AESTHETICS OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF SELECTED BOOKS

BY

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this work entitled "An aesthetic evaluation of Children's literature in Nigeria: A Study of selected Children's books in Nigeria" has been written by me in the Department of English and Literary Studies under the supervision of Dr. Ezekiel Akuso and Dr. Keston Odiwo.

The information derived for the literature has been duly acknowledged in the text and a list of references provided. No part of this thesis has been previously presented elsewhere for another degree or diploma at any University.

Zainab Zendana Shafii

Date

CERTIFICATION

This thesis entitled: "Aesthetics of Children's literature in Nigeria: a study of selected books " by Zainab Zendana Shafii, meets the regulations governing the award of Masters of Art Degree in Literature of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my Nephews and niece Muhammed (Abba), Hanan and Fazil through whose eyes I have been able to view the world differently.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the aesthetic components in Children's literature in Nigeria using the works of Fatima Akilu, Yusuf Adamu, Ayodele Olofintuade, Lola Shoneyin, and A. O Oyekanmi'. The research aims at showing that Children's literature in Nigeria can be viewed from an angle beyond that of morality and psychology. Thus using the qualitative research method of gathering information, this study portends that the generic marker for Children's literature is not necessarily its social and cultural appeal, but its peculiar features which include the use of language, illustrations and also the styles inherent. While many scholars, have been more preoccupied with the content and information gained from Children's literature, this study by using the formalist literary theory, focuses majorly on the text, that is, the beauty of the text, especially how writers have been able to combine words to make meaning. To this end, this study observes the relationship between illustration and text with a view to showcasing how these combined components enhance the story. The study further investigates the use of language and animal images in Children's literature in the works of to enumerate the various styles that form the aesthetic components of Children's literature. Its findings reveal that Children's literature becomes more interesting and appealing if its aesthetic elements are appreciated and appropriated.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Many writers of Children's literature have emerged from Nigeria since the 1960s. Before venturing into the historical development of Children's literature in Nigeria, it is pertinent to go back to the colonial period. This is because colonialism, to a large extent affected the Nigerian society and is considered one of the factors that contributed to the literary development of literature in Nigeria. During the colonial period, the colonial masters embarked on the importation of European books, which in reality was to help propagate and impose their cultural imperialism and propaganda on the people of Nigeria. To this end, before Nigerian children read books written by Nigerians, they had read the classics of Europe; the famous folktales and fairytales collected and popularized by the German academic, Enid Blyton books and so many other books from Europe. These books portrayed the culture and life of Europeans. None reflected the Nigerian culture and tradition. Osa (1984), observes that: this situation soon changed with the attainment of independence in 1960. The culture of writing serious literature began in earnest. Expectations became high in terms of the creation of qualitative children's books. More attention was paid to relevant culture content that would help in the nurture, education and entertainment of the Nigerian child. The spirit of independence was pervasive and writers were not left out in the quest for excellence in cultural production. Some works on Children's literature were produced by writers like Cyprian Ekwensi who was heavily influenced

by the writings of the West. As a result of this, Ekwensi's earlier works were modeled after European writers. Berth Lindfors stated in his semiinal book, *Folklore in Nigerian Literature* that early in his literary career, Ekwensi was not only influenced by western juvenile books, but also borrowed from classics, like *Treasure Island*. This influence, Lindfors further asserts, is seen in the book *Juju Rock* which was written in 1950 but published in 1966. Ekwensi also authored other children books like *The Drummer Boy* (1966). *The Passport of Mallam Illia* (1965). Other famous children's literature author are; Chinua Achebe: *Chike and the River* (1966) and *The Drum* (1977): Mabel Segun: *My Father's Daughter* (1965) and *My Mother's Daughter* (1985).

Publishing companies further helped in the growth and emergence of Children's literature in Nigeria. Between 1960 and 1980, book publishing flourished under a number of publishing companies that started different series. The African Universities Press's Reader's Library Series; Nelson's Rapid Readers; Longman's Library and Macmillan Pacesetters Series, also accelerated the publication of fiction for young people. Indigenous publishing companies such as Nwanife in Enugu and Onibonje in Ibadan were also active. Most of these series however, disappeared in the late 1980s after Nigeria's economy suffered a setback. The twenty first century revived the literary world. Children's literature has witnessed a large and massive improvement during this period. Many publishing companies now produce children storybooks. Even those who were publishing only primary and secondary school textbooks in the past have

reverted to producing storybooks. Some of the big publishers of children's storybooks are Lantern Books, University Press, Heineman of Nigeria, Macmillan and Spectrum (Abiola, P.60-66). Lantern Books are considered one of the biggest and most creative Children's literature publishers in Nigeria today. The company has more than three hundred titles of storybooks and over one hundred books in print. The storybooks come under the following categories: Adventure series, Folktales series and Heroes series. There are also small but active publishing companies that have contributed immensely to the growth of children literature. Cassava Republic and Farafina based in Lagos are two of the most enterprising of the newcomers.

For a very long time, the focus was largely on the content of Children's books. Many writers seemed to be more interested in the morals and depicting Nigerian culture through many themes. These writers developed their themes to capture realistically and convincingly the picture of Nigeria. Emenyonu further asserts this point by stating that:

> *Carefully crafted and programmed Children's literature would teach morals, satisfy inherent curiosity and excite imagination in children culminating in properly adjusted, well-socialized adulthood. To write appropriately and effectively for children in the Nigerian situation, therefore, tantamount almost to a commitment to a socio- cultural crusade, the works must have substance, which is relevant to the environment of the children, and contain messages, which would be apt for the mental and psychological well-being of the children in their unique circumstance (590).*

Even though many of the Children's literature were seen as an excellent idea at first, the quality of these literary works began to raise concern among critics and scholars. In recent times, the question of aesthetic has reared its head. One critic who has raised the issue of aesthetic quality in Children's literature is Akachi a Children's literature writer and critic. Akachi(2011), observed that many of the Children's literature that were written for children by some of the writers mentioned above, lacked some fundamental aesthetics. Adimora opined that some of the so-called children books had poor quality pictures and were not appropriate to the age of the children. Accordingly, Adimora further observed that most of the themes were of a violent nature. Citing Achebe's *Chike and the River*, Adimore noted that the theme of robbery and trickery were not too appropriate themes for children.

Another issue critics have raised is the use of language in Nigerian Children's literature. Writers of literature for children in Nigeria have been accused of sometimes using high sounding words that make the books difficult for children to comprehend. Recent publications however, have witnessed an improvement; with the new crop of modern writers, there has been a lot of improvement in the production of Children literature in Nigeria. Modern writers like Olofintuade, Mainasra, Akilu and Shoneyin, have published some good quality picture books that are age appropriate for children and vividly capture the experiences of children in simple but captivating language that keeps the children entertained and interested. This study uses some selected texts by some Nigerian writers in its attempt at an aesthetic evaluation of Children's literature in Nigeria. These texts are Ayodele Olofintuade's *Eno's Story* (2010), Lola Shoneyin's *Mayowa and the Masquerade* (2010) and Fatima Akilu's *Kitwa Plays The Drum* (2009), *The Reed Transistor Radio* (2009), *Timi's Dream Comes True* (2009) and Ngozi *Comes to Town*

(2009). These texts have been selected because they fall within the confines of the age limit of which this study intends to focus. This age limit is between three and eight years.

1.2 THE HISTORY OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

According to Osa (1984), the first literature written specifically for children was intended to instruct them. During the Middle Ages, the Venerable Bede, Aelfric, St. Aldhelm, and St. Anslem all wrote school texts in Latin. Some of which were later used in schools in England and colonial America. More enjoyable and enduring fare came later when William Caxton, England's first printer published Aesop's Fables (1484) and Sir Thomas Malory's Morte d' Arthur (1485). The hornbook, invented at the end of the fifteenth century taught children the alphabet, numerals, and the Lord's Prayer. Alphabet books were popular in battledor and in chapbook form. The New England Primer (1689), the first children's book published in the American colonies, taught the alphabet along with prayers and religious exhortations.

The first distinctly juvenile literature in England and the United States consisted of gloomy and pious tales mostly recounting the deaths of sanctimonious children, which were written for the edification of puritan boys and girls. Out of this period came one classic for both children and adults, John Bunyan's *Pilgrim Progress* (1678). Later works written for adults but adapted for children were Daniel Defoe's *Robinson crusoe*(1719) and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*(1726). In 1729, the English translation of Charles Perrault's *Tales of Mother Goose* became popular in England. A collection of Mother Goose rhymes was published in 1765 by John Newberry, an English author and bookseller. Newberry was the first publisher to devote himself seriously to publishing for children. Among his publications are A Pretty little Pocket book (1744) and the Renowned History of little Goody Two Shoes (1765). Pirated editions of

Newberry"s works were however, soon published in the United States of America by Isaiah Thomas and a host of others.

By the end of the eighteenth century, children literature, partly under the influence of Locke and Rousseau, had again become didactic. This time the didactism was of an intellectual and moralistic variety, as evidenced in the sober, uplifting books of such authors as Thomas Day, Mary Sherwood, and Maria Edgeworth in England and in the United States by Samuel Goodrich and Martha Finley, who wrote the famous Elsie Dismore series.

A blossoming of Children's literature distinct with the didactic movement surfaced during the age of Romanticism in the nineteenth century. This period produced a body of literature that authentically belonged to children. For the first time children's books contained fantasy and realism, fun and adventure, and many books written at that time are still popular today. Folk tales collected in Germany by the Grimm brothers were translated into English in 1823. The fairy stories of Hans Christian Andersen appeared in England in 1846. At the end of the nineteenth century, Joseph Jacobs compiled English folk tales. Andrew Lang, a folklorist, began a series of fairy tales. Edward Lear's *Book of Nonesense* (1846) and Robert Louis Stevenson's Child's Garden of Verses (1885) set the style for musc of the poetry written for children today. Lewis Carrol's twin masterpieces *Alice's adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking Glass* (1872) combine lunacy and fantasy with satire and word games.

Victorian family life is realistically depicted in Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* (1868), whereas mark twain's *Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and Robert Louis Stevensen's *Treasure Island* (1880) emphasize adventure; all three books fully developed characters. At the turn of the century, several children magazines were being published, the most important being

the *St. Nicholas Magazine* (1887-1943). Meanwhile, translations widened the world of the English- speaking child from the nineteenth century: one of the popular translated works include J.D. Wyss's Swiss Family Robinson(1814); Carlo Collodi's Pinoccio (from the Italian 1892); Felix Salten's Bambi (translated from the German, 1928); Antoine de Saint- Exupery's Little Prince(translated from the French 1943); Astrid Lindgren's Pippi Longstocking(translated from the Swedish, 1950); and Herta Von Gebhardt's The Girl from Nowhere(translated from the German 1959).

The contributions and innovations of the nineteenth century continued into the twentieth century, achieving a distinct place in literature for children's books and spawning innumerable genres of children's literature. Fantasy written for children includes L. Frank Baum's Wonderful Wizard of Oz(1900), A.A. Milne's *Winnie the Pooh* (1927), P. L. Travers's *Mary Poppins* (1934), and J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter books* (7vol., 1997- 2007). Among the most popular and influential books in the last half of the twentieth century are the many novels of Beverly Clearly, which portray the lives of ordinary children. Popular collections of humorous verse include Laura Richards's Tirra Lirra (1932), Hilaire belloc's Cautionary Verses (1941), John Ciardi's Reason for the Pelican (1959), and Arnold Spilka's Rumbudgin of Nonesense (1970).

Adventure and mystery are found in such works as Armstrong Sperry's Call it courage (1941) and E.L. konigsburg's From the Mixed – Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler (1968). The literature for children now includes many of the literary, psychological and social elements found in its adult counterpart. Books with sophisticated emphasis on plot, mood, characterization, or setting are Kenneth Grahame's *Wind in the Willows* (1908).

From the 1960s through the 90s, socially relevant children's books have appeared, treating subjects like death, drugs, colonialism, racism, culture and identity and many more that reflects the universality of children literature. Thus, children literature has garnered many attention and focus in other continent and countries. Of specific interest to this study are Nigeria and how the children literary scene has changed and developed from the state of emergency to a state of preponderance and quality (Encarta 2009).

1.3 DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN NIGERIA

For generations, Africans told stories in their numerous indigenous tongues to children and young people and to adults as well, in their social, informal or formal gatherings. From mythic narratives that tell of the creation of the world to simple proverbs that relate to human wisdom, oral tradition held and in many African countries, it still holds the position of a literature at once esoteric and popular, didactic and diverting (Harris et al, 1973). These stories were probably some of the first stories heard by African children in their homes and in their community. These narratives were handed down principally by word of mouth from one generation to the next. These stories, which range from the mythic narratives that tell of creation of the world, to simple proverbs that relate to human wisdom, have gradually metamorphosed into what is today known as Children's literature.

The publication of fiction for children in Nigeria began in the early twentieth century, in the same context as fiction for western based children. However, what was produced for Nigerian children was practically out of touch with the young Nigerian: "its appropriateness for African readers was never considered apart from gearing it to their level of literacy, for the aim

of teachers and missionaries was to Europeanize African children, not to provide literature related to their needs and interests." (Schmidt, 5).

As Nigeria attained independence from Britain in 1960, patriotism expressed itself in various spheres of Nigerian life. Fiction of Nigerian writers published by both European and Nigerian writers in the 60s largely featured Nigerian characters acting on Nigerian values. Such achievement was in synchronization with the United Nations principles proclaimed in 1959 in its Declaration of the Rights of the child; specifically the principle stated that children should be given an education that will promote their general culture. For young children, literature transmits their cultural heritage at best.

As a result of the above, a lot has been done where Nigerian literature is concerned. Conferences have been held in Nigeria and Africa and these have brought significant attention to children literature. In 1968, the first important conference on book development in Africa was organized by UNESCO. In 1973, an international African meeting held in Yaounde, which was jointly sponsored by UNESCO and the Cameroun Government, emphasized the creation of Book Development councils in every African country. In December 1973, an international conference on publishing was sponsored by the University of Ife with the support of UNESCO. In 1979, the Nigerian English Studies Association (NESA) devoted its tenth annual conference to junior literature in English.

The thematic compromise of these conferences is that African Children's literature can no longer be taken for granted. This largely helped to promote Children's literature in Nigeria because each conference looked at the original and elemental role of Children's literature. It was also agreed upon that a life- long reading habit must develop early. The need for a carefully written body of

literature for Children's cannot be overemphasized; stimulating the child's imagination by graphic or pictorial images and auditory images is the chief concern of Nigerian Children's literature.

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Many scholars seem to be more focused on the moralizing aspect of Children's literature thereby, giving little or no attention to the aesthetic value. This assertion is validated by Zohar Shavit (1986), in the book: *Poetics of Children's Literature*, where she states thus:

> *Only a short time ago, Children's literature was not even considered a legitimate field of research in the academic world. Scholars hardly regarded it as a proper subject for their work, if they did, they were most often concerned solely with its pedagogic and educational value and not with its existence as a literary phenomenon.*

The questions these scholars tend to ask after encountering a Children book, is what lessons a child would learn from the book and less about how the words and illustrations help the comprehension and enhancement of the child's knowledge. In line with this therefore, the problematic of this study is premised on the assumption that the distinct nature of Children's literature, that is, what makes a literature Children's literature is drawn not only from the morality ideal but also from the aesthetic and style of writing. This is because the morality ideal is spread across the various literary sub genres. Therefore, this research is premised on the following propositions that:

- The relationship between the text and illustration in Children's literature is scarcely discussed.
- Little attention has been given to the aesthetic value and style in Children's literature in Nigeria

- Children's literature in Nigeria offers children a variety of things to think about, question and consider.
- That Children's literature is also blessed with a rich vein of aesthetics.

1.5 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The traditional mode of storytelling has for a very long time dominated the print version of Children's literature with oral tales being committed to print version. According to Ojaide, African Children's literature is not just art for art's sake, it has a function. While not disputing this assertion, this study however, aims to delineate and explore the aesthetic qualities of Children's literature in Nigeria. The objectives of this study are:

- To demonstrate that Children literature can be examined from another perspective beyond morality.
- To depict the relationship that exists between illustration and the text in Children's literature.
- To show that Children literature constitutes an art form that has become increasingly sophisticated.
- To reveal that there are peculiar components that makes up children's literature.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is conducted to evaluate the aesthetic value of Children's literature in Nigeria. Selected Nigerian Children's storybooks have been chosen as sources for primary data. Consequently, the materials for critical analysis and review of related literature are library and

internet based. Other secondary sources include newspapers, journals, television programmes about Children's literature and radio commentaries.

1.7 SCOPE AND DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This thesis evaluates the aesthetic qualities of Children literature in Nigeria. To this end, the focus is on Nigerian literary works alone with a major focus on Children's literature written by Nigerian writers. The primary texts have been carefully chosen, references may however, be made to non- Nigerian literary works, but such will be done for illustrative purposes. In order to properly evaluate the aesthetic quality of Children's literature in Nigeria, the following texts are considered by the researcher: Olofintuade Ayodele's *Eno's Story* (2010), Lola Shoneyin's *Mayowa and the Masquerade* (2010), and Fatima Akilu's *Timi's Dream Comes True* (2009), *Ngozi Comes to Town* (2009), *The yellow mosquito Net* (2009), *The Red Transistor radio* (2009) and *Kitwa plays the Drum* (2009), Adamu Yusuf's *Clever Squirrel and the Great Wedding* context (2013), *Tales by Moonlight* (2013), and A.O. Oyekanmi's *The Lion and The Hare and Other short stories* (2013).

1.8 JUSTIFICATION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Even though a lot of research has been carried out in the field of Children's literature, only few scholars have truly focused their studies on the aesthetic values. In order to examine the aesthetic qualities of Children literature in Nigeria, about ten Nigerian texts have been chosen for the purpose of this research. These texts are *The Red Transistor Radio, The yellow Mosquito net, Kitwa Plays the Drum, Timi's Dream comes True* by Fatima Akilu and *Eno's Story* by Ayodele Olofintuade, *Mayowa and the Masquerade* by Lola Shoneyin ,*The clever Squirrel* by Yusuf Adamu and *Tales by Moonlight* and A.O.Oyekanmi's *The Lion and The Hare and other stories*.

These texts are grey in the sense that few people have discussed them. Furthermore, these texts have been chosen for this study because of their contemporary approach to Children's literature in Nigeria. The texts come with good pictorials for children. These texts have been picked because the researcher having gone through the texts is of the view that the texts best suit the purpose of the research. This is because the texts contain the aesthetic components that the study explores. Furthermore, this study is justified in the sense that the researcher feels that aesthetics is the foundation of Children's literature and is of the view that any Children's literature that neglects aesthetics cannot hold, aesthetics should be considered as the fundamental aspect of Children's literature. Consequently, the researcher feels that aesthetics could be another way to solve the problem of neglect to reading especially in the present contemporary society.

1.9 FORMALISM AS THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Hartman (1970), "Formalism" is, as the name implies, an interpretative approach that emphasizes literary form and the study of literary devices within the text. The name, "formalism," was chosen by opponents of the literary movement who considered the approach controversially structured and formal. The critics wondered why the author's sociological positioning was ignored yet it was the main source of insights and motivation during composition. The formalists argued that formalism was an attractive approach since one could device a methodology that was applicable across a wide range of literary works, regardless of geographical or historical considerations. To further strengthen the argument, Hartman argues that formalism reveals the human content of art by studying its formal properties. To this end, the formalists' view formalism as a sort of medium to understanding the human mind. "Formalism," like structuralism sought to place the study of literature on a scientific basis through objective analysis of the motifs, devices, techniques, and other "functions" that comprise the literary work.

The formalists placed great importance on the literariness of a text, those qualities that distinguished the literary from other kinds of writing. Neither author nor context was essential for the formalists; it was the narrative that spoke, the "hero- function," for example, that had meaning. Form was the content. A plot device or a narrative strategy was examined for how it functioned and compared to how it had functioned in other literary works (Murfin, 2003).

1.10 HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE THEORY

Early formalism developed quite independently in America and Russia, it was however, Russian formalism that flourished during the pre- and post- revolutionary period in Russia that had more far-reaching effect. Formalism rose to prominence in the early twentieth century as a reaction against Romanticist theories of literature, which focused on the artist and individual creative genius. The formalists therefore, placed the text back in the spotlight and showed how text was indebted to forms and other works that had preceded it. Formalism centered around two different interrelated groups. One was " The Society for the Study of poetic Language" (Opojaz), founded in 1916 by Shklovsky, Boris Eichenbaum, Yury Tynyanov and others, whose interest was the general principles governing literature and distinguishing it from other forms of verb expression. The other group was the Moscow Linguistic Circle, founded in 1915 by linguists like Roman Jakobson, which based literary study on linguists by insisting on the differentiation between poetic and practical language (Dictionary of Literary Criticism, 2009).

In spite of the apparent differences in theoretical assumptions and critical practice however, the two groups placed the study of literature on scientific footing by defining its object and establishing its own methods and procedures. In other words, these two groups were united in an effort to find the internal laws and principles that make a piece of literature literary.

Formalism also became the dominant mode of academic literary study in the United States and United Kingdom from the end of the Second World War through the 1970s. The first group of formalism and the later school of formalism however, developed in isolation from one another.

From the earliest meetings, the formalists had been focused on what Jakobson in 1921 started to call "literariness" which makes a literary text different from other genres. The formalists wanted to find the literary common denominator among the different literary texts. Formalism wanted to discover general laws which make literature more specific and close to science. Robert (1997) observes that the formalists are of the view that "literariness" resides in poetry- the initial focus of their interest- where ordinary language becomes "defamiliarized." Robert argues that it is linguistic defamiliarization that leads to a perceptual defamiliarization on the part of the reader and thus to a renewed and fresh way of looking at the world. For defamiliarization, poetry seemed to be the "ideal" genre of the study since it employs a great range of linguistic "devices." It uses, for instance, forms of repetition that one does not find in ordinary language such as rhyme, a regular meter, or the subdivision of stanzas. Over a period hoever, other literary genres, like prose and drama, have been included in the formalist analysis of what makes a work literary.

The formalists argued at the beginning for a strict separation of form and content and made repeated efforts to discredit the latter as a proper object of literary study by concentrating exclusively on the former. This radical separation posed difficult problems, theoretically as well as ideologically and soon a compromise was reached by the formalists in order to gain a balance. To this end, the former " extra- aesthetic" materials (historical, biographical, sociological and psychological) were treated as quasi- formal and put back into the category of "form" in terms of foregrounding/ background. Here the content was called upon only as a means of foregrounding

form and therefore, had lost the value of its own ontological existence (Stephen Bann and John E. Bowlt, 1973).

1.11 THE PROPONENTS OF THE THEORY

The Russian formalist critics, Roman Jakobson, Viktor Shklovsky and Yury Tynnanov are considered to be the most prominent proponents of formalism. Roman Jakobson is considered a bridge between Russian formalism and structuralism. Jakobson was the founding member of the Moscow Linguistic Circle and all the writings that Jakobson wrote revealed the centrality of linguistic theory of his thought and the influence of Saussure. Apart from the various linguistic researches Roman was known also for his precise linguistic analysis of classic works of literature. Jakobson attempted to define "literariness" in linguistic term. Besides that, Jakobson developed the concepts of "defarmiliarization" and "foregrounding." (O'Toole and Shukman, 1977).

Another proponent of formalism is Shklovsky. Shklovsky's "Art as Device" sought to dispute the conception of literature and literary criticism that was common in Russia at the time. Literature was considered on the one hand to be a social or political product, whereby it was then interpreted in the tradition of the great critic belinsky as an intergral part of social and political history. On the other hand, literature was considered to be the personal expression of an author's vision, expressed by means of images and symbols. Shklovsky aimed to isolate and define something specific to literature. Shklovsky contributed two major concepts to the development of formalism, these concepts include: defamiliarization ("enstrangement" or "making it strange") and the plot/ story distinction (syuzhet/ fabula). "Defamiliarization" is one of the crucial ways in which literary language distinguishes itself from ordinary, communicative language, and is a

feature of how art in general functions, namely, by presenting things in strange and new ways that allows the reader to see the world in a different light. Innovation in literarily history is, according to Shklovsky, partly a matter of finding new techniques of defamiliarization. Shklovsky further asserts that the second aspect of literary evolution which comprises the plot/story, is the distinction between the sequence of events the text relates (story) from the sequence in which events are presented in the work (plot). By emphasizing how the plot of any fiction naturally diverges from the chronological sequence of its "story," Shklovsky was able to emphasize the importance of paying an extraordinary amount of attention to the plot- that is, the form- of a text, so as to understand its meaning. Both of these concepts were attempts to describe the significance of the form of a literary work in other to define its "literariness" (Glossary of Literary terms).

1.12 MAIN IDEAS OF THE THEORY

The formalist adage that the purpose of literature was "to make the stones stonier" nicely expresses their notion of literariness. In formalism the text is perceived as "Art" and the autonomy of the text is advocated. Formalists focus on the intrinsic nature of the text excluding external factors such as, the author, the reader, historical context as well as cultural context of the piece of work. Formalists believe that it is not possible to understand words without first understanding the relationship that exists between the object, emotion or experience and the symbol that signifies it. Similarly, it is the relationship that exists between words that make different interpretations of a sentence possible. The formalists believe that every aspect of the text is integral and that text possesses all the meaning necessary for interpretation. Additionally, different sentences make it possible for a text to be interpreted in different ways. To this end, the formalists were interested in paying attention to the poetic attributes of a language. The

formalists opined that poetic attributes of a language if well used, could enable the reader perceive a familiar situation in a completely new way, thereby enhancing meaning while at the same time making the text more interesting.

Formalists evaluate the internal features of the text inclusive of grammar, syntax and literary devices. The formalists consider that tensions are vital to the text and are created through irony, paradox and ambiguity. One major concerns of the formalism is unity in literature; the coming together of various parts of the text to build up a whole. For the formalists, in a successful text, format and content cannot be separated because form also has meaning. In formalism, the text is analyzed based on the relationship between the form and text and the content of the text. Formalism is best understood through Shklovsky's concept of "defarmiliarization." Shklovsky contends that the routine of ordinary experience rendered invisible, the uniqueness and particularity of the objects of existence. In essence, literary language by calling attention to itself as language estranged the reader from the familiar and made fresh the experience of daily life.

1.13 MAJOR TENETS OF FORMALISM

The tenets of formalism are form, diction and unity. These three form the premise on which formalism functions.

- Form is considered as the most obvious because it is found with the name of the theory (Formalism). According to Ann Dobie, form "grows out of the work's recurrencies, repetitions, relationships, motif- all organizational devices that create the total effect." All of these works together create the statement of the piece. Looking into the form of a work begs the question of how the structure of the piece can create a meaning. This can be

answered in many ways depending on the actual structure of the individual work, but one example is a story that structures itself in a circular way. A story that ends the same way it begins creates meaning through its structure.

- Diction is the second tenet of formalism. Because formalism deals strictly with the text, words hold the keys to the meaning. Formalism questions words denotations and connotations, that is, the formalist questions the straightforward definitions as well as the implications or alternative meaning of words. When looking into the diction of a text, important elements are looked at, some of these elements include repeated words and their specific and contextual meaning, ambiguity and how that ambiguity adds to the work's meaning and how the symbols of the text create unity in the text.
- The third tenet is unity. Dobie (2014) says that if a work has unity, all of its aspects then fit together in significant ways to help create a whole. When an image or figure of speech is extended throughout a work, unity is created. Tension is created when elements of a work do not come together effortlessly. Tension can be used within irony, paradox, or ambiguity. Formalists look for images and how elaborate or extended these images are. Formalists also analyze all the elements to understand if these elements create meaning together. In view of these ideas, this theory evaluates the aesthetics of the selected texts by exploring how the tenets of the formalist theory has been used by the writers of these texts to bring out the aesthetic qualities in the text. The study examines the use of form, diction and unity in these selected texts.

1.14 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

While there has been a lot of discursive research on children's literature in the western world, same cannot really be said with regards to Children's literature in Nigeria. It is only in recent times that Nigerian literary critics have started to pay more attention to Children's literature. In doing this, some of these critics have looked at Children's literature from different perspectives. While some appropriate what constitutes Children's literature in Nigeria, others have looked at the psychological effect Children literature has on children. Acholonu (1990) opines that many books supposedly for children are not really for appropriate for children. Acholonu thus, asserts that

> *The first thing that strikes any scholar of Nigerian Children's literature or any teacher of children, is the dearth of good and adequate literature for children as well as the lack of order and an organized and systemized list of reading books for this level. Most of the books do not bear clear specifications as to the level, class and age of readers. Very often due to the fact that there are few books in this area, publishers tend to fill up the children's reading list with books written originally for adults.*

Acholonu further raises concern about the overriding exploitation of the themes of crime and violence in some so- called Children's books with the portraiture of young children involved in criminal acts. This, to Acholonu is inappropriate because it makes a child or the reader of these texts, relieve harrowing experiences that the protagonist goes through. In essence, the themes of violence and crime should be toned down. To this end, Acholonu, in discussing aesthetics, primarily focuses on the language and its appropriateness. However, in critiquing Children's literature, Acholonu fails to take note of other equally important components like pictures, the use of images and also the various literary devices that can be used in Children's litearature to bring out the overall component in Children's literature. In the same vein, Gundu

(1990), in a paper titled "content and narrative forms in the Nigerian Child's literature: the case of the Tiv Child's literature," focuses on the subject contents in Children's literature, specifically the Tiv Child's literature. The major concern for Gundu is how Children's literature negatively impact on children because of the inappropriateness of some stories. Gundu bases his argument on two criteria; these two criterias he considers to be very pertinent to Children's literature. These two criterias include; the socializing relevance and the familiarity of the subject content. Gundu considers the socializing relevance as a key issue because to Gundu, literature should serve an an educative tool for the child; that is literature should thrive to inculcate in the child the duties of childhood and youth as well as prepare him for the adult world by acquainting the child with the knowledge of his or her physical and social environment (Gundu, p.221). Secondly, the familiarity criterion is of concern because of a child's limited experience. Gundu then further goes ahead to replicate these two criterias in "Tiv child's literature". Gundu states that even though the subject content of many Tiv stories has come a long way from its "colonial mission" orientation which sought to alienate the Tiv child to homely lessons.

Since the early eighties, Children's literature has been written predominantly from the point of view and taste of adults. Gundu observes that Tiv literature tend to de- emphasize childhood life experiences that are of immediate relevance to the instruction of a child of age six to twelve years. While also looking at narrative forms, Gundu observes that the accessibility of the vocabulary as well as its adequacy in this Tiv child's literature is often marred by inconsistent spellings. Thus, Gundu, like Acholonu narrows the aesthetics of Children's literature to contents. Even though, Gundu discusses the linguistic aspect of children's literature, it is only in passing. Clearly seen in Gundu's critique is the premise of how Children's literature impacts the life of a child to becoming a better adult in the society. Furthermore, Gundu's critique is

narrow as it only focuses on Tiv child's literature and not on Nigerian Children's literature. In using Tiv child's literature as a premise for analysis, it begs the question as to if Tiv child's literature encompasses what Children's literature in Nigeria is known for. Is the literature limited only to the Tiv child? Since it is called Tiv child's literature, does this mean that it is exclusive of other Nigerian children? To this end, Gundu's literary critique of Children's literature leaves a lot of gaps to be filled. Some of these gaps are the illustrations in Children's literature in Nigeria, and other literary techniques that Gundu fails to address in his paper presentation.

Banke, on the other hand views Children's literature from the prism of gender roles. In an M.A. thesis with the title; Gender stereotypes and Children's literature in Nigeria, Haruna examines how language in Children's literature is used to perpetuate gender imbalance in the society. According to Banke;

> *Children's literature in Nigeria is gender biased and displays imbalances in the representation of textual characters which implicitly gives children messages of what their gender roles are, and gives limitations to what they are capable of.* (Banke, 2005).

From the above, it could be argued that Banke's major contention is how characters in Children's literature are portrayed either erroneously or unequally. Since one of the basic function of Children's literature is to engage children in stories so they are able to make meaning of the world, Banke fears that the language, content and structure of Children's literature in Nigeria has a way of portraying women and girls badly. This, to Banke, influences children negatively. Adams and Laurikietis (1976) support Banke's views by revealing other stereotypical roles that are assigned to women and girls. These roles include maidens and princess who usually must wait passively for a prince to save them and elevate the status of these girls and women.

Adam and Laurikietis posit that females are portrayed as docile and incapable of fending for themselves. To this end, Adam and Laurikietis examine the role language plays in the subjugation of women. In doing this however, these critics fail to discuss several other components of Children's literature. There is a relegation of an overall aesthetic quality in the sense that these critics, having made gender the primary point of contention, have overlooked the extrinsic qualities that Children's literature has. In line with these critics, is Manjari (1998:80)

Other critics like Flora Nwapa delegate the responsibility of aesthetics in Children's literature to the publishers rather than the authors. For Nwapa, the paramount aim in Children's literature is the content and not the form. This is drawn from Nwapa's assertion in Matatu, where Nwapa replicates the experiences that led to the publication of fiction for younger readers. Nwapa says that the stories:

> *Have all being inspired by one thing or the other. The skill I required was that of a storyteller who knows her story very well and tells it vividly and dramatically. The stories are told in the simplest style, without a thought about the grammer, syntax or even the chronology of the story. These are left for the editors to handle- they play a major role in the production of children's books. (1997: 265).*

This mindset is not favourable to the advancement of Children's literature in Nigeria because Children's literature is not just about storytelling; Children's literature is an art form that should not be haphazardly written. Nwapa's statement above depicts Children's literature as an unserious literature that anyone can just take to. But studies overtime, have shown that Children's literature is much more than just storytelling. For one to delve into the art of writing children's literature, one should be equipped with the necessary knowledge of what it takes. On another notch however, Quangen (2006), opines that the primary focus on Children's literature

should be on how it impacts on the spiritual development of children. Thus, like Gundu, Quangen states that the fundamental aesthetic characteristics of children's literature should be "goodness of beauty." According to Quangen:

> *the idea of beauty is the preliminary preparation for embedding into the soul of younger generation the faith of humanity, and for the healthy development of the spiritual life of younger generation, which is a great cause concerning the purpose of human life.* (Quangen: 2006).

What Quangen views as aesthetics is the 'uprightness' of a story and not the formation of the story itself. Quangen's view on aesthetics is therefore one- sided as it neglects the structural beauty of Children's literature. Quangen places more emphasis on the cultural expectation of the human society for the next generation. That is an expectation of value carrying the significance of life and the highest aim to improve human beings, namely: the expectation that children can establish an idea about what kind of person they should be, in the future by virtue of the special literature form "goodness is beauty." Hence, Quangen's major concern is on the moral aspect alone as Quangen fails to raise the issue of form, structure and aesthetic in its entirety, what Quangen instead does, is to promulgate that Children's literature should hitherto serve as a form of "bible" to children. Fang on the other hand, explores Children's literature from the angle of illustrations. Fang acknowledges the impact of illustrations in the aesthetic evaluation of Children's literature by trying to delineate the functions of illustrations in relation to the text in picture books. Fang notes that illustrations perform certain functions that may differ from those of gallery paintings by emphasizing that art work in picture books is most often concerned with storytelling. To this end, Fang draws the reader's attention to the illustrations in many Children's literature.

Even though these literary critics bring to fore several issues that deal with Children's literature, these critics have only discussed Children's literature in parts and not in its entirety. This is to say that there has not really been a holistic approach to the study of Children's literature. This study therefore hopes to bridge the gap by taking a look at Children's literature not just as a moral harbinger but also as an art form that has peculiar traits. This study takes a look at the works of Fatima Akilu, Ayodele Olofintuade, Yusuf Adamu, Lola Shoneyin and some other new books.

1.15 FOREGROUNDING THE CONCEPT OF AESTHETICS

Aesthetics is a branch of philosophy that is concerned with the nature of art and the criteria of artistic judgment. According to Kagan (2015), aesthetic thinking arose in earliest antiquity as part of the mythological consciousness of preclass society. The myths of various people were seen to be imprinted with man's initial conceptions of the various arts' origin and role in people's lives and of the connection between art and beauty. This is exemplified in the works of Plato and Aristotle, where aesthetic problems were treated from the philosophical point of view. In other instances, aesthetics was treated and discussed in treaties dealing with the various types of art, such as the works of Polyclitus, Gorgias and Horace. These early scholars laid the foundation for the subsequent development aesthetic thought.

Overtime, the concept of aesthetics has been viewed from different perspectives. During the medieval period, the medieval Christian aesthetics used spiritual concepts as the theoretical basis of aesthetic phenomena; the structure of art was interpreted from the symbolic point of view by such thinkers as Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. This concept of aesthetics took on another dimension with the birth of renaissance. The criteria of judging art became secular and humanist in outlook. The primary emphasis was on the theoretical substantiation and defense of specific artistic methods, styles, and trends such as mannerism, classicism, the baroque and realism. After the renaissance, came the enlightenment period with its own criteria for judging art and beauty. In an attempt to mold man's view of the world,

there was an attempt to contrast the various forms of art. To this end, taste was viewed as a specific psychic mechanism enabling man to perceive and evaluate beauty and the fruits of artistic creativity. One of the proponents of this aesthetic criterion is Baumgarten.

As a working definition however, this study has chosen to judge arts using the formalist approach as a criteria for its research. In doing this, the study judges the selected texts using the various tenets of formalism as expounded by Shklovsky, jakobson and several other formalist theorists.

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CHAPTER TWO

The relationship between text and illustration in Children's literature

2.1 Preamble

The level of individual understanding is highly dependent on the mental picture from any object or particular thing to serve as a visible (visual) sample. Thus, it is not in doubt that the child's art or literary form is inevitable of pictorial criteria, which in all ways pronounces the textual inscriptions from page to page. Through the textual and photographic, literature can be independently used in the literary field, the blend of the two and especially the illustrative pictures make up a unique whole. However, the level of literary taste, anticipation and expectation of Children's literature differs as far as the reader's brain, which is not fully developed like that of the adult. To this extent therefore, the relationship between illustration and text becomes inevitable in the art of Children's literature. Kiefer (1995) reveals the function of pictures in a text. According to Kiefer (1995), pictures add form and feeling, colour and depth as the words pour forth. Thus, the value of a reader towards the literary work consumed (read) will rely on the choice of words, diction, registers of a literary description (text) digested through the typical pictures on the pages. As the literary text is understood in part, the photographic text makes it a whole.

Children's literature, to this extent, demonstrates a certain type of value. This is to say that for the reader to value a literary work, it must appeal to the reader's sense of reasoning, scope and ambience of knowledge and exposure. kiefer (1995) argues that society can be reflected in the culture of a given age and this determines the content and designated object. Thus, the appropriateness, connection and relationship of artistic illustrations and textual write-

ups become a necessary factor and criteria of the reader's textual product (literature). To this end, art and literature in combination form a chain of literary content in the defense of how knowledge is obtained and made tangible. As the paintings and sculptures of artists like Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo have been regarded as prized interpretations in the fourteenth to sixteenth century, the twenty- first in no doubt should incorporate more literary depictions with the visual art, if not a blend.

2.2 Visual art and Literature

According to Voight (2015), literature in itself is an art form. Carefully chosen words paint visuals upon a page for the theater of the mind. This has often inspired other, more visually oriented artists to create tangible objects based on these mental images. Not only can this create a more fully realized piece of art, it also allows these artists to produce content based on their interpretations. This creative wealth of material has continued to inspire modern filmmakers, artists and even writers who now have technology to help bring these pages to life. Literature, like other arts, is an expression of individual thought and feeling achieved through the creative process. Artists seek to share their experiences, observation and understanding of the world through the medium that most effectively conveys what it is the artist wants to convey. Thus, art connects humans to each other allowing for a shared perception, emotions and experiences.

The world of art overtime has always improvised itself as artists keep record of historical upheavals thereby making a relay of artistic culture and events of time and expression. This therefore means that literature, painting, music and many other forms of art such as dance and sculpture as we come across in the twenty- first century to become mediums of expressions evoking understanding, thoughts and emotions to the human senses (Winfried, 2004). Although

all art forms can exist independently of others, more than one medium of art can be combined to produce a much better result. Just as songs are combined with dance or even the attires used on stage by performers on the stage, art are combinations of two to three artistic elements or sphere to make or give a unified outlook. In addition, words are given feelings in literature just as a poem read or articulated aloud will give life to the scripted lines and stanzas.

Literature can thus, help to inspire other medium of artistic expression. Challenging and powerful literature go a long way to induce power and likeness for the artistic expressions. For example, music makes the listener to use imagination and to create a mental image, or a picture of what is happening. To this end, literature like other mediums of art can be used to articulate experiences within the human predicament. Literature can serve as a vehicle used in expressing levels of truth one condones and seeks to voice or simply to express beauty.

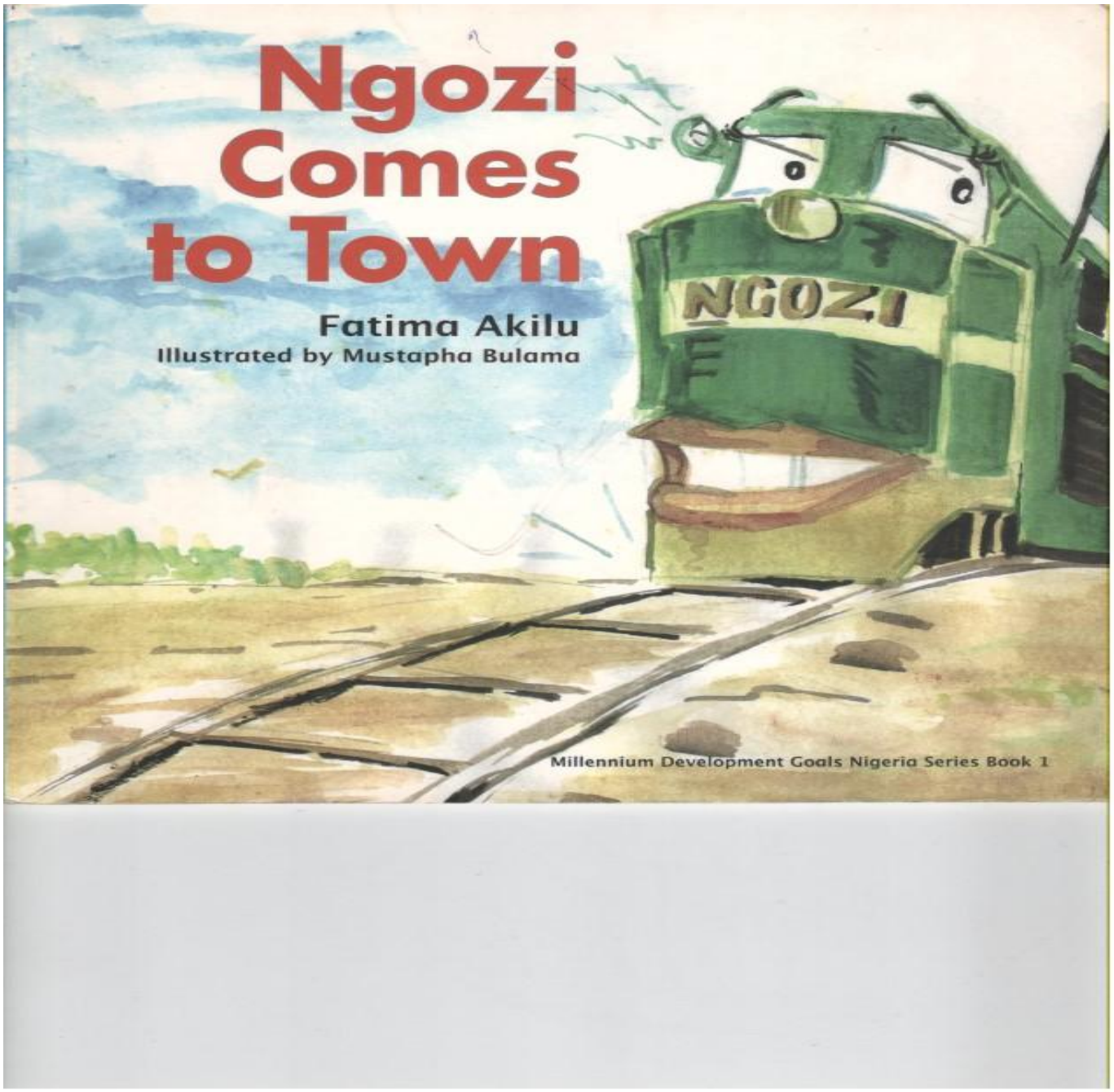
Creativity is a phenomenon that can be made possible in the sphere of art or literature whereby human nature can be reflected. Literature and other art forms are similar in the way that they specify the innermost feelings of man's soul as well as the way man visualizes the world (Lucy Santaella, 2006). Poetry for instance, is often set to music or dance which are all performance art. Thus literature imitates vice versa, all art forms as encountered in varied writings. Art helps to solidify communication and embellish thoughts and communicate in a manner that transcends all other art. Thus, the blend of literature and art gives a leeway to the artist's mind and imagination.

2.3 Pictoral and textual interpretation in Fatima Akilu's five Children story Books

The relationship between text and illustration can be explained in three fundamental ways, as gleaned from the work of Nikolajeva & Scott (2000) and Agosto (1999). According to

Nikolajeva & Scott (2000), the relationship between text and illustration could be symmetrical: that is when illustration correlates with text. In this case, the illustration reflects what is told in the text rather than adding any new meaning or nuances. The second type of relationship is that of augmentation. This is a situation whereby illustrations enhance or extend the text or give a new meaning that has not been expressed in the text. The illustration thus; provides critical information that lends meaning to the story as a whole. The text depends on pictures for clarification; illustration enhances, elaborates text, while text carries primary narrative. The third is that of contradiction, this is when illustrations present a meaning contrary to the text.

In Akilu's first titled text, *Ngozi Comes to Town,* the symbiotic relationship between text and illustration is vividly portrayed on the cover page, where the picture of a train is imbued with human features- eyes, nose, and mouth with the name "Ngozi" boldly written on it. The story simplifies the reader's curiosity at the end because there is a pictorial build- up that helps to expand the scope of the written text. To an extent the relationship between the text and illustrations are played out in a structural definition and literary vindication of the various characters. The reader gets to see the pictorial reactions and actions of the characters viz-a-viz the textual constructions. Where the title of the text is clearly and boldly written "Ngozi comes to Town," there is also an accompaniment of pictorial representation to sort of demystify the concept of 'Ngozi," to lay bare who and what Ngozi truly represents. Akilu personifies the train to elaborately depict the extent of damage and neglect of infrastructures by the government.Thus, Akilu is able to capture the interest of the reader with this simple act. As if the title is not enough, the bold picture of Ngozi on the cover page emphasizes and enhances the title.



From the above illustration, it could be argued that Akilu demonstrates this by showing the dependent relationship between pictorial illustrations and text with a dramatic photograph of Ngozi- a train who relates other characters in the text. The text and the illustrations are used interchangeably in a descriptive and expository manner. This happens because of the bold

illustrations in the text which draws attention to itself. On each page of this text are bold and colourful illustrations of Ngozi and two other children that help in the narrative, thus, making for some kind of interchange between illustration and text. As the reader goes through the story, the illustrations also jump at the reader seeking some kind of attention. To this end, the reader not only reads the text, but also goes through the illustrations for more and elaborate meaning to the story. In *Ngozi Comes to town,* a psychological train of events is opened as the reader's imagination is stretched with plausible questions like "how come a train has eyes, nose and even mouth?" curiosity to explore the pages further is stamped and suspense of great interest is raised in the reader's mind. Here, the mind is prepared and attention is captured. Hence, the picture of a train with human characteristic is eased with the opening words of the text.

> *My name is Ngozi. Many years ago I used to travel all over the country. People would stand by the tracks as I came into the station and I would blow my whistle to say hello (Akilu, 2009).*

The above affirms the pictorial scene of the first picture illustrated. As a form of representation, pupils and adults make their way with luggage into a train. Representational art consists of literal, realistic depictions of characters, objects and events (Hamilton, 2000). To this end, Akilu gradually relates the issue of transportation and its importance in the text. Furthermore, the utilitarian function of the train is stressed and emphasized through the text. Since the reader (child) seeks for visible defense or visual satisfaction, the illustrations serve as a complimentary role to the text and tend to stretch the reader's imagination.

Ngozi comes to Town gives an adventurous relay of events. The format of textual description embodies cues for reading that extend beyond the letters and words on the page, demanding interpretation and interaction with the text (Dwanene, 2001). Akilu cues the text with the mention of cities Ngozi has travelled, to give the reader some sense of adventure. "I carried, chickens, maize and fruit all round Nigeria. I felt very important, as I knew that I was helping a lot of people. I don't go anywhere now (Akilu,2009)".

The above quotation shows Ngozi speaking in the first person, Ngozi here is personified; thus, a seemingly lifeless and rusted train is brought to life not just through text, but also through pictures. To this end, the reader's emotion and perception of understanding is enhanced by pictures, the aesthetics here, is the trait given to a train which makes it a focal point for the reader. In addition, the author uses the image of the train to represent the decay and neglect of infrastructures in the country. Also, the cue of colours eases information about the mood of Ngozi whose neglect has caused some level of underdevelopment. The gloomy scene is indicated by the brown colour on yellow background, wireless light poles and headless trains. Hammerberg (2001), argues that words appear in pictures and over pictures in ways that require a non literal reading of the printed text, for to only read the words for their literal meaning would be to escape with no meaning what so ever (Dawnene, 2001). Akilu therefore, uses the illustrations in the text as a way of elaborating the story of Ngozi. It can therefore, be argued that in line with the formalist school of thought, Ngozi, the train is representational of not just the train, but also symbolic of a country whereby all that used to be good has now turned bad as a result of mismanagement and neglect. Akilu also introduces the theme in *Ngozi Comes to Town* subtly through the clever illustrations and use of descriptive language; as such the theme of neglect and mismanagement is depicted successfully. The essential textual descriptions are

appropriate to the pictures, this can be deduced from the characters of Mr. Joseph, the children, Margaret and Philip. Mr. Joseph, the station owner needs no flashback of text to know that he is the custodian of Ngozi. The text speaks thus: "Mr. Joseph and his assistant David talk about the good old days." *(Akilu, 2009).* This quotation establishes the setting of the text signaling the problem of transportation to the reader. The clarity of the text is due to the clue given by the "good old days". The reader uses his or her own discretion to measure the time and understanding that takes place immediately. Fang calls it "the brief poetic text" which to him, could mean descriptive and symbolic. Thus, Akilu uses multicolours- green and grey, on the wall and red on the chairs. This gives an understanding of the picture of Mr. Joseph who sits down explaining to David. The multiple relay of the stories of the "good old past" of Ngozi is assumed to be told, if not, it is suggested to the reader. Dwanene (2001) states that to use complex characters and situations in books for children, acknowledges that children draw upon their own experimental developmental, social and cultural perspectives. Therefore, the choice of the picture scene by the illustrator constructs a sense of meaning to the reader that there is a problem with the transportation system and the text illustrates thus:

One afternoon, Philip climbs the ladder to my roof.
He is feeling sad. He calls down to Margaret,
"Come up here. I don't feel like playing today."



Margaret and Philip race round the carriage in an attempt to bring back the "good old days," but fatigue sets in, they then climb on the train to improvise. Akilu unfolds the story in pictures and text whereby the pictures back up text or the text supports the pictures. The train's colour is light green, depicting the poor state of the train. Ngozi's eyes are slightly raised and her mouth closed tightly to back up the textual description of neglect and ineffectiveness. Hamilton calls it unity; a style in Children literature which configures artistic elements that together constitute a specific and identifiable manner of expression (Hamilton, 2000). In *Ngozi Comes to Town,* the inter relationship between text and illustration appears to be intentional. There seems to be a deliberate choice in colours and words, even the facial expressions of the characters are arguably tailored towards a revelation of the theme of mismanagement and neglect. Akilu and Bulama remain as guide to the reader whose thought are directed in line with that of Margaret and Philip as they set out to wonder about why Ngozi no longer functions. This helps in the development of the plot as the story goes on. Fang (1996) defends the picture in Children literature to be the "criteria in the plot advancement" during supplementary information. Thus, the lonely nature of the characters is captured in the long picture of Ngozi with drooping eyes. (P.7-12).

The textual backup for this page compliments for Ngozi's picture. The text reads below "A long time passes. I am so lonely that sometimes I cry quietly to myself." It is impossible for a train to shed tears as an inanimate object. The picture of Ngozi's drooping eyes defends the textual description, even the wrinkles on the faces of the characters tell the story by extension. For a contemporary writer like Akilu and Bulama they succeed in the verification of the text with companionship of the pictures. Thus, the words on the pages ascertain for relevance of the two.

The climax of the story is interwoven with a thematic and moral display of both words and paintings. Akilu and Bulama use the Millenium Development goals as a yardstick to measure out

the political conotation of the text. The illustrations come alive, the facial expressions change accordingly to reflect the textual description, thereby creating a harmony of sort between the verbal and pictorial representation. Fang (1996) states that the plot of the story or picture storybooks can be extended or rounded a little by illustrations or advanced by illustrations. To this end, Akilu and Bulama succeed in vividly depicting the message through both text and illustration. Bobulova (2010) observes that:

> *The relationship between pictures and words in modern picture books are incredibly rich and varied. The visual text and the verbal text can expand, amplify, reinforce, complete, anticipate, interprete, counterpoint and contradict one or the other. In the process of expanding amplification, enhancement, reinforcement and completion, the visual text and the verbal text are congruent with each other*. (Bobulova et al. pg. 42).

The ambiguity or vacuum of understanding left by the text is compensated for with the visual presentation. The blurred picture of Ngozi is soon replaced with colourful paintings; the red and yellow colours signal jubilation and the ceremonies, even the sky is clear and free of thick clouds. The text compliments thus, the picture:

> *On the day of the grand celebration, I am as shiny as new. It takes a long time to fill my carriages with food and people. Everyone is excited and there is a feeling of hope in the air. I can't wait to get moving and travel around Nigeria again.* (Akilu, 2000).

The above signals the end of the story. Akilu and Bulama gives the storyline an adventure-like depiction showing a dependent aesthetic level of pictures and textual illustration, giving the reader (child) a visual and written harmony typical of the genre's characteristics.

The dependent relationship between illustration and text continues to run through in the second selected text, *Timi's Dream Comes True*. Sipe refers to the text – picture relationship in a book as to a;

> *"synergistic relationship" in which a combined effect of the verbal and visual components is greater than the sum of their separate effects and depends not only on the union of the verbal text and the visual text but also on the perceived interaction or transaction between these two components… synergy of words and pictures works in a picture book in any case, whether the visual text expands, amplifies, compliments, anticipates, interpretes, counterpoints or contradicts the verbal text. Every re- reading can reveal new layers of meaning as the reader develops.* (Sipe. P. 42).

The story begins with an illustration of a boy flying on the back of a bird. The idea of flying could actually be possible with a child's imagination especially children between the ages of three to seven, whose thoughts are like building castles in the air, that is thinking of the impossible. Tina Harlon (2004) points out the main feature of children literature to be of "action and optimistic effect; this is seen in the way Akilu sustains the dreamlike Timi in words while the illustrations speak in colours. Throughout the text, Timi remains optimistic in spite of his mother's discouragement. Akilu raises the dream of Timi above and beyond the expectations of the family and his dream is at the end of the story fashioned out in colours.

The cover page and the title combined present a symbolic meaning. The pictorial of Timi flying and the title suggest that Timi achieved his aim. Akilu uses colours to define the scenario of the characters; Timi, Boyo and Mofe who begin to "stir." The word "stir" or sentence "beginning to stir" is suggestive of the textual characters who are in a deep state … the picture also establishes and builds on the plausible and possible nature of characterization expected by the reader as the story unfolds. Virginia Hamilton in her work *The Art of Picture Books*, argues

that the time and place of a story is often presented succinctly in the text of picture books as visual details. Akilu thus, announces the thoughtful and prudent nature of a child's dream world by constantly giving details to the world of flight. All actions in the pictures capture Timi with his two hands in the air. He also does not fail to backup with the textual description of Timi. Timi speaks thus:

> *My name is Timi. I am eight years old. My father says that when I am nine I will have to go out to fish with my brothers to help feed our family. But I don't want to work. I just want to stay at home and chase the Cockerel around the hut (Akilu, 2004).*

The above statement is typical of a growing child or children who refuse to give up on their innermost fancy and world of imagination. Timi speaking in a first person's voice could be a deliberate act by the author to capture the reader's interest in the story. The use of language is synonymous with that of a child's; the sentences are simple and none complicating; just subject and verb sentences. This depicts the limitation of the child's vocabulary and experiences. Mollie and Russell validate this assertion by stating that children think and reason, but they do it slowly and concretely, in terms of their experience of the moment (Mollie .S. and Russell .C. P,98). A similar storyline can be seen in Anthony Umelo's *The River of Hope*. These titles are indicative of optimism; the language use in the titles already gives the reader a feeling of a happy ending. The River of Hope as the title suggests, relates a story about a young lad whose dream and fancy for swimming comes against the tides and waves of the water but at the end catching fishes and making little income out of the occupation was the result of his keenness and love for swimming. Umelo's illustrations serve as a pointer to the opening of the story whereby pictures of a boy and a girl pointing to the river for fishes are etched on the cover page. From an artistic perspective,

the picture explicates the pathway towards the pursuit of hope with a textual relationship to explain the thought of the main characters.

The relationship between the textual writings and illustrations in Akilu's *Timi's dream Comes True* is further played out in a chronological arrangement of events. Akilu demonstrates an inevitable utility of the authorial voice in relating the textual background of the story with the textual material. She speaks thus for Timi:

> *I live in a small village called Koko. My mother says that Koko was an historic place and many people came to trade- men and women wearing my favourite colours: red, blue and green. All I see now are the same people. No one new comes anymore (*Akilu, 2009*).*

Akilu relates the occupational history of Koko with the description of occupational perspective. Akilu uses this to establish the background of the stories and atmosphere in which Timi's "Dream" is about to be tested and planted. Thus, the colours red, blue and green gives a symbol and imagery of the personal pursuit of the different dreams and aspirations of the people of Koko. To this end, the metaphor of flight which the author uses is a deliberate attempt to lift and raise the major characters above expectations beyond the boundaries of Koko.

Conkey and Christine (1992) with regards to art and artistic venture, see the message of visual artist to be inclusive of subjective vocabularies, always accompanied by illustrations, so that there can be no doubt about what exists objectively (Conkey and Christine, 1992). Hence, an inevitable criterion of Children literature should be the vehicle of language which needs to be interactive from the subjective voice of the author which may appear intrusive to the objective psychological strength of the reader. Thus, Akilu allows for the message to be played out through the dramatic and active pictures of Timi's adventures. The text projects Akilu's attempt

to relate meaning, ascertain the thematic preoccupation of the text and the aesthetic level of both text and illustration which are married together. Hammerberg (2001) opines that the function of the author is to guide the reader about a shared or common experience and suggest meanings as the story unfolds. Akilu thus, achieves with a blend of the story's plot in the market and streets of Koko where Timi gets the opportunity to experiment his expectations and take advantage of the Millenium Development goal. The line below describes further and carries along the flight mode of Timi's dreams.

> *When I get tired of playing, I lie on my back and watch the sky change. On some days it is angry and purple with red edges. On other days it is happy and I see it smiling in golden yellow. The sky reminds me of what happens inside my head. I have thoughts and I dream all day. My brother says it is my imagination* (Akilu, 2000).

From the above, it can be argued that Akilu uses colour descriptions to keep Timi's dream on track. This style of switching voices between the author and narrator is a deliberate act to make identifiable the dreamlike voice and constructive hand. The yellow, red, and blue colour are kind of flashy and shiny just like another of Timi's dream to become a teacher. Like all children with dreams, Timi seeks to become a teacher but he however, has little knowledge of what it really takes to become one. Akilu and Bulama aptly work through an effort to correlate both text and illustration through picaresque portrayal and vivid descriptions of the Characters' actions. Hamilton states that characters reflect actions, thoughts and emotions of children or adolescents depending on the intended audience. The interdependence of text and illustration is further elucidated by Fang who opines that:

> *Whether intended or not, illustrations sometimes tell a slightly different or even contradictory story than the text. It seems that the greater the proportion of illustration to text, the greater the influence illustrations have in the creation of the story* (Fang,)

Akilu thus, merges a greater portion of the characterization by channeling all actions towards the dreams of the protagonist Timi. Thus, other characters only reveal or enhance Timi's pursuit of his dream through their acts. Timi's father, mother, Jeniwari and a host of others, are contributive towards the flight of Timi. Simeon air plane also becomes a symbol of better things to come. Reading this text begs the question why a plane and not an abandoned building of trailer. The use of a plane as a classroom points out one of the aesthetic quality of this text. Ordinarily, what a plane does is to fly people (who can afford the airfare) above and beyond in the clouds to wherever they may have chosen to go. It is therefore interesting that Akilu choses the plane as an object to serve the children of Koko as a place of learning. The plane could therefore be a symbol of what education represents; a gateway to civilization, to exposure and to a better life for Timi and the people of Koko.

The Yellow Mosquito Net is another story that replicates the interdependency between illustration and text. The story comes in the line of an educative plot formation where Akilu addresses the health problem- malaria. Malaria; its causes and effect and mode of prevention are what Akilu uses to occupy the thematic focus of the text. The illustrations further elucidate the story. Dawnene (2001) states that the first person narrative of today's Children's literature takes perspectives that is open to chaos and uncertainty, able to read from multiple vantage points. The first page of the text and illustration are appropriate to the opening of the story. The facial expressions of the main characters; Kemi and Grace on the streets signals a dramatic excitement for the reader whose interest is piqued and arrested with the onomatopoeic inscriptions of "Buzz, buzz, buzzzzzz", this creates a sound effect that mimics the mosquito hereby making the description interesting and expressive. The reader is drawn to hear the sound of the mosquito which makes the expression more effective. The street serves as an extension of an unkempt

environment with gutters filled with stagnated water. Thus, the illustrations take the reader through the observant eyes towards the illustrations and listening ears to the text.

Kiefer (1995) advices that artist illustrating in their own work, the theme of the book, motive of the book and moods, characters, setting and also events chosen by the artist should convey meanings visually and overall aesthetic experience of the book. Akilu to an extent tries to replicate this by blending the illustrations and texts to vividly relay the story. The thematic experience is hence brought to bear through the use of words; some of these words are creatively used to induce the reader into getting the story, for instance the word *splat* conjures a picture of liquid. Colours also speak clearly in the text with Kemi and grace dressed in red football kits. This is highly suggestive of blood and the sky colour takes the yellow colour, which could be alluded to sickness.

Akilu uses text and illustration to demonstrate the dangers behind being carefree, but however, portrays that it can be overcome by being careful and watchful. This is depicted when grace races ahead of Kemi because she did not want to be late; Grace however falls into the gutter and has to make do with another top given to her by Kemi. Akilu further uses the football field as a good and interesting setting. The football net bears a yellow colour, the colour yellow could be seen in this text a symbol of death (for the unfortunate mosquito that gets caught in it) and as a symbol of life for the one that uses it. The goalpost where they usually play was covered with a bright yellow net. The girls moved nearer to get a better view (p.6).

Akilu exhibits a literary and cinematic relationship with the choice of characterization in the text. Hammerberg opines that the child protagonist in a picture book are seen as capable of making decisions based on different contextual experiences of right and wrong. Akilu thus,

informs the reader and takes the place of a class teacher with a passive voice in the text, while she allows the reader's mental psyche to play upon the colour effects of the pictures. The picture on page nineteen explains the thematic focus of the text as it depicts the picture of a coach as she admonishes and intimates the girls about the yellow mosquito net, malaria and a clean environment. Attention and interest of the reader is released as the sustained thoughts about the yellow mosquito net is played out.

Akilu presents a textual pattern of education to the reader where she balances pleasure, leisure, recreation and health, which remain a vital criteria in the life of a child in achieving dreams like becoming footballers. Hamilton points out that children who encounter excellent picture books learn how to read not just the moods but also the picture. They pay close attention to what they see, often discovering things in illustration

From the above, it can be argued that Akilu achieves and attains the unity of illustration and text in the careful management of subject matter (malaria- health) by using football as a passage of interest and the use of loud colours in the choice of outfits in the storyline to command interest. Kiefer opines that colours are one of the most expensive aesthetic elements in picture books; Kiefer further notes that colours convey temperature (hot or cold) or emotion (red for anger or blue for melancholy). Akilu definitely uses yellow as a colour to emote the message of the text. Yellow , in the text seems to be going at parallel lines at the beginning of the story, however, its continuous use makes it more vivid. Akilu manipulates the colour yellow by projecting the importance of health as it regards the prevention of malaria, through the use of the "yellow"mosquito net. The playful use of colours is also reiterated by Inkita Obasi in the text Essido *and his evil plans* whereby red broom and drink is indicative of blood; suggestive of the stories' pathway to evil deeds and characters.

The Yellow Mosquito net comes out in a fashion of plot played out in both pictures and text. The plot begins with a story from a recognized image- the mosquito net and ends with the dangers of mosquito bites and environmental health. Hamilton (2000, P.9) once again argues that: "As the character looks to solve the problem, the plot unfolds into an event or series of events that lead to a solution." Hamilton is actually suggestive of picture and textual clue to the reader as the author raises and develops the characters. Akilu develops Kemi and grace with recreational clues (football) but covers it up for the educational text. The pictures serve as part of the plot extension and explication of the whole text whereby both text and illustrations in the text not only depend on each other but also lengthen the story. There is thereby a shared source of information for the reader who gets educated and entertained at the same time.

The relationship between text and illustration continue to bare itself in *Kitwa Plays The Drums*. This text brings to fore the various aesthetic qualities by relaying the story and challenges of Kitwa. The storyline is knitted around the responsibility of a growing child, especially the girl child who seems to be conflicted as to why some things are exclusive to only girls and some to only boys. At first, the thoughts and doubts of the drum becomes or sounds interesting but the suspence however, lies in the processes Kitwa goes through to achieve her dream of playing the drum.

Kiefer argues that a vital point of interest for Children literature of the twenty- first century is the choice of the artistic convention like pictures associated with particular time or people. Thus Akilu makes the illustrations and text a focal point for the characterization of the whole story. Akilu tries to replicate what obtains in the modern world by strategically shifting away the notion that there are certain chores for certain gender. Akilu's use of words project vivdly the emotions of the characters. The illustrations help enunciate the disgruntled feelings of Kitwa

through the text. Words such as “grumbled, glum and miserable” gives the reader an insight into Kitwa’s state of mind in the beginning of the story where she is made to help with the house chores whereby Ogaga, her brother plays around all day with his guiter. Akilu shows an inbalance in the beginning of the story; like the beating of a drum which could either be loud or low. On the one hand is a sad Kitwa while on the other hand, is a joyful and carefree Ogaga. This juxtaposition of feelings continues to play out until their grandmother decides to take them to visit their uncle, Uncle Henry. Kitwa’s horizon is broadened in Uncle Henry’s house where she sees a world different from hers, a world which she actually likes and adores. Even though Akilu seeks to correct some notions of tradition, her thematic choice of the storyline reflects what Hamilton calls “the child’s world” where themes are organized around “growing up,” increasing independence and self-reliance and understanding.

The picture captures the two characters in pyjamas, Kitwa is shown to still be in bed as Ogaga tries to wake her with a ball in his hands. The picture is suggestive of boredom and stress on the part of Kitwa, it shows her reluctance towards a new day and some kind of apprehension towards what awaits her (chores). These are gotten from the emoting effect of text through the illustrations, the ability for texts to project emotion, mood or atmosphere is one of the relationship that text and illustration brings to the reader.

> *Wake up, you sleepy head! Ogaga said. Leave me alone, Kitwa murmured. Come on! Mum says you have to help her in the kitchen. Grandma is coming today, Ogaga persisted. Why do I always have to help and you don’t? grumbled Kitwa.* (Akilu, 2000).

The textual write-up signals the nature and type of the characters involved in the story, while the illustrations explicates further the state of the characters’ day or time. Some Children writers also try to replicate the story to the illustrations. Chioma Pauline, a Children literature

author captures a similar pictorial scene in the story *Nobody knows Tomorrow* where she depicts a well dressed boy who maltreats a boy hawker who sells banana. The picture scene flashes the unnecessary pride of one and the humility of another, the suffering of one and the privileged life of the other. In the end however, there is a reversal in the boys' condition. The pictures further extend the story with the proud boy wearing flashy and loud colours of red and blue while the poor boy appears in a blurred pink colour and brown shorts.

Akilu utilizes the sounds and beats of the drum to keep lively, the mood and emotion of the reader by injecting a lot of action through flute playing, drumming and strumming of the guitar by Ogaga. Hammerberg argues that to identify with a complex character in Children's literature requires the draining on experience and an interaction with the text on several levels, a kind of aesthetic reading. Derrida, a formalist critique argues that the sound images triggered by the written word are communicated through the detour of the sign. To this end, Akilu uses the drum to create not just interest but also relieve for the reader. Hammerberg says it is a technique to transform the abstract into a concrete and expected form of specific characteristic. Akilu depicts this in *Timi's Dream Comes true* where the flight on a bird is converted at the end to schooling inside a plane. Kitwa's dream of respite from house chores as a young girl and fascination with the drum is carried along in the story as she ends up grasping the skills of playing the drum from a cousin to ease her stress whenever she is tired. The drum itself is symbolic of the challenges of life, just like the rhythm that comes from the drum; Kitwa goes through life trying to find answers to her questions.

The writer further uses costumes to depict boredom which kitwa passes through in the beginning of the story. From the first illustration, Kitwa is shown to be in her pyjamas to indicate the impossibility of escape for her. She changes into a white coloured dress as she begins to learn

the skill of the drum beat, white then can be a signification of hope and aspirations in this story. Akilu captures the innate desire of Kitwa to ease her world of boredom, as she is featured with her hands on her chin; this shows a good relationship between text and illustration. To this end the posture, is indicative of Kitwa in a moment of thought. Hamilton opines that as the story progresses, the art reflects characters' emotions and the growth and changes that occur. Akilu, in *Kitwa Plays The Drum* attains this by sustaining the actions of the characters from a low tempo to a high one whereby the story ends happily. Here, Akilu can be likened to a song that takes off slowly and as the words catches on, becomes almost lost in its melody. Thus, *Kitwa Plays the Drum,* becomes like a musical instrument that heightens the emotions and passions of the characters as they all achieve their dream. There is then little wonder as to why Shakespeare said if music be the fruit of love, play on, give me excess of it. Akilu uses a musical instrument to depict the challenges of a girl child in an African home. It is like a "yoyo," for as Kitwa begins to become self aware, she also begins to question the norms of society, and it is just as if she follows the rhythm of the drum. The drum therefore, becomes a symbol of life's experiences.

Akilu connects the choice of characters in the story as the reader comes across the text whereby their function and use appear inevitable. Hamilton opines that when developed characters in picture story books are active rather than passive, they interact with their story world to solve their own problems. This can be deduced from grandma's speech, she speaks thus: The world is changing so fast…girls like boys can be whatever they want to be. On a whole, the text relates the theme of change.

The correlation between text and illustration pans itself out in the various dramatic interactions of the characters in *The Red Transistor radio*. Just like in *The Yellow Mosquito Net,* Akilu uses colours and characters to reflect a thematic preoccupation of maternal mortality.

Characters in the text help form a relational function as the pictures are displayed. Akilu achieves a degree of textual expertise and defends it with facial characterization, body language and attitude of the child character. Kiefer (1995) observes that:

> *In good picture books no single element exist apart from others, rather, the illustrator will use principles of composition to unify elements on each page and on each succeeding page. In arranging the elements on each page, including the printed type, the artist tries to obtain an effective balance between unity and variety and creates certain visual patterns that may be carried on from page to page.* (Kiefer: Pg.129- 134).

It can be argued that Kiefer is suggesting that there should be a bond of all elements of the picture story book where there needs to be all necessary ingredients. Thus, Akilu blends the inquisitive nature of Khalida, the early death of Khalida's siblings and the programme- *Mother's Hour* which is always transmitted through the red radio. All of these together with the pictorial representation make the story of Khalida whole and meaningful. The story starts with two opposing characters; Khalida, a young girl whose interest is to play hopscotch with her friends and the mother whose interest is to listen to the programme; *Mother's Hour.* The textual write up springs forth the aesthetic qualities in the text; the italized words, thus, *Mother's Hour* serves as a clue and anchor to the understanding of the whole story. Akilu blends the serious nature of the plot with a side attraction of the hopscotch game. Leisure, which is a common trait of young minds is once again utilized by Akilu. Colours also continue to play a vital and fundamental role towards the interdependency of text and illustration. Barbra Kiefer resonates that the artist will try to obtain an effective balance between unity and variety and to create certain visual patterns that may be carried on from page to page. In the story *The Red Transistor radio*, the plot is chronological, moving from one point to another, without skipping a beat; from Khalidah's love of hopscotch and her disdain for the red transistor radio to a shift in health issues. Thus, Akilu

builds the story gradually taking the reader through an educational journey. Akilu does not just tell the story, but invites the reader to take a ride along. The lessons unlike previous story books by the first generation of Children's literature in Nigeria, are not explicit but implicit. Khalida speaks thus:

> *Oh mama, are you still listening to that radio? Khalida turned and missed her place, landing squarely on the line. " khalida you are out! It is my turn Habiba called (Akilu, 2009).*

The above speech shows Khalida's disdain towards the red transistor radio at the beginning of the story. It stamps her dislike just as her facial expression tells the reader (picture 4). Akilu makes vital and corelational, the choice of the story's title. As a symbol and imagery of information and education to the family and community at large, Hamilton states that:

> *Memorable themes are neither blatantly stated as in explicit moral to a story, nor so subtle that they elude young readers. The theme evolves naturally from the plot and character.* (Hamilton, 2000).

Akilu demonstrates the above in the *Red Transistor Radio* through Khalida's aunty: *That radio is special, she said. It has made many things happen, including you, Khalida.* (Akilu, 2009). What Akilu achieves here is to reawaken the interest of the reader whose curiosity is released in a flashback and the passive voice of Khalida's mother and father who relate the significance of the programme, *Mother's Hour*. Akilu also gives an upholding hand to the passive voice of the author to enable the handling of the issue of maternal mortality in a gradual process for educative purpose while purpose while the active voice of the child remains inquisitive. Hamilton opines that: Characters in picture story books are often children or adolescents, depending on the intended audience. They reflect the actions, thoughts and emotions of children and adolescents in the narration; the dialogue and art.

The above is suggestive of characteristic buildup in Children literature where all can be easily realized in the selection of text and choice of painting to define and ascertain the role of the character in a text. Thus, Akilu utilizes well the choice of character trait in the story where Khalida maintains a buildup of a typical child in emotion, speech and picture as she is featured.

On the whole, Akilu remains interactive and exemplary in the illustrations and choice of text used in all the five texts discussed. Her use of language and illustration are like conjugal blend seen from the textual facet of setting, plots, character development and choice of colours , which appears very effective in engaging the reader. Akilu extends the meaning of the text and thoughts (Dwanene Hammerberg) as the stories are filled with contemporary storylines, challenging titles which are all representational and commonly associated with the reader.

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CHAPTER THREE

The language of Children's literature

3.1 Preamble

Every literary genre has its own characteristics and is by some means specific; as such Children's literature is a very specific literary genre with its own unique features. According to Kabele (1981), the books which are to attract children's attention and to be read by them, have to fulfill certain conditions. To this end, some features are the same for every sort of Children's literature. To determine the language of Children's literature therefore, this study focuses on literature oriented to an elementary school period. This is between the ages of three and eight. This is a period when bedtime stories prevail and gradually when children are able to read the stories themselves because the capacity to think gets wider and deeper. Thus, broadening and opening the minds of children to endless possibilities. As Kabele puts it, reading books is one of the most effective ways of enriching the children's knowledge of language and so children when reading books start to create their own vocabulary. Unarguably, the language in children's literary texts must correspond with children's ability which means that vocabulary as well as the sentence structure should be simple so that a clear expression could be created.

Kabele argues that the clarity and simplicity of expression are the basic characteristics of the literature for children. Many factors however, help in making this possible. Some of these are the layout, sentence structure and the lexis. The layout is considered because it helps in revealing the target readership. This is so because, in Children's literature, the cover pages are usually colourful and in most cases, come with a picture. The first thing children notice when examining a book is the cover of the book, to this end therefore the cover has to attract children's attraction. As this Kabele states, says something about the book- what it is about, where the story

takes place, whom the characters are, and so it makes children curious to know what is going to happen. To this end, this chapter explores the use of language and aesthetics in Ayodele Olofintuade's Eno's Story, Lola Shoneyin's Mayowa and the Masquerade and Fatima Akilu's five children story books.

3.2 Aesthetic Appeal in *Eno's Story and Mayowa and The Masquerade*

Eno's Story is written by Ayodele Olofintuade and illustrated by Bolaji Liadi. The story revolves around Eno, a young girl who is probably around eight years old. It is about witchcraft; and how Eno is accused by her uncle of being a witch and taken to pastor Erasmus' church after the disappearance of her father. The story relays the strife and struggles Eno goes through to overcome victimization in the hands of her uncle, Etim, pastor Erasmus and aunty Esther. Through Eno, the reader is brought into the world of the powerful versus the weak. With clear and simple words, Olofintuade takes the reader through Eno's travails in the hands of her uncle, who takes her to pastor Erasmus's church for deliverance, after uncle Etim's departure, pastor Erasmus locks Eno up in a filthy room but however, comes back later to start the process of deliverance which involves whipping and name calling; thus, putting Eno through psychological and physical torture.

> *Eno's uncle drove her to a white bungalow where the pastor lived. She was locked in a room which stank of urine. Eno sat on the floor and started crying. She had never felt so scared. After a while she heard the sounds of keys in the lock. A thin man with a shaved head came into the room holding a whip. He looked at her sadly. Beelzebub! He suddenly yelled. I command you to let Eno loose in the name of Jesus! Then he started hitting her face with the whip.* (P.9).

With clarity of expression, Olofintuade projects the nuances of the characters in the text. Through the use of language, the text lends itself to the theme of oppression. From the beginning of the text to almost the end, the language use expresses the tension in the text. The simple but emphatic statement by Eno *So I'm a Witch!* already gives the reader and the story a sense of wonder as to what comes next. It brings some presence to the text itself. The statement raises many other questions and makes the reader interested in paying more attention to the text. As the story unfolds, the thematic preoccupation continues to be unraveled. Eno continues to suffer in the hands of her uncle, aunty and pastor Erasmus. Throughout this period, the tone of language is high. The narrative therefore, creates a frame to express the oppression of children characters, Eno and the other children who are victimized by adults. The children are pictured constantly in one form of discomfort or the other. The children are not given the carefree and naïve characteristics usually associated with children. Rather, the children are portrayed as emotionally and physically disturbed. Through various literary devices, the text lends itself to an aesthetic ideal. An examination of the words used by the characters creates and enunciates the aesthetic qualities inherent. There is a repetition of the word "ignoramus". Olofintuade uses repetition to put emphasis on the word ignoramus and also to express the insistence upon someone; in this case, uncle Etim.

Furthermore, repetition makes the story predictable, this way; Olofintuade gives the reader an opportunity to predict what is going to happen and what is going to be said. Bill Martin and Peggy Brogan (1984), observe that the more predictable the story, the more likely children will enjoy, remember and want to read it over and over. Through the use of repetition, Olofintuade articulates the beauty of using figurative language in the sense that the pattern the words are arranged into is nothing like the ordinary speech. This is because repetition is not only

stylistically appealing but it also helps convey the message of this text in a much more engaging and notable way. Furthermore, the aura that is created by the repetition of "ignoramus" cannot be achieved through any other device. The repetition of this word makes the story sound dramatic. It therefore, enhances the beauty of the story and stresses on the point of main significance. Mem Fox, author of *Two Little Monkeys* and *Time For Bed* says repetition and rhyme and rhythm are incredibly important in books for small children.

> *Repetition and rhythm probably even more than rhyme are mesmerizing for a start. When children are born, they've been used to the mother's heartbeat in the womb. When they're born, they're rocked and cradled. There is the rhythm of life itself. There's the rhythm in the nursery rhymes and songs that are sung to children early on. And those rhythms and rhymes and repetitions morph into children's books, which are like a bridge from spoken language to written language. The repetition, rhyme and rhythm in written language then morph into normal language. It's like a stage of learning.* (Fox. 2014).

In essence, repetition in Children's literature is an important literary device that not only adds to the aesthetic qualities in Children's literature, but also aids in the comprehension and understanding of children books. Repetition thus, makes the story more predictable and interesting to read. Other words also serve to project the aesthetic qualities, as the author plays with words to create an effect. For example; words like, "*Beelzebub," "bulbiburb," "busyburb," "konkosili*," and many others, demonstrate the use of strange words to extend the interest of the reader. Also the negative words that uncle Etim, aunty Esther and Pastor Erasmus say to Eno further illustrates tension between Eno and these other characters in the text. For example; "bad spirit," "Demons living inside of you," "Devil," "Witch," "you are such a lazy girl" "Stupid girl," and "princess of darkness." Furthermore, Pastor Erasmus embodies people in position of authority who misuse their offices. The pastor agrees to cure Eno of witchcraft only because of

what he can gain from it. Pastor Erasmus takes Eno into custody based on the understanding that money would be given to him. This scenario explicates Pastor Erasmus' intention;

> *Did you not tell me that her father was very rich and that you would share all the money with the Lord if I stop her from being a witch? Brother Etim, it appears you no longer believe in God…* (Olofintuade. Pg. 20).

In narrative the Formalists preferred the term "theory of prose " the material-device opposition translates into that between the representational elements of action and event in their natural chronological and causal order *(fabula)* and the rearranged manner of their textual presentation created by artistic compositional patterns Formalism *(sujet).* The deforming, hence artful, element of narrative thus consists in the particular manner of its unfolding, and content (character and action) may often serve as mere material or motivation for deformation for the sake of some aesthetic goals. Shklovsky pointed out that the same architectonic principles are often at work in both small scale stylistic devices and large-scale devices of *sujet* construction. Thus, Olofintuade projects a mood of desolation, resolve and resilience through the use of simple but vivid description of the characters. These descriptions are further enhanced through illustrations which express the characters' emotions through the features. Glazer and Giorgis (2005) believe that the style of writing helps to create mood in the story based on the selection of words and how they are arranged. Thus, Olofintuade, is able to emote a feeling of indignation and resolve when Eno in her rumination says thus;

> *So I'm a Witch! She said to herself That means I can fly and turn into a cat or even a fierce lion! She let out a loud roar… I can curse all the people I don't like! I'll make Uncle Etim grow a long tail and two donkey ears.* (Olofintuade. Pg. 1).

The writing style uses large, clear font making it easy to read and accompanies this with several colourful pictures of the characters. Ayodele uses a fun, educational tone to teach

children as opposed to a lecture style of writing. There is a lot of pathos in this piece as it speaks to children's imagination. On the front cover of the book; Olofintuade chooses to use bold red letters for the title of the book. However, on the first page of the book, she chooses plain black colour for her title. It could be argued here that Olofintuade does this to communicate to the readers through colours. Based on the different colour denotation of the text, the reader is given a clue that the story is not as it seems. True enough, the story is told in Eno's point of view where the reader knows what Eno is thinking and at the same time what she does.

> *So I'm a Witch! She said to herself That means I can fly and turn into a cat or even a fierce lion! She let out a loud roar… I can curse all the people I don't like! I'll make Uncle Etim grow a long tail and two donkey ears.* (Olofintuade. Pg. 1).

Even though Eno states what she would do to her uncle and the people who have been mean to her, what she does is to run to her father. In addition, Olofintuade uses bold and normal font to relay the story. Each chapter begins with bold lines as if to elucidate and immerse the reader's interest in the story. For instance, in chapter two, Eno asks thus; Papa, if a witch can put a spell on people and turn into different animals, why haven't I been able to do these things? This style is suggestive of the author's attempt at piquing the reader's interest while reflecting the naivety of the protagonist through question and answer sessions. The child character asks questions, while the adult father answers these questions and tries to guide and direct the child. Here, the curiousity and inquisitiveness of the child is brought to bear through Eno's character.

Furthermore, the numbers of exclamation marks in the text help enhance the story. For example; "So am a Witch!" "I can curse all the people I don't like! Here, Olofintuade wants the reader to connect the emotion of the character. The exclamation mark in the above sentences shows the reader that the character is exasperated and angry. This view is supported by

Trask(1997) in an article " *The Exclamation mark*" where Trask explains that exclamation marks are used to show very strong feeling as well as to show that a statement is surprising. With this, it can be argued that Olofintuade successfully captures Eno's emotion through her style of writing. This injects some form of life into the story and makes the story interesting and present in such a way that the reader finds it hard to put the book down. The writer also uses a variety of syntax throughout the book. The usage of simple and compound sentence are evident in the text. Booth and Barton (2000) advocated that new and varied syntactic patterns allow the children to be engaged in experiencing language which are more complex than their own. For example, the usage of a more complex version of simple sentence as;

> *When I was passing by your workshop, I heard Uncle Etim telling you that I'm a Witch because I like cats and I always come first in class even when I missed school for a month because Mama and the baby died.* (Olofintuade. Pg. 3).

This allows young readers to know the different ways of how language is used. The Ministry of education of New Zealand(2003) also supports that rich texts should have varied sentence structure that motivates and challenges the readers. This variation in sentence structure is evident in *Eno's story.* Through the injection of humour, the text exudes a liveliness that keeps the readers glued to the story. This literary device runs through the text, from the beginning, the author begins to entertain the reader;

> *So I'm a witch!... that means I can fly and turn into a cat or even a fierce lion! She let out a roar. Her cat leapt to the ground giving her an angry look. I can curse all the people I don't like! I'll make Uncle Etim grow a long tail and two donkey ears. She laughed at this picture of her uncle.* (Olofintuade. Pg. 1).

The above instance depicts the imaginative and humorous interjections the author uses in order to make light a serious issue. Jan Bremmer and Herman Roodenberg, editors of *A Cultural*

History of Humour: *From Antiquity to the Present day* (1997), define humour as "any message transmitted in action, speech, writing, images or music that is intended to produce a smile or a laugh". In doing this, the author engages the reader in such a way that the reader relates to the character's wild imagination and take part in it while also taking a break from the seemingly serious theme that the story splurges. This would indirectly make the reader enjoy reading the story. Zbaracki (2003) validates this where in his research he found that humour in text highly engage the children as it appeals to them in terms of suspense and the use of language for humorous effect.

To this end, Olofintuade uses the visual appearances of the characters and the manipulation of words to project the humour in the text. Eno uses word play; that is nonsense words as a coping mechanism to vent. "Moira Robbinson (2009), supports this, by saying that humour is the Cinderella in Children's literature". What this means is that humour is the livewire of a Children's literature, it springs the stories to life and injects some form of liveliness. "I don't care whether it's bulbiburb or it's busyburb…. There is the use of hyperbolic sentences also, to enhance and diffuse the tension in the story. For example; when Eno describes her aunty to the other children on her first encounter with them in the uncompleted building where they have all taken refuge, Eno describes her thus; "she is so fat she rolls like a drum and her body jiggles and wiggles." Another instance is when Eno thinks of what she would do to her uncle if she were a witch; she says "I'll make Uncle Etim grow a long tail and two donkey ears." Olofintuade projects humour through the use of language and also the portrayal of characters in the text. For example, Uncle Etim is described as having a big stomach "Uncle Etim shouted, his big stomach shaking." These all bring out the aesthetic qualities in the text. The author is not preachy; the author simply tells a story through words.

In addition to the humour, comes the illustration in the text. In this book, the illustration plays a vital role in emphasizing the meaning of the text or story. Booth and Barton (2000) believe that words and picture work together where pictures draw the eye and the text catches the imagination of readers. Bolaji Liadi, illustrates based on the written text. When the text is referring to Eno's father's affectionate feelings for her (pg.6); "you must never forget that I love you very much." The visual, which is spread across two pages, shows exactly what the text says as the reader can see drawings of Eno and her father in a warm embrace. This ensures that the readers would be able to make meaning from the text even though they are not very familiar with the text. Thus, allowing the reader to enjoy the story. However, the illustrations are elaborate and detailed. For example; to depict the scenario between Eno and her aunty (Olofintuade, P.22), the illustrator drew an explicit picture of the piles of clothes and a basin- full of plates, bars of soap and further enunciated the facial expression through the use of lines and posture to explicate and project the different emotions that both Eno and her aunty are feeling.

> *...Now her uncle's wife was making her life hell. You are such a lazy girl! Instead of washing you are sitting there like a log of wood! For your information princess Eno, you are not eating until all these clothes are washed and ironed! Aunty Esther yelled at Eno.* (Olofintuade, Pg. 13).

The illustrator's depiction of Aunty Esther's expression of anger is vividly shown through her physical posture and lines. Where this picture coheres with the above text, it is however, not in all instances that the pictures project exactly what the text says. On page thirty-two, for example; the text speaks thus; "… just as she burst into tears, a woman approached her. Eno looked at her pretty face and nicely braided hair*…"* this picture however, does not show or feature Eno in tears, it also does not depict the woman walking towards Eno, what it shows, is the woman squatting with a smile on her face and her hand outstretched with Eno's back turned

from her. It could be argued that the illustrator's attempt of leaving out some pictures is to expand the reader's knowledge of the story. According to Lemke (1998) and Hagan (2007), the relationship between word and picture is not necessarily symmetrical because each mode specializes in the transmission of specific meaning.

Graham (1990) argues that the verbal resources of language are essential for the representation of sequential relations and events, while the resources of image are most appropriate for the representation of spatial aspects and non- linear relationships. Words narrate, determine time and tell the reader what the characters say or think. However, pictures best show what characters look like, what they are doing and the setting in which they appear. Spatial and physical descriptions are typically created by the illustrator as they may instantly communicate information depicting characters' physical appearances and setting, which if only narrated verbally, would be too verbose. While words serve to describe space and communicate solely by means of narration, pictures can actually show this, thus transmitting information more effectively .Another example; is Eno's first encounter with mike at the market where the text states that she is eating corn, the illustration in the text instead shows Eno holding a corn to the ground while Mike standing beside her, busies himself with eating corn.

This variant description between text and illustration is an interesting display as this could prompt the reader to think critically and actively participate in reading by questioning the pictures. Saxby (1997) advocates that picture books play an active role as readers are expected to participate in the life and activity of the book. The writer cleverly includes two different socio-economic backgrounds which are the home Eno shared with her "Papa" and the uncompleted building that Eno shared with the other children who were abandoned by their parents also.

In line with the formalist theory, Olofintuade's uses nonsense words. Nonsense words in the real sense are defined as words or signs that have no intelligible meaning. (The free Dictionary.com). Nonsense words are, by their nature, not the kind of thing that a dictionary deals with. Nonsense words are often indefinable, and used by an individual writer as part of his or her linguistic repertoire which does not necessarily gain wider currency. In as much as nonsense words convey nothing linguistically, in literature and most especially in Children's literature, nonsense words have become a medium of expression through which a reader's interest is captured. Professor Maria Nikolajeva claims that the unusual phrases and words teach children the expressive power of language which aids the development of children's imagination. Nikolajeva further states that the puns, linguistic inventions and fantastical names given to characters and places in fiction also allow children to understand the symbolic meaning of words. Nikolajeva says thus;

> *A lot of people presume that writing children's literature is relatively simple, but in fact it demands great sophistication… the creative employment of language in children's books gives the child the power of expression. By challenging the arbitrary rules of language, especially written language, children learn to be critically- thinking individuals.* (Nikolajeva. Pg. 205).

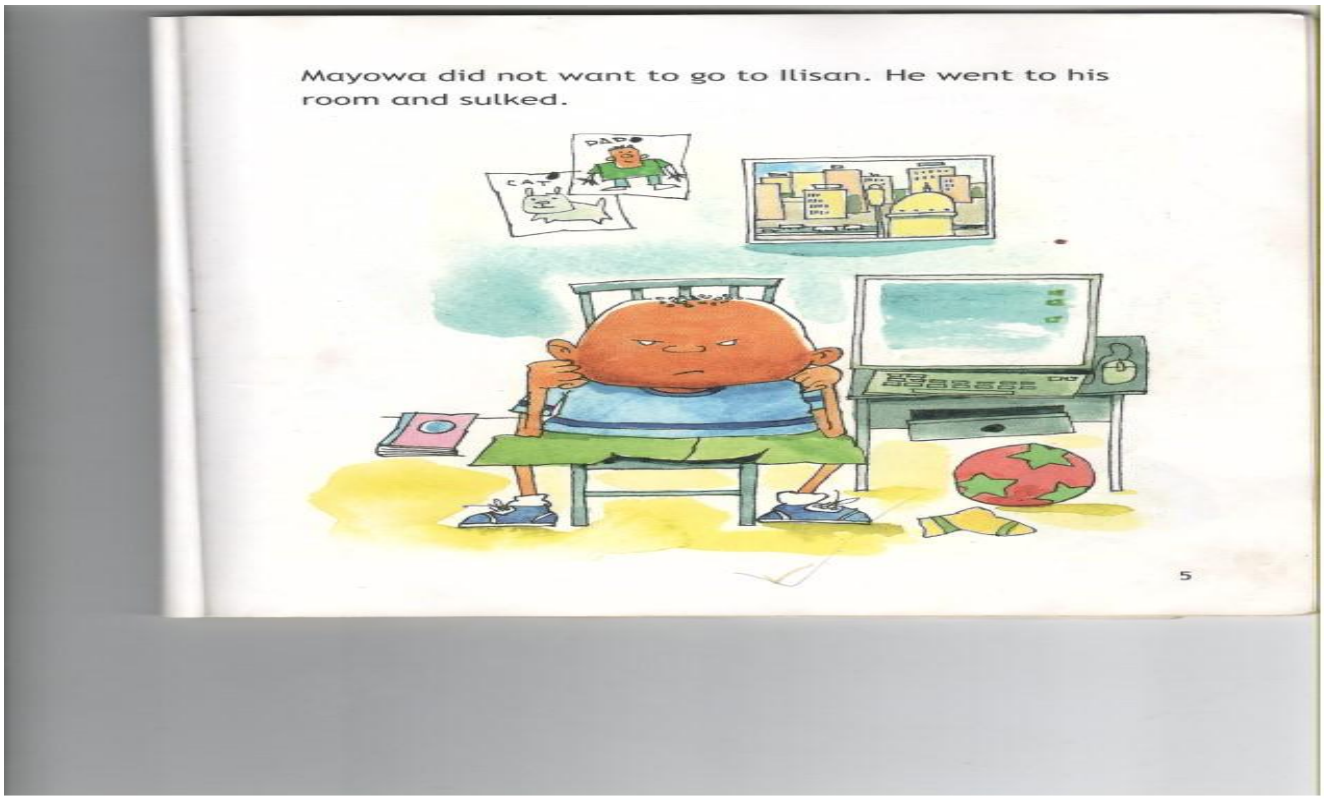
To this end, Olofintuade uses nonsense words to show the advantage gained by readers who are able to distinguish between real and made- up terms. Mastery of language here, can be linked to the idea of miracle and mystery, because the pastor is praying to something supreme and thus feels the urge to use unfamiliar words to defamiliarize words for magical or some form of strange effect. This can be likened to the *Harry Potter* series in which Nikolajeva opines that mastery of language is linked to magic, because the characters can gain power over the world by learning spells from ancient grimories. While Pastor Erasmus uses the nonsense word of

"Beelzebub" to invoke witches so that Eno can be free from their Clutches, Eno's mockery of the word "Beelzebub" to "bulbiburb" and "busyburb," in a way, serve as a symbol of the foolishness that Uncle Etim and Pastor Erasmus exhibit throughout the text. One other effect that Olofintuade is able to bring to fore, is that these words conjure images before the reader's ears. These made- up words serve as an opportunity to craft vowels, consonants, syllables and rhymes into the tastiest, most orally and aurally tactile little surprises for the reader. The reader does not have to read these words in the context of the story to be completely entranced by the way these words spark on the page.

Writer's deployment of language and aesthetics continue to spring forth in Lola Shoneyin's *Mayowa and the Masquerade. Mayowa and the Masquerade* is a text that was published by Cassava republic in the year two thousand and ten. It is a modern day story about the technological advancement and its effect on children. *Mayowa and the Masquerade,* tells the story of Mayowa's reluctance to visit his Grandmother in Ilisan village. Instead, Mayowa is looking forward to playing computer games all day. Mayowa is so sad that he refuses to join in any conversation while on transit to visit his grandmother. On getting to the village however, Mayowa is introduced to a boy his own age; Denuyi, a happy- go lucky lad who is all too pleased to serve as Mayowa's guide and companion on the adventurous journey that they embark on. At the end of the story, Mayowa enjoys the adventure so much that he cannot wait to come back to Ilisan village. The interest in this book is not just the story, but the way Lola uses simple but interesting choice of words to relay events. The pictures also explicate and extend the storyline thereby giving the reader an imaginative and colourful picture of the characters' adventure.

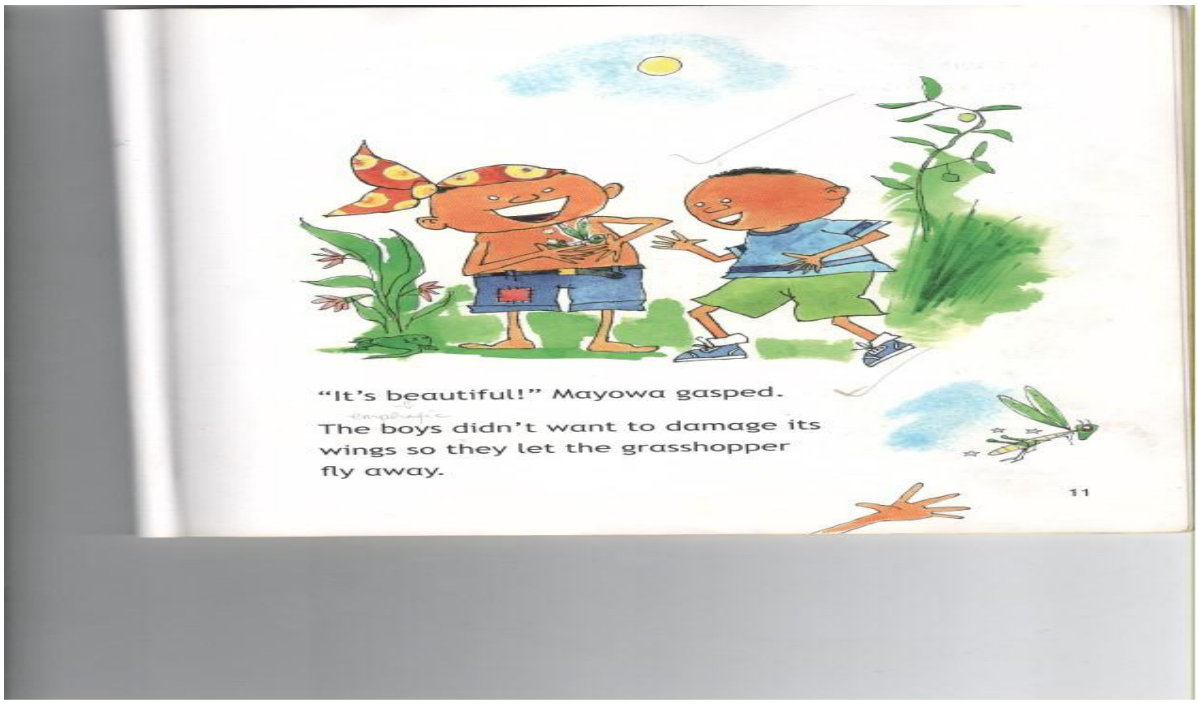
The first sentence, "Mayowa was looking forward to playing computer games all day…" relays an emphatic decision and tells the reader about Mayowa's mindset; thus, Mayowa was

looking forward to playing computer and not doing any other thing. It is a direct statement that reveals Mayowa's choice, which is to play computer games and not to play with friends or go to Ilisan as the mother informs him. The statement hence, helps in projecting Mayowa's disappointment. The first line lays bare Mayowa's wishes and unlike in adult fiction where symbolism is sometimes used to convey and depict a story, Lola here, uses the child's emotional and physical needs to relay the story. If a child wants something, the child does not think of any other thing but that which he or she wants.



Lola Shoneyin also uses juxtaposition as a literary device to draw a parallel between two different worlds. Mayowa's world and Denuyi's world is placed side-by- side for the reader to see. The modern and chaotic world of Mayowa is brought to the fore by salient clues like the computer, cars, and the way of dressing. This is made known through the pictorial depiction and

textual description. In the illustration, Mayowa is pictured to be fully dressed in a blue tee- shirt and green shorts, he also has on blue shoes and white stockings, while Denuyi on the other hand, has on only a pair of patched shorts and no shoes or shirt.



The dressing here, could be symbolic of the restrictive nature of urban people, while Denuyi's dressing signifies the carefree and happy nature of the rural people. Another symbolic depiction, is the facial expression of Mayowa at the beginning of the text and that of the reader's first encounter with Denuyi. In the beginning, Mayowa's expresses sadness which could be representative of the gloomy nature of what modernization brings, restricting people's form of communication with the world. Denuyi on the other hand represents nature, unpolluted and fresh. Shoneyin's use of juxtaposition as a literary style once again can be seen in the depiction of both township and rural area. On page four to five, the illustrations are imbued with modern artifacts such as the frames hanging on the walls of the kitchen and in Mayowa's room; these frames all have pictures of high rise buildings on them, in the kitchen is also a gas cooker. On the street are

cars and people on their way to the office. The village however, is devoid of all these, what one sees, is the character's close contact with nature. This can be seen on page ten, where Mayowa and Denuyi go on an expedition:

> *As soon as they were on their own, Denuyi hopped after a grasshopper. Soon, the emerald green insect was sitting on his hand. It's beautiful! Mayowa gasped. The boys didn't want to damage its wing so they let the grasshopper fly away* (Shoneyin. P.10).

Another instance is where Denuyi takes Mayowa to the stream. Unlike in the city where people rarely have contact with their natural habitat, in the village, people are portrayed to be more in tune with nature. This is depicted on page twelve: Denuyi took Mayowa to the stream. "The boys perched on the water's edge and dipped their hands and feet in the cool water" (Shoneyin, P.12). While Mayowa only has his computer games as a companion in the city, thus making him stay at home for most of the time, the village opens up a new world for him. Mayowa sees "anew" things that had hitherto, been ignored and overlooked. Mayowa also gets to engage in a meaningful exercise as he hops from one place to the other alongside Denuyi. One thing that makes this text interesting, is the salient way the author uses language to discuss and raise some issues without making it preachy and sermon-like. Evidently, the theme of this text is the effect of computer games on children. A grumpy Mayowa before the trip to the village emotes the unfriendly and disgruntled feeling of loneliness. The dependency of Mayowa on the computer to bring him happiness is brought to bear also. By juxtaposing the activities of children based in the city with activities of those based in the village, Shoneyin portrays which of these acts are better. To this end, Shoneyin uses technology as a figure for the dehumanization of mankind. The effacement of man is here, constituted through the acts of language. Without the vocabulary of modernization and the depiction through illustration, any such effacement would be inconceivable. The word "computer," gives room to a much more elaborate depiction of the

depiction of modernity. The "computer" is suggestive of a synedochic substitution- computer games, for modernity and the masquerades, for tradition. The juxtaposition of these two characters and their lives, give the reader a better view and an option to making a choice.

One answer to the question of how figures and tropes function in literature is that figures and tropes make the reader see what is otherwise invisible, concealed by prejudice, effaced by habit. Thus, through Mayowa and Denuyi's portrayal, it is not just Mayowa's eyes that are opened to the interesting adventures and life in the village, but also that of the reader. Through the simple use of language and the application of different literary devices, the reader experiences a new world. For example; Shoneyin likens the shape of piglets tail to be "curled like pencil shavings." To this end, figures and tropes seek to change the world; the use of language and its application springs forth newer meaning which at a first glance can be ignored. To recall the term used by Viktor Shklovsky and other Russian formalist critics writing in the 1920s, figurative language has the capacity to 'defamiliarize' our world – to refigure, reform, revolutionize (Bennett and Royle, 2004). Consequently, Shoneyin continues to sprout those literary devices to enhance and enumerate the aesthetic qualities inherent *in Mayowa and the Masquerade.*

Adjectives have an interesting usage in Children's literature. According to Nanci Panuccio, "the right adjective can breathe life into ones writing." This statement conveys a certain truth as this, projects through the several uses of adjectival words by Children literary writers. From Shoneyin's text to Akilu's, the story books run through full of adjectival words and phrases. The phrase from Mayowa and the Masquerade, "*emerald green insect*" is evocative and descriptive. It gives the reader a vivid picture of the insect. Without *emerald green* to describe the insect, the reader would probably not get a tactile and visual sense of the insects

colour and beauty. Not only does *emerald* trigger sensory replications, it marshals forth a flood of unconscious associations. Beauty, freshness, nature and even wonder are all imbued in that emerald green insect. Insect on its own would not really give the reader the same imprint and perhaps, the story might even come across as drab and uninteresting without the use of interesting adjectives. In Akilu's *The yellow mosquito net*, adjectives continue to spring forth on pages to make for pleasurable reading. The yellow colour is strategically selected. Akilu could have easily chosen a more familiar colour, let's say pink or blue. But these colours would have barely registered. The unexpected *yellow* jumps out at the reader, thus, making it impossible for the reader to have a neutral reaction to it. What is interesting about this choice though is how Akilu recycles it all through the text, repeating the colour of the mosquito net to show, rather than to tell the reader, the preventive measures by the mosquito net.

> *The goal post where they played was covered with a bright yellow net. The girls moved nearer to get a better view. What is that hanging on the goalpost? Grace asked. I think it's a tent, like you would use for camping, Kemi responded, but she sounded unsure. Actually, it is not a tent, it's a mosquito net…* (Akilu, n pag).

Thus, Akilu here consciously crafts adjectives to capture the essence of the story; which is the theme of malaria prevention. In using the colour yellow, Akilu succeeds in drawing the reader's attention to the story and its message. Hence, Akilu and Shoneyin's use of adjective brings a beauty to the story books and also evokes life into the stories.

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CHAPTER FOUR

Animal images in Children's literature

4.1 Preamble

The interaction between man and animals has been a long standing relationship. Since existence, man has sought to understand the world through various interpretations and the use of animals has been one of the foremost methods that have been used. Goldman states that:

> *Stories are one of the main ways that our species understands the natural world. Giving human attributes to animals is by no means a recent phenomenon; ancient gods were often hybridized human-like animals (or animal-like humans.* (Goldman: 2014).

Thus, the co-existent way of life between man and animals has invariably given man the ability to not only study animals and their behavioural patterns, but has also provided man with a rich source of story to tell. Consequently, from the beginning of creation, man in trying to understand the myth of everything has featured animals in several stories which have been passed from one generation to the other. From the Stone Age where man shared land and space with animals right to the age of renaissance and also in the twenty- first century, where man has moved relatively far away from animals. The interest in the animal world has been depicted in the writings and paintings of several writers and artists.

With the emergence of the printing press, the trend continues to prevail, the fascination which man has with animals seems to grow more and more with each passing day, and because of this fascination, animals have appeared in art and stories throughout time and across most human cultures (Boyd, 2007; Daston and Mitman,2005). This trend continues even in the twenty- first century where technology has been an overriding phenomenon in the explication of

human existence. In literature, the images of animals feature in almost all genres. What is however, observed is its prevalence in Children's literature. Even though, animals had been featured in the oral storytelling tradition, that is, prior to the emergence of the printing press, a number of reasons have been given as to why it is still a popular literary art today. According to Carolyn and Copenhaver :

> *The emerging view declared that children needed extended time to develop before they would be able to take on the full responsibilities of adulthood. They needed guidance and instruction to maintain their safety and to allow them to grow into full membership in society. Play came to be viewed as child's work during which they were discovering and practicing lessons, and pleasure came to be seen as an enticement in this process. To heighten that enticement, animals with human characteristics began to appear in children's books.* (Carolyn & Copenhaver : 2004 :3).

To make children interested in books, writers have had to improvise and imaginatively tell and write stories that have a lot of creative content. To this end, animals feature in folktales and fables and are often treated as sub-genres of fantasy. This is however heterogeneous. Some animal stories describe animals in their natural surroundings with their natural behavior. Another large group of children's stories makes use of anthropomorphic animals. Sometimes wearing clothes and always with human traits. With this portraiture however, it is important that these stories are not viewed from the superficial aspect, animals in children's text should be seen as representations of children (Nikolajeva: 54). When writers present their characters as animals, it is merely a narrative device, which has little to do with genre. This is because animal stories are sometimes treated together with fables. Fables are satiric or moral stories using animal shape to portray human vices and shortcomings. This genre, which is already known in the ancient time, has nothing to do with Children's literature, and if some fables have been incorporated in

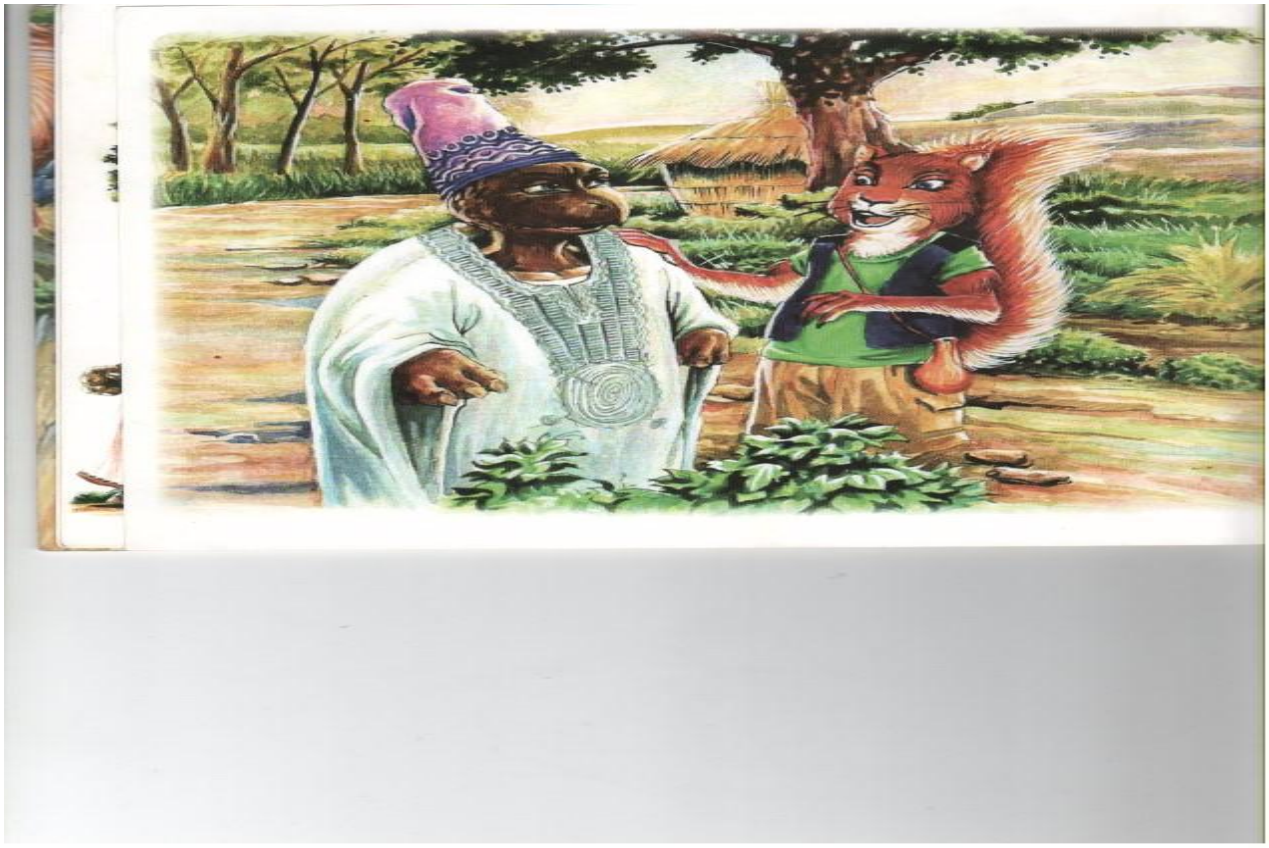
children's reading, it was just as an improvised solution as folktales. To this end therefore, this chapter examines the images of Children's literature as an aesthetic component and not as a literary genre. Hence, the name anthropomorphism as a device is used to describe and explore the images of animals as an aesthetic component in the selected texts.

4.2 Anthropomorphism as a literary technique in children's literature in Nigeria.

As a literary device, anthropomorphism is the art of attributing human traits to animals or objects, it originated from the Greek words "*anthrope*; meaning" human and "*morph*; meaning form.*"* As a literary device, it is sometimes confused with personification but on a closer look, there happens to be a slight variation in the two. While both assert the intangible human characteristics- such as consciousness and thought onto an inanimate object, entity or animal, the difference is that anthropomorphization imposes physical or tangible human characteristics onto the subject to suggest an embodiment of the human form. (wordreference.com). In essence, personification pretends (for literary effect) to ascribe one or two human attributes (especially thoughts, feelings and intentions) to non- human things, while anthropomorphism turns non-humans into humans completely. From the above explication, this chapter takes a look at the images of animals in some selected Nigerian stories with a view to expounding how this literary technique helps in the articulation of Children's literature in Nigeria.

Animal stories can be divided into three broad categories based on the degree of anthropomorphism present: the first is those in which animals behave like human beings, the second is those in which animals behave like animals except that the animals talk and may wear clothes and the third is those in which animals behave entirely like animals (Sutherland: 341). Yusuf Adamu's *The clever Squirrel and The great wedding contest* can be argued to belong to

the first category. From the picture below, it can be seen that animals in this text wear clothes, talk like humans and even live in human houses:



The major character, who happens to be Squirrel, is portrayed as an animal in love with gazelle that has many suitors. A competition is organized by Gazelle's father to choose a good husband for gazelle. Gazelle however, has eyes only for "handsome squirrel." She therefore encourages squirrel to do all he can to come out victorious. With the assurance of love from Gazelle, squirrel begins to scheme and hatch plans to ensure his victory at the competition. With the interjections of humour, Adamu, succeeds in relieving the theme of survival and determination. By using the real features of the animals, Adamu, relieves how ones weakness is exploited to gain higher grounds for the success of another. According to Alison Boyle (2012), through animals, one can make observations about the human condition, the fictionalized pace one creates for those

animals does not need to conform to all of one's reality. Boyle states that through this, the writer can be creatively playful. Hence, Adamu depicts animals like gazelle, squirrel and the likes to creatively project the theme of love, trickery and perseverance. To this end, squirrel, after taking one week to put together his plans, eventually puts to use his plans. On the day of the competition, "rich Tortoise" sets out for the competition, along the way he is stopped by "clever squirrel" and the following conversation ensues:

> *Squirrel: where are you off to?*
> *Tortoise: well… I am going… to the competition," in his slow voice.*
> *Beautiful Gazelle… is choosing a husband… today.*
> *Squirrel: I see. So you haven't heard about the new rules?*
> *Tortoise: No… not at all.*
> *Squirrel: Her father said all the contestants must participate in a race.*
> *They even sent invitations to Dog and horse from the city.*
> *Tortoise: if that is the condition… I will lose because… I am very slow.*
> *Squirrel: so what do you want to do now?*
> *Tortoise: I am not going… anymore,… thank you… Squirrel… I better start going… because it will take me a long time… to get home… goodbye.* (n. pag).

Adamu uses the above conversation to project the image of both squirrel and tortoise. One the one hand is the clever squirrel and, on the other hand, is the slow witted tortoise. From the descriptive use of adjectives, the reader is at once made to see the disparity in the animals. There is a juxtaposition of attributes: "clever squirrel" against the "slow tortoise." Adamu also uses ellipsis to depict the tortoise's sluggish nature. This can be deduced from the conversation that ensues between tortoise and Squirrel. While Squirrel's speech comes off straight forwardly; "where are you off to?" tortoise's speeches are riddled with ellipsis to show that he is uncertain and not at all confident in his quest. Thus, from the conversation, the reader is made to understand the nature of the tortoise. In spite of his riches, tortoise is not at all clever and the squirrel succeeds in tricking him to quit the competition.

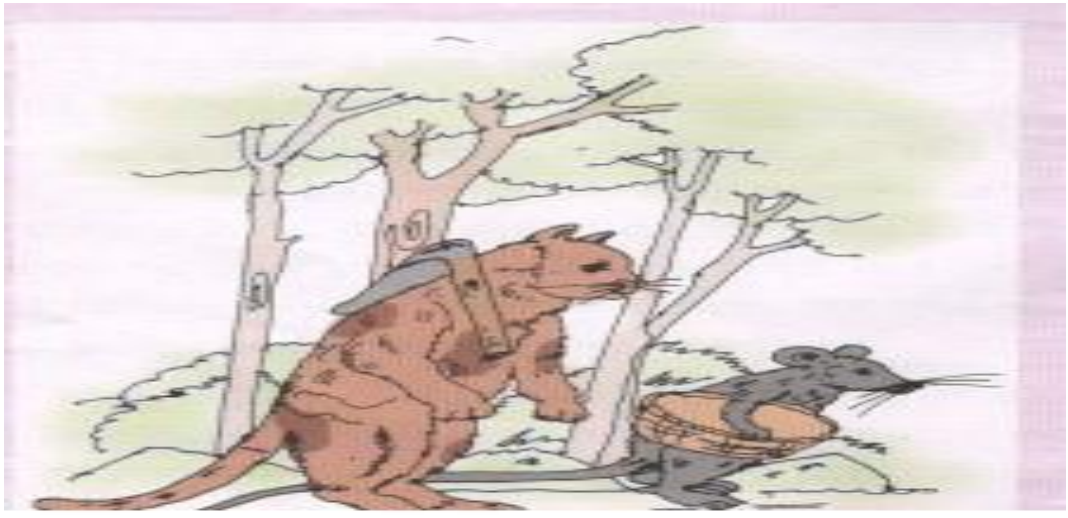
Adamu uses descriptive adjectives a lot throughout the text to project the attributes of all the animals; from "Handsome Zebra," to "talkative parrot." From the very first sentence, "One day, Squirrel was walking in the bush when he saw beautiful Gazelle dancing with her friends," the reader is made to see the anthropomorphic quality in the text. Ideally, a Squirrel is known to hop from one end to another, but here, the author gives the squirrel a human trait of not just walking, but that of recognition and feeling. In doing this, the author makes the reader view the squirrel in a different light. Goodhart, (2012), states that it is easier for an audience or reader to identify with a character who looks quite different than the ordinary. Goodhart further asserts that a complete removal from the reader's reality leaves the reader free to jump into that world that a "similar but- not- quite- the same world doesn't."

Another statement the author projects through the "beautiful Gazelle," is the statement of showmanship. The word "beautiful" is an adjective that qualifies the Gazelle . By attaching the world "beautiful" to Gazelle, the writer seems to be telling the reader to take a careful look at Gazelle. What this achieves, is that it makes the reader view Gazelle differently; "anew" thus, the word "beautiful" defamiliarizes Gazelle as not just an animal but an animal attributed with different features. The reader therefore starts to ask questions as to what other things gazelle is capable of. In the end, squirrel wins the competition after a fierce contest with Rhinoceros who fails to answer the riddle correctly. Through this, the theme of perseverance and competitiveness is depicted. The reader learns that to win or achieve anything in life, one must strive and persevere. Judith affirms the utilitarian function of literature by stating that:

> *Stories can be designed to show effective ways of defining and responding to common life experience and may be an especially good vehicle for this kind of communication because embed into a child's consciousness in ways that direct instruction cannot, anthropomorphic stories rely on children to think analogically, but it is known that children are able to make simple analogies as early as*

> *two, when they can be observed role- playing with their toys. Analogical thought provides a powerful mechanism for understanding ourselves and our world. Children can indeed observe an animal character in a particular situation and see the significance of that event in their own context.* (Judith: 2009: 4).

The second story titled *How Cat and Rat became enemies*, comes from the text *Tales by Moonlight*, which was published in the year 2014 by HEBN Publishers Plc. The two animal characters that the writer uses are cat and rat. Through this story, the writer raises the theme of trust, betrayal and greed. It is a story about two close friends that is the rat and the cat. These two are very close that wherever one is seen, the other is sure to be found close by. This friendship however, comes to an end when the rat tries to consume all the food left because of greed. The image of the cat here is that of a loyal and compassionate friend while the rat is portrayed as cunning and greedy. In this story, the animals are not entirely anthropomorphic, the animals are portrayed in their natural habitat and in their natural form. What makes these animals partly anthropomorphic animals, is that they are talking animals. The picture below illustrates this:



Ordinarily, the author could have used humans instead of using animals as characters in the story. It can however, be argued that the writer uses animals as characters to stimulate the

reader's attention and imagination. Boyd describes several reasons as to why animals continue to appear in literature. According to Boyd (2007):

> *Animals are similar to and different from us and also different from others, stimulating the imagination; they play many roles in our lives with them; and they evoke many feelings. Because for us they are mute "unable to explain themselves… we have attributed them a whole range of properties.* (Boyd: 227)

Thus, authors imaginatively develop animal characters just as they do when creating human characters. In doing this, the writer employs the insights and knowledge gained through relationships and in the process, mirror the world as it is perceived. This is what takes place in the story *How the Cat and Rat became enemies.* The writer uses animal portraiture to try to relate some life experiences and by portraying animal characters instead of humans, the stories seem more believable to the reader/ audience. The portraiture does not typify a sectional or tribal group, when children read stories like this, the questions that would likely be asked is why the rat did what he did and not where the rat comes from. In essence it could be argued that the portrayal of animal characters in Children's literature, gives a sense of believability because of its multicultural form. Children of all races and colours can thus, relate to this animal without any bias. Butterfield (2012) validates this assertion in an interview, where she says that:

> *Animals transcend international and cultural boundaries, making them ideal for global sale. A human face varies from country to country, and publishing can be very sensitive to it. In addition, there is great variation in illustration tastes, especially when it comes to people, but animal images are easier to get consensus on.* (2012).

Although Butterfield's point is that the use of animal images in Children's literature helps the sale of Children's books, one important thing to note, is the transcendental acceptance of animal characters by readers. Scarry (1993), a popular American children's author and

illustrator, once said that he uses "animals to eliminate racial stereotypes and also because children relate better to talking animals in stories than to talking children." To this end, anthropomorphizing animals may increase feelings and control by making the animals appear more human and therefore more knowable (Waytz et al., 2010).

Accordingly, studies suggest that children use anthropomorphic language to make educated guesses about actions of inanimate objects and animals to reason about their behavior, or to help explain events when they are having difficulty verbalizing (Waytz et al, 2010). Hence the use of cat and rat to relay the story of trust and betrayal will go a long way in enhancing the imaginative impulse of a child. There is a similarity of theme in Agama's *The Tiger and the Rat and other stories*. In one of the stories titled *The Tortoise and the Dog*, the theme of deceit and betrayal also runs its course. It relates how the tortoise and the dog's once harmonious relationship became sour as a result of tortoise betrayal. The story starts with the traditional opening "a long time ago," this opening is indicative of the event having taken place sometime in the past. It takes the reader to the realm of nostalgia and gives a seemingly real portraiture which makes the story believable. With this opening, Agama then springs the story weaving it from one point to the other, thereby giving it a chronological plot. The story starts from tortoise and dogs adventure to getting udara fruits, their encounter with the "wicked bird, utukuru" and dog's eventual triumph after the fight with utukuru. Agama uses irony to portray the theme of betrayal at the beginning of dog and tortoise' encounter with utukuru, the tortoise says: My friend dog, it is the wicked utukuru. I fear it's going to kill you today. It is far stronger than you are. If it kills you, we shall eat your flesh. Even though the tortoise calls the dog his friend, the above statement portrays tortoise as an unfeeling and uncaring "friend." Whose only interest is that of

himself and no other. This act of betrayal and sabotage comes to bear when utukuru attacks dog. For when tortoise thinks utukuru would win, tortoise further reveals his wicked nature:

> *Utukuru, kill that idiotic dog for our food. Kill it! It has been a nuisance to me all along. In fact, I warned it not to climb your udara tree but it refused. Kill it, we shall feast on its flesh.* (Agama: pg.15).

After dog defeats utukuru, tortoise begins to sing dog's praise and even though dog is offended at tortoise's behavior, dog forgives tortoise after tortoise convinces dog that he did not tell utukuru to kill dog:

> *Hei! What am I hearing? I told the bird to flap you to death? I'm not surprised that you said this. But it was due to the noise of the fight that made you hear that. I was shouting to you to kill the bird so that we would eat it. It was the nervousness you were having in the fight that made you hear the wrong thing…. God forbid! How can I come to hunt with you and tell another thing to kill you? I am not a foolish person to tell a bird that would fly away with whatever catch he has made to kill my best friend.* (Agama: pg. 16-17).

Through this, the naivety of dog is revealed and Agama once more reveals the ironic relationship dog shares with tortoise. Theirs is not a true friendship, while the dog holds his friendship with tortoise to be genuine; tortoise on the other hand, is just out to grab what he can from the relationship. In relieving this story of treachery and betrayal, Agama infuses indigenous Nigerian parlance. *"gome, gome, gome, gome*," this sound signifies the striking of the gong. The gong which the tortoise strikes so utukuru's people will come out and have a go at dog. Tortoise plans however, fail because dog having found out tortoise true intentions, outwits tortoise by taking the remains of utukuru's meat to tortoise wife for safe keep. Thus, when utukuru's people go in search of utukuru's remains, they find it in tortoise's house. As a result of this, tortoise and his family lose their lives. In the *Tiger and the Rat*, the theme however, differs in the sense that the story portrays an act of kindness by the tiger to the rat. This act is repaid when the tiger gets trapped in a net and the rat comes around to spare his life. The animals portrayed in stories

written by Agama are not entirely anthropomorphic, this is because they do not wear clothes like Yusuf's *The clever squirrel and the great wedding contest.* The animals in *the Tiger and the Rat,* are portrayed to be in their natural habitat. Furthermore, these animals are not attributed any gender, unlike in *The clever squirrel and the great wedding contest* where the gazelle is referred to as "beautiful gazelle," and the zebra, as "handsome zebra." Agama's animals are referred to as "it" thus not giving away any gender. Even though the animals talk and plot like humans, they never lose their believability as animals. The animals live in their natural habitat and eat what animals normally eat. In *The Tortoise and the Dog*, the dog eats utukuru, the bird after it kills utukuru, it is a known fact that dogs are meat loving animals. Likewise, in *The weaver bird and Okri*, the birds live in a nest. When Okri refuses to learn how to weave a nest properly by deceiving the weaver bird to teach it the basic rudiments, thinking he could outsmart the weaver bird, Okri learns a lesson the hard way when the rains become too heavy for his haphazardly weaved nest and Okri ends in death. Even though death occurs, it is treated in a matter of fact way. The reader therefore, can identify with Okri, who is much like a child except that his basic bird nature is changed.

In conclusion, anthropomorphized animals continue to concurrently feature human features and traits in the selected children's literature as an aspect of aesthetic dynamics in the art of Children's literature by projecting unto animals the emotions and feelings of humans to add value and to teach certain truths to children without the moral directness that Children's literature has come to be known for.

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CHAPTER FIVE:

CONCLUSION

Children's literature in Nigeria as the name stipulates refers to books written for Children that depict Nigerian characters and capture the Nigerian experience. Furthermore, Children's literature in Nigeria can arguably be defined as that literature that is written by a Nigerian. In essence, Children's literatures in Nigeria is a literary genre that dates back to the colonial period whereby, books were imported by the government and missionaries to sort of alienate and adulterate the culture of the people at the time. During this period, children read many foreign books such as the Enid Blython series, *Treasure Island* and many other books. In as much as children enjoyed reading these books, there was a damaging effect on the psychic of these children. The themes and plot of these storylines did not depict any experience that the Nigerian child could relate to. In addition to this, children started to use expressions that were not relatable, for example; expressions such as "as white as snow," "a penny for your thought," and many other similar expressions like these further alienated the Nigerian child.

A wave of change however, came in the name of independence, after Nigerian attained her independence in the year 1960, a lot of changes began to reflect and one of these changes was in the literary scene. Many writers started turning inwards for materials. Majority of these writers wanted to debunk and prove to the world that Nigeria had a vibrant culture before the colonial period. And what these writers did was to commit to print the many tales that had been told to them by their parents, and handed down from one generation to the other. It is in this vein that Cyprian Ekwensi published works like *The Drummer boy* (1966), *Juju Rock* (1966). Other writers also tried to infuse African and Nigerian content into their works. Some of these writers

include Chinua Achebe who wrote *Chike and the River* and also Mabel Segun who wrote *The Drum.*

As the mid eighties approached however, another change began to take effect in Children's literature in Nigeria. This change had to do with the changing concept of childhood that was taking effect in not just Nigeria, but Africa as a whole. The nature of education and the advancement in science and technology was a major factor in the evolution of childhood. The mass exodus of people from rural to urban cities in search of greener pastures left parents and grandparents little or no time for moonlight stories. Thus, children were provided children literary products to keep themselves entertained. At worst, these children were given access to video and computer games to keep them busy. At a point in time, writers of Children's literature were faced with a daunting task. To this end, the question became less of whether Children's literature was Nigerian enough and more about how Children's literature could be made to compete favourably with the several diversions and distractions. Hence, the issue of aesthetics arose and this has become significant to the study of Children's literary genre today.

In line with the above explication, this study has attempted an exploration of the features of Children's literature, in order to prove that Children's literature is much more than a sociological or psychological phenomenon. To this end, this study has tried to examine the relationship between text and illustration in the selected texts of Fatima Akilu. Namely : *Ngozi Comes to Town* (2009), *Timi's Dream Comes True* (2009), *The Yellow Mosquito Net* (2009), and *The Red Transistor Radio* (2009), in order to show how the communicative components of these features add to the beauty of Children's literature. This study also explores the language of Children's literature in Olofintuade's *Eno's Story* (2010) and Shoneyin's *Mayowa and the Masquerade* (2010), thus, bringing to the fore the peculiar traits and what makes this literary

genre a Children's literature. By using formalism as its theoretical frame work, the study focuses majorly on the text itself, that is, the formalist ideology of what makes a text literary. This study looks at the peculiar use of language in Children's literature; its use of tenses, humour and other literary techniques that makes Children's literature in Nigeria aesthetically appealing to the reader. Another feature that has been delved into is the use of animals in Children's literature. Using the texts of Yusuf, Oyekanmi, and Agama, namely: *Clever squirrel and the Great Wedding cont*est and *The Tiger and The Rat* and *The Tortoise and the Dog*, this study has examined animal images not as a genre but as a technique. It explores animal images in Children's literature as an aesthetic component in Children's literature. To this extent, the study tried to extend the study of Children's Literature beyond cultural and moral ideals.

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