

**POETICS OF SELECTED TRADITIONAL CHILDREN'S
GAMES IN KANO: A STUDY OF TATSUNIOYI DA
WASANNI (TALES AND GAMES BOOKS 1—6) AND
THIRTEEN (13) OTHERS**

BY

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SPS/09/MEN/00008**

2013

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF
POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, BAYERO UNIVERSITY, KANO, IN
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
AWARD OF MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN ENGLISH
(LITERATURE)**

2013

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this work is the product of my own research effort, undertaken under the supervision of Prof. Sa'idu Babura Ahmad, and has not been presented elsewhere for the award of a degree of certificate. All sources of information have been duly acknowledged.

MUSA HARUNA YAKASAI
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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the research work for this dissertation and the subsequent preparation of this dissertation by Musa Haruna Yakasai (SPS/09/MEN/00008) were carried out under my supervision.

Prof. Sa'idu Babura Ahmad
SUPERVISOR

Date

APPROVAL PAGE

This research work has been read and approved by the Department of English and Literary Studies, Bayero University, Kano as meeting the requirements of M.A. in English (Literature) at the Bayero University, Kano.

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DEDICATION

ASSALAMU ALAIKUM

This work is dedicated to the worlds of the dead and the living.

The dead are:

- a) My beloved parents Hindatu Isyaku Alkali and Haruna Musa Haruna
- b) My in-laws Aminu Yunusa Sagagi and Aisha Musa Yakasai
- c) My daughter Hindatu Musa Haruna
- d) My M.A mate Muhammad Ibrahim.

May your souls rest in perfect peace.

The living are:

- a) Professor Sale Abdu,
- b) Professor Sa'idu Babura, Ahmad,
- c) Professor Isma'ila Tsiga
- d) Professor Muhammad O Bhadmus

Whose methods of imparting knowledge were ever impressive variables.

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ABSTRACT

The study of Oral Children's literature of Africa is for long getting more attention. This research is also one of such. But it is not a research of social, educational, moral or entertaining functions as is the case of literature reviewed in this thesis. The research is solely on the inherent literary features or poetics of such children's games. In such performances, there exist marvelous, colorful, delicate and symbolic or figurative elements that glide between the poetic, dramatic and narrative instances. In this vein, the dissertation examines the poetics of Hausa children traditional games played at night after dinner as contain in books 1 – 6 of *Tatsuniyoyi da Wasanni* (Tales and traditional children's Games) by Ibrahim Yaro Yahaya, as the the primary text, '*Karamin Sani*, (A Little Knowledge) books 1-2 and *Wasannin Tashe* (Tashe Games by Umar. Thsese are the secondary source. The games in this three different materials are "a manifestation and a co-existence and mingling of both oral and written phenomenon.... (Ohaeto, 1998). They should not be regarded as one percent traditional, but rather as "Oral made into writing; what Mineke Schipper (1989; 67) terms the "written Orality" the idea of pouring old wine into new bottles. In this dissertation are some games not recorded in the different anthologies. Many of such games contained the philosophical, social, scientific and even the economic thoughts of the Hausa people through their little ones. All these glide from one form of game to another swiftly with little or no notice. These games that some scholars, especially Finnegan (1970) term as "quasi-literature" are multidisciplinary. This study further considers the thoughts that many of such games that exist in one area of Africa are found in others. That portrays the inseparable unity in Africa, that Africa was a single entity especially in its traditional children's games. Instances of these have been cited. It is as well argued that literary or poetic devices are inherent antics that remain to be explored and are inseparable with children's traditional games. I intend to give a new look of these games from the figurative view point. These traditional children's games create a particular aroma of art, unique from others that emerged from the cultural repertoire of the Hausa oral arts.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Nature of Children Traditional African Games

Traditional or indigenous African games, more especially the children's ones, seemed on the verge of disappearance despite their numerous socio cultural, psychological and philosophical merits. Beside their didactic value, they possess artistic and literary considerations. This tendency (the disappearance), is observed to be more apparent in the urban centers where the influence of modern schools, modern sophisticated gadgets (television, videos, cinemas), night schools, clubs meetings [scout, debates], and their likes attract and distract more attention of the children in their games that were mostly played at night especially in this:

Fast changing world and a world berserk with modern technology including computer games and other foreign toys and games, coupled with a rapidly disappearing childhood and play culture... (Iworetok, 2000:193-194).

The fear that the traditional African children games were fast eclipsing is further emphasized by other intellectuals, one of which is Abdurraheem who, while commenting broadly on literature in northern Nigeria says,

We had the cause to worry about the dearth of imaginative writing...from the geographical zone known as old north....Many (writers and critics alike) seem to be oblivious to a literary lacuna in the north of the country. (Abdurraheem 2006: i-ii)

Adamu, a year later, points out that: “this is a practice that is fast disappearing in Hausa traditional societies” (Adamu, 2007: 48). In this respect, this scholar is more specific for he talks of ‘Hausa traditional societies’, the focus of this thesis, than Abdurraheem, who talks on the north of Nigeria in general. This part of the country is known to have more than two hundred different cultures. Much earlier, in his unpublished thesis, Maikaba graphically points out that:

The channel from which the individual (child) draws his or her picture of reality is increasing daily. This hastens the decline and transformation of orality as means of personal communication between individuals, and of imaginative activities...not just the atrophy of certain forms of oral activities but also the emergence of a different...orature.... This affects the traditional story-telling method, its content, its form and this applies as much to Tatsuniya as oral poetry, myths as well as legend. (Maikaba 1996: 4)

Most of these local children’s games do take place at night, more particularly when the moon was shining.

Children of various ages did meet with their peers to play them not merely for pastimes or enjoyment but for physical exercises. There were some lessons (moral, social, creative, intellectual, emotional, physical etc) they acquire which prepare them directly or indirectly for their future lives as adults and leaders of their particular societies.

Among the lessons learnt by the children during such traditional games is imitating the elders in some skills of leading the society. For in each game to be played, there must be a one (a child in this context) who would either lead them in a song to be chorused by the others, or a one who would show and direct the steps

and action to be performed in the game, and in some instances, dictates the rules of such a game and whoever breaches any of such rules has to pay a penalty, a penalty that is not in cash but rather in kind. This payment in kind may either warrant whoever goes against or breaches any of such rules of the game to be isolated for a while from the game, or to accept some mild and mock beatings on the body till he reaches a certain point of safety; or on the other hand, such erring child may be mocked or jeered or taunted. The punishments and their likes are many and were mostly agreed upon by the children themselves.

This offender on his part has to accept such punishment as part of the game. Sometimes, it would be his/her turn to dole out the same consequences onto others who may inadvertently break the rules. Here the children engage in such a game do accept leadership responsibility and that of followership. These acts (leading and following) are some of the basis of societal norms in which there must be a leader and a subordinate that is socially accepted unlike in the modern democratic era especially the Nigerian type of democracy, where the leader is imposed on the people by hook or crook.

Apart from acquiring leadership and followership training through imitation, there are such other children's traditional games that develop intellectual ability. One of such games is *Malam na Bakin Kogi* as written by Babura that:

Malam na Bakin Kogi as a cultural game, is studied as a Hausa children's game which because of its demand on the intellectual and analytical capacity of the mind, falls into the category of intellectual activities used by Hausa youths to develop and enhance their innate mathematical acumen. (Babura, 2009:27)

This cultural game is performed by males and females that are healthy. Disabled children and youth of the Hausa society also play it because it does not need vigorous physical exercise but conducted while sitting.

Among such traditional games are some that are exclusively played by girls and some by boys. Some are performed while sitting and others while standing. Also, they may involve songs, dances, jumping, chases, skipping, running and other active physical activities.

Concentration is another important aspect of life which a person must apply when learning any skill or trade or in acquisition of knowledge. Among such children's games are some that teach this important aspect. One of such game that teaches this important side of life (concentration) is *Carafke* in the Hausa language. This game has its equivalent in other cultures or societies. To the Europeans it is *5 Stones and a Jack* while to the Ibibios, it is *Ukpokpoppo-Nsa* (Iwokedok, 2001: 126.) Many of such games are children's ways of thinking, learning, creating and absorbing them for future life. (ibid, 216-220.) The *Carafke* of the Hausa societies needs only five small pebbles while the *Ukpokpoppo-Nsa* needs "seven taws (it could be rubber seeds, periwinkle shells... or palm kernels), while the Europeans "*5 Stones and a Jack* needs 6 items". (Ibid) the *Carafke* game and others of its types promotes the child's concentration abilities, dexterity, coordination between the eye, the hand and the brain as well as an increase in the

knowledge of number and arrangement pattern to young players. *Carafke* is usually a game for girls and was\is played indoors.

There is yet another game that is played by both sexes. Its setting can be either indoors or outdoors. This game is *Cankulato-kulato* in some Hausa areas while in another it is known as *Na jeje ni gidan gwauro*, (it also has other titles too). The titles do not matter but the form or formula it is performed in is mostly the same. What is meant here is that certain game or play may have variety of titles depending of the knowledge of the presenter or the area he/she comes from. In one of Yahaya's series, Adamu, one of the players knows it as "Lekuma-lekumalele", while to Asabe, another player, it is "Na jeje ni gidan gwauro" (book 5, pp 26-32). The game is also accompanied with a song while *Carafke* has no song in it. The children sit either in a circle, a horse-shoe-formation or one straight line that may be long or short depending on the number of players involved in it. This game is usually played at the tail end of other more vigorous games when the children are exhausted yet still, have some time left for the night before they turn in.

As mentioned above, most of these games are played during the night especially when the moon shines brightly. But now due, to the advancement of modern technology, proliferation of night schools, especially the Islamiyya schools in the north of Nigeria, and of recent, insecurity of the nation hamper the children from attending their night schools as well as performing their night games.

The greatest merit of such African traditional children's games is socialization among the children and keeping their culture alive. Yet, despite these numerous advantages, the games are allowed to perish, by the parents' nonchalant attitudes and some foreign influences of mass media and "the unwillingness of those in government to promulgate policies that would rejuvenate the institutions"(Ohaeto, 1989:2) of African indigenous culture but only paying token lip services. These performances of the children in the traditional African society are disappearing or metamorphosing or mutating into something else. The *Cankulato-kulato* or *Na jejje ni gidan gwauro* played by a group of not less than 10 children has now mutated into a play by a single child using broomstick or soft drink bottle covers. This portrays its flexibility and adaptability to change, that the oral form can accommodate modernism through specific indigenous perspective. In such a situation, where the child plays alone, the social relationship and interaction, the leadership ability and followership tendency that were informally acquired between the children during their past natural traditional setting is no more vibrant. Also, the act of playing the game by an individual alone has more or less denigrated the feeling of sense of belonging to the whole society by the individual and the shared creativity talents of others experienced by the young ones are no more.

By extension, the formally knitted social spirit of the Africans is no more in evidence especially in the urban centers. Still, the traditional African artifacts (cornstalks, pebbles, palm kernel, cowries, and their likes) employed by the

children and their skillful talents and intellectual acumen and creativity in shaping and molding them into useful items or props for their games and plays are no more viable since the children become adapt to using soft drink covers, buttons, corks etc, which are all foreign. Even the traditional language and registers of the traditional children's games are now acculturated or constantly mixed with the English language, thus, gradually the indigenous language words/vocabularies and expressions generally are paving ways to foreign ones. This indeed is a retrogression to the African setting more especially the games the research is particularly concerned with.

Many of such children's games contain in them stories, anecdotes, proverbs, riddles and jokes, tongue twisters etc. The games are also seen as poetry and drama and as a culture in which the poetics of drama and poetry are quite apparent.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In games and plays, the traditional African child has his own peculiar games and songs and rhymes that differentiates him and makes him unique from other children of the world. But nowadays, these types of traditional African games and plays are hardly seen or heard most especially in the urban centers (Kano City, Wudil, Bichi, Ungoggo, Kumbotso as few examples). They are hardly seen or witnessed due to the influence of globalization and modern technology. In this

vein, Iwocketok wonders whether “...the Nigerian (African by extension) child has a past, a heritage or if he is capable of any form of creativity”. (2000, 193-194). A research of this nature makes effort to answer the wonders of this intellectual, by proving to the world, the distinctiveness, the peculiarity and the well-isolated nature of the traditional African child’s plays and games. Also, the research would try to dissect whether the lost, the retrogression or the metamorphosis of these games to globalization has any distinctive or significant effects to Africa in general and its child in particular. Awosika through Iwocketok (2000, 193) has a strong belief that the lost of such Africa traditional children’s games (may have) ‘... created monsters, demons, killers, anti-social and amoral beings in our (African) children’.

1.3 Objectives Study

For every endeavor in one’s life, there ought to be a target or focus to be achieved.

This research is not an exception as it aims to

- a. To illustrate the existence, validity and dynamism of the Hausa children games which allows them to still play a role in a modified manner in urban settings.
- b. To analyze any significant literary or poetic technique worthy of scholarly attention and further academic concern.

- c. If really the above claims are true, the research wishes to discuss the relevance of such poetics of the children's games and performances and compare them to other cultures in Africa and the world at large.

1.4 Scope and Limitation

The scope of this research dwells on games that are truly African in general, the Hausa society of Kano state of Nigeria in particular. These games the research focuses on are those that are played by children of about 7 – 11 years old. Some of such games would come largely from the six series of Ibrahim Yaro Yahaya's texts *Tatsuniyoyi Da Wasanni*, books 1-6 (Tales and traditional children's games) as primary source. The other texts compared with Yahaya's are *Karamin Sani* (A little Knowledge) and *Wasannin Tashe by Umar*. These are all treated in chapter three. In chapter four is the secondary source in which games not in the aforementioned anthologies are presented and their poetics discussed.

The games are limited to those that are identified as local (indigenous and traditional) of the Hausa society and their types. Any mention of a modern game or play (such as football, basket ball, hockey, snooker etc) is either comparative or co-incidental.

1.5 Definition of some Operational Terms

1.5.1 Notes on Translations

As all the primary texts consulted on this dissertation are in the Hausa language, all translation into English are made by the researcher. This is not a word for word

or a professional one. All omissions or commissions are responsibly accepted by the researcher.

1.5.2 The Poetics

The word ‘poetics’ gathers momentum from Aristotle’s book *The Poetics* in which variety of fine subject and topics on epistemology have been treated. Since then the word, like a flower has attracted to itself a worldwide interpretation and diverse commentaries. The term is applied broadly as it donates to the concept of theory or literary discourse. In art, other terms closely linked with poetics are creative, figurative rhythmical symbolic, metaphoric, aesthetic et-cetera that refers to the form, context and structure of a given concept. The word means so many things to so many scholars in the academic fold. As an art, it portrays various cultural differences of approaches to literariness. Hence, there are now many poetics with contemporary multi-dimensional write-ups on linguistics, thematic, dramatic, etc fields. In the poetics of Aristotle, even children and their games and plays are given a thought of intelligent consideration; that, children games and plays should not be neglected, though such games were viewed by others as irrational, faulty and controversial, forgetting that, “the biggest man you ever see was once a baby” (Tosh, Peter: 1978)

Hugh Holman (1973:403) says that “Poetics is used to refer to the body of principles promulgated or exemplified by a poet or an artist for aesthetic articulation”. In this research, the poetic is the use and appreciation of the children

orature infusing the flavor of orality through its mingling with the written. In the Hausa children traditional games, there is an:

intermingling of effective use of humor, narrative, poetry, fable, parabolic, myth, legend, proverbs, poetry of tenderness, poetic celebration of laughter and joy, of wit, of love, of courtship, farming, hunting, epic, boast, satire, praise, abuse, celebration of absence and receptions and welcomes and other varied aspects of life, with a tradition of pouring old wine in to new bottles. The forms and techniques suitable for rendering the new aspect of Africa which are decipherable are 'poetics', the principle of traditional aesthetics and rhetorical devices. (Ohaeto, 1998:18)

1.5.3 Kano

The selected traditional African games to be researched on are all within the state of Kano which is one of the thirty-six (36) states in Nigeria. It is located in northern Nigeria. Kano is considered as the current home and the seat of the standard Hausa language.

The Hausa language spoken in Kano is also considered as the standard medium of writing in which many books of literature are produced. Kano state has forty-four (44) local government areas and is rated as the highest in Nigerian population. Kano, the capital of Kano state as it is now, is a big industrial and commercial center. These industrialization and commerce attract many tribes with their various cultures to live in the city and many of its local governments. Their settlement blesses Kano state with a conglomeration of multi-faceted cultures. The big towns and villages of Kano are now blessed with settlers and their cultures that come to engage in one activity or another. In most of these places (the capital, the

towns and the big villages), one can rarely see or witness any of these types of traditional children's games to be researched on played or performed as a result of the influx of modern technology and other foreign influences as mentioned earlier.

1.5.4 The African Child

This is not referring to Camara Laye's novel, *The African Child*, which is a story of a small African boy brought up and trained by his parents amidst typical African superstitious practices who is made to attend a formal school under the colonial masters by his mother; rather, the research is more concerned with the literal, physical African child in the traditional unsophisticated African sense, who used to perform the traditional unsophisticated games this project selects and studies. This type of African child is completely different from the modern European child or the modern American, Russian, Arabic, Indian or Chinese child or any other child from anywhere in the world who plays computer games, a game of chess or snooker or other modern electronic games. The traditional African child this study concentrates on is the type who has not a range of toys bought from the super market or shopping malls to play with. The research is concerned with the traditional African child who crudely creates his toys from the materials available within his immediate environment based on his immediate needs and resources; nor is he the child who has been to a formal school to learn in a confined setting and dictated by restricted rules and regulations under a strict and regular supervision of teachers. The research concentrates on the African child

who creates the setting of his games and also the rules of the games even if such games are inherited from his mentors, the African child who has the liberty to moderate them (the games) to his taste; this study is also concerned with the type of African child who used to belong to the whole society, to brothers and sisters, to cousins, nieces and nephews, uncles, aunties, grannies, far and near him; not the modern African child who sleeps alone in a well decorated room, with his nanny nearby; the research is referring to an African child who played games when the moon shines, a child who learns informally, a child who, with others of his kind used to tend to the goats, the sheep, the cows to pasture. This is the type of child this dissertation refers to, the child of about 7-11 years old, who plays the types of games that were “fore grounded on a pedagogical adjective...cherished by the...community ... to appreciate their cultural values”. (Babura 2009, 27)

1.5.5 Africa

The African continent, from its emergence till today, witnessed a number of conditions or circumstances in which its people live, work or do things individually or collectively. Some of these conditions Africa has fallen into were either natural or premeditated by people in the course of its historical evolution.

First, it was inhabited with only its own types, indigenous crude Africans before the arrivals of the Arabs and the religion of Islam and the intrusion of the European colonial masters. It was the Africa“...that was influenced neither by the Arabic Islamic-culture or western European worlds...That was the primitive

Africa” (Jahn, 1966: 22). Ali Mazrui as quoted by Abdu (2010) also refers to that period or condition of Africa as “the indigenous, heretic Africa of the unlettered people”.

Africa also witnessed the period of slave trade when the victors carried away the vanquished as their slaves and or concubines and sold elsewhere or made to work in domesticated areas. In Africa still, some people were made slaves by their religious deities as the Osus of the Igbo people: “...an Osu was a person dedicated to a god, a thing set apart, a taboo; and his children after him. He could neither marry nor be married by the free-born”. (Achebe, 1958;11).

In those days of slave trade, there were some Africans in the diaspora who were able to become literate. Some of those include Olaudah Equino, Philips Wheatley, Juan Latino, Jupiter Hammon, Ottoba Coguano”; (ibid), these were the slaves who were recognized as the first batch of Africans to write creative and imaginative literature in the European languages using the Greco-Roman letters.

The next period of African transformation was when colonialism came. That was when Africa started losing its cultural identity, the children’s games in particular. Much later, colonialism paved way to independence. After their independence, many African countries became involved in various civil wars that further destabilized it (Africa). This period in which Africa has lost its important identity came along with new terms like Post-colonialism, Post independence, Imperialism, Neo-colonialism, commonwealth countries etc, each connected to a foreign power that colonized it. Now Africa is nurtured by so called self rule

leaders who are the sons and daughters of the soil, who rule and control Africa's economy and all aspects of her social conditions. Now, the native African rulers more especially the politicians, made their rules and regulations, create their own laws and constitutions, each, doggedly following a particular European or American influence.

Before then, Janheinz Jahn, (1966) a German critic, was able to come up with a text titled *A History of Neo-African Literature*.

In the text he cites an Egyptian astronomer and geographer Ptolamy, whom Jahn assumes to be the first person to give Africa its name, first, as 'Agysimba' and later 'Africa'. Jahn, further identifies Africa or Agysimba by:

two different cultural areas with different histories and traditions; on the one hand is north Africa, and on the other is what is variously called Negro-Africa, black Africa, non-Islamic Africa, or Africa south of the Sahara. (ibid,1966:3)

Africa is different from other continents in its literary creativity and religious innovations, its songs and dances; in short her art, her socio-cultural and economic facets. Generally:

the African traditional art, was, not as in the art of more contemporary society, a luxury or a past-time...which arouse partly out of a social necessity to express and communicate, through and partly out of a natural instinct for survival and adornment" (Darthorn: 1974, 3)

On story telling:

Africa was always rich... than in other cultures. Africa has a well established ancient tradition of orature which is a common property belonging to the people as a whole: it is an expression of their culture and social circumstances. The reputation of the story teller depends on the inventiveness which he modifies and adds

to the basic framework of the tale. So, within the basic framework, the teller is allowed considerable room for maneuver. His audience...will look forward to the extent and effectiveness of his improvisation and modification, to the skill with which he makes use of facial expression, gestures, poses and rhetorical devices and create suspense and excitement. While using the inherited framework, the brilliant story teller of folktales transforms them into something uniquely his own. (NTI Kaduna, NCE/DLS Course book on English Language, Cycle 1, module 3, 2000)

In drama and poetry and other literary aspects, Africa is also unique. This would be discussed in chapter two during literature review.

1.5.6 Folklore

In the phrase ‘traditional African children’s games’, the word traditional is synonymous with words like ‘folklore, local, indigenous, oral and verbal’. These analogies rightly placed this research under the umbrella of traditional (African) literature or oral (African) literature or folklore or orature (as coined by Zirinu in 1963.) In his overview of folklore studies, Ahmad (1984:1) says: “The term folklore was coined in England in 1846 to reflect the folk stories, customs and beliefs ... looked down upon and... associated with falsity, wrongness, and ignorance”. This expression of Ahmad on orature was further emphasized that, “... in the 1960s in Britain at least, the term oral literature did - just – exist, as an academic concept (which) was really not relevant for serious scholarship in the modern world”. (Finnegan, 2010:278)

These views by these two academic giants is now history as the study of orature or oral literature is now a subject of research which this study is part of.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Orature in Perspective

Many traditional children's games are seen or viewed as 'meta-literature' (Abdu, 2012) or 'quasi-literature' (Finnegan 1970). Meta or quasi literature is an activity that combines poetry, drama and stories and other literary acts, therefore, it is multidisciplinary in nature. In the children's games that are traditional, many of such activities are seen as poetry and drama as well as containing in them substances of stories, anecdotes, proverbs, riddles and jokes, tongue twisters, songs and dances etc, which all possess various literary techniques. This combination is enshrined in the verbal arts speculatively form the foundation of other studies of literature. In this respect, many scholarly discourses, researches; recordings etc are conducted in this field. Few among these are Finnegan, (1970, 2001), Iwaketok, (2009), Ahmad, (1997) Akporobaro, (2001) etc, who have in one way or the other written on various academic areas closely related to Oral African literature in general and in particular, the children traditional games of Africa.

Finnegan (1970) explores the traditional oral literature in Africa. She comes across some children of the African continent, in the Swahili, from Zululand, and from Nigeria especially the Yoruba land.

Most of her researches in the local children's games take cognizance of some areas of the French speaking African countries. She investigated more adult plays than those of the children. Few of children's performances noted by Finnegan are "... lullabies (and other songs designed for children) but primarily transmitted by adults)" (Finnegan 1970: 299). The concern of this dissertation is not with these types of children's games but rather with the types originally designed, transmitted and performed by the children themselves. Also, Finnegan's research does not consider the poetics or stylistic aspects of the traditional African children's games. None of her area on children performances takes cognizance of any Hausa children traditional games of Kano state in particular. She pays attention to countries like "Malawi, Uganda, Zululand, Ruwanda, Zambia, Central Africa, Southern Sudan or the Yoruba land" (Finnegan, 1970: 297-313). The African children's traditional games she researched on according to her claims were contextual, with local significance but in creativity or figurative symbolism she is silenced. Most of these types of games hang on improvisation. Improvisation is one of the elements that differentiate the oral from literature. Akporobaro (2001) identifies seven factors which distinguished Orature from literature. These seven are derived from the oral medium as he says:

The identity of oral literary form is shaped by a number of factors which represents the oral matrix of the forms. These are derived from the oral medium and include;

- (i) Performance as a basis of the artistic communication
- (ii) Orality, the mode of communication

- (iii) The personality of the artiste
 - (iv) The audience as a factor
 - (v) Memory as factor
 - (vi) Improvisation
 - (vii) Artistic literary qualities
- (Akporobaro, 2001:3)

These yardsticks of oral traditional African Children's games by Akporobaro are lacking in some aspects if compared with the yardsticks of Finnegan in which she includes the age of the performer and the setting of the performances. Since this research is concerned with children of about 7 – 11 years of age, these two factors of Finnegan (age and setting/situation) would be used to quantify or bring out the artistic literariness as contained in the games played by the children.

Another scholar, in three different years writes on the Ibibio cultural children's games. In 1980, Iwaketok writes a paper titled "Ibibio Children's Oral Poetry". In that paper she discusses some children plays versus games. One of such is "Nsa Ison" (p. 35-36). This game is equivalent to the 'Enter Game' of the traditional Hausa culture performed by girls of about seven to eleven years. In this game, as in all other games, the writer just describes how they were carried out and their nonsensical, meaningless words. Nothing is said about the rhythmical or figurative stylistics or simply put, the poetics of the games. In another paper titled "Ibibio Children's games as a means of learning and preserving cultural values", the writer discusses 5 different children games:

- a. Ukpokpoppo Nsa
- b. Nitgha

- c. Esaase owo
- d. Tongue twisters
- e. Word games.

In her paper, apart from describing how the games are performed, she also writes on their socio-cultural merits and their history and how the same games could be used to preserve the Ibibio cultural values. As in her first paper, there is no comment on their literariness.

In another paper by the same writer, “A historical Analysis of Ibibio Anaang Children’s Toys”, the scholar further writes her observations of such toys and their functionality. She writes that the toys provide “delight, pacification, fulfillment and satisfaction....” The dolls/toys are sometimes regarded as symbols of superstitious belief. As she continues:

They served and (still do) as a medium through which a barren woman can have children or a male child can be acquired by a woman who had had several girls and was running the risk of losing her husband to a more promising women. In fact, the dolls were and are still used as a medium to ward off misfortunes like arrest, capture, and other undesired condition. At present, the wooden doll is no longer used as a play thing but for ritual. It is studied as cultural relics or used as theatrical production. In traditional performances, (they) also serve as a medium of literary expressions. The toys brought back childhood memories, engendered folktales, proverbs, riddles. The sight of a doll...called forth some lullabies. (Iwokedok, 1980: 35-36, 2001: 216, 2007: 237-239).

All these papers are on traditional children’s games expressing their descriptions, didacticism, functionality and history. But they are not from northern Nigeria and

in particular the Hausa children of Kano. Though some of the games of the Ibibio children are almost similar to some of the Hausa children in titles or names when translated into English, and their mode of performances, still there is no mention of their poetics. Oral African literature comprises of four main segments; these are

... Expressive art which in itself is further divided into folk narrative, folk songs or folk poetry. Folk narratives includes tales, legends, anecdotes, etc. while folk songs includes songs which might be accompanied with dances, romances, epics proverbs riddles etc.

The second segment is material culture... and the third is social folk custom... the last segment is performing folk arts. These largely deal with poetry, music, dances, and **games**. (Ahmad,1981: 4-5).

Games, the last word in the quote and emphasized by this research is a point of importance because it is the concern of the thesis, though not all games, but the ones that are played or performed by the little ones, which mostly involve poetry, music, dances, juggling, narratives, legends, history and lots of others of their type. All these are correlated in their verbal acumen. They are transmitted or transferred from one generation to another verbally their storage is by rote memory in those days, but nowadays, some are documented through research of this nature and many other writings that attract the attention of academic figures. The verbal rendition and the storage by memory are two of the many reasons why such oral activities may have the same content but various formats of performances as once observed by Umar: ‘canje canje na sunaye da salon gabatarwa ne suka banbanta su tun da ba’a Kano kadai ake yin su ba.’ (Umar, 1977).

What this Scholar is explaining is that such games are not performed in Kano alone. Their differences are in their names and in their forms of performances for the narrator, singer, transmitter or speaker of such traditional oral activity is at liberty to moderate and improve the already known events. The personality of the performer, further observed:

not only recreates but also mediates between the inherited core forms and his living performance and the audience, coloring the received version with his personality traits such as his experience, religious beliefs, world view and narrative verve, verbal skill and the force of his memory. Although, he is a re creator, he is never an indifferent or objective re creator. ... He can also transform and remold his received material in accordance with the power of his imagination or memory. (Akporobaro, 2001: 6).

By this quote, it is easy to believe that such traditional oral activities, more especially in the children's world, are highly imaginative, creative and improvisational, full of theatrical and childish nuances but lacking proper props and costumes. Over the years, researches and collections of various types of oral African performances have taken place, but accordingly the researchers:

...did not investigate it as poetry, looking for its stylistic rules. They let it be used as handy, materials for ethnology, anthropology, linguistics, theology, psychology, etc.... But as literature, as poetry, it has remained unexplored territory. (Jahn, 1966: 56)

So how does one rate children's oral traditional games of Africa in these contemporary days? As literature or merely as sociological activities; for the same writer (Jahn) posits that before an activity is recognised or categorized as literature, certain features must be considered:

Now literature, art and music no doubt have social functions, but they are not themselves social functions. They are something more than that. Literature should be ‘an imaginative, pithy, witty or euphonious.’ The feelings of the persons...are as irrelevant to its literary value... (ibid: 57).

So, back to the same postulation above; how do we consider oral traditional African children’s games, if not as literature? The writers above (Ahmad 1997, Jahn 1966) do not talk or consider the children games specifically in their writings. But do such children’s games particularly the poetry, the drama and the stories or narratives in them uphold the above poetic qualifiers (Imaginative, pithy, witty, and euphonious) of literature by Jahn? To be ‘imaginative’ is for one to have or create a mental picture that will be understood by one and the other person. A ‘pithy’ situation is when one is able to express himself well and the expression to be full of meanings; while ‘witty’ means the ability to say or do or write clever amusing things; while a ‘euphonious’ activity describes how words or sounds are manipulated to be pleasant to the ear. Many of such children’s games posses these qualities and many more. For among the games of the children are some that are played silently, without a single word uttered, while many contain songs with dances in them, jumpings, clapping, skippings, hoppings and chasing one another, chantings, grunting melodies, rhythms and may as well be dramatized all in various degrees of flexibility. Most of the games traditionally played by the children in Kano area came as a result of inherited improvisation and imitation by the children themselves:

This culture was and is oral. Like most oral cultures, it relies on the reminiscences of old people, as well as everyday happenings, on diverse subject from birth to marriage, religion and death (and games) memories were, and are, the life line of any oral culture though these do not however presuppose oral arts are handed down from one generation to the other verbatim. (Maikaba,1996: 1)

These two (improvisation and imitation) are part of the drama and poetry in such games. Heath, translates Aristotle that “ an imitation needs not be a straight forward copy of the object imitated...nor needs an imitation be a likeness...of fidelity to real events.” (Heath,1996:xiv)

As children copy from elders, whatever is imitated by them would be nothing but childish balderdash, therefore, its performance would be full of childish franks more meaningful to them (the children) than to others, more dramatic and more enacted. “Poetry is better if its mode is dramatic” (Ibid). This is saying that the children in their traditional games are dramatic and making poetry lively, exciting and memorable. The inclusion of children and their plays and games in *The Poetics* by Aristotle is a point of concern and an issue of importance for its poetic in it, (The Poetics).

Aristotle has woven a variety of understanding speculations that are enlightening, contradictory, thought provoking and at the same time all encompassing in mitigating circumstances. Among these varieties in *The Poetics* by Aristotle is universal judgment, epistemology (knowledge) metaphysics (nature of the world and human life), tragedy (a play about a man that is a good and of royal birth, who through his flaw or moral weakness falls from grace to grass,

though Yerima (2009: 15) debunks this assertion by proving that tragedy, in drama or reality affects the noble and commoner, the rich and poor. In his own words, Yerima says:

Aristotle, the father of European intellectual drama says that tragedy is a play about a man who is good and of royal birth, who, through his flaw, falls from grace to grace, and his fall which must be a reversal of his fortune must evoke pity and fear from the audience.... The African example of a tragedy is not the same. Man can change his destiny even if he is in conflict with his gods.

In a more practical manner, Arthur Miller (1953), in *The Crucible* dramatizes that tragedy can struck the rich and the poor, the noble or the commoner.

Other related aspects considered by Aristotle in *The Poetics* include epic, comedy, plot, poetry, animals, rhetoric, memory, culture, politics, imitation or mimesis and children's play acting (Heath 1996). His (Aristotle's) purpose or desire of writing *The Poetics* may be to set the academia to speculate, explore, critique, and understand more the universal or global variabilities. Recognizing "play acting" in *The Poetics* is worthy of my attention especially to this research which is about children and their childish activities especially their games and plays.

In such children plays, poetry, drama and stories are all brought together through a display of semiotic signs, meanings and narrative events. Almost all aspects of life are jumbled together in which epistemology, metaphysics, science, politics, animals and birds' kingdoms, and agriculture, (pastoral and aquatic life), creativity and all the variables of life. That orality in Africa

Contains parables, narrations, poetry, fable, paradox, myth, legends, proverbs, poetry of tenderness, poetic celebrations of laughter and joy, poetry of wit and humour, women choral poetry and naming ceremonies and puberty rites, love songs, and songs of courtship, wedding songs, farm songs, songs that celebrate absences or welcomes or receptions, funeral dirges and hunting songs,, drinking songs, epic, boasts, satire,, songs of praise or abuse, and other varied aspects of life. (Ohaeto, 1998)

The Poetics of Aristotle is indeed an artful textual production that attracts worldwide translations (since it was first written in the Greek language, Aristotle's mother tongue), interpretations and diverse commentaries and debates are still pouring in from scholars in the academia. Aristotle in that book considers and discusses all aspects of knowledge (epistemology) and the ambivalent nature of life in a combination and juxtaposition of many diversified intellectual matrices. "The poetics is worth studying closely (because) of the quality of its thought". (Heath, 1996: viii). This clearly is stating that, that book is a well researched, organized and well informed document. Therefore, it is quite apparent that the study of 'poetics' has taken a much deeper interest in a variety of well informed and intelligent conceptions, meanings and generalizations to readers and researchers, scholars and artistes. In *The Poetics* of Aristotle, even the children and their games are given a thoughtful, intelligent consideration. Children's games and plays are mostly neglected by scholars for such were seen as irrational, faulty or controversial. That is probably why in his *Introduction to African Oral Literature*; Akporobaro too neglects the children games. The whole book does not contain any game of the children which is also viewed as Orature. He concentrates rather on

adults' activities, stories and prose forms, proverbs, praise poems, the epic, myth, lyric and songs, folk tales, cultural environment, communication etc.

In these areas covered, Akporobaro talks of literary qualities, their “metaphors, similes, hyperbole, synecdoche, repetition, parallelism homophones, proverbs, prolepsis, idiophones, symbolism, riddles, irony” (Akporobaro, 2006, 14-18) but he does not consider the children's performances. His is a general consideration more especially on the adults' performances while this dissertation pays particular attention to the stylistics, the syntax and diction of children's games of Africa, particularly the Hausa of Kano.

2.2 Position of Traditional African Children Games

Scholars who discuss African Children games concentrate on their values to the society or the children themselves. A scholar, categorically states their importance or position in the field of academic discourse, especially those games of the Hausa traditional children:

Traditional games by children...are components of Orature and they constitute a forum from which a variety of lessons are derived within the framework of a people's cultural sphere of experience...there have been quite a few scholarly researches and writings which attempt to survey, describe and asses the anther, scope and full impact of some of these games on general Hausa life. (Babura, 2009:28)

In the bygone days and even these cotemporary ones, children's games are considered as activities that have little or no importance, for many believed that the children play them just to while away the time or exercise:

Two broad views exist on children's play. While one group thinks that children's play is an activity that is very crucial to the proper development process of a child, a process that should not be trivialized, another group sees it as a frivolous activity they (children) engage in when parents want their children out of the way. (Iwoketok, 2001: 237)

This research shares the view that children's plays or games are crucial to their proper development as the leaders of their societies in the near future.

The spirit of sportsmanship is as well inculcated as the players learn to accept defeat. The person who studies closely the children's traditional games would find them fascinating and ruminating. Some of the games appear simple while others tasking and complicated to the adult's eye, but are easily surmountable by the children themselves. The games often prove to make illuminating senses when further reflections bring to light their underlined rationale as written in a paper titled "Lessons In Hausa Ethnomathematics: A Case Study Of Malam Na Bakin Kogi"

Malam Na Bakiun Kogi as a cultural game is studied as a Hausa children's game which, because of its demand on the intellectual and analytical capacity of the mind, falls into the category of intellectual activities used by Hausa youths to develop and enhance their innate mathematical acumen. The study proves that the game Malam Na Bakin Kogi is another evidence of the assertion by many scholars that the mathematical impulse is native to man wherever he is in all communities whatever their level of civilization. (Babura, 2009: 27-30)

Iwoketok has done extensive researches, surveys and findings on her Ibibio traditional children games. She laments and voices out fears at the gradual loss of these games she asserts to be priceless to the socio-cultural and educational growth

of the children that prepare them for future leadership roles in their community. These games, according to her are “children’s ways of thinking, learning, creating...and absorbing them for future life. (2001:216) In this vein, that scholar is emphasizing that these types of children’s activities should not be allowed to perish, doing so would jeopardize the culture and or tradition of Africa in general and Kano state in particular. When fully utilized, this research believes these types of children’s traditional games of Africa would be an avenue “for unifying and rationalizing factors...to establish logical, political and cultural identities” (Dorson, 1972: 38). As the children play together as a team, their relationship becomes more solidified and would extend to their maturity irrespective of their social class as “each of these games is fore grounded on a pedagogical adjective that is cherished by thecommunity”. (Babura, 2009: 27) Children’s games are a contribution to the society they are found in. They also promote the people’s tradition and literature and portray the identity, the talent, the socio-cultural outlook etc, all blended together to provide a particular cultural aroma. Through such children’s games, many social, emotional, psychological and mental merits are acquired. One among these merits achieved is team spirit, that is the ability to work together and also the ability to lead and the ability to follow others, and the ability to endure disappointment and to accept defeat, all while playing in a group as a team. Babura (2009: 27) posits that each of these games played by the children has an educational purpose. In other words, this intellectual is admitting

that apart from acquiring team spirit, the children acquire other mental skills of a mathematical, scientific and technological nature and vocational skills.

In 1978, in a B.A dissertation a research was conducted on children's games in Hausaland, Kano area of my focus in particular. Three years later, that dissertation was published into a text titled *Wasannin Tashe* (the plays of tashe). 'Tashe is a cultural performance within the Hausa society that is conducted once in a year during the month of Muslims compulsory fasting. The writer states that "Tashe al'ada ce da ake yi a cikin watan nan mai alfarma, watau watan Ramalan." (Umar, 1981: 1) (that Tashe is a cultural performance conducted once in a year during the revered month of fasting known as Ramalan). In the book, the author lists and discusses twenty three (23) different plays. This type of annual game is not the concern of this dissertation on poetics of children's traditional games because they are conducted once a year. The type of games this research focuses on are those performed daily. Tashe games are also conducted during the night or day times while games of these dissertation are performed only at night. Another difference between the traditional children games of this dissertation with that of Umar is that Tashe games are conducted by both children and youths while this work's are by children only. Umar himself proves that: "Da tafiya ta yi tafiya sai ya zama ba kananan yara kadai ke wasan tashe ba. Manyan samari kan yi kungiya su rika bi unguwa-unguwa" (ibid: 5). This is saying that 'it is not only children who perform Tashe games. Youths and adults as well form their groups and visit various places with them'. The players of Tashe also expect the people they play

to, to give them something in return for their games, but this dissertation types of children games are not reciprocative.

The traditional children's games of Kano this research concerns itself with are not mobile as in the "Tashe" games. The performers play them in one place and finish in the same place and disperse for the night, all by the children themselves not by youths or adults.

2.3 Children Traditional Games as Poetry

In African community, the children are the center of attraction and at the same time, the backbone on which its continued socio-political and economic survival depends on.

The child thus models himself and his verse (children's poems) on his father and other adult, but many of these adults' songs (poems) were in fact composed by their singers when they were still younger boys minding their fathers' cattle in the bush. (Finnegan, 1970: 304-305)

The songs performed by children in some games researched on are performances that further elucidate the integral part of them. The games are viewed as dramatization which encapsulates orality, face to face interaction between the performer and his audience and they go with emotional situation, beauty of voice, vocal expressiveness, facial expression. Memorization rather than creation is the expectation role of this verbal variability" (Ibid, 3-8)

In performing these action games, Dorson, (1971) asserts that the poems in the traditional African sense are performed amidst “gestures, eye contact, interaction, pantomime, acrobats... as the author of the written words never does” (Dorson, 1971: 11).

Here Dorson is in concert with Malinowski, on the function of oral literature by adding that:

Folklore is not an educational tool which ensures the continuity of traditional society only but also a means of enlightening the younger members of the norms and values that are held sacred ...to reinforce the custom and taboo or provide a means of releasing of aggression through fantasy. (ibid)

Yahaya (1971) published six (6) volumes of *Tatsuniyoyi Da Wasanni* (folktales and traditional children games) as a means of enlightening the younger members of the Hausa community about the norms and values of their society. In these volumes, Yahaya records twenty eight (28) different types of Hausa children games. In book 1 the author records eight (8) different word games or tongue twisters. In book two he has four (4) types which include thirty two (32) riddles, one (1) tongue twister, “Askille” (A game of beating or touching the opponent’s chest and hands in a song sang by the two players simultaneously). The next game is titled “matar kwadi” a game played by two girls using a sing-song dialogue with one of the players bending on her fours while, the other playfully and lightly beating her on her back with clenched fist.

In book three (3) Yahaya records seven various games of the children. The first is a riddle with twenty (20) questions and answers, while the second one is a tongue-twister. The remaining five (5) are all girls plays. The first two (2) “Charman dudu” and “Dare in kirkizalle” are played amidst singing, chorus, dances, jumps and claps, while the next three (3) are by a minimum number of two (2) players throughout clapping and twisting of hands with a singer and chorus. Each has a different song but similar in form. These three are “tafa-tafa”, “Na debo ruwa” and “Ina da cikin dan fari”.

In book four 4, five games, three (3) by boys and two (2) girls are played actively without sitting. They are “Awo-awo”, “Jini-Jini”, “Dan Akuya na” then “Tama ya ki tama” and “Iye nanaye”.

In Book Five (5), there are three (3) games all played by girls sitting down. The mode of playing the games is the same while each has a different song.

Book Six (6) which is the final one, contains eight (8) games as in book one (1). They are “Kulin Kulifita”, A riddle with twenty three (23) questions and answers, then “lugu-lugu ta nuna”, (a game performed while sitting by both sexes), followed by “Dan tsinke” (by boys), then “Dan Maliyo” (by girls) and the remaining five (5) by boys. They are “gwalalan gwalalami”, “Se-se-se”, “Zanzarni” and “Wo na kolin-koli”.

In Kano, the focus of this dissertation is the place where most of the games documented by Yahaya are performed. This collection has a lot of variation from Umar’s *Wasannin Tashe*. Umar’s (2007) book, portrays Hausa traditionnal games

of both children and adult, while in these six (6) volumes, Yahaya concentrates on children's performances only. Also the type of games reflected in the six (6) volumes are conducted at night only when the players have taken their night meals and were/are played on daily basis, while those games of Umar are yearly.

In the series, there are word games, concentration games, games that demand much physical, vigorous exercises, games that are played while sitting and others played with the players running and or chasing one another. Some of the games are played solely by males and some by females and others are unisex. The settings of the games are either outside the compound or sometimes inside the houses of some of the players with enough spaces.

'Tashe' games by Umar conducted annually, usually uses costumes and props and make-up, but the children games in the six (6) volumes of Yahaya's *Tatsuniyoyi da Wasanni* have no costume, prop or make-up requirement. This is evident from the researcher's knowledge and the drawn pictures in the six (6) volumes. The children use their informal, normal day to day clothes. Some of the boys even play bare chested wearing only trousers or shorts.

Apart from drama and narration, there is poetry aplenty in the performances of such children's games because the children believe in fantasy yet, were able to uphold the society's customs and taboos. To an African, young or old, "poetry permeate all aspects of the circle of human life from birth in tradition, marriage, death and burial" (Akporobaro, 2006:55). The few ones that have no poetry in them are full of dramatic performances.

On the importance of African oral literature, Kaschula, (2003) reiterates that it is an “all round development of life in both the past and the present. For African oral literature, relate to media, music, theater, cinema, technology text, gender, religion power, politics and globalization.” Still on this issue of African oral literature, Dathorne (1974), shares the views of Lambo that:

While western art (literature) has become largely just a by product without function in daily life, African traditional art is integrated into the community with specific functions. African traditional arts, was not as is the art of more contemporary societies, a luxury or a pastime, it was the expression of a more crude but intensely earnest religion and arose partly, out of social necessity to express and communicate....., and partly out of natural instinct for adornment. (Dathorne, 1974)

African traditional children’s games agree with the ‘social necessity’, but not with the ‘religious aspect’, for such games are performed mostly for leisurely activities, socialization, physical training and the like.

Karamin Sani books 1 and 2 contains a number of traditional children’s games of Hausa society. By calculation, ten (10) are discovered which are sanctioned as six (6) Riddles, two (2) anecdotes, one (1) Tongue twister and lastly, one play by boys done rigorously.

These games, though, traditional, are not performed in their natural setting in the African traditional sense. What is meant here is that, almost all the games concentrated on by this dissertation are performed at night especially when the moon shines, and also in non-formal settings with no involvement of the elders. But the local games in *Karamin Sani 1 and 2* are performed within a primary

school situation, some even with elders guiding or assisting the players. In the traditional context, riddles and jokes usually come at the tail end of the games when the children are physically exhausted before they retire for the night, but in the aforementioned texts, these (riddles or jokes) are at the apex and middle while the only game that is played vigorously comes lastly. In these two texts, the sequence of the games is reversed. The plot is distorted. Usually, games such as riddles and jokes, tongue twisters, stories or narratives come at the end after more vigorous plays. But in these two series, riddles and stories with the more vigorous boys play are at the tail end.

Connectedness manifested in the events of a plot of the African traditional children games are chronological, in which one game is performed, discarded for another, then another till when the children are thoroughly exhausted for the night. Traditional children's games are series of activities that come one after the other, sequentially in an informal but organized manner. The games in the two series of *Karamin Sani* may rightly be compared with those in book 1 of *Tatsuniyoyi Da Wasanni*. Both games take place in a formal setting by both boys and girls under the supervision of elders unlike those in *Wasanni Tashe* by Umar (1981) and in series 2 - 6 of *Tatsuniyoyi da Wasanni*, of Yahaya (1971,72)

2.4 Children Traditional Games as Drama

In the modern sense, in particular the western or American senses, drama is a performance that involves imitation of action or role playing of a story. The audience is

detached from the artistes. They (audience) usually pay a token fee (money) to enter a specific place (a theater) to watch impassionedly the performance of a person or a group of people acting or imitating others. This imitation of action is also consciously done by the performer or the actor. The performance also is sponsored by a Producer whose purpose or intention is of generating a profit. de-Graft (1981) calls this type of action 'dramatic art of entertainment'. That is, the people pay to watch a play consciously done by others for them to laugh or enjoy themselves.

On the other hand, in the traditional African sense, intellectual scholars, the same de-Graft (1981), Finnegan (1970), Solomon (1980), all share the postulation that African indigenous drama has no "analogies to the familiar European forms" of drama in the performance mode, the artiste and the artistry. Finnegan further elaborates that:

Though some writers have very positively affirmed the existence of native African drama, it would perhaps be truer to say that in Africa, in contrast to Western Europe and Asia, drama is not typically a word spread or a developed form. (Finnegan,1970:300)

The same de-Graft prefers to regard the native African performance dramatic semblance as 'magical drama' because it contains

Simulation, incantations, spells and passes and self hypnosis in which the subject (modern day actor) slips unconsciously into the act of impersonation. What he (the subject/impersonator) does in this trance state and how he does it is beyond his control. He is possessed.....by a spirit or a demon. (de-Graft,1981:)

Another aspect that differentiates 'magical drama' and the 'dramatic art of entertainment' is that, in the former, the audience is not so detached from the performer. He is an:

Audience of initiates... through empathy with the impersonator... till they reach that state of ecstatic release which constitutes the objective of the ritual (that) in the traditional African situation was nothing but ritual and imagination. (ibid.)

De-Graft research on the African type of drama tumbles upon only one type of indigenous African dramatic element. He has not come across what was traditionally known as 'Wasan Gauta' *of the Hausa culture*. 'Wasan Gauta' was a play performed by the subjects for their king in order to enlighten the monarch about their condition from the previous year to that particular time. In this type of drama, (Wasan Gauta) the players perform consciously in full control of their senses as in the children's traditional games. In the 'Wasan Gauta' also, the actors wear special costumes and make up, but in the traditional children's plays, the players have no costume or make up. In both plays of 'Wasan Gauta' and the traditional games of the African children, truly the characters or actors imitate or simulate consciously as in the modern day drama, yet, they do not get into a 'trance' nor become 'possessed'. The 'Wasan Gauta' has passive audiences that are entertained as in modern days' drama, but the audience does not pay any money to watch the performance while in the children's play there is no audience as in the case of 'Wasan Gauta' and the modern drama. The children are both the players and the audience; all merged into one. The children also are entertained by their own acts, in which they (children) fervently throw themselves in, involving imitation of action, mimicry, manipulation, dances, singing, merry making , linguistic contests, etc. The elements of drama in these plays have "no evidence of

specialized scenery or of buildings or sites specifically designed for theatrical performances.” (Finnegan, 1970:517).

Akporobaro who studies more closely traditional African drama than de-Graft or Finnegan says that: “Traditional performances in Africa are often highly dramatic and picturesque in form (which)...provides very dramatic and theatrical expression of history, beliefs and social experiences”. (2006:4)

The dramatic elements of the African “quasi –dramatic phenomena” (Finnegan, 1970:203) are somehow similar and at the same time different from the Aristotelian concept of drama. That European philosopher posits that drama must possess “imitation of historical and imagined events or experience through action or through words”. On Aristotle’s terms, drama implies a separation of real life from the imitated events which merely seeks to portray real life through spectacular and realistic incidents. Drama also entails the use of “characters...dialogue, a stage specifically designed for the purpose of performance or enactments”

In the African traditional action or dramatic children’s games, there is imitation in some and none in others ‘and any suitable place is a ‘theater’, and the characters are the imitators and at the same time the audience in their real selves. And also, these types of children performances are impressive, entertaining, stimulating, educative and above all theatrical to the African child who would one day turn out to be a man.

2.5 Conclusion

The traditional children's games are reminiscences of many African villages and rural areas. They are still performed by the children who in those days "look forward eagerly to the evenings when, in the lovely moonlight...keeping them out of their beds long after they should have been asleep." (Olagoke, 1963:5). In those days, each primitive ethnic group or tribe has its specific plays that are peculiar to it only. There are also some games that cut across ethnicity with slight margins here and there. For instance, here in Nigeria, the Hausa Community, Fulani, Nupe et cetera in the north, the Igbo, Yoruba, Ibibio, Itsekiri in the south and eastern parts all have various tribal games that are identical to them. Most of these games have few or little or even no materials or equipments to perform them. Those that have are less sophisticated and can very easily be manufactured. Such types of traditional African games are minor games because of their want of technical gadgets. Many of these games have mutated to something else into the contemporary times. Those that have changed include boxing, wrestling, racing and arching. Still, there are some few ones that have achieved international recognition and standard while the others are yet to be even at their local level.

Modern games on the other hand, are those that are globally recognized and accepted and are performed with sophisticated gadgets and equipments with strict rules and regulations and supervision of officials with a lot of audience. These strict supervision is absent in many traditional games especially those of the children.

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS OF HAUSA TRADITIONAL CHILDREN GAMES

Ibrahim Yaro Yahaya has been recognized as one of the greatest contributors to Hausa traditional children games in his series of *Tatsuniyoyi da Wasanni* books 1-6. These series of ‘written-orality’ contain in them a substantial number of Hausa children traditional games and plays. In such texts, the writer does not write on their didactic functions as Iwokedok does in many of her writings (1984, 1997, 2000, 2001) or the period of their performances (as Umar 1981) or their social values as Finnegan (1970). Yahaya does not even interpret or mention where in particular in Hausaland such children’s games are performed. He only records and presents them for posterity and as sources or materials for future researches. The use of firsthand knowledge as source of research in analyzing data is emphasized by Dorson through Bodunde that suggests:

...Three tests for establishing the past works of oral tradition (are) ‘biographical evidence’; that the author has enjoyed direct contact with oral lore, then ‘internal evidence’ which is indicating the authors familiarity with folklore and ‘corroborative evidence’, that the sayings, tales, songs, or customs inside the literary works possess an independent traditional life. (Bodunde, 2001: 3)

In this case, this researcher is very much familiar with some Hausa traditional games performed by girls of 7-11 years. As for the games played by boys, this researcher is very much at home with them for participating in almost all the

games mentioned by Yahaya and many others outside them. Instead of textual analysis, a generic one would be attempted of the games.

3.2 Analysis of Tongue-Twisters

In this book, there are eight (8) types of children games which are all tongue twisters, though each of them has a different theme or purpose. These are “Karya Harshe”, “Kidaya daga 1 zuwa 10 a bai-bai”. (Counting 1-10 in the opposite direction, “Kai Jan Mutumin Can... “(Oh You Red Man Yonder), followed by “Tauna kashi...” (Chewing Bones). The remaining four (4) are “Kwado da ‘Kato” (The Frog and The Giant), “An Kashe Kasa...” (Killing the Serpent), “Tsuntsun Bisa” (The Bird Above) “Yan Tsaki” (The Chicks) and lastly “Salam Alaikum Matar Dubarudu” (Excuse Me Dubarudu’s Wife). The games mentioned above are not titled as such by the author in book 1. The researcher did that mostly from the first sentences.

Despite these games been in a formal setting, they are from Hausa children and are aimed at improving or mastering some Hausa expressions of allophones and homophones that are peculiarly identified with Hausa language only. Few among such allophones and homophones are:

Hausa letters with a hook as in x X q Q v V as in games 1, 4, 7, and 8.

Hausa clusters like ‘Kw, ‘kw, Gw, gy, ts, as in tongue twisters 1-8.

With regards to the second game, that is counting 1-10 in the opposite manner, it is known that the Hausa numbers 1-10 have two syllables each. In this game, the second syllable of each number is mentioned first. In this order if care and concentration are not taken by the child, the end result is a failure. This counting game is as follows

Normal		Twisted
daya	(one)	yada
Biyu	(two)	yubi
Uku	(three)	ku'u
Hudu	(four)	duhu
Biyar	(five)	yarbi
Shida	(six)	dashi
Bakwai	(seven)	kwaiba
Takwas	(eight)	kwasta
Tara	(rata)	rata
Goma	(ten)	mago

Some of these numbers twisted produce other meanings in the Hausa language. For instance, the twisted 'yada' has two other meanings. The first means propagation of information, while the second means peddling rumor. Six is another number that has two other meanings if twisted. The first meaning is 'dashi' which is a kind of a tree in Hausa language. This tree has a proverb 'dashi

mai tsawon rai' (dashi tree with a long life). The second meaning of 'dashi' is an agreement in which some people agree to contribute money periodically and give it to one of them turn by turn. The twisted number nine, 'rata' assumes another meaning, which means a distance between two competing people. Then the twisted ten 'mago' could become 'mago-mago' which means fraudulent or dishonest act.

These homonymous words are there to enrich the Hausa culture via the Hausa diction .

Tongue twisters appear in book 2. With the title "Turmi ture Kura" (Mortar Push Away the Hyena), and in book 3 with the title "Kona Kota" (Burning a hoe's handle).

These word games improve the children's pronunciation and socialization because they are performed by both boys and girls. The poetic devices in these games are setting (formal), allophones, homophones and idiophones.

The games in book 1 of the series have a difference with those in books 2-6. This difference is in their setting, these are the places in which the games are performed. The setting of all the games in books 2-6 are informal, traditional, natural, while the setting in book 1 is a formal school setting, in a classroom in particular between a teacher and his pupils. This is highly unusual in a typical traditional African children game of the Hausa society that were mostly performed informally (in an arena, a bride's house, or in one of the children's compound).

3.3 Analysis of Riddles

The traditional children games of the Hausa children contained in book 2 are four (4) which are “Ka-cici ka-cici” (32 riddles) followed by a tongue twister already mentioned above. There is also “Askille-askille” and lastly “Matar Kwadi” (The Frogs’ wife). In the Hausa society, these types of games as mentioned earlier are played in the house of one of the players, the ‘dandali’ or local arena or in the house of an ‘Amarya,’ a young bride. Boys and girls of about 7–11 years usually meet there to help the bride while away her nostalgia. In this sery, the author says:

Wata rana ne dai, wadansu yara su biyar, maza biyu, Garba da Ilu, mata uku, Dudu da Sima da Kande suka hadu a gidan wata amarya, wai ita Ziza domin su taya ta hira da dare... (Yahaya, 1971:9)

(‘One day, some five children, two boys, Garba and Ilu, and three girls, Dudu, Sima and Kande visited the house of a young bride called Ziza at night to help her while away the time).

In the opinion of the researcher, this setting was very common before but in the contemporary times, it is may be no more in existence in the urban centers, and even in the rural areas, it is not much in evidence. Marriage arrangements of contemporary times are completely different from that of say, twenty years ago in Hausa society.

In this book, four different children’s plays are portrayed. Two of these are unisex while the other two are played by girls only. Both types can be played indoors or outdoors depending on the available situation. The first game of both

boys and girls is a long riddle which covers six pages. In this riddle, all aspects of life are considered that are enlightening, contradictory and thought provoking in a disarray ranging from religion, wonders of Allah's creations, domestic and wild lives, aquatic and agrarian lives, terrestrial and celestial images, birds (domesticated and those in the wild) biological, philosophical, social and even economy of the Hausa society. The most baffling riddle questions (as far as this researcher is concerned) are the ones on page 13 of this sery. It is between Kande and Sima:

Kande: (Question) Dillin bari dillin, dillin na kallonki

(dillin stop dillin, dillin is watching you)

Ilu: (answers) kaza bari tono, shaho na kallonki.

(Hen stop perching, the hawk is watching you)

Kande:(Question) Yadda dillin, ta kan dillin, haka ma dillin, ya kan yi dillin,

(as dillin made dillin, so also dillin made dillin)

Sima: (answers) Yadda kaza ta kan yi kwan nan, haka ma kwan nan

ya kan yi kaza. (as the hen makes the egg so does the egg make the hen)

In these riddles, the word 'dillin' is repeated seven times each having the same spelling and pronunciation but, each bears a different meaning. Having the same spelling, the same pronunciation, makes this word an idiophone poetically. As for having seven different types of meanings, this makes the word 'dillin' to be literally a pun. (This is a device in which words having the same sound and the same spelling but different meanings and different purposes).

Jahn (1966) believes that literature should be an “imaginative, pithy, witty or euphonious”. In particular euphonious literature describes how words and sounds are manipulated to be meaningful and pleasant to the ear. This word “dillin” in these two riddles is a good example. The first one means a hen, the second one is perching or chapping with its claws. The third “dillin” means a Hawk which is usually considered arch enemy of the hen, for to the hawk, the hen and its chicks are preys. “Dillin” number four means the same with “dillin” number one, while “dillin” number five means an egg. Number six is an egg also, while number seven has the same meaning with “dillin” number one.

On the second riddle, there is a philosophical literary consideration on the wonderful acts of creation and survival. This question poses a complex line of speculation and postulates on various aspects of life, for it is questioning that, which of these two (an egg and a hen) was the first to come to the world. If it is the egg, then which hen laid it, and if it is the hen, then from which egg was it hatched? Up to this time, the answer to this baffling philosophical question that came from children is yet to be answered.

Still, the word dillin in these two riddles, further proves the formalist assumption that ‘meaning’ in a language, (a word) is a system of signs; that the sign is the basic unit of meaning between a signifier and the signified. According to this theory.

The main concern of the Formalist is the ‘form’ of literature, which they see to be more important than the content. Form refers to the shape, features and literary style of literary work” (Lawal,2009:32)

In terms of language, the formalists believe in the

..... transformation of language from everyday use to the service of literature. Language should be employed with special features to represent a particular meaning and express a particular message. It must be removed from everyday use. For them, the use of figure of speech is very important. The sound of the language matters as well as other devices that could be used to show the value of arts. (ibid).

The second unisex game is a tongue twister. Like all other word games, this is a verbal rendition aimed at teaching the children to learn specific sound pattern in their language and at the same time, to improve on their vocabulary as Iwaketok observes in her traditional children’s games:

“Ibibio also have word game. It includes riddles, humor and tongue twisters. Of the three, tongue-twisters are the most tasking and complex, because they require verbal skill....The game involves the ability to repeat some words, phrases, clauses or sentences correctly at a very fast speed” (Iwaketok, 2001:218

In the above tongue twister, the children are requested to utter this alliterative statement ‘Turmi ture Kura, Kura ture Turmi’ (mortar push away hyena, Hyena push away mortar). In this alliteration, the letter ‘r’ is one of prominent letters in the Hausa language that a person has to learn how to utter correctly. Anyone who speaks with a lisp finds it extremely difficult to pronounce.

The following two games in the text are performed by girls while the boys become the audience/spectator with the girls more active. In the traditional African performances, the audience/spectator is not passive like those in the European or American drama who pay to watch impassionedly. They are “audience of initiates” as de-Graft once observes. They are part and parcel of the performance as Babura emphasizes: “In African traditional children’s games, the spectators are in principle also the participants”. (Babura, 2009:36)

These last two games performed by the girls contained some songs/poetry and are more dramatic, for despite the number of words in them, there is a lot of action by the females player using their two hands simultaneously to clap and touch the chest of the opponent with their other hands very quickly to see who would falter first. While doing this action games, one or two or all of the players sing/s the song therein. This is making the poetry in these two games more dramatic, lovely, lively, exciting, and memorable as Aristotle says “poetry is better if its mode is dramatic”, (Heath, 1996: iv). This is the song of the game of ‘tafa-tafa’ (clap):

Hausa version from the text

Askille, askille.
Askille fatattaka kunnuwa.
Matan sarki guda nawa?
Matan sarki guda uku.
Daya da ciki.
Daya da goyon dan zakara
Ke wannan wa yai miki cikin?
Dan zakara in ba ki magani
ya zube
Zube dan farkan nan
Zube dan farkan nan
Zube dan farkan nan
Zube dan farkan nan

English version as translated by the researcher

Askille, askille
Askille that chases away the big ears
How many wives has the Emir?
The Emir has three wives
One is pregnant
You who impregnated you?
The cockerel? May I give you some concoction
to abort it
Abort you , useless one
Abort you , useless one
Abort you , useless one
Abort you , useless one

‘Askille, askille’ is a girl’s game played in pairs with a lead singer in each group. Usually, the girls play it while sitting on one of their legs folded under them while the right leg is extended forward on the ground. This sitting posture provides a well balanced sitting position to the players. Each girl’s hands works in consonance with the other. They will be beating their partners chest with one hand while the other hand claps the partner’s hand concurrently. The song in this game

is divided into two portions; a nonsensical story portion that has no tail or head about a person who always spreads rumors about the palace, in particular the Emir's wives. The second part is a command repeated over and over again to an unwanted pregnancy. This command "zube dan farkan nan,'zube dan farkan nan" (abort you useless one) is repeated many times till when the players feel to stop. This game provides hands strengthening training and chest flattening. A sick or weak child does not participate in 'askille-askille' for she may easily be pushed backwards or may encounter hard breathing. The required speed needed in the repetition of the play would be lost or even not achieved if a player is not healthy enough.

After askille is a game called 'Matar Kwadi' (the Frogs' wife) which is also played by female players in the book. From the title, one can see that the Hausa children are somehow familiar with aquatic life and that ponds ('kududdufi') are many. The Hausa children of the contemporary times especially in the urban areas are denied this knowledge of frogs and ponds. Most of the ponds are now filled up and since frogs did habitate in then, they too disappear with time. One wonders why the poem is titled 'Matar Kwadi'. Were the Hausa people practicing polyandry before the advent of Islam? This is another area of research for the future. To perform this game, one of the players squat on her knees to assume the character 'Matar Kwadi'. That player addressed as such answers Iye, iye' (yes, yes) when addressed by her co-player. This is a direct personified imaginary that is dramatic with a dialogue between the two players or characters. The one who is

referred to as the wife will be gyrating her spinal cord up and down many times inconsonance with the sing-song dialogue while answering the challenging statement of her partner. The dialogue at this point, is an element of drama and it makes the play to be more dramatic than poetic. The dialogue in the poem goes like this

Hausa version

Dudu: Matar kwadi

Kande: iye, iye

Dudu: Ina kwadin?

Kande: Suna gida

Dudu: Me ki ka ba su?

Kande: Tuwo da miya da nama

Dudu: kin gutsura ne?

Kande: Ban gutsura ba.

Dudu: Rantse, rantse

Kande: Na rantse da ririya,

Matar sarki tana

Kan doki ta na cin goro

Karas-karas

Kai wawa in ka je duma

Mata duka dim! dim!

English version

The Frogs' wife

yes, yes

Where are the frogs?

I left them at home

What have you fed them on?

Tuwo, soup and meat

Have you taken a bite?

No, I did not

Swear, swear

I swear with Ririya, ririya

The queen is

Riding a horse, chewing Kolanut

Karas, karas

Oh you fool, when you reach her,

Give her some beatings with your fist

dim! dim!

This playful poem contains three different themes. Lines 1-8 are about how a typical Hausa wife should behave when leaving her matrimonial home. She should treat her husband well with basic necessities of life (well prepared edibles). She should not forget his stomach. The second segment starts from line 10 which portrays that even before the advent of Islam, the Hausa people are religious, that they believe in something they worship and revered. That is why the interrogator asks ‘Matar Kwadi’ to swear that she has attended to her husband’s needs before leaving her house. Lines 11-15 reveal the disgust of the Hausa people about a certain social misbehavior from the ruling class or from any other person. After she swears, she rants about the queen eating kola nut publicly without shame on her chastity as a leader who is supposed to lead and teach by example. The wife of the frog, although a commoner, prescribes punitive punishment to any public leader that misbehaves by encouraging the Fool; another commoner, to dole out some corporal punishment on the queen. This odd behavior of the ruling class represented by the queen may be compared to what is happening now in this contemporary political era with our leaders. They are unashamedly amassing wealth, enriching themselves, building lofty mansions, driving one in town vehicles, dressing flamboyantly, taking their breakfast in America, their lunch in London and dinner in Dubai neglecting their national assignment of developing their Mother/fatherland.

The literary poetics deduced from this short narrative poem includes: onomatopoeia which is the “use of words whose sound suggest their meaning and

character” (Yakasai 2012:69). This device is found in lines 13 and 15 (karas-karas/dim-dim), ‘karas-karas’ is a sound made when kola nut is chewed and ‘dim-dim’ is a sound made when a person is beaten with a fist on his back.

Satire, which is a style of criticizing or ridiculing a person or idea or institutional behavior, attitudes, dress codes, utterances etc through painting a gruesome or humorous picture so as to bring out the weaknesses or follies therein. Imagine the picture of this queen surrounded by her courtiers, riding majestically, but unfortunately, misbehaving in the public she is expected to be an exemplary figure, she would appear as a clown of course.

Setting: Every society and culture has its own peculiar tendencies that make it unique from others. So, in that game, there are some elements that really portray the Hausa society it comes from. Therefore, the poetic figures that can be found in this dramatic play include the setting which is the place where the game takes place (ie bride’s house); The character’s names (Kande, Ziza, Ilu, Garba, Dudu, Sima) The food of the people (tuwo, meat, ghea butter) these names are typically found in the Hausa of Kano more especially. The next element is the food of the people (Tuwo, meat, ghea butter) and finally the environment full of frogs, ponds, housewives, etc.

The opening two words of the song “askille askille” may be either of two things; nonsensical words that are meaningless but just concocted for their rhyming sounds and music suitable for their play (an onomotopia) in nature; or it

may be addressing an unknown person, or more appropriately addressing an imaginary lady serving in the palace, a one who knows the secrets of his royal highness's wives. In Africa, polygamy is common. It is more natural for a monarch to have many wives, but the one in this rendition has only three. One is assumed to be legally pregnant, the other one is already suckling a baby ("Dan Zakara", son of a cock). This is a paradoxical image of the monarch (cock) who already begot his heir, a male prince. That is why he is 'Dan Zakara'. The third wife addressed as "ke" which is a derogatory address by the common people at the lower rung of the ladder meaning "you" with no respect. This may be a wicked or unlovable wife of the emir. Because of her wickedness to the people, the women in particular, her pregnancy is even accused to be an illegitimate one. So, she is interrogated rhetorically-'ke wannan wa yai miki ciki?' (you, who has put you in the family way?) Which leads to another apostrophe (i.e. addressing an unseen figure) 'In ba ki magani ya zube?' (Do I give you an abortion dosage?) This rhetorical question marks the end of the first part of the poem.

Another poetical device in Askillle game is again rhetorical, in which the woman with the illegitimate suspected pregnancy is queried whether she should like an abortion concoction, "in baki magani ya zube? There is no response from the wayward woman.

The second segment is nothing but a command given to the suspected illegal pregnancy of the third wife to abort. So the player continues the simultaneous insults by raining some beatings and clappings with each other using

open palms repeatedly saying ‘zube dan farkan nan’. The last two words in this repetitive line “dan farka” may mean an unwanted one. Dialogue is another device between the “Matar Kwadi” and her co-player.

3.4 Analysis of Concentration Games

Children games in book three (3) of *Tatsuniyoyi Da Wasanni* are as follows: ‘Ka-ci-ci, ka-ci-ci’ (riddles) and more tongue-twisters. These types were already discussed. The others include ‘gada’, (girls play). The form and context of ‘gada’ performance are exclusively feminine. Through this type of games the girls acquire womanish, coquettish tricks which is an art or style of attracting the opposite sex in varied flairs as peacocks do. Most ‘gada’ games are played while standing and dancing and clapping. The next concentration female games are ‘Tafa-Tafa’, ‘carmandudu’ and ‘Dare in kirki zalle’ (night inside Kirki zalle), ‘Tafa-tafa tafiyar nan’..... (clap, clap that journey), ‘Na dauko ruwa’ (I have fetched some water). In structure, these games are almost similar to those in books 1 and 2 (games played by both sexes and by girls only, it is decided to ignore any analysis of the riddles, jokes and tongue twisters, and focus on games that have more concentration exercise.

The book four (4) contains five different games, three by boys and two by girls. None of these is done while sitting and are performed outside. The boys’ games dwell on concentration exercise. They are

‘Awo awo’ (Buying Grain), followed by ‘Jini-jini’ (Blood Blood) and ‘Dan Akuya na’ (My Little He-Goat). The girl’s games are ‘Tama Ya Ki Tama’ (Silver Come Silver), and then ‘Iye Nanaye Carmama’ (has no English equivalent).

In the concentration games the players, when answering the lead singer, have to pay proper attention so as not to err in responding. Any child who does not answer correctly receives some mild beatings from all the players for his folly. To escape from the beatings, that erring player has to reach a certain spot they all agreed upon earlier to be the safe zone. But before he reaches that zone, all the players would be raining beatings on him. In some cases, a player may intentionally make a mistake to make the game more amusing and or to prove to himself and to his play-mates that he is the fastest runner among them and the most dexterous in escaping from their onslaughts.

The third boys’ game (Dan Akuya Na) is almost another concentration one. I say almost because in this game, no player is expected to make any mistake. The lead singer, who is in the middle of the circle moves from one place to another while the rest form a circle, holding each other’s hands tightly so as to prevent the lead singer against breaking any pairs’ hold. If the singer fails to break a hold and runs to safety, he will be trapped inside and be merciless beating but if he is able to succeed in breaking a weaker pair’s hand, he must run as fast as a deer chased by the lion to the safety zone with all the others pursuing him. All the three games portray that, the Hausa people, through their children’s plays are skilled agrarians

and they solely depend on agriculture (farming, herding, dyeing, hunting etc.) to survive.

In the first game (awo-awo), almost all the grains the Hausa society farms is mentioned till at the end something that is not a grain is said. The lead singer would be mentioning the grains carelessly, surreptitiously, playfully, lengthily so as to take the others unaware of what he is saying. The time they are refraining or answering him with 'awo', he will gradually and tactfully come to mention something that is not a grain. A player who is not concentrating would answer 'awo'. At that point only his legs could save him.

The second game "Jini-Jini" is almost similar to the first one "Awo-Awo". This time it is not a grain the lead singer mentions but rather an animal, reptile or anything that has blood in it and the others chorus with "Jini" accepting "yes", the thing you mentioned has blood. If someone who is not concentrating answers "jini" for something that has no blood, then that culprit has to dash to the safety point or be beaten mercilessly.

This game as well further proves the scientific and biological knowledge of the Hausa man of the creatures of the forest, the depth of the ocean or domestic animals around him.

This game 'Jini-Jini' would be likened or compared to the game of the Yoruba in southern Nigeria as Finnegan offers:

‘other types of rhymes and song are..... exemplified by the Yoruba

<i>Who has blood?</i>	<i>chorus: Blood, blood</i>
<i>Has a goat blood?</i>	<i>chorus: Blood, blood</i>
<i>Has a sheep blood?</i>	<i>chorus: Blood, blood</i>
<i>Has a horse blood ?</i>	<i>chorus: Blood, blood</i>
<i>Has a stone blood ?</i>	<i>chorus: Blood, blood</i>

In which the point of the game is to try to get some child to say ‘blood’ after an inanimate ‘object. A mistake results in laughter and sometimes a beating (Finnegan 1970:308).

The next game ‘Dan akuya na’ (my little He-goat) is a game full of metonymic images. It is a story of a goat who deliberately enters into a granary. A granary is a place where a Hausa man stores his grain for the year. The ‘Dan akuya’ is trapped inside by an angry crowd of people. The he-goat attempts to escape.

This play portrays the negligence of the people for not taking precaution of their barns. It is at the same time portraying the mischievousness and strong headedness of a he-goat into getting in to where it is not supposed to enter. Whoever breaks a universal law, must meet with universal justice. As the He -goat enters, the owners become aware and trap him inside with various traditional weapons (swords, spears, knives, cudgels, clubs etc). Mentioning these metonymic images goes on to portray that the Hausa people are hunters and warriors (in history, they participated and won so many wars, and hunting is still taking place in some local governments areas of the state). As the owners trap him there, he tricks them to escape with various voice articulations, ululations, and cadences

onomatopoeic utterances. The other players are taken unaware as he breaks a point of escape.

In these Children's games of book 4, some for boys and others for girls, it seems appropriate to analyze poetically only one of them, that is the game of "Dan Akuya Na" (My Little He-Goat). This is because some discussions on females' games have been done.

3.5 Poetics of Dan Akuya Na

The poem pre-occupies itself with aspects of poetic justice and judgment. It is based on a He-goat breaking into a granary as a result of the owners' carelessness of their barn, or the owner's negligence to take proper care of their animal by not feeding it or tying it (which is a religious and social prerequisite of keeping domestic animals).

Point of view is another prominent poetic device in this dramatic poem. Point of view is the mark or angle or position from which a story is narrated. Usually, the points of telling a story are two. The first point is a story to be narrated by someone about somebody (3rd person narration) and secondly, narrating a story about self by oneself (1st person narration). The third person point of view is characterized by pronouns such as he, it, they, them etc); while the first person narration or point of view is noted by I, me, us, mine, my, and their likes. In this dramatic play of eighteen lines, the narration point is divided into two. Lines 1-14 are third person narrated by the owner of the He-goat, and lines 15-18

by the He-goat himself in the 1st person narration style. These lines by the he-goat may be as long as it can be, but since the author records eighteen only, the researcher restricts himself to them. The narration goes like this:

Xan Akuya Na (My Little He-Goat)

Idi: Dan Akuya Na (My little He-goat)

Chorus: Damu sherere

Idi: Ya shiga rumbu (Has entered a barn)

Chorus: Damu sherere

Idi: Za su kashe shi (They are going to kill him)

Chorus: Damu sherere

Idi: Nan da wukake (With knives here)

Chorus: Damu sherere

Idi: Nan dasu adda (With strong cutlasses here)

Chorus: Damu sherere

Idi: Nan dasu lauje (With cudgels here)

Chorus: Damu sherere

Idi: Wubub na wuce nan (Wubub I force my exist)

Chorus: Wubub na buge ka (Wubub I knock you down)

Idi: Wubub na wuce nan (Wubub I force my exist)

Chorus: Wubub na buge ka (wubub I knock you down)

The use of an animal as main character in this game is a poetic indicator that the children's literature in Hausa society is also full of fables. It is a figurative device in which animals, birds and other inanimate objects are used to teach people moral lessons. The lesson is that people should take proper care of their properties (barns, animals etc).

Pathetic fallacy is another device featured in this dramatic play of children. It is a literary device that looks like personification. It is an art or symbol of making animals or birds, or things or images to express human feelings or human action like anger, fear, sorrow, pleasure etc. In this poem, it is the attempt of "Dan Akuya Na" to trick (" wubub na wuce nan") his trappers to safety.

3.3.3 Analysis of Games of Luck

The games recorded in this book are: "Lekuma Lekuma Daskare", (Lekuma Lekuma Frozen) "Lekuma Lekuma Lele" (Has no English equivalent) and "Na Jejje Ni Gidan Gwauro (I have been to a bachelors Den) they can be likened to games of chance, but they are not gambling. Winning or loosing depends on one's luck.

The mode of playing the games in these three different songs is the same. Only the songs in them differ from one to the other. Playing the same type of game (form) but using different songs (content) is the:

Wit of the metaphysical poet.... That experience is available to all individuals, that everybody has a story to tell, a story that comprises his experiences. What makes a story is the ability of an individual to convey that story in an artistic form...in a story that is unique or different of transformation. (Lawal, 209:33)

In all the three, the children sit on their buttocks with their two legs outstretched. The singer starts singing a song touching the knees of the players' one after the other. On which ever knee the last word of the song ends, that leg is drawn out by the owner happily. This continues up to the last leg. Whosoever two knees are lucky enough to be touched by the singer, is out of the game triumphantly. This continues till all the players are out remaining a last with outstretched leg or legs. At that juncture, the lead singer asks that unlucky player, "Da sama da kasa wane ki ke so?" (Between up and down, which is your preference?) Wherever the player chooses, the song would then continue with the singer touching the last knee and pointing to the "up or down" chosen by the player. If he is lucky enough the song ends on his knee, then he/she is also out, but if unluckily the song ends in the position he chosed (up or down), then that player looses and all the rest will laugh and jeer and boo him derisively.

As these are multi-sex games, the researcher has no wish to discuss them or their poetics further.

3. 7 Analysis of Fable Games

In book six (6), according to the author are "Wasanni Iri-Iri" (variety of games). They are as follows: "Kulin Kulifita" (a riddle), Kulla abota" (friendship for life),

“Lugu Lugu Ta Nuna” (successfully cooked soft as cotton), “Dan Tsinke”, (A Little Stick), “Dan Maliyo Maliyo” (Little Maliyo Maliyo), “Gwalalan Gwalalami”, “Se se se”, “Zanzarmi” and “Wo Na Kolin Koli”. (Oh you in the uppermost up).

Among these nine games, only one (‘Dan maliyo-maliyo’) belongs to girls. The researcher will discuss the boys’ ones briefly noting some of their prominent ‘poetics’ without citing the textual songs or poems or utterances in them. The last one (‘Wo na kolin koli’) would be textually considered.

In these Hausa children games, the first one is bi-sexual, while the second and third can be played by either of the sexes but not together as in the riddle.

The first game contains 32 riddles and all the content in these riddles but one, are completely different from all those in the other series. This further emphasizes the rich cultural heritage of African folklore as one folklorist points out that:

Face to face with the west, we have, for hundreds of years chanted the slogan that our culture (African) is the richest and most powerful which is capable of answering all relevant (contemporary) questions in our life as well as everyday happenings on diverse subjects, ranging from birth to marriage, religion and death (Maikaba, 1996:1)

The second game is not a game per-se but rather an oath of forming a lasting friendship in which the-would-be friends would join their little fingers in a hooked (symbolic) way and make an oath simultaneously. This is usually between two new friends or some that were not on good footings before but are now reconciled

by another friend. Usually, in this type of oath making, there is the presence of a witness. The most important part of the oath is the last line “kowa ya kwance dan wuta” (that whoever breaks this friendship will enter hell fire). This allusion to ‘hell fire’ is an emphasis of the Hausa people being practicing Muslims since their childhood’.

The third play ‘Lugu-lugu ta tuna’ is a humorous game in which the lead dramatic player talks/sing alternating and modulating his voice, his face contours, how he grabs the players thighs tight and shakes them uttering ‘lugu-lugu ta nuna’ one after the other. All the other players would sit on their buttocks, with outstretched legs answering the lead player’s various onomatopoeic words (lugu-lugu, luguf-luguf lagube, sharaf-sharaf, sharandabai, sharandabe) with some assonance (zazzauna, nannane, dandanke). Each time he speaks, the others answer with the chorus ‘da romo’. If they like, the children take turns playing this game with each child showing or dramatizing the stuff he is made of. This little action poem is just talking about a wish or a desire to eat a very superior palatable dish, full of meat cooked as soft as cotton, easy to chew.

The fourth game ‘Dan tsinke dama dama rido’ is also a boys’ one in which the players play in turns, would be holding a stick while the others hold their hands in a circle (as in the play of Dan akuya na). The children, dancing and holding hands and going round the one holding the stick. He too would be gyrating with them closing and opening his eyes, singing and calling the names of his play mates as they move round him trying to confuse him to make him mistake the

names of his play mates. Each time he touches or points to any of them with the stick one after the other, mentions the name. If he is wrong, he is booed mildly or jeered and another player takes his position becoming the lead singer this time holding the stick and the game continues till each of the boys has a turn in being 'Dan tsinke' or they decide to discard it for another game.

Apart from the refrain, 'Dama dama rido' there are also consonantal sounds ('dokan, zagan, jefan kun and kai')

The fifth game 'Dan maliyo-maliyo' is a females' game played amidst clapping, singing, dancings, laughing joyously. The girls would be in a line facing the lead singer and answering or chorusing 'maliyo' to the lead singer. While doing so, they would be dancing on the spot and clapping till they come to the last three lines of the song "Tambotsa mu gani na Aliko/gwadas na aliko gwadas gwadas gwadas na Aliko gwadas". At this point, oh lalala, it is dancing time, each doing her style of dancing enticingly.

In the song, the lead singer would be asking questions and answering her own questions about an imaginary lover of hers who has travelled to "Ilori" (the capital of Kwara state) and would be back next month, and when he comes back, she would welcome him coquettishly as he is expected to bring her "tsaraba" (souvenir) lavishly. The dance portrays the most coquettish, girlish manner of her conduct as a female in welcoming and receiving someone close to her heart.

The next game is a boys' one. The children form a circle but would not hold hands. They would be clapping in consonance with the song's rhythm, going

round their circle with the lead singer within the circle. They would be skipping from one leg to another. The content of the song is divided into three, the first eight lines contains a personal issue of shaving the head of a person who has ring worm. It is sung in an epigrammatic device “ga wuya ga zafi/sai wuya ba dadi” (it is difficult and painful/only difficult with no pleasure). The next four lines contain a warning to the players; ‘yaro sheda na baya/kar kaje ka ci duka’ (boy, know those behind you/or you will be severely beaten). The next eight lines are rhetorical questions to an imaginary gardener: “malami mai lambu? /Albasa ta nuna?/ ma samu ta taushe?/ ko da ta miya ce?” (Mister Gardener /is the onion ready? Do we get some for ‘taushe’? This play also portrays that the Hausa people are farmers of all the year round. After the rainy season farming, they also engage in it during the dry season through irrigation.

Some of the devices contained in the game include imagery of onion (albasa), river (rafi) and various Hausa cultural elements such as ‘taushe’, ‘miya’ soup. Both the two are types of soup. But in the Hausa culture, ‘Taushe’ refers to a type of soup made very rich and garnished with leaves, spinach, groundnuts or ‘Kabewa’ (pumpkin) etc. eaten with ‘tuwo’ made of millet, corn or maize. These grains are all pounded into powder. Rice is also eaten with ‘taushe’ soup. The other one ‘miya’ is any soup that is not a vegetable one. The other words or expression ‘kwalalan kwalalami’ are just words related to words that have the sounds of allophones and idiophones.

The next game is as well a male's one. Its title is 'se-se se' which is also just a sound. It is a kind of game in which the players form a circle and chorus the song together after a lead singer. They also move round clapping their hands and at a certain point, the lead singer turns to his right while the next person at that place bends, his hands on his knees while his partner uses both hands to beat him or box him or punch him on that back or shoulder blades. This beating and beating moves clockwise till all the players have taken a beating on their backs. The words "Dibge" jibge, Kwabje" all variously mean 'beat'. The others, 'damula', 'hargitsa', 'birkita', are almost alike in their definitions i.e. turn-things-inside-out or upside down. These expressions also portray the richness of the Hausa language in synonyms, antonyms, homophones, or idiophones etc. The last line "Dungulun kafar gafiyar bera" expresses zoological knowledge of the Hausa children. Two closely related animals/rodents-mouse and rats are mentioned, that their legs are fingerless.

The eighth game Zanzarmi is a game with a difference from those analyzed. In it, the children are neither in a circle nor in a straight line, neither sitting nor standing and there is no lead singer. They sing the song together simultaneously. For every line of the verse, they chant 'hiyya' in an exclamatory tone. This word 'hiyya' is usually exclaimed to animals especially horses to command or control them to move fast or faster, or even stop or run. 'Zanzarmi' is either a rope with which a horse is tethered or just a nonsensical utterance. The game starts with one or two of them shouting the word 'zanzarmi for all to answer or chorus 'hiyya' and

each child starts doing his thing. They all take the position of people on horses and continue singing the song and chorusing the word ‘hiyya’ after each line. At the same time, each child would imagine himself on a horse riding it anyhow he likes, some in a canter, others in a gallop, some in a swoop with others even behaving like warriors, holding various imaginary weapons. The game is indeed very dramatic and exciting. The song is saying that if you want a good horse, you must take proper care of it, wash it, feed it, clean its sty, quench its thirst, etc. If you do all those, then, you will own a better horse for any event or eventuality.

In line 15 of “zanzarmi,” the players provide a special diction ‘kuru’ which describes a horse not properly tended by the owner. As they sing “dokin naka kuru ne baka ba shi ruwa da ciyawa ba” (your horse is a “kuru” which you fail to feed with enough water and grass.) The use of ‘ruwa’ (water) and ‘ciyawa’ (grass) further describe that the northern part of Nigeria’s Hausa land has many rivers and creeks and dams and grass, that it is indeed a lazy owner of a horse or a merciless one who refuses to properly take care of his horse. In those days, a horse was a major means of transportation, as such; the players are being sarcastic and lambasting the useless person. They further say that since his horse is ‘kuru’, they would go to places without him; ‘muje ga A’u mu ci gyada/muje ga Mammadu ga kilishi (let us go to A’u to eat groundnuts/let us go to Mammadu for shredded dry meat). These two edibles ‘groundnut and meat’ are two of the main export materials Hausa land was known of. One easily remembers with nostalgia the deceased groundnut pyramids of Kano and the hide and skin of the bygone days.

These type of metonymies' picture the numerous farmers, herdsman and hunters of Hausa society. So, with a good healthy horse, you can travel, defend yourself, visit each other and get Allah's reward for taking care of his creature. The children players in this game enjoy the benefit of freewill and determinism.

The last play in the sixth seri is 'Wo na 'kolin 'koli.' This game dwells on life's mysteries verses reality in a direct metaphoric comparison. The poem/song of the play goes like this:

<u>The Hausa version</u>	<u>English version</u>
Lead singer: Wo na 'kolin 'koli	Oh you who lives above the ground
Chorus: Jemage	A Bat
LS: Yaro duba duba	Boy look before you leap
Chorus: Jemage	A bat
LS: Yaro dubi sa'anka	Boy challenge your equal
Chorus: Jemage	A Bat
LS: Kar ka dubi rubago	challenge a weakling
Chorus: Jemage	A Bat
LS: Rubago ba karfi ba	A weakling is never strong
Chorus: Jemage	A Bat
LS: Ba shi 'kwarin gwiwa	He is a weakling
Chorus: Jemage	A Bat
LS: Kar ka fadi ka karye	Least you fall and break a limb
Chorus: Jemage	A bat

LS: Na yi nitso na kamo kifi ko ruwa ban sha ba I dived into the bottom of
the ocean and caught a fish
without gulping water

Chorus: Jemage A bat

LS: Na yi nitso na kamo tarwad'a ko ruwa ban sha ba I dived into the
bottom of the sea and
caught a mud fish
without taking a breath

Chorus: Jemage A bat

Unlike the 'zanzarmi game in which the children play with no restriction, in this one they play in a circle holding hands tightly, following a lead singer and all the others chorusing the word 'Jemage' which is repeated nine times in the game as recorded by Yahaya. The title of the poem is a scientific observation of the Hausa children in which they are able to study the habitat of some wonderful and mysterious creatures like the 'Jemage' who lives hanging upside down on a tree. It is the only known creature that stays like that. The trees that 'jemage' usually hangs on are tall beyond the reach of children (and even the youths and adults). That is why the children metaphorically refer to it as 'na 'kolin 'koli' (that is something high above the ground), that is the title of the poem and the first word in the song of the game. The first line in the poem is an exclamation of the word that might mean 'oh' in English language.

The word of the chorus of "jemaga" is the first scientific mystery in the song of the play. Jemage means a bat which is neither a bird nor an animal. It flies like a bird but at night only, birds do not fly at night. But a bat is a nocturnal

creature like other dangerous creature such as the hyena, the lions and others. A bat also has breast tits with which it suckles its babies like animals. Birds do not suckle their young ones. A bat also has teeth unlike birds. It is also blind in the day time but can see well at night. It is the only known creature that excretes through its mouth. This none-bird-none-animal creature does that. Also, a bat delivers its babies unlike birds that lay, incubate and hatch its young. This wide knowledge of the mystery of the bat is an allegorical one.

The second line after the first chorus is ‘yaro duba duba’ (boy look before you leap), this is a worldly or universal knowledge, an epigram, which is “a speech which involves both antithesis and paradox Always concise, amusing, witty and emphatic and (it) contains some proverbial wisdom” (Yakasai, 2012:52) This epigram is considered an advice or even a warning to anybody (child or even grown up) that before you embark on anything, you must be prepared.

The third line after the second chorus is also another mysterious statement, ‘yaro dubi sa’anka’ (Boy take on your equal). This is another epigram in which another advice is offered. The mystery here is the diction ‘sa’anka’ (your equal). Your equal in what sense, age, strength, intellect, height, size, riches, health, valor or what? For it is highly mysterious in life that you and your peer may never be equal. Even twins born on the same day and time are known to be unequal. This is like that unanswered riddle about a hen and an egg.

The fourth line after the third chorus contrasts with the word ‘sa’anka (your equal). The line is ‘kar ka dubi rubago’ (You should not take on a weakling) in

anything you plan to do. This word weakling reminds me of “Onoka”, Okwonko’s father in *Things Fall Apart* who is considered a ‘weakling’ by his son for not taking a title in the society (even though he too, Onoka the weakling, has his special uses within the society).

This poem/song/play, in the fifth line further says “Bashi kwarin gwiwa”) (His knees are weak) that such a person is a weakling; if you challenge him you are considered a laughing stock in the society. Taking on a weakling is like fighting a woman, both ways one lost, if she beats or defeats you, you will be jeered and if you defeat her you will be mocked that you have touched a woman. This is like the proverbial adage ‘head I win, tail you loose’. This is the sixth line. Now the fifth line is an emphasized sarcasm on the weakling, that ‘Rubago ba karfi ba’ (a weakling is never strong). That weakling may appear strong and muscular, but down at heart, he is nothing but frail.

Lines seven and eight are other mysteries that may be considered as foreshadowing (predicting an event yet to happen). This poetic device would soon be considered. These two lines ‘Na yi nutso na kamo kifi ko ruwa ban sha ba/na yi nitso na kamo tarwada ko ruwa ban sha ba’ (I dived into the bottom of the ocean and caught a fish without gulping water or taking a breath or getting wet, (all the underlined expressions may stand in as the literal and poetic meanings of the expression ‘ko ruwa ban sha ba’ The mystery here is, how can a person dived into the bottom of the sea or ocean in those days when the game was formed, (nobody knows exactly when such local plays emerged. They can be as old as the society

itself) but Africans, especially the Hausa, for ages are mysterious people. They do some impossible mysterious things like catching and playing with a hyena, snakes, scorpion, crocodiles etc. They are also known to possess some mysterious concoctions that make their skins portent or immune to some knives, swords, cutlasses etc. Also, a Hausa person has ‘*layar zana*’, a charm he uses to disappear completely from sight. So, it may be possible in those bygone days to dive into the bottom of the ocean without gulping water, getting wet or taking a breath. But in these contemporary days, it is possible to do so with aquatic instruments of frogmen and frog women when they wear their special gear. That is what makes those last two lines foreshadowed events; that in those days, the children predicted that one day a person may go deep into the ocean without getting wet or gulping water. This brings us to another poetic device known as planting which is “a term in which a fore shadowed event becomes a reality (Yakasai, 2012:74)

‘*Jemage*’ (a bat) is a frail looking creature that can be further compared, (the body of a bat is weak in skin and in bone) to a human weakling.

This game like ‘*Zanzarmi*’ is played by healthy, strong and brave players. The children play in a circle and on one leg only taking hold of the shoulders of their right and left partners. Doing this, they then lift their right leg and fold it on their knees. When all have done this, the lead singer stretches the folded leg clockwise and places it on the folded knee of his partner on the right side, and that partner would also do the same with his leg till when all the players place their right legs on the thighs of the folded legs of their playmates clockwise, all standing

on one leg each. Doing these they then release their hands from each other's shoulders and use the hands to clap and sing and chorus 'Jemage,' hopping on their one legs, moving right-wise or left-wise depending on where the lead singer pulls them. The time they reach the eight line "Na yi nutso na kamo kifi ko ruwa ban sha ba", they will all bend forward and use their hands to dramatise diving and catching a fish, then they raise up again. At the ninth line "Na yi nutso na kamo tarwada ko ruwa ban sha ba", they will once again bend either right ways' left ways or any way they are led by their leader. This continues till when they feel to change or discard the game for another.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the Hausa anthology of late Ibrahim Yaro Yahaya series 1-6, "*Tatsuniyoyi da Wasanni*" on Hausa tales and children games have been used as source materials for this dissertation as mentioned in chapter two on literature review. The author merely records and lists them without either describing how the games are performed or analyzing their poetics. In this chapter, these two omissions (analysis of the performances and description) of the children games have been considered. All the games have been discussed with a word or two on each of them. But on poetic analysis, only some few ones are considered. Those literarily analyzed are some games that are played by both sexes and some by boys or females only. Apart from identifying the traditional settings (in the arena, one of the players compound or the house of "amarya" a young bride) of the game

attempt has been made to provide postulation on the titles and of the time in which they were conducted, (at night after dinner).

Since the games are in the Hausa language, those poetically analyzed are crudely (not professionally) translated by this researcher into the English language literally and some poetically. So, I accept responsibility for any omission or commission for such English translations that may appear absurd or incongruous in some ways.

In this analysis, different types of literary or poetic devices have been linked to the games. Some of these devices are poetic, others dramatic and some few ones related to prose narrative. Some of these are emphatic, allegoric, symbolic, rhetoric, repetitive, epigramic, contrastive, comparative, rhythmic, Punic, alliterative, satiric, sarcastic, parabolic, personified, apostrophic, and many others.

Also, some didactic, social, philosophic, scientific, and moral, and educational etc. functions are observed and partially interpreted. These games of the children of the Hausa society are mostly on songs, dances and rhyming that are made dramatic in their performance. There are many others, especially these on prose narrative (games with partial length of stories in them are not considered in the series.) Again, the sequential setting (time, place and situation) of these games in the next are not as they were supposed to be traditionally. Those played in “Gidan amarya” (bride’s house) are not rigorous. But those performed in the arena or a large compound, most physical rigorous ones are performed first, followed by those that require sitting and talking most.

CHAPTER FOUR

HAUSA CHILDREN GAMES OUTSIDE YAHAYA's TEXTS

In the six series of *Tatsuniyoyi da Wasanni* (Tales and children games), the following games were not presented: (a) Langa, (b) Carafke, (c) Turke (Tirna), (d) Wasan Goyo, (e) Long narrative riddles, (f) 'Yar Gala-Gala, (g) Wasan 'Yar Tsana (Doll Playing), (h) Wasan 'Buya (Hide and Seek), (i) Zilliya, (j) Sarki Ya Hana Dawa Tsaiwa (The Emir Has Forbidden The Corn To Remain Standing)

4.2 Grouping the Game

Among the ten listed, four games (Langa, Turke, Zilliya and Sarki Ya Hana Dawa Tsaiwa) are boys plays while three (Carafke, 'Yar Gala-Gala and Wasan 'Yar Tsana) are girls own and the remaining three (Wasan Goyo, long narrative riddles and Wasan Buya) are unisex. This is the first angle of categorization. From another, these ten games can also be viewed not from the sex of the players. But from literary genre. Eight of them are more dramatic than oral. Only some few exclamations, ululations, grunts, shouts and their likes are in them. One of them is more like a story with no song or action in it. And the tenth one may contain a song (usually a lullaby) and some narrations.

As the games from the six series of Yahaya were treated or considered under the umbrella of sex, these ten in this chapter would be analyzed as 'more dramatic games' that are mimed through body language bearing very little or no

wordings in them. These further portray that in Africa, there are many activities or semblance of literature with elements of drama in them apart from those in which the participants are “possessed, be in a trance or simulated”. In these types of children games, the players are fully conscious and in control of their senses and action.

The games can further be grouped from whence they are played. Some can be played indoors, or big compounds especially those by females. These are b, g, h while a, c, d are basically outdoor games. Game ‘e’ is performed either indoors or outdoors.

From the literary point of view, these ten games of the Hausa children in the traditional period are specifically sanctioned by the researcher into three prototypes

- i. Games performed by children according to their sex, (girls, boys and combined).
- ii. Those that have more body movement, narrative or poetic.
- iii. Those games stratified on their environmental dispositions (either indoors or outdoors)

Since the Hausa traditional children’s games are analyzed according to their biological tendencies in chapter three, so the choice now is to discuss the poetics of these games according to ii or iii above.

After much thinking, it is realized that if the games are treated or discussed under caption iii, they may end up again on gender categorization because most of those

played indoors are by girls, and outside, by boys. Therefore, in this chapter, the traditional Hausa children's game would be appraised under the games that are either more dramatic or more narrative than poetic (ii above)

4.3 Body Games

Accordingly, drama is a genre of literature that: "Uses action largely as a medium of communicating, meaning and relevance to people ...practically drama is domiciled in the area of conflict" (Ayegba, 2006:125-127).

The 'relevance' here is that the children in this sense play the game as children not as adult, nor as youths and all the actions involved are relevant to the physical and psychological behavior of the little players, full of childish actions that are more understood and enjoyed by them in their socialization bids. Among these action plays, some would be treated under their social, moral, physical and educational preoccupations.

4.4. Play b: Carafke

Research has proven that this type of game exists in other cultures too. Thus, in Nigeria, the Ibibio tribe also has a similar one known as "Npökkopo Nsan" (Iwóketok 2001). The Europeans as well have an almost similar one known as 'Five stones and a Jack' (ibid). The Ibibio use seven periwinkles and their likes while the Europeans use six items. In the Hausa culture, only five little stones are used with no determined number of players. The players (usually girls) sit in a

circle and the first to utter 'ni firir' would be the first one to cast or throw the stones on the ground in front of the players. The mode of the play is that after casting her five stones, the player studies them critically and picks one up among them. What is required of this player and any of them is to go through various motions of the game successfully without allowing the thrown stone ('ya) to fall down while picking or scooping the remaining little stones in front of her/them. The game is played in turns. Failure or success depends on either catching the flying one and picking or scooping the ones on the ground one by one, then two by two, then three by one and finally scooping the four altogether. If the player successfully does that without touching those on the ground and simultaneously catching the dropping 'Ya, then that child is successful; but if on the other hand, she fails to catch the "Ya," then she loses her turn and the game of 'carafke' moves to the other player clockwise. All these motions would be performed using one hand only, either left or right depending on the hand the player is most comfortable with.

These motions of throwing, picking or scooping and catching the 'Ya continues till when all the players are eliminated remaining two only who are most dexterous. The other losers would be watching and or judging spectators, encouraging ones favorite to success and distracting the other one to fail till the winner emerges among the two.

As mentioned earlier, 'carafke is conducted silently with some ejections of arguments here and there. Arguments are comparisms and contrastings. These two

are the main poetics there in, and it is played indoors, (a room, parlor, veranda or compound with lights or when the moon shines most.

Next to socializing, the players acquire physical training in coordinating the hand and the eye in doing two simultaneous actions. They also learn patterning and critical analysis and calculations.

4.5 Play G Wasan ‘Yar Tsana (Doll Playing)

This is basically a girl’s game in which a little girl (usually 7-11 years or thereabout) plays with a doll imagining it to be a baby or usually a little brother/sister. The doll is traditionally made of bone, stalk, dry clay or sticks fashioned out by the children themselves. The little children dress, cajole, sing lullabies, breastfeed and do everything they observe their parents do to their babies. The acts of playing with dolls or toys are not peculiar to Hausa society alone as further enunciated:

Ibibio Anang children like their Nigerian counterparts or children elsewhere, make and play with toys of different shapes and make. Quite often, these toys and games are accompanied with songs and action. Down through the ages, these toys which depict the art, creative and imaginative impulse of the children (with)....the toys often made from natural and man-made materials in the children’s environment are sometimes made by adults; while several others are by children themselves (Iwokedok. 2007:237)

Lullabies as poems are sung to babies (in this case creative babies' not real ones) by elders to console or distract them from crying or any other emotional disturbance. As noted:

Lullaby provides a good example of the ways in which what might be expected to be a simple, natural and spontaneous expression of feelings in all societies – a mother singing to her child --- is in fact governed by convention in the affected by the particular constitution of the society (Finnegan, 1970: 299).

A lullaby may be long, but usually they are short and brief with few lines in them and simple words. The following is an example of a lullaby from the Hausa society:

The Hausa version

Ina uwar dan nan ne? iya

Ta tafi rafi, iya

Ta debo ruwa iya

Ta ba shi mama, iya

Ya sha ya 'koshi, iya

The English version

Where is this baby's mother, iya

She has gone to the river, iya

To fetch some water, iya

To breast fed him, Iya

To his satisfaction, iya

This short lullaby of five lines contains a song by the player and also the chorus 'iya' by the same player or singer. This is an unusual pattern of a song that bears a refrain. In other songs, the singer is different from those answering him, in almost all types of poems, the singer is independent of the chorus, but in this lullaby, the singer is synonymous as the chorus. This is a new artistic poetic due to inherent poetic license.

In the above lullaby, the first line is questioning the whereabouts of the baby's mother. This question, which is not a rhetorical one is answered by the same singer, after the refrain of the word 'iya' (meaning mother) repeated in each of the five lines. The answer to the question of the mother's whereabouts is that, the mother has gone to the river to fetch some water which is essential to the survival of any creature. On her return, the mother would embark on her next domestic duty, that is, breast feeding her baby.

In this respect a child playing with a baby doll is taken into the world of imagination and fantasy. Since from their childhood, the female children learn to assume their future roles as wives, mothers, and nurses etc that are dutiful to their domestic responsibilities.

4.3.3 Play I: Wasan Buya (Hide and Seek)

'Carafke' and 'Wasan 'Yar Tsana' are both indoor games but this particular game may be an indoor one but not as the previous two. In 'Wasan Buya' the children hide themselves in various places within the compound behind doors or barns and any other appropriate place. It is done with the sole purpose of an 'explorer' who is the lead player (a volunteer) to discover such hidden places of the other players. The game has two patterns; either the others hide or they do not hide but remain quite visible to the explorer, but must not allow the discoverer to catch or touch them by dodging him or her. At the beginning of this play, there is a kind of a prologue in a form of dialogue between the leading player, asking them questions

which they must answer in one voice. The last line of these ‘you-say-we-say’ is a command issued by the leading player to all the others which signifies the commencement of his exploration to catch them. This dialogue, another dramatic literary technique or literary poetic goes like this:

<u>The Hausa version</u>	<u>The English version</u>
Singer: Yara yara	Little children
Chorus: Iye,iye	Yes, yes
Singer: Me kuke ci? What are you eating?	
Chorus: Kan kare	Dog’s head
Singer: Ku sam min nawa Give me my share	
Chorus: Aiko yaro	Send your messenger
Singer: Ba ni da yaro	I have no messenger
Chorus: Zo da kan ki	Come by yourself
Singer: Sa’ka na ke I am weaving	
Chorus: Yanke sakar	Cut off the weaving
Singer: Ta ‘karfe’ ce	It is of iron
Chorus: Nane da wuta	Use fire then
Singer: Burukuku	Burukuku
Chorus: Tuwon wake	Tuwo of beans
Singer: Akushi da rufi	Wooden bowl with a cover
Chorus: Na sarki ne This belongs to the emir	
Singer: Kaza da mai A fat hen	

Chorus: Ta muzuru ce This belongs to the pussy cat

Singer: Da babba da yaro All you big and small, everyone for himself

kowa yai ta kan sa.

This dramatic dialogue of nineteen lines, ten by the lead singer and nine by the others, contains some historical artifacts that are no more in use especially in the urban centers. But before these are discussed, a consideration would be accorded to line one in which the lead singer calls out to the players ‘Yara-yara’. This really shows that this is a play by children not youth or adults, so any childish utterances or acts are possibly expected. In the next line after the children’s response of ‘Iye-iye’ (these too is a childish manner of responding to a call) the lead singer inquires inquisitively ‘May ku ke ci?.’ Inquisitiveness is a social vice that is abhorred by every culture. Though it is a question, it is not a rhetorical one. An answer is supplied by the players ‘Kan kare’; that they are eating a dog’s head. Why dog’s head? Are they been sarcastic to their inquisitive friend? Why not sheep’s, goat’s or cow’s head. This may be a historical image. For, the present Hausa history is linked to that of Maguzawa who were a heathen tribe that worship many deities. Among their favorite meat is/was that of a dog. The reference to this animal (Dog) signifies a tribe (Maguzawa), the language (Maguzanci/Hausa) and a religion of polytheism (the practice of worshipping many deities). But now with the advent of Islam, a dog’s meat is a prohibition. But this poem retains this history. One of the purposes of literature is to store cultural archives which this poem has done successfully.

In this particular play and the song therein which are partially no more, so the eating of a dog's meat is also no more acceptable to Hausa Muslims.

The next line, 'ku sam min nawa' is begging which is another social vice frowned at by global progressive societies. After this line is a command given by the children to the lead singer who by extension is a glutton. The command to the lead singer 'aiko yaro'; that if he wants a share of their delicacy he should 'aiko yaro' (a messenger) to collect it for him. A 'yaro' can be literally a boy or it can be metaphorical. The next line is by the lead singer in response to them where he says 'bani da yaro'; that he has no boy/messenger to send. This is an absurdity because he is not ready to accept terms dictated.

The next line is another command, that since he has no one to send, then he should come by himself; 'zo da kan ki'. This is even better than sending a messenger for a Hausa proverb says 'zuwa da kai yafi sako', that self-messenger is better than sent-messenger. This is an epigram, a universal wisdom. But instead of the lead player to do that, he gives another lame excuse 'saka na ke' that he is weaving. This 'saka' or weaving was a trade engaged in by the Hausa society. This further portrays that Hausa people are self dependent who engaged in various trades apart from agricultural ones. After his weak excuse, this greedy person is further advised by the 'yara-yara' that if he really likes to have a share of their delicacy then he should 'yanke sakar' (cut off the weaving, with a knife may be). For they feel it

Inappropriate for the givers to do two simultaneous things; agreeing to be generous with their ‘kan kare’ and also to take it to him. The lead singer again provides another stupid excuse. That his weaving is ‘ta karfe ce’, that it is not a thread weaving but that of iron or wire. This is impliedly telling them that his ‘saka’ cannot be cut off. So again, the other players, instructing him further to ‘nane da wuta’; that since his weaving is not the natural one in which thread and wood are used, then he should use fire to fix it.

To this point it proves that the Hausa children are not selfish or vain glorious, that they are generous, patient and logical thinkers even if some would be gluttonous.

The lead singer becomes desperate and so he brings in gibberish, meaningless onomatopoeia ‘burukuku’ which the children further answer him with ‘tuwon wake’. The players prove that they are up to the task by answering the lead singer in contradictory dictions. ‘tuwo is made of millet, maize, corn, wheat or rice in the Hausa society but there is never ‘tuwon wake’. ‘Wake’ means beans which is either boiled, cooked and mixed with rice or any of the above grains, or grounded to make “kosai” (bean cake). If beans is boiled and mixed with any of the above grains it is either referred to as ‘wake da shinkafa’ (rice and beans), or ‘dahuwa’ (mixed with millet, maize or corn) but there is never ‘tuwon wake’.

The next line by the lead singer is ‘Akushi da rufi (wooden bowl with a cover). These two words are too metonymic symbols of earthen ware of the Hausa people. ‘Akushi’ was an eating bowl carved out from hard wood and polished smoothly. ‘Akushi’ has an advantage of retaining heat of what it contains for more

than ten hours without the food inside getting sour or stale unlike the present day food coolers. 'Akushi' has two types of covers. The first one is made of the same wood and is as well polished. 'Akushi' is covered with a smaller one than the main one. This type is called 'rufi'. The other cover of 'Akushi' was made from straw. These two (Akushi and rufi) were designed in such a way that the identity of the social class of the persons using them was known. As for the commoners, the cover of their 'Akushi' was not 'rufi' but 'faifai' (a circular one made of straw).

Next they answer the lead singer in the same coin that 'na sarki ne' (belongs to the emir). The Hausa people love their rulers and that to them anything beautiful, expensive, priceless belongs to the emir who is the sole caretaker of all the community as ordained by God. This reference to the emir is an allusion for the Hausa people believe that the "sarki" is the God's representative on earth. The next line of the lead singer in 'Kaza da mai (a big fat Hen) is answered with 'Ta Muzuru ce' (belongs to the pussy cat). These two domestic creatures, a bird and an animal, who are sworn enemies, further portrays the children's love of fable indicating that it is possible or impossible for two arch enemies to live together. This is a fore shadow of an impending crisis between the cat which may be the lead player, and 'kaza da mai' which may be the other players who would soon be the devoured when he (the cats/lead player) catches any of them. That is why he finally gives them the warning 'da babbba da yaro kowa yai ta kansa' (all you big and small everyone for himself). This expression signifies a time of crisis. Whenever a crisis especially a war, an earth quake, a storm, etc occurs, everybody was for

himself. In such a period, parents abandon their children, husbands their wives etc. these 'kowa yai ta kansa' draws another analogy of the Hereafter (i.e. the Judgement Day) talked about in the scriptures by Allah the creator:

On the Day of resurrection—that day shall a man flee from his brother. And from his mother and his father, and from his wife and children. Everyman that Day will have enough to make him careless of others. (Qur'an, 30:33-37)

After this command then, the explorer or the lead singer in earnest, starts the search in every nooks, corners and crannies of the compound. Anyone discovered becomes a subordinate of the explorer and together they continue their search for others each time their number increasing whenever any other player is found. The one or ones, who were able to hide themselves very well become/s the winners.

In this poem, the children acquire the knowledge or philosophy of giving and taking. That is invariably saying that you are at liberty to dictate terms if somebody wants something from you. For instance, in the modern days, if you go to the bank for a loan there are terms you must meet. In these dramatic dialogues, the chorus is directly compared with the financial organizations like the World Bank, the Paris Club, African Development Bank, etc who give something for something. So the chorus dictates what the explorer would do to get a share in their delicacy by dictating what the discoverer must do. These stringent measures create suspense and tension. These two (the suspense and tension) are also poetics of children's games.

‘Roko’ or begging is a bad social behavior the Hausa society frowns at. This begging usually occurs as a result of laziness, greediness, gluttonous, miserliness etc. Which emanates from inquisitiveness, which sometimes is another social vice. This lead singer does so. That is why the answers he gets are unpalatable. But in this communication between the two, the singer begs. It is a universal rule that if you want something you must work for it. But this discoverer, apart from begging has the audacity, the effrontery to argue. his argument ends with a childish, meaningless expression, gibberish which further proves that this is a children’s game.

4.7 Game A - Langa

This is purely a boys’ game. In it, the boys play on one leg (like in the ‘Na ‘kolin ‘koli’), but this time individually hopping on the right or left leg according to the player’s wish. If the player or child is using the right leg to hop about, then the left leg is folded and held by the right hand and if the left leg is preferred, then the right leg is folded and held with the left hand. The ‘Langa’ is played in either of these two manners; as a race or as a war. This racing or warring can be between peers or more or less.

4.7.1 Langa Game as a Race

If the players decide to play the langa game as a race, then they will first agree on the mark or point to reach and then the number of the racers to contest. The

competitors are put on their marks and a gibberish nonsense would be chanted and at the word go! They start hopping to that point and then back to the starting point. The others are the spectators, the referees, the judges and linesmen. The losers in this turn become the watchers, and the winners wait for other winners from the next group. Then another group goes into the race, then another, till all the players participate and at each time, there must be losers and winners. When all had their turns, the next bout is between winners and winners. This continues till there must be another group of winners and losers then the next bout, the third between winners and winners in which there must be other winners. This continues till a winner among winners emerges as the supreme winner of all. This supreme winner now chooses someone as his horse to carry him around and the others, his slaves, cheering, clapping and jubilating around him as subjects to a king.

4.4.3 Langa Game as a War

In this too, the players assume war poise. But this time around each player faces an opponent. The contest is for a player to either push down his opponent, or dislodge his hooked hand from the leg he is holding. Only one hand is used as a fighting weapon while the other hand keeps on hooking or holding the leg. When winners emerge in round A, then round B commences, then C, then D till when a champion of champions emerges as well. The same choice/selection of a horse is made and the others as slaves as in the above.

4.8 Game C - Wasan Goyo (Carrying on the Back)

‘Goyo’ means carrying someone on your back just as women do to their babies in Hausa land. In this game, players are paired up with one stronger than the other. The strongest of the duo is the horse, while the other one is the rider. Both the two can be the fighters. The pairing is conducted by agreement between the paired up players. After the pairing up, the game is conducted either one pair to another in which the winners await other winners, while the losers become the spectators and judges. In this game, the ‘horses’ are expected to be behaving like real war horses, neighing and grunting while the riders, usually the fighters would be proclaiming some ejections of war cry shouts when they fight or struck down an opponent as in real battle.

In this ‘wasan goyo’ game, if the players so wish, the fighting or warring takes place in a rampage style, the strongest pair knocking or cutting down the weak. If the players otherwise decided they can use it as a race in groups or between individuals. In whatever way the play is conducted, the losers are put to various ridicules or tasks such as imagined farmers, or squatting or may be made to make various animal noises such as braying of a donkey, neighing of a horse, mooing as a cattle, crowing like a crow or whatever else the winners decide. This continues till the players are satisfied or ready to change to another game.

The inherent themes of the above two games (Langa and Goyo) are almost similar. The players, since their childhood times are required to acquire skills of

war and endurance in defense and attack situations, dexterity, bravery and also submit themselves to physical training and accept defeat whenever it comes.

As in other games in this section, there are no verbal communications, only instructions, monologues, exclamations, cheering and booing.

4.9 Game D - Turke

It is another outdoor boys' game. In this one, two volunteers are called for, one to serve as a 'turke' (a post to tie an animal), and the other volunteer to serve as a 'me gadi' (a security). All the players shed off their garments with the exception of the two volunteers. The garments will be dropped into a big circle drawn by the 'me gadi'. The idea of the game is that the other players would make attempts to pick up any of the garments not necessarily theirs, while the security stops them doing so. If he allows them to pick, then they will use it as a whip to teach him a lesson for negligence of duty. On his part to stop them from picking the clothes, he is allowed to do anything to block them. He can box, kick, backlash, slap, or do whatever to them because it is his life or theirs. He too must not venture out of the circle and if he does that, the players would thrash him; and the 'turke' would hold him back, drawing him back with the rope. At the initial stage of this game, after the volunteers are gotten, the security is tied up from his waist with a long rope that is made from the strongest garments of the players. That is what is 'turke' would be using to checkmate the advances of the 'me gadi' from venturing out of the circle. If the security man within the 'da'ira' (circle or area of his jurisdiction)

is able to catch hold of someone before all the garments are finished, then that caught up child would be the next security officer. But, in most cases, this play of ‘turke’ ends up in a fight because the remaining players will use all bags of tricks on the security and molest him.

Like in ‘Langa’, ‘Goyo’ and ‘Carafke’ games, ‘Turke’ has no song or dialogue in it; only action and more action which teaches the players various strategies of attack and defense and enduring qualities and many others.

4.10 Game F ‘Yar Gala-Gala

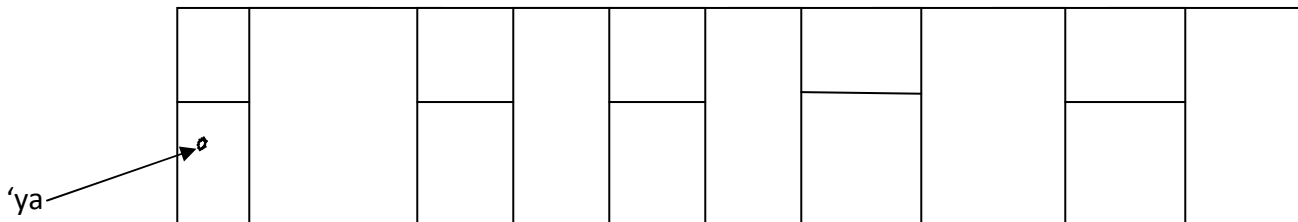
This is a unisex game nowadays, but traditionally, it was a girls’ game played in big compounds or outside but mostly in the rainy season period. The reason why this season is the preferred period for this game is that drawings are made on the ground. A big rectangular box is drawn. Inside this box, smaller ones are drawn diagonally. The first small box would be single, then next to it would be two smaller ones than the first ones, then the next, that is the third is another single and after it a double continuously up to the end of the major box. As the first one is single, then the last one must be a double or vice versa. The players may be two or more and they take turns to skip-dance in the drawn boxes, buying houses. The buying is made with a small pebble called ‘ya’ (daughter) agreed upon by all the participants. They also reach an agreement upon who would be the first to start. Then, the game starts with the first player tossing the ‘ya’ into the first box on the right. That box in which the daughter lies, is a forbidden territory at that time, then

the player would, with one leg, hops on to the box without the 'ya, then jumps to the next one with a single box, still on one leg and then to the next one with two boxes. But in this box, the player would use both legs (one in each box) to stand, then moves to the fourth one, which is a single and the fifth one, with double boxes and stand in it as before, then jumps to the next box, the sixth, which is a double, then to the eighth, a single and later to the ninth which is a double. This box is the last and in it the player makes a swift turn clockwise and faces where she comes from. The same skips are made till she reaches second to the last box where her 'ya' lies. On one leg, this player bends down and picks the daughter without her other hand or leg touching the ground. If any of these two limbs touches the ground, or she fails to successfully picks the 'ya', then she losses her turn and chance to buy and own a house. If she does pick the daughter without her two limbs helping her, then she skips out of the main box, turns her back and then throws the 'ya' backward into the big rectangle. Any box into which that 'daughter' falls in is her personal house and not to be tampered with or trespassed by any other player. That first player would draw any pattern such as (X,+,#[]) or any other mathematical pattern into the house. On the other hand, if the daughter falls outside any of the smaller boxes, then that player as well fails to own a house. Whatever the case, failure or success, the next player starts the process of the 'yar gala-gala' game as described above, but this time around not venturing into the already bought house. This continues till when she too buys her own, and goes on till all the players finished their rounds, some with houses, and

some without till when the houses were all bought. The player with the most houses is the winner.

The players in this game also talk less but act more as in the other discussed games in this chapter. The game of ‘yar gala-gala’ teaches the players balancing especially on one leg and one hand and the general physical exercises and training.

The graph of the ‘yar gala-gala appears like this:



This box with the ‘ya in the first right hand box signifies the commencements of the game in which the first player will, with one leg skip in the first box on the left, opposite the ‘ya’s house, then the second box, still on one leg and then double skip in the third two boxes; and it continues one legged, two legged, one legged, two legged etc.

As said earlier, this outdoor game may also be played by boys of 7-11 years old and is played in the same format with that of their female counterparts. In some instances, the players mix up to play it turn by turn.

4.11 Game I - Zilliya

‘Zilliya’, in the Hausa language means dodging, and this particular one is an outdoor game played by Hausa children traditionally. Like in the game of

‘zanzarni,’ the children are as free as air as far as the normal protocols of traditional games are concerned. They play not in a line, neither in a circle, nor carrying any of the players. Each of them, in this game is required to bounce on his heels and or toes or sways sideways or back ways or forth ways like a drunkard facing anyone that comes their way all the while chanting:

Zilliya kwabo kwabo	dodge, one penny, one penny
Zilliya dari, dari,	dodge, half penny, half penny
Zilliya	dodge
Zilliya kai kai	dodge oh you
Zilliya dari,dari	dodge, one penny, one penny
Zilliya sule-sule	dodge, shilling, shilling
Zilliya kai, kai	dodge oh you

That is what they will be chanting or regurgitating in various modulated voices that are exaggeratedly comic. Any player who allows himself to touch or be touched is out of the game. In this game the children players are also the audience or spectators and judges as well. The play goes on as long or short as they wish it to be. In ‘Zilliya’ game, some poetic devices become apparent. The metaphor of a drunkard in which the players bounce or sway, rhyming of two words only in various modulated voices and, exaggerations of action and finally repetition of the words ‘zilliya’ and ‘kai’.

Another poetic device is metonymy that symbolizes the use of coins in the olden days. Many traditional games in Africa are said to start at periods that were

not known specifically. But this game may have started or improved or moderated with the coming of the Europeans in northern Nigeria, in 1903. These coins 'kwabo', 'dari', 'sule' (Pence, half pence, one shilling) came with the Europeans. Before their arrival with their own types of money, the nature of trade in northern Nigeria was by barter and cowries.

4.12 Game J: Sarki ya Hana Dawa Tsaiwa (Emir has Forbidden the Corn to Remain Standing)

In this game, the players are like wild beast of the forest, as they attack each other. The strong is against the weak and the frail. The attack is not with any weapon. The only weapons are your legs (not your hands). With the legs of each other, the players hit to hurt anyone to force him to be on the ground. If you feel you are strong enough and your legs (shin, calves, heels, toes) are strong enough or hard enough to remain standing or otherwise, you will continue the game. If not you simply become a coward and sit. Each time one player goes to attack another player, that attacker must say 'sarki ya hana dawa tsayuwa/mai taurin kai shi aka nema'. (The emir decreed the corn not to remain standing/the strong headed is sought for).

When an opponent is to be attacked, that attack must be anywhere below the knee. Anybody caught down must remain in that position till there is only one player standing.

In this game, the paradox of harvesting after the rainy season is acted. We all know that when cutting down a ripe corn, cutlass must be employed and the use of force is what is needed for that. The inclusion of the word ‘sarki’ is a symbol of a monarch dictating a command or a decree promulgated by the ruling class: and once that is made, then law and order must be enforced. The enforcers (in those days were the ‘dogaris’ , i.e. place guards, but in these days they are the Police, the Army, the Road Safety Corp members, the State Security Service, the Prison warders, the Civil Defense corps and now recently in Kano, the KAROTA, i.e. Kano Roads Transport Authority).

The strong players in the game are these law enforcement agencies while the players forced down on their buttocks are the majority, who must obey the constituted authority.

The word ‘Dawa’ (corn) another, metaphor in reality is the staple grain of the Hausa people especially those of Kano, the focus of this research. When pounded or grounded into powder, ‘tuwo’ (mentioned many times above) is made. This word ‘dawa’ is again used as a direct personification of the common man that must dance to the tune of the royal class whether traditional, military or even civilian.

4.13 Some Hausa Traditional Children Narrative Games

As mentioned earlier, the traditional children’s games of Hausa in particular and Africa in general, are what some scholars term as ‘meta-literature’ or ‘quasi-

literature' (i.e. they involve elements of poetry, drama and narration). The games to be discussed under this caption are on the narrative or prose side. In most cases, when the players perform the most rigorous games that exhaust their energy, they then sit down to stories, tales, riddles, jokes, tongue twisters, anecdotes and others. All these are presented by Yahaya in the six series. The only types not listed or recorded by him are short narrative riddles (in the 1-6 series, there are more than 100 short riddles). So, in this section, the concern is to discuss the poetics of some few ones that combine short stories in them as well as riddles that tickle the mind and baffles the attention of the little players. Only the English versions of the story/riddles are presented here as translated into English language by the researcher. The titles of such stories are also not part of the original Hausa version. The researcher provides the titles for convenience

4.13 Narrative Riddle 1: The Professionals

Once upon a time, there were two friends walking in the forest. Their names were King of Swiftness and King of Dodging. As they were plodding on, thunderstorm started to gather clouds, an indication for rain. They both looked at the sky and became certain that it will soon be raining. The King of Swiftness looked at his friend, the King of Dodging, "what do we do?" he asked.

"Do?" replied the King of Dodging, "let everyone be for himself".

After their little dialogue, a cool wind started blowing, indicating that it will soon be raining cats and dogs. At that point, the King of Swiftness swiftly brought out a

sickle from his pocket, cut some grasses, twigs and woods and built a small hut for himself. As he enters, a torrential rain began to fall.

As the rain fell in torrents, the King of Dodging too put on his professional garb into use. He prevented getting wet by passing and dodging through droplets after droplets of that incessant rain till it has ceased without him getting wet even by a drop. All that while, the King of Swiftness was also comfortably dry in his cover.

After the rain stopped, the King of Swiftness came out of his hut. On reaching the door-step, he stepped on wet mud and slipped. The King of Dodging jeeringly looked at him and commented “let’s see the swiftness now”. Before the Swiftness King fell on the wet mud as he slipped, he once more brought out his sickle, cut enough ‘kaba’ (a kind of) wove a mat, spread it and fell on that mat. So, between these two professionals, who do you think is the best?

4.14 Narrative Riddle 2: The Story of Baka Barin Bashi, Baka Biyan Bashi and Ba’ A Baka Labari

A long time ago, there lived three people each with a distinct quality. The first one was called ‘Baka Barin Bashi’ (one who never forgoes a debt), the second was ‘Baka Biyan Bashi’ (one who never pays his debts) and the third one was ‘Ba’a Baka Labari’ (one who rather sees for himself than be told).

One day, the second man ‘Baka Biyan Bashi’ heard the story of the first man ‘Baka Barin Bashi’. He therefore intended to test him by getting a loan from

him. On his way, he met the man ‘Ba’a Baka Labari’. This dialogue between them took place:

3rd man: Good morning Mr. Man. Where to?

2nd man: Morning. I am going to get me a loan from ‘Baka Barin Bashi’.

3rd man: Let me go with you.

2nd man: You are welcome.

On reaching the house of ‘Baka Barin Bashi’, the second man expressed his wishes. Without much ado, Baka Barin Bashi gave him the loan.

1st man: When do I see you back?

2nd man: In two weeks, time. Maybe

The third man noted their meeting time. And when that time came, Ba’a Baka Labari was the first to be in the house of Baka Barin Bashi as early as possible and waited to see what would happen between the two. The time the sun was about to set without the presence of ‘Baka Biyan Bashi’, ‘Baka Barin Bashi’ decided to go to the house to collect his debt. The third man followed suit.

As they reached the house of ‘Baka Biyan Bashi’, the duo were warmly welcomed with cool water. After the drinks, ‘Baka Barin Bashi’ looked at his debtor, squarely in the eyes and commanded, ‘It is now two weeks. You must redeem your debt!’.

2nd man: Have you forgotten that I never pay back my debt?

1st man: Don’t you remember I never forgo a debt?

2nd man: I will never pay you!

1st man: You must pay me!

2nd man: Never!

1st man: You must!

As these arguments heated up, the third man, who was never told a story but rather see for himself, was busy watching them, doing nothing and saying nothing. When their argument reached its climax, ‘Baka Biyan Bashi’ decided to end it all. So, he killed himself there and then to avoid payment. The first man ‘Baka Barin Bashi’ burst out, “Ba mutuwa ba, ko me zaka yi sai ka biya ni kudi na”. (Do whatever else you would do besides killing yourself, you must pay me) so, he too killed himself and followed the second man for his rights. The third man ‘Ba’a Baka Labari’, was so curious to see how this drama would end. To prove his mantle he said to himself “Ina, da a bani labari gara in bayar”. (Incredible, I would rather see the end of this conflict than to be told). He too killed himself and followed them in death to see the end of the conflict. Amongst these three people, who was the most foolish?

After the narrators, (for in such a situation the children players usually take turns to give their own riddles) have finished their narration and posed out the debatable issue therein, the other players take turns to answer, each providing his reasons for that.

In this type of children game, various themes are brought to light on various aspect of child development related to emotional sentiments, psychology, social and educational aspect of life etc are raised up and tackled. As the first story

provides the show of professionalism, the second one is on foolishness. Each of the two narrative riddles has a conflict, a plot and characters.

Also, in these types of puzzles as in all folk customs, the authors were anonymous and the stories have no titles. The titles in these two tales are assumptions of this researcher. These types of moderations usually occur because oral arts belong to the whole society not to the individual as in the contemporary arts. Traditional oral literature is a:

Common property belonging to the people of Africa as a whole; it is an expression of their culture, and social circumstances. The tailor of folktales knows that the frame work of the story he is about to tell is already known to the majority of his hearers. But he knows equally that his reputation as a story teller depends on the inventiveness with which he modifies and adds to the basic framework of the tale. For within the basic framework, the teller is allowed considerable room for maneuver. His audience, knowing the detail of the tale already, will look forward, not to his accuracy, but to the extent and effectiveness of his improvisation and modification, to the skill with which he makes use of facial expressions, gestures, pauses and rhetorical devices and create suspense and excitement. While using the inherited frame work, the brilliant story teller of folk tales transforms them into something uniquely his own. (NTI Kaduna, NCE/DLS series)

In the second riddle in particular, some elements of drama (dialogue, tension, suspense, characterization, setting, conflict) are noted. During the researcher's childhood, he engaged in such traditional African games, many versions of the riddles that came our way were many. But the most memorable one that still lingers in my mind was told to us by a person named Idris. Idi was our age mate then that came to visit us every Wednesday from Mandawari quarters in Kano. He

was older than many of us and we looked forward to his visits. It was he who posed that riddle to us including the dialogues, characterization and voice modulations. He even picked me and another to act the second and third men (Baka Biyan Bashi and Ba'a Baka Labari) while he acted the first man Baka Barin Bashi . Idi even went further to ask us on how we would have behaved if we were any of the three. As children, afraid of death, none of us would kill himself for anything.

4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, the third segment or genre of oral African literature in the children's game aptly described as possessing some elements of narration apart from drama and poetry are presented and discussed. Analysis on narratives of Hausa traditional children games of 7-11 years old have been portrayed. In such activities, the children portrayed the Hausa society socio-cultural background relating to their trades and sports, (farming, hunting, fishing etc), social relationship, and responding (positively) to a person who attends to you or calls your attention. Also, in the Hausa society, even the ruling class is not spared criticism of their follies if observed by their subjects. These games would also be categorized into many academic literary terms on the basis of their sex (biological) environment, (indoor or outdoor) etc.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Scholars, critics, researchers and a host of others have written a lot of assumptions, postulations and observations, expressing views and findings on Orature in general and children literature which includes specifically traditional children games, the focus of this research. A close scrutiny of the Hausa traditional children games reveals that such games can be studied from many angles; the functional angle, the social one, the philosophical and psychological areas or even the poetical literary one. This literary angle which in other words, is the poetical, is what this dissertation ventured into. It came to reveal further that literature comprises of the totality of man's (children's) life. Also, the African traditional children's games of the Hausa society in particular comprises of the totality of the poetics of literature that can be deduced from the three important units of poetry, drama and prose narrative which are usually treated independent of each other. In this research, it is not so with the African traditional Children's games. The genres go together. Readers of this research become convinced that the younger ones and their games contribute to the progress of epistemology especially literary devices that abound plenty in them. Many metaphorical, lexical, hyperbolic, personified, contrastical, symbolical, paradoxical, tragic, rhythmical, resonance, alliterative, repetitive, allegorical, satirical, etcetera all are located in these children's performances. Others related to drama are also there. These include elements like prologue,

epilogue, setting, character and characterization, climax, anticlimax and conflicts. These apart, they also contain various poetics of storytelling and narration. The type of game a child plays determines the figurative devices deduced in it. It is also through these devices we come to learn and identify more about the children's world and wealth of creativity and what instigated their other development of physical growth, emotional and psychological changes and status, social adjustment, moral acumen, spirit of sportsmanship and participation in which one instigates another. With regards to language perfection, many rhythmic, alliterative consonance in which letters, words, phrases, clauses and sentences were acquired, formed, learnt and perfected. As they played, the children came across new situations and people of various characters and or attitudes as in the puzzling story of The Professionals and three foolish men that came at the tail end of chapter four. The complexity of the poetics as well pictured the children sharing in decisions as portrayed in many competitive games such as 'Langa', 'Turke', 'Carafke', 'Yar gala-gala'; and passing judgement on any culprit that breaches the societal norms or rules as the queen in 'Matar Kwadi' and the foolish man sent to punish her with 'duma mata duka/dim-dim'. The dramatic poetics as well functioned as agents that bare out the hazardous, tasking and frustrating effects of life in general in the near future of the children when they become men. Instances of such attitudes are more apparent in the games of 'Sarki ya Hana Dawa Tsaiwa', 'Dan Akuya Na', Tongue twisters and many riddles. Furthermore, in children games that developed over the years, further literary poetics, such as symbolic

images of social histories such as ‘koko’, akushi’, ‘saka’ ‘kan kare’ were retained in many others that reflect the values of the society such as hard work, honesty, perseverance, courage, personal achievements and individual regards and recognition, valor and above all respect for elders. This didactic values of the Hausa man (in this respect the Hausa child) are some that Ahmad (2006: 91-109) views as his “identities” of Hausa people. Still, through the poetics of contrast and comparism examined by this researcher in the traditional children’s games, the notion that Africans are one and the same is discovered with peculiarities, especially identity and religion which differentiate one and the other. It was found out that many Hausa traditional children’s games are almost evidently similar to other areas in Africa, like ‘Carafke’ and ‘Yar Gala-Gala’ or ‘Wasar ‘yar tsana’ or doll playing which abound in Ibibio children games. Finnegan, (1970) as well records some of such games that exist in other areas of Africa also exist in the Hausa tradition. One example is the concentration game of ‘blood-blood’ (jini-jini) and lullabies. Also Umar, (1981) further asserts that many of such games that are similar are also evident in other areas.

This research in the traditional children’s game came from two main sources. The source are those found in Ibrahim Yaro Yahaya’s series of *‘Tatsuniyoi da Wasanni’* and partly from *‘Karamin Sani’* books 1-2, of unknown author published in 1964 by NNPC. From these two types of texts, the research further provides that the setting (another literary feature of the traditional African children games of the Hausa society) can be performed informally or formally. Even

though, they do not exist in the school curricula, many of such games can still fit in and be accommodated to tally with the contemporary times especially when teaching or introducing literature to students.

The scope of researches of orature as an academic or scholarly subject is inexhaustible. This area is like the traditional African story teller, with plenty of rooms to maneuver but insufficient time to deliver. As such, this little area of traditional African games of Hausa culture explored by the researcher moderately proved that such games have a lot of literary features that would qualify them as literature containing cluster, images and symbolism that remain to be excavated and filtered. The games are full of striking literary qualities of artistic values that portray the creativity of the Hausa children. A close examination of the games as poetry, as drama and as prose narrative provides artistic effects that exposed various patterns of sensations, thought provoking, feelings, as well as term that were otherwise inexpressible, full of words and diction associated with fantasy and reality of the child, and by extension man. Works of erudite scholars were cited to further provide evidence, that are to the researcher , sufficient enough to suffice that poetics examination on traditional children games that this study carried out, proved that there are still various areas to view them not merely as a store or archives of culture, socialization and entertainment, education and instruction morally. The research has gone beyond these and more.

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