

Sights and Sounds of Northern Nigeria in AbdulRasheed Na’Allah’s Poetry

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Abstract: The pact between the artist and his community is underscored by the relevance of art to society. The artist plays a vital role in the community’s growth and development in some ways: he represents his community through the artistic mode; he helps in preserving cultural values by rescuing such from extinction or degeneration and these values are transferred from generation to generation. In essence, Literature depicts man and his environment and it is the conscience of society. AbdulRasheed Na’Allah’s *Ilorin Praise Poetry* and *Ahmad Fulani* truly reflect this noble role of the artist in exerting an influence on the cultural practices of a people. The diversity of culture which defines the heterogeneous composition of the Northern Nigeria is artistically captured in these collections. Apart from the sociological imperative of the poet’s songs, there is also a touch of humanism as a philosophical guide. It is submitted that from style and language, these collections interrogate dynamics of cultures, attitudes and entertainment of many tribes and ethnic groups inhabiting the northern hemisphere of Nigeria, the most populous black nation in Africa.

Keywords: AbdulRasheed Na’Allah; Community; Culture; Ilorin Praise Poetry; Northern Nigeria

Introduction

One of the major ways by which we can gain insights into the culture and sociology of a people is through art. Apart from its permanent value, it is an incontrovertible fact that no subject or discipline presents humanity as richly as literature. Literature depicts man and his environment by

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concretizing his everyday experience and turning them into values. Gotera (67) observes that “culture is lived as one comprehensive experience, combining the various aspects diversified by the analysis of the concept in one synthetic whole”.

In carrying out the task and fulfilling his obligatory service to society, the artist goes further by digging into historical archives and mythical resources of his people to source materials which he transposes for philosophical and visionary statements and timeless predictions. As Gotera (65) has noted, “culture is the springboard of philosophy”. In a broad manner, Dalfovo (68–69) identifies two binary aspects of culture as the outer and inner aspects which Gotera (65–66) paraphrased in the following words:

The first one is the outer aspect or “body” of culture. This aspect refers to the social heritage of a community that is most readily perceived, described by sociologists as the local body of material artifacts (tools, weapons, houses); also seen in distinctive forms of behaviour (rituals, institutions, groupings etc.) developed by society (deliberately or accidentally) in its on-going activities within its particular life conditioned and transmitted from generation to generation. The inner aspect or “mind” or “soul” of culture is given by the collective mental and spiritual heritage, which includes systems of symbols, ideas, beliefs, aesthetic perception, values etc. These two like the outer aspects of culture are produced by a community in its life –conditions and passed on to later generations. This inner aspect is also described as mentality or worldview. The inner aspects find their concrete expressions in the outer aspects. An outer expression of culture is understood by reference to its inner aspect, the ‘why’ of an act.

The artist is an agent of cultural transformation, transmission and preservation which he labours to do through artistic modes. From the fossils of culture, myths and attitudinal tendencies of members of society, and from generation to generation as documented by historical heritage and cultural practices, the artist creates a vision for society. At times, he plays this role by being censorious and critical of societal institutions and humans or forces behind them. The artist as well may introduce a comic relief to cushion the effect of harsh historical billows through the entertaining modes. In whichever way we turn, the purpose of artistic painting or presentation in the ultimate is to delight and edify.

In what sounds like lending an authoritative voice to the relevance of art, Irele (44) asserts:

It might therefore serve a purpose to stress at the outset of this intervention the nature and binding purpose of literature, deriving in the first place from its grounding in language – from its essential nature, implicit in its character as an enabling medium of human interaction, social participation and cultural creation. For literature implies the use of language, which we take so much for granted that we forget that this is the most immediate form of social engagement that we can conceive of.

The very genre of literature which enjoys and presents mostly the resourcefulness of language for the concretization of human interactive engagement is poetry. Poetry is incidentally the oldest and the richest of the three genres of literature. Either in epic, heroic, or satiric mode, poetry expresses man's accomplishments or failings which usually confer image and status on his community and race. Its other forms are incantations, divination and exoteric which are deployed to probe into man's spirituality and mundane challenges. Other forms of poetry are songs or chants that may be comic, celebratory, bridal, pastoral or elegiac with which the poet entertains his fellow men and women or mourns the passage of members, expose and correct societal ills among other poetic essence.

AbdulRaheed Na'Allah's *Ahmed Fulani* and *Ilorin Praise Poetry* exemplify a song chronicling the image, diversity and cultural heritage of a multilingual and multi-ethnic society of Ilorin as destined or designated by colonial contraption or amalgamation to be part of the northern hemisphere.

Synopsis

Ahmed Fulani (AF) and *Ilorin Praise Poetry* (IPP) collections of poems are written and produced to reflect Ilorin cultural endowment as well as its religious and political practices. It is these sociological manifestations that define the strength and accomplishments of the community. The poet reflects the multilingual status of Ilorin; its dominance not just as the state capital but its overwhelming aura in the socio-political and economic affairs of Kwara State. Of utmost resonance is the cultural milieu and ethnic coloration of Ilorin which smacks of antithetical benevolence.

AbdulRaheed Na'Allah sings of Ilorin as a unique community among its northern committee of towns and cities. Ilorin is a mini North, a gateway to South and North and of course, the battle field for Northern and Southern politicians right from the time of Obafemi Awolowo and Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto. The poems are presented as praise songs with humanistic and historical touch as the poet delves into the oral traditional singing modes through clichés and banality. Yet satiric commentary is equally elevated especially with a reference to the larger enclave called Nigeria in the poet's bid to do a global comparative growth index.

In *Ahmadu Fulani: An African Poetry*, there are Thirty-seven (37) poems in subtitles which are divided into six (6) sections, while *Ilorin Praise Poetry* has a total number of Thirty (30) poems devoted to the praise of individuals, the city and nature. Both are performance poetry rich in direct adoption and translation of songs, proverbs, aphorism, anecdotes mostly from Yoruba and a few from Hausa and Fulani languages as being spoken in Ilorin. There are evidences of code-mixing of Fulani and Yoruba, English and Yoruba, Hausa and Yoruba and Arabic, among others. There is a reflection of Arabic language to enhance and confirm the religious status of Ilorin as the home of knowledge especially in Arabic studies. In the subtitle "Ilorin Afonja, Geri Alimi", the poet does not only extol the virtue of the city, he equally and proudly sings of its awesomeness:

Pebbles ask Hill
 Why hill mounts
 the ground
 Why it displaces pebbles on earth
 Hill laughs. Oh! What kids won't
 acknowledge their mother
 What children would dare question their own birth
 Ilorin Afonja laughs
 When lesser towns question her might! (IPP 1–2).

Of course, in the poet's refrain, Ilorin is an octopus among communities of Kwara State which stature is overbearing. It is like a Hill, towering above pebbles and a mother whose children pay obeisance to and dare not question about how she does her things. The poet says the city

Ilorin Afonja
 (Metal of Elephant, who dares)

Is it metal, or is it
 Elephant?
 However mighty a human
 Which of both can he swallow

The sprawling city, according to Na'Allah, cannot be submerged, overshadowed or overtaken by small communities because, metaphorically, it is a giant, as big as an elephant. And it is like the proverbial metal which cannot be swallowed by any human being no matter how powerful. Ilorin has come to stay as visible as a hill, and as giant as an elephant which the poet reverently refers to as his Love. In a rather incantatory manner, the poet intones:

Laugh,
 My love, laugh
 Laugh, Geri Alimi, laugh
 Daybreak can't hold-up from breaking
 Nightfall cannot refuse to fall;
 However long the day delays,
 Night falls and blankets our tired eyes
 And soon the dawn opens again
 Unruly sky, however cloudy, will
 Clear up for sun's rays
 My love, (its) from you your elephant
 inherits
 Its gorgeous zeal!

The subtitle hints of many elephants like him (the poet) who draw inspiration and zeal either to sing or forge ahead in one communal service or the other. As we later encounter in the poetic collections, these individuals include the poet's father, Ahmadu Fulani of Ilorin, Zulu Gambari, Sheik Adam Al Ilory, Sheik Kamaludeen, Dr. Olusola Saraki, Abiola Irele, and a host of others.

Thus, as observed of literature by Irele (44), Na'Allah's poetry as a "literary phenomenon derives its force from this association, which ensures its direct connection to the world of human experience, a connection that is mediated by the (poetic) peculiar mode of address". The language of his poetry is not only rich, but it is condensed and sublime, which the poet achieves through reconstruction and manipulation. In the collections under reference, Na'Allah succeeds in passing the poetic vision to the readers and society. Irele (44) portrays such poetic vision in the following words:

The literary phenomenon derives its force from this association, which ensures its direct connection to the world of human experience... through a reworking of language not merely to designate outer reality but indeed to evoke through image and symbol and bring alive to our senses and consciousness an inner essence by which we are inhabited and ultimately defined. It is through this heightening of language by which literature achieves its inward effect and brings us in touch with our inherent humanity that it assumes what one might call its moral valency.

Images, Voices and Poetic Mediation

In both collections selected for the paper, (*Ahmadu Fulani and Ilorin Praise Poetry*), the poet uses the medium to present a catalogue of ethnic and people(s) inhabiting Ilorin, his hometown. His poetry smacks of tribal diversity which defines the social and cultural network of Ilorin. It is these multi-layered practices and ethnic plurality that nurtured him and many others as indigenes of the capital city of Kwara State. In other words, the overriding idea that runs through the songs is the registration of the multilingual and multi-ethnic composition of Ilorin, the physical setting of the poems. Ilorin means two things in the real sense as a community and a capital city but it means many things to the poet. In his words, Na'Allah says:

Ilorin continues to boom as a multi-lingual and multi-ethnic community where Hausa, Yoruba, Fulani, Baruba, Nupe, Gobir and several other ethnic ancestries refer to as our Ilorin. Ilorin children! it is not a question for the Ilorin what post-modernists call hybridist, a nurture of identities or no-identity (AF xi).

Poetry thrives in the employment of imagery, symbolism and metaphor to create a mental reproduction or a description of people, icons, places and events. Obafemi (2) remarks that even though there has been no assailable definition of poetry either of the universal or national level, "in Africa and Nigeria, where until very recently, written records of the arts were not available, poetry, since recoverable memory, has been distinguished by its orality, its performance provenance...". Na'Allah's songs are purely traditional, which he dubbed as performance poetry. The African content of the songs is the oral flavour and traditional aesthetics which have been earlier mentioned in the previous

pages. Thus, in achieving his mission and vision, Na’Allah delves into songs to showcase the endowment of Ilorin. *Ilorin Praise Poetry* and *Ahmadu Fulani* are presented as performance poetry with African touch. The poet in the introductory part asserts that “praise poetry is an important performance poetry to African tradition” and that “while it preoccupies a genre of its own, it also forms a part of every genre of African oral poetry”. G. G. Darah (20) lends credence to the prevalence and functionality of oral poetry to African communities from which Na’Allah’s songs have been derived, borrowed or adapted.

Oral poetry, songs and allied arts constitute the bulk of oral literature resources in Nigeria. This fact is implicit in the sheer number of languages spoken in the country. Linguistic authorities agreed that there are 500 indigenous languages in Nigeria... the plurality of tongue offers a good content for the creation and performance of oral poetic forms A community of a few hundred people can have a repertoire made up of dozens of poems and songs.

In both Na’Allah’s poetry collections and as practically available, Ilorin just offers the multilingual content alluded to in Dara’s explanation above. Ilorin is not just a capital city of Kwara State but a gateway to the Northern and Southern hemispheres of Nigeria. But the poet professes that Ilorin has a rather metaphorical reference than a gateway. It is a microcosm of the macro Northern protectorate in what is today referred to as Northern Nigeria.

The North is heterogeneous and multi-ethnic in nature and what now constitutes nineteen (19) Northern states are an amalgamation of tribes, ethnic nationals and groups unified by colonial administration on the one hand and partly religion on the other. Ilorin boasts of many tribes, groups and peoples as a mini- Nigeria. It is a melting pot for migrants, caravans and settlers who came from far and near to settle in Ilorin. Na’Allah’s indicates that:

Ilorin people may prefer to define themselves as Ilorin or Yoruba Ilorin or name themselves Yoruba. Our king is Fulani, our Baloguns, the war lords, are Fulani, Hausa, and Yoruba; our religious leaders are of Malian, Fulani, and Yoruba ancestries! Our community Chiefs are from Baruba, Gobir, Nupe, Yoruba, and Hausa livings; and the ordinary persons are from all of the above! The salt and delicacies in Ilorin’s metaphoric soup form the richness in Ilorin’s cultural plurality! (IPP xiii).

Thus, what we have is a harvest of images and voices in both collections. The poet impresses it on his audience and readers that even though Yoruba remains the lingual franca of the people of Ilorin as the dominant language, it is one of the more than five languages being spoken. The others are Fulfulde, Nupe, Bariba/Batonu, Hausa and English languages. Attesting to this are a number of titles written in Hausa, Arabic, English and Yoruba.

There is ample evidence of code-mixing, code-switching and outright translation or adaptation of songs in various languages. In the following quoted excerpts from the collection, three major languages are adopted by the poet to communicate with the readers and audience in case the poems are chanted or read aloud to a live audience. These languages are Yoruba, Hausa and Arabic with Yoruba dominating. Here is a song in Arabic:

Laihala Llallahi
 La ilha
 Ko s' oba meji nibikan
 Lla' llahu, af' olohun
 Ohun ni n seye, ohun ni n semu
 N Ningbo bukata awa eda
 Eda o mookan wale aye
 Eda oni mookan rorun
 Iwa teda ba wu ni teda
 Ise teda ba see ni teda
 Iwa teda ba wu ni teda
 Al-humma an-nabi ejare
 Kaman ja s'orun lofiffo (IPP) .

What the poet says in Yoruba and Arabic in this song is that there is no other god except God, who is capable of all things; and that man does not bring anything to the world and will not take anything to heaven except his deeds and that man should do well in order not to go empty-handed to heaven.

The code switching occurs from Arabic to Yoruba and vice versa. The poet also code mixes both Yoruba and Arabic words. An evidence of the ethnic plurality of the inhabitants of Ilorin is the multilingual voicing the poet persona assumes.

In the song dedicated to Jawabi ta Sakkwata, he sings in Hausa.

Muugode Allah mu ya bamu maiki
 Zari jawabi nag a iyan Birin sheu ma-aiki

Don said a ilimi duniyan sai kaaruwa
 In baba ilimi ‘Dan fodio ya so asan sakkwato
 Ani da ilimi badu wanda sai banza damu (AF 52).

The song here is rendered in Arabic and Hausa. It is a celebration of knowledge because it is important to man and Usman Dan Fodio prioritised and acquired knowledge. The poet is grateful to God for this feat as knowledge turns a man from his ordinary status to being an important person.

In what sounds like the historical echo on the part of the ancient town of Ilorin which the poet truthfully and aesthetically presents is the evidence of the domination of Yoruba language and its adoption as the lingual Franca or the official and commonest language of communication of the people of Ilorin regardless of ethnic extraction. From historical account, Ilorin was founded by Afonja, a warrior and generalissimo of the then Oyo Empire. The heroic epithet or panegyric of Ilorin adopted by the poet is a testimony of the dominance of the Yoruba.

Ilorin afonja enu dun, iyo te
 Ilu to bi to yi o leegun
 Esin leegun ile wa
 Oko loro be (IPP).

The song means Ilorin has the appellation of or name after Afonja, one of its founders; its natives are blessed with the power of words; they are so religious that they never paraded masquerade but are known for display of chariots during wars.

And in the refrain for “Iye maja”, a popular deity in Yoruba mythology,

Iye maja yee!
 Iye maja o!
 Neither Egungun nor Orisa,
 Knows how you accompanied Are
 Onakakanfo
 To the embrace of Ilorin!
 They couldn’t explain
 How your sweet water entered
 Your coconut! (AF).

Afonja was joined by Alfa Alimi who came on an evangelistic cum political mission and upon the dethronement of Afonja, Sheik Alimi set up a Fulani oligarchy as his descendants have been occupying the throne

and ruling in Ilorin. Up till now, there is the supremacy tussle between Afonja's and Sheik Alimi's descendants which of course has polarized the community. But the poet, using poetic license and ingenuity, sings of the unity in diversity which both Afonja and Alimi symbolise.

Yeye O O!
 That day at ile Ilorin
 The dundun drum sent bembe on an errand,
 Asked Kakaki to bring out
 Its juiciest voice
 Iye maja
 Joined Iya kewu on the dance
 Of Adini
 And set a pace for our dance of wealth! (AF78)

Note: The person of *Iye Maja* and *Iya Kewu* dancing to the economic objects of drumming such as bembe, dundun with the acid voice of Kakaki-all united at the dance of Adini. It is the dance of wealth and unity of purpose. The poet goes further in his lyric of politics and unity.

Iye maya yeye yeye!
 Iye maja
 Whoever knows Iye maja
 And knows Iya kewu
 Would know Afonja and Alimi
 The dance of joy
 A dance of Annabi!
 Who can teach okoto
 How to dance! (78–79).

The fact that successive monarchs of Ilorin bear the title “Oba” attests to the pre-eminence of Yoruba in the community either in terms of historical exploit or lingual franca. Evidently, the poet writes or composes his poems mostly in English and Yoruba in both collections. Of the linguistic prowess of the poet, a reflection of his nurture and nature, Falola (22] attests to the influence of Arabic language, especially on the poetry development in Ilorin:

Arabic script was used in Northern Yoruba land to write the Yoruba language, and texts in Arabic and Hausa,... . Ilorin became the centre of literacy and learning, because of its close contact with Islam where Yoruba imams and teachers

write history, law and poetry, which were not substantially recovered.

It is obvious that as a performer and poet, Na’Allah is more at home, competent and skilful in the writing or composition of songs in Yoruba than in any other language. He has to his credit titles such as “Baba ni Baba mi”, “Eniyan Soro”, “Irele Rere”, “Kongi! Kongi o o!”, “Abiku”, “Talabami Gberu mi Dori”, “Iyaa mi”, “Omo mi Asab’i, “Aafa imo” among others. The list is endless. The point being made here is that Abdul Rasheed Na’Allah has more titles of poem in both collections in Yoruba language than in Hausa, Fulfude, or Arabic languages.

Apart from the linguistic dominance of English and Yoruba visibly registered in the collections, of essence is the looming image of the Fulani tribe in his poetry with the specific focus on *Ahmadu Fulani* and *Ilorin Praise Poetry*. From the title and dedication, Fulani, in the literal sense is an ethnic group in Nigeria and obviously African sub-region. But in the metaphorical sense, Fulani is a quintessential tribe; it is the tribe of Sheik Alimi to whom the poet ascribes the rulership and leadership of Ilorin and by implication the entire Northern region. The Ilorin monarchy presided over by Alimi’s descent claims their origin and source from Sokoto which incidentally is the seat of the caliphate.

Of serious implication both spiritual and political is the disposition of the poet to the appellation of Fulani which his father wears. In dedicating the songs to his father, he sings of him in the subtitle “Ahmadu Fulani”:

Gentle, gently, his steps sound gently on the sand
 His character steps, gently, Fulani gentility!
 My father did the Fulani, people thought he
 had never approached a woman
 My father did Quranic learning, they
 thought it was for avoiding physical work.
 No, it’s not for an inability to talk to women,
 It isn’t for not wanting to perform hard labor;
 For respect, courteousness for rewards
 Learning the Quran, closeness to God/Akewukewe (AF 13).

The performative flavour of the poetry is underscored by the refrain recaptured and reworked by the poet in singing mode. The subtitle “Fulani O Filago” exemplifies this adaptation.

Fulani 'O Filago'
 Gbomi kana o pon roro
 Bukele meji o so fafa!
 Full, Fulani, filani
 Full Alafia
 Phu! Phu! Fill the air
 Your Alafia-health
 Full to the brim
 Fulani O filage
 Gbomi kana o pon roro
 Bukele meji o so fafa!

It is a traditional song in praise of the Fulani. It means Fulani are fair in complexion as if they were boiling water; and fart indiscriminately after swallowing two morsels of amala. In fact, onomatopoeia is employed "phu! Phu!" to enhance the rhythm of the song.

Socio-Political Overtures

AbdulRasheed Na'Allah's collections lend themselves to the utilitarian essence of the art and specifically poetry as they affect the society for which they are produced. Literature is an act and a social product as observed by Wolf (1981) and Lentricchia (1983). On the one hand, the volumes are meant to praise, eulogise, venerate and commend. For instance, *Ahmadu Fulani* is written to honour and mourn the passing of the poet's biological father, Ahmadu Fulani, as attested to by the poet in the blurb of the collection.

Ahmadu Fulani: An African poetry is a volume in English, Yoruba and Hausa, celebrating the memory of the poet's father and speaking to the lessons the poet learned from his father as a child.

The poetic lines are written to chronicle the tutelage the poet had both from parental and communal angles. His dexterity, competence and singing prowess are a product of the nurture he received right from his childhood.

But if *Ahmadu Fulani* is a dedication, *Ilorin Praise Poetry* is humanistic and eulogistic in content and tone. It presents an array of icons, legends, figures and persons, both male and female. It is a roll call of who is who in Ilorin whose identity, vocation or calling ranges from spiritualists, clerics, politicians, musicians, academics, administrators,

mothers, fathers, youths, places among others. But while it could be said that the praise chant in *Ilorin Praise Poetry* is exclusively reserved for local icons of the place of birth of the poet, *Ahmadu Fulani* extends frontier; there is a reference to international arena where the likes of Irele, Soyinka, Osundare, Jawabi ta Sakkatawa and Dankeli Burodi Buzu symbolise.

For instance, some lines of his praise poetry for Abilola Irele go thus,

Abiola omo Irele ee
 Ire o, alekun ire fun Irele
 Ire fun Irele
 Irele owo, Irele iyi
 Ekorin fun Irele o
 Baba rere oni wa rere (AF 47).

Meaning:

Abiola, son of Irele
 Goodness, abundance of goodness
 Goodness for Irele
 Irele for wealth, Irele for honour
 Sing for Irele
 a good father, a man of good habit.

And for Soyinka entitled “Kongi! Kongi o o !!!”

(fun omowe Soyinka)

Wole o
 Wole omo Soyinka
 Maa wo ile maa rora

Wole o Ori baba wa o gbe wa (48)
 Yo bawa tun orile ede wa se
 Yofun eniti ngboro ni ima to kun fun ogbon inu,
 Yo f’eni to l’eti leti lati gbo ohun to niye
 Ti ile t’oko ko ma ri onje je.

Meaning:

Wole, son of Soyinka, step the ground gently; Wole, our father’s spirit will redeem us; our father’s spirit will help us redeem this land; may it help those who have ears hear and heed what is valuable; may all and sundry be able to feed.

It is a two-in one song. In the song, the poet would not but wholly praise as he seizes the refrain to delve into the nation's gory picture. His approach to praising Soyinka is to hint on Soyinka's life and labour in relation to Nigeria's leadership and economic challenges.

In this way, Na'Allah however could not help but to betray his emotion as he reserves some satiric refrains for the other group who in his view are opposed to the growth of humanity. There are some of the poems which negate or deviate from the "praise and worship" mode of the volumes. The poet's guiding art could be located in the artistry of oral art forms.

Here, he assumes the image of a satirist and a social crusader as he weaves his lines to sermonize on the baleful aura which has enveloped the socio-political and economic life of his people.

The song entitled "Oil Price", "Alara", Bombou, "Global Africa, How many?" All wrapped in allegorical refrain of sensitization, direct commentary, lamentation and prayers.

For instance,

America
Gave a warning today
Bring your price down
Or we release from reserve!

Another warning!
Oh, Saudi
OH, Kuwait,
Just remember
SADAM.
Stampeding,
Oh, we'll pump more!
Twice more
Trice more
More! More!! More!!! (AF 27).

The efficacy of words is re-echoed in the subtitle "Changing the World" composed for the consumption of Peter Dietsch of CBC Radio who once queried the essence of poetry in nation building.

This journalist wants to know
Whether poetry can change the world or whether
Poets plane the earth and roll it over
This journalist

Wants to know
How Oka-snake decides to spur its poison (AF 29).

The foresight of the poet resonates on the state of the nation and especially in the area of the economy. In most oil producing nation states of African now, the fortune of proceeds from oil exploration keeps dwindling on yearly basis. It is either the market prospect for oil is becoming extinct or it is drying. Besides, in what manner are the proceeds appropriated? Other titles in *Ahmadu Fulani* which are laced with satirical chants include “Adieu” Abacha, “Patriotism”, “I no Sabi o!”

In *Ilorin Praise Poetry*, the volume too has its satiric lines; the poet does not just praise, he also criticises certain ugly or unsavoury practices which he notices around him. His poetic tirade is targeted at Ilorin’s brand of politics.

Ilorin politics are like the buyers and
sellers at Oja-Oba
Politics in a trade in Ilorin
The buyers are many and the sellers,
a few
Ilorin politics resembles *robo* and
dodonkuwa to many who can eat them .
Politics, to Ilorin, is
Like a ball that roles
From all corners of a football field
And Ilorin scores its goals
Sometimes tearing the net to pieces (IPP 123).

In the song quoted above, the poet takes a swipe at the politicians whose approach to politicking often unsettles the community. Their antics, the poet interprets to mean merchandising as they trade in politicking. These politicians of Ilorin stock are business-like and their article of trade is nothing but political power.

Conclusion

The essay has discussed the content and form of AbdulRasheed Na’Allah’s *Ilorin Praise Poetry* and *Ahmad Fulani* as performance songs. The heroic songs are reserved for scores of deserving individuals while invectives are poured on those the poet considers ineligible for his eulogy. From the evidence of poetic rendition recaptured in writing by

Na’Allah in the two collections chosen for the study, the image of Ilorin as the ethnic hub of the northern Nigeria is coloured by multicultural and multi-ethnic city. Ilorin is not better seen than a mini northern Nigeria.

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