INDIAN FILMS AND NIGERIAN LOVERS: MEDIA AND THE CREATION OF PARALLEL MODERNITIES

Brian Larkin

God make him rich so he can go to India.
   Mallam Sidi, husband of Hotiho.
Sidi's ambition is for God to make him rich so he can go to India.
   Mallam Sidi, husband of Hotiho.
His ambition is to see Hotiho . . .
   Mallam Sidi, husband of Hotiho.
He swears if he sees Hotiho then no problems can move him.
   Mallam Sidi, husband of Hotiho.

<div align="right">

Mamman Shata, 'Mallam Sidi, mijin Hotiho',
'Mallam Sidi is the husband of Hotiho'[1]

</div>

The sight of a 15 ft image of Sridevi, dancing erotically on the screens of the open-air cinemas of northern Nigeria, or the tall, angular figure of Amitabh Bachchan radiating charisma through the snowy, crackly reception of domestic television have become powerful, resonant images in Hausa popular culture. To this day, stickers of Indian films and stars decorate the taxis and buses of the north, posters of Indian films adorn the walls of tailors' shops and mechanics' garages, and love songs from Indian film songs are borrowed by religious singers who change the words to sing praises to the Prophet Mohammed. For over thirty years Indian films, their stars and fashions, music and stories have been a dominant part of everyday popular culture in northern Nigeria. If, as Bakhtin (1981) writes, communication is fundamental to human life, that self and society emerge in dialogue with others surrounding them, then Indian films have entered into the dialogic construction of Hausa popular culture by offering Hausa men and women an alternative world, similar to their own, from which they may imagine other forms of fashion, beauty, love and romance, coloniality and post-coloniality.

Before I began my research I read all I could find by Nigerian and Western scholars on media and film in Nigeria. For the most part, this scholarship dealt with the complex and continuing problem of cultural imperialism—the dominance of Western media and most especially Hollywood films. When I first visited Kano, the major city in northern Nigeria, it came as a surprise, then, that Indian films are shown five nights a week at the cinemas (compared with one night for Hollywood films and one night for Chinese films); that the most popular programme on television was the Sunday morning Indian film on City Television Kano (CTV); and that most video shops reserved the bulk of their space for Indian films (followed by Western and Chinese films, Nigerian dramas and religious videos). The question of why Indian films are so popular among Hausa viewers has occupied much of my research since that time.[2] What pleasures do Hausa viewers take from films portraying a culture and religion that seem so dissimilar and are watched usually in a language they cannot understand?

Why has such a prominent part of the popular culture of many African societies received so little attention from academics?[3] This article attempts to answer these questions by taking seriously the significance of Indian films in Hausa culture. It explores the influence of Indian cinema on Hausa social life through the medium of Hausa *littatafan soyayya* (love stories). This pamphlet-type market literature, which began as recently as 1989, has created a popular reading public for wilful, passionate heroes and heroines who mimic a style of love and sexual interaction found in Indian films. *Soyayya* books, and videos based on their plots, produce a world where the imagined alternative of Indian romance is incorporated within local Hausa reality.

The popularity of Indian film in Nigeria highlights the circulation of media within and between non-Western countries, an aspect of transnational cultural flows that has been largely ignored in recent theories of globalisation. Indian films offer Hausa viewers a way of imaginatively engaging with forms of tradition different from their own at the same time as conceiving of a modernity that comes without the political and ideological significance of that of the West. After discussing reasons for the popularity of Indian films in a Hausa context, I account for this imaginative investment of viewers by looking at narrative as a mode of social enquiry. Hausa youth explore the limits of accepted Hausa attitudes to love and sexuality through the narratives of Indian film and Hausa love stories. This exploration has occasioned intense public debate, as *soyayya* authors are accused of corrupting Hausa youth by borrowing from Indian films foreign modes of love and sexual relations. I argue that this controversy indexes wider concerns about the shape and direction of contemporary Nigerian culture. Analysing *soyayya* books and Indian films gives insight into the local reworking and indigenising of transnational media flows that take place within and between Third World countries, disrupting the dichotomies between West and non-West, coloniser and colonised, modernity and tradition, foregrounding instead the ability of media to create parallel modernities.

PARALLEL MODERNITIES

I use the term 'parallel modernities' to refer to the coexistence in space and time of multiple economic, religious and cultural flows that are often subsumed within the term 'modernity'. This formulation resonates with the term 'alternative modernities' used by Appadurai (1991),[4] but with a key difference. Appadurai links the emergence of alternative modernities with the increased deterritorialisation of the globe and the movement of people, capital and political movements across cultural and national boundaries. While deterritorialisation is important, the experience of parallel modernities is not necessarily linked with the needs of relocated populations for contact with their homelands (Appadurai, 1991: 192). My concern, by contrast, is with an Indian film-watching Hausa populace who are not involved in nostalgic imaginings of a partly invented native land but who participate in the imagined realities of other cultures as part of their daily lives.

By stressing the importance of modernities that run parallel to the classical paradigm of the West I want to criticise recent work in African studies and media studies that has been dominated by the focus on local 'resistance' to various forms of 'dominant culture'. Abu-Lughod has warned that the 'romance of resistance' tends to focus on the creativity of resistors and fails to explore fully the effectiveness of systems of power (1990). My concern is different, arguing that concepts of resistance in African studies and elsewhere often depend on a reductive binary distinction between oppression and resistance. The effect of this is that phenomena that cannot be neatly organised within that binary distinction then fall out of view. In a recent review essay on African historiography Frederick Cooper addresses some of these concerns:

> The difficulty [in contemporary Africanist historiography] is to confront the power behind European expansion without assuming it was all-determining and to probe the clash of different forms of social organisation without treating them as self-contained and autonomous. The binaries of coloniser/colonised, Western/non-Western and domination/resistance begin as useful devices for opening up questions of power but end up constraining the search for precise ways in which power is deployed and the ways in which power is engaged, contested, deflected, and appropriated. [Cooper, 1994: 1517]

Cooper wishes to move away from what he sees as monolithic constructions of civilised coloniser and primitive colonised (and the related labels of modernity and tradition) by asserting the heterogeneity of both colonial rule and African resistances. While complicating the picture, he nevertheless remains wedded to a structural binarism that looks at the organisation of African experience in terms of its response to Western rule and its consequences.

Recent theories of postcolonialism have also unintentionally tended to reify this distinction in that the term 'postcolonial', despite a variety of different definitions, connotes a historical periodisation based on the core period of colonialism.[5] Northern Nigeria, for example, was colonised by the British in 1903, and achieved independence in 1960. A history of over a thousand years is divided into the period pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial which centres less than sixty years of British rule at the heart of Hausa experience. Even while criticising the role of the West in post-colonial Nigerian life, theorists of cultural imperialism and postcolonialism often view Nigerian reality largely in terms of its relation to the West, with the resulting irony of reaffirming cultural imperialism at the same moment as critiquing it. It is as if the periphery could not have an experience independent of its relation to metropolitan centres. Shohat and Stam criticise this contemporary insistence on resistance for producing an 'inverted European narcissism' positing a monolithic West as the source of all evil in the world, and which 'reduces non-Western life to a pathological response to Western domination' (Shohat and Stam, 1994: 3). The widespread popularity of Indian films in Nigeria necessitates a revision of conceptions of global cultural flows that privilege the centrality of the West and refuse to recognise

the common historical process of centres and peripheries engaged in contemporary cultural production.

The narrow conception of cultural imperialism has left little place for the study of phenomena such as Hong Kong or Indian film which cannot be as easily tied to a wider economic hegemony as is the case with Hollywood film.[6] This myopia has also been the result of the disciplinary boundaries of contemporary scholarship, which has little ethnographic understanding of cross-cultural media environments. Recent groundbreaking works in African cinema, such as Diawara (1992) and Ukadike (1994; see also Ekwuazi, 1987; Ekwuazi and Nasidi, 1992), deal largely with production by African film makers and are less concerned with what African film audiences are actually watching. Until recently anthropologists, with their disciplinary focus on indigenous cultural production, have been suspicious of foreign mass-mediated cultural forms, no matter how popular they may be (cf. Abu-Lughod, 1993b; Ginsburg, 1991; Hannerz, 1992). Karin Barber, for instance, in her seminal definition of African popular arts (1987) argues that 'imported commercial entertainments . . . symbolize Western culture (though they include Chinese Kung Fu movies and Indian romantic melodramas)' (1987: 25; her parenthesis). As well as reducing foreign media to a subset of Hollywood, Barber is reluctant to admit any real engagement by African audiences with these texts. Because they do not originate from an African reality she suggests they have little meaning in African life. '[E]ntertainment films that are least mediated by African culture . . . [she concludes] are also the most easily replaced' (*ibid.*). Barber's observations are probably influenced by her experience among Yoruba, where indigenous videos have provided a popular alternative to imported cinema in recent years. She fails, however, to appreciate the complicated identifications that allow audiences to engage with media forms no matter how superficially 'foreign'. The popularity of Indian films in Africa has fallen into the interstices of academic analysis, as the *Indian* texts do not fit with studies of African cinema; the *African* audience is ignored in the growing work on Indian film; the films are too non-Western for Euro-American-dominated media studies, and anthropologists are only beginning to theorise the social importance of media.

My intent is not to downplay the importance of the cultural struggle of Nigerians against foreign media, or to minimise the hegemony of Western culture, but to stress that this is only part of the cultural reality of many African nations. It is necessary to move toward a more ethnographic understanding of the range of the media environments that offer Hausa youth the choice between watching Hausa or Yoruba videos, Indian, Hong Kong or American films, or videos of Qur'anic *tafsir* (exegesis) by local preachers. In this my work has been influenced heavily by participation in the Program in Culture and Media and its affiliates within the department of anthropology at New York University. Borrowing from media and cultural studies as well as from traditional anthropological theory the Program is developing a variety of critical anthropological perspectives that examine the social relations within which media are embedded and enacted (Abu-Lughod, 1993b, 1995; Ginsburg, 1991, 1993, 1994; McLagan, 1996; Sullivan 1993). Examining the significance of Indian films in an African context, and the processes of

identification by which the ideas, values and aesthetics of another culture are incorporated within an African quotidian, is a step further in this developing field. With other approaches to transnational cultural studies such as that emerging from the journal *Public Culture*, this work is building a sophisticated and supple theoretical frame to deal with what Appadurai terms a 'new cosmopolitanism' that unites the cultural, financial and political flows within and between Western and non-Western countries into a single conceptual whole. 'Modernity,' Appadurai and Breckenridge assert, 'is now everywhere, it is simultaneously everywhere, it is interactively everywhere' (1995: 2).

Appadurai argues that the new cosmopolitanism brought about by movements of people and capital in the contemporary era has created a deterritorialised world that has new significance for the understanding of media and of imagination (1990, 1991). Media figure prominently in creating interconnections between different peoples who can now consider alternative lives based not on experiences in their own locality but on a range of experiences brought to them through international mass media. As more people throughout the world see their reality 'through the prisms of possible lives offered by the mass media', Appadurai argues that contemporary ethnography must now expand to find ways of understanding the social reality of imagination: 'fantasy is now a social practice; it enters, in a host of ways, into the fabrication of social lives' (Appadurai, 1991: 198).

The concept of imagination as outlined by Appadurai is helpful in gaining insight into the pleasures that Indian films offer Hausa viewers. (I shall discuss this further below.) It also provides a theoretical way to understand the complicated identifications of audiences and cultural forms that cross expected racial, cultural and national lines. For Hausa viewers, Indian films offer images of a parallel modernity to the West, one intimately concerned with the changing basis of social life, but rooted in conservative cultural values. Characters in Indian films struggle over whether they should speak Hindi or borrow from English, whether they should marry the person they love or wed the person their parents choose. In these and many other decisions like them the narrative tensions of Indian films raise, consider and resolve minor and major anxieties within contemporary Indian society, anxieties that are relevant to Hausa viewers. Moreover, when Hausa youth rework Indian films within their own culture by adopting Indian fashions (such as the headscarves or jewellery of Indian actresses), by copying the music styles for religious purposes, or by using the filmic world of Indian sexual relations to probe the limitations within their own cultural world they can do so without engaging with the heavy ideological load of 'becoming Western'. The popularity of Indian films rests on this delicate balance of being situated between Nigerian 'tradition' and Western 'modernity', offering a mediating space for postcolonial Hausa viewers from which they may reflect on and consider the nature of contemporary social change.

INDIAN FILMS AND HAUSA VIEWERS

One result of the myopia regarding the presence of Indian films in West Africa is that hard data regarding their distribution and exhibition are

extremely difficult to come by. Ekwuazi, for instance, borrows from UN statistics to write that in 1978–79 86 per cent of all films imported into Nigeria were of American origin (1987: 121). Yet earlier in the same book he acknowledges that many films come in through a grey market that escapes official notice, and unofficially 'the all-time favourite is the Indian, not the American film' (1987: 44).[7] Whereas all American films were imported through the American Motion Picture Exporters and Cinema Association (AMPECA), later the Nigerian Film Distribution Company (NFDC), Indian films were imported by a host of entrepreneurs in different countries, including the Middle East, England and India. British censorship records reveal that Indian films were first introduced by Lebanese exhibitors in the 1950s who were eager to see whether the diet of American and English films could be supplemented by the odd Arab or Indian one.[8] These exhibitors speculated that Arabic films would be popular in the north because of the many religious links between northern Nigeria and the Islamic world. As the language of religious practice and debate Arabic carried immense authority, but despite these links the films never became popular on northern Nigerian screens while Indian films came to dominate them.[9]

The lack of information on the political economy of Indian film obscures the relation between the economic and symbolic reasons for its popularity (but see Pendakur and Subramanyam 1996). It seems likely that the disappearing presence of American films is related to the increasing cost of American film prints, which makes the cheaper Indian films more attractive. However, Hausa, Lebanese and Indian film and video entrepreneurs I interviewed all accounted for the dominance of Indian film in symbolic and cultural, rather than economic, terms. In an interview with Michel Issa, manager of the Cinema Distribution Circuit, which owns cinemas throughout northern Nigeria, Issa argued that Indian films were popular because 'their culture is the same' as Hausa culture.[10] One Indian video entrepreneur posited that it was the (allegedly) common linguistic roots of Hindi and Hausa that accounted for the sense of cultural familiarity (an argument supported by Muhammad 1992).[11] Uninterested in my questions about why Indian films were more popular, Issa finally said he had no idea why Arab films had not been accepted. All he knew was that from the beginning Indian films gained a massive popular following in the north. Even before American films stopped being distributed in Nigeria, he pointed out, they had been largely replaced by Indian films on northern screens.

Indian film fans and theorists refer to contemporary Hindi films as *masala* films. Referring to the blend of spices used in Indian cooking, popular Indian cinema often mixes the genres of romance, melodrama, action, musical and comedy within the same film. For a considerable time this eclectic mix was seen by both Western and Indian academics as evidence of the inability of Indian film makers to make 'proper' American-style films. More recently, Indian film scholars have come to view Bombay films not as poor imitations of American films but as based on a distinct narrative style and structure (see Chakravarty, 1993; the special issue of *India International Centre Quarterly* 1980; Mishray, 1985; Thomas, 1985, 1995). Rosie Thomas argues that:

> A form has developed in which narrative is comparatively loose and fragmented, realism irrelevant, psychological characterization disregarded, elaborate dialogues prized, music essential and both the emotional involvement of the audience and the pleasures of sheer spectacle privileged throughout the three hour long duration of the entertainment. [Thomas, 1995: 162; see also Thomas, 1985]

Indian films, or at least the Hindi ones that are imported into Nigeria, are made for a pan-Indian audience, and the makers of the films are aware of the necessity of constructing a filmic style that crosses both linguistic and cultural boundaries. Even so, these films are embedded in a cultural specificity that presupposes familiarity with Indian cultural values, Hindu religion, and a strong sense of Indian nationalism. They are also playfully intertextual, making constant reference to classical Indian mythology, folk drama and literature and Hindu religious practice. Chakravarty (1993) argues that Indian films have created a 'communal' mode of address, a 'we-ness' of common cultural and national concerns that accounts for their appeal but which is largely a fiction in a country as large and diverse as India. Indian films are subtitled in English at Hausa cinemas, but the majority of those on television (which has the largest audience) are broadcast in Hindi only. This means that most Hausa viewers are watching Indian films in a language of which they have little understanding. After thirty years of watching Indian films Hausa audiences are, of course, sophisticated at understanding the narrative style of the films, and many families have several members who claim they can 'speak' Hindi, but inevitably there is a considerable cultural gap between the intertextual references to local cultural and religious values by Indian films and a Hausa viewing audience.

Despite the cultural gap between the Hindu Indian audience to which the filmic text is being addressed and the Muslim Hausa one watching in northern Nigeria, what is remarkable is how well the main messages of the films are communicated. This problem is made easier by the narrative structure of Indian films, which is borrowed from the Indian religious epics the *Mahabarata* and *Ramayana* (Mishray, 1985). The dependence upon the epics means that there is usually a fixed range of plots with clear moral contrasts that make the outlines of Indian films familiar to their viewers. The regularity of character types whose actions fall within a limited range of behaviour such as the hero, the mother, the comedic friend or the evil boss, with many of the lesser roles (such as boss or the mother) played by the same people in film after film, further aids the fixed parameters of plot structure within which the spectacle unfolds. This dependence on religious epics for narrative structure provides an easily comprehended moral guide for characters' actions and creates a limited set of narrative possibilities facilitating the easy 'translation' of Indian films across cultural, linguistic and national boundaries.[12]

Talking to many friends about their love of Indian films, I was struck by the common refrain that Indian culture was 'just like' Hausa culture. I found it surprising that staunchly Muslim Hausa should identify so strongly with Hindu Indian culture, but over time different cultural similarities became clearer. Most obvious are the many visual affinities between Indian and Hausa culture. Men in Indian films, for instance, often dress in long kaftans,

similar to the Hausa *dogon riga*, over which they wear long waistcoats, much like the Hausa *palmaran.* Women are also dressed in long saris and scarves which veil their heads and accord with Hausa ideas of feminine decorum. The iconography of Indian 'tradition', such as marriage celebrations, food, village life and so on, even when different from Hausa culture, provides a similar cultural background that is frequently in opposition to the spread of 'westernisation'. Indian films place family and kinship at the centre of narrative tension as a key stimulus for characters' motivations to a degree that rarely occurs in Western films. They are based on a strict division between the sexes, and love songs and sexual relations, while sensuous, are kept within firm boundaries. Kissing is rare and nudity absent. These generic conventions provide a marked difference from Hollywood films, and many Hausa viewers argue that Indian films 'have culture' in a way that American films seem to lack.

More complexly, Indian films are based upon negotiating the tension of preserving traditional moral values in a time of profound change. Ashis Nandy argues, in terms as relevant for Nigerians as they are for Indians, that Indian films are successful with Indian masses because despite their spectacle and rich settings they are based in a moral universe of action that is grounded in a traditional world view.

The basic principles of commercial cinema derive from the needs of Indians caught in the hinges of social change who are trying to understand their predicament in terms familiar to them. [Nandy, 1995: 205]

Nandy argues that commercial cinema tends to

reaffirm the values that are being increasingly marginalized in public life by the language of the modernizing middle classes, values such as community ties, primacy of maternity over conjugality, priority of the mythic over the historical. [*ibid.*: 202]

Characters in Indian films have to negotiate the tension between traditional life and modernity in ways that Hausa, in a similar postcolonial situation, can sympathise with. The choice of wearing Indian or Western-style clothes; the use of English by arrogant upper-class characters or by imperious bureaucrats; even the endemic corruption of the postcolonial state, are all familiar situations with which Hausa viewers can engage.

The familiarity that Hausa viewers experience when watching Indian films is reinforced by changes over time in the style and themes of Indian film. Contemporary films are more sexually explicit and violent, and borrow heavily from the styles of Western film genres. Nigerian viewers comment on this when they compare older Indian films of the 1950s and 1960s that 'had culture' with newer ones which are more westernised. Older films were more often set among the rural poor than contemporary films. Characters, for instance, were more likely to wear traditional clothes, to keep animals or to travel by oxen. Not only did visual iconography change but musical styles, once based mainly on Indian classical forms, began to incorporate disco beats and Western instrumentation. This perceived shift toward a growing materialism in Indian film echoed a similar shift in Nigerian society brought

about by the radical dislocations of the oil boom of the mid-1970s. For Nigerian audiences the evolution of Indian film style thus corresponded with developments within their own society that brought home the similarities between the two. This has been a contentious process, and as difficult for Hausa viewers to accept in Indian films as to accept in their own culture. One young friend, who was a fan of Indian film, complained to me about this shift:

> When I was young and watching films, the Indian films we used to see were based on their tradition. You wouldn't see something like disco, going out to clubs, making gangs. Before, they didn't do it like that. But now Indian films are just like American films. They go to discos, make gangs, go out for picnics.[13] They'll do anything in a hotel and they play rough in romantic scenes where before you could never see things like that.

The perceived rise in violence, in sexual immorality and in materialism are all represented in my friend's complaint. Clubs, hotels and discos are symbols in Indian film and in Hausa popular culture of corrupt immoral spaces frequented by the rich. They are emblems of Western life and stand in moral contrast to the Indian or Hausa social spaces such as the temple, mosque or village. Indian films depict an ambivalent attitude to such spaces, exploiting their use as spectacle while at the same time ensuring that the heroes and heroines are at some moral distance from them. Nandy argues that Indian films stand against the vicissitudes of the postcolonial state by grounding the shifts in materialism, urbanisation and apparent westernisation within a moral universe that is structured around familiar religious values. This is why, despite apparent westernisation, Indian films depict moral dilemmas strikingly different from Hollywood or other Western films.

The reasons why Hausa viewers recognise commonalities between their culture and Indian culture are many and varied. In an Islamic African society the films are popular because they engage with the disjunctures of social change elaborated in terms that are familiar to Hausa society yet also distinct from it. This coexistence between likeness and dissimilarity is important because it is in the gap that the narratives of Indian film allow the exploration of social relations. I now discuss in greater detail this aspect of narrative and offer suggestions why it has become so controversial in *soyayya* books.

IMAGINATION, NARRATIVE AND SOCIAL CHANGE

The narratives of Indian films allow the exploration of attitudes and social possibilities that are still controversial in everyday Hausa social life. The psychoanalyst Sudhir Kakar has discussed this phenomenon in India, arguing that Hindi films are successful because they engage everyday fantasy. 'The power of fantasy . . .,' he argues, 'comes to our rescue by extending or withdrawing the desires beyond what is possible or reasonable' in the social order (1989: 27). He defines fantasy as 'that world of imagination which is fuelled by desire and which provides us with an alternative world where we can continue with our longstanding quarrel with reality' (*ibid.*). My concern in this article is with the narrative tension between love marriages and

arranged marriages which is a dominant theme of both Hindi cinema and Hausa *soyayya* books. There is much more to Hindi films than this—the spectacle of beauty and wealth, the difficulty of reconciling responsibility to kin in a rapidly urbanising bureaucratic world or the problem of operating with honesty and honour in a corrupt postcolonial world—but this one genre of Indian film gives insight into broader conflict between desire and responsibility to a wider social order.

The romantic insistence on the potentially subversive power of imagination has been explored in two recent works on African oral literature and social structure. Beidelman (1993) argues that imagination has both an individual and a group importance. On the one hand, 'it relates to the ways that people construct images of the world in which they live . . . a cosmology that . . . presents a picture in which they measure, assess and reflect upon the reality of their experiences' (1993: 1). On the other hand, imagination offers a space from which to reflect upon the social order: 'In this sense imaginative exercise constitutes means for criticism, for distortion, even subversion of the moral social order' (*ibid.*). Michael Jackson, in his study of Kuranko oral literature, puts forward a similar picture of the power of narrative to explore ambiguities in social life. 'Kuranko narratives,' he argues, 'initiate a dialectic of doubt and uncertainty . . . [that] promote ambivalence and exploit ambiguity as a way of stimulating listeners to resolve problems of choice' (Jackson, 1982: 2). Jackson stipulates that narratives are a secure way to bring up ambiguous situations, allowing readers the imaginative space to explore multiple resolutions of narrative tensions, before resolving them (in the case of oral literature) safely within the limits of accepted norms.

What Jackson and Beidelman see as a function of oral literature Kakar views as part of the collective fantasy provided by the mass culture of Indian films. I argue that the engagement with themes of romantic love revealed in *soyayya* books and Indian films exemplifies precisely this desire to explore the limits of social norms during a period of rapid change. The tension between arranged marriages and love marriages is not new to Hausa society, nor is the idea that romantic love may be subversive of the moral order, as many Hausa folk tales exemplify. What is new, however, is the speed of contemporary social change that has placed the issues of love, marriage and sexuality squarely at the forefront of social concern. The increase in conflicts over the style and nature of courtship, the appropriate age and conditions of marriage and over what is seen as the increased materialism of marriage partners condenses fears about the pace of social change. As Indian films and *soyayya* books are the main mass cultural forms that provide a sustained engagement with these issues over a long period of time, it is unsurprising that they have become a topic of public controversy. To account for the intensity of this controversy it is first necessary to outline the boundaries of social transformation in contemporary Hausa society.

YOUTH AND MARRIAGE IN CONTEMPORARY KANO

The oil boom of the 1970s thrust Nigeria into the fast capitalism of an oil economy, transforming not only the economic basis of the country but the

pace of urbanisation, consumption habits and the political system. Watts and Pred (1992) have borrowed from Benjamin to label this revolutionary change the 'shock of modernity'. As well as making the country dependent upon imports of basic foodstuffs, the boom internationalised the consumption habits of the middle classes, creating the easy assumption that fast capitalism meant fast westernisation. The economic crash which followed the oil boom exacerbated these transformations and contributed to a growing self-consciousness about the changing nature of Nigerian society, marked by Islamic revitalisation and criticism of secular westernisation. The transformative impact of the boom and bust of the oil economy continues to affect all classes of Nigerian society, but the position of youth has become an issue of considerable concern (Barkindo, 1993; 'Dan Asabe, n.d.; Said and Last, 1991).

The 'problems' of contemporary youth are evidenced in different realms, from the perceived rise in violence to theft, drug-taking, disrespect for elders and materialism. Even the rise in Islamic participation of youth has been a key moral discourse by which youths have challenged the authority of government and elders.[14] Important religious scholars such as Sheikh Isa Waziri in Kano preached regularly against the changing attitudes and behaviour of Hausa youth, and it is these social tensions that are indexed by the debate about *soyayya* books. At the forefront of this concern is the problem of changing marriage patterns in northern Nigeria, and more especially the concern over regulating female sexuality.

The collapse in the Nigerian economy has made the cost of the *lefe*, the gifts each man must give his wife before marriage, economically difficult for many young men. The *lefe* forms only part of the rising cost of marriage, and this inflation has been vehemently attacked as one of the most visible markers of the growing materialism of Hausa society. Religious leaders have complained regularly against the practice and there have even been attempts by state governments to regulate the costs involved, but to little avail. The result is that young men are delaying marriage until a later age when they have the income to afford the expense. Meanwhile the marrying age of women has also been moving upward. The introduction of compulsory primary-school education in 1976 affected the traditional practice of arranging marriages for girls before the onset of puberty, at around 13 years of age (Callaway, 1987). Nowadays it is more common for parents to wait until a child has finished school, around the age of 16 or 17, before choosing a marriage partner. Callaway, in her study of Hausa women in Kano, sees the rise in both Western and Islamic education as the source of potential change in the status of women (*ibid.*). As women are more enlightened as to their rights as women under Islamic law, she asserts there may be more room to resist Hausa cultural practices from the point of view of Islamic orthodoxy. One consequence is that increased education and the rise in marriage age mean that women may be more prepared to assert some measure of control over the choice of their marriage partners.

For parents and religious leaders the increase in the number of sexually mature young people outside the bounds of marriage is not only contrary to a proper Islamic social order but has become an issue demanding public regulation. In 1987 the Kano state government set up state committees to

find solutions to contemporary social problems. Along with the rise in crime, hooliganism and begging, the 'problem' of unmarried women was the subject of state examination. Two years later, in his Ramadan sermon, Sheikh Isa Waziri, one of the prominent Islamic leaders in Kano, addressed the same issue when he sent out a call for rich men to marry more wives in order to solve what he termed the 'calamity' of unmarried women (Barkindo, 1993: 96). A perceived rise in sexual activity before marriage, as well as in the growing number of prostitutes (seen as a moral rather than an economic problem), has neatly conflated the issues of westernisation, materialism, the need to regulate sexuality, and the immorality of the secular Nigerian state, for northern political and religious leaders.

In her discussion of Hausa female marriage and sexuality Callaway points out that there is no acceptable space within Islamic society to be of childbearing age and unmarried. As more women occupy this 'unacceptable' space, relations between the sexes are evolving. Callaway, for instance, describes traditional Hausa interaction between the sexes as extremely limited. Compared with the West, she argues, Hausa men live separate physical and emotional lives. She concludes,

> Thus, men and women live in two separate worlds, normally do not share their thoughts or their lives, and function fairly independently of each other in their different spheres. Even husbands and wives do not normally socialize together or with each other; in order to show respect in the home, they do not eat together, seldom interact and avoid addressing each other by name. [Callaway, 1987: 44]

As a result of this sexual segregation, Callaway argues, 'The experience of romantic love is not normally part of an Islamic marriage'; ' "Love" and "Romance" are Western concepts and have little real meaning in this [Hausa] culture' (1987: 36, 40). Callaway's comments caricature and devalue the complex emotions of Muslim marriages,[15] but she does represent problems that many Hausa experience. Many *soyayya* authors discussed the issue with me as they talked of the massive changes in the way young men and women interact with each other in contemporary Hausa society. Ideally, both women and men in Hausa society are expected to exhibit *kunya*, a sense of modesty and shame. Adamu Mohammed,[16] author of the novel *Garnak'ak'i* ('Uncompromising') explained what this meant in terms of sexual interaction. Traditionally, he said, all meetings between boys and girls would be chaperoned by older relatives. Frequently the couple involved might be too embarrassed even to speak to each other, and women, especially, would communicate reluctantly, if at all. Another author, 'Dan Azumi 'Yan Gurasa,[17] confirmed this. 'When I was young,' he said, 'and came across the girl I loved I couldn't face her and tell her. Instead I would send someone who could talk to her about it.' Nowadays, both authors agreed, this sense of shyness has been transformed, and both men and women act in a manner that would have been unacceptable twenty years previously.

In their plots, *soyayya* authors examine some of the issues made contentious by the shift in gender interaction. The common narrative conflict between youth wishing to marry for love and parents who wish to

organise marriage partners reveals how romance narratives allow a form of moral enquiry for Hausa youth. The fantasy encoded in fictional narratives succeeds, as Beidelman points out, 'by presenting a version of experience and things that is both less and more than what we ordinarily encounter', allowing, in part, 'a luxuriation of qualities and possibilities not encountered in reality' (1993: 5). For over thirty years Indian films provided a dominant forum for the creation of an imaginary space where real social tensions over love and responsibility, individual desire and social control, appeared and various resolutions of these tensions were considered. Indian films could do this successfully only by engaging with issues that were meaningful to Hausa viewers yet at the same time providing enough of a difference for alternative resolutions to be possible. This engagement with the conflict of love and courtship in contemporary society is what has defined the plots of *soyayya* books for both their admirers and their critics. Examining these stories reveals the intertextual presence of Indian films and its appropriation within Hausa popular culture.

MARKET LITERATURE IN THE VERNACULAR: THE RISE OF *SOYAYYA* BOOKS

In the last six years there has been a near-revolution in the publishing of Hausa literature. A whole new genre of *littatafan soyayya*, love stories, has emerged, published by authors themselves and sold through markets and small shops all over the northern region. During the time of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), when the cost of imported goods (such as paper) has been soaring and the purchasing power of incomes has been collapsing, *soyayya* authors have published over 200 books, and created a system of publishing and distribution that keeps book prices within the range of ordinary people. Earlier books have achieved the status of 'best-seller', giving their authors a great deal of fame. Many of them are read out on the radio, on the extremely popular programme *Shafa Labari Shuni* (meaning 'a person exaggerates what he hears'), and adaptations of successful books form a significant proportion of the vibrant new market in Hausa videos. While the debate rages over whether *soyayya* books are a beneficial addition to Hausa culture, their great achievement has been to create a popular Hausa reading public for fiction.

In his major survey of Hausa literature Furniss (1996: 54–5) argues that *soyayya* writers 'appear to owe more to the English language publishing of Mills and Boon, and James Hadley Chase . . . than to any Hausa precedent'. Furniss is correct in assessing the innovativeness of this new style of literature but mistaken in seeing it as based solely on Western precedents. *Soyayya* authors and their critics cite many sources for their books, including English romances and Hollywood 'best-sellers', but they also admit the important influence of Arabian tales, Nigerian romance magazines and Indian films. I concentrate on the influence of Indian films, not to ignore these other media, but as part of my larger point in analysing the flow of media within and between non-Western countries. The great appeal of Indian films across class, education and gender, along with the recognised similarities in culture, make them a significant precedent for contemporary writers and readers.
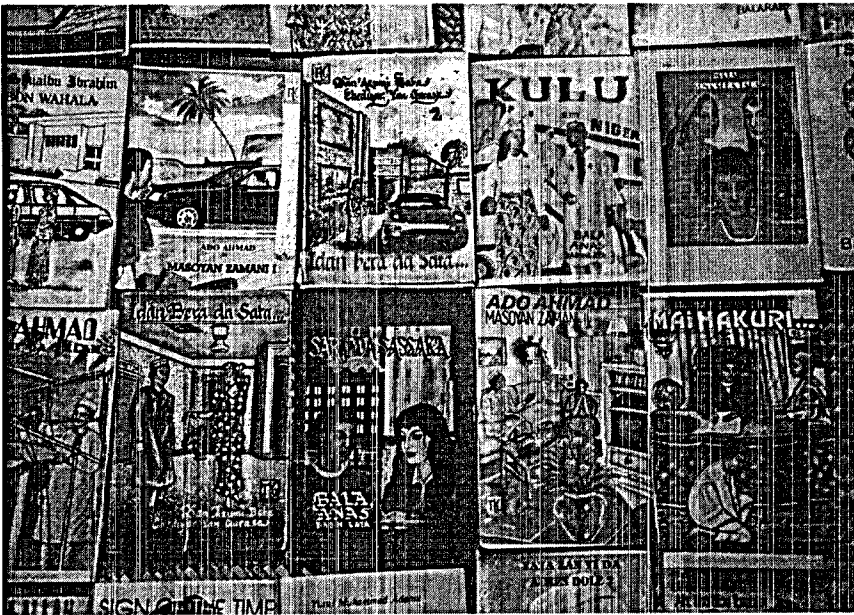
PLATES 1–2 *Soyayya* books on sale at Gidan Dabino, bookseller and publisher, Kano

Soyayya books are pamphlets little more than fifty pages in length. Many run to two or three parts in order to keep costs down. They are badly typeset, badly printed and, from the point of view of critics, badly edited and written. Furniss argues that authors adopted the practice of publishing their own work, using offset litho printers, following the example of religious *ajami*[18] poets. Print runs are typically small, running from 2,000 to 5,000, but successful books will go into multiple printings. Originally, *soyayya* books were sold from shops and vendors selling school books. As they have become more established it is not uncommon to see market stalls devoted solely to *soyayya* books, or to see hawkers wandering round markets and business districts balancing books on their heads. The authors, unlike earlier generations of Hausa writers, come from neither an elite nor even a well educated background. Some have never received Western education and most of those who have, left after primary level, remaining only in Islamic schools, and consequently their knowledge of English, and with it their integration into existing literary culture, is often poor. Women make up a significant proportion of *soyayya* authors and some, like Hajiya Balaraba Ramat Yakubu (*Alhaki Kwikwiyo*, meaning 'Retribution is like a puppy, it follows its owner', 1990a, and *Budurwar Zuciya*, 'The heart's desire', 1990b), are among the most famous *soyayya* authors. Secondary-school leavers make up a significant proportion of the readers (though perhaps not as great a proportion as people claim) and there is a strong association in the public mind between *soyayya* books and women readers. Despite this, many young men I knew were avid readers of the literature, and the high percentage of men who write fan letters to the authors suggests that there is a significant male relationship.

Soyayya books first emerged from Kano, the metropolitan centre of northern Nigeria. Originally authors came together to organise writers' clubs modelled on the famous drama clubs organised by heroes of independence in the north, Mallam Aminu Kano, Sa'adu Zungur and Maitama Sule. The first and most famous clubs were Raina Kama ('Deceptive Appearances')[19] and Kukan Kurciya ('The Cry of a Dove'), created in order to exchange mutual aid and advice among neophyte authors. Since that time new writers' clubs have appeared in many major cities and contemporary *soyayya* authors come from all northern urban centres. Many authors began by basing their first novel on an experience that had happened to them or their friends, often an affair of love. *In da so da K'auna* I, II (meaning 'Where there's love and desire') by Ado Ahmad (1989) or *Garnak'ak'i* I, II by Adamu Mohammed (1991) are both examples of this. Many authors go on to write about other issues, whether it be politics in Bala Anas Babinlata's *Tsuntsu Mai Wayo* I, II ('The Clever Bird', 1993) or *'yan daba* [thugs] and crime in 'Dan Azumi Baba's *Rikicin Duniya* I, II, III ('This Deceptive World', 1990). The dominant theme with which most books are identified remains the conflict over love.

Soyayya books dramatise the problems of contemporary sexual relations, criticising forced marriages and the increasing material demands of both lovers and parents. Many authors claim a didactic purpose for their writing, arguing that they are educating young people and their parents against the problems that beset contemporary youth. The fact that many authors begin

writing as a direct result of a personal experience underscores the close
relation between the stories and perceived social problems. Adamu
Mohammed explained to me that he began writing books when the parents
of the girl he loved married her off, against the wishes of both the lovers, to a
wealthier man. As a poor man, Mohammed argued, he had no means of
fighting the decision except by writing his book *Garnak'ak'i*—'Uncompro-
mising'. The sense of outrage and vindication is common to many of the
early *soyayya* writers. A similar event sparked off the career of Ado Ahmad.
As Maigari Ahmed Bichi (1992) reports, the arrangements for Ahmad's first
marriage were broken off despite the fact that he and his fiancée were in love
and her parents were happy about the marriage: 'a misunderstanding
between their two families . . . was caused by the grandmother of the girl,
who . . . had arranged for the girl to be given to one Alhaji[20] for marriage'
(1992: 7). Bichi continues that as a result Ahmad intended his first novel to
'show how love is played in Hausa society and the role of parents in
marriage affairs' (*ibid.*). One fledgling author from Kaduna, Adamu Ciroma,
who also began writing after a personal experience, argues that many if not
most *soyayya* authors begin writing this way:

> Our writers today we share experiences which makes us start writing. . . . An
> experience happens to me and so I decide to write about it in order to enlighten
> people on what has happened. . . . Nine out of ten writers begin writing *soyayya*
> because they have experienced it.

For *soyayya* authors there is a didactic and moral purpose to their
discourse on love that gives their novels a sense of social responsibility.
They argue that incompatibility in the choice of marriage partner leads
daughters to run away from their parents to become 'independent women'
(and hence prostitutes), or to attempt suicide, or to go through an unhappy
marriage and an early divorce—even if the partner chosen is wealthy. But as
the author 'Dan Azumi Baba argues, 'now everything has changed [and]
because of reading such books [*soyayya* books] no girl agrees with forced
marriage and parents understand that if they force their daughter to marry
somebody she will eventually go and become a prostitute' (interview, 28
June 1995). He continued, 'the main problem of marriage is lack of love',
adding that most women now are wise to the fact that 'if there is love, they
will not mind about any problems'. The concerns aired by 'Dan Azumi and
others over the increasing commodification of contemporary love and the
iniquities of forced marriage are not just the province of *soyayya* books but
have formed staple themes of Indian films. For over thirty years Indian films
have provided an extended narration of the problems of arranged marriages
and of the place of materialism in a 'traditional' society that mimics real
events in everyday Hausa lives. Before discussing *soyayya* books themselves
it is worth returning briefly to the concept of fantasy and imagination to give
an example of the investment of viewers in Indian narratives.

The possibility of imaginative investment was brought home to me one
day when I was talking to an older Hausa friend in his 40s. Knowing he liked
Indian films, I was surprised to hear him say that they had a negative
influence on Hausa culture. He cited the example of his own marriage. He

IN DA SO DA KAUNA...
NA DAYA

NA ADO AHMAD
GIDAN DA BINO S/MAINAGGE

PLATE 3   Plates 3, 4 and 5 all show the illustrated covers of *soyayya* books. Note especially the Indian features of Sumayya in Plate 4

said that when he was young, in the 1970s, he went to see lots of Indian films. He, like many other men, liked the commitment of Indian films to the family, the importance of marriage and children, and many other cultural values in the films. The problem, he said, was that in Indian films women are very supportive of their husbands. He explained that what he meant was that when an Indian man sees his love they talk about their problems. He declares his love for her, she declares hers for him, and they embrace. In the 1970s men who went to the cinema were expecting or wanting similar behaviour from their wives. It was what he had wanted when he got married. But when
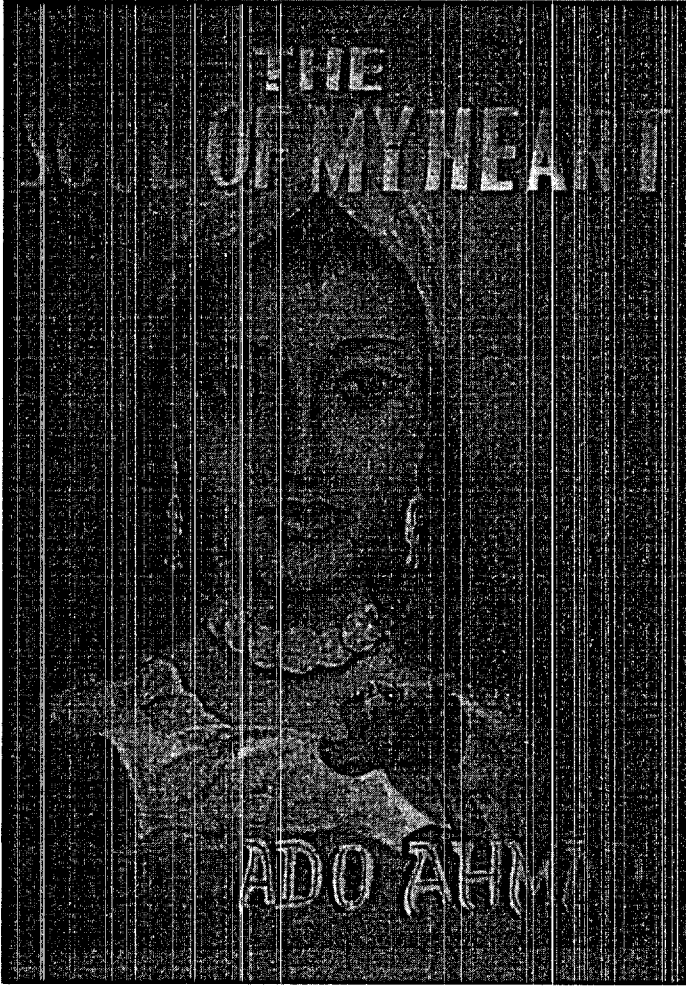
PLATE 4

he returned home and tried to talk to his wife she would turn away, answer as briefly as possible and try to leave the room. He told me women in Hausa society were taught that their husband is everything and they should be in awe of him. His wife was acting with the modesty that a good Hausa wife should have, whereas he wanted the sort of relationship he had seen in Indian films. As a result he had encountered many problems early in his marriage and that was why, he argued, the films could be harmful. Indian films, he said conveyed ideas about marriage and relationships that local culture could not support.

My friend's anecdote is a striking example of the complicated ways in which transnational media flows become incorporated into individual

experience and affect larger social constructions such as gender. It is even
more fascinating as it is so clearly dated. In the early 1970s the exhibition of
Indian films was largely restricted to the cinema. The practice of female
seclusion (*kulle*) meant that women were absent (for the most part) from the
male arena of cinema and it was not until the growth of domestic
technologies such as television and video that women gained access to the
popular culture of Indian films. Since that time Indian films have become
identified as 'women's films' because of their huge popularity. The
stereotype now is that it is *women* who demand that their partners act

more like lovers in Indian films and *men* who complain that Indian films create demands that cannot be met. This complaint has become all the more controversial as people accuse *soyayya* authors of dramatising the Bombay melodrama style of love within a Hausa context.

ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE . . .

To give some sense of the tone and structure of the texts I am dealing with I briefly outline the plots of two *soyayya* books. The books I discuss are *Inda so da K'auna* I, II by Ado Ahmad (1989) and *Kishi Kumallon Mata* (meaning 'Jealousy is the nausea of women') by Maryam Sahabi Liman (1993). *Inda* is a two-part volume that was abridged and translated into English as *The Soul of my Heart* in 1993. Its author, Ado Ahmad, says it is the best-selling of all *soyayya* books, selling over 50,000 copies, and has since been adapted into a three-part Hausa video and remains one of the few *soyayya* books to have been translated into English. (I cite from this text.)[21] *Inda*, as one of the earliest and most popular books, has been the subject of great attention and discussion, and exemplifies many of the major themes associated with *soyayya* books. *Kishi* is a more recent novel, published after *soyayya* books had received a great deal of public criticism. Because of this, Liman is careful to avoid many of the themes that have led to *soyayya* books being dismissed as a form of *iskanci* (immorality, loose living) and provides a good counterpoint to *Inda*.

Inda tells the story of Sumayya, a rich girl who falls in love with a much poorer boy, Mohammed. Unfortunately Sumayya herself is the object of the affections of Abdulkadir, a wealthy young businessman. When Abdulkadir is rejected by Sumayya he visits her grandmother, taking gifts and money, and persuades her to intervene on his behalf with Sumayya's parents. Accordingly she threatens to withdraw her blessing from her son if Sumayya is not wed to Abdulkadir. Abdulkadir, meanwhile, arranges to have Mohammed beaten up by thugs to warn him off Sumayya. Sumayya and Mohammed are crushed by the news of the arranged marriage. As the wedding nears, Sumayya throws herself down a well in a desperate attempt at suicide. She survives and is taken to hospital, where her life is saved by a timely blood transfusion from Mohammed. Her parents, seeing this, feel that now the couple should be united and agree to the marriage. They are wed and Mohammed goes into business, becoming rich, while Abdulkadir, returning from a business deal in Abuja, is pursued by armed robbers who force his Mercedes off the road and rob him of all his money, leaving him a pauper.

Kishi describes the problems that derive from jealous co-wives. It tells the story of a rich man, Usman, who falls in love and marries Ruk'ayya. They live happily together until it is found out that Ruk'ayya cannot conceive. After consulting both Western doctors and religious teachers, Ruk'ayya selflessly advises her husband that he should take a second wife. Ruk'ayya persuades her good friend Saratu to attract the attentions of her husband so that he will marry her, arguing that if she has to have a co-wife it should be someone she is friends with. Usman and Saratu marry and Saratu becomes pregnant. Immediately, though, she accuses Ruk'ayya of trying to poison her

from jealousy. Usman comes to side with Saratu's accusations of poison and witchcraft against Ruk'ayya. He moves Saratu to a different house and later, when he travels to America on business, he leaves his affairs in the hands of Saratu's grasping father. After his departure, Ruk'ayya discovers she is two months pregnant. Months later, while Usman is still away, she gives birth and while she is in hospital Saratu is admitted because of a miscarriage. Usman returns home to discover that his and Saratu's baby has died, that Saratu orchestrated the accusations of poison and witchcraft against Ruk'ayya and that her father has been ruining his business. Usman divorces Saratu and returns to Ruk'ayya, who accepts him lovingly and without recrimination.

  Soyayya books create a utopian world where the norms of sexual relations are inverted and transformed. *Inda* and *Kishi* recount the love stories of young people of equal age. Unlike usual Hausa sexual relations, men and women not only share social space with each other, but they spend recreational time together and lead a shared emotional life. The traditional sense of shyness that regulates social interaction is transformed. Men openly declare their love for women, and women, more shockingly, are equally vocal in expressing their love in return. In *Inda*, for instance, Sumayya is the first to look at Mohammed. She initiates contact with him through letters and when they finally meet:

  'Mohammed,' she said shyly, 'I must confess that you are always on my mind. I love you very much.' [Ahmad, 1993a: 10]

Similarly, in *Kishi*, Usman and Ruk'ayya address each other in phrases that are new to Hausa love-making: in one scene Ruk'ayya approaches a worried Usman and asks, 'O my lover, the milk that cools my heart, what is worrying you?' (Liman, 1993: 20). Usman replies, 'There is nothing, light of my heart' (*ibid.*).

  Soyayya books portray a field of sexual interaction very different from 'traditional' Hausa ideals. Open declarations of love, expressed in an elaborate and highly formalised way, are one of the most visible markers of the shift in styles of love among Hausa youth. In fact *Inda* represents a reversal of the norms of Hausa sexual hierarchy, with Sumayya, by virtue of her money and status, narratively more active and passionate than Mohammed. This subversive link between materialism and sexuality is another common theme of *soyayya* books, and reiterates the fears of many Hausa young about the difficulties of marriage. At the beginning of *Inda*, when his friends notice that Sumayya is eyeing Mohammed, it sets off an exchange among his friends, who dismiss Mohammed's concern that Sumayya is too rich for him. They make the familiar claim among male Hausa youth that there are too many unmarried women and lament the fact that they cannot afford to marry:

  'Husbands are hard to come by now, anyway.'
  'Exactly,' Garba agreed. 'The table has now turned. It is the girls that now court. Men are extremely scarce you know.' [Ahmad, 1993a: 3]

Garba discusses the reason for this unnatural state of affairs:

'The fault lies squarely on the parents. They try to commercialise marriages. It goes to the highest bidder. . . . [A]ll of us here crave marriage but it is the demands that scare us away.' [*ibid.*: 4]

The commodification of religious affairs such as marriage that Garba refers to is represented by the figure of the grandmother. Her age should represent the accrual of wisdom and authority but she loses the respect she is due when she commodifies her authority by accepting bribes from Abdulkadir. Instead of representing what is best about tradition she comes to stand for what is worst about the corruption of contemporary times. It is this illegitimate act that allows Sumayya's rebellion against parental authority to remain within the bounds of an ideal moral universe.

The tension between tradition and modernity that materialism represents in the story is mimicked in the conflict over individual desire and social responsibility. Early in the book, Mohammed points out to Sumayya that her parents are likely to view the possibility of their marriage negatively, owing to their unequal social status. Sumayya reveals her commitment to modern social values as she dismisses his argument:

Please do understand that nothing is permanent, riches or otherwise. Are we the ones who determine our destinies? I assume that our creator has that singular quality. He gives to whomever he wishes and refuses whomever he wishes. Besides, talking about parental interference, I think that has by now been one of the bygones. They now accept what the boy and girl want. The evils of forced marriages are too clear for all to see. [*ibid.*: 10–11]

Sumayya is overconfident in believing forced marriage a thing of the past, and that parents will readily cede autonomy to their children. She makes the religiously acceptable argument that is Allah who determines destiny, but she does so as she sloughs off concern for parental authority and asserts the right to control her own destiny.

While overt rebellion against parental authority is missing, this sense of individual control also marks the storyline of *Kishi*. *Kishi* was intended overtly to avoid the criticism that surrounded early *soyayya* books such as *Inda*. The suicide attempt by Sumayya, for instance, was alleged to have inspired other young girls to follow her example, and critics accused Ahmad of teaching girls to rebel against their parents (Giginyu, 1992). Liman is careful not to advocate rebellion and attempts to articulate the new subjectivity of youth, and the fascination of romantic love, within an accepted Hausa framework. *Kishi* is full of platitudinous statements about ideal behaviour which are immediately contradicted by the logic and tension of narrative development. Unlike *Inda*, all the youths in *Kishi* respect and obey their parents and never contemplate rebelling against their decisions. But Liman never puts them in a position where they have to. Usman and Ruk'ayya meet and court by themselves. When they fall in love *they* decide to tell their parents, who are delighted and form no embarrassing obstacles. Significantly, though, control over the decision as to marriage partner is left

to the young people themselves. This is the case even with Usman's second
marriage, to the devious but beautiful Saratu.

Liman creates a utopian world of rich and beautiful youth who fly to
Europe for medical treatment, who act selflessly and love passionately, but
always in the context of proper Hausa behaviour. It may be that the
characters drive fancy cars, go to Western-style hotels for their honeymoon
and live in large houses filled with the latest in electronic consumer goods,
but Liman accompanies this spectacle of material wealth with moral
homilies referencing key Hausa virtues. When Alhaji Lawal, Usman's
grandfather, instructs him that now is the time to be thinking of marriage and
to begin looking for a bride, he tells him, 'Even though I won't prevent you
from looking for beauty, you should make sure it's religion that leads you to
marriage and not your heart' (Liman, 1993: 2). Usman agrees to this obvious
insertion of 'ideal' Hausa values, but in the next paragraph he sees a girl,
their eyes meet and he falls in love, asking himself if she will agree to marry
him before he has ever said a word to her, let alone found out about her
religious values. Similarly, Usman announces his wedding to his grandfather
with:

> 'Grandfather, today something wonderful has happened to us.' Then he told him
> the story from the beginning to the end. Fortunately Alhaji Lawal knew Mallam
> Haruna [Ruk'ayya's father] and knew him for an upright character who doesn't
> care about worldly things. [Liman, 1993: 9–10]

Liman protects Usman's desire for control over his own life and Alhaji's
concern for proper Hausa values, as individual desire and parental will
coincide in a perfect world.

The dominant melodramatic tension in *Kishi* revolves around the moral of
sacrifice. This theme constitutes part of the basic genre of Indian film and
depends for its significance on the tension between modernity and tradition
in postcolonial societies. Sacrifice, as it is mobilised in *Kishi* and many
Indian films, depends upon a moral choice between individual desire and
social responsibility, taking on a cultural as well as an individual resonance.
Ruk'ayya, in *Kishi*, is the supreme example of the self-sacrificing wife. Not
only does she accept the unjust accusations of her co-wife uncomplainingly,
the very fact that as a wife she insists on her husband marrying a second wife
reveals how willing she is to sacrifice her individual happiness for the good
of the family. In Hausa the name for co-wife, *kishiya*, derives from *kishi*, the
Hausa word for jealousy, and is particularly identified with women (as the
proverb and title of the book, 'Jealousy is the nausea of women', implies).
Most Hausa readers I spoke to thought it highly unlikely that any husband
and grandfather would not look for a second wife if the first were barren
(again reiterating the utopian nature of the book), but this device is necessary
to highlight the individual nature of Ruk'ayya's sacrifice.

Jackson argues that narratives function by raising 'ethical dissonance'
(1982: 2), situations of doubt and uncertainty through which the audience
can reflect upon the nature of the social order. He argues that this is
especially true in folk tales about love. In many societies the choice of
marriage partner is an important decision affecting the entire family and so is

rarely left to the individuals directly concerned. Love affairs, Jackson points out, are based on individual choices. 'Love,' he states, 'like all strong emotions, is difficult to control, and its course is unpredictable' (*ibid.*: 202). In consequence love can be wild and a potential threat to the social order. To make sure the passing fancies of men and women are regulated for the common good, love has to be reined in and controlled by authorities, usually elder kin. Abu-Lughod makes a similar point in her discussion of the poetry of love and emotions among Bedouin. 'Succumbing to sexual desire, or merely to romantic love,' she asserts, 'can lead individuals to disregard social convention and social obligations' and threaten social values of honour and the authority of elders (1986: 147–8). Stories of romantic love raise questions about the importance of individual action versus familial obligation, but precisely how these stories are resolved varies. When, in *Kishi*, Ruk'ayya decides to regulate her emotions and sacrifice her desires for the good of the family she makes a choice in favour of the social order. Conversely, when Sumayya decides to reject what she sees as the illegitimate decision of her parents, she refuses their authority in an attempted suicide.

By presenting two radically different solutions to comparable problems these books bear out Jackson's argument that narratives promote ambivalence and ambiguity as a way of allowing readers to imaginately explore social tensions in their multiple connotations. Jackson argues that this process occurs in the development of a single narrative, but it is my point that the mass culture of *soyayya* books and Indian films develops the process of ambiguity by presenting various resolutions of similar predicaments in thousands of narratives extending over many years. By engaging both with individual stories and with the genre as a whole, narratives provide the ability for social inquiry. Sacrifice is significant to postcolonial societies negotiating the rapidity and direction of social change because it is for their readers and viewers that the conflict between parental authority and individual desire is most keenly felt. This is one reason why the theme of sacrifice is so prevalent in Indian films and *soyayya* books and relatively absent from Western genres such as Hollywood films. Precisely because this theme has such relevance to Hausa society, the success of *soyayya* books has occasioned a powerful backlash against them, and even, by proxy, against Indian films, which previously were a relatively unremarked part of the Hausa cultural landscape. To finish my discussion of transnational media and social change I now outline the contours of the public debate that surrounds the success of *soyayya* books. This controversy reveals how conflict over the direction of social change is condensed around issues of changing sexual relations among youth, and the place of Indian films as a cultural third space situated between Hausa tradition and Western modernity.[22]

SOYAYYA BOOKS, YOUTH AND SOCIAL CHANGE: THE CONTROVERSY

Right from your book cover the design is sinful. . . . Similarly when somebody reads your books he will see that inside consists of sin and forbidden things. And when it comes to letters in the books to believe in them will make somebody deviate from the teachings of his religion. Quotations like 'my better half' [*rabin*

raina], 'the light of my heart' [*hasken zuciyata*] and other lies makes you wonder whether the writer should not be lashed. [*Zuwa ga marabutan Soyayya*, 'An open letter to *soyayya* authors', from the editor, *Gwagwarmaya* ('Struggle') 2: 19]

The strong moral lessons embedded in *soyayya* books have gained enormous popularity with a young Hausa audience. Yet it is often youth who are the bitterest opponents of this new form of fiction. The success of *soyayya* books has created a public discourse that includes a profusion of articles in Hausa-language magazines and newspapers, letters to the authors themselves, and the everyday conversation of fans and critics. The tone and passion of the public discourse indicate the volatility of response to the popular culture of romance. One letter to the editor of the Hausa-language newspaper *Nasiha* 'Advice') is typical of the debate:

Dear Sir,
I wish to take space in your widely read newspaper to appeal to the Federal Government and the State Government. In truth, it would be better if the Government took steps regarding the books that certain notorious elements are writing everywhere in Nigeria, especially in the north. [19 May 1995: 8]

The letter writer continues, 'These books only succeed in corrupting our youth, especially girls,' and adds that it has become necessary for the government to take action.

When I was in Nigeria the idea that the state government was about to take radical action 'against' *soyayya* books was widely believed by young men who were opposed to their continued distribution. Such youths had two main complaints against the books. The first was that the material world of fine clothes, expensive cars and generous lovers that the books presented encouraged girls to demand presents from their boyfriends and lovers that they could not afford. In consequence boys who may court a girl for years, giving her small presents and supporting her education, lose out to a rich Alhaji who meets and marries the girl within just a few months. The second complaint is that girls demand a different style of behaviour from their lovers. In a reverse of the complaints made against Indian films cited earlier, girls both demonstrate and demand greater sophistication in the language and behaviour of love. One friend of mine who attacked *soyayya* books vehemently said that in the past if you tried to kiss a girl before you were married she would scream and call for her brothers. Now, he said, if you don't kiss her by the second time you meet she will think you are 'bush' (backward) and this is the result of reading *soyayya* books. As well as calls for the government to intervene, some secondary school headmasters are said to have embarked on a campaign to expel any girls found with *soyayya* books in their possession. The discourse around the books then, has touched on an issue of considerable public passion.

The press debate was sparked by the efforts of two journalists (both fiction writers themselves) working at the newspaper *Nasiha*: Ibrahim Sheme and Ibrahim Malumfashi. Sheme initiated a regular literary page in the newspaper which, soon after *soyayya* books began to appear in northern markets, published an interview with one author, Hauwa Ibrahim Shariff (6 September 1991). Thus began the public debate over the pros and cons of

soyayya books, including a seminal exchange of articles between Ibrahim Malumfashi (then at Usman Dan Fodio University in Sokoto) and Ado Ahmad. Malumfashi opened the debate with an attack on *soyayya* writers, 'On the need to change the style of Hausa literature' (November 1991: 7). In this article he charged *soyayya* writers with dwelling on themes of escapism that had little or no relevance to the problems of poverty and deteriorating life style that dominated everyday existence. He argued that the books shamelessly borrowed from other cultures, creating situations that could never possibly exist in Hausa society. Later, Malumfashi extended his critique of cultural borrowing in an article entitled 'Between second-hand and original' (*Nasiha*, 7 August 1992: 4; 14 August 1992: 4) where he argued that *soyayya* books were 'second-hand' and that if Ado Ahmad 'watches Indian films he will realise that it is these films that are being translated into Hausa and claimed to have happened in Kano, Kaduna, Katsina or Sokoto. Most of these books are filled with rubbish' (14 August 1992: 4).

Ahmad responded to Malumfashi as chairman of the main *soyayya* writing group, Raina Kama. His article 'Let's go with modern times! (*Nasiha* 24, 31 July 1992) makes the powerful point that for the first time Hausa markets are filled with books written in Hausa that, far from copying foreign cultures, represent an efflorescence of Hausa culture. Times have changed, Ahmad argues, and *soyayya* books call for the betterment of society rather than corrupting it. Ahmad's argument stems from the fact that many *soyayya* writers who create stories from personal experience are writing about issues that are important to contemporary culture and should not be ignored for the sake of more 'relevant' issues. It is a point of view echoed by Yusuf Adamu Mohammed when he asks why contemporary authors write love stories:

> The contemporary generation of readers are more interested in what concerns them: stories of ancient empires and jinns [spirits] are no longer appealing to them.[23] Second, many of these young authors are young and unmarried . . . [and they suffer] from the misdeeds of autocratic rich men in society . . . Since the young novelists are also among the downtrodden, in real life they are virtually helpless. Yet they can use their pens to fight for their rights and the rights of the oppressed. [*Association of Nigerian Authors Review*, October 1994: 9, 10]

The debate between Ahmad, Malumfashi and others sparked an outpouring in the pages on *Nasiha* and other Hausa-language magazines and newspapers. Sheme, who had initiated the debate, finally had to ask for no more submissions because the paper was inundated (*Nasiha*, 28 August 1992), though the debate still continues regularly. The debate in the press was supplemented by letters to the authors themselves. Many *soyayya* authors include a postal address on all books published, and popular authors such as Ahmad, 'Dan Azumi Baba and Adamu Mohhammed get an enormous response. Ahmad has received more than 2,000 letters covering a range of topics from requests for free copies, to expressions of love, to requests for advice on how to manage relationships, and compliments and criticism. One such letter from a recent (male) school graduate stated:

Among all the writers of Hausa *soyayya* books you [Ado Ahmad] are the best of
them. This is because you are aware of what is going on nowadays. And you are
more devoted Islamically and culturally than all of them. . . . [Your popularity is]
because of your struggle to educate youth on marriage and not only children but
parents too. The books stop parents making arranged marriages for their children
and give freedom of choice to each and everybody irrespective of tribe or culture.
This is of course the major aspect of your books that impresses and encourages
people to read more *soyayya* books. [3 November 1993]

It is interesting and unsurprising that the writer registers Ahmad's
devotion to religion and to culture, as these are the grounds on which
soyayya authors are attacked most strongly. Many other letter writers have
praised Ahmad for his stand against materialistic parents. One said that
contemporary youth were sick of the greed of money mongers (*mai idon cin
naira*) like Sumayya's grandmother and grateful for the 'educative' nature of
soyayya books. Another said that the books showed him the wrongs of forced
marriage (*auren dole*) and the importance of individual choice. The books,
he continued, 'teach us how to live successfully in the world . . . how parents
should take care of their children and be careful in letting their daughters
choose the person they love and admire' (no date).

The insistence on individual choice curbing parental authority is cited by
many critics as the prime reason for the pernicious effect of *soyayya* books.
'I swear, Mallam Ado,' wrote one youth in response to reading *Inda*, 'most
of the crises that are occurring nowadays are caused by your writings. Our
youths are spoiled by reading your books.' He continued:

[Ado Ahmad] you are among those who mobilise our youth, especially our girls,
to start feeling freedom of choice by force, and that they should start doing
everything according to their own interest and to forget about their parents'
interest, and that they should only marry the person they love. For example,
mostly in your books you write about a girl running away from her parents,
because of someone she loves and chooses to be with. And, as you see, this is a
great deviation from the teachings of Islam and culture, as you forget that girls are
under the thumb of their parents religiously and culturally. [29 January 1994]

The response of letter writers to Ahmad and other authors indicates how
closely people view the relation between *soyayya* books and everyday life.
One writer to Ahmad said he became a fan of his books when his girlfriend
insisted he read them because there were so many things he could learn from
them. Similarly, Baba and Ahmad receive many letters asking for advice in
matters of love. It is unsurprising, then, that these books generate such
passion, as fans of *soyayya* writers and their critics are both responding to the
mundane concern about contemporary social change. *Soyayya* books
effectively dramatise this change within the realm of romance and sexuality.
The profusion of articles both for and against *soyayya* books in the press has
taken what was mainly a controversy among young people (reading *soyayya*
books would be considered too demanding for older men) into a wider public
arena.

CONCLUSION

One Friday night I went with a friend to see the classic Indian film *Mother India* (1957, directed by Mehboob Khan) at the Marhaba. A Lebanese distributor had explained to me how despite the fact that he had been screening the film for decades it could still sell out any cinema in the north, and he made me curious to see whether it was true. Sure enough, on Friday night at the Marhaba, the busiest night (usually reserved for new films) at the newest and largest cinema in Kano, all the seats were full. As the film started the friend I went with turned to me and said, 'Besides you, everyone in the cinema has seen this film at least fifteen times.' I relate this anecdote to give some sense not just of the pervasiveness of Indian film but of the fan culture that surrounds it. This comes across strongly when you watch a film where everyone knows the songs, when people laugh at the comedy routines almost before they are finished, and where the dialogue, the narrative and the emotions invoked carry the familiarity and comfort of a well known and well loved film.[24] When I returned home that night another friend in his late 20s asked me where I had been. I told him and asked if he knew when the film was made. He laughed, saying, 'I don't know, but as soon as I knew film I knew *Mother India*.' Just as I, growing up in London in a cinematic world dominated by American stars, incorporated American media as part of English popular culture, so it is for Hausa audiences. Indian films have been reworked and incorporated to form an integral part of contemporary Hausa social life.

The long struggle against cultural imperialism has not so much criticised the influence of Indian films as ignored it. While the politics of representation, and the effects of cultural imperialism, are highly politicised topics in Nigeria, Indian films, by virtue of their traditions and 'culture', have created a space which largely sidesteps criticism. This is because for Hausa viewers Indian films have been situated in cultural space that stands outside the binary distinctions between tradition and modernity, Africa and the West, resistance and domination. The images of modernity they offer are mediated through a concern for maintaining traditional social relations and so they run parallel to, similar yet different from, the modernity offered by westernisation. Hausa viewers managed to engage with texts that showed a culture that was 'just like' Hausa culture as long as it was also irreducibly different. It is no surprise that, when the difference collapsed through the rise of *soyayya* books, Indian films became controversial in a way they never were before. As one writer to Ado Ahmad put it, 'In truth, Ado, you are among those who spread this modern love to our young people, not the films they watch, because in those films they don't usually understand what they are about. But now you are telling us in our own language' (letter of Ahmad, 29 January 1994).

The tendency of many Africanists to see resistance as the underlying cause of a vast range of social and cultural phenomena led, in its reductionism, to the elision of other cultural flows that did not fit neatly into the pattern. How else do we account for the absence of Indian films from analyses of African popular culture? The understandable tendency for anthropologists and others to concentrate on the vibrancy of popular arts produced by the people,

though laudable, has elided some forms of mass-mediated culture from academic purview. Barber, for instance, asks, 'What exactly an African audience gets out of, say, a film in a foreign language, about culturally remote people who perform a series of actions almost invisible to the naked eye on a dim and flickering screen. Do these shows perhaps represent novelty itself in its most concentrated form?' (Barber, 1987: 25). What audiences take from these films is considerable. Indian film has been a popular form of entertainment in urban West Africa for well over forty years and commands viewers because it engages with real desires and conflicts in African societies. Instead of indulging in a blanket dismissal of these forms it is necessary to take them seriously in their textual, cultural and historical specificities. The task that remains is to theorise adequately the complexity and heterogeneity of contemporary national and transnational cultural flows. Why are Indian films more popular in northern than in southern Nigeria? Are the reasons for their popularity the same elsewhere in West Africa? Why have influential film genres such as Egyptian films had so little impact in Nigeria? These are questions that need to be answered, for, as Appadurai and Breckenridge (1988) observe, transnational cultural flows emerge from many centres and flow into many peripheries. In this article I have been concerned to articulate why one media form—Indian film—has resonance in the very different cultural environment of northern Nigeria. Indian films are popular because they provide a parallel modernity, a way of imaginatively engaging with the changing social basis of contemporary life that is an alternative to the pervasive influence of a secular West. Through spectacle and fantasy, romance and sexuality, Indian films provide arenas to consider what it means to be modern and what may be the place of Hausa society within that modernity. For northern Nigerians, who respond to a number of different centres, whether politically to the Nigerian state, religiously to the Middle East and North Africa, economically to the West, or culturally to the cinematic dominance of India, Indian films are just one part of the heterogeneity of everyday life.

NOTES

[1] Mamman Shata is one of the most famous Hausa singers. This song was written as a satire on his friend, Mallam Sidi, who 'fell in love' with an Indian film actress.

[2] I use the term 'Indian film' throughout as it is how Hausa viewers describe what is, in actuality, Bombay Hindi film. 'Indian film' should properly refer to the variety of Indian-language films.

[3] To my knowledge, the only Nigerian film critics to discuss Indian films are Ekwuazi (1987), who criticises them, and Muhammad (1992), who praises them. For a journalist's view see Sheme (1995a, b). Fugelsang (1994) discusses viewing of Indian videos by Lamu youth.

[4] Abu-Lughod (1993a) also argues for increased attention to global flows that do not originate in Euro-American centres.

[5] My use of the term 'postcolonial' in this article is historical rather than theoretical, referring to the aftermath of the experience of colonialism for ex-colonised nations.

[6] The success of Brazilian *telenovelas* in China, the Soviet Union and elsewhere, and the regional dominance of Egyptian film and soap operas among Arabic-speaking countries, are other examples of the phenomenon. See McNeely and Soysal (1989) for a discussion of this trend. See Sreberny-Mohammadi (1991) for a critique.

[7] Ekwuazi, while admitting the widespread popularity of Indian film, argues that 'its impact on the cultural landscape is relatively minimal' (1987: 44). In almost direct contrast to this article, he argues that the reason is that Indian films are unable to offer a 'feasible model for (teenage) dreams' (*ibid.*). That Ekwuazi comes to what I see as a mistaken conclusion is a marker of the devalued position that popular Indian cinema has among scholars. (See Thomas 1985 for a discussion of this phenomenon.) Ekwuazi views Indian film as a cheap copy of American film and, rather than considering Indian narratives, stars or spectacles as governed by an alternative filmic style he judges them by their failure to live up to Western standards: 'To anyone who has seen the real thing, the Indian imitation film is an aesthetic offense; it makes even the worst American film a sight for sore eyes' (*ibid.*).

[8] History and Culture Bureau, Kano (HCB): Edu/14, Cinematograph and Censorship of Films, Exhibition of Films.

[9] The reason why this is so is unclear. Arab films have long been successful internationally, and popular Egyptian films have a wide audience outside their own country. Perhaps it was precisely because Arabic is a religious language that its association with such a profane domain as cinema (as it is seen in northern Nigeria) made it impossible to attract an early viewing public. The recent introduction of satellite television in Nigeria has made channels from Saudi Arabia and Egypt available. As this comes at the same time as a revival in Arabic-language learning it may give Arab media a new popularity.

[10] Interview, Michel G. Issa, Manager, Cinema Distribution Circuit, May 1995.

[11] Many Arabic loan words are common to both Hindi and Hausa, which creates an oft-remarked sense of linguistic similarity.

[12] It is no accident that the two other popular genres of film in Nigeria are Chinese Kung-fu and gangster films, and American action films. Action films depend more heavily on visual sequences than on complex narrative development, which makes them easier to understand across linguistic barriers.

[13] Going for picnics is a disreputable activity because it refers to increased mixing between unrelated men and women. This goes against the traditional norm of sexual segregation and is widely seen (and criticised) as an index of growing immorality.

[14] The participation of youth in Islamic religious movements has been part of the history of northern Nigeria. Contemporary challenges, revealed in movements as diverse as the *'yan tatsine* (see Lubeck, 1987; Watts and Pred, 1992) and the Muslim Brothers illustrate how oppositional contemporary religious movements can be for the *status quo*.

[15] Consider, for instance, that, during the time Callaway was researching and writing, Indian films were already established as a common part of everyday female popular culture. Often referred to as 'women's films', the concentration of romance and melodrama was and is seen as the prime reason for female identification. Only two years after Callaway's book was published, the efflorescence of a Hausa romance literature identified primarily with women readers (and with a significant number of women writers) makes her assertion that romance cannot exist in Islamic marriages untenable. Abu-Lughod (1986) provides a much more nuanced analysis of the romance, the poetry of love and emotional attachments among an equally sexually segregated Bedouin society.

[16] Interview, December 1994.

[17] Interview, June 1995.

[18] Hausa can be written in either Arabic or Latin script. *Ajami* refers to Hausa written in Arabic script, *boko* to Hausa written in Latin script.

[19] For the sake of consistency, wherever possible I follow (as here) the translation of *soyayya* clubs and books in Furniss (1996).

[20] *Alhaji* strictly means a man who has made the pilgrimage (*hajj*) to Mecca. In common Hausa usage it refers to any person of wealth or status.

[21] Ahmad abridged and translated his book into English in order to tap into a wider Nigerian English-speaking audience (interview, May 1995). Following its publication he did begin to receive letters in English from fans from many other Nigerian ethnic groups, indicating its success. In 1995 he abridged and published *Masoyan Zamani* I, II ('Modern Lovers', 1993) as *Nemesis*. The only other English-language *soyayya* book is *The Sign of the Times* (1994) by Tijani Usman Adamu. Adamu's book was written in English and no Hausa version exists.

[22] Indian films present an alternative to both Hausa tradition and Western modernity in that, while they depict a culture 'just like' Hausa culture, their popularity resides in the fact that Indian culture is also precisely *unlike* Hausa culture. Indian films portray an alternative world where actions that would not be tolerated within Hausa social norms are raised without attracting widespread condemnation. A comparison with Hausa reception of Yoruba or Igbo films is helpful here. Onitsha market literature, Yoruba and Igbo videos, and popular romance magazines such as *Hints*, all suggest how popular the theme of love remains in southern Nigeria. Clearly many of the Yoruba and Igbo films are set in locations with cultural references that are familiar to and have similarities with Hausa audiences. Yoruba and Igbo films, however, are often sexually more explicit in their themes than either Hausa videos or Indian films. While many Hausa viewers watch and enjoy these videos, for others their themes are too explicit for comfort. The attitude of one Hausa video shop owner I talked to, who sold Igbo and Yoruba films but was reluctant to let members of his family watch them, is not exceptional.

[23] Mohammed is here referring to the subject matter of stories which make up classic Hausa fiction such as Abubakar Imam's *Ruwan Bagaja* (1934) or *Gand'oki* by Bello Kagara (1934). For further discussion of these works see Furniss (1996); Rahim (1990); Sani (1990); Yahaya (1988).

[24] This familiarity is one reason why *bandiri* singers have drawn on popular Indian film songs for religious music. These sufi adepts will take the songs from a popular film, such as *Mother India*, or *Kabhi, Kabhie* (1976, directed by Yash Chopra), and change the words to sing praises to the Prophet Mohammed.

REFERENCES

Abu-Lughod, Lila. 1986. *Veiled Sentiments: honor and poetry in a Bedouin society*. Berkeley, Cal.: University of California Press.

——1990. 'The romance of resistance: tracing transformations through Bedouin women', *American Ethnologist* 17 (1), 41–55.

——1993a. 'Editorial comment: screening politics in a world of nations', *Public Culture* 5 (3), 465–7.

——1993b. 'Finding a place for Islam: Egyptian television serials and the national interest', *Public Culture* 5 (3), 493–514.

——1995. 'The objects of soap opera: Egyptian television and the cultural politics of modernity', in Daniel Miller (ed.), *Worlds Apart: modernity through the prism of the local*, pp. 190–210. London: Routledge.

Adamu, Tijani Usman. 1994. *The Sign of the Times*. Kano: Gidan Dabino.

Ahmad, Ado. 1989. *In da so da K'auna*. Kano.

——1993a. *The Soul of my Heart*. Kano.

——1993b. *Masoyan Zamani*. Kano.

——1995. *Nemesis*. Kano.

Appadurai, Arjun. 1990. 'Disjuncture and difference in the global cultural economy', *Public Culture* 2 (2), 1–24.

——1991. 'Global ethnoscapes: notes and queries for a transnational anthropology',

in Richard Fox (ed.), *Recapturing Anthropology: working in the present*, pp. 191–210. Santa Fe, Cal.: SAR Press.

Appadurai, Arjun, and Breckenridge, Carol A. 1988. 'Why public culture?' *Public Culture* 1 (1), 5–9.

——1995. 'Public modernity in India', in Carol A. Breckenridge (ed.), *Consuming Modernity: public culture in a South Asian world*, pp. 1–20. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Baba, 'Dan Azumi. 1990. *Rikicin Duniya*. Kano.

Babinlata, Bala Anas. 1991. *Tsuntsu Mai Wayo*. Kano.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. 1981. *The Dialogic Imagination*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Barber, Karin. 1987. 'Popular arts in Africa', *African Studies Review* 30 (3), 1–78.

Barkindo, Bawuro M. 1993. 'Growing Islamism in Kano City since 1970', in Louis Brenner (ed.), *Muslim Identity and Social Change in sub-Saharan Africa*, pp. 91–105. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Beidelman, T. O. 1986. *Moral Imagination among Kaguru Modes of Thought*, Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press. New Edition, 1993, Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Bichi, Maigari Ahmed. 1992. 'The author's imagination' II, *The Triumph*, 17 March, p. 7.

Callaway, Barbara. 1987. *Muslim Hausa Women in Nigeria: tradition and change*. New York: Syracuse University Press.

Chakravarty, Sunita. 1993. *National Ideology in Indian Popular Cinema, 1947–87*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Cooper, Frederick. 1994. 'Conflict and connection: rethinking African colonial history', *American Historical Review* 99 (5), 1516–45.

Dan Asabe, Abdul Karim. n.d. 'The Way Youth Organise Themselves: a study of clubs in Kano metropolis, Nigeria'. Kano (unpublished).

Diawara, Manthia. 1992. *African Cinema: politics and culture*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Ekwuazi Hyginus. 1987. *Film in Nigeria*. Jos: Nigerian Film Corporation.

Ekwuazi, Hyginus, and Nasidi Yakubu, (eds.). 1992. *Operative Principles of the Film Industry: towards a film policy for Nigeria*. Jos: Nigerian Film Corporation.

Fugelsang, Minou. 1994. *Veils and Videos: female youth culture on the Kenyan coast*. Studies in Social Anthropology, Stockholm: Gotab.

Furniss, Graham. 1996. *Poetry, Prose and Popular Culture in Hausa*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press; Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, for the International African Institute.

Giginyu, Nasiru Mudi. 1992. 'A little knowledge is a dangerous thing: a reply to Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino', *Nasiha*, 28 August.

Ginsburg, Faye. 1991. 'Indigenous media: Faustian contract or global village?' *Cultural Anthropology* 6 (1), 92–112.

——1993. 'Aboriginal media and the aboriginal imaginary', *Public Culture* 5 (3), 557–78.

——1994. 'Embedded aesthetics: creating a discursive place for indigenous media', *Cultural Anthropology* 9 (3), 365–82.

Hannerz, Ulf. 1992. *Cultural Complexity: studies in the social organization of meaning*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Imam, Abubakar. 1934. *Ruwan Bagaja*. Zaria: NNPC.

India International Centre Quarterly. 1980. Special issue, 8 (1).

Jackson, Michael. 1982. *Allegories of the Wilderness: ethics and ambiguity in Kuranko narratives*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Kagara, Bello. 1934. *Gand'oki*. Zaria: Literature Bureau.

Kakar, Sudhir. 1989. *Intimate Relations: exploring Indian sexuality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lawan, Yusuf. 1993. *Komai Wahalar So*. Kano.

——1995. *Mai Hakuri . . .* Kano.

Liman, Maryam Sahabi. 1993. *Kishi Kumallon Mata*. Gusau: Bushara Publishing House.

Lubeck, Paul. 1987. 'Islamic protest under semi-industrial capitalism: Yan Tatsine explained', in J.D.Y. Peel and C.C. Stewart (eds.), *Popular Islam South of the Sahara*. pp. 369–89. Manchester: Manchester University Press, for the International African Institute.

McLagan, Meg. 1996. 'Computing for Tibet: virtual politics in the Cold War era', in G. Marcus (ed.) *Connected: engagements with media at century's end*. Late Editions 3. Chicago University of Chicago Press.

McNeely, Connie and Soysal, Yasemin Muhoglu. 1989. 'International flows of television programming: a revisionist research orientation', *Public Culture* 2 (1), 136–45.

Mishray, Vijay. 1985. 'Toward a theoretical critique of Bombay cinema', *Screen* 26 (3–4), 133–46.

Mohammed, Adamu. 1991. *Garnak'ak'i*. Kano: Kamfanin Kwabon Masoyi.

Muhammad, Bala. 1992. 'The Hausa film: a study of slow growth, problems and prospects', in Hyginus Ekwuazi and Yakubu Nasidi (eds.), *Operative Principles of the Film Industry: towards a film policy for Nigeria*, pp. 179–204. Jos: Nigerian Film Corporation.

Nandy, Ashis. 1995. *The Savage Freud and other Essays on Possible and Retrievable Selves*. Princeton; N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Pendakur, Manjunath and Subramanyam, Radha. 1996. 'Indian cinema beyond national borders', in John Sinclair, Elizabeth Jacka and Stuart Cunningham (eds.), *New Patterns in Global Television: peripheral vision*, pp. 67–82. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rahim, Oba Abdul (ed.). 1990. *Essays on Northern Nigerian Literature* 1. Zaria: Hamdan Express Printers.

Said, H. I., and Last, Murray. 1991. *Youth and Health in Kano Today*. Special issue of *Kano Studies*.

Sani, Abba Aliyu. 1990. 'The place of Rupert East in the culture and literature of northern Nigeria', in Oba Abdul Raheem (ed.), *Essays on Northern Nigerian Literature* pp. 12–21. Zaria: Hamdan Express Printers.

Sheme, Ibrahim. 1995a. 'Indian films and our culture', *New Nigerian*, 13 May: 7.

——1995b. Zagon k'asar da finafinan Indiya ke yi wa al'adanmu' ('The danger of Indian films to our culture'), *Gaskiya ta fi kwabo*, 15 May: 5.

Shohat, Ella and Stam, Robert. 1994. *Unthinking Eurocentrism*. New York: Routledge.

Sreberny-Mohammadi, Annabelle. 1991. 'The global and the local in international communications', in James Curran and Michael Gurevitch (eds.), *Mass Media and Society*. London: Edward Arnold.

Sullivan, Nancy. 1993. 'Film and television production in New Guinea: how the media become the message', *Public Culture* 5 (3), 533–55.

Thomas, Rosie. 1985. 'Indian cinema: pleasures and popularity', *Screen* 26 (3–4), 116–31.

——1995. 'Melodrama and the negotiation of morality in mainstram Indian film', in *Consuming Modernity: public culture in a South Asian world*, pp. 157–82. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Ukadike, Nwachukwu Frank. 1994. *Black African Cinema*. Berkeley, Cal.: University of California Press.

Watts, Michael and Pred, Allan. 1992. *The Shock of Modernity: capitalisms and symbolic discontent*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.

Yahaya, Ibrahim Yaro. 1988. *Hausa a Rubuce: tarihin rubuce rubuce cikin Hausa*. Zaria: NNPC.

Yakubu, Hajiya Balaraba Ramat. 1990a. *Alhaki Kwikwiyo*. Kano.

——1990b. *Budurwar Zuciya*. Kano.

ABSTRACT

This article discusses the significance of Indian films in revealing a relatively ignored aspect of the transnational flow of culture. The intra-Third World circulation of Indian film offers Hausa viewers a way of imaginatively engaging with forms of tradition different from their own at the same time as conceiving of a modernity that comes without the political and ideological significance of that of the West. After discussing reasons for the popularity of Indian films in a Hausa context, it accounts for this imaginative investment of viewers by looking at narrative as a mode of social enquiry. Hausa youth explore the limits of accepted Hausa attitudes to love and sexuality through the narratives of Indian film and Hausa love stories (*soyayya*). This exploration has occasioned intense public debate, as *soyayya* authors are accused of corrupting Hausa youth by borrowing foreign modes of love and sexual relations. The article argues that this controversy indexes wider concerns about the shape and direction of contemporary Nigerian culture. Analysing *soyayya* books and Indian films gives insight into the local reworking and indigenising of transnational media flows that take place within and between Third World countries, disrupting the dichotomies between West and non-West, coloniser and colonised, modernity and tradition, in order to see how media create parallel modernities. Through spectacle and fantasy, romance and sexuality, Indian films provide arenas for considering what it means to be modern and what may be the place of Hausa society within that modernity. For northern Nigerians, who respond to a number of different centres, whether politically to the Nigerian state, religiously to the Middle East and North Africa, economically to the West, or culturally to the cinematic dominance of India, Indian films are just one part of the heterogeneity of everyday life. They provide a parallel modernity, a way of imaginatively engaging with the changing social basis of contemporary life that is an alternative to the pervasive influence of a secular West.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article discute l'importance qu'ont les films indiens en révélant un aspect relativement ignoré dans le courant de culture transnational. La circulation de films indiens au sein du Tiers-Monde offre aux spectateurs Hausa une façon de s'engager imaginativement avec des formes de tradition différentes dès leurs tout en percevant une modernité qui vient sans la signification politique et idéologique de celle de l'ouest. Après avoir discussé les raisons pour la popularité des films indiens dans un context Hausa, cet article explique cet investissement imaginatif des spectateurs en examinant les histoires comme forme d'enquête sociale. Les jeunes hausa explorent les limites des attitudes acceptées des hausa envers l'amour et la sexualité à travers les histoires dans les films indiens et les histoires d'amour hausa (*soyayya*). Cet exploration a occasioné un débat public profond, comme les auteurs de *soyayya* ont été accusés de corrupter les jeunes hausa en empruntant des formes d'amour et relations sexuelles étrangères. Cet article maintient que cette controverse révèle une inquiétude plus générale à propos de la forme et de la direction de la culture nigérienne contemporaine. L'analyse des livres *soyayya* et des films indiens éclaircit