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# A Cosmopolitan National Romance: A Study of *In Dependence* by Sarah Ladipo Manyika

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Johannesburg 2017

**Declaration**

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

_____ Signature _____

(Name of candidate)

___ day of _____, 2017

## ABSTRACT

This research report uses *In Dependence* by Sarah Ladipo Manyika to demonstrate that African romance fiction is not necessarily escapist fantasy. It does this by focusing on the exploration of gender, racism, national and cultural identity in the post-colonial era in this novel that uses the romance template. The close textual analysis that is at the core of this reading is guided by an eclectic theoretical framework made out of several notions, the most important of which are: Ngugi wa Thiong'o's idea of fiction as a form of language; the understanding that gender and race are socially constructed and can thus be remade or unmade; cosmopolitanism, and particularly the variety known as Afropolitanism. The research report is divided into five chapters. Chapter I, the introductory chapter, plots what the research report is about, explains how the research that led to the writing of the report was carried out, and locates the report in its appropriate intellectual contexts. Chapter II engages with the formal characteristics of *In Dependence*. Evidence is assembled to support the argument that in *In Dependence* Manyika creatively enhances the popular romance in the process forging a "fiction language" that she uses to communicate significant social and political messages in a rhetorically powerful manner. Chapter III analyzes the manner in which Manyika uses an inter-racial heterosexual relationship in the novel to explore gender and racism. The key argument pursued in the chapter is that in *In Dependence* Manyika challenges racialized patriarchal ideologies and envisions a cosmopolitan world in which the genders interact in a humane and fair manner. Chapter IV demonstrates that the story of an interracial romantic relationship that is used to structure the novel problematizes cultural identities and their attendant prejudices such as sexism and racism, and ultimately raises cosmopolitanism as the solution to the problem of intercultural interaction. Chapter V is the Conclusion. The arguments and conclusions of the core chapters of the research report – Chapter II, Chapter III and Chapter IV – are rehashed here. Also stated in this final chapter are the reading's general conclusions on the novel and its contribution to the romance genre in the broader context of African literature.

## Dedication

To my mother, Sabrina. Thank you mum.

And to the fond memory of my father, James. Dad, I wish you could see this.

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I am greatly indebted to many people in too many ways and I regret that I cannot thank each one of them individually, as it would have been appropriate to do. I beg the forgiveness of those whose names do not feature in this ridiculously redacted list. It is not for my lack of appreciation for your role in making it possible for me to see this work through.

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# Chapter I

## Introduction

In 1945, a prince of the Bamangwato Chieftaincy in the British protectorate of Bechuanaland (present day Botswana) made his way to Balliol College, Oxford University in England to study law. Once in Oxford the young man, Seretse Khama, met a young woman, Ruth Williams, and the two fell in love. The relationship would three years later lead to a marriage that caused a great controversy. There was outrage not only in Bechuanaland and Britain, but also in neighbouring South Africa, where the attitudes towards race that were becoming institutionalised as apartheid were taking firm roots. Seretse Khama, the rightful heir, was stopped from taking over the chieftaincy of the Bamangwato by his half–brother who was holding the seat in an acting capacity, waiting for Seretse to come of age. The British barred Seretse from going back to his homeland as is recounted by Susan Williams (2006). A newspaper feature narrates that "the Khamas were forced to exchange vows in a London registry office because an Anglican bishop refused the couple (both of them Christian) a church wedding" (*New Africa*. 39, 1 December , 2003). The marriage ultimately took place, and Seretse Khama went on to lead Botswana to independence from Britain in 1966 and became the country's first elected president.

The challenges that the Khamas faced as a young interracial couple in a world where race is a politically–laden dividing factor are at the heart of the novel that I study in this research report: Sarah Ladipo Manyika's *In Dependence* (2009). The attitudes to race that complicated the love story of the Khamas had their origin in notions of cultural identity that are usually tied to the idea of belonging to a certain group of people. Identity is often used to justify an individual's insertion into a large social group, be it an ethnic group, a nation, a large religious community or a racial group. Following Benedict Anderson (1983), one can

see how the individual is then imagined and encouraged to imagine herself as being connected in intimate ways to all the other (millions of) individuals – dead, living and yet to be born – who make up a national community, for example. This is supported by notions of shared possessions and characteristics – including a homeland, traditions and customs (like gender definitions and relations), institutions (like language and governance structures) and historical experience – that are taken to distinguish nations from one another. It is for this reason that Seretse and Ruth Khama were considered "outsiders"[1], in England and Botswana respectively hence the outrage over their affair. Not surprisingly, notions of common origins, history, tradition and custom become important to the idea of cultural identity. In *In Dependence* some of forms of oppression that have historically flowed out of the idea of cultural identity, most specifically racism and sexism, are used to problematize the very idea of cultural identity. My study argues that, in *In Dependence*, Manyika offers cosmopolitanism as the answer to the problems of identity.

Interestingly, *In Dependence* makes a direct reference to the story of the Khamas in a gesture to the enduring power of the issues that the novel engages with and which are explicated in the present research report. The story of the Khamas happened more than sixty years ago, starting in the second half of the 1940s. The love story in *In Dependence* begins in the early 1960s and is projected to continue past the time when the novel's action ends in the late 1990s. *In Dependence* was written and first published in the second half of the first decade of the twenty first century and was obviously meant to speak to its time.

Significantly, the reference to the story of the Khamas, a story of an interracial romance that survives hostility from the social environment in which it plays out, is made towards the end of *In Dependence* (247). This act of locating the story of the Khamas towards

[1] According to Benedict Anderson's (1983) concept of a nation as an "imagined community", members of a nation are brought together by common culture, tradition, religion among others as explained above, without which one is then considered an "outsider".

the end of the novel speaks to the hopes and aspirations of the author. In this vein, one can argue that the interracial romance of the black Nigerian hero, Tayo, and the white English heroine, Vanessa, could be used in the novel to construct a much bigger vision: a call for inter-dependence between (post)colony (as represented by Tayo) and metropole (as represented by Vanessa). Like the Khamas in their real life story, Tayo and Vanessa are presented as carrying a hope for a humane and united world.

Before I proceed, it is important to give a summary of *In Dependence*. Written in the realist mode, *In Dependence* has as protagonists a Nigerian, Omotayo Oluwakayode Ajayi (Tayo), the son of a civil servant, and Vanessa Richardson, an English woman and daughter of an ex-colonial officer who served part of his tour of duty in Nigeria. The two meet in 1963 at Balliol College in Oxford, where Tayo is on a scholarship, and they fall in love. After starting on a high note, the relationship between the two runs into rough winds, mainly on account of Tayo's philandering, and finally comes to ground in what eventually turns out to be more than twenty-five year estrangement. Subsequently, live separate lives, building their careers and families in many countries – Nigeria, Senegal, the United Kingdom, Paris and the United States of America. Impossible to miss is the fact that events in the history of Nigeria are mentioned or reported in the context of a narrative of a romance that spans four decades – from the early 1960s to the late 1990s. The relationship between the romance narrative and the historical events in *In Dependence* ranges from the remote to the intimate. Sometimes, the political mayhem in post-colonial Nigeria is used as a backdrop for the romance between Tayo and Vanessa. At other times events in the history of Nigeria parallel developments in the romantic relationship. Occasionally, the story of Tayo and Vanessa and the story of Nigeria interweave. When this happens, the impression is created that the Tayo–Vanessa relationship functions as an allegory of the story of Nigerian independence, such as the coincidence of the Tayo–Vanessa romance beginning to experience challenges at almost the

same time that the nation of Nigeria also experiences its first military coup. A chance encounter in 1991 when Tayo goes back to Oxford to receive an honorary degree leads to the reawakening of the romance even though the hope that the two will end up in a permanent relationship is uncertain and only remains the reader's hope.

The setting in *In Dependence* together with the choice to have an interracial romance at the heart of the novel, obviously evoke the background of the book's author. Sarah Ladipo Manyika is an Anglo-Nigerian writer and academic, born in 1968 of a white British mother and a black Nigerian father. Since 1994, Manyika has been married to James Manyika, a Zimbabwean. Apart from Nigeria, where she was raised, Manyika has lived in Kenya, France, England, Zimbabwe and the United States of America (USA). Manyika currently teaches English Literature at the San Francisco State University, USA. Manyika divides her time between San Francisco, London and Zimbabwe. Besides *In Dependence*, which is her first novel, Manyika is the author of a second novel, *Like a Mule Bringing Ice Cream to the Sun* (2016), short stories, essays, academic papers and reviews.

In an interview with Oyo Adagha (2009), Manyika has explained that in *In Dependence* she aimed at writing a "story of unfulfilled love fraught with the weight of history, race and geography and intertwined with questions of belonging, aging, religious faith and family secrets." She adds that she "also hoped that the novel might speak to the complexities of contemporary Africa, its diaspora and its interdependence with the rest of the world." This point of a heterosexual, inter-racial romantic relationship that is used in *In Dependence* to unpack the larger social and political issues is one that Manyika has made elsewhere. For example, in an online interview with Pamela Stitch (2012), she has stated that the title *In Dependence* "plays to political themes that are within this novel", and goes on to explain:

> The novel starts shortly after Nigeria gains its independence and it speaks to issues within relationships. The notion of how we are dependent on each other in a relationship and not just relationships between individuals but also between nations.

The obvious characteristics and concerns of Manyika's *In Dependence* outlined above constitute an apparent contradiction that is at the heart of this study: How is the romance genre that has long been linked to escapist fantasy used as a narrative vehicle for the exploration of significant social and political issues in *In Dependence*? A corollary question is: Does the use of the romance genre to explore significant social and political issues subvert the image of the romance genre as uncommitted?[2]

The questions posed above comprise the central concerns of the study. The focus of the present study is therefore on the deployment of the popular romance template to deliberate on the colonial, post–colonial and global contradictions and entanglements in Manyika's *In Dependence*. This focus is here broken down into specific aims.

I first demonstrate that Manyika redefines the concept of the (American and European) popular romance in order to use it as a narrative vehicle for the exploration of significant social and political issues. Secondly, I engage with the interrogation of the notion of cultural identity and national isolationism in Manyika's *In Dependence*. I latch onto gender and race as the aspects that Manyika uses in her interrogation of cultural identity in *In Dependence.* Thirdly, I explore the manner in which Manyika's *In Dependence* offers cosmopolitanism as the solution to the problem that is cultural identity in the era of globalization. These aims engender the following specific questions that systematically drive

[2] For instance, Chris Wanjala (1980) criticized particularly the popular romance as trashy (136).

the research: One, what are the literary characteristics of *In Dependence* by Manyika? Two, how and with what results does Manyika use an inter-racial heterosexual relationship to critique the notion of cultural identity in *In Dependence*? And lastly, what ideological vision emerges from Manyika's *In Dependence*?

In this research report, Manyika's *In Dependence* is approached as a romance. It is also important to mention at this juncture that although I am alive to the possibility that it can be argued that *In Dependence* is not a popular novel owing mainly to its style and thematic concerns, I rely on the theories of the popular romance to explicate the novel because the love story that structures it seems to fit into the template of the African popular romance. By examining the novel's engagement with issues of race and gender as well as cultural identity, concerns that affect groups of people, the study builds on an existing body of work on the African popular romance that has argued for the genre's significance.[3] Catherine Muhoma (2002), for instance, examines how African popular romantic narratives move beyond romantic fantasies, and deal with challenging real life situations. Muhoma looks at Asenath Odaga's *Between the Years* (1987) and *Riana* (1991), both written and set in Kenya. She argues that the romances do not end with the declaration of love between the hero and the heroine but delve deep into serious marital issues. This research report is therefore potentially important in contributing to debates that can help the romance genre in battling to free itself of the characterisation as escapist fantasy. The romance genre has been criticized and dismissed as trivial by, among others, scholars such as Chris Wanjala (1980) and Bernth Lindfors (1991) in the specific context of Kenyan popular writers.[4] Wanjala (1980) charged and judged the popular romance novels of Maillu as "[…] trashy and scabrous imitation of brothel and low life" (136). On his part, Lindfors, while comparing the works of the Kenyan

[3]See for instance Tom Odhiambo (2004) and Catherine Muhoma (2002).
[4]See also Knight (1979).

popular writer Charles Mangua to others such as Ngugi wa Thiong'o's and Okot p'Bitek's, saw popular fiction as a "deflation of literary value" and regretted that "Mangua's frivolous proletarian potboilers [were] being duplicated in every genre as imitators with far less talent flood the market with insipid drivel" (51). This study contributes in disputing these assertions that popular literature is meant for low-brow, non-elite readers and that it is trashy since Manyika's *In Dependence*, even though not necessarily a popular work, is a romance genre that has often been associated with popular literature.

In addition, by locating Manyika in the group of writers that Pius Adesanmi and Chris Dunton (2005, 2008) labelled The Third Generation of Nigerian Writers (which include young contemporary writers such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Chris Abani among others), the study continues the description of what has been considered a major development in African, and more specifically Nigerian, literature as evident in the works of these writers. For instance Abani's (2004) *Graceland* and Chimamanda's (2003) *Purple Hibiscus* just to mention but a few. To this end the study brings to light the point that, influenced by the contemporary socio-political environment, Manyika's use of the romance and her awareness of social and political issues reflect the increasingly globalized nature of the societies all over the world.

Even though Manyika's *In Dependence* is yet to attract sustained critical study, it has been the subject of a number of reviews. These, mostly online, reviews – found in *The Herald* (2015), Weaver Press (2014), Bookshy (2012), Kinna Reads (2010) and Jude Dibia (2009), among others – mainly give summaries of the novel probably with the aim of enticing potential readers. However, even these summaries pick out the features of the novel that the present study is concerned with, (such as it being a romance narrative).

The points that the novel falls in the romance genre and that it also explores political issues are identified by the different reviewers such as those whose comments are carried in Weaver Press and Bookshy among others. The Bookshy (2012) review recognizes *In Dependence* as more than a love story, adding that the novel is also a story of Nigeria and the changes that took place after the country obtained its independence in the 1960s. The review in Weaver Press (2014) echoes similar sentiments, adding that *In Dependence* recounts the demise of Nigeria's international reputation and it's rapidly destabilizing state in the 1980s. In a sense, these reviews are the starting point for the present study which goes beyond the identification of the novel's prominent features as is done in the reviews, to discuss deeper and intricate socio-political themes. The present study examines the features in depth and, more significantly, shows how they are related, and with what results. In summary, the present study's interest is in the form and the content of *In Dependence* – as well as the relationship between the two, and the significance of that relationship.

The focus of the present study on the deployment of the interracial romance to explore significant contemporary political and social issues in *In Dependence* compels an interest in the form of the novel. It must be made abundantly clear at the outset that the present research report is not and does not aspire to be formalist. That stated, it is worth noting that the research report deems it necessary to come to terms with the genre and structure that underlies *In Dependence* since, the appraisal of the achievement and failure of *In Dependence* is partly also an assessment of the manipulation of the genre. This point is closely related to a second one, which is that in its appraisal of the achievement of *In Dependence* the present study situates the novel in its literary context, tracing the traditions that feed into it.

As has been noted, *In Dependence* is, in terms of its genre, a romance whose structure emulates the popular romance hence the handiness of the theories on the popular romance for the current study. Michael Meyer (1994) expounds on the characteristics of the genre when

he puts together “a composite of a romance tip sheet” from several guidelines that American publishing houses give to aspiring writers of the popular romance. After highlighting the definitive focus on the developing relationship between the hero and the heroine, Meyer discusses the main characteristics of the genre. He particularly picks out the formulaic manner in which the elements of narrative are manipulated in the popular romance. He points out the rules that the popular romance adheres to. First, the narrative should focus on the developing relationship between the hero and the heroine. There could be other characters such as “the-other-woman” but the focus should not be on them as their main function is to advance the events in the story (20). Secondly, after facing obstacles, the hero and heroine “discover lasting love and make a permanent commitment to each other in marriage” (18), while “the story is told in the third person from ... [the] point of view” (18) of the heroine. Thirdly, in terms of characterisation – the heroine should be beautiful though not flashy, a young woman whose “personality is spirited and independent without being pushy or stubborn” (19). The hero on the other hand “must be strongly masculine”, “[…] very successful professionally and financially ... a man in charge of whatever work he is engaged in” (19) and lastly, that the setting should always be contemporary (20).

Similarly, commenting on the conventions of a popular romance novel, Janice Radway (1984) maintains that “the book’s proper plot structure is what makes it a romance” (64). She emphasizes that the popular romance novel should necessarily develop a certain kind of a loving relationship. Accordingly, the popular romance novel should involve a particular relationship between the heroine and the hero – usually a heterosexual, one woman to one man kind of affair. And as she puts it, it is “the particular manner in which the hero pursues and wins the affection of the heroine” (77) besides certain specific character traits of the hero and the heroine that make it an ideal popular romance. For Radway, it is the combination of all these aspects that enables readers of the popular romance to derive some

form of pleasure, satisfaction or and even excitement without which the narrative may then fall into what could be considered sub-genre of the romance novel known as a "failed romance", whereby the romantic affair between the hero and the heroines fails to lead to happy marriage as is expected. Radway further theorizes the pleasure that the popular romance gives, arguing that that "to qualify as a romance, the story must chronicle not merely the events of a courtship but what it feels like to be the object of one" (64). This implies that the women readers should be able to experience the feelings, including "the sense of exquisite tension, anticipation, and excitement" (65) that are the peculiar pleasure provided by the popular romance.

Following these conventions of the American romance, Manyika's *In Dependence* is what could be regarded as a failed romance. Different from the popular American romance as illustrated above in Meyer's (1994) template, here the hero and the heroine do not end in a happy marriage – even though the possibility is kept open. Perhaps more important, which is the focus of the present study, is what the love story is made to do in *In Dependence*; how the plot of a "failed" romance narrative is effectively utilised to subsequently argue a case for cosmopolitanism. This extra-to-the-romance thrust puts *In Dependence* firmly to function as an African popular romance.

Even though it is based on the European and American popular romance, the African romance redrafts the template of its original plot. Thus while the plot of the "African" romance usually remains unchanged, Lydie Moudileno (2008) concludes that the "Africanization of the romance [is] achieved through a series of variations that occur not at the structural but at the paradigmatic level" (123). As explained further in the words of Karin Barber (1997), the African popular romance is not simply an imitation of the Western model in the manner that it slightly yet significantly deviates from the formulaic Western template. Barber (1994) contends that the popular African romance "contain[s] surprising re-readings

of the romantic template, in which language and structures of Western romances are reworked in striking new ways" (144). Newell makes the same point, and adds that in the African context the romance is not a static genre since the women writers, "put it to different uses… [They] utilise and rewrite what has, in Western societies, long been labelled as stultifying, 'dead' (151) by some feminist critics.

Against the critical denigration of the romance Radway (1984) and Tania Modleski (1982) have long defended the romance by appreciating the complexities of the romance novels arguing that they are used by the women as tools for empowerment. As Lynne Pearce and Jackie Stacey (1995) emphasize, for Radway; the romance "offers women a place in which to explore their own gendered identities, social and emotional desires, and life expectations ... [The] reading [of] romance [allows women] to secure independent time/ space for themselves from which to say 'no' to insistent family demands" (13).

Even as Radway and Modleski acknowledge the heterosexist nature of these romance narratives, for them, the engagement with significant social issues is indeed a defining characteristic of the genre. Hence in a much recent study on African romance, Newell (2000) argues that the genre has proved to be a "far more politicized, capable, complex and 'uprising'" (151). Newell particularly notes that the popular African romances are "historically situated texts containing an array of preoccupations that relate in precise terms to contemporary religious and gender debates, as well as to family relationships and political events within their region of production" (2000, 151).

And this is what Manyika achieves in *In Dependence* as through the relationship between Tayo and Vanessa, she explores the politics of the main settings of the novel, both Nigeria and England. Therefore, my claim is that *In Dependence* is used as "a trope for the desire for [social] change […] and for the belief in the possibility of change [and as a site

where] perceptions, experiences and problems are worked out in an open never-ending process" (Barber, 1997, 6).

Following the defence of the romance by Radway and Modelski, several studies have explored this aspect of the 'popular' romance in the African context. Newell (1997), in another study, *Writing African Women: Gender, Popular Culture and Literature in West Africa*, proclaims that women writers have appropriated the romance genre and employed it as a means to counter what has been taken as a male dominated process by transliterating the domestic experiences and observations by women. She asserts that women writers "rewrite popular myths of female subordination [and thus] construct new, assertive femininity, endowing it with a positive power which undermines conventional image of women" (4). Looking at how images are reworked in literary writings, Newell (1997) asserts that gender changes with time: "gender images and ideologies constantly shift to account for their changing status [that] has led to emergence of new perspectives which interrogate, reformulate and [analyse] inherited, popular codes" (1). In the present study, this is particularly important in examining issues of gender as presented in the romance in the novel, *In Dependence*.

Similarly, chick-lit, a genre that just like romance is more often than not, associated with women readers, has been defended along these lines of argument.[5] Lynda Gichanda Spencer (2014) defends "Chick lit", as an uprising romance genre in recent South African and Ugandan fiction. Spencer argues that despite the dismissal of the genre, it significantly mirrors the lived realities of its readers. These realities include issues of race, class, marriage, motherhood, infertility and infidelity among others (71-78).

[5] According to the online *Oxford English Dictionary*, "Chick lit *n.* [is] (*occas. depreciative*) literature by, for or about women; *esp*. a type of fiction, typically focusing on the social lives and relationships of young professional women, and often aimed at readers with similar experiences."
See online: http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/31534?redirectedFrom=chick+lit#eid9466449. Accessed 08, February, 2017.

The studies on the African popular romance reviewed above also explain the approach taken in the present study, which argues against the reading of (popular) romance literature as at best simplistic narratives and at worst merely escapist fantasy. The present study is therefore aligned to the counter criticism of the dismissive arguments put forward by some popular literature critics of the 1970s and 1980s, including Wanjala (1980), Lindfors (1991) and Knight (1979).

Newell (2000) and Barber (1997) have shown that despite being considered less important than the so-called literature of commitment, African popular texts are indeed shaped by socio-economic and political reality. Following these two, Tom Odhiambo (2004) has presented new approaches to the critical reading of popular romance stories. Using for demonstration the novels of the popular Kenyan writer, David Mailu, Odhiambo argues that "the evaluation of the popularity of (romance) fiction or lack of it should be based on the literary, creative and aesthetic merits of the literature as part of the subgenre of popular fiction rather than a comparison with the so-called serious literature" (2004, 3). He then discourages the comparative approach, proposing a break away from comparing popular literature with "elite" literature as has often been the case. In the present study, Manyika's *In Dependence* is read and judged more or less independently as a romance that overlaps the boundary between "elite" and "popular" writing.

It is, nonetheless, interesting to look at the presentation of gender in the romance in "high-brow", canonical African novels. In his assessment of Ngugi's portrayal of gender specifically the women characters in his novels, James Ogude (1999), for instance, notes that the romantic relationships function as allegories. He observes that the women characters reflect anti-imperialist sentiments and "in their striving gesture towards the possibilities of redemption and the birth of a nation […]" (109). He explains that "[for] Ngugi, there is no borderline between personal morality and political engagement [since no] other struggles

exist outside class war. [Therefore no] democratic spaces exist for women outside class struggle" (123). This argument resonates with Florence Stratton's (1994) literary exploration into the manner in which the struggle by women against gender discrimination was a struggle against colonialism in Africa (39-50). Therefore, the assertion that in "the narratives of many African women writers, the family becomes the nation writ small" also rings true (Suzan Andrade 2011, 21).

The possibility that the romance in *In Dependence* stands for more than itself is buttressed by critical literature on the allegorization in African fiction of the heterosexual interracial romance of the kind that is at the centre of Manyika's novel. Moses Geoffrey Kwame Ayivor (1998) observes that the interracial sexual relationship in Ayi Kwei-Armah's *Why Are We So Blest?* serves as an allegory for what he calls "the politics of psycho-eroticism," in essence implying that the romantic relationship in the novel reflects the larger public politics.

Pia Thelmann (1997) assesses the depiction of the heterosexual interracial relationship in African novels by black authors. Thelmann pays particular attention to a number of texts including; Ousmane Sembene's 1957 novel, *O Pays, Mon Beau Peuple! (Oh My Country, My Beautiful People!*; Peter Abraham's *A Wreath for Udomo* and *The Path of Thunder*; William Conton's *The African*; Mariama Bâ's *Scarlet Song* and Hazel Mugot's *Black Night of Quiloa*. Among the reasons that Thielmann offers for why all these narratives do not have a happy ending is the colonial conceptions of blacks as inferior and whites as superior. She then concludes that some of the interracial relationships in these texts are used as national allegories. Thielmann also observes the chauvinistic nature of the hero in these novels. This, she argues, reflects the "male-centeredness and destructiveness of the political power structure" (62). She asserts that:

> Interracial love relationships are overshadowed and endangered by external forces, including family resistance from both sides, but have absolutely no chance if no internal balance exists; that is, if the partners do not know and perceive each other as equals. (62)

Finally, Thielmann very much summarizes what I consider as Manyika's ultimate aim in *In Dependence*. She contends that the "literary representation of interracial love relationships by Black authors also serves as expressions of the author's vision of what is desired by Africans for a truly liberated future" (63). This means that interracial love is viewed as a means of charting the way forward to some of the contemporary issues of gender and cultural identity among others as presented in the text. Hence, this is the line of argument that I adopt in my assessment of Manyika's *In Dependence*.

It is important to note at this juncture that Manyika's symbolic use of the interracial relationships as a sign of unity. It overcomes racial boundaries in *In Dependence* and continues a trend in African literature as is evident in, for instance, the earlier works of Peter Abrahams such as *The Path of Thunder* (1952) and *A Wreath for Udomo* (1956). In *The Path of Thunder*, the young educated Coloured man, Lanny, upon returning to his native rural community notices the physical decadence and mental despair of his people. He gets to understand the oppression and exploitation meted upon the Blacks by the whites in the society. He thereafter also envisions the end to this exploitation through socializing of the various races and hence their cultures as seen in Lanny's affair with the white woman, Sarie. Further, as echoed in the final chapter of his last autobiography, *The Black Experience in the 20$^{th}$ Century: An Autobiography and Mediation* (2000), Abrahams like Manyika, points out that interracial love poses a threat to the myth of racial purity which is used to justify racism. This subversion of racial ideology is, in its turn, important for its enabling of true individual freedom, unrestrained by the need to sacrifice personal desire at the altar of racism.

I read the presentation of the interracial romantic relationship in the novel to exemplify the desire for a more liberal, cosmopolitan society. As evident in the novel, the liberation that Manyika demonstrates in *In Dependence* encompasses a break from racial categories as well as a disruption of boundaries of singular national identity.

This study is guided by a theoretical framework that has been assembled out of several ideas, namely: the notion that literary form is a type of language; the notion that gender and race are socially constructed and, therefore, not being natural or God–ordained, can be recalibrated; the theory of the relationship between sexual desire and race in a world in which race is an important political idea and force; and the concept of cosmopolitanism, and particularly the form of cosmopolitanism labelled Afropolitanism.

The notion that literary form is a type of language is deployed in this research report to clarify the achievement of *In Dependence* as a literary work. In *Decolonising the Mind* (1986), Ngugi wa Thiong'o explains this notion which he also labels "'fiction language', that is ... fiction itself taken as a form of language, with which to effectively communicate with one's targeted audience" (75). According to Ngugi, the literary characteristics, that in particular combinations make up a genre, enable authors and readers to communicate in the same manner that a language enables a speaker to communicate with their interlocutor. It is in this sense that genre and even form, becomes a type of language. By looking closely at the form of *In Dependence* we see how subtle meaning is created by drawing on diverse literary texts and traditions. Beyond this, and again in line with Ngugi's *Decolonising the Mind*, language is simultaneously a tool for communication and a carrier of culture, that the form of a literary work may by itself suggest meaning. For example, the hybridity of the form of *In Dependence* (a characteristic feature of African novels)– the novel being rooted in the template of the Western popular romance while at the same time presenting ideas in the ways

that they are presented in the African popular romance – can possibly be read as a suggestion of cosmopolitanism.

The critique of gender relations in *In Dependence* is anchored in a set of ideas that have found so much acceptance they have become commonplace. Primary among these ideas is the view that gender is socially constructed. This understanding undermines all social orders based on the privileging of one gender at the expense of others since it automatically argues for the general equality of human individuals. The point is captured by Chimamanda Adichie in "A Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions" (2016): "The solid unbending [feminist] belief that you start off with [is that you] matter […] equally." There are no greater or lesser human beings but society makes them so. The critique of gender then becomes the identification of how society creates inequality and oppression in the name of gender. And this is how the examination of patriarchal structures is embarked upon.

The critique of racism in *In Dependence* is similarly moored in an understanding that race is not natural. Ta–Nehisi Coates articulates the idea, which I quote at length:

> [People] believe in the reality of "race" as a defined, indubitable feature of the natural world. Racism – the need to ascribe bone-deep features to people and then humiliate, reduce, and destroy them – inevitably follows from this unalterable condition. In this way, racism is rendered as the innocent daughter of Mother Nature ….
>
> But race is the child of racism, not the father. And the process of naming "the people" has never been a matter of genealogy and physiognomy so much as one of hierarchy. Difference in hue and hair is old. But the belief in the pre–eminence of hue and hair, the notion that these factors can correctly organize a society and that they

signify deeper attributes, which are indelible – this is a new idea ….

(7)

This study's focus on the interracial romance in *In Dependence* benefits from the ideas of the relationship between race and sexual desire. Insights from feminist scholars such as Anne McClintock (1995) and Ann Laura Stoler (2002) as well as the revolutionary philosopher, Frantz Fanon (1967), become key to interrogating issues of gender and race as presented in the novel in this study. Their ideas are interesting in the manner in which they expound on the colonial construction of gender as influenced by the colonial perception upon the colonized. In a study interrogating intimacy and colonial politics, Stoler (2002), argues that the management of sexual relationships were important for the imperial power to maintain its authority by preserving the binary between the colonized and the colonialist (42). She observes that sexuality and sexual control was "a loaded metaphor for colonial domination" – that it was used to construct the "'male power fantasy' […] in which the Orient was penetrated, silenced, and possessed" (44-5). She indicates that sexual control and sexuality was used by the colonizer to assert their dominant position hence pointing to the intimate relationship between gender and race. Consequently, imperialism became a profoundly masculine agenda with the creation of the colonizer as the masculine and the colonized as the feminine. And this became a characteristic feature of the colonial life. The feminizing of the colonized and perpetuation of masculinity of the colonizer was considered as a necessity in the instilling of the notion of white superiority (Stoler, 2002, 46).

Along the same lines, Anne McClintock (1995), in her discourse on colonialism in *Imperial Leather*, declares that "race, gender, and class are not distinct realms of experience existing in splendid isolation from each other […]. Rather they come into existence *in and through* relation to each other if in contradictory and conflictual ways." She refers to this relationship between race and gender as the "intimate relationship between

imperial power and resistance […] race and gender" (emphasis in original, 5). Here, McClintock alludes to the complicated nature of this colonial construction of the feminine colonized "Other" and the masculine colonizer.

The complexity McClintock points out is seen in the place of the white woman's position in the colonial structure. She further observes that:

> Nonetheless, the rationed privileges of race all too often put white women in positions of decided – if borrowed – power, not only over colonized women but also over colonized men. As such, white women were not the hapless onlookers of empire but were ambiguously complicit both as colonizers and colonized, privileged and restricted, acted upon and acting. (6)

For instance, Vanessa in Manyika's *In Dependence* might occupy a privileged position because of her belonging to the colonizing nation; she is however less so in regard to the status accorded her by gender. She thus occupies both the positions of the oppressor and the oppressed at the same time as is elaborated further in the third chapter in this discussion.

Finally, there is need for a close examination of the concepts of cosmopolitanism and Afropolitanism since *In Dependence* raises them in answer to the problems of gender inequality and racism. According to an online *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, the term cosmopolitanism has been generally used to refer to the condition of being a *kosmopolites* (Greek: "citizen of the world"), one who is "familiar with and at ease in many different countries and cultures". It is underpinned by recognition of a common humanity that has a healthy attitude to cultural difference. As it is linked to the mobile nature of individuals globally (Antony Giddens, 1990 and Stuart Hall, 1992), cosmopolitanism celebrates the idea of people who, instead of feeling attached to their localities, consider themselves more as

"citizens of the world". The fact that the cosmopolitan must hail from a particular locality leads to a strain between their local and global identity. This is reiterated in Edward Said's (2000) understanding of exile as non-alignment with any traditional cultural identities (for instance, tribe, faith), which suggests that cosmopolitanism for him is rootlessness. In opposition, other theorists, such as Antony Appiah (2006), have contended that a cosmopolitan individual must have their roots in their locality while they embrace other cultures. This led to terms like a "rooted cosmopolitan/cosmopolitan patriot" as well as "homeboy cosmopolitanism" as described by Manthia Diawara (1998) and "cosmopolitan nativists" by Tejumola Olaniyan (2001) – all of which take into account the importance of having roots while appreciating other cultures.[6] These yoking's then points towards the blurring of binaries such as between the colonized and the colonizer through cosmopolitanism as Timothy Brennan (1997) asserts.

The anxiety expressed in the very nature of the terms that appear oxymoronic as they allude to the capability to be mobile economically, socially, physically (cosmopolitan) while simultaneously having roots to a particular place, is perhaps best captured in the definitions and criticism of the recently emergent term, Afropolitanism. According to the online *Urban Dictionary*, the term Afropolitan refers to "An African who was educated in the US or Europe and spends a significant amount of time in those parts of the world, [have] global perspective on issues, as well as [a] mixed cultural identity." The term Afropolitanism has been popularized by Taiye Selasi (2005) and Achille Mbembe (2007). Mbembe and Selasi view Afropolitanism as a move towards universality, a common humanity to be achieved by embracing diversity. Differentiating it from Negritude and Pan-Africanism – what he calls the 'nativistic reflex' – Mbembe (2007) emphasizes the fact that the term Afropolitanism acknowledges the unstable nature of African identities. His explanation draws into the

[6]See Appiah (1997, 618)

African past which is the history of migration within and outside the continent. The criticism that Afropolitanism is for the select few – the elite, as a consequence of which it does not reflect the realities of the majority of the black people who are not visible in the metropolitan spaces – is called upon in the critique. Grace Musila (2016), echoing Emma Dabiri (2016), has fleshed out this criticism in her contention that the term appears "to be embracing just enough of Africa to retain a certain flavour that sets one apart from the norm […] but not so much to be too 'African'." Musila adds that just "Like Coke Lite or a lite beer, Afropolitanism seems to promise Africa lite: Africa *sans* the 'unhealthy' or 'intoxicating' baggage of Africa" (110). This resonates with Dabiri's (2016) argument in her criticism of the concept that "at a time when poverty remains endemic for millions, the narratives of a privileged few telling us how great everything is, how much opportunities and potential is available, may drown out the voices of a majority who remain denied basic life chances" (106).

The research report is organized in the following manner. Chapter One, the present chapter, is the Introduction. It spells out what the research report is about, stating the research problem that the research report grapples with, setting out the procedures deployed in the research and situating Manyika's novel in its appropriate intellectual contexts.

In Chapter Two, the form of *In Dependence* is discussed at length. It is argued that by creatively enhancing the popular romance, Manyika forges a "fiction language" that she uses to communicate significant social and political messages in a rhetorically powerful manner. She does this by writing these grand issues, which are explored in the subsequent chapters, into easy to relate to everyday experience conveyed in the love story.

Chapter Three explores Manyika's presentation of gender and race through the interracial love relationship at the heart of the novel. The main argument pursued in the

chapter is that in *In Dependence* Manyika challenges racialized patriarchal ideologies and envisions a post–racial world in which the genders interact in a humane and fair manner.

In Chapter Four the case for cosmopolitanism in the era of globalization that *In Dependence* puts forth is examined. It is demonstrated that the story of an interracial romantic relationship that is used to structure the novel problematizes cultural identities and their attendant prejudices such as sexism and racism, and ultimately raises cosmopolitanism as the humane solution to the problem of intercultural interaction.

Chapter Five, which is the conclusion, summarizes the findings of the analysis chapters and makes evaluative statements on the achievement of the novel. It also revisits the key arguments made in the research report.

## Chapter II

## *In Dependence* as 'Fiction Language'

This chapter is both the starting point and foundation of the argument pursued in this research report that Manyika's *In Dependence* is a romance that explores the following significant social and political discourses: gender, race and cosmopolitanism. The chapter's focus is on the literary characteristics of the novel the Manyika uses. Indeed, she declares in an interview with Ovo Adagha (2009) that the novel seeks to "speak to the complexities of contemporary Africa, its Diaspora and its interdependence with the rest of the world". The "complexities" revolve around gender and race, while "Diaspora" and "interdependence" suggest cosmopolitanism.

The discussion of the literary characteristics of *In Dependence* is framed by Ngugi wa Thiong'o's (1986) notion of "fiction language", as illustrated in the previous chapter. Ngugi's viewpoint is that the literary conventions that together constitute a genre are understood by author and reader. In order to communicate his/her specific objective, the "fiction language", the choice of genre by a writer is crucial and is therefore influenced by that purpose. Speculatively, in the case of *In Dependence* this point is politically poignant if the assumed reason for using the romance is to offer solutions to the existing problems in the contemporary world. The extension in *In Dependence* of the range of material expected in the romance and the inclusion of significant social and political issues – as will be shown presently – can, also, be understood as the widening of the genre's significance in the literary field. Directly, as has been stated in the previous chapter, this expansion of scope of the romance novel places *In Dependence* into the category of the African romance.

More importantly for the purposes of this chapter, I am making the claim that the rhetorical power of *In Dependence* largely emanates from the choice of a "fiction language" –

the romance – which personalizes such grand themes as gender, race and cosmopolitanism by writing them into everyday lived experience that is easy to relate to via the career of a love story.

*In Dependence* is, as has been noted severally in this research report, structurally a romance as it largely adheres to the key, definitive elements of the popular romance. The popular romance is a readily recognizable genre. The "Composite of a Romance Tip Sheet" put together by Michael Meyer (1994, 18–21), which is referred to in the previous chapter, identifies the key characteristics of the genre. These characteristics – subject, plot, point of view, characterization, setting, style – make up a template that justifies the categorization of particular novels as popular romances.

The single most fundamental element in the template of the popular romance is the primary subject: romantic love. "The story focuses on the growing relationship between the heroine and the hero", writes Meyer (1994, 18), before he comes back with the clincher: "Love is the major interest" (Meyer 1994, 18). In keeping with this expectation, *In Dependence* focuses on the romance between Tayo and Vanessa with the idea of "true love" evidenced in their romantic affair. Even after they separate and end up living far away from each other and notwithstanding each of them getting married to different individuals, they still harbour fond feelings for each other. As each is bored in their marriages and often thinking of the other, the belief is perpetuated that Tayo and Vanessa cannot be happy with any other person except each other. This also promotes the idea of "soul-mate" – that real love is experienced once in one's lifetime which is further emphasized when Vanessa, in hoping that she will reunite with Tayo her "true love", remembers a Hausa saying: "Pick-up-your-stick-and sandals". As explained to her by her mother, the saying meant that "a person never married their first love […] but later in life that person would be reunited with [them]"

(209). Fortunately, destiny and fate work in favour of Tayo and Vanessa ultimately, bringing them together again as they get to see each other in the end.

Even though the narrative focus in *In Dependence* is on the enduring love between Tayo and Vanessa, the novel most obviously goes against the edict pronounced by Meyer: "Controversial social issues and politics, if mentioned at all, should never be allowed a significant role" (1994, 18). Happenings, such as political events in Nigeria, are mentioned as the romance unfolds in *In Dependence*. Indeed, several incidents and episodes in the Tayo-Vanessa love story find parallels with the Nigerian political dynamics as narrated in the novel. The following instances illustrate the point.

The first section of *In Dependence* is entitled "In the Beginning, September 1963-1969", 1963 marking the point at which the narrative starts. Having gained its independence from British colonial rule in 1960, the early 1960s mark a period of intense hope for Nigeria and its citizens. The mood is quite optimistically euphoric as people hope for better beginnings after the ending of the oppressive colonial rule. This hope is perhaps best captured in the words of Tayo's father in a letter to Tayo, who is already in England:

> Meanwhile, things in Nigeria are running splendidly. The independence celebrations (three years of independence now!) were quite fantastic. In short, there were many fireworks, dancing and eating, and general gaiety. We are proud and now the government is working for increased Nigerian leadership. Indigenous responsibility is what we call it. (16)

Similar to the affairs of the nation, the romance between Tayo and Vanessa is also in bloom during this period. After meeting Vanessa, Tayo appears to have finally reached "his horizon" (20), unlike when he initially had affairs with Modupe and Christine (Tayo's first

and second lover with whom he has an affairs with, first before leaving for Oxford and later after his arrival in Oxford respectively, after which she meets Vanessa). They fall in love and their relationship begins to blossom. This is evident in their interactions and the activities they engage in. For instance, Vanessa invites Tayo to spend Christmas with her family in which have some good time together. The romance is also expressed in the letters that they exchange during the Easter holidays they spend apart as Vanessa writes to Tayo expressing love and affection:

> […] Tell me how much you've been missing me and how much you dream of me –otherwise I'll start to wonder what you're up to with those northern lasses! I do wish you were here, darling. The weather is beautifully warm, just as you would like it, […] In the afternoons I […] dream of you. […] Loads of love, kisses, hugs and anything else you dare to imagine. (80)

Tayo also expresses similar emotions and feelings when he responds to Vanessa: "I hear French can be quite romantic so don't let them woo you […] Remind them that you have a sweeter man waiting for you in England ... I miss you dreadfully Vanessa" (82). The exchange of sweet words, sentimental feelings in the letters, is evidence that mutual love has developed between the two. With Vanessa showing interest in Nigerian culture such as food (32), the readers are hopeful that the affair will develop into a permanent bonding.

The year 1966 marks the period when Tayo and Vanessa begin to live their lives separately. That same year Nigeria experiences its first military coup d'état. The Tayo-Vanessa separation coincides with the most difficult era of life in Nigeria. This is the time of the establishment of a military dictatorship in Nigeria and the accompanying acceleration of economic instability in the country.

The last section of the novel is comprised of events that happen between 1994 and 1998. As the novel ends in 1998, Tayo and Vanessa have reconnected and there are indications that they might pick up their disrupted romance – and achieve cathartic fulfilment. The hope is poignantly fused with the hope in Nigeria's future signified by the demise of the country's last military dictator, General Sani Abacha. Tayo is said to be hopeful to be part of a new Nigerian nation, when General Olusegun Obasanjo takes power after being democratically elected thereafter (240).

At one level, these parallels are the time-tested strategy in popular romances of having the setting echo and amplify the dominant feelings and emotions at critical points in the love story. In relation to *In Dependence* the parallels simultaneously help place personal events in political history and add *gravitas* to events in the love story. The novel thus encourages particular understandings of the events that are brought into parallel relationships. Through allusions to the story of the Nigerian nation from the 1960s to the late 1990s varying emotions and moods are evoked to accompany and heighten the actions that make up the plot. *In Dependence* begins with a mood of passion, hope and excitement, moves to a period of angst, anxiety and utter distress, and then, finally, as the narrative comes to an end, a sobering recovery of patience and a ray of hope for the future, even though the hope is not entirely secure as the love story ends in a in limbo.

At a second level, the parallels between events in the love story and those in the history of Nigeria significantly contribute to the exploration of themes in the novel. For instance, the period of military dictatorship in Nigeria coincides with the isolation of the country from other nations. That this isolation parallels the separation of Tayo and Vanessa is important in the construction of the argument for cosmopolitanism in *In Dependence*, as is elaborated in Chapter IV.

Seen separately from the love story, the events in Nigerian history in *In Dependence* are also about the history of the twentieth century, which is the period in which the narrative is set. The novel therefore includes rich reference to literary and non-literary texts and personalities, movements, establishments, as well as music. There are several occasions in *In Dependence* when other, mostly African literary texts are mentioned or alluded to. For example, there is reference to Wole Soyinka's *A Dance of the Forests* (57), Chinua Achebe's novels, *Things Fall Apart* and *No Longer at Ease* (80), and Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood* (151). There is also allusion to African literary movements through the mentioning of *Presence Africaine* (66) – the journal that was used to spread the ideas associated with the Negritude movement. The references therefore function as ''the way [in which the] narrative recreates history and memory" (Simon Gikandi, 1991, 126), which are then used to allude to the national politics presented in the text. Soyinka's *A Dance of the Forests,* for instance, emphasizes the historical event of Nigerias' attainment of independence in the 1960s as it had been commissioned to be performed for the Nigerian independence celebrations at the time.

Apart from the textual references, *In Dependence* is also awash with obvious, open allusions to 20th century African literary and historical figures as well as historical and popular culture figures and phenomena that were widely appreciated on the African continent, for instance, Senghor, Kenyatta, Haile Selassie, Nkrumah, Dele Giwa, Abacha, Obasanjo, the Indian Nehru as well as those of (African) American origin such as Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Langston Hughes, Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday, John Coltrane, among many others. There is also the mention of Margery Perham (who was a British historian and writer whose interest was majorly on African affairs) and the Oxford historian Hugh Trevor-Roper.

Performing the same function of writing the history of the twentieth century is the mention of music genres such as Jazz and Highlife. At the party during the Easter holiday at

Bradford, where Tayo's cousins Tunde and Yusuf stay, they play, listen and dance to Highlife. Yusuf mentions his collection of "Dairo, Bobby Benson, Sunny Ade…" (84). We are told that:

> Tayo was twisting and jiving to Sam Cooke's Saturday Night. […]. Yusuf was demonstrating the wild rock and roll better than Elvis, and then showing all the girls how to do the twist to Highlife. He concocted fancy Hausa names for the two-step and the cha chacha, and called himself a cool cat after Victor Olaiya's band.[7] (89-90)

The significance of the Highlife music is clearly explained by Jane Bryce and Kari Darko (1993) who claim that Highlife was a "great popular dance music of West Africa that originated in the nineteen forties as a hybrid of the local rhythms and the western instrument [which was] sung ordinarily in pidgin and celebrated the optimism of the independence era and the raised expectations of material prosperity" (10). Fela Kuti's famous song *Lady* (177) and a song about Mandela by Hugh Masekela's (200) are also mentioned among others. Hence, apart from enhancing the mood in the text such as when Tayo and Vanessa dance to the sound of Ellington and Coltrane's *In a Sentimental Mood* (63), as with the other textual references above, the songs allude to memory and evoke certain historical times.

Looking at some of the references given above, intertextuality as a narrative technique used by Manyika functions to create an intense, rich sense of nostalgia whose significance lies in the continuity between past struggles (alluded to in the references) and contemporary ones. The novel is filled with nostalgia for twentieth century movements, counterculture movements in Africa and beyond, which are used to demonstrate and provide a background for more contemporary issues. It demonstrates the inception and the continued existence of

[7] According to Bode Omojola in "Politics, Identity, and Nostalgia in Nigerian Music: A Study of Victor Olaiya's Highlife" Olaiya is among Nigeria's pioneers of highlife music artists.

debates that have been carried out around as such issues as gender and race, and also echoes the cosmopolitan African identity that the novel is concerned with – all of which are discussed in details in the subsequent chapters. The nostalgia for twentieth Century countercultures and dissident African political movements is evoked for better understanding of the events of the contemporary world. Countercultures and movements across the globe and in the continent (such as negritude, pan-Africanism and counterculture artists such as Fela Kuti and Bob Dylan, to mention but a few) had enthusiastically articulated the visions, goals and the aspirations that were eminent among people in their struggle against the status quo – in their desire for change. Nostalgia therefore reignites the excitement of the past, creating hope for the future. In short, the nostalgia in *In Dependence* speaks to the hopeful past that was lost and through which Manyika is attempting to chart a way forward to accomplish what is currently hoped for. The past in this case therefore acts as a way of building the future – as reiterated in Manyika's words in the interview with Oyo Adagha (2009); "I would hope that my book evokes some of the excitement of this earlier period and perhaps leaves the reader with continued hope for today". The plot of the Tayo–Vanessa love story serves as a metaphor for the hope.

In relation to the subject, then, *In Dependence* transcends the requirements of the popular romance. But it does so by first adhering to, or appearing to adhere to, the requirements, and then adding something on. This strategy of adhering to, or appearing to adhere to, the template of the popular romance, only to then infuse serious theme, is also evident in the treatment of the plot in *In Dependence.*

An aspect of plot is captured in Meyer's statement, quoted above, that "[t]he story [in the popular romance] focuses on the growing relationship between the heroine and the hero" (1994, 18). Meyer adds that, "After a number of complications, they [that is, the hero and the heroine] discover lasting love and make a permanent commitment to each other in marriage"

(1994, 18). In *In Dependence* the elaboration of the "number of complications" (Meyer 1994, 18) experienced by the hero and heroine challenges the expectations in the template of the popular romance. For it is in the elaboration of complications that *In Dependence* insistently situates the hero and heroine in their respective historical contexts by playing up their family relationships and the demands that these make on them, instead of presenting them merely as individuals. The difficulties are enhanced with the introduction of race and racism (the hero is a black Nigerian, the heroine is a white English woman) which makes more complex the matter of gender relations (the world the hero and heroine live in is dominated by the white man – but the power structures in this patriarchal universe are in the hero–heroine relationship upset by the fact that it is the woman who belongs to the dominant racial group). The next chapter will explore these complications.

Suffice for now to note that the elaboration of the complications – including the step of making both the hero and heroine get married to other characters – makes it highly improbable to bring the story to a simple happy ending where the hero and the heroine "make a permanent commitment to each other in marriage" (Meyer 1994, 18). Nonetheless, there is hope for the possibility of the hero and heroine picking up the thread of their love story and finding happiness together. With that ending, the layering notwithstanding, the novel to an extent adheres to the plot of the popular romance. As echoed in Manyika's word in an interview with Belinda Otas (2010), there is hope that true love *somehow* will overcome all obstacles on its way and which symbolises the author's hope that readers might have "hope for Africa" amidst the challenges.

The manipulation of elements of the popular romance in *In Dependence* is also evident in the novel's characterization, with the humanizing through elaborate individuation and making equal of the heroine and hero – as is explored at depth in the next chapter.

As is noted in the previous chapter, such manipulation of the elements of the popular romance that is evident in *In Dependence* is not particularly new. The domestication of the genre in Africa is based entirely on the innovative manipulation of some of the elements in the template of the European and American popular romance. And, interestingly, *In Dependence* inserts itself into the debate on what constitutes modern African literature in a manner that by justifying its handling of social and political material (which is explored in the two subsequent chapters) further illuminates the novel's form. According to Bhekizizwe Peterson (2000), the fight for the restoration of agency of Africans in history began in the 1900s. And while he focuses on the period between 1900 and 1940, he observes that theatre was used for such an agenda as the natives artistic voices were used to uncover colonialism (12-64). This debate continued and was revived in the 1960s and continues to the present. The earlier debaters include Obi Wali, Chinua Achebe, Leopold Sedar Senghor and Ngugi wa Thiong'o. Prominent contributions have in more recent times come from the likes of Taiye Selasi and Binyavanga Wainaina. The key points in the debate have included the language of African literature, its authorship (who qualifies to write about Africa) and its publics. There has been a lively contention over the determination of texts that belong to the corpus of African literature.

In *In Dependence* we encounter Vanessa grappling with and therefore reminding the readers some of the pertinent questions which pose dilemmas in the African literary field. Vanessa writes to Tayo, saying:

> *I also wrestle with the question of who can write about Africa. Do I still have the 'rights' to report on African affairs now that I no longer live on the continent? Did I earn the right when I was there? I often think back to that Oxford Union debate and what Malcolm said about foreign correspondents in Africa. I also wonder about this notion of*

> *the insider and outsider […]. To what extent does being an outsider allows a person unique insights into a culture? To what extent might the outside status blind rather than illuminate? And then to what point does one cease to be an outsider?* (206, Original italics)

These are questions that have been debated upon over the years. Criticism has correctly been levelled at the stereotypical representation of Africa in the literature of the West. In this literature the image of Africa is frequently represented in negative strokes – as a continent mainly characterized by war, poverty and starvation – reports that override the other positive images in which the continent can be represented. The criticism is expressed by Binyavanga Wainaina (2005) in his widely acclaimed piece, "How to Write about Africa", when he satirically advises non-Africans on how to write about the continent. Pointing out the clichés used to refer to Africa, Wainaina sarcastically urges non-Africans [and perhaps also some African] writing about Africa to be sure to mention "An AK-47, prominent ribs, naked breasts" [and] and "tall, thin people who are starving" in order to represent the "real Africa". Part of Wainaina's piece reads:

> In your text, treat Africa as if it were one country. It is hot and dusty with rolling grasslands and huge herds of animals and tall, thin people who are starving. Or it is hot and steamy with very short people who eat primates. Don't get bogged down with precise descriptions. Africa is big: 900 million people who are too busy starving and dying and warring and emigrating to read your book. The continent is full of deserts, jungles, highlands, savannahs and many other things, but your reader doesn't care about all that, so keep your descriptions romantic and evocative and unparticular.

Wainaina is alluding to the fact that the presentation of Africa as needy and helpless is usually in the service of the presentation of the West as Africa's only savior. This fashion of representing the African continent upholds the power structure that obtains in the era of globalization – one that in previous times was captured in the phrase "neo-colonialism." This representation is part of the power games played by the West that hoodwink Africans into being passive and thus forever dependent on the West. This is what the Ghanaian Teju Cole (2012) in an online Magazine, *The Atlantic*, referred to as "the white saviour industrial complex". He argues that this concept simply functions to "validate privilege". Declaring his stance, Cole thus states "I deeply respect American sentimentality, the way one respects a wounded hippo. You must keep an eye on it, for you know it is deadly."

In *In Dependence*, Vanessa, in trying to write an article on Zimbabwe, aims to stop the stereotypical presentation of Africa and thus she commences the article as follows; "*At a time when reports from Africa are dominated by famine, starvation, and AIDS, Shona holds the promise of …"* (210, original italics).This further gets her thinking as to why she was for-grounding with the negatives about Africa just like many other stories about the continent were written. She is critical of this long-existing tradition of presenting the continent in a negative light. We are told that, Vanessa "[…] did not want to start like this, but it seemed the only way to move the reader on from the pervasive images of naked, skeletal Africans with flies buzzing round their faces" (210). In this instance, the novel in a self-reflective manner, draws the reader's attention to its conscious political choice to go beyond literary stereotyping in its representation of the African (Nigerian) historical narrative. This is evidenced in an interview with Belinda Otas (2010) where in response to the question of why she chose a love story, she says; "At the time that I began to write the novel, I was looking for a really good story […]. I found stories of war and civil strife, of tyranny and of corruption, but where were all the grand amours, the tales of love and heartache?" This is an

indication that her choice of a love story and an interracial one at that is a deliberate attempt to present a different image of Africa.

In *In Dependence* Vanessa further thinks to herself: "Was she in fact perpetuating stereotypes by mentioning them, or was she helping readers to see past the clichés? And what was her audience these days? British lefties? Immigrants? African students? Or all three?" (210). The questions that she raises in regards to her writing about Africa are similar to some of the main questions that Selasi (2015) asks people to think about in deliberating about what she calls the "increasingly noisy debate" on the definition of African literature. The questions include: "who is an African writer, what should she write and for whom is she writing?"

Vanessa's critical perspective in her presentation of African stories demonstrates her endeavour to elude the stereotyping of Africans. She aims to present what resonates with what the character Dr. Kweku Sai, in Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* (2013), comes to realise to be what he was looking for in moving from Ghana to becoming an immigrant. We are told:

> To be 'free,' if one wants swelling strings, to be 'human.'Beyond being 'citizen,' beyond being 'poor.' It was all he was after in the end, a human story, a way to be Kweku beyond being poor. To have somehow unhooked his little story from the larger ones, the stories of Country and of Poverty and of War that had swallowed up the stories of the people around him and spat them up faceless, nameless Villagers, cogs; to have fled, thus unhooked, on the small SS Sai for the vastness and smallness of life free of want: the petty triumphs and defeats of the Self (profession, family) versus those of the State (grinding work, civil war)—yes, this would have been quite enough, Kweku thinks. (Selasi, 2013)

The push for the writing of a different story about Africa is memorably justified by Chimamanda Adichie (2016) in her TED talk "The Danger of the Single Story." Adichie sensitizes her listeners to take note of the often assumed fact that "Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity."

The story that Vanessa writes, and by extension *In Dependence* itself, seeks "to empower and to humanize ... [and to] repair ... [the] broken dignity" of Africa and her people. The intention finds expression in the literary choices that Manyika makes, and their significance, as has been discussed in this chapter. To conclude by way of a restatement of a point that has already been made, the present chapter's focus on the literary characteristics of *In Dependence* is critical to this research report's project of increasing the understanding both of the genre of romance generally and of the manner in which the genre manifests in Africa in particular.

## Chapter III

## A love for all Seasons: Romance, Gender and Racism

This chapter explores Manyika's presentation of gender and racism in *In Dependence.* The main argument pursued in the chapter is that Manyika uses interracial romance to challenge patriarchal and racial ideologies and to envision a post–racial world in which gender equity obtains. As such, attention is here being drawn to both the idea of romance as well as the notion of interracial sex. In so doing Manyika writes a romance novel that subverts the patriarchal gender tradition of the genre. This argument is chiefly supported with evidence of the novel's presentation of the characters Tayo, Vanessa and their interactions. The chapter also examines the intersection of gender and race in *In Dependence*. The perspectives in this chapter, thus, further develop the central argument that in *In Dependence,* Manyika argues for *inter-dependence,* in this case the interdependence of genders and races.

To examine Manyika's engagement with gender and gender relations in *In Dependence*, I first rehash the key characteristics of the romance genre and highlight its traditional agenda of upholding patriarchy. This helps make clear the robustness of the critique of patriarchal ideologies in the novel. The scrutiny of the intersection of gender and race in *In Dependence* is guided by the understanding of the colonial policing of the racialized relationships as argued by Ann Laura Stoler (2002) and Anne McClintock (1995) and as explained in the introduction of this research report. The two highlight the manner in which interracial sex was used in the construction of the imperial colonial discourses that were confirmed as well as contested by racialized and gendered identities. They show that in the colonial times, sex, gender and race were modelled and interconnected such that they became grounds upon which the colonizers distinguished themselves from the colonized.

These ideas are extrapolated to the postcolonial world of *In Dependence* because racial attitudes that obtained in the colonial era generally survived the end of official colonialism.

As a genre the romance novel propagates the ideology of romantic love. At the heart of this ideology, which has been argued to have its origins in Western culture, is the romantic love ideal. The romantic love ideal is associated with fantasy. This is indicated by the word "romantic" which implies perceiving something in its idealized form. Veronica Hefner (2011), in looking at the conception of Western ideas of love, presents the notion of the romantic love the key features of which include: the idea of the one and only beloved/soul mates, love at first sight, the idealization of the partner, the notion that love conquers all as well as the belief that marriage should be based on love (20-32). It is the combination of these features successfully presented in a romance narrative that usually leads to the formulaic happy ending – emotional bliss that usually marks the finale of such stories.

More critical to the present discussion is the point about this typical ending of the romance narrative that is found in Radway's (1984) pronouncements when she notes that, "the happy ending restores the status quo in gender relations when the hero enfolds the heroine protectively in his arms" (81). So, whereas the romantic love ideal appears on the surface to assume gender equality, Radway points out the fact that the genre that popularizes it disseminates messages of male superiority. Like Radway, Tania Modleski (1982) also argues that the romance reaffirms traditional patriarchal beliefs. This is even as they both seek to affirm the positive aspects of the genre (as shown in the introductory chapter).

There is sufficient evidence backing the argument about the patriarchal orientation of the romance novel in the "Composite of a Romance Tip Sheet" referred to in the Introduction of this research report. It is clear from this tip sheet that in the American tradition, the popular romance upholds the patriarchal system in its characteristic presentation of idealized

characters. The role of the hero and heroine are prominently typified as the very nature of the romance and in the first instance heterosexual relationships are privileged. The conventions of constructing sexual identities in the heterosexual romantic relationship lead to the construction of gender roles – with the roles of the hero and the heroine usually restricted. The hero is expected to be strong, successful and older than the heroine. The heroine on the other hand, is supposed to be beautiful, independent and decent in her mannerisms such as dressing. The expectation that the heroine should not be too sophisticated is so that they can fulfil their duties as wives and mothers in marriages. Beauty is necessary so that they can attract the man. The heroine is also expected to be decent as this acts as an indication that they can be good wives. These features of the heroine are such that they can be admired by the man hence it is evident that the women are meant to impress the man thus aligning to the traditional belief that men should be superior. The women, regardless of their independence, have their social status and position in relation to the man as always secondary and thus quite limited. The heroes in the romantic relationships tend to be portrayed as occupying a higher position owing partly to their age compared to the heroines who are often much younger. Hence despite being career a woman, the heroine is usually more dependent on the hero who is older and thus is supposedly more experienced. Presenting the heroine merely as one in search of a romanticised/idealized domestic eternal bliss in the expected "happily ever after" ending, the romance novel plots a coherent heterosexual relationship of female development and masculine authority/supremacy.

My argument in the following paragraphs is that in *In Dependence* Manyika posits counter-hegemonic perspectives on institutionalised systems of gender and race. She does this by disrupting the formulaic characteristics of the conventional romance narrative and through the manipulation of the interracial affair at the heart of the narrative.

*In Dependence* challenges the patriarchal structure that the romance usually reaffirms. The novel thus goes against a traditional expectation of the romance genre while still remaining part of it. In so doing *In Dependence* pushes the boundaries of the romance genre. I am here claiming that Manyika's *In Dependence* is a romance novel that problematizes the romantic love ideal as a central ritual in the romance narrative. This argument is further restated in the non–conventional nature of the ending of the novel. Tayo and Vanessa do not end in a happily-ever-after union as is the tradition with the romance narrative. As the narrative ends, Vanessa is still married to the old Baker even though Tayo is divorcing his wife Miriam with whom he has a daughter, Kemi. This presents a complicated situation even though it is evident that the two still love each other.

Manyika's general argument against patriarchal structures resonates with the feminists' arguments that dismantle patriarchal assumptions that women are lesser human beings than men. Her main concern is that women, like men, should be treated with equal respect.

The same concern is legible in Manyika's deviation from the characterization of hero and heroine that is traditionally expected in a romance. Tayo does not fit into the "older, successful and strong" type. As already mentioned, at the beginning of *In Dependence* Tayo is young, and just like Vanessa, he is a student at the university. Hence in this respect, one could argue that on one level, Manyika is in a way presenting them as equals thus disrupting the assumed superiority of the men from the very beginning (even though I also acknowledge that this may not necessarily be an indication of equality between the two). The characters' levels of intellectual capability are also equal as seen in the intellectual discussions that they are able to hold. That man and woman are similarly endowed intellectually is a powerful statement on the equality of the genders.

More significant than the drawing of attention to the similarities of men and women is the individuation of characters that gives the heroine attributes that traditionally fell under masculinity and gives the hero attributes that traditionally fell under femininity. This proves the equality of genders. It also undermines essentialist understandings of gender and, by moving individual human beings from gender restrictions, makes it possible to argue persuasively for the respectful treatment of all.

When we are first introduced to Vanessa, she is attending a party at Balliol. She is disapproving of the men at the party. She asks herself "what is wrong with Oxford men?" (21). At the party she is introduced to Mehul by Charlie and offers a hand to him only for the handshake to turn "a little too lingering". Mehul's prolonged handshake is a sign of his sexual attraction to Vanessa who, obviously, is not pleased by the fact that women are being viewed simply as sexual objects.

Vanessa is still preoccupied with "what is wrong with Oxford men" the morning after the party and toys with the idea of writing an article on the subject, in response to an article on "The Problem with Women at Oxford" which has appeared in the student paper to which she contributes. However, she ends up writing to her friend Jane at Cambridge, to whom she expresses her frustrations and her intention to defend women through her writing. She writes:

> *I've just spent […] hours trying to write something on the status of women in Oxford. […] I'm trying to write this in response to a silly article that Oxford women are to blame for distracting the men (as though men have nothing to do with their own distractions!). I'll write a totally separate piece on the ways in which we're treated like second-class citizens and how it must change*. (23-4; Original in italics)

In her preparations to begin writing, she remembers that "she had to have music" and picks Bob Dylan's[8]*The Times They Are a-Changing*[9]from her record collection (23). In her letter to Jane, she writes: *"can you tell that I'm listening to Dylan?"* The reference to Dylan and this specific song is important in its indication of the era and its political climate. Dylan was a key figure in the 1960s counterculture – the youth movement by the post–War children (the "baby boomers") in which the novel has a historical interest, which I discuss in the second chapter. This song motivates Vanessa to write, advocating change in the manner in which women in Oxford are treated. She heeds Dylan's call to writers and critics to "swim" in the social change before they drown in its waters as Robert Rosenstone (1969) describes it and as seen in the very first stanza of the song. Vanessa is thus using her writing to question the behaviour of the men in Oxford. Her writing in itself and the message that she strives to pass across therefore act as a means of negating the traditional beliefs and cultures that constantly relegate women to secondary roles.

Vanessa's spirit of independence is amplified in a number of her interactions with Tayo. For instance, Tayo asks her if he came to the party all by himself or not, during their very first conversation when they first met. He teasingly says: "How can such a beautiful young lady be without an escort?" and we are told that "it was meant to make her blush, but it didn't." Her agency is expressed when in response she asks him; "And why is that strange? […] Don't tell me you're one of those men who believe women need protecting" (32).

[8]Dylan is considered one of the greatest artists in American history in the 1960s.

[9]This song particularly was used to stir people to prepare to embrace/accept change. It is regarded as "the music of protest" more so due to its role in the Civil Rights Movement in America at the time.

Part of the lyrics of the song goes as follows "*Come writers and critics// Who prophesize with your pen// And keep your eyes wide// The chance won't come again// And don't speak too soon//For the wheel's still in spin// And there's no tellin' who that it's namin'// For the loser now will be later to win// For the times they are a-changin'" See online;* http://bobdylan.com/songs/times-they-are-changin/

She also does not play the role of a typical heroine in the manner that she openly expresses her feelings about Tayo. Soon after meeting Tayo, she even invites him for the Christmas party at her grandparents' home (42). This is unlike in the typical western romances, where gender roles are presented such that the men are the ones who go after women. The heroine, to show her femininity, is supposed to play hard to get. The heroine is meant to suppress her emotions and feelings about the hero, especially in the very early stages of the relationship. This is usually required of the heroine so that the hero can do their role of constantly going after them. Vanessa does not live up to this expectation as she openly shows her interest in him. On another occasion, we are told that "she had brought him daffodils to brighten the room, telling Tayo that 'Women can bring men flowers too'" (56).

By presenting the heroine in an unconventional way, Manyika seems to suggest a dismantling of the patriarchal structure in which men take the leading role. However, this presentation is complicated by the fact that Vanessa belongs to the former imperial nation. Hence, in occupying this assertive position one can argue that she takes up the masculine position of the colonial man through which she therefore restates the masculine position of the colonial power. Therefore, Vanessa's possibly masculine position is complicated by the fact that she adopts directly feminine positions at crucial points in her relationship with Tayo. Thus, for example, Vanessa in a manner uncharacteristic of her, secretly hopes that Tayo will propose to her, when she observes that things have been going on well between them. Consequently, to make an impression, Vanessa makes efforts to learn Tayo's culture. At some point in the narrative she is worried about what Tayo's favorite uncle, Kayode, will think about Oxford's finest hotel, The Randolph, but more importantly, what he will think of her. And so, in a bid not to spoil anything and instead to make everything even better by creating a good relationship with Tayo's uncle, we are told that: "Nervously, she ran through her list of greetings. '*Ekaasan. Salafiani*,' she practiced, hoping that the pronunciation was

correct, when Tayo arrived with his uncle." (107) This is important for the working of their relationship since Tayo is, for instance, impressed when "she helped herself to good–sized portions, not the cautious amounts that English people usually took" (32). With the adjustments that are necessarily implied in the statement, Vanessa complicates her assumed position of the colonial man.

Moreover, it is on the basis of marriage being historically a crucial site for the manufacture and circulation of notions of gender roles, that Tayo seems sceptical of marrying Vanessa. This is significant on grounds that their cultural beliefs would conflict then becomes significant. This is illustrated when he admits that perhaps in an "unconscious way he did judge her as he at times worries about how his family would view Vanessa; wondered how she would feel in a context where everyone was expected to believe in […] at least a God… [and where] women were expected to put children before profession and do womanly things like cooking; something he knew Vanessa would not agree with" (105). He is also worried that Vanessa is not interested in having children which according to him, is an important thing. And it is only when Vanessa clarifies that she would like to have children (despite her supporting women's right to choose to have children or not) that Tayo seems relieved (105-6). In this respect, Tayo's desire to retain his cultural beliefs in the event of a marriage could be interpreted to expresses his hope that he will occupy a conventionally masculine position in the intercultural relationship.

The context in which Tayo and Vanessa build their relationship is dominated by racial discourses and race–thinking. The reader is, for instance, made aware right from the beginning that Vanessa's father who together with his "white racist South Africans" (46) have a demeaning attitude towards blacks like Tayo, as is evident during the party when he is confused for a servant. Tayo also has many other encounters with racism, including a significant incident when together with his cousin Tunde and Yusuf he is arrested after a fight

arises between him and some white boys. The white boys attack Tayo for making out with an English girl who happens to be a sister to one of them. The narrator says the arrest is because of racial stereotyping: “It didn’t matter what sort of families they came from, it didn’t matter they were educated, it didn’t even matter that he was at Oxford” (92). The white boys might have seen Tayo’s actions as a threat to their ‘white masculinity’; since as men born and bred in a patriarchy they could have very easily understood that it is their duty to protect their women.

In the chapter of his famous book *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967) entitled “The Man of Colour and the White Woman,” Frantz Fanon gives this interesting quote from Louis–T. Achille’s report to the Interracial Conference of 1949:

> Insofar as truly interracial marriage is concerned, one can legitimately wonder to what extent it may not represent for the colored spouse a kind of subjective consecration to wiping out in himself and his own mind the color prejudice from which he has suffered for so long. It would be interesting to investigate this in a given number of cases and perhaps to seek in this clouded motivation the underlying reason for certain interracial marriages entered into outside the normal conditions of a happy household. Some men or some women, in effect, choosing partners of another race, marry persons of a class or a culture inferior to their own whom they would not have chosen as spouses in their own race and whose chief asset seems to be the assurance that the partner will achieve denaturalization and (to use a loathsome word) “deracialization.” Among certain people of color, the fact that they are marrying someone of the white race seems to have overridden every other consideration. In this fact they find

> access to complete equality with that illustrious race, the master of the world, the ruler of the peoples of color. (51-52)

The point here, and which I flesh out in the following paragraphs, is that what should otherwise be taken as an individual's desire and love for another can be greatly complicated by race in a world where political and moral value attaches to race. Thus, for Fanon the black man's desire for the white woman symbolically says: "When my restless hands caress those white breasts, they grasp white civilization and dignity and make them mine" (63).

Tayo in his relationship with Vanessa transcends this "civilizing" value attached to white women. When the two first met, Tayo gets attracted to Vanessa because of her beauty as a woman and not because she is white; in fact, the narrator recounts that "Tayo found himself staring at the fullness of her lips" and thinking to himself that "God had definitely blessed this Englishwoman with some other country's lips" (33). While recognizing that Vanessa is white, Tayo sees past her "whiteness" and sees her simply as a good–looking woman. Even though it is important to note that he recognizes that Vanessa's beauty is that of "some other country", such that one can then argue that Tayo's attraction to Vanessa is because of her more or less African beauty. And even later in their subsequent meeting, he also recognizes her character, her fighting spirit and thus he gives her a Yoruba name – Moremi (41). Tayo's non–racialized intentions in the relationship is further demonstrated when after a conversation with Yusuf, he ponders over Yusuf's argument whom (Yusuf) together with Christine claimed that the English women were often accused for liking "black men because they were 'exotic' (87). He thus thought to himself that "perhaps [Yusuf] was right about some things – but not about race." He "reasoned that if he behaved differently with Vanessa than he did with Christine it was because they came from different cultures. And the same thing would apply to any other woman from a different culture – any woman not from Nigeria" (87). This implies that Tayo somewhat considered race as a non-issue in

his love affair with and general interaction to Vanessa hence he wondered "how did Vanessa see thing" – if it was different from his own perception or not.

Even as Tayo appreciates women's role in motherhood, it is fairly clear that his intentions are not to objectify Vanessa or perhaps simply view her as a wife whose duties are merely to take care of the family. This is demonstrated when we see that his interests in Vanessa are not limited to making her a wife and them having a happy marriage in the future. On the contrary, he shows great interest in Vanessa's career path as he even encourages her when she encounters difficulties. When Vanessa asks him if he thinks she could be a journalist in Africa, he encouragingly responds saying; "Why not? Of course you would. Vanessa Richardson […] Africa Correspondent. I can see it already." (62-3) He further encourages her: "You have a flair for writing, and you already have your own unique voice" (60)

The nurturing Tayo, in a sense, represents Manyika's general desire towards change in patriarchal attitudes. In a particularly significant instance, he tells Vanessa that he would not mind another man to fix things in the house since he is not good at that (54). He is acknowledging that just like most women, he cannot perform some of the duties usually considered masculine. And since the lack of this skill does not make him inferior as a person, equally women should not be regarded as lesser beings simply because they cannot carry out such tasks. Adichie echoes similar sentiments in her feminist manifesto when she dismisses the issue of gender roles by declaring that for instance domestic work, just like any other skill "is a life skill that both men and women should ideally have. It is also a skill that can elude both men and women."

Tayo's non–patriarchal attitude is further proven in his marriage with Miriam where he respects her profession as a nurse. Hence considering that she also works besides doing

household duties, he offers to help her. We are told that he "felt it only fair. Most Saturday mornings, she gave him a list and he would do the Kingsway shopping, while she haggled with traders selling fresh fruits and vegetables in the car park outside" (136-7). This shows his belief in the equal division of domestic labour. He respects Miriam's right to voice her opinion about their family issues. Miriam is also able to exercise her freedom to make decisions regarding the family. On a certain occasion, Tayo remembers how he had moved to Jos because it was Miriam's decision: "It was Miriam who argued that Jos would be better for the family – a more temperate climate than Ibadan, a good international school for Kemi, and on and on and on. Moving had not been his choice" (172). Manyika envisages an egalitarian society where both men's and women's voices are heard.

With the patriarchy-subverting individuation of the hero and the heroine, the relationship between Tayo and Vanessa is shown to be based on love whose mutual growth is compounded by their mutual interests and which in a way acts as the basis for their attraction. Their level of education then explains the common interest they have in certain issues about Africa. For instance in their very first conversation, they discuss their admiration for Senghor (32-3). Therefore love as the proposed basis for marriage is highlighted in *In Dependence*. Romantic love then promotes the idea of monogamous marriage as espoused in the notion of the soul-mate, the one and only. For instance, Tayo disapproves the idea of sharing a woman sexually with another man. This does not mean that he simply views the woman as his property/object to be owned as is usually the patriarchal perception. Instead, he says it is purely out of love for Vanessa as is evident when he confesses: "I'm afraid I'd be too jealous." And when asked about for his preference between monogamy and polygamy, he says "Monogamy, happy monogamy" implying that both parties have to be contented with each other as a condition for their marriage. Tayo further emphasizes that "it would have to be a woman who is gentle […] loving […] intelligent, able to put up with [him] and God-

fearing [not] Tayo-fearing" (55). This could suggests that monogamy as presented in the novel is considered an option, but only if both parties are happy in the marriage, hence the marriage therefore being one that is built on basis of mutual agreement and understanding. The idea of the soul mate and love as an important element in marriage is demonstrated when Tayo in the end divorces Miriam while he still has strong feelings for Vanessa. As presented in the text, love as a prerequisite for marriages is significant in the sense that love deconstructs race and gender which are socially used to build hierarchies.

Even as she presents her preferred model of marriage, which is monogamy, Manyika also appreciates polygamy and polyamory – and does not privilege one over the other. This is evident when Vanessa compares the patriarchal culture of polygamy with the aspect of divorcing and remarrying. Vanessa argues that "in a sense, you could argue that polygamy is not terribly different from people here in England marrying, divorcing, and then remarrying, only in one situation the marriages are simultaneous and, in another, consecutive" (53). Instead, Manyika suggests that polygamy can be empowering as seen through her representation of Tayo's mother whom despite having a polygamous husband remains happy, as Tayo says to Vanessa:

> […] my mother is happy; she's certainly very independent. In fact, you could almost say she practiced a form of polyandry because she left my father for a time to be with another man. […] but a year or two later she returned to my father. Maybe it happened because my father decided to make the family Christian. (53)

The Tayo–Vanessa relationship that is built on love is contrasted with that of Yusuf's relationship with the white woman, Joyce, and the Nigerian, Joy, whom he marries in the end. Yusuf's racialized and gendered attitude is illustrated in his conversation with Tayo when

despite having an affair with Joyce, he strongly dismisses the possibility of marrying her or any other white woman. When asked if he will marry his current girlfriend Yusuf explains:

> […] But don't get me wrong, I do like Joyce. We dance, we go to the pictures, we have a good time; there's nought wrong with an English lass for a bit of fun, but marriage, that's different. When I'm ready, my friend, it's going to be a one hundred percent Nigerian woman. Yes, most definitely, and a good northern Muslim one too But Nigerian women are no use for girlfriends. I no fit take Nigerian girlfriend…Because it's too much palaver. Wallahi! Dem just go dey talk wedding, wedding, wedding. But white woman, eh henh—dat's where man fit relax well-well! (84-85)

Unlike Tayo, Yusuf still holds on to racial stereotypes about women and it is from this perspective that he relegates the women to certain roles. From his assertions, women are generally consigned to the periphery. While white women are regarded as objects for pleasure and fun – the place "where man fit relax well-well" – the black women play the role of wives and mothers: they are good home-makers since they only 'talk wedding'. Even his concept of beauty is racialized as he says that "[…] at the end of the day [Nigerian] are the best. Besides [since after the white women] pass 30, they look old […] they get all those wrinkles […] and their bottoms just go flat like ironing board; whereas our African woman remains young and smooooth and curvy" (85). And sure enough, after having enough fun with Joyce, he finally gets married in a traditional Nigerian wedding to the Nigerian woman, Joy. Yusuf's attitude further shows that racial prejudice can also be shown by both black and white people. Hence racism is not a one-way affair, from whites to blacks, but that it can also be vice versa.

Racism and racial prejudice become important in the novel since they are the major obstacle in the Tayo–Vanessa relationship. For instance, the conversation with Yusuf gets Tayo thinking about his affair with Vanessa (87). And when Yusuf finally ends up in a marriage with a Nigerian lady instead of the white lady, Joyce, Vanessa is alarmed and feels deceived as a result, leading to an argument between her and Tayo in which she angrily accuses Tayo: "You and all your bloody Nigerian friends just use white women, don't you?...You use and then dump us for black women when you want to get married" (98-99). When he tries to calm her and calls her using the Yoruba name he had baptized her with, she takes this as Tayo's effort to assimilate her into Nigerian culture which only works to further weaken the affair between the two lovers. She tells him; "Don't Moremi me. Stop bloody trying to turn me into a Nigerian" (100).

Likewise, Tayo appears overwhelmed by the racist attitude around him. Even at the point before he proposes to her, he does not show any willingness to courageously stand up against Mr. Richardson's (Vanessa's father) racist attitude or that of the police, even if it is for the sake of his love for Vanessa (115). As a consequence, Vanessa who is much stronger in her stance against British racism gets frustrated in her single-handed efforts to ensure their relationship flourishes. She then accuses him of having never wanted to marry an English girl anyway but instead wanting "a subservient Nigerian girl who will do exactly what [he says] and agree with everything [he] wants" (115). This is during an argument when after coming from seeing Mr. Richardson, Tayo portrays an indifferent attitude towards Vanessa as he has been discouraged by Vanessa's father on the idea of marrying Vanessa. The ultimate failure of the Vanessa-Tayo affair can thus be linked to Tayo's seemingly indifferent attitude: his lack of equal commitment which is mainly influenced by the racial setting in which they interact, a recurrent characteristic of some post-colonial African women's writings such as Mariama Bâ (1986) in *Scarlet Song*. In this novel, Bâ particularly highlights the issues of race

and gender and the manner in which racialized gender attitudes among Africans pose difficulties to the romance and marriage of Mireille and Ousmane. Like Bâ, Manyika navigates the gender and racialism plot such that she examines the ground of the two issues through the Tayo–Vanessa relationship.

What Manyika does in *In Dependence* can be linked to what the popular romance, in the hands of African women writers, has been moulded to become – an apparatus for the expansion of the woman's potential in a man's world. As Stephanie Newell (1997) writes, women "rewrite popular myths of female subordination [and thus] construct a new, assertive femininity, endowing it with a positive power which undermines conventional image of women" (4). Bryce (1997), echoing similar sentiments argues that "romantic love becomes a trope for the desire for change both personal and social […] a testing ground for new ideas, new permutations and new constructions of gendered identity" (122).The above arguments by Newell and Bryce offer a starting point for interrogating the representation of gender in *In Dependence*.

Thus far, we have seen how Manyika through the interracial romantic relationship works to challenge racial prejudice, racism and racialized constructions of gender. Her presentation of gender in the novel challenges racialized masculinist ideologies as seen through Tayo and Vanessa's experiences. The two interact at a much deeper level, as soulmates, which enables them to modify ideas of race and gender in a manner that subverts the social construction of such concepts. Even though the two do not end up in a 'happily-ever-after' Manyika seems to propose that love can be used to overcome racial and gender injustice, as is evident in the narrative's optimism that they will in the future get back together despite the many years of separation.

## Chapter IV

## A Case for Cosmopolitanism

In this chapter, I examine how in *In Dependence,* Manyika uses an interracial romantic relationship to make a politically potent case for cosmopolitanism. By cosmopolitanism it is here meant a belief in a common humanity that unites by transcending (not ignoring) the differences that arise out of subscription to different worldviews by different human groups. Cosmopolitanism manifests in attitudes, ideas and practices that flow out of and are consistent with this belief. But, as shall be demonstrated in this discussion, *In Dependence* argues for a particular variety of cosmopolitanism, and by so doing provokes reflection on the notion itself. Expectedly, given that it is structured as a romance, *In Dependence* makes its most important points in the argument for cosmopolitanism through the two main characters, the hero Tayo and the heroine Vanessa, and the career of their love story. Other characters – especially Mr. Richardson, Kemi and Yusuf – are used to bring into sharp focus this main research report of the novel.

The case for cosmopolitanism in *In Dependence* starts with a robust critique of the notion of cultural purity in the era of globalization. This critique is conducted through a problematization of cultural identity that involves reiterating the simple fact of life that peoples and cultures interact in complex ways and significantly impact one another, in the process "polluting" one another. Directly, in this vein, the novel interrogates Englishness and the notion of pure African identities. It then makes its case for cosmopolitanism on the back of the interrogation.

The novel's two protagonists, Tayo and Vanessa, are highly educated and well-travelled individuals. Tayo is a black Nigerian who in the course of the novel spends time in

England, Paris as well as San Francisco while the white English Vanessa spends time in Paris, Nigeria and Senegal. The two characters live fully in the era of globalization.

Globalization, with its history entrenched in the advent of modernity, is a move beyond the nation–state and the national boundaries that are limiting. Instead, as Antony Giddens (1990) and Stuart Hall (1992) claim, it involves the traversing of national boundaries and identities, leading to new ways of life ordered and characterized by ideas that cross–cut space and time and which consequently impact the individual's cultural identity. In the end, globalization leads to the deconstruction of the belief in national unity as nations are then characterized by diversity in culture due to the interactions of people across time and space. This is for instance evident in Giddens' (1990) discussions of the nation–state (among others such as international division of labour, world military order and capitalism), as a dimension of globalization. He asserts that "the nation–state has become 'too small for the big problems of life, and too big for the small problems of life'" (65). Hall (1992) adds that even the belief in the unified identity of the self also remains an illusion. He affirms that:

> If we feel we have a unified identity from birth to death, it is only because we construct a comforting story or "narrative of the self" about ourselves [since] [t]he fully unified, completed, secure and coherent identity is a fantasy. Instead, as the systems of meaning and cultural representation multiply, we are confronted by a bewildering, fleeting multiplicity of possible identities, any one of which we could identify with – at least temporarily. (598)

The 'multiplicity of systems of meaning and cultural representation' as intensified by globalization and characterized by migration among others has led to the deterritorialization of peoples cultural experiences. As a result, maintaining a stable cultural identity as well as

our national identities is an increasingly difficult goal to achieve as our experiences and consequently our way of life is continuously being influenced by other people's culture. From these arguments put forward by Hall and Giddens, one can conclude that globalization leads to not only plural identities but also contested and in certain cases dislocated identities that challenge the notion of cohesive/homogenous national identity. In *In Dependence*, the impacts of globalization on self and group perceptions of the individual's identity are clearly evident.

The understanding by Tayo and Vanessa of what happens to their cultural identities as a result of their travels and interactions with cultures other than the ones they were born into underlines the statement that *In Dependence* makes on cultural purity. At some point in the narrative, Vanessa comes to acknowledge that she does not feel at home in England and with Englishness while on the other hand Tayo comes to recognize that some of his beliefs and values seem to alienate him from what in popular belief should be his African identity. And yet there is no denying that Vanessa is English and Tayo is African.

Vanessa's observation on her "impure" English identity is a good starting point for my examination of the interrogation of Englishness in *In Dependence.* For purposes of clarity, I restate that in my reading the questioning of Englishness – and of the notion of pure African identities – in *In Dependence* is part of a critique of essentialist notions of identity that makes possible a justification for cosmopolitanism. In my exploration of the interrogation of Englishness in *In Dependence*, I particularly draw on the arguments by scholars and critics like Salman Rushdie (1992), Simon Gikandi (1996) and Paul Gilroy (1987) among others. These scholars have fervently criticized and questioned the purity of cultural identity more especially in regards to the idea of Englishness and its association to the concept of racial purity. In their consideration of the constituents of Englishness, they conclusively declare that Englishness is a creation of the colonies. To them, Englishness as a

cultural identity that was most significantly articulated through ideas of racial and cultural difference between the English and the peoples they colonized. It is, therefore, a cultural identity that was supposed to maintain a particular system of power relations.

The critics' start their arguments against Englishness by noting the manner in which the notion of Englishness is associated with racial purity hence playing a key role in the division of, first, English society and, then, the world into insiders and outsiders as argued by Gilroy (1987) and Gikandi (1996). Gilroy, for instance, notes that Englishness is considered a racially exclusive identity – he sees it as "morbid celebration of England and Englishness from which blacks are systematically excluded" (12). Englishness only recognizes as English white Englishmen and women. Englishness also comes with a sense of superiority. This is clear in M. Diawara's (1990) definition of Englishness as "the privileging of a certain use of language, literature, ideology, and history of one group over populations that it subordinates to itself" (830). This definition picks out the crucial linking of some ideas of race, class, national history and national belonging with the British Empire in the construction of Englishness. The linking of these ideas with the English Empire feed the notion of the superiority of the English and account for pride in Englishness.

Having established that Englishness as a racially constructed concept is used to reject the multi–cultural nature of British society (Gikandi, Hall, and Gilroy), these scholars dig beneath the surface and present evidence that supports the argument that being English, as opposed to Englishness, has been impacted by processes of migration and colonization that led to the interaction of people and thus the mixing and exchange of various cultures which has continued to post-colonial times. Gilroy (1987) thus argues against essentialist notions of race and nationalism while Bhabha (1994), on similar grounds, proposes that "[t]he Western metropole must confront its postcolonial history, told by its influx of post–war migrants and refugees, as an indigenous or native narrative interna1 to its national identity" (6). In the

same study, Bhabha attempts to demonstrate that despite the existence of the national narratives that are meant to instil a sense of oneness among the people; the cohesion may never be achieved since the national representation in itself is equivocal (Bhabha 208-9). Bhabha, picking up from Benedict Anderson's (1983) idea of a nation as an "imagined communities", argues that the nation as a text carries with it contradictions that make it impossible to fit into a neat definition. This is because the understanding of a nation, similar to a text, relies on an individuals' interpretation which is in turn influenced by their assumptions among other factors.

In the novel, as has been noted, the English heroine comes to feel uncomfortable with Englishness as the novel also to a significant extent dwells on the exploration of the idea of Englishness. The novel particularly narrates twentieth century England – as it is the period in which its action is set.

The argument that Englishness is a colonial invention as maintained by the scholars and critics cited above are consequently relevant in understanding the portrayal of Englishness in the novel. For instance, there is the embodiment of Englishness in the character of Vanessa's father, Mr. Richardson, whose career included a tour of duty in Nigeria as a colonial officer. As indicated by Simon Potter (2007), colonial officers played a most important part in the construction and promotion of Englishness. Mr. Richardson is used to illustrate the feelings of superiority associated with Englishness when even with the end of colonialism he still considers African nations the subordinates of Britain. This is despite Vanessa reminding him that they are no longer colonies but ex–colonies (Manyika, 73) during a conversation in which he adds that "one feels rather obliged to show them the world" in a bid to civilize them (Manyika, 74). Mr. Richardson also becomes a symbolic representation of the reluctance of the former colonial masters to grant complete independence to their colonies and accept them as equals. I further argue that Vanessa's

father in this context, is also used to present the anxieties among the white population in England who desperately want to hold on to Englishness even though, as the critics have argued, it is a historical illusion – one that had no real relationship with the objective truth about what it means to be English but was nevertheless ideologically useful for the state and the ruling class.

Not surprisingly, Mr. Richardson warns Tayo against marrying his daughter since, according to him, they are likely to experience insurmountable difficulties because of their racial difference. Comparing this with the difficulties exerted upon marriages among people of different classes, as his own to Vanessa's mother, he says to Tayo: "in many ways you and I are quite similar […] I was fond of a woman from a different class in the way that you seem to be fond of a woman of a different race. My wife, as you know, is from the upper-class, and her family didn't approve of me. […They] have never entirely accepted our marriage." (112). Tayo is aware that Mr. Richardson is warning him particularly of the "challenges that mixed race couples faced, with half-caste children" (113), implying that the marriage could be a threat to Englishness (whiteness) with its resultant bi-racial identity of the child. The marriage may interfere with the idea of racial "purity" that is privileged in definitions of Englishness.

This concern to maintain a "pure" racial identity among some white English people can be further illustrated through the utterance by Mrs. Murdoch (the wife to Mr. Murdoch, Mr. Richardson's friend with whom they served in the colonial service) who in a conversation during a meal says;

> […] the number of black children in English children's homes is on the rise […because] many parents won't take the brown ones for the fear of what others might think. If the children are properly black of course, there's no mistaking the mothers. But with the brown

> ones…well, people gossip, you know. Few women want to be mistaken as mothers of …mulattoes... […] People will think it is rape. (71-71)

Mrs. Murdoch and Mr. Richardson are thus presented as representatives of an earlier English imperial nationalism, who find themselves disoriented in the period of decolonization. The utterance shows the fear among some white English people who were holding onto the idea, as confirmed by Gilroy (1987), that white and black are mutually exclusive.

All these illustrations of attempts to maintain the purity of Englishness are simply presented as the anxieties among some white Englishmen and women in the twentieth century in the wake of the declining Empire during this period in time. The decline of Empire is in *In Dependence* evident with it losing its Nigerian colony in the wake of the 1960s. With the proud former Nigerian colonial officers such as Mr. Richardson and Mr. Murdoch, who was in Tanganyika, back in England, Manyika could be argued to be in this instance gently mocking the idea of superiority that is at the centre of notions of Englishness.

It is with these racist attitudes as a backdrop that the romantic relationship between Vanessa and Tayo lances the concept of Englishness in the novel. The relationship disturbs the notion of racial purity. That Tayo and Vanessa are "soul mates" engaged in a romantic relationship is itself a challenge to the idea that black and white are mutually exclusive. Further, and most subtly, complicating the idea of Englishness in *In Dependence* is the detail that Vanessa's family once lived in Nigeria when her father worked as a colonial officer. Vanessa's desire to go to Nigeria during her affair with Tayo can also be interpreted as a longing for a place that was once "home" to her. A core idea in Englishness is that home is only England. And yet Vanessa's testimony is that despite being English there is a part of her that feels for Africa what she does not feel for England. This comes through in her wondering about her identity as is captured in a letter to Tayo. She writes: "*I'm so nostalgic for the days*

*in Dakar and restless here in England. Perhaps I am also a misfit. I live here, yet don't feel particularly English. What then is my 'personality' – African, European, or Afropean?*" (Manyika, 206, original in Italics)

These illustrations seem to suggest that Manyika is drawing the reader's attention to the very issue of Englishness as an identity that has preoccupied scholars of postcolonial literature. For such scholars, the history of the Empire and the imperial culture in general is to a large extent a resultant effect of British colonial endeavours on the metropole (the colonizing countries). Hence, such theorists claim that the culture of Englishness was born not simply in England but overseas, in the colonies. Gikandi "suggests that instead of reading metropole and colony as oppositions, we should see them as antimonies connected through the figure of modernity" (1996, 18) as Sara Suleri also contends that "the story of colonial encounter is in itself a radically decentering narrative" (1992, 2). Their arguments destabilize the assumed binaries that have been established between the colonizer and the colonized and as a consequent, further dismantle the identity of Englishness as pure. Their arguments thus become significant in this study in assessing the issue of cultural identity (Englishness/African identity) as a struggle presented in *In Dependence*.

By underlining the racism that is written into Englishness and showing its inadequacy in describing the English, *In Dependence* both shows the notion's inaccurate headedness and the fact that it is morally objectionable.

The difference between Vanessa's understanding of English identity and her father's seems to arise from the daughter's acceptance of the facts of globalization while Mr. Richardson is stuck to idealized images of the bygone era of Empire. The facts of globalization also account for Tayo's sense of his changing cultural identity. My

consideration of this change in Tayo is a starting point for my examination of the interrogation of the notion of "pure" African cultural identities in *In Dependence*.

Tayo's sense of his changing identity is best explained by a theory that centres the experiences by Africans who find themselves traversing different, mainly non-African, spaces and becoming affected as a result of their interacting with the cultures and ideas of those spaces: "Afropolitanism." As mentioned in the introduction to this research report, Taiye Selasi (2007) coined the term "Afropolitan" in reference to the new situation of migrants from various regions in sub-Saharan Africa who are criss-crossing borders in different parts of the world not only in practice but also in theory. In an online article, Selasi firmly concludes: "We are Afropolitans: not citizens, but Africans of the world". This definition functions to emphasize the significance of their being "African", as a key aspect in their identification amidst their interactions in the global world.

This point is emphasized by Gikandi (2011), who in picking from Selasi devises a more nuanced definition of the term when he asserts that,

> The term Afropolitan can now be read as the description of a new phenomenology of Africanness – a way of being African in the world. Afropolitanism may sound like an awkward term, but there is no doubting that it has been prompted by the desire to think of African identities as both rooted in specific local geographies but also transcendental of them. To be Afropolitan is to be connected to knowable African communities, nations, and traditions; but it is also to live a life divided across cultures, languages, and states. It is to embrace and celebrate a state of cultural hybridity – to be of Africa and of other worlds at the same time. (11)

Gikandi's definition does not suggest the equivalence to being African with blackness as a racial identity as championed by other ideologies of African identity such as Negritude

and Pan–Africanism (whose idea of African identity to a certain extent are based on the notion of Africa as in opposition to Europe). Afropolitanism therefore does not seem to endorse the notion that the terms blackness and African identity can be used interchangeably, nor that Africa is in opposition to Europe. The rejection of cultural purity that is written into Gikandi's definition of Afropolitanism resonates with Chielozona Eze's (2014) definition of the notion:

> [An] Afropolitan, in my understanding, is that human being on the African continent or of African descent who has realized that her identity can no longer be explained in purist, essentialist, and oppositional terms or by reference only to Africa. Afropolitans claim that they are no longer just X as opposed to Y; rather they are A and B and X. Their realities are already intermixed with the realities of even their erstwhile oppressors. It is not possible to go back to their native place, since they are all mutts, biologically or culturally. (240)

Gikandi recognizes "Afropolitanism" as characterized by embracing the hybrid nature of identity, Eze also takes plural identity as its characteristic feature. Their rejection of essentialist notions of identity is based on that fact of globalization – the movement and interaction of people and thus the mixing of culture which then undermines cultural purity. Therefore, the notion of Afropolitanism as an identity characterized by non-essentialism and multiple, hybridized and sometimes dislocated identities is useful to this exploration of Manyika's examination of individual and national identity of the characters.

After having had the experience of living for extended periods of time in more than one continent, Tayo recognizes that he can no longer claim a purist cultural African identity for himself in a simple and straightforward manner. In a letter to Vanessa he writes:

> *[…]I do not always comply with the demands of extended family and I'm no longer certain about the existence of a god. These are both*

> *fundamental elements in our culture that one is not supposed to question. […] these characteristics are obviously generalizations, but I believe they still ring true for much of the [African] continent […] the importance we attach to extended family, communal responsibility and reverence for ancestral spirits (all of which I fail miserably on), [and] the cultural tendency to gravitate towards other people rather than towards things and places.* (204; original in italics)

Tayo's utterances function to challenge the neat and coherent idea of African cultural identity. As evident from Manyika's presentation of Tayo, this neatly defined African identity does not take into consideration the mobile nature of the term Africa and the varied identity that results from the different lived experiences of its people. This understanding resonates with V. Y. Mudimbe's (1988) and Kwame Anthony Appiah's (1992) non–essentialist position on what it means to be "African". The two deconstruct the argument that there is a distinct, perfect and unique understanding of what "African" means. Mudimbe argues that this essentialist perspective led to the construction of "Africa" in binary opposition to Europe as Africa was associated with "tradition" while Europe was associated with "modernity"; and that these associations were used to justify colonization. He thus shows his reluctance to accept that ideologies such as Negritude are appropriate means of fixing the flawed perception by the West that "African" is inferior (36). Mudimbe, instead, suggests a move to "*demythify* the concept of Africanity [such that it becomes] the simple phenomenon which *per se* is perfectly neutral, of belonging to Africa" (37). Appiah (1992) seems to echo similar sentiments in his deconstruction of the understanding of an "Africa" that is based on race and culture (45). He asserts that the idea of a uniform African culture and race is simply a social construction that lacks evidence.

The arguments posed by Appiah and Mudimbe for non–essentialist African identity, which resonate with the arguments for Afropolitanism, have been cited as promoting Eurocentrism. Oyekan Owomoyela (1994), for instance, posits that Appiah argues for what he terms as "de–Africanization" (45) – that Africans abandon their customs and the beliefs that define them as Africans (Oyekan Owomoyela 1994). This perhaps could be an explanation to Tayo's and Vanessa's variety of cosmopolitanism shown most clearly in the "identity crises" that the two experience, and which has been noted above: Tayo's *oyinbo* mentality and Vanessa's unease with Englishness. Therefore the citing of Tayo's *oyinbo* character seems to be an acknowledgement of a criticism that has been levelled at Afropolitanism that he embodies. This is evident through the comments of the other characters in the novel (Manyika, 142), which is then made to appear to be Tayo's alienation from his "African" culture while he embraces "Western" culture.

Following the assertions of Mudimbe and Appiah in their questioning of universal African–ness, Tayo, despite some of his cultural non–beliefs, is an African following his sense of feeling of belonging. Tayo's character illustrates the Afropolitan identity which rejects the essentialist approach to African identity. This is confirmed when Tayo rhetorically asks: "*What then is my African personality?"* Tayo asks this question since some of his cultural beliefs such as his view on religion (his non-belief in God) contradicts those that are generally considered to be "African". The question therefore works to interrogate and in a sense dismiss what are conventionally taken to be the markers of the identity of an African. We are told, for instance, that he appreciates things and places mores than people, and this obviously stands in contrast to the idea that is most famously expressed in the term "ubuntu" that anchors most theories of autochthonous African–ness. "Ubuntu", which means person–ness, is a label for a social theory that privileges the idea of humane sociability that privileges human relationships to (the invention of) artefacts. "Ubuntu" is often argued to be a distinct

character of African–ness. Thus Tayo writes to Vanessa, "*In a way, 'things' (such as books filled with ideas) and 'places' (memories of places and destinations yet to be visited) are what capture me more than people"* (204; original in italics).

By specifying his individual identity, Tayo undermines the rhetorical and political power of the collective African cultural identity. Through Tayo, Manyika questions the clichéd and the romanticized idea of a pure and fixed African identity. This kind of identity, to individuals like Tayo, considering their transnational affiliations, in both practical and theoretical terms can only remain an idealist, purist fantasy.

The presentation of Tayo's non–essentialist approach to his identity resonates with the ideas of scholars such as Rushdie (1991) Bhabha (1994) and Hall (1992). Tayo's perception on his identity, for instance, substantiates Rushdie's proclamation that "our identity is at once plural and partial. Sometimes we feel that we straddle culture; at other times, that we fall between two stools" (15). This declaration works to ascertain the unstable nature of our identity – that identity is fluid and keeps on changing from time to time.

It is not only Tayo who interprets his non–subscription to some general ideas of African–ness and his embrace of the so called "European" and "American" ideas, as indication of his his alienation from his African culture. Many of his close relations argue that he has become more of an "Englishman" than a Nigerian. The narrator recounts that Tayo's wife Miriam always reminded him that "he was far too English in the way he dressed, in the music he listened to, and in his preference for speaking English rather than Yoruba." Adding that "it wasn't just Miriam, but his brothers and sisters (even Bisi) who told him he had too much *oyinbo* [White man/ European] mentality for his own good" (142).

The argument on Tayo's alienation from his "African identity" is complicated by the point that, "yet, for all his so-called Western thinking, he [Tayo] refused to leave Nigeria to

live abroad with his wife Miriam and daughter Kemi. Nigeria was home for his soul, if not entirely home for his mind. [In his view] despite his family and friends arguing that he had changed, he remained the same except for his approach to religion." He claims that "it was society that had changed" (142). Tayo's refusal to leave Nigeria is a reflection on the fact that despite his increasing sensibility to move past limiting national boundaries, he feels a sense of obligation to the people around him and a sense of professional duty to the students for instance. Tayo's commitment to the nation of Nigeria motivates his battle with the corruption and poor leadership that lead to the deterioration of the country. His dedication to his country is evident when he continues his fight even in the face of his being physically assaulted. His sacrifice extends to his decision to stay on in Nigeria and continue the struggle to change his country even after his wife and daughter leave for exile. Tayo's attachment to Nigeria, and by extension to Africa, as not only a physical but more importantly a spiritual home makes him an African, if not more African than those of his compatriots who accuse him of being alienated. Being "African" in this instance refers not to any specific cultural traits, but to an active citizenship, to a commitment to the well-being of an African country and the continent more generally. It is an Africanness of active affiliation rather than one of mere filiation.

The narrative further calls attention to Tayo's *oyinbo* character by juxtaposing it to that of his foil, Yusuf. This is thought–provoking in the sense that, like Tayo, Yusuf has lived in places other than Nigeria, such as England. Unlike Tayo who appears to like only English and not any other language including his own, Yusuf is at ease with different cultures – both African and non–African. At one point when Yusuf and Tayo meet at the Yelwa Club, we are told that:

> In one minute (Yusuf) could be heard speaking pidgin, then Hausa or English (with the Yorkshire accent he had never lost), and even some Yoruba these days, depending on who happened to be around. And it

> wasn't just linguistics that Yusuf juggled with so smoothly, but everything, it seemed to Tayo, right down to the clothes he wore. Today it was a *danshiki*, but he might just as easily have donned a safari jacket or a three-piece suit. (142)

It is important to note that through Yusuf *In Dependence* reminds readers that the interaction of peoples and cultures in complex ways in the era of globalization is not limited to the contact between the Global North and the Global South. There are South–South dealings – some of them, as the Yusuf case illustrates, limited to the contact of peoples of a single nation state – and there are cultural identities that present themselves as being rooted in the South even though they are clearly significantly impacted by cultures of the Global North. Crucially, these South–South dealings also result in the "pollution" of cultural identities.

Due to the interaction of peoples and cultures as part of the phenomenon known as diaspora, more and more groups of people are moving from their original homes into new lands, in which they settle for extended periods of time and make new homes. These migrants remain attached to their old homes. Even though they may feel that they are strangers or, at worst, unwelcomed foreigners in their new homes, members of the groups that have created new homes take up ideas of the dominant culture in these spaces where they now live. At the same time, these same members will continue to nostalgically "remember" and hold on to some ideas of the culture they lived in the old homes without forgetting that the old homes are not paradise – otherwise they would have never left them in the first place. In this manner the interaction of peoples and cultures in the era of globalization gives rise to diasporic identities that are characterized by feelings of simultaneously belonging and not belonging in both the new and the old homes (Hall, 1992).

The feeling of non–belonging that usually characterizes diasporic identities also, on certain occasions, tends to push the individual to develop nostalgia. This much is clear from

the experience of Tayo's daughter, Kemi. After moving to San Francisco, Kemi does "menial jobs" as she works as a nanny to support herself (Manyika, 225). We are also told that Franklin Street where she lives is "one of the few streets in San Francisco that never went to sleep" (224). These show sense of unsettlement, the lack of comfort, which may bring in the feeling of non-belonging. As a result, she gets interested in the things of her original home, such as music, to fulfil her need to belong. However, the idea of original home in this case is not narrowed down to Nigeria, but instead refers to Africa as a whole. For instance, her interest in music has shifted from liking Michael Jackson to African artists as evident when Tayo found that, "*Kemi owned CDs of African musicians with names like Les Nubians, and Positive Black Soul*," adding that he "*found it curious that his daughter, living abroad, probably knew more about African music than Africans in Africa*" (225). Significantly, in the light of the longing for a piece of home, Kemi "also owned some of her mother's favourites, such as Sunny Ade and Miriam Makeba" (225). In another letter to Vanessa from Tayo, we also get to learn that Kemi had taken a degree in "African studies and Arts History", while she also harbours dreams of returning to Africa to teach English as a second language" (208). Christine Arinze, also, despite having lived in Oxford for many years, still holds on to her original home (Nigerian) culture. She cooks Nigerian food and listens to Nigerian music as we are told that "[w]henever he (Tayo) stepped into Christine's flat, [he] thought of home [probably because] the smell of Christine's cooking [...] reminded him of Mama, or the fact that she frequently played Highlife and Juju music" (35-36). This also gestures towards her diasporic consciousness. As James Clifford (1994) in his introductory paragraph, similar to Hall (1997), states that "contemporary diaspora cannot be reduced to epiphenomena of the nation-state or of global capitalism" (302). This implies that the diasporic individuals such as Christine and Kemi cannot be simply defined by either the nation (Nigeria) or by globalization, in as much as these structures define them as diaspora. Instead, they exceed

and disapprove them (nation and globalization) as neat homogeneous entities as demonstrated in their feelings of non-belong in either places.

*In Dependence*, then, shows that the interaction of peoples and cultures in the era of globalization makes impossible the assumption of "pure" African cultures, whether these cultures are based on the African continent or are in other lands. This demonstration, together with the critique on Englishness, is an indirect articulation of a belief in a common humanity. Peoples and cultures interact because they share a common humanity. More significantly, because of the influencing of one another that results from these interactions, each culture contains a bit of other cultures. Logically, disdain for any culture, therefore, becomes an expression of self–hatred. It is in these ways that the critique of the notion of cultural purity in the era of globalization in *In Dependence* constitutes the foundation on which the novel builds its case for cosmopolitanism – and for a particular variety of cosmopolitanism.

Being a romance, *In Dependence* heavily invests meaning in the overcoming of obstacles by the hero and the heroine as this leads to the triumph of true love. It is through these that the novel roots for a particular variety of cosmopolitanism.

As has been indicated, several characters in *In Dependence* interact with cultures other than the one they were born into. As a result, some of these characters – Tayo, Vanessa, Yusuf, Christine and Kemi – become cosmopolitan. But their ways of being cosmopolitan are different, and it is this that gives us the varieties of cosmopolitanism in the novel. Further, the novel suggests its preferred way of being cosmopolitan through these characters.

There is, for instance, the cosmopolitanism of Yusuf – the Hausa man who is at ease with several other Nigerian cultures, in addition to non–African Western cultures. In keeping with the logic of the romance, the point that Yusuf ends up in a happy marriage with his Nigeria wife Joy seems to be an endorsement of his kind of cosmopolitanism. This is

especially so since even at the end of the novel the fulfilment of Tayo's relationship with Vanessa remains only a possibility, albeit an optimistic one. My argument, however, is that Yusuf's brand of cosmopolitanism is only raised so as to be dismissed – and thereby to pave the way for Tayo's and Vanessa's version to be presented as the preferred one. As has been shown in the previous chapter, Yusuf is presented as a not very likeable character in *In Dependence*. He is sexist and racially prejudiced. And therefore his ease in performing the various cultures is rather simply linked to his "sort of personality […] associated with those attuned to life in Nigeria – [the] seamless ability for social metamorphosis, which [Tayo] sometimes envied" (142) and thus does not necessarily mean that he is an open–minded individual, who embraces and internalizes these other cultures like Tayo. On the contrary, the version of cosmopolitanism that he represents is brought into question. It is suggested that this is the cosmopolitanism of the selfish African man who takes advantage of the social transformation wrought on the continent by the interaction of the continent's people with people from other continents to further entrench the patriarchal system that guarantees his advantages.

Furthermore, Tayo's "alienation" mirrors Vanessa's, and their "identity crises" call attention to their common humanity. "Identity crisis" can be a lived experience for anyone. And so, as a result of experiencing "identity crises" both Vanessa and Tayo become "misfits." Similar to Vanessa who does not feel particularly English, Tayo also describes his situation:

> *Where exactly do I fit? So often I feel out of place and, by this, I am not referring to my stance against government policies. I consider my political dissension to be a necessity rather than the actions of a misfit, given that the majority of us believe in the same thing. What I mean, when I speak of not fitting in, has to do with a cultural sense of non-belonging*. (203-204)

The idea of the "misfit" as imagined by both Tayo and Vanessa can be compared to the idea of the "half-caste" – which is a sense of being at home everywhere. Dan Ojwang' (2008), in clarifying the reasons for the approval of the "half-caste" in Asian East African writing, explores among other issues the manner in which the "half-castes" – the offspring of parents who belong to different racial groups – who were initially regarded as disgraceful have become signs of post–colonial hope (17). In his analysis of selected East African Asian novels such as Bahadur Tejani's *Day after tomorrow*, Ojwang' notes that the half-caste children are thematised in this text such that they are used as a way of imagining and thus arguing for a broader nationalistic concept – one that is more accommodating to the divergent cultures that is characteristic of the post-colonial states that give rise to them (18). Following this argument, I maintain that Manyika also privileges cosmopolitanism as a way of deconstructing the traditional cultural identities that are used to define outsiders from insiders.

Tayo and Vanessa being cultural misfits as presented in their critical perspective can be understood through the lens of the idea of the intellectual cosmopolitan as captured in the words of Edward Said (2000) who notes the "pleasures" of being in exile as in enabling one to see "'the entire world as a foreign land'" hence promoting "originality of vision" due to a diminishing of the individual's "orthodox judgement"; adding that it "is both wearying and nerve-racking, […] never the state of being satisfied, placid, or secure [and that it] is life led outside habitual order […] nomadic, decentered, contrapuntal" (178). Said's pronouncement points out that the critical character of the cosmopolitan is out of the awakening realization that there are different dimensions and approaches to ideas and beliefs apart from the one they originally knew hence they begin to question and challenge ideas and assumptions that they originally thought as absolute. This is what we observe Tayo and Vanessa do as they interact with ideas as they travel and read. It is possible that Manyika is, here, also trying to

portray the challenges of being too critical and reflexive as a cosmopolitan – "the state of never being satisfied, placid, or secure" as illustrated in *In Dependence* when in a letter to Tayo, Vanessa rhetorically asks:

> *Is this restlessness the price we have to pay for having lived in other countries and tasted other cultures? And yet there are people who have lived and travelled in various places who still seem most at home in their country of birth. I don't know what it is, Tayo. Do people like us just think about these things too much?* (206)

Of interest in this extract is what Vanessa implies by the words '*people like us'*. By using 'us', Vanessa is very specific, she is referring to a given category of people as she even observes that not all people who travel experience the same challenge of identity crisis. An appropriate example in the novel is Yusuf, who despite having live in England just like Tayo does not seem to 'just think about these things too much' as Tayo and Vanessa.

Said (2000) has explained that;

> Most people are principally aware of one culture, one setting, one home; exiles are aware of at least two, and this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions, an awareness that – to borrow a phrase from music – is *contrapuntal*. For an exile, habits of life, expression or activity in the new environment inevitably occur against the memory of these things in another environment. Thus both the new and the old environments are vivid, actual, occurring together contrapuntally. (186) (Emphasis in original)

The word 'contrapuntal', according to *Dictionary.com* means "composed of two or more relatively independent melodies sounded together/of relating to counterpoint". This can therefore be used to understand the fact that Tayo and Vanessa actualize their individuality and make peace with their differences from their societies' standards. Hence, the "identity

crisis" experienced by Tayo and Vanessa moves the love story at the heart of *In Dependence* towards it's in some way optimistic ending. This is presented in Vanessa's interesting observations regarding the two characters' changed attitudes towards religion. She observes that she and Tayo have done the opposite of the collective national expectation in regards to religion. She says:

> *I find it ironic that we seem to have moved in the opposite directions on this topic (faith). I now attend church regularly. It gives me a sense of belonging and a feeling of peace. You say that Nigerian society expects one to believe, whereas British society almost presumes the opposite. "Could it be that our societies have driven us to our respective points of belief and unbelief?"* (206)

Crucially, the fact that one, Vanessa, here inhabits a position vacated by the other, Tayo, also means that the characters can understand and empathise with each other's present place. My claim is that, despite Tayo and Vanessa move in opposite directions, inspired by cosmopolitanism, this does not mean that they become mutually incompatible. For Tayo and Vanessa, in any case, the movements in opposite directions are movements towards each other that make possible an ultimate embrace. The movements are at first born of mutual sexual attraction. They are later consolidated and enhanced – and they become spiritual movements towards and into each other. The ideas of human dignity, rights and progress that must be mobilized to appreciate the somewhat optimistic feeling with which *In Dependence* ends definitely get their most articulate expression in the manner in which through their undying love the black African hero and white English heroine celebrate their common humanity and inter-dependence. As shown in *In Dependence*, cosmopolitanism enables individuals to transcend limiting cultural identities and therefore makes possible their achievement of happiness.

## Chapter V

## Conclusion

A lot has happened since 1948 when the marriage of the African Seretse Khama and the English woman Ruth Williams caused such a storm across three countries and two continents. There is more contact between people of different races today. Millions of Africans, for example, are living and working away from their home continent. As a result of this greater interaction of people of different races interracial relationships are no longer rare. One can even argue that such unions are generally deemed acceptable. This, after all, is an age that has witnessed an individual of mixed heritage with African roots ascending to the presidency of the most powerful country in the world, the United States of America. Whereas such facts indicate a fundamental change in attitudes towards race, the existence of social movements such as Black Lives Matter in the United States of America and Fees Must Fall in South Africa are potent reminders that race remains a politically–laden dividing factor in multi–racial societies. Along similar lines, the fact that the women's movement continues to grow all over the world is indicative that gender still is an important focal point in social and political discourses.

The present study has critically examined Manyika's engagement with race and gender in her novel *In Dependence.* It has investigated Manyika's use of the romance form, which has long been linked to escapist fantasy, to explore such contemporary social and political issues. In the process the study has recognized that the notion of interdependence is used to structure the novel in the various levels. This idea is worked into the title of the novel – "in dependence". In summary, then, the thesis of this study has been that *In Dependence* Manyika argues for cosmopolitanism. It does this by mobilizing a form (the romance) that is itself "cosmopolitan" in as far as the two main characters, for instance, traverse borders in the

course of their interaction; living and socializing with people of various origins. The content of the argument involves showing of the inter-dependence of gender categories and races.

A theoretical framework made out of several notions has been deployed to undertake the examination of the argument for cosmopolitanism in *In Dependence*. The central concepts making up the theoretical framework are: Ngugi wa Thiong'o's idea of the literary form as a type of language; Ann Laura Stoler, Anne McClintock and Frantz Fanon's elaboration of the connection between race and sexual desire in racialized societies; and the notion of Afropolitanism as a form of cosmopolitanism. The methodology that has been used in the exploration is close and critical reading of *In Dependence*. Material that could shed further light on the novel has been mobilized in the reading.

The findings of the study have been as follows: First, Manyika's *In Dependence* is a romance that is particularly suited for justifying cosmopolitanism. This is the main finding that emerges out of the first of the core chapters of this study, "The Form of *In Dependence."* This chapter engages with the first objective of the study, which is to examine the formal characteristics of *In Dependence*. The chapter establishes that *In Dependence* is a popular African romance on account of its characteristic domestication of the American romance template. The plot of the narratives reworks that of the American popular romance. And while the focus is on the romantic affair between Tayo and Vanessa, other important events that are taking place in the post-independent Nigeria and even outside, are also alluded to. The two narratives – that of the politics of state and of the love affair – run parallel to each other from the beginning to the end of the narrative. Manyika's intense use of intertextuality is argued to further help depict the nostalgia of the twentieth century in which the novel is set. It is argued in the chapter that the intertextuality in *In Dependence* also reflects the cosmopolitan agenda of the novel. In all, *In Dependence* is assessed as a novel that uses the romance genre template to communicate its vision to its readers.

Secondly, Manyika's *In Dependence* negotiates for gender definitions that transcend the traditional colonial racialized gender roles. This is the main finding that emerges out of the third chapter entitled "A love for all Seasons: Romance, Gender and Racism." This chapter explores the second objective of the study, which is to analyze how and with what results Manyika uses an inter-racial heterosexual relationship to reflect upon gender and racism in the novel. The chapter shows that the interracial relationship, between Tayo and Vanessa, bridges both racial and gender divides. The two interact on grounds of mutual love for each other – as soul mates. Therefore, the deep, strong and destined feelings of love and attraction that they harbor for each other, as the driving force in their relationship, enables them to transcend the societal limitations as they begin to focus on their love for one another. *In Dependence* argues for inter-dependence in gender relation. The novel presents women's agency through Vanessa who is evidently interested in women's cause as seen through her writing in defense of women at the university. Yet while defending the women's right, Vanessa does not entirely dismiss her feminine role such as motherhood. For instance, she agrees that she would have children with Tayo while she also learns the Nigerian traditions and cultures in order to please Tayo whom she is in love with and hopes to get married to. Tayo himself is used to present Manyika's view of the archetypal man that she proposes as an ideal man for the progressive society. Tayo is modernized but does not entirely discard his societal traditions. He for instance holds dear the belief in having children and the notion that woman should take care of them. However, he is flexible enough not believe in defined roles for men and women. This is evident as he also partakes in the household chores as we see him helping his wife Miriam in doing family shopping. In a sense, Manyika is calling for interdependence in gender and is therefore arguing for a new non-racialized and non-essentialized understanding of gender.

And lastly, Manyika's *In Dependence* holds out a vision of cosmopolitanism. This is the main finding that emerges out of the fourth chapter entitled "– a Case for Cosmopolitanism", which helps the study achieve its third objective – which is to present the ideological vision that emerges from Manyika's novel. *In Dependence* evidently challenges the racialized, essentialised cultural identity. Instead, the novel argues for cosmopolitanism as a way of defeating this limiting identity for individuals in these contemporary times. By having as its main characters two well-educated and widely travelled individuals, *In Dependence* encourages a shifting of focus from the nation – whether Nigeria or England – to the larger cosmopolitan affairs. This is complemented by presenting the main characters as individuals who are not at ease with the cultural national identities, which they abandon as they embrace a more individualized kind of personal identities.

The critical scrutiny of the argument of cosmopolitanism in the novel then leads to several conclusions. The first has to do with the variety of cosmopolitan that is argued for in *In Dependence.* As demonstrated through Tayo, who as hero embodies the notion, the African cosmopolitan (the Afropolitan) identifies more with the Western culture, borrowing so much from the West, while sidelining his African culture. Tayo prefers English over his traditional Yoruba language for instance. This works to glorify the West, furthering the argument that the Western culture is superior to the traditional African ways. The suggestion that the form of cosmopolitanism preferred in *In Dependence* really is the buying into Western culture by non-Westerners finds concrete expression in the dismissal of African-rooted cosmopolitanism, in the novel embodied in Yusuf. One can see how this argument becomes a justification for the continuation of neo-colonial power arrangements. For instance, *In Dependence* sweeps under the carpet the serious issues of brain drain and its effects on the brain-drained environments.

Not even an acknowledgement of the fact of increased movement of people across borders, and its impacts, can justify a cosmopolitanism that perpetuates the marginalization of parts of the world. But, importantly, even if ironically, the mere fact that *In Dependence* promotes this variety of cosmopolitanism is a pointer to the evolving common political positions among African writers. Manyika belongs in the group of writers that has been labelled The Third Generation of Nigerian Writers. A number of these writers live and work away from Nigeria. As was noted in the Introduction Manyika is currently based at the University of San Francisco, United States of America. The names of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Chris Abani quickly come to mind as other Third Generation of Nigerian Writers in diaspora. Influenced by a socio-political environment which is dissimilar from that which shaped the writers in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, these writers' experience of diaspora give them an awareness of social and political issues that are different from those of the earlier generations of Nigerian and African writers. Not surprisingly, in this light, *In Dependence* writes a cultural politics that in earlier times would have been considered anti–Africa.

In general, *In Dependence* serves to remind us that the African romance traverses the same space presenting serious issues as its more glorified sibling, the canonical novel. The African romance is most emphatically not escapist fantasy.

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