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Rhetoricity in Orality: An Analysis of Muhammadu Dan'Anace's "Shagon Mafara"

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Abstract

This study focuses on the analysis of Muhammadu Bawa Dan'anace's song "Shagon Mafara" from the point of view of rhetoricity in orality. The study uses primary method of data collection where the song was downloaded, carefully and analytically listened to, orthographically transcribed and subsequently translated into English. Similarly, the study uses Cultural Rhetorics as it is theoretical thrust to highlight the role of culture in the dissemination of information and communication. At the domain of oral literature especially in the field of Hausa oral songs research, little attentions have been paid to the use of rhetoric in orality which the present study investigates and analyses, commenting that rhetoric does not only exist in speeches presented by politicians, clerics, educators. Rhetoric exists in orality and Hausa oral singers are powerful in the portrayal of expressions that have the rhetorical value of persuading their listeners and audience. In the study, it is equally discovered that Muhammadu Bawa Dan'anace Gandu exercises the use of rhetorical appeals such as ethos, pathos and logos which the researchers use to discover the rhetorical strategies obtainable in Hausa oral songs focusing on Muhammadu Bawa Dan'anace's song "Shagon Mafara."

Key words: Rhetoricity, Orality, Oral Literature, Rhetorical Devices, Hausa

Introduction

Oral singers understand and master the use of indigenous language to persuade their target audience. They rely on the power of referents in manipulating the psyche of their immediate and long-distant listeners. Singers' ability to expertly encode information and the listeners' ability to decode make singers' utilization of

rhetorical strategies effective. The media through which songs are conveyed remain dominant in human affair. Language is used differently according to various communicative purposes. Within the study of language, a rhetoric comes to play. Rhetoric is the study of the act and art of persuasion in orality. It is the study of the process of using available



means or resources of persuasion in a given context (Aristotle). Language is tied to the tradition of the people. As such, Hausa oral singers deploy persuasive strategies to the audience whom the songs are meant for.

Orality is the study of oral usage of language and culture. Various cultures in Africa have distinctly focused on orality as the medium of message creation and message conveyance. As such, scholars have postulated that orality preceded textuality. Owing to the fact that orality has existed before textuality, the question of interest of most researchers lies on how rhetorical is orality in the ancient and perhaps modern times. Since every communication within a particular culture is done with a purpose, the singers composed their songs in order to convince and persuade their audience using various rhetorical capacities available to them.

Hausa oral singers are known with the presentation of ideas and facts within their songs. Some of the songs attributed to Hausa cultures are persuasive both in tone and mood. Oral singers in the Hausaland in northern Nigeria have indelible and incredible stages in which there are categorizations based on time (temporal) and medium (mode of expression). However, despite the apparent variations of the temporal old and the current or contemporary Hausa oral singers, there exist the proliferations of rhetorical means which are ingrained in their oral songs.

Most of the studies on Hausa oral songs such as Dandatti (1975), Daba (2006), Sheme (2006), Bichi (1992), Zurmi (1981) and Gusau (2013) among others focused distinctively on the roles of the oral singers in the disseminations of engaging corrective ideas on the people of their lands. At the center of Hausa oral songs, there exists the concern of lands, experiences, travails which in the expression of these phenomena singers are acknowledged to have deployed rhetorical strategies in orality. Yusuf (2013) explains the Hausa oral songs by attaching orality to it. He notes that:

The term "oral" etymologically means 'to do with the mouth'. Oral song is poetry that is composed and transmitted without the aid of writing. Oral song is sometimes considered to include any poetry which is performed live. Oral song exists most clearly within oral cultures, and much oral poetry, however, is memorized verbatim - though the precise wording, particularly of words which are not essential to sense or metre, do tend to change from one performance to another, and one performer to another...



In Hausa, the term "verse" "poetry" and "song" are regarded to be synonyms". Meanwhile in Hausa society, oral poetry is also performed by other means, such as talking drums. Songs and dances are very common in Hausa or African societies in general. There is almost no communal activity that is not accompanied by song and dance. There are work songs, marriage songs, praise songs, love songs, nursing songs, spirit songs etc. Songs form an important part of the lives and thinking of the people (3-4).

The rich and vast ideas conveyed through the Hausa oral songs are evident in the singers' creative compositions. In both the pre-jihad and post-jihad periods, the singers use their varieties of creative prowess and power to perform songs that are of great value to their people, audience, lands as well as generations yet unborn. Among the imprints that sustain the Hausa oral songs from disappearing and waning are their continuous relevance to the societal expectations and the rhetorical elements that the songs contain.

This paper aims at investigating the rhetorical devices obtainable in the

Hausa oral songs by examining Dan'anace's song "Shagon Mafara" with the intention of figuring out these devices by highlighting in details the significant creative prowess of the oral singer in terms of orality. As speech predates writing, so as orality predates textuality. To show and further expound the rhetoricity in orality, this study is undertaken to ascertain the distinctiveness of Hausa heritage in the art and act of compositions of oral songs in the light of ancient cataclysms and contemporary continuity.

Review of Literature

Yusuf (2013) in his paper titled: *Hausa Oral Songs as a tool for National Integration and Development in Nigeria* examines Hausa oral songs as the effective instrument for both national integration and development. The contents of the songs studied and analyzed in this study dwells on hard work, patriotism, nationalism, self-reliance among the people of Nigeria. Through the study's deployment of functional approach, the researcher demonstrates Hausa singers' creative ability in fueling their voices to serve as the agent of national integration. Thus, literature is indeed an agent of change (Tadi, 2017).

Ladan (2017) examines the Hausa oral songs on Mamman Shata's awareness on the environmental scientific issues in which he hallows the God by appreciating His creatures exemplifies in *Dawa da giwa ikon Allah* and similarly engages with the audience to participate in the environmental sanitations.



Similarly, Iguda (2018) investigates agricultural development in relation to a popular Hausa oral singer Mamman Shata. In the study titled *Shata and Agricultural Development: Reflections on Shata's Poem On Daberam Farm House In Daura Local Government Area And The Present Challenges Facing The Farm House*, he examines the richness of the singer's talent in which he virtually sung for almost every topic in existence in the Hausaland. He sung on economy, trade, commerce, social relations, morality, and wildlife, among others. As cited in the study, Kankara (2013) remarks that there are almost fifteen (15) songs sung by Mamman Shata on agriculture which have in them words of encouragements on farming and rearing of animals as the most blessed ventures in the Hausa land in the northern Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

The study used Cultural Rhetoric as it is theoretical thrust. Cultural Rhetorics is a theory advanced by Sano-Franchini (2015) in her work *Cultural Rhetorics and the Digital Humanities* where she posited that the theory (cultural rhetorics) is culturally reflexive which embodies and carries elements of persuasion. She asserts that:

To clarify what I mean when I say cultural rhetorics, cultural rhetorics theorizes how rhetoric and culture are interconnected

through a focus on the processes by which language, texts, and other discursive practices like performance, embodiment, and materiality create meaning. It is, therefore, not simply the rhetorics of race, nor is it cultural studies, critical race theory, cultural philosophy, or cultural studies of technology. It is not "minority" rhetorics, or "alternative" rhetorics. Cultural rhetorics is an interdisciplinary field of study, a scholarly practice, and a category for interpreting the world around us (52).

Cultural rhetorics is seemingly a signpost and a theory that rhetoricians and cultural scholars alike draw from across various disciplines, as it offers insights, views about knowledge, on the relations between culture, knowledge, practice and how communicative acts are expressed. This theory is relevant and significant to the present study because of its scope on the investigations of persuasion on the rhetoricity and orality in cultural songs, such as Hausa oral songs. Cultural rhetorics is a theory that is concerned with the persuasive interpretation of the world around the people. The study similarly



adopted Aristotelian Model of Rhetoric by using ethos, pathos and logos to aid in the analysis of data.

Methodology

The study used the primary method of data collection. The researcher used the mobile cellphone to collect the data by downloading the song of Muhammadu Bawa Dan Anace Gandhi. The researchers listened to the song, transcribed and translated it into English. Thus, the song used as the data for the study is "Shagon Mafara." The motivation for the selection of Dan Anace as one of the pure Hausa oral singer is as the result of the singer's use of words and expressions for wrestlers. Persuasion is a key to Muhammadu Bawa Gandhi Dan Anace in his songs.

Manifestations of Rhetoricity in "Shagon Mafara"

At the heart of oral literature, there exists the aspect of persuasion. Hausa oral singers have noted the strong functional aspects of the oral medium through which they vocalize and verbalize their expressions. "Shagon Mafara" is translated as "The Shago of Mafara". It was composed by the popular Hausa oral singer Muhammadu Bawa Dan'anace Gandhi. The song contains various rhetorical devices which best describe rhetoricity in orality. In the song, the singer examines and perhaps exaggerates the influence of a wrestler in a community. He does so masterfully in the use of deliberate rhetoric to convince the audience,

In the expositions of various statements in the song, the singer is careful in choosing the words to express his views and opinions but he is deliberate in articulating them.

Ethos

Ethos is one of the rhetorical devices that is concerned with establishing the character and credibility of the speaker. In Hausa oral songs, singers usually use the device of ethos to the fullest in presenting their players, kings or any significant person around whom their songs revolve. They achieve this device/appeal through repetition or diction, as well as lexico-semantic choice of expressions. Muhammadu Bawa Dan Anace is a Hausa oral singer who sung variously to wrestlers where he praised one wrestler called Shago in the Hausaland.

Lead Singer

Kai Jama'a!
Duk wanda baiga damben Shago ba
Nada sauran kallo
Duk wanda bega kallon Shago ba
Na da sauran kallo

Translation

Lend me your attention, my listeners
Whoever is yet to witness Shago's fight
Had seen nothing yet
Whoever is yet to witness Shago's fight
Had seen nothing yet

In the above lines, Muhammadu Bawa Dan Anace Gandhi uses repetition to establish ethos where the singer expresses that for people to have a

contentive wrestling with energetic substance, they have to see Shago engaged in wrestling. This is used to portray the character of the wrestler as brave, bold and undealt in a wrestling match. Thus, oral singers use repetition in the expression of credibility and quality of their characters. Hence, in this song, it was the "Shagon Mafara"/ The Shagon of Mafara.

In the following lines, the oral singer demonstrates creative prowess and power that the singer has in postulating and offering his personal views guided by a careful use of language in the expression of these views.

Lead Singer:

Dan Audu mai wajahaini
Na kande juji mai shan ruwa
Kwatarnin kura
Kazama babban kare abin sa rani
Wai ko da mai kare agata
Dan Audu gaza guru
Kuge mai kasha maulo

Translation:

Dan Audu, the strongest
Kande's Husband, an open land that
consumes water
The hyena's territory
You become the mighty dog so fearful
Is there anyone who enjoys
protection like the dog owner
The son of Audu, the famous
The sound of Goge that diminishes
that of Maulo

In the above lines from the song, it is evidently clear that the singer,

Muhammadu Bawa Dan Anace Gandi, uses a very elevated language in expounding the great virtues of Shagon Marafa. The singer attributes ethos quality to the character of whom the song revolves around, anchoring him in a subtle, distinctive manner.

Pathos

This is a rhetorical appeal that is deeply concerned with the emotional state of listeners or audience. In this sense and considering the song of Muhammadu Bawa Dan'anace Gandi's "Shagon Mafara", one must admit that the song is rhetorical in which elements of pathos are ingrained. Oral singers in Hausa land exude remarkable dexterity in using rhetoricity in orality.

Lead Singer:

Wallai abin da duk kac ce man;
Dan'anace ban amsaba;
Sai ka dibi Dandunawa
Ka kimbideshi da hannu
Tunda ba uwwaku guda ba

Translation:

To God, I can't accept any excuse
Dan'anace won't accept it
Just attack Dandunawa
Defeat him with hand
He remains your opponent

The above lines from the song are used to examine the use of pathos through the use of expressions that are in themselves emotional and psychological. The singer is asserting through creative wittiness that the speaker should not relent on his mission until he throws his opponent.

The verse above states the ways in which audience's emotions are arrested in the way the singer's masterful demonstration and display of language.

Lead Singer:

Kashe mutum a gafarta ma
Duna kaga raina ya abaci
Banga ka kasha wani ba
Barin amana tsoro
Bakunka tuwo ba na furaba
Kukan baleri ya raga bayi
Dan Audu ko ga giribin gero
Bara-bara takan hana wake
Kashe mutum!

Translation:

Defeat your opponent to get elevation
I am worried
Eager to see you defeat someone
Only cowards abandons what is
entrusted to them
I do not cry for food or water
But I cry that Baleri is in control
Dan Audu even when millet is
harvested
Unwanted crops hinder the growth of
beans
Defeat opponent!

The above quotation from the song demonstrates an exemplary notion of pathos as demonstrated by the oral singer, Muhammadu Bawa Dan Anace Gandhi. The emotions of the audience are caught with the use of words such as 'death' 'cry' among others for their compelling meaning in stirring emotional appeals of people. In this case, the oral singer has become the driver and controller of the

audience's emotions in which words wave the listeners ears to be tempted.

Logos

As one of the rhetorical appeals of Aristotle, logos is the center of an argument. It proves what is true and not a contested fact. Oral singers, though they use language full of polish(ment) and embellishment, are able to express concrete logic and effective portrayal of their arguments. The argument is that the selected song is holistic, as it demonstrates the inherent ability and capacity of the wrestler "shago" in the act of wrestling. The singer cites and mentions Shago by referring to him as different names that prove his logicality while expressing his. The overall portrayal of logos is attested to the fact that Muhammadu Bawa Dan Anace Gandhi is a great singer who sung for one of the popular wrestler in the Hausa land called 'Shagon Mafara'. This wrestler won various wrestling matches which earned him great reputations to the extent of having songs composed by Muhammadu Bawa Dan Anace Gandhi, praising him for his wrestling prowess, as he throws his opponents in wrestling matches.

Conclusion

This study analyses the use of rhetorical qualities and capacities in the oral song sung by the popular Hausa oral singer, Muhammadu Bawa Dan'anace Gandhi, titled "Shagon

Mafara". The study analyses the use of rhetoric in orality, pointing out the potential of oral singers in demonstrating the powerful poetic vitality in the expression of their views and opinions in songs. The study points and discusses the use of various rhetorical appeals in the songs of Muhammadu bawa Dan'anace's "Shagon Mafara" wherein ethos, pathos and logos are decisively discussed using the song as a case in point argument. As researches on oral literature remain themed, the present study analyses rhetoricity in orality by adding value to the existing scholarly commentaries on the corpus of Hausa oral song.

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