



Echoes of Resistance to European Cultural Domination in Hausa Poetry: A Historical Reconnaissance

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Abstract: The Hausa people of Northern Nigeria, along with the other populations inhabiting the Nigerian area, were conquered and subjugated by British colonial forces. Scholars have proposed various reasons to explain why Europeans succeeded in defeating African societies militarily. In the Hausa regions of Northern Nigeria, the people sustained their resistance through non-military means. The intellectual tradition left by the Sokoto Jihadist leaders, particularly the use of poetry to disseminate information among the populace, was utilized. Various methods were employed to collect the necessary instruments for this paper. Manuscripts were obtained from the Waziri Junaidu History and Culture Bureau, Sokoto, as well as extracts from some resistance poems. These poems were composed to attack and dismiss various aspects of European culture as un-Islamic and unacceptable to a Muslim community like the one in Northern Nigeria. The banner of the "jihad of the pen" was raised to condemn anything European as heretical, leading those who subscribed to it toward hellfire in the hereafter. This paper highlights how Hausa poetry was directed toward condemning European cultural values, their romanticized education (Boko), and European cultural domination, which was a key factor in achieving successful political and economic domination.

Keywords: Hausa People, Jihad, Culture, Poetry, Education.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, the main purpose of Hausa poets since the jihad period was to enlighten the people, explain the basic principles of Islam, and preach against what was considered evil and anti-Islam. The poets were learned and had a clear understanding of the challenges before them in educating the public on the proper practice of Islam and the dangers of deviating from its teachings. To the 20th-century poets of Hausaland, Western colonialism was the greatest evil that had ever befallen society and needed to be confronted head-on. Noting that the Europeans possessed superior fighting equipment, Hausa scholars resorted to using

their pens to confront the challenge. The pen, it is said, is mightier than the sword. They used poetry to attack various facets of the European project in Hausaland. Through poetic expression, they attacked the system and tried to convince people to keep away from it. The scholars of that time did not relent in their attack on Western culture. The jihad of the pen was waged by the poets where the jihad of the sword had failed.

As rightly observed by Hiskett (1975:92), literate poetry of Hausaland conformed to an Islamic pattern. Since literacy in Hausaland was a direct result of Islam, those who composed the poems were already conditioned to an Islamic view of life. The

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Hausa reaction to the British occupation was complex. Hausa society viewed the events of c. 1900 at several different levels. First, they were simply steps on the way to the final apocalyptic climax, "sign of the hour." Second, when this final catastrophe failed to materialize immediately, they were seen as part of all the other tensions and clashes of interest that already made up the pattern of Hausa relations with intruders.

The Muslims, who are the majority in Hausaland, rejected the European system of education and culture. For the Hausa poets of protest, the entire concept of 'Western education' was seen as mere *biri-boko*, a whitewash and empty endeavor, as it did not promote spiritual growth or add value to life in the Hereafter. Even the style of writing associated with this type of education, which moves from left to right instead of right to left as in Arabic, was regarded as a symbol of the emptiness of the ways of the white colonialists. In fact, the entire culture of the intruders was portrayed as evil to be completely rejected. It was in this vein that Shehu Shagari, in 1947, in his song titled *Wakar Bature (Ingilishi)*, opined that:

*Don wajibina gun Musulmi duk shi fal-
lasa kafiri, har dai Bature, don shi*

It is indeed obligatory upon all Muslims to
Expose the evil of the infidel, especially the European,
the one

*Ban sonsa ban kaunarsa ban komi da shi,
Ba don rashin karfi ba sai in kar shi*
I neither like him nor have anything to do with him
If not for my weakness, I would have finished him

*Don ja'irina, kafiri kuma makiri
Ga halinsa kwas san shi bai kaunarshi*
Because he (the European) is stupid, infidel and
malicious
Whoever knows his habits will hate him
(Shehu Shagari: *Wakar Baturen Ingilishi*)

The following sub-sections represent a highlight on the condemnations of various practices that appear to have some relation with European colonialist culture.

2.1 Resistance to Western Education

The Muslim communities, who are the majority in Hausaland, vehemently resisted the Western system of education. They believed that Western education deliberately refused to recognize the cultural and religious values of the society within which it operated. The Muslims rejected the European system of education and culture, expressing a common stance that whoever identified with any aspect of Euro/Christian culture was either a non-Muslim or had committed a grave sin, and must repent before being fully accepted into the fold.

Scholar-poets expressed hatred and condemned all aspects and levels of Western education. This was especially so because Christian missionaries viewed Western education as a vehicle for converting the colonized into Christianity. They understood that the colonialists wanted to destroy the bridge linking the Muslims with their glorious past. They believed that if the Muslims accepted the European form of writing, the Arabic language, and consequently the Islamic religion, would be adversely affected. The colonialists intensified literacy campaigns and labeled anyone who could not read or write in English as illiterate, even if that person was a prolific writer in Arabic.

The majority of Hausa people, who were mostly Muslims, adopted ways to resist Western education and some Western cultural practices introduced into their society in an attempt to safeguard their religion (Junaidu 1990:239). In Hausaland, Western education was considered useless because it had no benefit in the hereafter. People further detested the Western style of writing, as it starts from left to right, which was very strange to a society accustomed to the Arabic writing style, which begins from the right and moves to the left (Tsigia 2014:8).

The introduction of Western education in Northern Nigeria created a condition of mistrust, as people believed that the missionaries inserted sections of the Bible into the curriculum of instruction in their schools, leading to fierce resistance (Inuwa 1987:2). Many people refused to send their children to Western schools because they did not believe that the Europeans, who were considered their enemies, could offer anything good (Tibendarana 1988:263).

Scholars, particularly poets, expressed their views through poetry about Western education. They waged a war against Western education and anything that appeared to have originated from contact with Europeans.

In line with this, Abubakar Maikaturu, a poet in 1940s Hausaland, opined that:

*Hausas su kwas san ta ya halaka,
Daidai da mai kirat dan mabudi.*

Anybody who learns their language (English) has
gone astray,
He is akin to the one who fabricates padlock keys

*Hausa don Allah ka yo irin taku,
Naka halshe don kak ka juye shi.*
Learn your own language,
Don't distrust your own language anywhere anyhow.
(Abubakar Maikaturu: *Wakar Gudun Duniya*)

Enrollement of children into western style schools in those days was seen as efforts at baptising

the children into Christianity. A poet Haliru Wurno in his criticism of western schhol education pointrd out that:

Wajen ilimi a can ne yay yi tushe,
Kujerin 'yan maza a haɗe da mata.
In western type of schools, it originates
Likewise mixing of seat between boys and girls is common.

A ce wai diskashin ake yi tsakani,
Ga al'adarmu sam haka ba irinta.
To pretend they are doing discussion
An issue that's never accepted in our culture
(Haliru Wurno: Waƙar Muhimmancin Al'adunmu da Haɗarin Rungumar na Waje)

Resisting Western education did not stop at the introduction of this system of education. Even today, when Western education is widespread and most people have realized its benefits, some poets continue to voice their disdain for it. A poet named Auwal Anwar, as late as 1987, composed a poem titled *Karamin Sani*, condemning the various stages of attainment in Western education as follows:

Digirin banza digirin wofi,
Iliminmu da ba shi da ɗan tofi.
A useless and bastard degree,
A knowledge that has no value.

Digirinmu na labari soko,
Ilimin ga na tulu ba rafi.
A degree of mere talking,
A knowledge that has no benefit.

Digirinmu na zance ratata,
Ilimin wauta na ganin ka fi.
A degree of mere talking,
A knowledge of mere feeling pompous.

Ilimin ga a don shi kar ka tsaya,
Ilimin da kana tsaye sai ya tafi.
A knowledge that you should not depend,
Because depending on it is baseless

Ilimin fitina, ilimin wasa,
Ilimin a yi shewa ai tafi.
A knowledge of play and crises
A knowledge that is mere lapping and go away.
(Auwal Anwar: Waƙar Karamin Sani)

In condemning western education poet Auwal Anwar describe it as a play, he further stress that western education has no any benefits hence it is useless where he said:

Ilimin a ci daɗi ai galla,
Ilimin ga na karfafa 'yan wofi.
A knowledge that's prioritise enjoyment and,
A knowledge that empower bastard,

Ilimin gaye na shiga mota,
Na kiran mata a ga ɗan tofi.
A knowledge of fancy of driving motor.
A way of moving with girls in order to get them.

Ilimin ga na tushen iskanci,
Ilimin banza ilimin wofi.
A knowledge that breads immorality
A bastard and useless knowledge.
(Auwal Anwar: Waƙar Karamin Sani)

He further buttresses his criticisms on western education because according to him it leads people to develop unwarranted behavior that's why he said:

Digirinmu na farko har na biyu,
Na ukunsu na 'Dokta' cin zarafi.
First degree and second degree,
The third degree, PhD an insult.

A saman na ukun aka sa 'Reader',
Mai ridar 'ya'ya ɗan wofi.
Next to Ph, D is Reader,
A reader who deceived childrens a stupid.

A wuce 'reader' har Farfesa,
Mai feso karya sha-ka-tafi.
After Reader there is Professor,
A useless broadcaster of of lies.

Digirinmu na zagin jahilci,
Tsananin jahilci shi muka fi.
The Degree of condemning of condemning ignorance,
Ignorance is our priority.
(Auwal Anwar: Waƙar Karamin Sani)

The poet passes a curse on all levels of educational attainment gotten by people through western education. He describes it as a way of increasing illiteracy, idiocy and stupidity.

2.1 Resistance to European Cloths

Clothes are elements of a people's culture, worn on the body, such as shirts, trousers, and dresses. It is well known that the style of dressing used by Western people and that of the native Africans are two entirely different things. The colonialist style of dressing did not escape the sharp tongues of Hausa poets, who were mostly Muslims.

Abubakar Maikaturu was particularly uncompromising in his criticism of European culture. Condemning the type of clothes worn by Western people who came to Hausaland, he composed many poems, among which the poem titled "Gudun Duniya" is quite popular. In this poem, he condemned all the types of clothes used by Europeans, especially those copied by the Hausa people. He stressed that wearing short trousers is prohibited because they cannot be

used for prayer since they do not properly cover the lower part of the body. The poet considers short trousers appropriate for children, not adults, as used by the Europeans. He did not stop at condemning short trousers; he also criticized the use of face caps and tight clothing. He cautioned Muslims against the use of covered shoes and dusting powder, stating:

*Kayansu in kassa don ka kula
In kai dubun Sallah gonga wala*
Their cloths, whichever you wear,
If you pray a thousand times It is ineffective

*Wandon ga dan guntu shi da tsala,
Kwas sa shi kafirci yai makurfi.*
The short trouser and the tight pairs of long trouser
Whosoever wear it has giving in to unbelief

*Taggwon da yay like yab bi jiki,
Kai ar maki Allah ka bi kudfi.*
Those cloths that tight with body,
You hate the Almighty because of money.

*Fulla ta Akawu ne kowane na,
Yas sa ta ran tashi sai makodi.*
The facing cap weared by clerks,
Whoever, wear it will be subjected to torture on the
resurrection day.

*Sos kwandiras bata shoti kwala,
Kwas sa su kafirci ya yi fadi.*
Socks, cover shoe and shirts,
Wearing them puts one to unbelief

*Kaki da hwanjama kowane na,
Yas sa su yai salla ya yi kaudi.*
Whosoever wears Khaki and Pyjamas
Using them to pray is violating the rules (Shari'a).

*Tawul bulu hoda kak ka yi su,
Don gobe sai nari am majidi.*
Do not keep a towel use the washing (blue) powder,
For fear that one ends in Hell fire.
(Abubakar Maikaturu: Waƙar Gudun Duniya)

Before the coming of the Europeans into Hausaland, the Hausa people have their way of making clothes. The social relationship between Hausa people and other ethnic groups that have embraced the European culture brought about changes in terms of making and using of clothes. Hausa people started to adopt the use of short trousers and other type of western style of clothes. It is as a result of this that a Hausa poet known as Maharazu Barmu Kware composed a poem condemning this attitude of adopting the western style type of clothes he said:

*Tabbas sigari buƙuƙu da rediyo ya aza,
Da tsala da dan taggo irin na Nasara.*

Indeed, smoking cigarette and listening to radio
The putting on tight trousers and a small tight shirt of
the Europeans

*Shi malami ya sa tufafin bariki,
Ga batun gwadin iko shi kan fi Nasara.*
(Waƙar Maharazu Barmu Kwasare ta AnNasara)
Malam who wear modern dressing,
When exercising power pass infidel
(Abubakar Maikaturu: Waƙar Gudun Duniya)

In a similar vein Alkali Haliru Wurno condemned those who patronize European mode of dressing to the detriment of the indigenous ones. He report:
*Su sai musu 'yan tufafi 'yan matsatti,
A tanke tsara da bel tamkar ta Biri ta.*
They bought them small and tight clothes,
Stocking the waist with belt a kin to that of the
monkey.

*A sa fes kap bakar hulla a sanya,
Abar zancen ta saka wa ka son ta.*
They put on a facing cap and black cap,
They threw away the locally knitted cap

*Idan an shafa mai kai na ta kyalli,
A sanya siket ga guiwa wai fitatta.*
When they rub pomade on their head it shines
They put a short skirt to demonstrate superiority.
(Haliru Wurno: Waƙar Muhimmancin Al'adunmu da
Haƙarin Rungumar na Waje)

Many poets composed a number of poems in educating people to resist whatever the Europeans brought in stating that it is against the teachings of the religion of Islam.

2.3 Resistance to European Second Hand Cloths

Used clothes are new in Hausaland there availability has to do with the development in the western world, when they started sending used items including clothes to their colonies whom were regarded as ready made markets for Metropolitan products. Used clothes are what is termed as "Osho, Gwanjo, Bura-bura, and Akirka" the exact name depends on the dialect. But which ever dialect of the Hausa language is used it is referring to second-hand clothes imported from European Countries Bunza (2002).

Second- hand European clothes are aspects of European culture that is not in consonance with Hausa Muslim culture. The clothes are usually tight and expose the body of the user something prohibited by Islam. It was condemned by some Hausa poet who were mostly Muslim Ulama. It was based on that a poet Maharazu said:

*Waƙar ga duk zancen ta na bisa dabtare,
Daraja wala lallai ga mai sa osho.*

The explanation in this poem is very clean,
Anybody wearing 2nd hand clothes lack personality.
(Muhammadu Huci: Waƙar Osho)

Poet Maharazu took great pains to refer to religious authorities to buttress his position and to silence those doubting his stance. He pointed out that:
*Kowa ka tambaba shi lura da Lawwali,
Shi ga inda Allah yak ki mai sa osho*
Anybody doubting should refer to the book of *Lawwali*
To see the why wearing Osho is prohibited by Allah
(Muhammadu Huci: Waƙar Osho)

The coming of Second -hand clothes to the Hausa people is what makes them to know button that is been put and used in clothes. The poet took this aspect of 2nd hand clothes for condemnation. It was on this that he opined:
*Wando da karfe ya yi goma iri-iri,
Da ganin tufan wuta babu shakka osho*
Trouser embrioded with different metals
A glimpse at the cloth could reveal sign of hell fire.
(Muhammadu Huci: Waƙar Osho)

In light of the above, the poet advises people to avoid European second-hand clothes being paraded in the markets as a sign of modernity. Likewise, in the following stanza, the poet emphasizes that even Sheik Usmanu Danfodiyo, the 19th-century Islamic reformer and founder of the Sokoto Caliphate, detested such clothing (Osho). He said:
*Duba ga Shaikhu Mujaddadi bin Fodiye,
Ku dubi taƙiyyi ba shi son mai osho.*
Refer to Sheikh Usmanu Danfodiyo,
A God-fearing scholar that reject dealing with Osho-
2nd hand clothes
(Muhammadu Huci: Waƙar Osho)

The Poet went further to conclude that, any Muslim who wears osho has become an infidel. The below stanzas shed more light to that effect as:
*Kwas sa tufafin kafiri ya zan wa shi,
Ji wannan tashabbaha kak ka yarda da osho.*
16. He who wear an infidel dress resembles him,
Move away from this copying do not agree with 2nd hand clothes.
(Muhammadu Huci: Waƙar Osho)

The poet stance is guided by a saying ascribed to the Prophet of Islam prohibiting copying the ways of the infidels. The poet advanced further by showing that Osho materials can not be used to perform any Islamic religious right, because the owners of those materials are not Muslims. The poet pointed out some stanzas to this effect where he said:
*Kowa ka yin sallah da osho mun jiya,
To sai shi maishe ta, ai shi fufura osho.*

Anybody who pray with Second hand clothes,
should remove them and repeat his prayer.

*Kuma manya-manyu kafurai su ad da shi,
Wari da kazni duk akwai su ga osho*
Prominent infidels are the owners of Osho,
Bad odour and smell characterizes Osho,
(Muhammadu Huci: Waƙar Osho)

3.0 COCLUSSION

The pen is mightier than the gun and more effective in winning the hearts of the populace, persuading them to reject and counter European cultural infiltration in society. Poems are powerful tools for educating the public on any program that needs propagation. The ulamas, who were also poets, made significant efforts to enlighten the populace on all aspects of human endeavors, including resistance to European conquerors. These poets composed numerous poems resisting the arrival of British colonialists and various aspects of their culture. The colonialists introduced many things, such as their style of education, mode of dressing, eating habits, and more. In protest against the domination of European cultural practices and ideas, the poets composed resistance poems addressing Western education, Western clothing culture, and the influx of second-hand clothes from Europe. These poems, among others, fostered a deep mistrust of anything European within the indigenous community and played a crucial role in preserving aspects of indigenous culture from being entirely wiped out or replaced by European ones.

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