

Measuring Hausa Culture in Popular Media – Literature, Film and Music: An Analytical Framework

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Brief Introduction

This is an excerpt from a paper presented in Bayero University Kano at the Department of English and European Languages Seminar on 23rd January 2001. The full title of the paper was *Tarbiyar Bahausha, Mutumin Kirki and Hausa Prose Fiction: Towards an Analytical Framework*. It was eventually published in *FAIS Journal of Humanities*. Vol 1, No 4, November 2001, [pp. 86-95]. Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria.

The paper analyzed contemporary Hausa novels for behavior codes that are often thought of by the Hausa critical culturist environment as ‘corrupting’ the morals of youth. This argument – corrupting moral or ‘lalata tarbiya’ – against contemporary Hausa literature started in the 1990s, which led to the establishing of a first censorship committee in 1996 at the Kano Educational Resource Center, and whose main job was to censor Hausa novels at the time. Although the committee did not last, its mechanisms were revived in 2001 when Hausa the Video Film Industry became firmly established and which led to more of the same protestations against the mode of delivering storylines continue to trail Hausa popular culture. This time, a full-fledged Kano State Censorship Board – the first of its kind at the State level in Nigeria – was established in early 2001 to filter not only literature, but also films and musical works.

The purpose of this paper to bring out clearly what constitutes the ‘moral code’ of the Hausa, using arguments given by Kirk-Greene (1974) and Alhassan et al (1982).

In this regard, a good starting point for the analytical framework is provided by Anthony Hamilton Millard Kirk-Greene (b. 1925), at the Third Annual Hans Wolff Memorial Lecture delivered on April 11, 1973 at the University of Indiana, in the lecture which he titled *Mutumin Kirki: The Concept of the Good Man in Hausa* (published in 1974). According to the African Studies Association UK (ASAUk) newsletter of October 2006, Kirk-Greene’s distinguished career began in 1950 in the colonial service in Nigeria – Adamawa, then Borno, and then at the Institute of Administration in Zaria both pre- and post-independence. Ahmadu Bello University appointed him as its founding Reader in Government in 1961. He has remained a figure well-known and much respected in Nigeria ever since those days. Following the first military coup of 1966, he returned to England and secured a Senior Research Fellowship at St Antony’s College in Oxford where he has continued his long association with Africa and with Nigeria in particular.,

Having lived in northern Nigeria for years, and during the formative eras of the modernization process of the territory, as well as conducted historical, anthropological and ethnographic studies of Hausa people and their behaviors, Kirk-Greene was placed to provide a critical insight into ‘tarbiyar’ Bahaushe – having interacted with northern Nigerian elite society often considered quintessential gentlemen, such as Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Sir Ahmadu Bello (the Sardaunan Sakkwato).

Habib Alhassan and his colleagues, particularly Rabi’u Muhammad Zarruk were well-respected Hausa linguists based in the Institute of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria. For years they provided critical training and understanding about what constitutes Hausa language and culture to thousands of teacher-trainees and established themselves as ethnographic authorities on Hausa language and cultures from an emic perspective.

The analytical framework presented here combines those developed by Kirk-Greene and Alhassan et al. The discussion will serve as a guide to Hausa popular culture practitioners as to what constitutes typical Hausa behavior, especially in the public sphere. Note that this is NOT the full paper, which, as I said earlier, analyzed Hausa novels only at the time. This version contains only the core instrument that can be used to evaluate ‘tarbiyar Bahaushe’ in fiction, film and songs.

The Analytical Framework

To generate my analytical framework, I first ask: what constitutes ‘tarbiyya’ in Hausa social universe? The answer is fairly obvious—religious values. However, I did not use variables from religion (Hadith and the Holy Qur’an) for obvious reasons that any deviation from any moral prescriptions of Islam is unacceptable to the Hausa who are core Muslims. The entire religion of Islam is a blueprint for ‘tarbiyya’, and is simply too concentrated as an application to Hausa prose fiction. And as will be revealed later, any source for ‘tarbiyyar’ Bahaushe will have direct link to Islam, which is the matrix of life and behavior for the Muslim Hausa. And despite their indigenous non-Muslim Muslim populations (the Maguzawa), the entire Hausa share the same behavioral mindset.

Thus by linking the analytical framework to individual behavior traits (i.e. interpersonal ‘tarbiyya’ instead of spiritual guide), I am seeking to embed my proposed analytical framework within the sociology matrix of literary criticism. I therefore argue that within the mindset of the Hausa, the sociological function of imaginative literature evokes more critical reaction than other possible variables of literary critical inquiry (e.g. psychoanalysis, anthropology, stylistics, etc).

Consequently, in the Hausa universe ‘tarbiyya’ is coded moral education and good manners, and the expected target of alleged corruption of the Hausa contemporary novels, especially those written by Hausa youth in a frenzy of self-publishing from 1980. To further refine the analytical framework, we need to identify the elements of ‘tarbiyya’, and see what exactly we are ‘corrupting’ when writing imaginative literature in Hausa.

In Kirk-Greene's classification, there are at least ten attributes of a classical *Mutumun Kirki* in Hausa. These are:

1. Gaskiya (truth)
2. Amana (strictly friendliness, but used to refer to trust)
3. Karamci (open-handed generosity)
4. Hakuri (patience)
5. Hankali (good sense)
6. Kunya (bashfulness)
7. Ladabi (courtesy)
8. Mutumci (self-esteem)
9. Hikima (wisdom)
10. Adalci (scrupulous behavior)

This, surely cannot be all there is to *Tarbiyyar Bahause* . so I set about looking for more variables to add to my moral shopping basket.

A second source of analytical framework is provided by Habib Alhassan, Usman Ibrahim Musa and Rabi'u Muhammad Alhassan, in their *Zaman Hausawa* (privately published, 1982, Zaria) who also provided further refinements of *Tarbiyar Bahause* where they identified about twelve behavioral characteristics of *Tarbiyar Hausawa* including:

1. Mua'amala (sociability: relaxed, interacts with people, friendly)
2. Ladabi da biyayya (respect self and respects others; also considerate of others, both older and younger)
3. Kunya da kara (modesty, self-deprecation, humble, acknowledges others' opinion over his own)
4. Zumunta (community spirit)
5. Rikon addini (adhering to religious tenets and being guided by them with attributes such as truth)
6. Gaskiya (fairness)
7. Dattako (gentlemanliness)
8. Adalci (scrupulous behavior)
9. Kawaici (tactfulness)
10. Rashin tsegumi (no idle talk)
11. Kama sana'a (engaging one in gainful employment)
12. Juriya da jarumta (fortitude, courage and bravery).

Alhassan et al's classification, of course, is more comprehensive than that of Kirk-Greene. Yet the variations in the codes are merely academic for there are so many conceptual overlaps. *Rikon Addini*, as given by Alhassan et al, for instance, encapsulates all the over 17 categories,

yet this code was not acknowledged by Kirk-Greene. A summary of the two codes is given in Table 1.

Table 1: Tarbiyar Bahause Mutumin Kirki: Code 1

S/N	Kirk-Greene	S/N	Alhassan et al
1.	Gaskiya	1.	Mua'amala
2.	Amana	2.	Ladabi da biyayya
3.	Karamci	3.	Kunya da kara
4.	Hakuri	4.	Zumunta
5.	Hankali	5.	Rikon addini
6.	Kunya	6.	Gaskiya
7.	Ladabi	7.	Dattako
8.	Mutumci	8.	Kawaici
9.	Hikima	9.	Adalci
10.	Adalci	10.	Rashin tsegumi
		11.	Kama sana'a
		12.	Juriya da jarumta

If we can combine the two frameworks, we can perhaps come up with a unified scale of measuring Tarbiyar Bahause from these two secondary (their primary antecedents being Islam) sources, as in Table 2:

Table 2: Tarbiyar Bahause Mutumin Kirki: Summary

Tarbiyar Bahause Codes					
S/N	Kirk-Greene	S/N	Alhassan et al	S/N	Common
1.	Amana	7.	Mua'amala	15.	Gaskiya
2.	Karamci	8.	Zumunta	16.	Kunya
3.	Hakuri	9.	Rikon addini	17.	Adalci
4.	Hankali	10.	Dattako	18.	Ladabi
5.	Mutumci	11.	Kawaici		
6.	Hikima	12.	Rashin tsegumi		
		13.	Kama sana'a		
		14.	Juriya da jarumta		

It is interesting that at least 18 categories of behavior emerged from this loose classification. In the two categories, only Gaskiya, Kunya, Adalci and Ladabi were repeated, as indicated in the table.

I will not go into the structural, field or sociological validity of these codes, for as I said, this is meant as a rough-and-ready guide, rather than an exact instrument. So far, to the best of my knowledge, this seems to be the first instrument aimed at measuring the themes and contents of contemporary Hausa novels, and is therefore very much a first draft. As we use it repeatedly we may need to refine it to include other behaviors as may, although inconceivably, evolve in the Hausa social universe in the future. Indeed, it is my hope that other researchers will find faults with this scale and come up with a different one — either way, we move away from being arm-chair critics to field researchers, linking possible effects of literature on social outcomes.

However, as I pointed out, I was basically interested in creating a rough-and-ready code of behavior of a typical 'mutumin kirki' with a good 'tarbiyya.' And I want to use such code of behavior as a measuring scale to value the general themes of Hausa prose fiction, music and films in order to determine the extent of the deviance or adherence to, these codes of behavior. The full paper describes how this was applied to Hausa prose fiction.

References

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