is prevalent or encouraged, they still cannot say whatever they want.

## 6.2 Conclusion

The research explores, among other issues, the role of Kannywood in the presentation and representation of the “acceptable” Hausa culture. The research finding corroborates a well-known fact about the culture, namely that it is evolving. Indeed, what people consider “acceptable” or “unacceptable” keeps changing with changes in time and place. Despite the culture war between Kannywood filmmakers and the hegemonic religio-cultural institutions, many directors and producers in the film industry claim to present and represent Hausa culture even better than other institutions. The contestation is endless, and will continue as long as the industry exists and produces films, for human beings are always bound to disagree. Stuart Hall’s encoding/decoding paradigm, used in this research work, demonstrates the inevitability of these incongruities and contestations. No matter how well-crafted, authorial intentions cannot control the audiences’ perceptions of fictional narrative films. That notwithstanding, we can conclude that Kannywood presents both acceptable and unacceptable Muslim-Hausa cultural identities, depending on one’s point of view.

The second research question interrogates the use of religion by both the filmmakers and their critics. It also explores how that affects the art of films in Kannywood. Although there is an increase in film production in Africa and in other countries worldwide, the academic study of the relationship between cinema and religion is in its infancy. Nonetheless, given our empirical data and a few other related studies, we can conclude that strict ‘compliance’ with religion, particularly Islam, affects the aesthetics of Kannywood films. As an audio-visual art that goes with verisimilitude, when Kannywood filmmakers are compelled to avoid anything that could make their movies achieve that effect due to official and unofficial censorship demands, the art suffers.

Opinions differ among the filmmakers. However, scrutiny reveals that even those who, during our interviews, claimed to have no issues with the censorship still do struggle to film as they wish. The case of the film *Ana Wata Ga Wata* and its director, Ali Gumzak, is an excellent example. That is the situation in Kannywood. However, the filmmakers are generally, though arguably, quite successful in swimming against this tide. So, by and large, their films are still artistic by specific standards – although surely not those of Hollywood or of other more developed and better funded film industries.

The last question seeks to determine the role language plays in the construction or deconstruction of the Hausa people's identity in Kannywood. Kannywood is a Hausaphone empire, and its films are mostly in Hausa with, disputably, Hausa ethnocultural themes and motifs. My results show that the film industry practically, if not prejudicially, prefers some varieties and identities over others. First, Kannywood has immensely contributed to the commodification of culture (although this issue is not central to the research) and the 'standard' Hausa language. It is mandatory for aspiring actors to learn Hausa in order to feature in its films. Second, as a commodity, it portrays that the language does not belong to the other ethnic groups living among the Hausa people. Therefore, those 'others' use an objectified 'broken' variety in all Kannywood films, making it look as if the language is un-learnable for them. Third, the portrayal of speakers of other dialects, chiefly from the Sokoto sub-region, deconstructs the identity of these speakers as ethnic Hausa people and casts them, quite toxically, as 'foreigners'. This occurs in several films, much to the displeasure of speakers from that sub-region or of members of the northern minority ethnic groups. With this in mind, it is clear that the Kannywood film industry plays a significant role in the politics

and poetics of the construction and deconstruction of identity of Hausa speakers within and beyond northern Nigeria, its main base.

There is more to the above conclusion. A new generation of non-Hausa filmmakers has recently taken the reins in making films in the Hausa language, culture and entire landscape. It is becoming evident that the Hausa identities are more complicated than what many mainstream Kannywood filmmakers and some audience members, as per the data from this research, imagine it to be. Some of these films include *Jalil* (2020, dir. Kelly D. Lenka), *Voiceless* (2020, dir. Robert O. Peters) and *The Milkmaid* (2020, dir. Desmond Ovbiagele). Although the last two have English language titles, their dialogue tracks are all in Hausa, with a little Fulfulde or Arabic, the latter being the language used sparingly by Boko Haram insurgents. Nigeria submitted *The Milkmaid* as its entry for the 2021 Academy Awards in the Best International Feature Film category. The film is the second to have reached that height, following Genevieve Nnaji's *Lionheart*. This development demonstrates the market value of Hausa-Fulani tangible and intangible heritages. It also proves that the Hausa identity and language is not monolithic. The "Hausanness" of some personnel in Kannywood may be questioned, and it is, but that does not always mean these people are not, indeed, Hausa linguistically and ethnically. Therefore, they may not be ignorant of Hausa culture, as their critics argue.

### **6.3 Limitations**

Like many studies carried out in Hausa-Muslim parts of northern Nigeria, the existing gender separation affects my data collection in at least two ways. First, there is already a paucity of female filmmakers (especially directors) in Kannywood. Thus, the few active ones are hard to reach out

to. I started with one who was then living in London. I thought that, as an ‘informed’ person, she would welcome my request for an interview about her works and related issues. She declined without any explanation. In Kano, too, I tried to sit down with some of them, but they were not available – or perhaps not accessible. In the end, I interviewed a single female scriptwriter. Thus, one of the limitations of this research is the lack of ‘enough’ female filmmakers among the people I interviewed.

The second issue concerning gender was my inability to have female respondents during our Focus Group Discussion. Eventually, I used social networking platforms to contact a few ladies, but some declined or ignored my requests. I avoided asking close friends or family members who indicated interest in helping, for fear that our relationship could influence their responses. Despite having more male participants, the findings still have a degree of authenticity and reliability as, generally, the study works with samples.

Another limitation involved my inability to travel to other states beyond Kano during the fieldwork. Obviously, Kano is the epicentre of the film industry and has people from all parts of the Hausa speaking world. Most known actors and actresses also come to Kano to do films and post-production work such as marketing and distribution. Nevertheless, the data gathered would have had more diversity if I had been able to travel to those states. There might have been other Hausa films by non-Kannywood members, ‘independent’ filmmakers. The prevailing security challenges in northern Nigeria, then and still now, prevented me from travelling. I also have little

or no rapport with any filmmakers, established or emerging, outside Kano. Therefore, reaching out to them via other available means like social media proved difficult. I had to give up.

#### **6.4 Recommendations for Further Work**

Kannywood is a film industry that is growing. Though it is principally domiciled in Kano, as its name suggests, there are other filmmakers in other states in northern Nigeria. Recently, due to the popularity of social media, coupled with the Coronavirus pandemic which forced cinemas to close, many of them, both mainstream and ‘independent’ producers, have opened YouTube channels and are uploading content on topics like sex and intimacy. Such themes were hitherto considered taboo. Thus, mainstream filmmakers avoid these topics like the plague, for fear of the censorship board and the public, or film them in an indirect, euphemism-laden rendition. Therefore, the ‘provocative’ contents of these ‘other woods’ generate tense debates on religion, culture and morality among the audience. To make matters worse, the independent filmmakers and artists are arguably Hausa – and Muslims. This identity further infuriates many of their audience, while others are either unfazed or supportive. As is the case with social media trends, these scandals make the filmmakers and artists more influential, thereby bringing changes to the northern Nigerian cyberspace discourse. Today, some mainstream filmmakers (Adam A. Zango, for example, in his YouTube series, *Farin Wata*) have begun to collaborate with these ‘other wood’ people like Abdul Babulaye, one of the (in)famous actors. Thus, their rise and works call for more thorough research.



The Kano State Censorship Board has been rendered like the proverbial toothless barking dog, unable to control what people watch in their private spaces on their mobile electronic devices. Viewing uncensored, free and ‘explicit’ content has become easy and commonplace. Consequently, some people interrogate the ‘Hausanness’ of these new, independent filmmakers, making the issue all the more interesting. I highly recommend other researchers to explore the online engagement of these YouTube – and Kannywood – celebrities.

Although I explored the issue of commodifying the Hausa language in Kannywood in this work, which is, hopefully, a significant contribution, it deserves a whole dissertation, a more thorough investigation. More researchers should also write on the language ideologies – either English, broken Hausa or the Sokoto dialect – in Kannywood from other perspectives. The few written documents in this area mostly concentrate on the semantics, syntax, and morphology of the Hausa language used in selected films. There is more about language use, as demonstrated in this research, than those issues alone.

Finally, I believe that governments at all levels should have a rethink about Kannywood. The potential of this film industry remains mostly untapped due to its battle with the hegemonic religio-cultural institutions and, to an extent, conservative linguists. Generally, more research works on Kannywood should be encouraged, and even funded, to popularise their productions, enhance their visibility and change people’s perception of them from negative to positive. Generally, film is an effective medium through which many governments, both democratic and authoritarian, have achieved a lot. The Kano state government, in particular, should follow suit.

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Appendix 1 (page 1)



**KANO STATE CENSORSHIP BOARD**  
**(HUKUMAR TACE FINA-FINAI DA DAB'I)**  
*Motto: Ido Mada (Morality is Measurable)*  
Website: WWW.kanocensorsboard.com E-mail: Enquiry@kanostatecensorsboard.com  
P.O. Box 2286 Tel: 08035517111, 08092184438  
Address: 3rd Floor Broadcasting House, (ARTV-44) Maiduguri Road, Hoto, Kano.

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Our Ref: CB/ADM/132 Your Ref: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 07/04/2020

The Managing Director/CEO,  
Arewa 24 Television,  
Racecourse, Nassarawa, Kano

**LETTER IN RESPECT OF KWANA CASA'IN AND GIDAN BADAMASI TV SERIES BEING AIRED BY YOUR TV STATION**

The above subject matter refers.

We write to notify you on the existing Laws of Kano State Censorship Board Law (2001) which stated thus:

*"Section 100(2) that a person shall not be allowed to exhibit a film, a video-work or audio-visual cassette or publications without Censorship Certificate".*

Furthermore, Section 102(2) of the Kano State Censorship Board Law (2001) stated thus:

*"The Board shall not approve a film, video work or (a) Indecent, Obscene or Likely to be injurious to morality; (c) Undesirable in the public interest*

Also Section 102(1)(a) Stated thus:

*"The Board in reaching a decision on a film, video work or publication shall ensure that:*

- (a) Such a film, video-work or publication has an educational or entertainment value, apart from promoting the state culture, unity and interest; and*
- (b) That such a film, video-work or publication is not likely:*
  - (2) To induce or reinforce the corruption of private or public morality; or*
  - (3) To encourage or glorify the use of violence.*

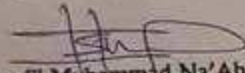
Appendix 1 (page 2)

It is from the foregoing, provisions of the law that we are drawing your attention to a recent episode in a *Tricycle and in Sahad Stores* showing a lady being held by men which is against our norms, values, religion and culture.

It is also in our record that another TV Series being shown by your Station called '*Gidan Badamasi*' is an uncensored and unlicensed film which is an offence contrary to the Kano State Censorship Board law (2001).

It is against the above background that we are giving your TV Station **48hours** from the receipt of this letter to stop showing '*Kwana Casa*' in and '*Gidan Badamasi* for not complying with the laws mandating all films shown in Kano State to pass through Censoring and Licensing by the Kano State Censorship Board and failure to comply with the above notice will attract legal sanctions.


Accept our Warm regards.

  
Isma'il Muhammad Na'Abba Afakallah  
Executive Secretary,

Bello Akalwan  
Jip  
7/11/2020



## Appendix 2



**KANO STATE CENSORSHIP BOARD**  
**(HUKUMAR TACE FINA-FINAI DA DAB'I)**  
*Motto: Ido Mudu (Morality is Measurable)*  
Website: WWW.kanocensorsboard.com, E-mail: Enquiry@kanostatecensorsboard.com  
P.O. Box 2286 Tel: 08035517111, 08092184438  
Address: 3rd Floor Broadcasting House, (ARTV/44) Maiduguri Road, Hoto, Kano.

---

Our Ref: \_\_\_\_\_ Your Ref: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**PRESS RELEASE**

The Executive Secretary Kano State Censorship Board Alhaji Isma'il Muhammad Na'Abba Afakallah expressed appreciation to Arewa24 for their resolved to agree and work hand in hand with the Board.

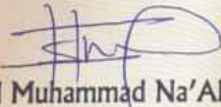
Alhaji Isma'il Muhammad Na'Abba Afakallah after receiving numerous complaints against Arewa24, on their programmes Kwana Casa'in were some indecent scenery were shown by the Station, immediately a meeting was called aimed at resolving the issue amicably.

The Executive Secretary noted the two TV film series Kwana Casa'in and Gidan Badamasi did not pass the process of censoring by the Kano State Censorship Board but are been shown by Arewa TV.

He explained that an agreement have been reached during the meeting that the scenes showing indecency in Kwana Casa'in would be removed immediately before re-airing.

Alhaji Isma'il Muhammad Na'Abba Afakallah said that the Board and Arewa24 resolved that all Kannywood movies and TV Series contents received by Arewa24 must be censored and certified by the Board before airing.

The Executive Secretary therefore commended the Management of Arewa24 for exhibiting maturity during the meeting and wished the resolved issues would be attained to.

  
**Isma'il Muhammad Na'Abba Afakallah**  
Executive Secretary,

## Appendix 3

### Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

The FGD took place at the Brigade Quarters, Kano Nigeria on the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 2020 at 4:30 pm. Before and after starting, we watched several scenes from some Kannywood films that include *Hafeez*, *Alhaki Kwikwiyo* (“Sin in a Puppy”), *Risala*, and some relatively old ones of the late Ibro.

**Muhsin:** *Yau 28 ga wata. Ku fada min sunayenku.*

Abubakar Malami (late 30s, SSCE), Anas Musa (33, master’s degree), Muhammadu a.k.a. Afaku (mid 40s, primary school), Sani Musa Ismail (28, Higher National Diploma), Ismail Ibrahim (35, SSCE; he left before the discussion started), Ishaq Khalid Sulaiman (35, SSCE) and Abdulhalim Ibrahim a.k.a. Fahru (33, bachelor’s degree). Musbahu and Salim Ishaq Hassan (35, bachelor’s degree) joined the discussion later on.

**Muhsin:** *Mene ne ra'ayunku? Da gadin wadannan finafinan, za ka iya cewa al'adar Bahaushe suke nunawa? Misali idan ka kunna finafinan Indiya ko American film, ko babu sound za ka fahimci abinda suke nunawa, wannan ma za a iya cewa haka?*

Anas: A fim din farko, ita matar, babar yaron, shigarta ta Hausawa ce. Ko ba ta yi magana da Hausa ba, duk wanda ya san Bahaushe, ya san wannan shigar ta Bahaushiya ce.

Muhsin: Atamfa?

R: E. Da kuma yanayin daurin dankwalinta.

**Muhsin:** *Bahaushe ne kadai yake saka atamfa?*

R: Shigar ba ta karkace daga tsarin shigar Hausawa ba.

**Muhsin:** *Shigarfa?*

Afaku: Amma shigar da yarinyar ta yi, ba ta Bahaushe ba ce ba. Amma da yake muna yinta ta zama tamu, amma da ya ce mata "ya na ga kin yi shiga haka, ko kina tafiya kasar waje ne?". Ita kuma sai ta ga ai an yi mata wulakanci. Kuma shigar da ta yi, kamar ta Bahaushe, amma ba ta Bahaushe ba ce ba.

**Muhsin:** *Bayan shigar, abinda ta yi fa?*

Afaku: Abin da ta yi ba na Bahaushe ba ne ba. Ta zo gatse-gatse kawai ta zauna a kan kujera.

Sani: Fim din da na kalla na farko. A misali, ka ga farko Hausawa ba haka suke neman aurensu ba da. Idan aminai mata suna son su hada yayansu aure ai ba haka suke yi ba. Iyayen da farko za su fara zama su muhawara kan cewa, me zai hana su hada auren yayan nasu domin kara zumunci. Amman shi ka ga a nan abin da suka nuna, kawai ka ga shi a nan ba haka bane ba.

**Muhsin:** *Ya ya kamata a ce sunyi?*

Sani: Tun farko misali iyaye matan za su zauna su yi muhawara akan cewa me zai hada auren wane da wance domin karfafa zumunci. Amma abinda suka nuna a wannan...Abinda suka nuna a nan

*Muhsin: Baka ganin sunyi maganar?*

Afaku: Shi iya bin iyayensa. Tana biyayya ga iyayensa. Shi ya sa har uwarsa ma ta turo shi ya zo, amma shi bai san gun budurawar zai je ba. An aiko sa da niyyar cewa, ya zo wurin kawar uwarsa akwai wani abu da za a yi, amma shi ba a gaya masa ba kuma shi ba wurinta ya zo ba. Ya zo wurin babarta shi ne ta ce masa je ka falo ina zuwa. Da ya je falo ya zauna, sai ta zo aka zauna su yi hira.

*Muhsin: Ana yin haka common a al'adar Bahaushe? Mace ta zo ta ce "hi"?*

Some: Ana yi

Some: Ba a yi.

Fahru: Ya kamata a ce in ta zo, at least don ta yi selling din kanta a wurinshi, ya kamata at least a ce ta fara da gaisuwa ta durkusa ta gaishe shi. At least wannan kaga cewa, daga nan zai fara ba ta remark din cewa tana da tarbiyya. At least in ta zo ba daga tsaye ya kamata ta ce mai "hi" ba at least ya kamata ko dai ba za ta durkusa ba, ta zauna a kan kujera sannan ta yi mai magana.

Anas: Wato akwai abubuwa da yawa a nan wurin. Na farko, zan koma maganar dressing, saboda ka yi maganar a kaddara ba murya. Maganar sutura tana daya daga cikin abin da ke nuna Bahaushe ko kuma kabilar mutum a lokaci guda. Na farko shi a yanda ya shigo, daga kan gashinsa irin na Musbahu, zuwa kayan da ya saka, zuwa yanayin maganar da ya yi mata gaba daya babu wani abu Bahaushe a ciki.

All: Babu.

Anas: Na farko kenan. Ita kuma duk da za a iya cewa wannan kamar yadda Afaku ya fada al'adar wasu ce ta Larabawa, abaya ta sa baka. Mun dauko amma kuma ya za ma namu tunda ya yi daidai da Muslunci mun karba, za a iya cewa tunda ta shigo kamar Bahaushiya, amma da zuwanta da abinda ta fada masa da abinda ya fada mata da martanin da ta mayar masa gaba daya babu wani abu Bahaushe ni a wurina.

R: Hakane gaskiya babu.

Anas: Amma dai iya inta shiga ne. Saboda na farko in da Bahaushiya in za a hada ku, ko kun san za a hada ku ko ba ku san za a hadaku ba ta zo ta ganshi bako ne a gidansu ko ca aka yi ta zo su gaisa, yanda ta yi masa bai dace ba. A tsari na Bahaushe, tsantsagaryar ko a yanzu yanda zamanin ya canza, yar Bahaushe ba za ta zo ta yi wa bako a gidansu abin da wannan ta yi masa ba. Na farko kenan. Na biyu shi kuma ko me ta yi masa a gidansu a matsayinsa na Bahaushe daga wannan abin kawai sai mari. Wannan abin da ta yi ma bai kai mari ba.

Many: Gaskiya ne.

Anas: Ba Bahaushen gaskiya wanda zai je bakunta wani gidan ai masa wannan abin ya yi mari.

Fahru: Kuma ni abin da ban sani ba. Shi an riga an gaya mai neman aure zai zo gidan ko kuwa da zai zo harda kananan kaya? Idan an gaya mai wajen mace zai je bai kamata ya zo da wadannan

kayan ba. Idan kuma kawai zuwa ne tunda da ma an nuna cewa shi ɗan gata ne don ya je da wannan kayan kuma da rashin tarbiyyarsa is ok amma in dai har neman aure ne gaskiya wannan kayan basu dace ba.

Afaku: Ba ka gani shi bai san da zai zo gidan ba. Ba ka jin abin da ta ce, ta bi malamai ba ta san irin kudin da ta kashe ba don Hafiz ya zo gidan?

Fahru: Eh to amma shin babar ta ce masa ya je ya ga yarta ne ko kuwa?

Afaku: A'a, da ma su can iyayen mata sun daidaita. Amma shi ba a gaya masa cewa zai je ya nemi yarta ba.

Fahru: In dai aure ne ya je nema gaskiya da wannan kayan gaskiya har yanzu ba a yi rashin kunyar da za a yi wannan ba.

***Muhsin:** Ba kwa cewa komai.*

Anas: Ah to ni kuma a wurina, ka gane. Ba rashin kunya ko kunya ko ba. Ni kuma a qurina ba rashin kunya ko rashi kunya ba, shigarsa...

Musbahu: Gaskiya kamar yadda suke fada, ka ga bai dace ba. Ai abinda za ku duba ku gani shi ai duk da haka ina tunanin an gaya masa cewa ga wacce zai nema tunda ya ce ai da ya je gidan wannan yarinyar ga abinda ta yi masa ga abinda ta yi masa. Ka ga atleast ya san cewa dama za su hadu da ita, ga abinda ta yi nasa ga abinda ta yi masa, kuma ta tambaye shi ta ce masa wacce din ba ta san ko waye kai ba to amma da an gaya masa tunda an san zai je, kamar yadda wancan ya ke fada a baya, bai kamata kwata-kwata ma ya zo da wannan shigar ba.

***Muhsin:** Kuma yadda ta zo mai dinfa?*

Musbahu: Ita ma kanta shigowar da ta yi masa bai kamata ba. Ita shigarta duk da a cikin gida ne za ta iya shiga irin wannan kayan ta zo wajensa, amma yanayin zuwan da ta yi masa ne duk su ne bai kamata ba.

***Muhsin:** Kana da aure?*

Musbahu: Ba ni da aure.

***Muhsin:** idan mutum ya je zance, dama mata su kan fito a ba lillibi?*

Musbahu: Shi fa wannan zuwa karo ne na farko ne. Amma in ba haka ba yau za ka iya zuwa da wannan shigar gobe ka je da waccan, an riga an zama daya. Ko da wace irin shiga ka je an sankan.

R: Wato ko da Riga iya vobiya za ka iya zuwa?

Ishaq: Ni abinda na fuskanta a wanna fim ɗin, a zahirin gaskiya ni ban ga al'adar Bahausha a cikinsa ba. Na farko a misali, shi kansa zuwan da ya yi, wasu sun yi complain cewa ya zo da kananan kaya. Kananan kaya ba al'adar Bahausha ba ce ba. Na biyu fitowar da ta yi ita kanta an yi magana a kanta cewa abin da ya dace ta yi. Na farko al'ada da addini, tunda mu Hausawa ne kuma Musulmi. Za ta sako kaya. Ko wannan kayan da ta sako ya yi daidai to ta sako hijabi. Idan ta zo

za ta yi sallama sannan ta gaida shi ko a tsaye ko a zaune duk wanda ta yi za'a iya karba, amma a girmamamawa a al'adance da addini, sunkuyawa za ta yi. Ni abin da na fahimta kenan.

Anas: Ni yadda na fadā na farko zan dora. Ita zuwanta, duk da juyawar zamani, mu kaddara a gidan yān boko suke, ita kanta zuwan nata a gidan yān boko in dai da akwai namiji a gidan baƙo ya zo to ya kamata a ce ta doro mayafi a kan wannan abayar. Ko da ba hijabi ba ne. Hijabi ta dora. Wataƙila ba ta je Islamiyya ba ne ba, ko kuma babanta ba dān Izala ba ne ba, amma zuwan da ta yi wurin ya fadī abubuwa da yawa a haka. Ko da ace ita uwar, na yarda ta yi shiga ta Hausawa. Wannan shiga ce ta Bahaushe. Ko da da baƙo, ai dān kawarta ne, dānta ne. Ai mu na shiga gidan kawayen iyayenmu mu gansu a haka, amma in wanda za ki haɗa da yārki ya zo at least ya kamata ki ƙara da mayafi, tunda ai zai zama surikinki. A al'adar Bahaushe, duk tsayin alaƙarka da mutum, sai ya zamanto surkunta za ta shiga tsakaninku, wani abu yana canzawa komai ƙanƙantarsa. To ka ga ita ba ta nuna haka ba. Ka ga kenan ta fita daga tsarin yanda Bahaushe tsarin yadda Bahaushe yake yi in zai ba wa mutum yārsa. Ita ma zuwan nata da ta zo a haka, amma ni a wuri na shi kuma juyawar zamani ba abinda yake ban a wurinsa, banda wnnan marin da kuma kalamam. Saboda yadda muke yanzu idan aka saba za ka shiga gidansu gidan da ake cew family friends a tsari irin na yān boko a duk irin shigar da ka ke, za ka je neman aure za ka je falo. To amma a yaya aka zo a yaya aka karbe ka is different. In kuka lura ko ruwa ba a kawo masa ba.

Afaku: To ai danne-dannen waya yake.

Anas: E, to ai shi ma danne-dannen wayar juyawar zamani ne. Ko kai ma yanzu in ka je danna waya za ka rinka yi.

Afaku: Yanzu a juyawar zamanin, a al'ada ma ta Malam Bahaushe, a yanzu haka, idan za ka je gidansu yarinya yār masu hannu da shuni, ko ma yār talakawan ce, yamu-yamu haka, idan ka je ka zauna a gidansu yarinya ko a falo haka ko yār uwarku ce, idan baka taba ganinta ba, idan ta zo maka da doguwar riga, ya dace al'ada ta Bahaushe a yanzu za ta iya zuwa ka ganta: akwai breast, akwai baya, ka ga ta yi ko ba ta yi ba. Ba komai dan zuwa na biyu ta zo da gyalenta. Akwai zaituna, komai ya hadu. Amma yarinya siririya kamar kazar mayu.

Anas: Ni a gani na, yana da 'yar da ta isa aure, ba zai bari wani ya zo ya ganta a haka ba.

All: Gaskiya bai dace ba.

Fahru: Shi Hafiz yadda aka nuna shi a rashin tarbiyyarsa a fim dīn, don ya zo a haka ba laifi bane, amma kuma duk da rashin tarbiyyarsa, irin da kalamansa da ya yi da yanda yayi approaching da marin da ya yi, duk bai dace ba.

Anas: Amma ni shigarsa bata yi min komai ba. Ko kai yanzu ya zo wurin yārka a haka, indai ba matsalar sauran abubuwa ba, wannan ba zai sa ka hana shi yā ba, a Hausance.

Ishaq: Amma zan gaya masa ya aske kansa.

Anas: Ka gane abu dāya, ban sani ba, amma ko a da ko a yanzu ba haka ba ne ba, ta ce sun san nawa ta kashe a wurin malamai kafin wane ya zo gidan nan? Ni har yanzu ban yarda ana haka ba, aje har wannan level din ba. Ita uwa har ta rinka yin asiri don wane ya zo wurin yārta.

Fahru and two others: Wallahi ana yi.

Anas: Amma na yarda su matan suna yi.

Fahru: Ni naga matarda asirin ya ki yi, ka san me ta tura 'yar?

Afaku: Ko shekara biyu ba a yi ba a nan, yarinya kullum a hijabi, ga gayu a majalisarmu, akwai yān kasuwa akwai ma'aikatan gwamnati, duk dai babu mai zaman banza. Kawai sai aka yi wani biki, sai ta saka gyale, sai gayu suka ce da ma haka take amma kullum a hijabi. Su kuma duk sun kakkai kudinsu nesa, sai suka ce da ma haka wannan yarinyar take muka kai kuɗinmu nesa. Ni gaskiya ta birge ni da ta zo da gyale, amma yarinya kullum a hijabi. Al'ada fa ta juya.

Fahru: A da ba haka bane ba, amma banda yanzu. Zan ce zan je, da muka yi waya sai na ce mata kananan kaya ne a jikina. Ni ban taba zuwa da kananan kaya a jiki na ba gaskiya sai na ce mata, To bari na koma na canza kaya in dawo zan wahala, amma idan tana ganin ba wani abu ba ne ba zan iya zuwa a hakan, sai ta ce ba komai.

Anas: Amma kai a yanzu, ka zo ka tarar dan abokinka da yārka ta fito a yadda wannan ta ke? Za ka bari? Kai ko matarka ta na so ta haɗa shi aure da yārka a yanzun da zamanin ya canza mun yarda, sai ka shigo ɗakin, sai ka tarar da su a falo a yanda ita take a zaune suna hirar arziki ba wai suna faɗa ba ko wani abu, ba za ka hana ta next time idan ya zo ba? Ko kuma kawai ba za ka ji bata kyauta ba?

Afaku: Ya danganta da yadda na gan su.

Anas: A'a, a yanda ka gansu ɗin nan, a kujerar nan da wannan.

Afaku: Ba komai.

Some: Allah ya taimaki tsoho.

Ishaq: Maganarka bata hau kan network ba. A matakinka na uba, duba ga cewa, Allah (S.A.W.) Ya ce "Ku amfusakum wa ahalikum nara...", sai ka zo ka tarar da yārka ta fito gaban saurayi, ba gyale a jikinta ba hijabi ai ya kamata za ka ji ranka. Saboda yarinyar nan...

Anas: Ai bai zama sincire ba. Ai da farko cewa ya yi ba komai. Ga hips ga breast, da aka zo kan yārsa kuma sai ya ce ya danganta.

All: Ya hau kan katanga.

Ishaq: Ka yi karo.

Fahru: Ina ganin su suna ganin haka is ok, amma ni ina ganin har yanzu a al'adarmu ta cikin gari ba'oa saba haka ba, ban sani ba dai ko a wasu unguwannin amma ni dai a sani na a cikin gari ba'a haka.

Anas: Kawai yanda na faɗa, they overdo it. Ko a yanzun duka sincerely. babu wanda zai je neman aure gidan su yarinya, komai alakarsu, ko ɗan ya da ɗan kani su ke da ita, a barta ta fito ba gyale, sai dai idan ba nemanta ya fito ba, kawai zumunci ya zo. Amma in dai maganar aure za ta shiga, ana sa ran da gaske ake, ba kawai pretending ake ba, ba za ta saka gyale ta fito haka ba, za a bar ta

ta fito a ganta da gyale, koda ita kadai ce a gidan tana da kanne tana da yayye, zai kasance ta dai dan fita daban saboda ai wurinta aka zo. Mu dai a al'adance kenan.

Ishaq: Abin da kake magana, talla ne amma ba na aure ba. Talla ne na ga budurwa a gida.

**Muhsin:** *sannan ina ga abinda kanwarta take kokarin yi fa?*

Ishaq: Snatching ake cewa ko me?

Fahru: Kalaman da ta fada wa babar ne, wato "ko ba kya sona?" Ai ya yi tsauri. Ko ana yin haka?

Musbahu: Ce mata ta yi za ta nemo mata wanda ma ya fi shi. To amma inda take ce mata "ita ta gane dama bata kaunarta ko ta fi kaunar wance?"

All: Gaskiya bai kamata ba.

Fahru: Ba normal ba ne ba gaskiya. Idan ta ce na ga Umma kin fi son wance, amma ki fadi, na ga alamun ba kya sona. Ai ba kya sona daban yake da kin fi sonta. Wannan wace irin magana ce, sai dai a kance, "ai da man wane shi ne dan lele a gida, momy ta fi sonsa", ai wannan normal ne ana yi, amma ai wannan on a serious note ki ce na fahimci kamar ba kya sona, maganar ta yi nauyi.

Anas: Amma idan za a kalli maganar a context, ni a wurina, tarbiyyar gidan da kuma yanayin matar irin wadannan ya faru ba wani ba komai ba ne ba.

Ishaq: Ta fadi wata magana. "Allah wadarai" tsinuwa ce.

Anas: Wataƙila ta daƙe tana irin wannan. Laifinda bai kai wannan bama ku kue gani as normal, za ta iya yi irin wannan. Ko a yanzu a zamantakewarmu irin ta yanzu ba a cikin fim ba, gidan da bashi da tarbiyya sosai, irin haka za ta iya faruwa, kuma babu abinda za yi.

Sani: Mu dawo baya, misali, lokacin da shi saurayin ya zo gidan, may be uwar tashi ta ce zai je gidan, may be kafin ya je gidan may be mahaifiyarsa ta riga ta fada uwar wannan yaron cewa... Abin da fim din yake nuna mana shi ne, wannan saurayin ba a nan ma ya yi karatu ba shi, zai yiwu ya je can Turai ne ya yi karatu. Shi ma halayyarsa ba irin ta nan ba ce ba,

**Muhsin:** *Zaman turai ya lalata tarbiyyarsa Kenan?*

Sani: Don ya zo da wannan shigar normal ne. Don ta zo a wannan shigar kaga ba irin jigari-jigarin matan nan ba ce ba. Amma awani bangaren, ita yarinyar, ana tunanin duk wanda ya fita waje zai debo wasu dabi'u, kaza kaza. Abinda yake nunawa a wannan fim din ni yanda nake kallon wannan saurayin, yana da dan tarbiyya. Tun farkon shigowar za ka ga ai wani kallo da ya yi mata, sai ya yi mata kallon sama da kasa, sai yaga kwata kwata ba irin wannan yarinya yake so ba.

Afaku: Mal. Sanu, da ka ga fim din daga farko har karshe.

Sani: Abin da aka kalla, ya isa.

All others: Ba al'adarmu ba ce.

**Muhsin:** *Sample ne. Da muna da lokaci da gabaki daya fim din za mu kalla.*

Afaku: A fim din bashi da tarbiyya, sai daga karshe yake samun tarbiyya.

**Muhsin:** *Amma bari mu dan kara ganin wannan scenes din kamar na minti biyar haka. Ba wancan fim din bane ba, wannan “Alhaki ne”. Daman abinda nake so n ace kenan. Mene ne ra’ayinku?*

Fahru: wallahi ba’a jin komai in anga wannan...

Salim: Ba wai ba’a jin komai bane ba. Most of us in munga wannan bamu san me ake yi ba a lokacin.

**Muhsin;** *for record, namiji ne yake taba mace a kan gado.*

Salim: Akwai fina-finan da iyayenmu ba sa so a kalla tare da yara. Idan an zo wajen sai ka ga...

Ishaq: Ana sukur-sukur...

**Muhsin:** amma yanzu Salim me ya canza, tunda a lokacin bamu san me ake yi ba? Yanzu yaran yanzu sun me ake yi?

Salim: Yaran yanzu suna da wayewa sun sani.

Afaku: Sigowar wannan wayar sun waye. Waya ce z aka yi ta ganin abubuwa, ba sai na fad aba dai kowa ya sani.

**Muhsin:** *Amma muna kallon Indian fim. A American fim ana yin abinda ya wuce haka.*

All: Ba al'adarmu ba ba.

Afaku: E, shigowar wayarnan ne, yara duk sunbi sun waye.

**Muhsin:** *To amma wannan ba fim bane ba?*

All: E, fim ne.

**Muhsin:** *Alal misali, kamar bag aske bane ba?*

Fahru: Abin da ake yi a Indian fim da American film ai ba al'adunmu ba ne ba. Kabilu idan sun yi irin wannan dame-damen jikin ni ko birge ni ba sa yi, amma idan Bahaushiya ce tana attracting din mutane. Abin da ba naka ba ne ba ruwanka. Ni fa da na je camp, duk wannan shigar da su ke ba su birge ni ba. Ni ko a jikina.

Salim: Yanzu idan arniya za ta wuce ta nan da irin shigar, duk hankalinmu za ka ga ya je gunta, kowa zai fadi albarkacin bakinsa, amma idan yar uwarka ce Bahaushiya saboda sentiment din cewa 'yar uwar ka ce addininku daya kuma ga abin da addininmu ya fada. To ina iyayenta?

**Muhsin:** *Idan Balarabiya ko kabila Musulma ta yi irin haka, z aka damu?*

Salim: Ba damuwa gaskiya, saboda har yau akwai wani view da muke da shi cewa, in dai mutum ba Bahaushe ba ne ba ya yi wani abu marar kyau a addinace, ba ka kallonsa a in wani ya yi matsayin wani laifi sosai saboda daman kana ganin cewa ai shi Bayerabe daman Musluncin nasa ai rabi da rabi ne.



Ishaq: Shi al'adarsa ita ce addini.

**Muhsin:** *idan Balarabe da su suka kawo addinin ya yi fa?*

Salim: A misali akwai abin da idan Balarabe ya yi, idan ka san Musulmi ne, saboda shi Musulmi ne, addini ya hada ku, za ka fin jin dar a zuciyarka.

**Muhsin:** *Saboda a fim din Larabawa, zaka ga suna runguma, har rike hannu.*

Ishaq: Ba ma a fim ba ai Larabawan sukan yi a gaske ma.

Anas: Amm fa su kiss a ala'adarsu daidai ne. Har rungume juna suke da dan tattaba baya.

**Muhsin:** *Basu damu da addini ba Kenan? Addine ne ko al'ada?*

Almost all: Al'ada ce ba addini ba.

Salim: Idan Balarabe ya yi abu, a duniyar Muslunci, ko Balaraben nan ba Musulmi ba ne ba, duniyar Muslunci tana dan tabuwa. Bari na ba ka misali. Akwai wata, Mayer Janifa, wata mace ce yar Labanon. BF ta yi between 2014-2016. A shekara daya ta yi fm din ta shiga harkar, amma in ka ga yadda media ta yayata, ba don komai ba sai don yar Labanon ce. Ana ganin cewa Balarabiya ce, sai aka yi amfani da wannan damar. Kirista ce fa, iyayenta 'yan Katolika ne, amma sai aka yi amfani da wannan damar aka nuna cewa ga fa wata Musulma ta shigo wannan harkar. A shekarar 2016 aka ba ta award cewa the best performer. Kudin da ake biyanta ya ninka na kowace mace a wannan shekarar. A cikin irin wadannan fina finan, sai ta yi wani acting da hijabi, yan ISIS sai suka fara threatening dinta, daga karshe sai ta tuba, ta daina bata Muslunta ba. Ta yi aure.

Fahru: Bana son...saboda sai a nuna maka cewa duk wani abu da kake ji ana ce maka Muslunci to suma ga shi nan suna raping. Kamar ana ce maka ne ka dan rage wani kaifin kiyayyar. Kuma mu gaskiya abin da ya sa mu a nan irin abubuwan basu zama normal ba, shi ne, babu wanda ya taɓa ganin babansa ko babarsa suna yi. Ko ba haka ba, mu ba mu san ana yi ba, amma su Larabawa suna gani a gida haka, amma mu nan babu wanda ya taɓa gani.

Sani: Yanzu kai sani kana da damuwa da irin wannan scene din? A fim din yanzu ko na da?

**Muhsin:** *Wannan.*

Fahru: Gaskiya akwai damuwa. Kawai ni saboda kada yara su ga wannan abin ne.

**Muhsin:** *Ka yarda a yi irin wannan a fim?*

Fahru: Gaskiya ba zan ce na yarda ayi a fim ba.

Sani: Gaskiya ni damuwata a Musluncin ne.

Fahru: Duk wadannan ba arna ba ne ba, Musulmai ne.

**Muhsin:** *Suna cewa a I fim ne bag aske ba.*

Abubakar: Matsalar kwaya daya ce. Suna kokarin koyar da tarbiyya ce, tunda idan mutum yana kokarin koyar da tarbiyyarmu as in a al'adar Bahaushe, cewa, mutumin da ba maharraminka ba,

haramun ne a haɗa jiki kuma abu ne na rashin kunya. Tunda suna so su koyar da tarbiyya ne, a wurina, sun sabawa al'adar Bahaushe.

Anas: Wani abu da aka tsallake a nan shi ne, wannan a yadda aka nuna a nan ai matarsa ce, kai ba ka kama matarka?

*[Indistinct chat]*

Abubakar: E, amma ai ba a gaban mutane ba

Anas: Ni a wurina, ordinarily, ko kai matarka idan ba ta da lafiya haka za ka yi mata a gaske, amma saboda shi fim, na farko, za a iya haskawa a sinima, za kuma a iya nunawa a public, za kuma a kalla mafi yawa ba mutum daɗɗaine yake kallon fim ba, a nan matsalar take, saboda ko ni idan zan yi wa matata amma in akwai mutane a gurin ba zan mata haka ba.

Salim: Ba ta kama ba kenan

Anas: Amma at this context a ce akwai wasu matan, ko an yi baƙi ko wani abu a gidan wannan abin ya same ta ba zan zo na yi mata haka ba ko da a cikin gidana ne.

**Muhsin:** *To ya z aka yi?*

Anas: Sai in ba wa kishiyar in ce shafa mata.

**Muhsin:** *In kuma bata iya shafawa ba ko kuma duka kishiyoyin basa jituwa.*

Anas: Tunda ba mutuwa za ta yi ba, da wannan da wannan banda wannan banda wannan, sun sani cewar idan da mutane ko mata ne in babu wanda ai mata indai ba dsprate irin dying situation bane kawai shafawa ko maganin bata. Irin wannan ai ba za ka tallafota ba, amma daga kai sai ita a ɗaki sai ka dan tallafota ta ka ba ta magani ta sha.

**Muhsin:** *Kai mene ra'ayinka?*

Ishaq: In dai mata suna wajen, zan iya cewa wance, zo ɗan shafa mata wannan.

**Muhsin:** *Kai fa?*

Salim: Gaskiya ni na ɗan saba da Anas a nan, saboda ni a zahiri ni ina ma yin haka gaskiya. Misali, lokacin da mata tana naƙuda.

Anas: Naƙuda ai ta wuce nan. Shi ya sa na ce idan ba dying situation ba.

Salim: Ai magana ake a gaban mutane da mata har guda uku. Ni nake tallafota a wurin, y'ar gidan kanin baba na ce, sauran kuma duk makotanmu ne

**Muhsin:** ba kwa ganin tunda mutanen cewa su ke suna koyarda tarbiyya, to mene idan sun nuna haka?

Anas: Tunda kai har ka yi

Salim: Magana ta fuskar haramci zuwa wurin boka a fim. Kamar yadda ake zuwa wurin boka a Muslunci, ai ka san a aikace a gaske dai a cikin fim ɗin ba yi aka yi ba, domin ba'ayi asirin ba,

domin in mutum a gaske ya aikata hakan ya aikata haramun, to wannan a iya cewa wasa ne koda ka gani afim anyi. Domin a wajen fim ɗin, yanda aka nuna ai wannan asirin ba a kulla shi da gaske ba. Ba a yi wannan shirkar ba. To wannan wasa ne, amman wannan. Wannan kuwa zancen a ce wasa ne bai taso ba, amma wannan an aikata a aikace. Wannan a aikacen ya nuna cewa da gaske ake wannan taɓawar, duk da cewa a fim ne. A lokacin ya aikata haram fa, kuma zunubi za a rubuta masa, in ta fuskar haramci kenan. Haka ma a al'adancen ma za mu ga cewa ya saba.

***Muhsin:** Ina ga kamar yiwa abin bauta sijada a cikin fim, ko k ake abin bautana kendar, ka biya min bukata?*

Salim: Ka ga shi ma wannan yana daga cikin abin da malaman Saudiyya suka haramta gaskiya.

Anas: Na Kano fa?

***Muhsin:** Ra'ayinka nake son ji.*

Afaku: Na yarda da wannan ra'ayin.

***Muhsin:** Kai a ganinka, a ci gaba da irin wanna fim din?*

Salim: Ka fadi wani abu irin wannan, indai ka fada, duk da ka kudirce a ranka cewa ba da gaske bane ba, gaskiya bai dace ba, saboda shedan zai iya tahowa ta nan.

Afaku: Yanda aka daina ɗin ya yi dai-dai.

Musbahu: Abin sai dai dada kauwa.

***Muhsin:** Me ya canza?*

Ishaq: Wani irin canjin aka samu yanzu. Irin shigar da mata su ke yi yanzu, ta fi ta da muni. Wannan taɓe-ɓaben da ake yi kuma, a yanda za a nunawa mutane, sabanin korafe-korafe da malaman addini suke yi, an dan sassare wasu abubuwan za a je a tattace, amma akwai wasu abubuwan da ake yi har yanzun amma yanzu sakamakon ana daddatsewa, ba za mu gani ba amma shigar da ake yi yanzu, da ba a yi.

***Muhsin:** ba ana cewa zamani ya lalce ba? A da ne ya lalace ko kuma yanzu?*

Fahru: A film wai?

R: ko a da...

Fahru: Mutanen da sun fi tsoron Allah ba su da ilimi irin na mutanen yanzu. amma yanzu akwai ilimin sai dai ba a amfani da shi. Shi ne bambancin.

Anas: Zan iya tunawa sanda aka yi wannan fim ɗin, ana ta yama-ɗiɗi da fim ɗin. Ko a lokacin ba a karɓe shi ba, saboda ya saba al'ada da addini da shi da wani fim da Ɗan Ibro ya yi wanda ake rawar Salawitu salo. Abubuwa biyu zuwa uku da aka yi a fim ɗin ana ta yamaɗiɗi da su. Wadannan abubuwan su suka saka hukuma ta yi wani abu saboda outcry na mutane. Saboda haka ni ina ganin duk da zamani ya canza, akwai abin da still mutane ba sa karɓa sai idan abin ya wuce yanda za ka

iya yin wani abu. A lokacin babu abin da mutane za su iya yi. Gwamnati ce kawai za ta iya yin wani abu, sai daga baya aka yi wani abu bayan an yi abubuwan Maryam Hiyana.

**Muhsin:** *Kai yanzu ka yarda a rinka yi tace finanfanai?*

Anas: Abinda na yardada shi shi ne, ita harkar fim na Hausa a kowani yanayi, ya kamata ace akwai regulation. Ya zamto abinda za a yi a fim ya kasance ya dace da addini da al'ada. A sa doka ta yin kaza da kaza.

**Muhsin:** *Amma fa fim nake Magana.*

Anas: Fim din fa. saboda mutanen nan, magana ta gaskiya akwai jahilci da yawa yanda malam ya fada a tsarinsu. Idan ka bar su babu sa-ido abin zai ta wuce ka'ida.

**Muhsin:** *Amma ni sai nake ganin a kamar kwai fim industries a duniya da yawa, akwai a Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Saudi Arabia, Eghypt da Malasia, duk kasashen Musulmai ne, kamar suna yin abinda wata kil yafi haka. Su can mene yake faruwa? Saboda fim da reality ba bambanci?*

Anas: Mu abu biyu ne suka haɗu, addini da al'ada. Wato idan ka kalli abin ta fuskar addini, ko da bai ci karo da al'ada ba, to a al'adar munfi tsaurarawa, sannan har yanzu, wayewar mu ba ta kai yanda abin da wasu suke ganin ba komai ba ne mu ma mu gansu a haka, sannan yanda muke tasowa da addini ya bambanta da yadda su suke tasowa da shi. Mu mun dauki addinin har zuci sabanin su. Idan ka dauki wadanda suka dauki addinin har zuci yarsu, za ka ga cewa ba sa son wasu abubuwan da ke faruwa. Misali, mai shekarunka yanzu a Pakistan, watafala tunda ya tashi bai ga wani yana salla a gidansu ba kuma zai je ya sha giya ya dawo gida babu abin da za a yi masa misali. Yanayin rikon addininmu da al'adarmu daban yake da na kowa, sannan mu kuma muna conservatism da yawa a al'ada. Wani lokaci ba ma yarda zamanin ma ya canza domin ai don zamani ya canja, ba hujja ba ne ba kai ma ka canza, ko da ka canja baka sani ba, har yanzu ba mu kai matakin da za a ce don zamani ya canza ba to ai ba wani abu ba ne ba. Censorship ba siyasa, ya zama dole. Su ma Turawan da suke yin fim akwai abin da ba sa yarda a nuna wanda ya dangance su. Ko su idan suka yi fim za kaga sun yi rating film din. Idan za su nuna fim za su ce daga dan shekara 18 ne. Idan za a nuna fim din da bashi da wani explicit content da wanda aka nuna namiji da mace suna wani abu da ba daidai ba, za ka ga an ce dan shekara 16. Za ka ga wani fim din an ce dan shekara 14 zai iya shiga. Suna nunawa based on shekaru abin da yaro zai iya dauka na wanda ba dai-dai ba. To mu ma ya kamata koda mun dauko su, koda kasashen Yahudawan suna yin irin wannan rating din to su ma Musulman suna yi, to mu kuma sai a barmu sakaka babu censor? To ai wannan din shine censorship din. A ce daga 18 zuwa sama ne za su kalli wannan fim din, ai shima censorship ne saboda ita hukuma ce ta sa in za ka nuna abu kaza ka yi rating dinsa in fim din kuma ka kawo su sai su yi rating. Ni gaskiya view dina kenan.

**Muhsin:** *Rawa da waka fa. A ci gaba da yi? Mene ne ra'ayinku?*

Salim: Gaskiya ni a ra'ayina, sau da yawa fim din da ya fi burge ni shi ne wanda ba waka. Sau da yawa fim din ba waka ko daya za ka gane essence din ma saka waka din. Wani lokaci sai ka ga wakar ba ta dace ma a yi ta ba, kawai sai ka ga an saka ta.

**Muhsin:** *Yaushe ne ya kamata a yi waka?*

Salim: Waƙar suna saka ta ne kawai domin ɗebe kewa.

**Muhsin:** *Akwai makanin waka a fim?*

Fahru: Misali idan an yi wani moment na soyayya ai sai a saka waƙar da ta dace da wannan yanayin. Amma wallahi akwai finafinan da kawai ana cikin nuna wa kawai sai ka ga an katse fim an saka waƙa a inda bai kamata ba, ba ta ma da alaƙa da fim ɗin. What is the essence of that waƙa ma da ake sakawa? Wani lokaci, waƙar ma bai kamata a saka ta ba, kawai sai ka ga an saka ta.

**Muhsin:** *Kafin ayi muku aure kai da Zainab, kun taba yin waka?*

Fahru: Ko a Indiya ai ba a waƙa. Kawai ita wannan waƙar ai dadadawa ce kamar yadda ya fada maka.

**Muhsin:** *Ni ra'ayinka nake son ji.*

Fahru: Babu wata al'ada da ake yin rawa da waka tsakanin saurayi da budurwa, ko a Turai ko a Indiyar ma.

Anas: Ai ana zuwa club?

Fahru: A'a, ana dai gasar rawa. Akwai club din gasar rawa dai.

Salim: Shi wanna ai ba al'adarmu ba ne ba.

Fahru: Dadadawa dan kallo ne kawai. Ni gaskiya ina son waƙa, amma ni dai gaskiya na fi son ta audio. Ka ga yanzu kusan duka waƙar Umar M. Sharif ina da ita, amma ba na jin ina video guda 20 nasa.

**Muhsin:** *Kana supporting a ci gba Kenan?*

Fahru: Waƙa ba lallai sai an saka ta a fim ba, amma idan an saka ta takan yi min dadi. Ai idan ba waƙa fim ɗin ma ba zai yi dadi ba. Mansur ma ɗin ma ai waƙoƙin ne suka sayar da shi ba wai content ɗin fim din ba. Da waƙoƙin ake janyo 'yan kallo.

**Muhsin:** *Kai menen ne ra'ayinka?*

Musbahu: A ra'ayina, ina dai batun waƙa ne bai kamata ba? Ko da za a yi waƙa da rawa, irin shigar da ake yi ai ba ta dace ba. Kamar Maishinku za ka ga idan zai yi rawa ai ba ya rawa, ka bar shi dai da daga hannu. Ni na yarda in dai za a yi waƙa a yi amma banda rawa.

Rabiu: Ita fa rayuwa, ko ka shiga du ko ka fita du ce.

Anas: Ni ina da different ra'ayi gaskiya. Akwai abu guda 3. Wato rawa da waƙa da kiɗa. A wurina, duka a ci gaba da saka su a fim. Zamani yana canjawa kuma ko ni na yarda a tafi da zamani, amma kowanne kuma, idan za a saka sa a muhallin da Bahaushe yake sa sa, zai fi dadi. Tsaya ka ji. Akwai wani lokaci da aka yi wata waƙa ta Ki Yarda Da Ni. Ba wanda zai ce waƙar ba ta yi dadi ba ko ba saka ta a muhallinta ba, a background ake saka ta. Ta yi dadi. Har so kake a zo inda za a dan sako muryar Mandawari yana yin waƙar.

**Muhsin:** *A yi ta background kenen?*

Anas: A'a. Ba iya ta background ba. Idan muhallin waƙa da rawa ya kama, kamar misali irin wannan da ake nunawa yanzu, ai sai a sa.

**Muhsin:** *Bari mu gani kada ka yi jumping to conclusion.*

Ishaq: Malamai suna ta yaƙi da abin, amma abin ya fi ƙarfinsu.

Anas: Ni ka ga abinda nake cewa. Kamar wannan waƙar yanzu, kamar idan bikin aure ake yi. Da rawar da waƙar da ƙidān duka an yi su a muhallinsu, ni a wurina. Mece ce matsalar wannan a al'adance?

Anas: Ai in ka lura, wakokin da ɗin, daga haka suka zama na yanzu. A da waƙa takan ɗan yi making sense.

**Muhsin:** *Irin wannan waƙar da waccen, wacce ce ya kamata a nuna?*

Afaku: Wannan waƙarmu a al'ada, in dai ba a masarauta ba, babu inda za ka ji ta.

**Muhsin:** *Wannan waƙar is ok?*

Afaku: Wannan waƙar ta fito da al'ada ta Hausawa.

Salim: Yawanci dressing ne yake bata waƙar yanzu gaskiya. Dressing din da ake yi ka ga mace malam.

Anas: Wannan fim ɗin sabo ne ko tsoho?

Fahru: Sabo ne.

Anas: Shi wannan da kuke magana "waƙar yanzu waƙar yanzu" shi ma ta yanzun ce. Ka ga wannan ai ta masarauta ce. Ni abin da nake cewa shi ne, ita waƙa da rawa a fim kowanne yana da muhallinsa. Yana da inda za a saka shi ya dace kuma zai karbu. Ba wanda zai ga wannan ya ce ba ta yi ba. In dai fim ɗin ya bada ma'ana to waƙar ma ta bayar.

Almost all: Ni a al'adance wannan ta yi.

Salim: Waƙar ai ta hau muhallinta.

Afaku: Malam Zalimu.

**Muhsin:** *N ga kamar wadannan ma basu saka mayafi ba, amma duk babu wanda yak e Magana a kan hakan.*

Salim: Duk da a kan doron al'ada muke magana, amma fa in dai a addinace ne to ai ba za su karbu ba. Gaskiya kenan. Saboda ai shi addini, abin da yake tunani shi ne. Kun ga abin da nake gaya muku. Shi wannan da kuke magana a kai, waƙar yanzu waƙar yanzu ai shima na yanzun ne. Ka ga wannan ai ta masarauta ce. Ka kebanace da wacce ba muharramarkaba a addinace ai haramun ne. Ka ga irin rigunansu kuma sun kulla wani abu, ga shi babu gyale a jikinsu

Anas: Ni a gani na, ko a addinace wannan waƙar ta yi. Ni ba malami bane ba, ku ne malamai. Izala ce ta haramta irin wadannan abubuwan ba addini ba. Wallahi ba addini ba ne ya haramta ba.

Many: A'a.

Ishaq: Addini ne. Idan katuntubi malmai za ka tabbatar da hakan. Fin karfinsu aka yi.

Anas: No!

Ishaq: Ba hakan bane ba wallahi. Shi addini yana tafiya da al'adar mutanen wuri.

Salim: Za ka ga mace ta saka abaya ta rufe jikinta kuma ba a rawa sai rawrsu ta Sahawa. Ko a nuno ta tayi, shi ma sai a nuno sa ya yi. Still a wanan zamaninma ana yi. Ni abin da yake ba ta min rai, Wakokin Turawan nan ka ga wani irin dressing.

Many: Ciyaman! [referring to late Rabilu Musa Ibro]

R: Allah ya jikan rai.

***Muhsin:** Abinnan yana bani mamaki, a matsayi nan a researcher, b azan ce gar a'ayi na ba. Kullum idan ana magan sai a ce zamani ya lalace, to amma a da da yanzu yausha suka fi tarbiyya?*

Fahru: Shigar da ake yi a wancan lokacin ita ce dai ake yi a fim kuma ita ce ake yi a gari. Sai dai kawai a fim ba sa yafa mayafi. Amma duk irin damewar da ake a fim shi ne ake yi a cikin gari. A da irin kayan da Fati Muhammad da su Abida suke sakawa, irinsu ne dai yayyanmu suke sakawa. Kawai dai abinda ake yi a fim a yanzu amma a da ba'ayi shi ne su 'yan fim ba sa yafa mayafi kuma a gari ma an fara yi.

***Muhsin:** Za mu iya cewa 'yan Kannywood sun a nuna abinda yake faruwa kenan a cikin asociety?*

Ishaq: Ai su suke juya society din.

Fahru: Wannan sallar idan kuna lura, za ku ga yan mata suna yawo da wani mayafi shara-shara ko mayanin tatar koko bai kai ba, bari na fada maka wani abu: duk mayafin da yan mata suka saka a Kwana Casa'in irin wannan ne. Tun daga farkon fim din har karshensa.

Musbahu: Ba wai wani mayafi rariya ba. Ido na ganin ido. E wannan.

Fahru: Duk mayafin da budurwa ta saka a Kwana Casa'in irin wannan ne.

Anas: Amma ai Kwana Casa'in bai isa ya yi representing din Kannywood ba. Saboda...

Fahru: A gunsu ake ganin wasu abubuwan daga baya kuma sai ya zama normal. Yanzu Ina fim din da aka yi da Nafisa Muhammad a cikin Northwest [University] din nan [Sirrin Da Ke Raina]?

***Muhsin:** Nafisa Abdullahi?*

Fahru: E, normally take zuwa makaranta ba mayafi har muka yi criticizing fim din cewa ba al'adar mutanen Kano ba ce ba duk da an nuna fim din a Kano n a kuma Northwest. Na manta sunan fim din.

***Muhsin:** Wannan misrepresentation ne?*

Fahru: E, misrepresentation ne. Wani abin daga wurinsu ake fara ganowa sai a ce ai normal ne. Sai a kwaikwaye shi a wajen gidan biki. Yanzu idan ka je gidan biki mata ajiye mayafi suke yi babu hijabi. In dai ka ga mace da mayafi a gidan biki to matar aure ce. Su ba tarbiyya ce da su ba.

Abubakar: Gaskiya su kuma suna kwaikwayon al'umma a kan abin da ke faruwa, especially zamantakewa ta rayuwa. Generally, wani abin sai ka ga sai bayan ma ya faru a physically sai su nuna sa a cikin fim daga baya.

Fahru: Da yawa su suke canza al'umma.

*Muhsin: Ka yarda kaima su suke canza al'umma?*

Anas: No ni ban yarda su suke canza al'umma ba, amma suna da tasiri...

Abubakar: Gaskiya su suke kwakwayon al'umma a kan wani abu. Musamman zamantakewa ta rayuwa. Wani abin ma sai ya faru physically sannan za ka ga sun saka a fim.

Fahru: Shi da mu dressing muke magana a nan.

*Muhsin: A generally nake magana.*

Abubakar: Abin da yān Kannywood suke koyawa mutane abu dāya ne wato dressing. A wannan bangaren ne yawanci mata suke kwaikwayonsu. Suke adopting dinsa a gari.

Ishaq: Har mazan ma.

Abubakar: Yanzu kamar kai kana tela, za ka iya dāukar yār Kannywood ka yi mata dinki kyauta ta je tayi fim don ta tallata maka.

Salim: Na fahimcin inda kake da confusion. A da ana cewa fim ya lalace, tarbiyya ta lalace, amma shi kuma reseacher ga abin da yake kawo mana, fim ne kuma na da dīn. Shin a yaushe ne aka lalace. A da ne ko kuma a yanzu. Abinda ya sa ake cewa fim ya lalace shi ne abin da ya ke trending a yanzu. Dauko dressing, na biyu rawa. A da babu irin waɗānnan abubuwan a fina-finan da abin da ya sa ake cewa fim ya lalace shi ne dressing da rawa, dressing rawa.

Ishaq: Ga kalamai marasa dadi ga kuma caka wuka.

Salim: Shi kuma na da dīn an fi nuna fitsara ba wai a da dīn ba a challenge dīn nasa ba ne ba. Iyayenmu ko a lokacin su kan fada cewa wannan ai koyawa mutane fitsara ne. Abu na biyu na koyar d abu, gaskiya kowa yana yi, Hausa fim gaskiya ne sukan sukan kirkiro nasu wanda al'umma bata san shi ba, har ila yau, koda wanda su kan nuna al'umma ne su kan yi, still ka sani ko wannan dīn, an fi dāukar negative side, wanda bai san abin da ba yanzu ya kalla koya yadda ake yi. An fi koyonsa. Idan suka dāuko wani abu da ake yi a society kuma an nuna maka yadda ake yi a fim, a maimakon ka guje shi sai ka koya. Darakta ko mai shirya fim ba su da control a kan hakan.

Ishaq: Ka kalli wani abu, ko tallan abu za a yi, a rinka yawo a mota ana talla, dole fa sai an dāuko irin wadannan celebrity dīn an fara ba su sun tallata abin tukunna

Fahru: Kuma ba iya fim ba ne ba suke da tasiri ga al'umma na, harda social media bayan fim. Ita social media kamar wani catalyst ce ta connecting society da yān fim. Da ba social media da Arewa



24 da duk waɗannan tashoshin na Hausa na Afirka babu su. Takarkari sai dai a siyo fim a cassette a kalla. Yanzu mu a da babanmu ya taɓa sayo mana fim, sai dai mu hayo. To amma yanzu duk Musluncin mutum sai ya ga Arewa 24 a gidansa. Ni malaman addinin garinnan, na shiga gidajensu na ga ana kallan tashar. Ka lura, duk fim ɗin da ake yin batsa a ciki, Arewa 24 sunfi saka shi. Akwai wani fim da uwa da yā suke neman Zahardɗini Sani. *Kallan Kallo*; Mijin ne matafiyi. Sai yake barin matar a gida.

Anas: Ya yi wa uwar da 'yar ciki.

Fahru: Alla-alla yake...ba a seven days sai sun saka fim dinnan. Su saka a weekend 11 to 1. Ba a seven days sai sun saka fim ɗin. Sannan su saka shi da daddare 9-11. Ba ka ji abin da take cewa ba, ni aure nake so ba na son karatu ina bukatar namij.

Abubakar: Ai fadakarwa suke yi.

Fahru: A'a.

Abubakar: Ta nuna tana son aure ne ba wai lalacewa ba.

Fahru: Ai ba wani vierwers dicretion...

Abubakar: At the end, ya nuna cewa, duk neman kuɗin da mutum yake yi, iyalansa suna bukatar lokaci. Idan ya kasance ka bar Najeriya. Kwana biyu ka sake fita. Ka yi three months six months ba ka gida. Ai ka ga fim ɗin yana nuna cewa duk abin da za ka yi ya kasance kana baiwa iyalanka lokaci, in kana ba su. In kana baiwa gidanka lokaci, wannan ba zai faru ba.

***Muhsin**; Yanzu in general Kannywood suna nuna addini Bahaushe da al'adarsa? A maki 100, nawa za ka basu?*

Salim: Bai fi na ba su 10% ba

Afaku: Zan iya ba su 50%

Sani: 30%

Musbahu: 30%.

Fahru: Zan iya basu 40%

Salim: A fim din Hausa, only 10% will be positive.

Anas: Ba komawa baya na yi ba. Matsala ɗaya ce muke fama da ita. Su 'yan fim nii a waje na, ya kamata yān fim su daina yin capitalizing a kan cewa al'ada da addini suke karewa. Fim harka ce ta nishadantarwa kamar yadda ake yi a duniya. Idan suka yi emphasizing akan wannan abubuwa guda biyu, za su fi fita daga fuskar al'umma. Akwai waɗanda suke yin abubuwa da yawa a Kano, saboda sun fito a neman kuɗi suke yi, ba wai koyar da tarbiyya ba, ba'a challenging ɗinsu of course su 'yan Kannywood suna da wata dama da suke da ita ta reaching inda mutane basa son su je, ko da a cikin gidajen mutane ne. Amma yanzu yadda ake sai da shisha. Agarin nan, ya fi fim barna.

Salim: Su waye suke shan shisha.

Anas: Idan na ce ka fada min fim din da ake shan shisha ba za ka iya tunowa ba. Ba za ka iya gaya min ba.

Fahru: Gaskiya ni ma ban ga fim uku da ake shan shisha ba

Anas: Fim din da ba a nuna shisha ba ya fi wanda aka nuna shisha yawa, amma barnar da physically shisha take yi a yanzu, yaron da ba ya kallon fim amma yana shan shisha. A ina ya koya? Wanda ma fim bai dame shi ba, har a can kauye za ka je ka ga ana shan shisha.

Fahru: Flavour din Shisa iri-iri ne, akwai masu bugarwa akwai marasa bugarwa.

Anas: Amma su masu saida ita basu ce su tarbiyya suke koyarwa ba. So ni a ra'ayi na, ko dai a yi fim na al'ada daban, na addini ma daban. In ka lura, irin fina finan fa da ake yi a CTV a da, kamar "Hana Wani Hana Kai". Irin wadannan fina-finan, gwamnati ce ta dau nauyi ko kuma gidan TV don a nuna su, a kare addini da kuma al'ada. Kuma ko'ina ana yin irin wannan a duniya. Gwamnati ta dauki nauyin wani fim wanda za a nuna al'adar wadannan mutanen. Har yanzu ana yi a zamanance a CNN. Kasa guda kamar misali Romaniya, ta dauki nauyi an saka a CNN sai a tsaya a 10 second a nuna wata al'ada guda daya ta kasar.

***Muhsin:** Yanzu idan 'yan fim suka ce bas anuna addini da al'ada' is it a licence su yi duk abinda suke soa fim?*

Ishaq: Barnar da za ta faru sai tafi ta wannan yawa.

Salim: Ni a ra'ayina, in dai ka yarda cewa you're just doing your business for entertainment, you go ahead, you're on your own, illa iyaka dai kawai...

Abubakar: Shi Hausa fim ya shafi wani bangare na rayuwar al'umma. Rayuwa akwai nunawa. Kuma rayuwar nan ba zai yiwu ba dole. Ba za ka zo ka na yin business kana nuna wata rayuwa daban ba. Dole sai ka dauko al'adun wadannan rayuwar mutanen ka sa sannan ka sami wannan Hausar. Yanzu Dan Kannywood bai kamata ya dauko wani fim na Amurka ba ya sa a Kannywood ka ce zai sami, tunda Hausawa ne suke kallon fim din, to ka ga babu yadda za a yi dan Kannywood ya cire wata al'ada ko addini ya ce ace wai business story ne. Dole ya alakanta da al'adar Bahaushe da addini tunda al'adar Bahaushe tafiya ya ke da addininsa.

Anas: Shi ya sa da farko duk na yarda cewa censorship ya zama dole. So idan su suka yi emphasizing wannan a harkarsu ta fim. Me ya sa yan Indiyar Hausa suke ciniki? Kuma suna yin abin da za su birge ka ne ba wai abin da yake daidai ba. Abubuwa...Amma mutane ba su san ba daidai din ba ne ba. Ka gane irin abinnan da ake, tunda su ba su zo sun yi maganar al'ada ko addini ba. Na farko, sun sakawa kansu censorship ba ko abin da mutane suke so, amma abin da mutane suke so da zai tafi da yadda za su sai da fim din nasu shi za su yi. So suma yan fim din at the same time za su iya haka. Za su iya cewa misali, ba sai mun dage mun ce muna representing addini da al'ada ba. Za mu yi fim don mu yi ciniki. Me ya sa ake kallon Kwana Casa'in? Ai ba sai da shi ake yi ba. Kuma in za a siyar za a yi ciniki. Dadin Kowa da sayar da shi aka yi aka ce kowa sau daya zai kalla za a saya kuma za a ci riba. Amma ba su fito karara sun ce don kasuwa muka yi ba, kuma ko don hakan suka yi za su ci riba. Idan suka dau irin wannan model din ni ina ga is better for Hausa fim.

*Muhsin: To jama'a na gode sosai.*

16<sup>th</sup> July 2020

*Assalamu alaikum*

Allah ya gafarta malam,

Gaskiya halayyar da aka sa Boshu a wannan shirin [wato Dan Gaske], akwai wasu abubuwa dai na Sakkwatawa da aka dān sa. Ka ga akwai wauta ga Basakkwace kuma da ma ka ga akwai shi da wauta. Sannan Basakkwacen mutum dama a Arewacin Nijeriya gaba ki dāya babu wanda ya kai shi yawo zuwa garuruwa. Za ka ga mutum ma tun yana karami dān shekara sha huɗu, sha uku ya ta fi bariki neman kuɗi. To ka ga wannan halayyarsu ne. Kuma Sakkwatawan ma masu hakanan sai Sakkwatawan kauce. Kuma suke da ra'ayin duk inda mutum ya je a kasar nan, za ka ga suna iya aure a kowanne gari; gaskiya Sakkwatawa akwai wannan.

Sannan sai...akwai karin harshe da aka yi amfani da shi na Sakkwatawanci an yi kuskure sosai; kura-kurai da yawa aka yi. Kuskure tun daga tashin farko ma, za ka ji inda yake ce mata, “mun zaka tun daga kwarya,” maimakon ya ce, “mun taho tun daga kurya.” *Kuryan* kamar falling tone ne a wurin nan, ba rising tone ba ne ba. Don cewa yai “mun zaka tun daga kwarya,” maimakon, “mun zaka tun daga kurya.” Ka ga falling tone ne. Sai kuma ya ci gaba da cewa, “to, in za ki yi batutuwan kwarai, ki riƙa hwaɗa min,” maimakon ya ce, “in za ki yi maganar kwarai...” tun da ko Sakkwatawa *maganar kwarai* suke cewa. Batu abin da wani ya zo ya faɗi ne, ba wanda kake magana da shi ba a Sakkwatanci kenan. Sannan kuma in kana magana da wanda kake magana da shi, sai dai ka ce, “ko kai min dūmin kwarai,” *dumi*, a Kananci za ka ji ana ce masa *zafi*, kamar abu mai dān dūmi haka; kamar abinci mai dūmi. To mu a can Sakkwato, dūmi *magana* ake nufi; “to in za ka yi min dūmin kwarai, ka yi min dūmin kwarai.” Ba wai ya ce, “in za ki yi min batutuwan kwarai ba.”

Kuma sai ya ci gaba da cewa, “kin fara shaƙar iskar binni, ni za ki gaya ma wanga batutuwa,” maimakon ya ce, “kin fara shaƙar iskar binni, ni za ki riƙa hwaɗi wa wag ga magana.” Ko a Sakkwato dai magana ake cewa, ba ko'ina ne ake sa batutuwa ba. Batutuwa kamar labarin shirme da wani ya ba ka, wato batun banza kenan. Ya ba ka labarin banza, sai ka ce ya taho mini da batun banza. In kuma su da yawa ne suka taho maka da labarin banza, sai ka ce, “sun taho mini da wasu

batutuwa na banza.” Ina ga Musa Iiyasu Tantiti da ya shigo a scene ɗin nan na farko da aka fara nuno Boshu...Boshu ake ce masa ko Daushe, ya ma fi Daushe kofari, amma ko shi ma da ya zo ya yi kuskure, sai ya ce, “unguwak ku kaina?” Maimakon ya ce, “shiyak ku kaina,” don a yankinmu ba yadda za ai ɗan yankinmu ya ce maka unguwa, sai dai ya ce maka *shiyya*. Ka ga inda ya miƙa wa Musa Iiyasu Tantiri kuɗi, sai yake cewa, “tai riƙe wanga,” maimakon ya ce, “tai riƙe wayanga.”

Akwai dai kura-kurai wanda sai ɗan yankinmu ne gaskiya zai gane su. Kuma kura-kurai wanda babu ma yanda ɗan yakinmu zai yi irin wannan kuskuren, in dai Basakkwacen ƙwarai ne ko kuma ɗan yankinmu. Sannan kuma wani lokacin za ka ga Zamfaranci suke yi. Ka san Hausar tamu, ta yankimu, ta kasu wanjen kala uku. Akwai yankin yān Kyabbi (Kebbi), akwai yankin su mutanen Sakwakkwaton da kuma mu yān yankin Zamfara. Amma mu yankin Zamfara duk babu wanda ba mu ji saboda ka ga kamar an saka mu a tsakiya ne. In zan ma iya recalling, akwai san da farfesa Dangambo a nan BUK yake ce mana, “Duk Najeriya babu wanda ya kai mutanen Zamfara iya Hausa...” sai a aji ake ta gardama, suke cewa a’ a, ba haka ba ne. Sai ya ce to shi hujjar shi guda ɗaya ce, “saboda Zamfara an sa ka ta tsakiya, Zazzau ta wani gefen ta sa ta tsakiya, ta wani gefe Katsina ta sa ta tsakiya, ta wani gefe Sakkwato ta sa ta tsakiya, ta wani gefe kuma ta hi kusa da Kano. To, zagaye mun da aka yi a tsakiya, sai ya sa mun iya Hausar kowanne ɓangare. Ni ma kaina, in na juya harshena, malam ba ka gane ni, sai ka zata Bakano ne ni. Amma akwai kura-kurai sosai.

Sannan kuma idan ka lura da scenes ɗin gaba ki ɗaya yana yawan cewa, “aradu” da wuya ka ga....a Sakkwatancin yawanci ɗin ana cewa *aradu*, amma dai ana ɗan daɗewa ba a ace aradun ɗin ba, sai dai ka ji Basakkwace ya ce, “walla, walla ina ba ki, walla ina kaza.” To, amma yawanci *aradu-aradu* ɗin nan, sai yān yankin hillani-hillanin nan....amma dai Basakkwace na cikin gari da sauransu dai haka da na sani, ba su cika cewa aradu ba, sai dai su ce, “walla, walla ina ba ki, walla ban ba ki.” Duk dai magana ɗai-biyu sai ka ji sun sa walla. To, ka ga shi a nan yana ta yawan amfani da “aradu” ko kuma ka ji ya ce, “wallahi” ɗin gaba ki ɗaya. Amma yawanci dai da wuya ka ga sun sa wallahi ɗin. Sai da su ce, “walla ban kaza. Walla ina kaza.” In kuma ka ji Basakkwace ya ce, “wallahii,” ya yi mata jan nan, to abin nan “he means it. He is going to do that thing.” Amma ga kiɗa da aradu ɗin nan da wallahi ɗin nan da wuya ka ji, sai dai ai ta cewa walla-walla.

Kuma za ka ga yana ce mata zai samo alkalami ya ba ta “ta buruta mai,” maimakon ya ce, “rubuta mai.” Yan yankinmu, ba burutu muke cewa ba, “rubutawa” muke cewa. Shi kuma ya ce, “buruta mai” ka gani, akwai kura-kurai, amma dai ya yi kofori. Kuma can wajen scene din can kusa da karshe din da Naburaska ya zo ya same shi a restaurant, za ka ji yana cewa Naburaska “dubu dari biyat naka ba shi ka,” maimakon ya ce, “dubu dari biyat naka ba su wa?” Ka ga nan ma akwai matsala.