



SPECIFIC POSSIBILITIES WRITING TECHNIQUES USED IN EPISTOLARY FORM AND THEIR EFFECTS ON BOTH THE CHARACTERS AND READERS

Manzila Nuriddinovna Habibova

BSMI, teacher of English language department

Tel: 97 852-55-05; e-mail: khabibovamanzils@gmail.com

<https://www.doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7906895>

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 30th April 2023

Accepted: 07th May 2023

Online: 08th May 2023

KEY WORDS

Letter writing, writing techniques, epistolary novels, epistolary fiction, epistolary form, characters and readers.

ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the accomplishments of epistolary fiction and what it offers writers. It analyzes a study of the history and evolution of the form to develop a base for ideas presented in the following sections. Moreover, it addresses the challenges posed by the epistolary form as well as the form's possibilities. The article investigates specific possibilities writing techniques used in epistolary form and their effects on both the characters and readers. The central argument of this article offers an assessment of the strengths of epistolary fiction, and a claim that shows how these strengths are evident in epistolary novels spanning the last three and a half centuries.

Letter writing is the only device for combining solitude with good company.

- Lord Byron

INTRODUCTION. The type of literature known as epistolary is not usually found in the typical student's catalog of studies. In a course examining various types of novels, in a section studying an example of epistolary fiction, the door opened, and the stores of accessible information were seemingly infinite. Thus, I set out on a literary mission to discover the strengths and weaknesses of the epistolary form. The points addressed in this article investigate and analyze epistolary literature in a variety of forms from multiple authors and eras. The central organizing principle of this study is an attempt to answer the questions, "Why write through letters?" and "Why do different authors use the epistolary method, and how do they use it to create different types of effects?" This article addresses these questions while examining the role and the functionality of letter-writing in literature. It also examines the role of the epistolary form in both the realms of the literary experience of the reader and the creative flexibility of the author and offers an appreciation of its contributions to the development of the modern novel.

Methodology. The following six epistolary works are the objects of this analysis: The Letters of a Portuguese Nun by Marianna Alcoforado (1669), Pamela by Samuel Richardson (1740), Dracula by Bram Stoker (1897), Address Unknown by Kathrine Kressmann Taylor (1938), The Screwtape Letters by C.S. Lewis (1942), and Ella Minnow Pea by Mark Dunn (2001). It contains a brief history and development of epistolary fiction and an overview of



the types of works which are considered epistolary. Additionally it is a study of the creative possibilities and advantages held within the epistolary form and the strengths of the form and it is a study of the limitations and disadvantages of the form and the hindrances and obstacles that must be addressed by its authors to create a functional work. In order to fully appreciate the epistolary form in literature, it is useful to become familiar with its history and evolution. To understand the present, examine the past. Obviously, the epistolary novel has its roots in actual letters, but the exact date on which a physical letter or collection of letters acquired literary status is unknown. Literary analysts recognize two different theories explaining the origin and development of the epistolary novel. The first maintains that the epistolary novel evolved as novels were increasing in popularity and were becoming filled with text other than dialogue and description, including letters and poetry. The second holds that the epistolary novel was created from collections of actual letters and poems ordered into a functioning plot.¹ Many researchers consider Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (published in 1740) the first epistolary novel, and although it could be the first novel intentionally composed in letter form for recreational and instructional reading, it was not the first compilation of letters read for amusement.

Results. The work known as *The Letters of a Portuguese Nun* was published nearly a century before *Pamela*, and was quite a literary sensation. Even before *The Letters of a Portuguese Nun*, a few other epistolary works were in existence, including *Letters to Babbet* (exact date of publication undetermined) and *Prison of Love* (*Carcel de Amor*), by Diego de San Pedro published in 1485. The precise specifications of the epistolary novel were not settled then, but these early works might well qualify. In them, the genre of letters transformed into stories was born. This phenomenon affected not only the social side of literature, but also the structural side. Literature underwent many changes throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and a few distinct published forms included letters; "for example: manuals offering model letters to a wide readership for use on a 'variety of occasions,' [and] popular entertainments in the form of fictional correspondence posing as found letters—a genre that was a direct precursor of the novel".² During the eighteenth century letter writing became an inexpensive and fairly efficient means of correspondence with the help of such developments as a regular postal system. When letter writing became easily accessible and affordable to the masses, the epistolary novel began to form. When Samuel Richardson wrote *Pamela* in 1740, he opened the door to the much larger canon of the genre of novels that is recognized as epistolary fiction today.

Analysis. Samuel Richardson was a trained printer, working for several publications, when he was approached to write "a little volume of letters, in a common style, on such subjects as might be of use to those country readers, who were unable to indite for themselves."³ While he was creating this guide to letter writing, Richardson conceived the idea for *Pamela*. His hopes for the novel were modest: I thought the story, if written in an easy and natural manner, suitably to the simplicity of it, might possibly introduce a new species of

¹ Singer, Godfrey Frank. *The Epistolary Novel: Its Origin, Development, Decline and Residuary Influence*. New York: Russell & Russell Inc., 1963.

² Earle Rebecca. *Epistolary Selves: letters and letter-writers, 1600-1945*.

³ Dobson, Austin. *Samuel Richardson*. Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2003.



writing, that might possibly turn young people into a course of reading different from the pomp and parade of romance-writing, and dismissing the improbable and marvellous, with which novels generally abound, might tend to promote the cause of religion and virtue.⁴ At the simple request for an instructional guide to letter writing, the epistolary novel re-entered the literary scene in a new and highly creative form. The popularity of Pamela was due largely to the fact that letters were still the main means of communication between people separated from each other, and to read someone else's letter, even though that person were fictional, was highly intriguing to Richardson's audience. Readers felt as though they were personally involved in the plot because the story seemed entirely realistic. The situation and characters were common enough, and the letters could have been found in the mailbox of the reader's next-door-neighbor. Following Richardson's novel, many already popular novelists began turning their efforts to the epistolary form. Many of these works are still recognized and studied today, not as the origins of the epistolary novel, but as standards of the form. One critic describes the popularity of the epistolary novel as "the belle of the ball, her dance card signed by the literary titans of the age: Richardson in England, Goethe in Germany, Rousseau, Diderot and Laclos in France".⁵ The form's success and regard were not limited to popular audiences but extended to elite authorial circles as well. With the end of the eighteenth century, however, the epistolary form gave way to other rising literary types. With the invention of the telegraph and the telephone, letters began to wane as the primary form of long distance communication, and with this technological advancement fell the number of epistolary works. The epistolary form was memorable enough, however, and has not been put to rest for good. Debbie McVitty explains that, "Although the fashion for epistolary novels died out at the end of the eighteenth century, modern novelists have picked up on the possibilities that epistolary fiction holds".⁶ These possibilities are the direct results of the flexibility that comes with the epistolary form. Newer examples of epistolary fiction often employ instant messaging conversation and series of emails that replace the traditional letter with the conveniences of modern technology. In recent times letters are no longer simply a tool for bilateral correspondence, but have become a means to communicate to wider audiences.

Discussion. Through letters one may compose political commentary, philosophy, advice; relay news and events; and with the creation of the epistolary novel letters can also narrate the plot of a story. In the past novels doubled as sources of entertainment and of information and were often read aloud to multiple recipients. During the eighteenth century, women were supposed to be seen not heard, and the corruption of their thoughts was equivalent to the corruption of their chastity. It would not have been appropriate for a woman to voice her opinion in public or even in a semi-private conversation. However, the epistolary novel created an open form where a woman's thoughts could be revealed to anyone who read them; her private information would be available to the general public. This idea, though scandalous for the time could be used for the destruction of harmful stereotypes and for the

⁴ Dobson, Austin. Samuel Richardson. Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2003.

⁵ Favret Mary A. Romantic Correspondence: Women, politics and the fiction of letters. Ed. Marilyn Butler. James Chandler. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

⁶ McVitty, Debbie. "Lives in Letters: epistolary fictions past and present." The English Review Feb 2007: Student Resource Center-Gold. Gale. University of Mississippi. 23 Sep 2008.



advancement of women's stations in a dominantly male world. Epistolary fiction, in a sense, gave a voice to the voiceless.⁷ This commentarial functionality combined with the timeless appeal to readers of the personal quality of letters has helped to create a genre which has been employed in any era, despite its relative fall from popularity at the end of eighteenth century. Although they may have different goals, the epistolary novels written in the last century are no less effective than their predecessors. During World War Two communication through letters became increasingly favored, but even this method was not without its flaws. In times of war, the great adversary of the letter is censorship, and though censorship is employed even in Pamela, it played a much greater role in the wartime epistles. The idea of combining a created form of censorship with the created letters led to the development of many new epistolary novels. The added difficulty of avoiding censorship was a challenge that many authors decided to have their character's face.

Conclusion. The epistolary novel found its chance for a return to the literary shelves, and it now regularly appears in one form or another in book clubs, best seller lists, and classrooms. Throughout the birth and evolution of the epistolary novel over the course of the last four hundred years, many changes were made in its form and content, but the core idea of epistolary fiction has remained constant. A few particular questions then arise: what is considered specific to the epistolary form, what prompts an author to choose this form, and what makes the epistolary form timeless? The answers to these questions lie in an exploration of the physical details of the epistolary form as well as the form's effects on the experience of the reader. The epistolary form of the novel is different from the usual narrative novel because of its physical structure, but the form also relies on this difference for its strength. The next section of this chapter is a study of the physical form of epistolary fiction and the different techniques authors employ using letters to narrate a story.

References:

1. Dobson, Austin. Samuel Richardson. Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2003.
2. Earle Rebecca. Epistolary Selves: letters and letter-writers, 1600-1945.
3. Singer, Godfrey Frank. The Epistolary Novel: Its Origin, Development, Decline and Residuary Influence. New York: Russell & Russell Inc., 1963.
4. McVitty, Debbie. "Lives in Letters: epistolary fictions past and present." The English Review Feb 2007: Student Resource Center-Gold. Gale. University of Mississippi. 23 Sep 2008.
5. Favret Mary A. Romantic Correspondence: Women, politics and the fiction of letters. Ed. Marilyn Butler. James Chandler. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
6. Habibova, M. N. (2021). Jorjina Houellning "Queen of the desert" biografik asarida gertruda Bell timsoli tasviri. Academic research in educational sciences, 2(2), 770-778.
7. Habibova, M. N. (2021). The theme feminism in the epistolary novels in modern times. ISJ Theoretical & Applied Science, 11(103), 1101-1105.

⁷ McVitty, Debbie. "Lives in Letters: epistolary fictions past and present." The English Review Feb 2007: Student Resource Center-Gold. Gale. University of Mississippi. 23 Sep 2008.



9. Habibova, M. N. (2022). THE HISTORY OF THE RUSSIAN EPISTOLARY NOVEL IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY. EURASIAN JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, PHILOSOPHY AND CULTURE, 2 (3), 135–139.
10. Habibova, M. N. (2022). EVALUATIVE OBSERVATION ON DH LAWRENCE'S EPISTOLARY ACHIEVEMENT. EURASIAN JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH, 2 (4), 489–494.
11. Habibova, M. (2022). THEORIES OF INTERTEXTUALITY AND THE BASIC FRAMEWORK OF KRISTEVA'S FORMULATION OF HER THEORY OF INTERTEXTUALITY. Eurasian Journal of Social Sciences, Philosophy and Culture, 2(5), 301-307.
12. Habibova, M. N. (2022). A BIOGRAPHY IS A SPECIALIZED FORM OF HISTORY AND BASIC TYPES OF BIOGRAPHIES. Oriental renaissance: Innovative, educational, natural and social sciences, 2(5), 495-503.
13. Habibova, M. N. (2022). Epistolary Novel as a Scientific Problem. American Journal of Social and Humanitarian Research, 3(10), 211–214. Retrieved from <https://www.grnjournals.us/index.php/ajshr/article/view/1575>
14. Habibova, M. N. (2022). The Epistolary Form and Art in Modernist Literature. American Journal of Social and Humanitarian Research, 3(10), 206–210. Retrieved from <https://www.grnjournals.us/index.php/ajshr/article/view/1574>
15. Habibova, M. . (2022). WRITING THE NOVEL OF LETTERS AND THE ANALYSIS OF LETTER FICTION AND DIARY FICTION. International Bulletin of Applied Science and Technology, 2(11), 260–264. Retrieved from <https://researchcitations.com/index.php/ibast/article/view/317>
16. Habibova, M. (2022). EPISTOLARY NARRATOLOGY AND CITATIONS FROM AN EPISTOLARY SOURCE: SAMUEL RICHARDSON'S PAMELA AND CLARISSA AND FRANCES BURNEY'S EVELINA. Eurasian Journal of Academic Research, 2(12), 1131-1135.
17. Manzila Nuriddinovna Khabibova. (2022). JOYCE'S DEVELOPMENT AS AN AUTHOR AND HIS EXPERIMENTS WITH THE EPISTOLARY FORM. American Journal Of Philological Sciences, 2(11), 73–81. <https://doi.org/10.37547/ajps/Volume02Issue11-10>
18. Manzila Nuriddinovna Habibova. (2022). LETTER WRITING AS ALLEGORY FOR THE WOMAN WRITER. American Journal Of Philological Sciences, 2(11), 88–92. <https://doi.org/10.37547/ajps/Volume02Issue11-12>
19. Хабибова, М. Н. (2022). ЭПИСТОЛЯРНЫЙ РОМАН КАК НАУЧНАЯ ПРОБЛЕМА. Results of National Scientific Research International Journal, 1(9), 394–402. Retrieved from <https://academicsresearch.com/index.php/rnsr/article/view/1379>
20. Habibova, M. N. . (2023). Origins of the Epistolary Novel and the Principal Epistolary Works. INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE LEARNING AND APPLIED LINGUISTICS, 2(2), 70–74. Retrieved from <https://inter-publishing.com/index.php/IJLLAL/article/view/1159>
21. Khabibova, M. N. . (2023). The Historical Influence of the Epistolary Novel. INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE LEARNING AND APPLIED LINGUISTICS, 2(2), 75–79. Retrieved from <https://inter-publishing.com/index.php/IJLLAL/article/view/1161>
22. Давлатова М.Х. Резултатив мазмундаги воқеа - ҳодисалар таркибланишининг лисоний ва когнитив хусусиятлари.// Хоразм маъмун академияси ахборотномаси. № 11. – Хоразм, 2021. – Б. 361-363.



23. Davlatova M.H. Typology of expressive emotional lexical units (in English and Uzbek languages).// Ўзбекистонда илмий-амалий тадқиқотлар мавзусидаги конференция материаллари. №16.- Тошкент, 2020, – Б. 220.
24. Davlatova M.H. Resultative and causative meanings in English and Uzbek languages.// Ta'lim va rivojlanish tahlili onlayn ilmiy jurnali. – Surxandaryo, 2022. – P. 297-302.
25. Davlatova M.H. Typology of expressive emotional and linguistic features.// International journal of literature and languages, № 11. 2022. – P. 65-69.
26. Tursunbaevna, N. Z. . (2022). Types of Interactive Methods of Teaching Foreign Languages in Higher Education Institutions. American Journal of Social and Humanitarian Research, 3(10), 151-155. Retrieved from <https://www.grnjournals.us/index.php/ajshr/article/view/1560>
27. Tursunboevna, N. Z. (2022). Various types of assessment in language teaching and learning. Eurasian journal of social sciences, philosophy and culture, 2(3), 140-145.
28. Tursunboevna, N. Z., & Asomiddinovich, A. S. (2022). FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT IN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING.
29. Nematova, Z. T. (2019). THE USAGE OF SUGGESTOPEDIA FOR TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND INCREASE SPEECH ACTIVITY. Новый день в медицине, (3), 21-24.
30. Obidovna, D. Z. (2022). GENDER SPEECH BEHAVIOR IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SOCIO-LINGUISTIC FACTOR. Web of Scientist: International Scientific Research Journal, 3(6), 190-198.
31. Jalilova Z. O. Concerning the issue of terms, having a place with various morphological classes (in view of the example of the terminological arrangement of social action) //Новый день в медицине. – 2020. – №. 4. – С. 501-503.