

The Thematic Analysis of Aliyu Kamal's Hausa Girl

ABUBAKAR, Abubakar

Literature-in-English Unit, Department of Arts, College of Basic and Remedial Studies Sokoto

MUSTAPHA, Maccido Tangaza

Hausa Unit, Department of Arts, College of Basic and Remedial Studies Sokoto

MARYAM, Ibrahim Sama'ila

Literature-in-English Unit, Department of Arts, College of Basic and Remedial Studies Sokoto

UMAR, Surajo Sa'adu

Literature-in-English Unit, Department of Arts, College of Basic and Remedial Studies Sokoto

Abstract: *This paper aims at studying the thematic pre-occupation of Aliyu Kamal's Hausa Girl. It focuses on the themes of the novel. Theme is the central and dominating idea in a literary work, the message or moral implicit of any work of art. The dominant themes analyse in this paper as depicted by Kamal's Hausa Girl include; theme of dream, theme of religion, theme of culture and tradition, theme of love as well as theme of crime and corruption. Many African writers wrote about societal ills of their societies because most African leaders have no sense of concern in solving the problems of the people, since they do not bear the brunt of the misery. The paper therefore concluded that, many African writers like Abubakar Gimba, Chinua Achebe, Mariama Ba, Zainab Alkali, Ngugi wa Thiong'o wrote on themes such as corruption, culture and tradition, love, betrayal, religion, dream, immorality and so on. It is the attention of this that, the paper shows different ways and reasons that influence or spur the writing of Aliyu Kamal, his choice of writing is embedded in the reflection of African society in his Hausa Girl.*

Key Words: *Themes, Setting, Characters, Phenomenology, Inductive, Deductive, Epistemologies.*

Introduction

Thematic analysis is used in qualitative research and focuses on examining themes within data. (Jeanne, Allan & Micheal, 1997)

However, this method emphasizes organization and research description of the data set. Thematic analysis goes beyond simply counting phrases or words in a text and moves on to identifying implicit and explicit ideas within the data. Coding therefore is the primary process for developing themes within the raw data, by recognizing important moment in the data and encoding it prior to interpretation.

The interpretation of these codes can include comparing themes frequencies, identifying theme co-occurrence and graphically displaying relationships between different themes.

Most researchers consider thematic analysis to be a very useful method in capturing the intricacies of meaning within a data set. There is a wide range as to what data set entails; texts can range from a single-word response to an open-ended question or as complex, as a body of thousands of pages. (Boyatzis, 1998)

Cooper (2009, P. 36) says “as a consequence, thematic analysis strategies will likely varies according to size. Most qualitative researchers analyse transcribed in-depth interviews that can be two hours in length, resulting in nearly forty pages of transcribed data per respond, also it should be taken into consideration that complexity in a study can vary according to different data types.”

According to Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006). Thematic analysis take the concept of supporting assertions with data from grounded theory. This is a research method which operates almost in a reverse fashion traditional social science research. Rather than beginning with a hypothesis, the first is data collection, through a variety of method from the data collected, the key points are marked with series of codes, which are extracted from the text. This is a reflective in thematic analysis because the process consists of reading transcripts, identifying possible themes, comparing and contrasting themes and building theoretical models.

Thematic analysis is also related to phenomenology in that, it focuses on the human experience subjectively, this approach emphasizes the researcher’s perceptions, feeling and experiences as the paramount object of the study. Rooted in humanistic psychology, phenomenology notes is giving voice to the other as a key component in qualitative research in general. This allows the respondents to discuss the topic in their own words, free of constraints from fixed response questions found in qualitative studies. (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012)

Like most research methods, this process of data analysis can occur in two primary ways-inductively or deductively. In an inductive approach, the themes identified are strongly linked to the data because assumptions are data-driven. This means that the process of coding occurs without trying to fit the data into a pre-existing model or frame. It is important to note that throughout this inductive process, it is not possible for the researchers to free themselves from their epistemological responsibilities. Deductive approach on the other hand, are theory-driven. This form of analysis tends to be less descriptive overall because analysis is limited to the preconceived frames. The result tends to focus on one or two specific aspects of the data that were determined prior data analysis. The choice between these two approaches generally depends on the researchers’ epistemologies.

Literarily, every work of art has a theme. A theme may be seen as the central or dominating idea of the text. The theme encapsulates the message designed by a writer for the consumption of his readers or audience. Simply put, a theme is a subject of talk; a piece of writing or a person’s thought.

The Oxford Advance Learners' Dictionary defines theme as the subject or main ideas in a talk, piece of writing or work of art.

Meriam Webster Encyclopedia of Literature, (1995) describes theme as the dominant idea of a work of art, theme is considered as one of the fundamental components of fiction.

According to the Dictionary of Literary Terms (2nd edition 1994): A theme is the central and dominating idea in a literary work, the message or moral implicit on any work of art.

According to (Kabir, 2008, P. 09) in her introductory lecture notes of a course titled: Introduction to Fiction states that, theme of a story is the writer's wishes to make, a moral or a conceptual. She further asserts:

A theme is the main idea of an essay, paragraph or a book. The idea about life is revealed in a work of literature. The message may be about life, society or human nature. Themes often explore timeless and universal ideas and may be implied rather than stated explicitly. Along with plot, characters, setting and style, theme is considered as one of the fundamental components of fiction. It is the universal statement or feeling when reading a piece of writing.

Meanwhile, the above definition is not in conflict with the position of Cambridge International Dictionary (6th edition 1997) which defines theme as main subject of talk, book and film or a short simple tune on which a piece of music is based.

About the Author

Aliyu kamal was born in kano and had his early education at Gidan makama and the school for Arabic studies (SAS) Kano. He later studied at the University of Bayero and Edinburg, Scotland, where he had two masters degrees and a PhD. He reached the pinnacle of his career after becoming a professor in Applied linguistics.

Apparently the only specialist in Kano who has attend that level in that area, Professor Kamal has written two books. *English all the way* to improve undergraduate English Language through reading and writing and *Language for Academic purpose*, to do the same for graduate students. Perhaps the most prolific writer in Northern Nigeria, he has an anthology of his poetry and prose and has written ten novels among which is *Fire at my Backyard*, his second novel that won ANA/Chevron prize in 2005.

Since 1983, Professor Kamal has been teaching English Language and Linguistics at Bayero University Kano, including the years he spent at Edinburg University, in pursuit of post-graduate studies. Other than *Fire at my Backyard* he has written the following novels; *Hausa Land* (A young Fulani herdsman comes in search of his cattle), *Silence and Smile* (A love and marriage despite all odds), *The Blaming Soul* (A young executive tries to lead a life that is free from corruption and bereft of dispensable Culturalism), *Portrait of a Patron* (land owner leads a life of piety but fails to persuade his incorrigible neighbour from following suit), *A Possible World* (An elicit young man devote his energy to fight people's strict adherence to dispensable cultural antic), *Hausa Girl* (A young brave girl that becomes an actress without the approval of her community) as well as his collection of short stories titled *Computer Shutdown*.

However, his articles on reading and writing in English as second Language have appeared in the FAIS journal, the journal of general studies, Kakaki Kano studies among others. He is married with children including a set of twins.

Setting

The setting of the novel is that of Hausa environment, because the novel was set in Northern Nigeria, Kano state. That is to say that Kamal uses his own culture and tradition in writing the novel *Hausa Girl*.

Characters

Characters in the novel include:

- i. Hajjo Gano
- ii. Bala Gano
- iii. Gaji Ilu
- iv. Nana
- v. Sk
- vi. Kabiru Badayi
- vii. Zenat Amin
- viii. Muallah Amin

Thematic Analysis of the Novel

The following are the thematic pre-occupation as portrayed by Kamal in the novel:

- i. Theme of dream.

- ii. Theme of religion.
- iii. Theme of culture and tradition.
- iv. Theme of love
- v. Theme of crime and corruption.

i. Theme of Dream

This is one of the major theme in the novel, because almost all the actions in the novel were centred around this theme. The protagonist in the novel Hajjo Gano, was an epitome of this particular theme. Her aim in life was to become Hausa actress that is why she did not worry when she failed her paper. In the process of pursuing her dream, Hajjo encountered different obstacles of life, but she did not bother about anything than to become an actress. That is why she tells Kabiru Badayi:

As for me, I have finished my studies in film making, film making, he said with a Laugh, I studied at Kano school of English. I may decide to go into films. By Allah I am not joking, I want to see what help can I offer you to reform the business of Filmmaking. I want to make it respectable once and for all. (p. 13)

Meanwhile, Hajjo really want to involve in filmmaking. Kabiru Badayi happens to be her first love, he promised to help her in achieving her dream. After her secondary school, she stays in her uncle house together with Gaji Ilu.

Moreover, in running after her dream, Hajjo found a diversion by visiting a Fatihyya's house, she stays from morning till night doing nothing than watching Hausa films, thinking that will help her in achieving her dream of becoming an actress. Hajjo later has misunderstanding with Fatihyya.

More also Hajjo encountered with a film director named Sk, she was very happy to meet Sk thinking that he will take her to her dreamland. Sk promised Hajjo that he will cast her in one of his film, for Hajjo she feels flabbergasted, not knowing that Sk just want to use her and dump. That is why Kabiru Badayi tells her that:

My strongest advice is this: never have anything to do with him, as Hausa proverb says, he who loves you tell you the truth. You don't know Sk, you only met him once, you should know that film directors excel in seducing

girls for their own pleasure that may not have anything to do with filmmaking other than giving it a bad names. Directors also cheat women who sponsored films by keeping the profit or even the sponsorship money. As for Sk, from what I know of him, you can't stand up to him, he is more crooked than you can think. He doesn't make films in the western way as I do, but just does things haphazardly and depend on luck to break even the only thing, what I will say about him he has the money to make films. He therefore doesn't have to go around looking for sponsors. The danger is that the censor has his eyes on him. And Sk is thoroughly amoral, the censor wouldn't rest until he has him behind the bars. (p. 193)

Hajjo declined all the advice given to her by Kabiru Badayi, she went and short her first film with Sk. The film is a story about a girl named Hanne Garba, Hanne finished her secondary school, and she found it difficult to live in her father's house because her mother was divorced by her father.

The second film Hajjo Gano appears is titled Hausa Girl, she dresses in full Fulani wear. Sk leads her to six square dance, three in slow motion, three in normal mood and that makes track music and dance video CD *Hausa Girl*. The music produced million copies, the music 'Hausa Girl' become the best seller in Kano market and beyond, Hajjo received her share, she bought refrigerator and furnished her father's house.

As for Sk, police were after him because of the film he shot with Hajjo is immoral. One particular night Sk visits Hajjo, he told her that there is a film he want to short with her. In the process, he hypnotized her and at the same time make use of her hypnosis condition. Her father meet him at the house, Sk fight Hajjo's father and along the line, he killed her father. Kabiru arrived at the scene, he calls police and have Sk arrested.

For Hajjo, she wakes up and found that her father died and Sk has been arrested by the police. Kabiru told her that he had already engaged with Zenat Amin.

Meanwhile Hajjo is left alone, no father, no Kabiru or Sk. As she began to weep, Kabiru walk away.

ii. Theme of Religion

This theme is another important theme that plays a vital role in the novel. Kamal depicts this theme in his novel through uncle Ilu's household, because we learn that his children attend Qur'anic school with Hajjo Gano.

The twins also attend a night Islamiyah school where they were taught ritual ablution (for the five a daily prayers, for Friday bath before proceeding to the congregational prayer; for the cleansing bath following sexual relations, prayer, personal hygiene, the Qur'an and Hadith and the mu'amallat or human relation. (p. 15)

Another instance of religion is when Hajjo and her friends misbehave to the old woman during their farewell party. The old woman weep while Hajjo and her friend disappear in the shadow. Hajjo fell sick and she was taken to an Islamic learned man named Muallah Amin, he was very famous in town. Mallam Muallah assert that:

Hajjo's case is compulsion leading to emptiness of the head. Today youths don't know where to turn, there is no such to distract them there music and their film, there is alcohol and there is drugs. The Indian film has fallen into disfavour, but it has been replace by the Hausa movies. What youths often forget is this, Man is created by Allah for no greater purpose than divine worship. It is mentioned in the holy Qur'an, how then can one have a leg to stand on who doesn't worship accordingly? (p. 154)

Hajjo was left under the care of the learned man's daughter Zenat Amin, she is so strong in Islamic knowledge, she always recite Qur'an for Hajjo's surah. Zenat is very decent and religious, she was morally brought up by her father, that is why Kabiru assert that:

For me Zeenat's beauty ranks a lowly second to her beautiful manners, she will help me in my recitation and memorization of the holy Qur'an, what about you? You may be beautiful but you are a degenerate empty-head. (p. 250)

iii. Theme of Culture and Tradition

The depiction of Hausa culture and tradition in the novel shows that Kamal is really a Hausa by tribe from a Northern Nigeria.

Another instance that shows the above theme in the novel is when a new bride is located in Hajjo's neighbourhood, Hajjo and some girls of Hajjo's age visit the bride's house to keep her accompany. They played different kind of games in the bride's house.

The girls on their own would sit down play a game, carafke, with
six smooth pebbles... (p. 21)

Likewise when Hajjo and Gaji visit to the village, the houses in the village were traditionally made with Zana and Azara roofings, which are really traditionally made houses.

The most common event that addresses the issue of culture and tradition, is the music that Sk shoot with Hajjo named 'Hausa Girl'. The characters too are traditional Hausa name like, Hajjo Gano, Bala Gano, Gaji Ilu, Nana, Sk, Kabiru Badayi, Zeenat Amin and so on.

iv. Theme of Love

Love is one of the major theme in the novel and it plays a vital role. There is love between Hajjo Gano and Kabiru Badayi. Kabiru always stands for Hajjo despite the fact that, she rejected him at the end but he still loves her and visits her regularly. Kabiru warns Hajjo about the danger in watching Hausa film, saying that Hausa film shows Hausa culture in bad light.

However, when Hajjo Gano misbehaved to the old woman by calling her witch, Hajjo fell sick, Kabiru rushed her to the hospital and from hospital to an Islamic learned man known as Mu'alla Amin, up to her family house, he was still with her up to her recovery. For the love he has for her, he seriously warned her against associating herself with Sk saying that film directors are wicked.

Moreover there is love between Hajjo and Sk, for Hajjo, she loves Sk very much thinking that he will take her to the dreamland not knowing that he will use her and dump. Therefore, in the last chapter of the novel where Hajjo was hypnotized by Sk, Kabiru appears at Hajjo's house and called the police to come and have Sk arrested. After the arrest, Kabiru left Hajjo alone and said to her:

My strong advice to you, go back to Allah and beseech him for absolution
Satan in disguise of Sk whispered in your ears and led you astray. As a
Muslim let me quote the counsel of prophet (Pbuh) and give a piece of
advice to fellow muslims: fear ALLAH and cultivate parables manners,

whether you abandon film business, haven't do that, you should also think what the wise among the Hausa people say, borrowed cloth doesn't cover your tight. (p. 250)

v. Theme of Crime and Corruption

This theme goes in hand with the character of Sk. Sk in the novel, is presented as a crooked character, who commits many crimes, he uses Hajjo several times in her hypnosis condition in the name of film making.

He went on and tested her by letting her snip deeply at highly unpleasant odor wafting from his dirty handkerchief. She snipped it appreciate and claimed that it was given off a very pleasant perfume. To test her memory, he asked her who she was, she forgot her name, she lied a princess of starlet, she had become a fictional character and she could act under his control. He could do whatever he liked with her... (p. 217-218)

Kamal depict this particular theme in film making environment. In film industries, there are cases whereby directors have to be bribed before an actor will appear in a film and these so-called directors involve in embezzlement of the sponsorship money and most times seduced girls in the name of film making.

Thus, Sk in the novel is depicted as deceiver, murderer, liar, a drunkard, a criminal and corrupt character.

Conclusion

Through the themes found in the text analysis in this paper, we can say that Literature of Africans shows the images and situation around African societies. The paper studies the thematic pre-occupation of Aliyu Kamal's *Hausa Girl* which include: theme of dream, theme of religion, theme of culture and tradition, theme of love as well as theme of crime and corruption. Many African writers wrote about societal ills of their societies and how corruption has eaten deep into the nerve system of every sector of our lives. Furthermore, this is because most African leaders have no sense of concern in solving the problems of people's misery, since they do not bear the brunt of the misery.

Therefore, this paper shows different ways and reasons that influence or spur the writing of Aliyu Kamal, his choice of writing is embedded in the African society as seen in his novel *Hausa Girl*.

References

- Baldick, C. (1994). The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms. *International Journal of Lexicography*, 7(4), pp. 352-354.
- Boyatzis, R. E. (1998). *Transforming Qualitative Information: Thematic Analysis and Code Development*. California: Sage Publisher.
- Cooper, R. (2009). Decoding Coding via the Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers by Johnny Saldana. *The Qualitative Report*, Vol. 14(4), pp. 245-248.
- Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). "How Many Interviews are Enough?: Experiment with Data Saturation and Variability". *Field Methods*, Vol. 18 (1), pp. 59-82.
- Guest, G., MacQueen K. M., & Namey, E. E. (2012). Introduction to Applied Thematic Analysis. *Applied Thematic Analysis*, Vol. 3(20), pp. 1-21
- Hughes, H. G. A. (1997). Cambridge International Dictionary of Phrasal Verbs. Reference Reviews.
- Jeanne, D., Allan, K., & Michael, G. (1997). *The Public Health Researcher: Methodological Approach*. Melbourne, Australia: Oxford University Press, pp. 611-618
- Kabir, A. U. (2008). Introduction to fiction: Introductory Lecture Notes. pp. 09
- Kamal, A (2005). *Hausa Girl*. Ahmadu Bello University Press Limited.
- Webster, M. (1995). *Merriam Webster's Encyclopaedia of Literature*. Springfield: Massachusetts