

The Epistolary Form of Narrative and Communication in Abubakar Gimba's Letters to My Children and Sarah Ladipo Manyika's Independence

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Annotation: *This paper explores the epistolary form of narrative and communication in the works of Abubakar Gimba and Sarah Ladipo Manyika. The paper explains that there are different forms which writers can use to convey their message in literature, which the epistolary letter writing form is one of them. In his epistles, Gimba addresses all the problems that keep the nation from development in the past and the present suggesting to his children what they can achieve with moral rejuvenation and would address corruption as the root of the problems facing the nation. While Independence also traces the trajectory of Nigeria's political past from the period of independence to present. The paper adopts modernism as a theory and concludes that the epistle as form of narrative and communication can be deployed effectively in literature, citing Mariama Bâ's So Long a Letter as an example.*

Keywords: *Epistolary Form, Narrative, Communication, Abubakar Gimba's Letters to My Children and Sarah Ladipo Manyika's Independence.*

Introduction

Literature has traditionally been applied to those imaginative works of poetry, prose and drama, distinguished by the intentions of the writers and the perceived aesthetic excellence of their execution. Accordingly, this application of works is done through a variety of ways including language, historical period, genre and subject matter. As Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th edition considers literature to be "writings having excellence of form or expression and expressing ideas of permanent or universal interest", it is pertinent that literature work is done using forms and style. Therefore, in this context, the epistolary form suffices.

Communication generally, is a very important activity of life. Humans and animals communicate in different ways and for different reasons, and language is the primary but complex form of communication by which human beings are distinguished from other living things. Humans use language to achieve premeditated goals to defend themselves, to initiate and sustain interaction with one another.

However, in an epistolary novel, the usual form is letters. This form is considered to add greater realism to a story, because it mimics the workings of real life. The epistolary novel is popularly

believed to have started in the 18th century, and after a fading phase in the tail of same century, its resurgence on the literary scene and its experimental use by writers including those of African descent has offered credence to it as a formidably acceptable form of literature. It has also been considered to have seen continuous use, surviving in exceptions or in fragments in the 19th century novels. In view of the foregoing, epistolary novels can be categorized based on the number of people whose letters are included. This gives three types of epistolary novels namely: monologic (giving the work of only one character), dialogic (giving the work of two characters), and polylogic (with three or more letter-writing characters).

Statement of the Problem

Despite its wide acceptability, and accompanying realistic approach, the epistolary form of novel does not seem to have enough space in the Nigerian literature. What then could be said to be the major problem of this form of writing as it patterns to Nigerian literature? This research therefore seek to explore the epistolary form of narrative and communication as presented by these writers in the twenty first century Nigerian literature, and to dissect its complexity and the role it plays in literature.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The main aim of this research work is to illustrate the use of epistolary as a means of narrative writing and communication.

The objectives of this research include the following:

- i. To Illustrate how Abubakar Gimba's *Letters To My Children* and Sarah Ladipo Mayinka's *Independence* presents very important themes using epistolary form of writing and communication.
- ii. To Show the importance of the epistolary form of writing and communication in literature
- iii. To Show how the epistolary can be used effectively in literature.

Scope of the Study

This research falls within the works of Abubakar Gimba's *Letters to My Children* and Sarah Ladipo Mayinka's *Independence*. Also inclusive are; a critical analysis of the two texts, Encapsulating the epistolary form of writing and communication as a means of writing in contemporary Africa and Nigerian Literature.

Significance of the Study

It is hoped that this study, when successfully completed has a lot of roles to play. This work will greatly be of a good link to writers who want to use the epistolary form for their creative and literary works. It will also be significantly important in assisting other researchers who want to research on the subject matter of epistolary as a form of writing and communication in Nigerian literature.

Research Methodology

This research uses the qualitative research method. Qualitative Research is an interdisciplinary, trans-disciplinary and sometimes counter-disciplinary field. Abubakar Gimba's *Letters To My Children* And Sarah Ladipo Mayinka's *Independence* are used as primary sources, while other sources serve as secondary sources.

Theoretical Framework

Theories play important role in the analysis of works. In literature, it is called literary theory or criticism. This is the body of ideas and methods we use in the practical reading of literature.

Baker (2012) points that literary theory refers to a particular form of literary criticism in which particular academic, scientific, or philosophical approaches are followed in a systematic fashion while analyzing literary texts.

This paper makes use of the modernism theory. In literary criticism, the term “modernism” refers to a change or shift in the aesthetics of literary works as seen in the post world war literature. Writers and critics of the modernist tradition believe that the ordered and stable narrative methods of the past are inadequate to capture the anarchy and chaos of the globalised contemporary world. In the words of Oloruntoba-Oju, “Modernism is a subversion of old ideas about art and aesthetics and their replacement with a self conscious expression which is representative of individual artists” (Qtd Ortserga). In her contribution, Scchriber observes that modernist fiction rejects chronological narrative in favour of some kind of experiments, thus telling the story with a difference (138).

Some commentators define modernism as a mode of thinking—one or more philosophically defined characteristics, like self-consciousness or self-reference, that run across all the novelties in the arts and the disciplines. More common, especially in the West, are those who see it as a socially progressive trend of thought that affirms the power of human beings to create, improve, and reshape their environment with the aid of practical experimentation, scientific knowledge, or technology. From this perspective, modernism encouraged the re-examination of every aspect of existence, from commerce to philosophy, with the goal of finding that which was 'holding back' progress, and replacing it with new ways of reaching the same end.

The idea of modernism could be shrink as a mode of thinking that brings to a new mode. With this, modernism is thought to be a socially progressive trend of thought that affirms the power of human beings to create, improve, and reshape their environment with the aid of practical experimentation, scientific knowledge, or technology. From this perspective, modernism encouraged the re-examination of every aspect of existence, from commerce to philosophy, with the goal of finding that which was 'holding back' progress, and replacing it with new ways of reaching the same end.

Rogger Griffffin , therefore puts it that modernism can be defined as a broad cultural, social, or political initiative, sustained by the ethos of "the temporality of the new". Modernism sought to restore, Griffin writes, a "sense of sublime order and purpose to the contemporary world, thereby counteracting the (perceived) erosion of an overarching “nomos” or ‘sacred canopy’, under the fragmenting and secularizing impact of modernity." We can also deduce from this belief that modernism thrives to create new ways of doing things. In literature, therefore, modernism explores avenues of trying out new ways of writing or, of making a way for conventions to be broken.

This research, therefore adopts the modernist theory in its analysis, even though letter writing as a form of communication is very old, its adoption on the literary scene is relatively new fashioned.

Review of Related Literature

The English word “epistle” originated from a Latin word, epistola, that itself originated from a Greek word, pronounced epistole, which meant to send on. While the English word “pistol” originated from the same Latin version of the word, epistola, as “epistle,” epistles were a means delivering of communication, not of delivering bullets.

The English word “apostle” originated from a Greek word, pronounced apostolos, which although related to the Greek word for “epistle,” refers to a person sent, rather communication sent. In the Holy Bible, apostles used epistles to communicate when they were unable to make the journey in person. Epistles were letters sent by apostles, to individuals, or to congregations of Christians in general with Biblical teaching and prophecy. All have since been read by a vast number of people.

The Epistle is a Greek word for a formal didactic letter; a written communication. From the catholic Encyclopedia, and Spiritual view, the Epistle came out first under the general concept of a book as in the letters of the apostles in the New Testament. Later, ‘certain translational expressions signifying ‘writing’ and finally derivations were adopted by different writers.’ The Biblical epistle comprise those of the old testament beginning with David’s Letter to Joab in 2 Samuel (11:14-15), Jezebel’s Letter in I kings (21:8-9) Prophet Elias to king Joram, Jeremiah to the exiles in Babylon (Jeremiah 29: 1-59) among others. These were authoritative letters, advising and ordering certain actions to avoid pending dangers.

The New Testament epistles were even more developed with critics making distinctions between letter and epistle. These distinctions credited to Professor Diessmann defined the letter as a private and confidential conversation with the addressee, his anticipated answers shaping the course of the writing while the epistle addresses all whom it may concern, and tends to publication. The letter is a spontaneous product of the writer; the epistle follows the rules of art. The critics concluded that if publication be regarded as an essential condition of literature, the letter may be described as a ‘preliterary form of self- expression’. The Apostle James Epistles were Letters to groups of people he had visited in his ministry. The 13 Pauline epistles of Paul are common references. The Epistle is usually addressed to an absent person on a particular occasion. It is a long, formal composition and is instructive. Abubakar Gimba’s Letters fall into this category. They are written to some person (s), and Sarah Ladipo’s letters. Gimba’s Letters are printed communication directed to ‘My Children’ the ‘Unborn Child’ and ‘Muslim Fundamentalist’ and they inculcate literary culture, impart knowledge and encompass writing as a profession. These letters follow literal interpretations attending to every detail Gimba’s letters are complaint or protest addressed to one person or group but intended for the general public, often Nigerian but also global using conventional symbols associated with the youth, religionists, government or the international community. His Symbols are often associated with phonetic values of Nigerian English.

In Ladipo’s *In dependence*, a young Tayo Ajayi sails to England from Nigeria on a study scholarship. As he finds himself among a generation high on visions of a new world, he thinks about his newly independent country and the ills that bedevil her. Venessa, a girl he initiates love affair with begins a correspondence which makes this novel take the form of epistolary. Tayo himself writes to his parents and siblings back home, while his father and uncle does same in reply.

The Epistle as a Style of Narrative Writing

Style is defined by Lucas (1955:9) as “the effective use of language, especially in prose, whether to make statements or to arouse emotions. It involves first of all the power to put fact with clarity and brevity.” Style could also be said to be the description and analysis of the variability forms of linguistic items in actual language use. Style is applicable to virtually everything we do. However, there are different styles of writing, one of which is the epistolary. When a story is composed entirely of letters, diary entries or these days even e-mails or blog posts, it is known as an epistolary style. Nobody really sends letters anymore, but back in the day, written correspondence was rich with personality sentiment, and engaging story telling. Authors know this, which is why letters have been incorporated into novels since around the 15th century. An epistolary novel is a novel written as a series of documents. The usual form is letters, although diary entries, newspaper clippings and other documents are used. Recently, electronic “documents” such as recordings and radio, blogs, and e-mails have also come into use. It’s a genre of fiction which first gained popularity in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the epistolary novel is a form in which most or all of the plot is advanced by the letters or journal entries of one or more of its characters, and which marked the beginning of the novel as a literary form. The epistolary form can add greater realism to a story, because it mimics the workings of real life. It is thus able to demonstrate differing points of view without recourse to the device of an omniscient narrator.

Epistolary novels can be monologic, which means they focus exclusively on the letters or diary entries of one character. The *Perks of being a wallflower*, penned by American novelist Stephen Chbosky, is a good example of a modern monologic epistolary novel, because it consists entirely of the main character's letters to an anonymous recipient. They could also be dialogic, consisting of correspondence between two characters, or polylogic, where multiple characters are represented. *Les Liaisons dangereuses* written by French author Choderlos de Laclos, is a strong example of polylogic epistolary writing, because the alternating letters work well with the mood of the novel. They let the reader wonder who to trust, and they create an air of gossip and mystery. The letter has become a popular literary medium since Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740) Alice Walker's *The Colour Purple* (1983) which presents Celie, a main character who has been abused by a man she calls father. In her loneliness and despair she writes to God. It was an immediate hit. Rodger Morrison's *My Dearest Letters* (2003) is a set of love Letters from William to Annie whom he meets in the street. Their relationship develops and the story is told with embedded poetry, romance and religious overtones. Richardson's *Pamela* sometimes regarded as the 'First English Novel', wrote to a 'handsome' girl to instruct young girls on 'how to avoid the snares that may be laid against their virtue'. He hoped the style of the epistolary would turn young people away from the romance of the time and 'promote the cause of religion and virtue'. Popular on the African scene is Mariama Ba's *So Long a Letter* and its critique of gender discrimination in marriage. She writes her problems in a letter to her friend who has opted out of a difficult marriage and gone abroad. Another is Abubakar Gimba. Gimba's Letters are directed to 'My Children', the 'Unborn Child' and the 'Muslim Fundamentalist'. The Nigerian sociopolitical situation and its effects on its citizenry is the focus of Gimba's epistles. The people's reactions to their condition denigrate and fail to ensure human development and by extension national development. His letters are a critique of the poor education available to the citizens of Nigeria represented by the Children/Unborn Child/Fundamentalist. It is thus significant when sociological psychological and political keeps cropping up in Gimba's letters and showing in what ways the reader must decide to put him/herself for as Foster says, 'now is always a product of then'(290).

The Concept of Communication

Communication is sharing our feelings, ideas and opinions with others. This can be intellectual, personal, spoken or written in nature.

Communication also takes either oral or written, and it is a two-way process. In spoken communication, we have speakers and listeners who send and receive verbal messages from each other. In written communication, we have readers and writers, whereas in visualization and observation, the symbols and signs are included.

The word communication is derived from the Latin word 'communis', which means 'common', i.e., to share, exchange, send, transmit, write, relate and communicate. The other etymological source mentions that 'communication' is derived from the Latin term 'communicare' which means to impart or participate. This word often denotes and means different things to different people. In short, we can define communication as sharing and feelings mutually. As it involves interaction, it encourages exchange of ideas until all the experiences become a common profession. Communication is essential for close, sympathetic relationships in the society and for transformation of men, material and thoughts from one place to another. In a classroom, the meaning of communication is related to the message and counter-messages, which constitute the teaching, learning process. This involves initiation, reception and response that serve as feedback.

Communication Process

Communication is interactive by nature. The importance and meaning of communication pertain to the fact that receivers and senders of messages are connected through space and time. Communication as a process has two participants- the sender of the message and the receiver of

the message. When these messages are transmitted, they activate the person and this response is the purpose of communication. Thus, we can say that communication requires a source, a sender, a message and a person at the receiving end. Human beings are primarily related to the study of communication. Nevertheless, this process is present in all living things and is a fundamental and universal process. Communication influences the activities of the human community at large. Social development is a prominent feature of effective techniques of communication, which is necessary for sustaining the growth and development.

Communication Cycle

Communication is purposeful and comprises six components. They are:

1. Sender of the message
2. Receiver of the message
3. Message
4. Medium
5. Setting
6. Feedback

The cycle of communication works effectively when a sender formulates the message, encodes it and transmits the sound waves properly. This message is channelized via a medium to reach the receiver. The message can be termed as communicated when the receiver successfully interpretes it, decodes the message, formulates the counter message (feedback) and transmits it back to the person at the other end via the medium. This has been the way messages are communicated through ages.

In both spoken and written forms, technological process of communication remains the same. In a basic system of communication, sender, message, medium and receiver are the primary elements. Several linguists and communication specialists might have proposed various theories of communication. Even then, the basic model is repetitive, as only the dysfunctional factor or noise comes in as an extra element.

Critics views on Gimba's *Letters to My Children* and Ladipo's *In Dependence* as Epistolary Novels.

Many scholars and literary practitioners have tried to explain the epistolary novel, drawing examples from the two texts.

In an essay titled "Epistolary as an instrument of Postcolonial Discourse in Sarah Ladipo Manyika's *In Dependence*", Paul Liam asserts that the novel "... deploys the epistolary technique in x-raying postcolonial themes with a special reflection on the realities that confronts post independent nations, located within the era of military rule in Nigeria.". Exploring further, he states that the author plays a prank on the reader by what he calls "the emotional angle", which brings about love to subtly explore racial tension, and to hint at the bigger question of a common humanity in an unequaled world"

In his review of *In Dependence* on the Lagos Review, Toni Kan says " Manyika, humanises the post-colonial dialectic by giving it a romantic feel thus making it markedly different from other books that address the same basic concerns of Africa as a basket case". In this case, the love story between Tayo, the son of a Nigerian civil servant and Vanessa, daughter of a British colonial officer offers a narrative that relegates the anger and rage and chronicle of Africa's ills to the background. This furthers to tell of a way the author downplays on the flared emotions that trailed colonialism. Kan's views are critical in rethinking a new structure for the African state after independence, and not the new normal we have come to accept of Africa a dark continent with nor good culture, judicial system, and economic power. As its fulcrum of *In Dependence*,

which is a play on the state of independence in Africa at the start of the book, on the one hand as well as a comment on how African nations claim independence while still remaining dependent on their former colonizers offers a fresh and stimulating perspective to the ever growing corpus of post-colonial literature (Kan 2020).

In collaborating Kan's views, Susan Nwaobiala opines that, because the novel is brought home to the ills of colonialism, and in far away Diaspora, the characters and their lives feel real as one could "connect with them on an emotional level".

Since the release of *In Dependence*, it has received wonderful reviews from writers all over. In a compelling recommendation, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o says of the novel that "In Dependence is a riveting love story across the challenges of race, geography and scars of colonial history." This confirms the fact of the book revealing colonial oddities in a soothing way laden with love and romance.

To further demonstrate its acceptance and prominent role on the literary scene, Louis Gates Jr. Comments that "Sarah Ladipo Manyika tells a compelling story that challenges centuries of stereotypes of what an African story can be—one that weaves love, history and race across decades and continents. It also reminds us of how Africa has always been embedded in the world and the world in Africa. The novel is a graceful and astonishing achievement."

Relatedly, Abubakar Gimba's *Letters to My Children*, has anchored in a new way of educational upliftment of both the girl child and the boy child especially in the northern region of Nigeria, considered to be educationally backward. As a firm believer in the virtues of hardwork and true thorough education, Gimba fought for educational attainment of many in that region.

Commenting on the role Gimba's work plays, Gimba Kakanda said "As social critics, those of us who once disagreed with Gimba, for sincerely highlighting that the main trouble with Nigeria is its people in his 2008 epistolary work "A Letter to the Unborn Child", dissenting from Chinua Achebe's now flawed assertion, a view he actually changed in latter years of his public intellection, that "the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership". Kakanda further comments that Gimba's 2007 epistolary novel *letters to my children*, plays a role in the lives of both the students and parents as he addressed the letters at various times either during PTA meeting or his children's prize giving days.

It could be deduced that the nature of the epistolary genre makes it so plastic that it can adjust to fit the needs of communication in the communicants' environment (Couldry & McCarth, 2004). This is explained by the fact that the epistolary genre is a direct descendent of oral communication mediated, written dialog communication between people unable to engage in direct oral di alog (Vinogradov 2014). & Skvortsov, If the epistolary genre is used in a fiction text, it transforms to fit the needs of the text and acquires the attributes of a fiction text. Its expressive means are modified in accordance with the author's intent, the pl ot of the work, and its characters (Kuryanovich, 2013). Furthermore, according to Ye. Senichkina (2015), the entire factual nature of the epistolary genre, as its main stylistic feature, in this case is subject to the artistic intent, i.e. the documental n ature of the letter is transferred into the mythopoetic sphere of the author. If the epistolary genre is used in mass media, it acquires the attributes of social evaluation (Serdali et al., 2016), public expression (Adams, 2009), and bears the signs of a r equest or appeal to a specific addressee or a wide audience of readers (Buchanan, 2014; Kachkayeva, 2014), depending on the context of the published letter, etc. The two authors under review have both shown the clarity and effective use of the letter format in delivering powerful narratives.

Textual Analysis

Abubakar Gimba's pessimism in most of his works, *Letters to My Children* inclusive, about Nigeria and the State is unquestionable. He would want the people and the state to change for the better especially for the sake of the Nigerian child whom he believes has no optional country to

Nigeria and must necessarily move away from the conduct that bedevils the nation. He thus adopts the epistle in which he is a passionate narrator capturing the devastating truth, reality, perception and delusion of the compromised situation of Nigeria. He adopts an ethical stand point evaluating the conduct of Nigerians and the country's short-comings since independence. This Chapter looks at the objective view of a passing generation and the country's fate in absence of the moral principle. The Nigerian sociopolitical situation and its effects on its citizenry is the focus of this epistle. The people's reaction to their condition denigrate and fail to ensure human development and by extension national development. These letters are a critique of the poor education available to citizens of Nigeria represented by the Children. Their failures are as a result of this education which has worsened since independence. His references to what was and what it is now agrees with Ojaide (2011) That, 'African Literature has to promote literacy to ensure human development as a literate people do not forget and so learn from past mistakes and failures and resort to strategies that succeeded in the past.'

Gomba's view on Nigeria's problems contradicts Achebe's assertion that leadership is what is wrong in society; he takes a position that followers of political leaders and other members of society magnified societal problems in Nigeria.

Letters to my Children: An Analysis

Abubakar Gimba's *Letters to My Children* comprises two letters. The first was addressed to 'My dearest daughter' which was first presented at the Fifth Speech and Prize-Giving Graduation Ceremony of the Federal Government Girls' College, Bida on 14 June, 1986. The second letter was addressed to 'My dear son' and was first delivered at the Speech and Prize giving Day Ceremony of New Horizons College, Minna, on 1 August 2000. In his *Letter to My Daughter*, he laid emphasis on not just education but a good one. After congratulating her on being successfully admitted into Form Five (now SSS III), he encouraged her to work hard so as to live a respectable, peaceful and independent life. The importance of education was stressed by citing examples with the plight of the women in the village who got little or no education and also some of the girls in the neighbourhood who didn't take their secondary school education seriously thereby terminating their chances of getting into tertiary institutions. He mentioned to his daughter just how selfishly unreasonable and irresponsible men can be. This and a host of others portrayed the economy and scarcity of good husbands. It's unfortunate that most Muslim families are guilty of the misuse and abuse of religion to maltreat their wives. Quoting from the Qur'an and hadith, Gimba stated the importance of the girl-child education. The true meaning of gender equality was stated as non-superiority between the sexes and not sameness of identity, giving a clear cut distinction between the sexes as each has its roles, rights and responsibilities which must be given mutual respect. He encouraged her involvement in extracurricular activities like the Women's Rights Club that fights the inferiority complex imposed on the womenfolk and end the mental oppression. The second part of Gimba's letter titled, '*If your tomorrow comes*', was addressed to his son. He started by thanking the son for the letter he wrote informing him of their school's upcoming Parents Teachers Association (PTA) meeting and the importance of his (Gimba) presence. Unfortunately, he won't be able to attend the meeting as a result of a contract he is pursuing at Abuja in order to sustain the family. The author went further to tell his son about a poetry competition among secondary schools which he attended at Abuja. The title was '*The future is ours*'. The presentations were described as interesting and touching and made him think of his own son's future. Gimba encouraged his son to strive hard for a bright and successful future, this is achieved by seeking knowledge, both western and Islamic no matter how far he has to go to obtain it. This extends to having good manners as enjoined by Allah(SWT). A successful future depends on the hard work of both the parent and the child. He frowns at greediness, selfishness and being proud. The building blocks for a successful future include honesty, patience and tolerance, the dangers of hard drugs, bad company and secret societies were not left out either. Worshiping and consciousness of the creator were termed as most important. Obedience and kindness to parents and teachers also counts among others. In

conclusion, Gimba advised his son to stay away from religious arguments and should respect other people's beliefs.

Epistolary Discourse in *letters to My Children*

Gimba is familiar with his subject, and chooses words with caution and purpose deploying them in ways that add beauty and depth to meaning. Typical of epistles, the writer dominates the world of his characters, their physical terrain, and ennobles them, sensitizing his readers to the beauty of their religion and cultural heritage. He emphasizes the problems in relation to their practices. Education is a value Gimba uplifts simultaneously with the challenges the community faces as a result of its absence or its promotion in little measure. *Letters to My Children* comprises two letters, the first one was addressed to 'My Daughter' while the second letter was to 'My Son' titled 'If your tomorrow comes'. The key words in his *Letter to My Daughter*, he notes in the introduction are 'Girls Education' and 'Liberation' adding that 'for in the word, 'girl', a woman is born and liberation is a condition that seeks for change'(sic). Liberation presupposes a condition of oppression, suppression, repression and bondage (5). Gimba castigates the women for the widespread ignorance and living on in men's concept of keeping women in their proper place and promoted by a male-dominated society. In his letter, he congratulates his daughter for passing her promotional examination to her final class in secondary school but goes on to remind her it is not enough to finish and come home to get married. He informs her that good men are scarce and the majority abuse and misuse religion to abuse their wives.(11), noting that most men ignore the Holy Qur'an which says men and women are equal and treat their women as if God has decreed men superior. He blames this on men's ignorance of Islamic teachings. He advises her to work hard, get a good result that will get her a professional university education that will not only enable her to be self sufficient but be a good mother, raise good children who will in turn be good parents that will evolve a good nation. Gimba in the epistles' didactic form explains to his 'little girl' the serious business of education and religious instructions, encourages her to be involved in extracurricular activities such as the 'Women's Rights Club' to fight inferiority complex imposed on women and know her rights but not the wrong type of feminism being practiced by her mother's contemporaries, confusing equality and sameness. The letter concludes with a sincere hope that the girl will see her role in the social development of the country as 'behind every successful nation is an educated woman folk' (15).

The second letter, 'If your tomorrow comes' (16) is to his son, also in secondary school. Here the father writes to his son explaining to him (son) why he would not attend the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) meeting as much as he wanted to. This is because he had to be in Abuja to get a contract in order to take care of the family, his school fees and that of his brothers and sisters which have recently increased. In the letter to his son, Gimba informs him of the need for a contract, the difficulties of getting a contract and the need to know a senator who knows a minister, a director or a permanent secretary. He tells his son he has met someone who knows a minister and has an appointment fixed for Saturday which is why he cannot attend the PTA meeting. This is an important factor in the survival game in Nigeria where the government is the 'business centre' where one could get a contract with the right connections.

In his letter to the son, Gimba encourages the boy to not just read but emphasizes the importance of writing. He tells his son of a poetry competition he attended and a poem titled 'The future is ours.' He educates his son on the benefits of this competition but concludes with a question, 'if the future is theirs, what sort of future is theirs?'(19). As to his daughter he tells his son to work hard and uphold the culture of good manners enjoined by God. Here he uses the allegory of the mango tree which if not properly tendered will not only fail to bear fruit but die. Hard work, tolerance, speaking the truth and keeping promises, he notes, are important integrity builders. He warned against not being proud or greedy and keeping away from drugs and friends who indulge in such habits and most importantly worshipping God, obeying teachers, being kind to parents and having consideration for others will ensure a bright future. He goes further to inform his son

of the dangers of appointing a thief or a greedy man to run the ministry of education or health. These areas will end up in poor conditions. He chronicles the disadvantages of cheats and lies in spite of the initial financial benefits and typical of the folk stories, such people end up miserably. He concludes by advising his son to keep away from religious arguments and only seek religious knowledge and understanding and never to behave as if he holds the key to anybody's house in paradise(23). He enjoins him to respect other people's beliefs and be tolerant. With the social conditions of the day, Gimba is indeed writing this letter to all Nigerian children in secondary and tertiary schools.

In Dependence: An Analysis

In Dependence tells the story of TayoAjayi, a Nigerian man who gets a scholarship to study at Oxford in the 1960s, and Vanessa Richardson, the daughter of an ex-colonial officer. While it is a story of their love which spans from 1963 to 1998, it's way more than that. It's also a story about Nigeria, its independence and the changes that occur in the country post- independence - the Biafran war, the first coup and the numerous countercoups, military dictatorships, the brief return to civilian rule, exile of Nigerians, and towards the end of the book the eventual return to democracy. There are also issues of race, racism and cultural differences. We see Tayo, Vanessa, as well as a host of other characters, live their lives amidst all these issues. Tayo is an intelligent man but he always seems to do wrong. He tries to do the right thing, never wants to hurt anyone but in the end he does, especially the women in his life.

"*InDependence*" was revealed within the UK in 2008, in Nigeria in 2009 and within the US in 2011. It's Sarah LadipoManyika's first novel.

The novel begins within the early 1960s when TayoAjayi meets Vanessa Richardson, the gorgeous daughter of an ex-colonial officer. Their story, which spans three continents and 4 turbulent a long time, is that of a courageous however bittersweet love affair. It's the story of people struggling to search out their place inside unsure political instances – a narrative of ardour and idealism, braveness and betrayal.

In Dependence will be described as a love story. However it's greater than that. It traces the trajectory of Nigeria's political historical past; the navy coups, the dangerous and treacherous management, and its renewed tentative steps in direction of democracy.

It speaks to the demise – within the 1980s – of Nigeria's worldwide status and the nation's quickly destabilizing actuality. It seems to be on the poor whose state of affairs by no means improved however really worsened.

Utilizing occasions in Tayo's life, it describes the consequences of misrule on the nation's universities and the following huge mind drain that Africa skilled.

Sarah Manyika achieves all this with a voice and an outlook that's really genuine and goal.

The creator captures the temper and really feel of totally different a long time and the three continents – Africa, Europe and America – that function settings for the story. Its scope is huge and sweeping.

Manyika x-rays the universality of the misfortunes of immigrants of third world countries living in the West, when Tayo writes Vanessa again, telling her about inhuman conditions in which he and other immigrant workers are subjected to in a bread factory. He writes, 'The least strenuous job of all, which is packing the goods and loading them onto the dispatch trucks, is reserved for the English. So that's the pecking order: Pakistanis and Indians on the bottom, Africans in the middle, and English on top.' (50) Pakistan and India are part of the third countries and also former colonies of the British Empire; their inclusion in this context in the narration buttresses the fact that the post-independence affliction is not peculiar to Africans.

Exposition of the Epistolary Form in *In Dependence*

Manyika, using the epistolary technique revisits the discourse of colonialism, racism, love, intercultural marriage, politics and the dilemmatics of third world countries. In the text, Nigerian is portrayed as a metaphor of the instability faced by many third world countries: leadership failure, corruption, dictatorship, ethno-religious conflicts, civil war and the general ineptness to self-govern themselves as independent societies. Colonialism left many of their colonies in a perpetual state of imbalance and a deformed psychological sense of self, hence the continuous dependence on foreign expert knowledge which further entrenches neocolonialism. Through Manyika's eyes one is able to see the perpetuity of the dependence of the colonized peoples of the world on their former colonial masters. Perhaps, more instructive of Manyika's many layers of meanings is the projection of an unattainable utopia occasioned by a warped consciousness that value its colonial past than it recognizes its own future.

In Tayo's letter to his father from Oxford, England, he berates the English culture of individuality, by comparing it with his Nigerian culture of communalism. Tayo, in fostering Manyika's utopian projection, experiences a culture shock which leaves him questioning prior knowledge of the white people he had encountered back in Nigeria. He realizes that the whites are not after all the united tribe that he had thought them to be. A new consciousness overwhelms him. He recounts his discovery to his father thus:

I have come to the conclusion that because the English are a minority in Nigeria, they are obliged to be cordial in our country, whereas their true temperament is somewhat cold, much like their weather. You will also be surprised to discover that in this country, people do not greet each other in passing, not even Balliol men. (5)

In the same vein, his father writes him back informing him of the changes taking place back home in Nigeria, 'Rumour has it that a Nigerian will soon replace our Chief of Police, and we hope so. God willing. And yet some white men are still thinking they own our land, not acknowledging it is a new Nigeria.'(7). The possibility of the emergence of an indigenous Chief of Police is thus regarded as positive sign of true independence and a new hope for the country.

Vanessa's letter to Jane, highlights the whites' racist inclination towards Africans and other races. Though, Vanessa is greatly disturbed by the division amongst human beings on the account of the colour of their skin. In the letter, she explains to Jane, her new experiences and her membership of an anti-racism society. She writes, 'I've signed up for the Labour Club, JACARI (Joint Action Committee Against Racial Inequality), and the college music society.' (13) Vanessa is also a student of Oxford, like Tayo, and she is the daughter of a former colonial master and an unapologetic racist. Vanessa is Manyika's imagined utopia for attaining equality and inclusive society.

Tayo's life in England represents the experiences of other Africans, who haven found themselves in Europe for studies through colonial benevolence, encounter a difficult reality that further affect their perception of their place in the world. Tayo's eventual friendship with Vanessa sets the stage for a cross-cultural relationship, an obvious abomination to her family. In the relationship between Tayo and Vanessa, Tayo represents Africa, as the naïve and receptive lover who is gratified by the whites' acknowledgement of him. Vanessa on the other hand comes off as the rare case of European generosity and patronage towards Africa. She is mortified by the ills committed by her forebears and thinks she can undo it by her relationship with Africa through her friendship with Tayo and membership of the anti-racist group in her school.

Conclusion

The letter has become a popular literary medium since Samuel Richardson's Pamela (1740) Alice Walker's The Colour Purple (1983) which presents Celie, a main character who has been abused by a man she calls father. In her loneliness and despair she writes to God. It was an immediate hit. Rodger Morrison's My Dearest Letters (2003) is a set of Letters from William to

Annie whom he meets in the street. Their relationship develops and the story is told with embedded poetry, romance and religious overtones. Richardson's Pamela sometimes regarded as the 'First English Novel' wrote to a 'handsome' girl to instruct young girls on how to avoid the snares that may be laid against their virtue'. He hoped the style of the epistolary would turn young people away from the romance of the time and 'promote the cause of religion and virtue'.

Finally, according to Ojaide (2011), a country or a region that is very corrupt and with a lot of undisciplined, self-centered and ignorant folks and rife with injustice is very low in human development and without human development there can be no industrial or other forms of development.

Literature thus, serves as a catalyst for human development by inspiring people to stretch their imaginative potentials for physical development and the well being of people. It further encapsulates the socio-cultural, economic and political as well as other issues that confront and weigh down human and by extension, national development such as we encounter in Gimba's Letters to my Children. The country groans under the denigration of moral and ethical responsibility where culture is sidelined, where religion and its values are enveloped in hypocrisy and justice, fairness and communality has given way to disharmony and violence. His works question views of 'detrified' writers and citizens and is in agreement with Ojaide (2011:10). It is in this light we appreciate even the new writers like Chimamanda Adichie and Helon Habila who tap from their roots to affirm faith in our indigenous virtues and values, an issue that is of utmost importance in Gimba's works as was seen in his epistles, a literature for the youth which focus on virtue and ethical theory in the promotion of education and good behaviour.

Discussion of So long a Letter by the West African woman writer Mariama Ba, is used as a basis for highlighting the empowering and disempowering effects of particular types of education for women in the traditional African-Muslim context of Senegal. While Sarah Ladipo delves into the problems that plague the African immigrants.

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