

**THE REPRESENTATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN SELECTED
AFRICAN FICTION**

**A PROJECT WORK SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
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BY

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TITLE PAGE

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APPROVAL PAGE

I, Prof. D. U. Opata of the Department of English and Literary Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, do approve this research work as having fulfilled the requirements for the award of Master of Arts in English and Literary Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project is an independent study carried out by OLIVER, KINGSLEY Ugochukwu with the registration number, PG/MA/11/58565, of the Department of English and Literary Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and that this work has not been presented in part or full for the award of any diploma or degree in this or any other university.

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DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to scholars with disabilities who swim against the tide of institutionalised disability and the attendant prejudice; those who sincerely allow themselves to go through the rigours required of research. Every research sincerely carried out is indeed a rewarding experience. Though it may seem an uphill task, the outcome is good enough reward.

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ABSTRACT

The concept of disability as an entity worthy of study in African literature is hardly ever considered, yet it an engaging issue. Disability means different things to different people at different times and that is what the research work sought.

The four works under study: Aminata Sow Fall's *The Beggars' Strike*, Elechi Amadi's *The Concubine*, Cyprian Ekwensi's *The Drummerboy*, and Gabriel Okara's *The Voice* looked at the subject of disability and depicted persons with disabilities in these three dimensions. They achieved this through the use of some key literary devices that served as a medium to efficiently carry out the assignment of depicting persons with disabilities and their experiences.

The research work looked at the following as it discussed the subject of disability in these four texts: how disability is viewed in the selected works; the imagery that is recurrent in these works; how disability is connected to traditional, moral and ethical norms and what disability means for the subject.

This was achieved by doing a Marxist analytical study of some characters with disabilities in the texts in order to show the relationship between the disabled characters and society. This work discovered three ways disability has been portrayed in literature ó positive portrayal, negative portrayal and ambivalent portrayal.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

õMmebi aha ogaranya ka ogbu yaö ó An adage

õThe ruining of a wealthy man's name is worse than murdering himö ó My translation.

This is a popular saying among the Igbo that expresses the great importance attached to labelling, whether positive or negative. This value however is not confined to the Igbos and by extension Africa but it is a universal principle. In proper translation, it simply denotes that life is not worth living without a good name i.e. reputation.

I would like at this point to explain the expression õwealthy manö as mentioned above. It does not necessarily refer to one who has excess money and other material things of life but rather human dignity. This is evident in this anecdote, õNwanza bu eze n'akwu yaö, meaning, a sunbird is king in his own nest. This of course, stresses the fact that everyone is deserving of honour and fairness regardless of physical, mental or financial status.

It is not surprising therefore, that the concept of disability is not new in African literature, both the written and the oral contain lots of characters with varying degrees of disabilities. But surprisingly, these characters most of the time are not the actual focal point rather they are minor characters even when seemingly the protagonists. Consequently, not much has critically been done in this regard. So this research will be focusing on this area with particular interest on the representation of persons with disability in African fiction using selected texts. In this research, there is a critical look at the different representations of people with disabilities and analyses of

how the different attitudes of the society are created in the selected novels. The work will give attention to issues like:

- What is regarded as disability in the selected works.
- The imagery that is recurrent in these works.
- How these attitudes have been enshrined in the traditional, moral and ethical norms.
- What disability means for the subject.

The work would also consider the discourses, images, proverbs, metaphors and fantasies through which the selected texts ascribe meanings to experiences of characters with disability. These would be achieved by following a distinctive theoretical perspective on literary disability studies, which is Marxist literary criticism.

It is to be noted that disability is a social phenomenon; that is why words like handicap, deformity, invalidity, etc are interchangeably used in many contexts. This is the reason for the use of the Marxist literary analytical method for the analysis of the texts. The research examines the representation of persons with disabilities in four selected African fiction: namely, Aminata Sow Fall's *The Beggars' Strike*, Elechi Amadi's *The Concubine*, Cyprian Ekwensi's *The Drummer Boy*, and Gabriel Okara's *The Voice*.

1.2 Definition of Disability

Disability over the years has been viewed and defined by different peoples and cultures in various ways and this is strictly tied to value system. Generally speaking, it can be defined as a condition whether social, religious, material/financial, physical, mental or sensory that limits one's expected performance.

Disability has been given several connotations. According to Ozorji (2005), disability simply refers to loss of ability or loss of functions. Literarily, disability is made up of two words: *dis* (lack/absence of) and *ability*. Put in another way, disability means lack of ability. It also means functional limitations or activity restriction or lack of (resulting from impairment) ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being. Impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations. Thus disability is a complex phenomenon, reflecting an interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which he or she lives.

It is important to note that disability may be physical, cognitive, mental, sensory, emotional, developmental or some combination of these. A disability may be present from birth, or occur during a person's lifetime.

Disability apart from the definitions above is further defined from various angles some of which will be highlighted here. The definition reflects the stereotypes and tags on persons with various forms of disabilities over the years, re-enforced through our oral tradition and later by the written texts.

Among the Rwandans and Kenyans, the word disability literally denotes worthlessness which is captured in the expression, *ōichimugaö* meaning broken pot. Similar to this is what we find in the following words derived from three different dialects of the Igbo language expressing the same thing. *ōNdi ahu ruruö* *ōNdi nkwaruö* *ōNdi olusiö*. The transliteration of these expressions anchor on distortion, deformity, abnormality, disfigurement. In the Yoruba language, disability is called

õa birunõ transliterated (borne smelling) also the hausa calls it õnakasasuõ meaning (incomplete or worthless people)

Medically, it is defined in the *Free Online Dictionary* as inability to function normally, physically or mentally; incapacity. It states that, it is anything that causes disability. And as defined by the American Federal government: õinability to engage in any substantial gainful activity by reason of any medically determinable physical or mental impairment which can be expected to last or has lasted for a continuous period of not less than 12 months.ö Developmental disability, it continues: is a substantial handicap of indefinite duration, with onset before the age of 18 years, such as mental retardation, autism, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, or other neuropathy.

The Russian Encyclopedia of 1979 definition of disability tilts in the same direction. It asserts that, õDisability (Russian, ñinvalidnostø), the complete or partial loss of the ability to work either permanently or for a prolonged period as a result of illness or injury. Disability also refers to those persons not yet of pension age with prolonged loss of work ability because of diseases, traumas, or defects of development.ö

These definitions and the negative attitude attached to them are not limited to western world alone; it is also common in Africa. A few adjectives applied in the description of persons with disability elucidate these facts. Among the Igbo and the Hausa, for example, blindness does not just mean sightlessness; it both denotes and connotes foolishness and invalidity. These adjectives do not stop at description but also become nomenclatures. An unpopular proverb I heard from an adult asserts that õa blind woman does not know when sheø gone into except the tip of the penis is robbed on her eyes.ö This is but one out of the many derogatory remarks and clichés on persons with disability.

It will be observed that in the general description of persons with disability a part often becomes the whole, for example, the lame, the blind, the deaf, etc. Thus, the medical and social module of describing disability forms the standard and parochial view. "Socially speaking, a greater percentage of people consider disability "a curse" and in some extreme situations contagious.

1.3 History of Disability

Disability is a complex and knotty phenomenon to define, how much more to trace historically. However, some attempts have been made by philosophers in this regard.

Philosophers have always lived among people who could not see, walk, or hear; who had limited mobility, comprehension or longevity, or chronic illnesses of various sorts. And yet philosophical interest in these conditions was piecemeal and occasional until the past hundred or so years. Some of these conditions were cited in litanies of life's hardships or evils; some were the vehicle for inquiries into the relationship between human faculties and human knowledge [see SEP entry on "Molyneux's Problem"]. But the treatment of disability as a subject of philosophical interest is relatively new.

The lack of attention to "disability" or "impairment" in general may have a simple explanation: there were no such concepts to attend to until 19th century scientific thinking put variations in human function and form into categories of abnormality and deviance. Once such categories were established, it became possible to talk, and generalize, about "the disabled," and philosophers have done so for various purposes. The resurgent political philosophy of the second half of the last century, preoccupied with eliminating or reducing unearned disadvantages, tended to treat disability as a primary source of those disadvantages, to be addressed with medical

correction or government compensation. Somewhat later, social philosophers began to see disability as a source both of discrimination and oppression, and of group identity, akin to race or sex in these respects.

In some ways, disability looks much like sex or race as a philosophical topic. It concerns the classification of people on the basis of observed or inferred characteristics. It raises difficult threshold questions about the extent to which the classification is based on biology or is socially constructed. And yet the strong philosophical interest in some of the characteristics on which the disability classification is based appears to accord them a significance that many would deny to the distinguishing characteristics of sex or race.

Consider, for example, the question of how well-being is affected by the characteristics on which the disability classification is based. There is little interest now in the question of whether, in a world without discrimination, blacks or women would do better or worse on various metrics of well-being than whites or men. In contrast, there is considerable interest in this question when the subject is people with disabilities. Some philosophers and disability scholars claim that the answer is no different than in the case of race or sex: to the extent that disability reduces well-being, it is because of the stigma and discrimination it evokes. In contrast, other philosophers claim that disability is fundamentally different from race and gender in that it necessarily reduces well-being even in a utopian world of non-discrimination, people with blindness, deafness or paraplegia would be worse off than their able-bodied counterparts. This is but one example of the many ways that disability generates philosophical debate about some of our most familiar ethical, political, and epistemological concepts.

The definition of disability is highly contentious for several reasons. First, it is only in the past century that the term "disability" has been used to refer to a distinct class of people. Historically, "disability" has been used either as a synonym for "inability" or as a reference to legally imposed limitations on rights and powers. Indeed, as late as 2006, the *Oxford English Dictionary* recognized only these two senses of the term (Boorse, 2010). As a result, it is hard to settle questions about the meaning of "disability" by appeal to intuitions, since intuitions may be confused by the interplay between older, ordinary-language definitions and newer, specialized ones.

Second, many different characteristics are considered disabilities. Paraplegia, deafness, blindness, diabetes, autism, epilepsy, depression, and HIV have all been classified as "disabilities." The term covers such diverse conditions as the congenital absence or adventitious loss of a limb or a sensory function; progressive neurological conditions like multiple sclerosis; chronic diseases like arteriosclerosis; the inability or limited ability to perform such cognitive functions as remembering faces or calculating sums; and psychiatric disorders like schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. There seems to be little about the functional or experiential states of people with these various conditions to justify a common concept; indeed, there is at least as much variation among "disabled" people with respect to their experiences and bodily states as there is among people who lack disabilities.

At the same time, defining "disability" solely in terms of social responses like stigmatization and exclusion does not distinguish disability from race or sex (Bickenbach, 1993) — a result that some disability scholars might welcome, but that begs, or obscures, an important question. The

challenge of distinguishing “disability” from other concepts, without taking a simplistic or reductive view of it, has been taken up by various specialized definitions.

Two common features stand out in most official definitions of disability, such as those in the *World Health Organization*, the U.N. Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for People with Disabilities, the Disability Discrimination Act (U.K.), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (U.S.) : (i) a physical or mental characteristic labeled or perceived as an impairment or dysfunction (in the remainder of this entry, we will refer to such characteristics as “impairments,” without assuming the objectivity or validity of that label) and (ii) some personal or social limitation associated with that impairment. The classification of a physical or mental variation as an impairment may be statistical, based on the average in some reference groups; biological, based on a theory of human functioning; or normative, based on a view of human flourishing. However classified, impairments are generally seen as *traits* of the individual that he or she cannot readily alter. Just what makes a condition a trait or attribute of an individual is obscure and debatable, but there seems to be agreement on clear cases (Kahane and Savulescu, 2009). Thus, poverty is not seen as impairment, however disabling it may be seen as impairment, nor is tasteless clothing, even if it is a manifestation of impaired fashion-sense rather than scarce income. On the other hand, diseases are generally classified as impairments, even though they are rarely permanent or static conditions. Diseases that are not long-lasting, however, such as the flu and the measles, do not count as impairments.

The notion of a limitation is broad and elastic, encompassing restrictions on such “basic” actions as lifting one's arm (Nordenfelt, compare Amundson: actions “at the level of the person”); on

more complex physical activities such as dressing and toileting; and on social activities like working, learning or voting (see Wasserman, 2001).

The characterization of both features is disputed. Several scholars have challenged the prevailing view of impairment as objective and biologically grounded (Shakespeare, Davis, Tremain, Amundson). There is also disagreement about the conceptual and practical need for two categories of limitations, one involving personal activity, the other social or political participation—disability and handicap, respectively (Wright, 1983; Edwards, 1997; Nordenfelt, 1997; Altman, 2001). But the most controversial issue in defining disability is the relationship between the two. At one extreme are definitions that imply, or are read to imply, that biological impairments are the sole causes of limitation. The definitions in the World Health Organization's 1980 International Classification of Impairment, Disability, and Handicap, and the Disability Discrimination Act (UK) have been interpreted this way. At the other extreme are definitions that attribute the limitations faced by disabled people solely to contemporary social organization, such as the definition given by the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS, 1976). Such definitions appear to treat impairments merely as evocative causes—as conditions that are subject to exclusion and oppression. They have been criticized for ignoring disadvantages that cannot be attributed to social attitudes and practices (Terzi, 2009, 2004; Shakespeare, 2006). But in characterizing disability in terms of exclusion, these definitions need not deny that impairments have undesirable aspects, such as pain or discomfort—merely that those aspects are not within the scope, or part of the meaning, of disability.

In-between are definitions, which assert that individual impairment and the social environment are *jointly* sufficient causes of limitation. Perhaps the best-known example is the WHO's

International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF, 2001), which emphasizes that disability is a "dynamic interaction between health conditions and environmental and personal factors." Such interactive definitions predominate in current law and commentary on disability; even the International Classification, of Impairments, Disabilities, and Health (ICIDH) and Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) can be interpreted as compatible with this approach. The Americans with Disabilities Act (*ADA*) is generally seen as adopting an interactive approach to disability, although it contains an amalgam of definitional features.

Disability policy scholars describe four different historical and social models of disability:

- a moral model of disability which regards disability as the result of sin;
- a medical model of disability which regards disability as a defect or sickness which must be cured through medical intervention;
- a rehabilitation model, an offshoot of the medical model, which regards the disability as a deficiency that must be fixed by a rehabilitation professional or other helping professional; and
- the disability model, under which "the problem is defined as a dominating attitude by professionals and others, inadequate support services when compared with society generally, as well as attitudinal, architectural, sensory, cognitive, economic barriers, and the strong tendency for people to generalize about all persons with disabilities overlooking the large variations within the disability community."

The moral model is historically the oldest and is less prevalent today in the Western World but still common in Africa. However, there are many cultures that associate disability with sin and shame, and disability is often associated with feelings of guilt, even if such feelings are not

overtly based in religious doctrine. For the individual with a disability, this model is particularly burdensome. This model has been associated with shame on the entire family with a member with a disability. Families have hidden away the disabled family members, keeping them out of school and excluded from any chance at having a meaningful role in society. Even in less extreme circumstances, this model has resulted in general social ostracism and self-hatred. The moral and disability models are my working standpoint.

The medical model came about as "modern" medicine began to develop in the 19th Century, along with the enhanced role of the physician in society. Since many disabilities have medical origins, people with disabilities were expected to benefit from coming under the direction of the medical profession. Under this model, the problems that are associated with disability are deemed to reside within the individual. In other words, if the individual is "cured" then these problems will not exist. Society has no underlying responsibility to make a "place" for persons with disabilities, since they are treated as outsiders.

The individual with a disability is on the sick roll under the medical model. When people are sick, they are excused from the normal obligations of society: going to school, getting a job, taking on family responsibilities, etc. They are also expected to come under the authority of the medical profession in order to get better. Thus, until recently, most disability policy issues have been regarded as health issues, and physicians have been regarded as the primary authorities in this policy area.

One can see the influence of the medical model in disability public policy today, most notably in the Social Security system, in which disability is defined as the inability to work. This is consistent with the role of the person with a disability as sick. It is also the source of enormous

problems for persons with disabilities who want to work but who would risk losing all related public benefits, such as health care coverage or access to Personal Assistance Services (for in-home chores and personal functioning), since a person loses one's disability status by going to work.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

Experience has shown that the concept of disability in African literary works has not received genuine or the necessary critical attention that it deserves. This research intends to fill a gap in the study of African literature and disabilities studies, which is, that the four texts under study have not been studied together before, as a study of representation of persons with disability. The work has two goals; the first is to examine the portrayal of persons with disability in the already listed works and to compare how the authors were able to present them either in a positive, negative and ambivalent tones. The second is to examine how the characters are represented in the works under study and assess and evaluate the degree of the representations as to which of the texts is the most positive, negative or ambivalent. The problem of disability in the society has been most times attributed to punishment for evil deeds and the resultant factor of alienation has often times been accredited to the impaired as self-imposed.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study is delimited to selected works from African literature. The works include: Gabriel Okara's *The Voice*, Elechi Amadi's *The Concubine*, Aminata Sow Fall's *The Beggar's Strike* and Cyprian Ekwensi's *Drummer Boy*. Each of these selected works has qualitative issues of disability for the purpose of this work.

1.6 Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to carry out the analyses of selected works in African literature on disability issues produced over the years, to explore texts that are entrenched with issues of societal approach to persons with disability in the aspects of mobility, sight, perception, reasoning and functionality in social life, either by visual impairment, hearing impairment etc. Characters as represented will be considered in this study to establish the misconception of self alienation or societal imposed alienation.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study shall be of immense benefit to the social relationship between town and city dwellers, including planners and administrators and media agencies who steadily promote human interaction amongst citizens in a civilized society by unearthing the societal perception of disability as it is from the past to this time and promote a possible solution to the wrong approaches and perception.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Representation of Disability in Literature

To the great majority of writers, disability is synonymous with judgment [retribution], depravity, ignorance, brokenness or weakness. It must be observed that literature cannot be separated from society. One may even argue that it is one of the media that shape value systems and mode of perception.

The representation of disability has always been bleak from time immemorial. As such, many writers adopt the symbolic use of disability to convey themes of retribution, oppression, and rejection. In one Igbo ballad about the hen and a native doctor, a man took ill and came for treatment. After examination, it was found that an egg was needed for the medication to be complete. The *Dibia* sent one of his sons to Lady hen in demand of an egg. But the hen bluntly refused. He sent his other sons with the hope that she may bulge but she would not. Finally he went to take it by force and the hen in defence pecked out his eyes and he became blind. In his anguish and frustration he cracked big palm kernels and ate them noisily. Millipede came by and asked what he ate. "My eyes of course." On hearing this, the millipede plucked out his and ate and therefore remains blind till date.

From the short story it is evident that the author seeks to establish two major causes of blindness as retribution for abuse of power and position in the case of the *Dibia* and foolish emulation of others and the attendant want of direction on the side of the millipede. The answer of the *Dibia* further brings out the silent mischievous attribute accorded to the disabled in literature.

This is a constant metaphoric image in different genres of literature. The common image is one of helplessness, hopelessness, poverty, curse, etc. As a matter of fact, it spells everything negative. This is largely due to cultural and religious affiliation which, to great extent, influences writers of different ages and backgrounds and in this case Africa.

Among the Greeks, the sick were considered inferior according to Barker, and in Plato's Republic, Plato recommended that the deformed offspring of both the superior and inferior be put away in some "mysterious unknown places" (Goldberg & Lippman). On the other hand, societal perceptions and treatment of persons with disabilities are neither homogeneous nor static. Greek and Roman perceptions of disability and illness are reflected in the literature.

2.2 Disability in the Ancient World: Homer to Sophocles (Demodocus to Oedipus)

Unfortunately most disabled people met with a speedy death in both Ancient Greece and Rome, however in the myths of these other lands, there lie some scattered characters who are disabled; let's meet them.

Demodocus: A relatively minor character in Homer's *Odyssey* Demodocus appears in Book VIII of the epic poem as a blind bard (some believe this is an autobiographical reference on Homer's part, though this is a contestable claim). Homer does not go into detail about Demodocus' (lack of) eyesight or how he copes with it, though it seems that he is respected enough as the Phoenicians who he is acting as bard for seem to admire his story-telling skills. His importance to the poem lies in the fact that he serves as a plot device for the protagonist Odysseus to begin his famous 3 book (books IX-XII) flashback of his decades long wondering after the Trojan War

Demodocus motivates Odysseus's flashback by singing stories of the Trojan War (book VIII) while Odysseus is a guest at the Phoenician court after arriving in book VI after he was stranded on the island of the Goddess Calypso who he probably had an affair with (book V).

Polyphemos: A more central character in the *Odyssey* or at least one that has a slightly more important impact on Odysseus although like Demodocus he only appears in one book, is the Cyclops Polyphemos. After killing and raping those dastardly Trojans, Odysseus and his men set sail for their home Kingdom of Ithaca; however on their way they are blown off-course by the wind onto the island of Polyphemos the one-eyed Cyclops. Not seeing the creature straight away, Odysseus and his men decide to steal and plunder the food and materials they find in the cave of the Cyclops.

Eventually Polyphemos returns to his cave, discovers Odysseus and his men and begins to murder and eat them, killing a few, and promising to eat the Ithacan King last; however the name Odysseus is associated with cunning for a reason, and our hero waiting till the Cyclops is asleep punctures the creature's eye, and the next morning sneaks out of the cave (Polyphemos put a bolder in front of the exit once he realized he had visitors) by hiding in the wool of a Polyphemos's favourite ram.

Now that the giant is completely blind and in a manic fury and not being able to find his victim, he stumbles to the edge of the sea, where Odysseus has made it back to the boat, with the rest of his lads. Naturally being the cool, intellectual hero that he is Odysseus sneaks away on the boat and leaves Polyphemos alone. Odysseus won't get home for 10 years.

The sea God was already angry at the Ithacan King, because the latter refused to offer a sacrifice to him after the Trojan War ó Poseidon took the side of the Greeks in the war as seen in Homer's earlier and far superior epic poem *The Iliad*. So what can we say about Homer's ó who according to legend was blind himself. Well, we can say that Demodocus is portrayed rather neutrally, his blindness is not concentrated on, he is a plot device to start Odysseus off on his flashback of his 10 year wanderings, brought on by the Cyclops's curse.

His portrayal of Polyphemos is more complex, he is savage, enjoys eating people and seems to have a rather narrow intellect, but at the same time he knows of the Greek Gods, can speak Greek, and is aware of the Greek social practice of ðhospitalityö.

Teiresias: He is a blind prophet and he is actually a very strong character in the Greco-Roman myths. Moreover, he is headstrong and proud. Teiresias's story is that he was wondering in a meadow one day when he came upon two serpents. In order to get past them he assaulted them with a stick he was carrying. As a punishment he was turned into a woman. Did Teiresias decide to try and reverse this curse?

Well, yes. Eventually, after 7 years as the opposite sex, he came upon the snakes again and hit them again, thus turning back into his birth gender. Now it happened at this time that Jove and his wife Juno were having an argument about which gender was harder to be: male or female. Jove argued that men had to do all the work while having sex and Juno argued the opposite. To settle the dispute they summoned Teiresias and asked him which sex thought worked the hardest during intercourse, since he had spent time as a woman and thus knew both sexes.

Teiresias replied that he felt men had to work the hardest during sex and as a punishment the furious Juno cursed him by making him blind; however to compensate for this Jove gave him the gift of prophecy. Far from being bothered by his blindness Teiresias, sets about winning himself great fame over the Greco-Roman world ó his name is actually the same in the Greek myths that preceded the Roman ones.

Outside of Ovid's work, the blind seer appeared in Homer's *Odyssey* briefly in Book XI as a ghost in the underworld. He also features in Euripides' *Phoenician Women* and *The Bacchae* along with Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes*. In Sophocles' tragedies he seems to cope well with his lack of sight, and is far more concerned with the fact that his prophecies are going to be frowned upon, though he knows them to be true. He does not want to tell Oedipus that he (Oedipus) has slept with his mother, and killed his father, thus is doomed by fortune from birth, to be the ruin of Thebes.

In *Antigone* he bluntly tells the King of Thebes ó Creon that his refusal to allow Oedipus's daughter (the title character) to bury the corpse of one of her brothers ó who was killed fighting his other brother for control of Thebes - will bring ruin upon Creon, Antigone and Thebes itself, which ultimately turns out to be true.

Oedipus: Oedipus himself, after coming to the dreadful realization that he ultimately made true the prophecy he strove to avoid ó of committing patricide and sleeping with his mother, gouges out both of his eyes and goes into voluntary exile out of shame.

Oedipus was closely connected to the disabled even before he blinded himself, for the name Oedipus can translate as 'swollen foot'. While his wife Jocasta was pregnant with child, King

Laius of Thebes (Oedipus's father) received a prophecy from Apollo informing him that the child his wife would give birth to, would eventually kill him and then sleep with his wife Jocasta and marry her. Wishing to circumvent this, Laius brought the child (Oedipus) to a mountain and tied his feet together, and left him there to starve to death. However, unfortunately for all involved Oedipus did not die on the mountain as the shepherd who Laius instructed to expose the child, took pity on him and instead brought him to live in the city state of Corinth where he was adopted into the royal family. Here he grew up happily believing he was born a Prince of Corinth, until one day he received a prophecy from the Oracle at Delphi which was the exact prophecy Laius received before Oedipus's birth.

Believing he was fated to kill the King of Corinth and sleep with and marry the Queen who he believed to be his true parents, Oedipus fled Corinth to try and prevent this from happening, until he came to a place where three ways meet. Here he met Laius (who he did not recognize) and his entire party of men, who were out in a carriage. Laius demands that Oedipus get out of the way and goes to assault him. Provoked into anger the Prince kills Laius and then the rest of his party before proceeding to Thebes which is being terrorized by a giant Sphinx. After outwitting the Sphinx, Oedipus is hailed as a hero. When news comes back to Thebes that Laius has been slain by a mysterious stranger, the citizens of Thebes need a new King, so they appoint Oedipus who agrees to marry Laius's wife Jocasta (his mother). Eventually, he discovers the awful truth of what happened, partly because the shepherd who took pity on him unconventionally shows up again, partly thanks to Teiresias's blunt honesty and partly because the plot needs him to.

After he blinds himself he goes into exile with the help of his daughter Antigone. They arrive in Athens, with Oedipus wholly dependent on Antigone to help him find his way about. In Athens,

they meet with the founder of the city and current King Theseus who promises to keep secret the location of Oedipus's tomb since Oedipus reportedly received another prophecy informing him, he would die in Athens.

So in conclusion: this first part has examined the classical (mainly Greek) attitude towards the disabled in fiction (myth). Demodocus is portrayed as an indifferent plot device, Polyphemos is an ignorant savage, though he deserves some sympathy for the way the amoral Odysseus tricks him and taunts him after blinding him, Teiresias is headstrong, and is more worried about his prophecy than his blindness though he also has to be led about by a boy who leads him by the hand where-ever he goes, as Creon says in *Antigone* it is the fate of the blind to be led by others.

Oedipus meanwhile disables himself as a punishment for his incest/patricide although this is wildly excessive since as he himself points out in *Oedipus in Colonus* he was blameless for his actions.

From all of this we can deduce that the overall view of the disabled (as told through myth) is that disability was a punishment brought on by God (e.g. what happened to Teiresias) or something a man like Oedipus should inflict upon himself for his crimes or even when his crimes are brought about by Apollo on a whim through a prophecy that was set in motion before his birth, which he (Oedipus) tried to prevent from coming true.

References to eyesight and vision, both literal and metaphorical, are very frequent in all three of the Theban plays. Quite often, the image of clear vision is used as a metaphor for knowledge and insight. In fact, this metaphor is so much a part of the Greek way of thinking that it is almost not

a metaphor at all, just as in modern English: to say "I see the truth" or "I see the way things are" is a perfectly ordinary use of language.

However, the references to eyesight and insight in Sophocles' plays form a meaningful pattern in combination with the references to literal and metaphorical blindness. Oedipus is famed for his clear-sightedness and quick comprehension, but he discovers that he has been blind to the truth for many years, and then he blinds himself so as not to have to look on his own children/siblings.

Creon is prone to a similar blindness to the truth in *Antigone*. Though blind, the aging Oedipus finally acquires a limited prophetic vision. Teiresias is blind, yet he sees farther than others. Overall, Sophocles demonstrates in these plays ignorance is blindness and blindness is a curse. In the following quotes: "1546 you would be better dead than blind and living ... 1670 a brother's hands which turned your father's eyes,

those bright eyes you knew once, to what you see,

a father seeing nothing, knowing nothing,

begetting you from his own source of life.

I weep for you—I cannot see your faces"

And the entire conversation between Oedipus and Teiresias clearly reveals that to Greek writers of that era it is a punishment from the gods.

2.3 Representation of Disability in African Literature

The same metaphoric or allegorical representation is present in African fiction. J.M. Coetzee's Fiction and the Empowerment of the Disabled is a good example of this. J.M. Coetzee's works assume the dignity and central position of the disabled in the universe. In *The Heart of the Country*, *Waiting for the Barbarian*, *Life and Times of K and Foe*, are postmodern allegories, closely tied to the South African context, a milieu that was handicapped and disabled during the dismantled apartheid.

The texts also transform the urgent societal concerns into more universal troubles, making disability in Coetzee a signifier of the decadence and disillusionment in Africa, a continent that is literally disabled. The trope of disability is used as a metaphor to signify black people's struggle to discover their true identity. Each of the characters in the four texts attempts to re-inscribe the figure of the other black man commonly employed to validate the Afrikaner myth. Through his disabled characters, Coetzee seemingly suggests that the black peoples can break out of the racial and social hierarchies on which traditional Afrikaner identity is based.

On a larger political and social, Coetzee insinuates that for political stability and economic independence to be a reality in Africa, the continent's disabled must be involved. To Coetzee, the empowerment of the disabled in Africa is an index of the empowerment of the continent. The various effects of the colonial project on colonized individuals have been classified and evaluated by many scholars with perhaps the most notable being Frantz Fanon. It is in Jean-Paul Sartre's preface to Fanon's work that the phrase "The condition of native is nervous condition" appears. Pluralizing Sartre's "diagnosis" and affixing it to her novel, Dangarembga creates an apt title replete with rich layers of meaning and theoretical moorings to boot. The disabling effects of

colonization reoccur in Tambu's mother Mainini, in her Aunt Maiguru, and especially in Nyasha's battle with anorexia throughout the novel.

These women struggle to regain any sense of wholeness or stability and their lives, even the lives of women who have benefited most directly from contact with high culture, ultimately offer disappointment and discouragement. Yet the story does not sadly end with utter destruction and all encompassing helplessness of the representatives of low culture.

While the diseases of high cultured "Englishness," of patriarchy and colonialism indeed affect Tambu, she manages to transcend or escape their debilitating grasp as she pursues an education and grows as an individual. In so doing, she alone embodies agency in the face of impotence; ability in the face of disability.

"The Chthonic Realm" The "Abiku" Syndrome as a Metaphor of Failure in Soyinka.

From the outset, there are different degrees of illnesses, and among the Yorubas of which Soyinka is a member, illness is simply an indication that all is not well. It manifests itself in multiple ways: physical, spiritual, mental and metaphysical. The first three generally have causes, exhibit symptoms, and usually respond to a variety of treatments, aside from rituals. When it comes to the metaphysical illness, one enters a realm beyond the typical Yoruba worldview of the unborn, the dead and the living. Soyinka believes in a fourth realm: "the area of transition" (Conversations, 24). In an interview with Biodun Jeyifo, Wole Soyinka explains the concept of the "chthonic realm" or "transitional gulf" as that space between humans and spirits which Ogun the god of Iron bridges in Yoruba mythology, and is "inhabited by those whom the Yoruba regard as unfinished, imperfect beings, because they exist halfway between states" (Conversations, 22). This willful crisscrossing from and to the world of the living and

dead captures the essence of this paper which looks at the "Abiku" as a metaphor of failure, and general unfulfilled existence. Like the "Abiku", Nigeria is an ongoing process. It is unfinished, may never be finished, because it does not seem to be interested in being finished (apologies to Beckett's Endgame!) Soyinka's "Abiku"s are symptomatic of a political entity that is in need of some degree of normalcy, yet resists any attempt by the best its land has to offer in restoring it to order.

The majority of books written by African Americans, and featuring African American characters with disabilities were written for children between the ages of 7 and 14. Because of the complexity and variety of disabilities that exist, introducing the topic through images allows children to understand that people with disabilities are among the many groups of individuals who make up their community.

Some African children's literature reflects the negative stereotypes that are ascribed to individuals with disabilities through the use of implausible, one-dimensional characters that are expected to perform acts of heroism to gain acceptance. The critical use of these and similar texts in educational curriculum is a key step in combating stereotypes about Africans with disabilities. Of the broad range of disabilities that affect the African community, the most widely discussed topics in children literature are visual impairments, physical disabilities, and diseases.

CHAPTER THREE: THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

In this chapter there will be a review of the major theory related to this work. There will also be an outlining of the basic methodology that the researcher intends to follow.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

The theory used in this study is the Marxist literary theory. This theory is rooted in the philosophical writings of Karl Marx. The theory x-rays social change in diverse dimensions. For instance, Karl Marx sees alienation as one of the major causes of social conflict or class struggle. The concept of alienation can be viewed in four categories: Economic and Social Alienation, Political, Human, and Ideological Alienation.

Literarily, Marxist writers highlight the various contrasts in societal norms, need for social change, class struggle and consequences of conflicts. So in the course of the analyses, elements of class struggle, cultural conflict, social value system and so on will come into play.

3.2 Marxist Literary Criticism

Marxist literary criticism simply put, is a term describing literary criticism based on socialist and dialectic theories. Marxist criticism views literary works as reflections of the social institutions from which they originate. According to Marxists, even literature itself is a social institution and has a specific ideological function based on the background and ideology of the author. In the words of Terry Eagleton, an English literary critic and cultural theorist, "Marxist criticism aims at explaining the literary work more fully and this means a sensitive attention to its forms, styles and meaning. But it also means grasping those forms, styles and meanings as the product of a

particular history". Explaining further, David Carter in his book *Literary Theory Pocket Essential* asserts that,

for Karl Marx, and those closest to his way of thinking, all those modes of thought, including literary creativity, are ideological and are products of social and economic existence. Basically man's social being determines his consciousness and the material interests of the dominant social class determine how all classes perceive their existence. All forms of culture, therefore, do not exist in an ideal, abstract form but are inseparable from the historical determining social conditions. They exist, in other words, as a superstructure to the basic economic structure of a society.

This is very true of the four texts under review. Elechi Amadi's *The Concubine* for example is set in pre-colonial era and carries with it the ideology of that time of Ikwere history. This very view when linked to the social module of disability which posits disability as a social construct asserts that society disables more than the disability itself.

Georg Lukacs on the other hand is of the opinion that,

true Realism does not just depict the appearance of the social world but provides a truer, more complete, more vivid and more dynamic reflection of reality. A Realist novel does not provide an illusion of reality but is a special form of reflecting reality. A truly realistic work provides a sense of the artistic necessity of the scenes and details presented. The writer reflects, in an intensified form, the structure of the society depicted and its dialectical development.

This view is evident in Aminatu Sowfall's *The Beggars' Strike* of Senegalese society and the position of the poor and persons with disabilities.

Althusser presents in his writing two theses concerning ideology. The first is that, 'Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence'. The second thesis relates ideology to its social origins. For Althusser, 'ideology works through the so-called 'ideological state apparatuses'. These include the political system, the law, education, organised religion, etc. Ideology has a material existence in the sense that it is embodied in material systems.

Thus, everything we do and everything we involve ourselves in is, in some way, ideological. When we believe that we are acting according to free will it is really in accordance with the dominant ideology. In accordance with his belief that social structures are not systems with central controlling principles, he also asserts that ideology in capitalist societies is not dominated by the self-interest of a small group who use it to exploit others. Those who profit from the system are as ignorant to its effects as others. One of the causes of this ignorance is the very force of ideology itself. It convinces us that we are real 'concrete subjects'. We see as natural whatever ideology wants us to see as part of the natural order of things.

This is quite revealing in the analysis of Gabriel Okara's *The Voice*. The major characters in the book are driven by different ideological views that give room to the class struggle we see in the book. And this conflict we see, runs through the length and breadth of the work.

3.3 Research Methodology

In the review of the texts for this study, it is important to note that disability is seen as a major cause of alienation and using this as a lens, the researcher will be x-raying how the different characters in the works under review reflect the different Marxist views, in line with the Marxist principles and methodologies discussed above. The work will also pay attention to different

representations of alienation such as; social, political, powerlessness, economic, human alienation and other such concepts as, class struggle and how the use of language further reinforces this alienation.

- **Powerlessness**

Alienation in the sense of a lack of power has been technically defined by Seeman as "the expectancy or probability held by the individual that his own behaviour cannot determine the occurrence of the outcomes, or reinforcements, he seeks." Seeman argues that this is "the notion of alienation as it originated in the Marxian view of the worker's condition in capitalist society: the worker is alienated to the extent that the prerogative and means of decision are expropriated by the ruling entrepreneurs". Put more succinctly, Kalekin-Fishman says, "A person suffers from alienation in the form of 'powerlessness' when she is conscious of the gap between what she would like to do and what she feels capable of doing". (97)

In discussing powerlessness, Seeman also incorporated the insights of the psychologist Julian Rotter who distinguishes between internal control and external locus of control, which means "differences (among persons or situations) in the degree to which success or failure is attributable to external factors (e.g. luck, chance, or powerful others), as against success or failure that is seen as the outcome of one's personal skills or characteristics". Powerlessness, therefore, is the perception that the individual does not have the means to achieve his goals.

In Elechi Amadi's *The Concubine*, Madume in his blindness is socially alienated. He is depicted as miserably desolate, dependent and weeping like a woman. The voice of the narrator leaves no one in doubt in bringing out the fact of his powerlessness to the point of taking major decisions. Repairing roofs, for instance, we are made to understand from the book, is a man's job but now

the wife has to do it and that without consulting him anymore as hinted by the narrator. He loses control of everything including his family and finally he is abandoned which leads to his eventual death.

In *The Beggars' Strike*, all the characters with disabilities are powerless before their oppressors. They are suppressed and pushed out of their only source of livelihood. Even the skilled ones among them cannot survive unless they resort to alms begging. In the face of the cruel persecution, they are weak to the point of lacking organization. Nguirane the blind beggar suggests organization pointing out the fact that the alms they receive is not out of goodwill from the givers but a means to an end. He receives no serious attention from his comrades but as soon as Salla, an able bodied beggar being an instrument of exploitation herself, stands and addresses them on the same subject in a threatening manner, they all agree.

The language of description elucidates the powerlessness of characters with disabilities in all the texts under review. In *The Beggars' Strike* for instance, words suggesting uselessness, decay pollution, etc., greet the reader and these refer to persons with disabilities. Of course, when something is found obnoxious there is but one option which is removal and in this case alienation.

In the *Drummer Boy*, Akin the blind character lacks the power of self actualization, having been sent away by his parents on the one hand and his inability of going to school for fear of the impending ridicule by other children on the other hand. He has so much faith in his samba and believes that it is the sole source of his happiness.

- **Political alienation**

One manifestation of the above dimension of alienation can be a feeling of estrangement from, and a lack of engagement in, the political system. Such political alienation could result from not identifying with any particular political party or message, and could result in revolution, reforming behaviour or abstention from the political process, possibly due to voter apathy.

This is evident in *The Beggars' Strike*. The ruling class represented by Mour Ndiaye and Keba Dabo his Assistant pushes out (disenfranchises) the beggars and afterwards comes back for their support but is turned down with insolent indifference. This apathy is clearly seen in Nguirane the blind beggar who shows no interest in both speech and money from Mour Ndiaye.

In *The Voice*, the political alienation is typified in the crippled character Ukule who crawls away after Izongo's speech in the midst of eating and drinking, identifying fully with Okolo.

- **Social Alienation**

The work will be exploring how the characters in the texts are socially alienated for instance, Okolo is considered mad (mental disability) and is ostracized from the community.

- **Human Alienation**

In human alienation, individuals become estranged to themselves in the quest to stay alive, where they lose their true existence in the struggle for subsistence. This is reflected in Akin the blind drummer boy who claims satisfaction with only a stomach full of food.

- **Economic Alienation**

The work will give attention to issues of economic alienation in the various texts. Salla in *The Beggars' Strike* for instance, manipulates and takes advantage of the disabled beggars to enrich herself. In the *Drummer Boy*, Ayike, Herbart and his criminal friends exploit the blind drummer boy economically.

The work will also consider ideological issues and class conflict inherent in the texts under review.

CHAPTER FOUR: REPRESENTATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITY AND THE MARXIST READING OF THE SELECTED TEXTS

The body of disability has been a subject of multiple portrayals in works of literature as has been shown in the review of literature on it. A good number of these depictions are derogatory; some others are shown to be a conflict of feelings, and a few are quite favorable in their descriptions, hence positive. This is due to the fact that disability has come to mean a variety of things to people at different times; and also disability itself is a complex thing due to the interplay of a number of forces like religion, culture, economy, war and current happenings, etc.

These can be ascertained by examining the body of disability as portrayed in Elechi Amadi's *The Concubine*, Aminata Sow Fall's *The Beggars' Strike*, Gabriel Okara's *The Voice*, and Cyprian Ekwensi's *The Drummer Boy*.

4.1 Positive Image of Persons with Disability in *The Drummer Boy*, *The Beggars' Strike*, *The Voice* and *The Concubine*

4.1.1 Persons with Disability Portrayed as Good Natured, Resilient, Motivational and Intelligent

Elechi Amadi in *The Concubine* explores five categories of disability and these expose both his personal attitude and that of the society he wrote about and unfortunately and still same in the present day society towards persons with disabilities. The first to be introduced is a dwarf tagged the village wag. He created a grotesque image of this talkative individual who ridicules everyone including himself. Despite the spite this dwarf is given, he is found almost indispensable as the story unfolds.

Next on the queue is blind Madume who is insatiable, ferocious, insolent, intolerable and selfish. After him we find Mmam the drummer who in spite of his crooked fingers is described as a genius in drumming but quick tempered. He craftily touched on speech impediment, voicing his erroneous and ridiculous concept of stammerers through Wodu Wakiri. This is captured in the following words: "He was a mild stammerer. Wodu Wakiri always said he rumbled like thunder when he spoke - a most irreverent joke, seeing that Nwokekoro was the priest of Amadioha the god of thunder. But Wakiri enjoyed an immunity hard to explain" (9). And finally Otudo the madman who is passively mentioned which reflects how little or no regard is accorded such individuals in the society. In the entire book, all about Otudo is contained in seven sentences and in only two occasions stated thus:

One group contained Otudo the madman. He was brushing past people rapidly as if pressed for time. Villagers were used to him. They knew he would walk back again to the market where he normally stayed. He usually went back at dark. Saying that one met Otudo on his way back was another way of stating that one came back very late from the market. (145) For instance Otudo the madman at the waterside market had a morbid hatred for Nwoke koro. He once threw a cocoyam at him and hit him on the fore head.(178)

There's nothing more said about him. We neither can see his stature nor hear his voice but his homelessness is clearly stated.

A few positive traits of persons with disabilities are however covertly portrayed in Elechi Amadi's *The Concubine*. Only one positive attribute is given to Madume when he becomes blind

and consequently degenerate. He possesses a unique perception of happenings around him which startles the wife particularly when she tries sneaking away with the children:

'Wolu, get ready my bath water'. The calmness of his voice frightened his wife. 'Yes, my lord', she said trembling. She went into the house, making sure that the back door was open all the time. She collected some of her valuable wrappers and made them up into a neat bundle. Then she beckoned quietly to her eldest daughter and whispered to her. Adanna went into the house, discarded her working wrapper and donned a better one. Then she took hold of two of her younger sisters. Her mother carried the youngest in her arms and together they began to creep out of the compound. 'Where are you going, Wolu?' Madume asked suddenly. Wolu and Adanna turned round startled. It took Wolu some time to find her voice (74).

Mmam is so good in playing the drum that his crooked fingers rather than being a disabling factor is seen as enhancing his skills, "It is just as if his hands were made for beating drums," said a third.(26)

He is further described as an expert drummer whose rhythms force people into dancing:

Wodu Wakiri and his co-singer Ekwueme could be heard in the distance singing a well known tune. As they came close to the arena, the beater took it up, the okwos tore the air, the drums vibrated under expert hands and the igele beat out the tempo meticulously. The dance had started. For a time they moved round and round swaying to the rhythm in a half-stoop. Suddenly the soloist stopped and the instruments took over completely. No one talked, not even the old men who sat around the arena on their three-legged chairs. This was the time to know the top

dancers. Everyone bent low. Faces were as rigid as masks. The men moved their backs and shoulders but the women moved only their waists and every bit of their energy seemed to be concentrated there. The vibrations were extremely rapid. It was admirable how they maintained the rhythm at such high speedsí . Adiele belaboured the short high-pitched end of his oduma, Mmam caressed the crazy edge of his female drum with his crooked fingers, and the women nearly sobbed with enthusiasm.(27)

He is numbered among the few energetic young men who organize village activities, "She began to count the really energetic young men of the village. There was Nnadi, her brother-in-law, Adiele, the oduma beater, Wodu Wakiri the wag, Mmam, the drummer with his crooked fingers, Ekwueme, the soloist" (76).

In *The Drummer Boy*, the body of disability in this case, blind Akin, is portrayed as caring as a nurse:

A boy came towards them and, passing close to Bisi, placed a bunch of flowers on Anti's table. He smiled and asked Anti how she felt.

"Is it true that you'll be leaving us soon?"

"Yes, Akin. It is true. Don't you want me to leave?"

"No," said the boy. "Stay with us a little longer."

He came close to Anti and took her hand tenderly. Madam Bisi had turned at the mention of the name Akin, and as she studied the face of the boy before her, she found that he was no other than the drummer boy who had thrilled a whole crowd with his little tambourine or samba.

He was now dressed in a blue jumper which came down to his knees, and

somehow he looked more dignified and more serious like a competent nurse.(7)

He is presented as one who finds fulfilment from making people happy:

Bisi could see Akin now at the other end of the Ward, going from one bed to the other, spreading comfort and good cheer wherever he went. All the patients were laughing and calling out to him to come to them. He moved about nimbly on his feet in a way which would have excited the admiration of a man who had normal sight. "Oh'm," sighed Bisi. "No one ever thinks of the boy's own troubles. We all have our own troubles. But learn a lesson from that boy. See how that boy is putting up with his own. Blinded for life, and he can't be more than twelve! yet he doesn't sit down and mope. He makes others happy by being happy himself" (8).

Akin is shown to be forgiving and exudes happiness and courage. Though young, he is firm and cannot be manipulated because he has a mind of his own:

"I have no parents."

"Oh! We're sorry."

"No need to be sorry. They're not dead. They've merely thrown me out, because I'm blind, and a burden to them. But it isn't their fault. I'm of no use to them. Please don't blame them."

The women were silent. Ayike looked at this boy who had less than nothing in the world, and his calm face and plucky spirit gave her immediate courage. Her own troubles seemed to have vanished with the wind.

They sat down beside him and spoke to him gently. Gradually Akin told them about himself. He told how a certain Englishman was trying to educate him;

how painful it would be for him to go into the same school as normal boys who would keep on reminding him of his disability; and how he had decided instead to roam the countryside.

“With this samba of mine, he concluded, ‘I shall always be happy’ (36).

Despite his own troubles, he offers help in the best he could. Whereas Ayike complains she would have helped had it not been for her misfortune, Akin puts his own proposal on the table:

“All right! I have a proposal to make. My father once told me about a certain place in England. People used to go there to eat; and, according to him, there was a man who sang to them as they ate. He attracted many people to the eating-house because of his good voice. I’ll do all I can to draw crowds here with my tambourine. You can take all the money and build yourself a new eating-house. All I ask is a full stomach and a mat to lie on at night. When you have built the new place, I shall continue my journey. What do you say?”

Ayike said she was willing to do anything to put the business on its feet once more (37).

Akin is optimistic in his pursuits, never giving in to discouragement and influences people with the same spirit:

But the other woman complained about the absence of a roof. “Where are the people going to sit?” she said.

Akin brushed aside her objections. “In the open. In the sunshine. Isn’t this the season? By the time the rains come, there will be shelter.”

“By the grace of God,” said Ayike. “I think you are right.”

And so, next day, Ayike set up a grate in the open, a little distance away from the ashes of her old eating house. Akin was beside her with his drum, and if ever he had put his very soul into his music, it was on that opening day of the new eating-house.

People who passed to work heard him singing, and they paused; then they came nearer and stood in little mystified groups watching him and listening.

“Don’t you like to sit down?” Ayike would offer. And when they had sat down, and listened to him for some time, Ayike would suggest a little refreshment, during the course of which she would tell the pathetic story of the little blind boy. It was a formula that never failed to work. Within one month, Ayike had made sufficient money to put up a new and larger eating-house, with a large number of girls to cook, buy the ingredients and serve the customers.(38)

We are made to see that beyond disability lie beauty and great talents as is shown in Akin's musical prowess. He is selfless and an epitome of honesty and inspiration, "Trade boomed for Ayike, but never once did she think of rewarding Akin for his pains; neither did Akin ask her for a penny" (40).

Furthermore in pages 65-6, Akin is portrayed as one who has other people's interest at heart, which we find when he out of his earnings buys bananas for hungry school boys traveling home and his desire to donate his savings to the Boysø Forest Home as help to Fletcher's good work. He is also shown as having the power to influence people into doing good:

Madam Bisi and Joe held hands. Ayike looked on, like a child lost in wonder. Akin had brought with him some form of magic, some strange enchantment and power, over Fletcher's Forest Homeí . She looked quickly away to the woods,

where Akin the drummer boy was radiating happiness, in a manner to make everyone think only of doing good, of being good, and of living a clean life (81-2).

In *The Beggars' Strike*, a good number of positive traits of persons with disabilities are portrayed although Aminata did not set out to deliberately eulogise the body of disability which in the work is subsumed into beggars. They are depicted as having unity of purpose, persistent in the pursuit of their goals, and finding meaning and hope out of desperate situation. They are further shown to be articulate, humorous, bold and indispensable part of society.

The resilience/doggedness of the body of disability in the face of fierce opposition is described as astonishing:

"Yes, sir. I carried out your instructions. I must say I can't understand it myself ... I don't know how they manage to get back on the streets. We organise raids every week; sometimes they're dropped more than a hundred miles away, but the next day they're back at their strategic points. It's really getting quite beyond me, sir" (2).

Papa Gorgui Diop possesses a unique comic talent such that people from distant places flock around him for entertainment, he is also portrayed as wise and reasonable:

Here, among the teeming crowd, is Papa Gorgui Diop - the old man who has the knack of winking an extra mite out of the donors, thanks to his extraordinary comic talent; he's a perfect scream, the way he acts an old man in love with a young girl; he portrays one by one each of the old man's three wives who make bawdy fun of their husband's fads, then the old man himself, trying to make

himself out a youngster, and finally the mischievous young girl who first bleeds her elderly lover white and then gives him a kick in the backside. Gorgui Diop is well-known all over the City and people come a great distance to see him do his act in his accustomed pitch, in front of his bank, from the twenty-fifth of the month to the tenth of the following month, and then at his market from the eleventh onwards (8-9).

He has a cool and gentle disposition towards life even in the face of cruel oppression which would have ordinarily sparked up violent reaction:

When you beg you have to learn to be patient, to put up with a lot of things. If you need something from someone, you have to satisfy his whims. Besides Nguirane, those who give to us aren't the ones who knock us about. Many voices are raised above the general murmurs. That's true, that's true. Gorgui Diop's quite right. You have to learn in life not to let a situation get out of hand. Gorgui Diop spoke the truth. Gorgui Diop's words are dictated by reason and wisdom(21).

Madiabel, the lame beggar is presented as a caring house-holder who, in his poverty still sends clothes and money for food to his family:

He had been a tinker in his native village, mending pots and pans. But fewer and fewer people brought cooking-pots with holes needing to be patched up or old saucepans needing new handles to be fixed. He couldn't sell any more cookers, for the agent who collected them and took them to the City to dispose of them had disappeared one fine day without paying him for the results of a whole year's work. Madiabel had two wives and eight children to feed and clothe, so one day

he upped and left for the City and became a `battu-bearerø ô without a battu ô simply holding out his hand for alms. Business was much better and he was able regularly to send his family clothes and money for food (10).

There is a general solidarity and mutual respect among the beggars. In the event that one of them dies, their support still extends to the bereaved family:

The day of his funeral, the whole brotherhood had accompanied him to his last resting-place and afterwards had collected a quite substantial sum of money to send to his family by way of assistance (21).

They are presented in the light that some of the many other characters in the story are not presented. Unlike the other characters who have their bodies intact, they are satisfied. Even when all seems to be against them, they remain resolute and contented:

Even if competition is hard with hands jostling each other under the noses of the donors who then throw a few coins at random, just to get rid of the beggars, even then they only take what actually falls into their own outstretched palms (10).

They are presented as indomitable particularly to what they consider as their source of livelihood despite the cruel persecution:

All the beggars are afraid now. They are being ceaselessly hunted down without respite. They are afraid and they suffer physically, but that does not stop them from returning to their strategic points every morning they are drawn øback as if by a magnet, armed only with the hope of being able to rely on the speed of their legs to escape from the stinging blows of the policemenø batons, or of hiding in some nearby house when the round-up parties come by (20).

There is some sort of sympathetic touch in the presentation of the blind characters giving them special qualities. When Mour's attitude softens towards the beggars, the blind is the ideal picture of persons with disabilities in the utopian world in his imagination.

Nguirane Sarr is shown as eloquent and full of ideas, he articulates their relationship to the society and their own indispensable role in it:

Listen, we can perfectly well get organised. Even these madmen, these heartless brutes who descend on us and beat us up, even they give to charity. They need to give alms because they need our prayers ô wishes for long life, for prosperity, for pilgrimages; they like to hear them every morning to drive away their bad dreams of the night before, and to maintain their hopes that things will be better tomorrow. You think that people give out of the goodness of their hearts? Not at all. They give out of an instinct for self-preservation (22).

He is further shown to be always correctly dressed though blind: "Among them is blind Ngirane-Sarr, always correctly dressed with his tie, soiled starched collar, dark, gold-rimmed spectacles, invariable navy-blue suit and white stick (6). In the same place, he is described as distinguished, perhaps because he always holds his head high.

In *The Voice*, Ukule the cripple is described as foresighted, hating oppression, and embodying clear judgment and the voice of truth and reason which cannot be silenced or stopped. He is the custodian of Okolo's words and the symbolic little flame in Tuere's hut she spoke to which also illumined the dark room. In his wisdom and like a good farmer and watchman, he is quick to observe that Tiri, one of the messengers that 'Okolo's words have in his insides grown' (95).

When it becomes obvious to Tuere that she and Okolo would die, she hands over the task of maintaining the truth to Ukule regardless of his disability:

Then turning to Ukule she said, "You go and leave us. You stay in the town and in the days to come, tell our story and tend our spoken words."

Thereupon Ukule moved and when he reached the door turned and said, "Your spoken words will not die." With this he moved into the outside darkness (126-127).

Okolo is fearless in dispensing the truth in the face of difficulties and threat of death. Not even the pleas and sincere and discrete counsel of his strong allies, Tuere and Ukule could dissuade him from his resolve to face Uzongo and his people with the truth:

"Palmwine has held them and they can do any-thing."

"It is correct," joined Tuere. "They can do any bad thing with the eye of palmwine. Palmwine into their * heads has climbed. So in their heads there is no room for any teaching words. Do not go, Okolo," she pleaded.

"Am I then in this place to hide like a thief? Am I to run away? No! The straight word never runs away from the crooked word. I will go!" (116).

4.2 Negative Image of Disability in the Selected Works

All the works under review abound with negative portrayal of the body of disability and at such instance it is given special coloration. All the authors seem to concentrate their descriptive abilities on the negative traits of persons with disabilities. The characters lose their names to the disability they have or have no names at all other than the disability.

Persons with disabilities are portrayed as filthy, barbarous, contagious threat to public health, economic drainage, beggars, ill-tempered, foolish, under a curse/curses, without ambition, vengeful, without initiative, helpless, nauseating, social nuisance, etc.

The Beggars' Strike from the very first page of the first chapter begins an awful lot of contemptuous presentation of the body of disability. The choice of words are so carefully arranged to leave no reader in doubt of the purpose:

the streets are congested with these beggars, these talibés, these lepers and cripples, all these derelicts. The Capital must be cleared of these people - parodies of human beings rather - these dregs of society who beset you everywhere and attack you without provocation at all times. You hope that the traffic-lights will never turn red as you approach an intersection in your car! And once you've overcome the obstacle of the traffic-lights, you have to get past another hurdle to reach the hospital, force your way through a bombardment to get to work in your own office, struggle to emerge from the bank, make a thousand detours to avoid them at the markets, and finally pay a ransom to enter the House of God! Oh! these men, these parodies of human beings, as persistent as they are ubiquitous! The Capital is crying out to be cleared of them (1).

They are depicted as constituting nuisance to society. They are seen as some kind of evil that must be done away with for the peaceful existence of the society. They are not regarded as human enough to be part of the society. Their presence distorts the order and image of the society:

'You realise, the latter went on, 'their presence is harmful to the prestige of our country; they are a running sore, which should be kept hidden, at any rate in the Capital. This year the number of tourists has fallen considerably, in comparison with last year's figures, and it's almost certain that these beggars are to some extent responsible. We really can't let them invade our cities and form a threat to public hygiene and the national economy' (1-2).

Persons with disability portrayed as defenseless deviant weaklings and criminals:

The police proceeded to organise a round-up. As he was trying to get away he ran out into the road without looking where he was going, just as a car came past at full speed.

'Oh! those round-ups! They make our life a misery. Poor Madiabel! He shouldn't have run, with his lame leg. It must be fate.'

'Who wouldn't run, if he'd ever felt the sting of those whips? I take to my heels, I do, as soon as I catch sight of the fuzz. They lay about them like madmen; when they get worked up like that, they seem to forget that we're human beings' (11).

It is obvious that from the following passage, their life and presence is viewed by the authority as criminal:

'This time, it's different; you've got to track them down wherever they lurk. They think they can wear us down, but if we have to take severe measures, we shall take severe measures. It's a very serious problem, you know. No one can move about freely any more, without being attacked wherever one goes (12).

In the words of Salla Niang, an able bodied beggar, they belong to the underworld which has its own laws: furthermore in the words of Mour which is a true reflection of the wrong assumption of the society that they are deserving of their condition for their evil, 'The rogues! The hypocrites! The liars! That's the reason why they are reduced to begging.... They've only got what they deserve'(90)!

Persons with disabilities portrayed as insolent and full of obscenities. The descriptions seem to suggest that there must be something strange, obscene and untoward about them. The narrator describes a scene that involves a beggar:

Just as a young man was coming out of the shop, a beggar was feeling his way in and hit him with his stick. The young man swore at the beggar; the latter came back at him with some choice obscenities, to everyone's stupefaction (1).

A similar kind of description is used when Mour visits the beggars' house:

As he reaches the gate again, Mour starts: he sees 'the cheeky blind beggar with the guitar' still sitting on his chair, with his guitar on his lap, motionless as a block of stone (93).

Elsewhere in Mour's reflections, we hear of 'the insolence of the jackanapes of a blind beggar'(98).

In *The Concubine* persons with disabilities are portrayed in a number of negative stereotypical ways as ill-tempered and always ready to inflict pain on people at the least provocation and most times unjustifiably angry. The moment Madume realizes he is totally blind, he becomes

completely degenerate, most unfriendly and insolent. He is shown as an invalid, unproductive, ungrateful and pugnacious burden:

The hard, cold fact was that Madume was totally blind. While there was some hope of a cure neighbours called to cheer him. But as he became convinced he would be forever blind, he refused to see or rather to be seen by callers. He kept to his room and wept like a woman. Wolu sobbed and Adanna and the other children cried. Never had they known such desolation, such misery. In the two months since Madume's blindness, Wolu had lived through the most trying period of her life. Her husband was a changed man. She did not blame him. She and her children ministered to his needs with untiring devotion.

The extra attention she had to pay her husband did not bother her so much as the realization that she now had to take some major decisions herself. Looking at their reception hall, one day she said,

“I think our reception hall needs repairing,” she then added quickly. “I shall see to it as soon-as possible.”

“Leave the reception hall alone,” her husband snapped. “Who is staying there anyway?”

“It will fall if nothing is done.”

“Let it fall then.”

“Our house is in the same condition,” Wolu pointed out, curious to know what her husband would say.

“What is all this noise about repairing roofs? The dry season is almost here.”

Wolu thought it wise at that point to stop arguing. She would do the repairs without comment. She realized the humiliations her husband suffered over such matters (71).

He is presented as a brute and fault-finder who neither appreciates nor find anything good in his care givers in spite of all their efforts:

My lord, your meal is ready. Please have it while the soup is hot.

What is the hurry? I am not ready to eat just now.

It is well, my lord. The younger children will let you have it when you are ready.

I am going to the farm with Adanna.

Adanna will stay behind to serve me. You can go alone.

But there is so much to be done in the farm. Besides I cannot carry back all the cocoyams we want to sell at the next market.

Madume swallowed hard. You are bandying words with me, are you? The blind man's face twitched with anger... (71-2).

The character Madume [short for *madu mee onwe ya*] which when translated means, "What one does to himself" is plotted in such a way to leave no reader in doubt that his blindness came about as a curse or direct punishment for his evil deeds. Furthermore, the narrator systematically drops his name and replaces it with "the blind man". He is even indirectly referred to as a mad man:

"I say I have nothing to say," said the blind man .

"Supporting his head with his two hands the blind man gnashed his teeth. The elders went back when Madume declined to say anything further. "I wonder whether he is not crazy as well as blind," Webilo remarked as they trooped back.

"Well, he has only himself to blame. I don't see why he should bark at people," Wosu said. "The hunter who is never satisfied with small game may be obliged to carry home an elephant one day. I have always said this of him," Chima said.

"True, the plantain was not his," Wosu said

"Of course not. The elders gave their verdict in favour of Emenike long ago" (73).

Mmam the drummer is portrayed as ill-tempered and intolerant especially with children:

"Get out of there, do you hear?" Mmam the drummer rebuked the offender and strode menacingly towards him. The mischief-maker scampered away; Mmam was known to be hot-tempered and took no nonsense from rude children. "Wodu Wakiri had remarked that even the drums had more beating from him than was really necessary."

Instead of fooling around, Mmam went on, go and get two plantain stems for the oduma.

The youth went off with his mates to collect the trunks.

Mmam is fond of beating people, said one.

Yes, said another, "with his crooked fingers that never stretch out" (26).

Everything he does, constant reference is made to his crooked fingers thereby negating any of his good attributes. This is made more manifest in this quote, "It is just as if his hands were made for beating drums," Said a third." Which may seem to be a complement but from the context, it is rather a derision.

In *The Voice*, the body of disability is described as the unwanted or insignificant "other", inevitably brought in when there is no choice to fill in the gap. They dwell in the world of fantasy and confusion:

Even the deaf and dumb looking at lips as a hungry person looks at the mouths of people eating, hurried; and the blind, staring hard at nothing, guided by stamping feet and voices, groped; and the lame with dust in their eyes from heels that looked at nothing, crawled to Izongo's compound (69).

Persons with disabilities portrayed as contagious and nuisance:

Wonder again moved Okolo out of his door and as he closer walked to the crowd, somebody moved by fear shouted, "He's coming, he's coming!" Okolo's feet stuck to the ground. Women grabbed their children and ran. If the saliva from the mouth of one whose head is not correct enters one's mouth, one's head also becomes not correct. So they ran and some men too who had no chest or shadow in them also ran (26).

"Seven days have finished," he began, "since from our midst I ... we cleared a stinking thing; and since then our breaths have reached ground. Is it not right that we mark this with a little celebration?" (100)?

In *The Drummer Boy* persons with disabilities, which Akin represents are considered vagabond and self-willed. Their disability most times makes them incapable of recognising the nature of evil. It takes Akin such a long time to discover that Herbert and his gang are criminals. Furthermore, they are always awkwardly dressed.

Blind Akin portrayed as vagabond:

"About this boy, Akin. You don't need to worry too much. He was meant to be a wanderer, and you can't change his spots, however you try."

"What d'you mean?"

"Well, Akin has somehow got wind of your movements, and has left. I don't know where he's gone to. If you'll excuse me," he said, hurrying away, "I must be going for that operation. Cheer up, Bisi" (19).

Akin is shown as being so daft and slow to recognizing evil because of his disability:

"Madam, what have you done?" he said harshly. "Why have you sent away my friends?"

õLet them go; they are thieves and vagabonds."

"What! Thieves and vagabonds?"

"Yes, Akin. Perhaps some day when you grow up, you'll understand."

"Tell me now, Ayike. I want to understand. I am very angry with you for what you've done."

"Now, Akin; they were very bad people. They kept on obtaining money from me, and they were telling me all the time to give them more money otherwise they would carry me off by force to that man who wanted to marry me. You see, it was he who sent them to lure me away; but when they got here they met you and were happy. So they decided to stay, but on the condition that I was always giving them money."

Akin did not understand it. He saw Ayike only as a selfish woman who had deprived him of his music-loving friends. He spoke his mind to her.

"I'm going to leave you, Ayike. You've treated me very badly, and I shall never speak to you again" (42).

Akin's blindness makes him dress oddly, "There he stood at the foot of the tree: tall, with nothing on him save a pair of white pants" (5).

In order to clearly link his odd dressing to blindness, Ekwensi devotes considerable time to stressing Akin's argument against dressing outside his usual style when invited to play for the boys of Ilean College:

Herbert offered to lend him a shirt and a pair of white shorts, a red scarf and a broad-brimmed hat; but the blind boy was against the idea of putting on colours that he himself would not see. Not even the senior prefect of the school could persuade him to change his mind.

On the appointed evening, Akin appeared in his white shorts (23-4).

4.3 The Ambivalent Representation of Persons with Disability in *The Drummer Boy*, *The Beggars' Strike*, *The Voice* and *The Concubine*

Mmam the drummer is shown as being quick-tempered and good-natured. Although it is said that Mmam is quick-tempered and unleashes his anger on children and the drums, he is also portrayed as prompt, quiet and meticulous. When told Ekwueme is missing, his response is immediate. Furthermore, he is apt during the search, discovery and rescue of Ekwueme. Both the old and the young find his music irresistible. The dialogue between him and Ekwueme reveals his calmness even when jeered:

-I hope you won't burst this new skin so soon.'

'If men grow old and die, why not skins?' Mmam retorted in his quiet wayí .

He cleared his throat and broke into the new song. He fixed his glance on Mmam's face and the latter returned the stares. It was a look of mutual understanding. A look which betrayed the secret joys they shared in such beautifulø enchanting music. Children from neighbouring compounds were the first to gather. Then Nkechi and her mother came out. Lastly Wigwe drew near, smiling approval. Nkechi danced gracefully, trying to overcome one or two imperfections. Adaku danced slowly with her baby on her back. Everyone felt happy. Who could ever feel sad in the sound of such music?(85-6)

In *The Beggars's Strike* there is conflict of feeling in the presentation of persons with disabilities:

Keba did not tell Mour Ndiaye his feelings every time a beggar held out his hand to him. He did not tell him how he nearly choked when filthy hands were poked right "into his car, as soon as he was imprudent enough to lower the windows, nor the remorse he felt when he conformed to the principle he had laid down never to give alms to beggars, a principle that was not inspired by meanness or churlishness, but simply because he was shocked to see human beings - however poor they might be - diminishing their own dignity by sponging on others in such a disgraceful, shameless fashion. He forgot that hunger and poverty compelled some of them to beg, and so remind those who were better off that paupers too existed (2).

In *The Drummer Boy* Akin is depicted as one who will amount to nothing but begging on account of his disability:

She sat down in the darkness and thought of this boy, Akin. Blind: therefore he was to remain a beggar all his life. Therefore his talents were to waste. Because he was blind, he would never be able to do any good for himself and his friends, or even become a useful citizen of Africa (10).

Then in chapter nine we see the same boy becoming famous and loved by all:

Akin was becoming a national character; loved by his people, able to stir the deepest emotions within them, and so harmless that everyone gave and gave freely whenever he played (67).

In *The Voice*, Ukule is described as "a cripple who was at the rear, looking and listening between legs that looked at nothing"(72) yet foresighted, discerning and committed to the course of truth.

One can see variant representations of the body of disability in the same work as a testimony of its complexity by the accounts of the experiences of persons with disability through the characters.

Despite the fact that these four works were set at different places and times; informed by different cultures and religions; that is Nigeria and Senegal, and Animism, Christianity and Islam, it does not in any way alter the assumptions and stereotyping of the body of disability as represented by these four works. The frantic rhythm and the interplay of relations between the characters and their environment i.e. the society are incontrovertible as has been shown.

4.4 A MARXIST LITERARY READING OF THE SELECTED TEXTS

Here, there will be an examination of how the characters reflect the different Marxist views. I have, in this study established that disability is the major cause of alienation and from this standpoint, I will be exploring the different aspects of these views and other factors as pointed out in chapter three. Against this backdrop, we can see the disabled characters alienated in one or multiple forms.

In *The Concubine* Madume in his blindness is socially and economically alienated. When there was still hope for a cure, in other words hope for productivity from him callers came to cheer him but all that ceased when he became totally blind. At this point he is depicted as a weakling, miserably desolate, dependent and weeping like a woman. The voice of the narrator leaves no one in doubt in bringing out the fact of his powerlessness to the point of taking major decisions. Repairing roofs, for instance, we are made to understand from the book, is a man's job but now the wife has to do it and that without consulting him anymore as hinted by the narrator. He loses control of everything including his family and finally he is abandoned which leads to his eventual death:

While there was some hope of a cure neighbours called to cheer him. But as he became convinced he would be forever blind, he refused to see or rather to be seen by callers. He kept to his room and wept like a woman. Wolu sobbed and Adanna and the other children cried. Never had they known such desolation, such misery.

In the two months since Madume's blindness, Wolu had lived through the most trying period of her life. Her husband was a changed man. She did not blame him. She and her children ministered to his needs with untiring devotion.

The extra attention she had to pay her husband did not bother her so much as the realization that she now had to take some major decisions herself. Looking at their reception hall one day she said:

I think our reception hall needs repairing,' then added quickly. 'I shall see to it as soon as possibleø(71).

It is important to note that the gods enjoy a great deal of respect and in the event that one is found guilty or under their curse, the individual comes directly under their control. Madume is powerless before them. Amadioha is shown to control the rain without which there will be neither sowing nor reaping. He is described as the god of thunder and of the skies whose vengeance spells disaster for the victim. In page eight of chapter three, we have a little insight to the power and manner of this god from what is said about his priest:

He was friendly with everyone and was highly respected. His office as high priest of the most powerful god lent him great dignity.

The god of thunder was connected with rain, so Nwokekoro was also the chief rain maker. Everyone in the village knew that he kept a mysterious white smooth stone which, when immersed in water, caused rain to fall even in the dry season. Nwokekoro could also dispel heavy rain-bearing clouds by merely waving a short mystic broom black with age and soot. He derived a fair income during wrestling

matches and other such occasions when dry weather was most desirable.

Other rain makers stood in awe of him because he had the direct support of Amadioha. They dared not work in opposition to him. There was the case of Ogonda who tried to rival Nwokekoro. A village had hired Nwokekoro to dispel rain during a wrestling match. Ogonda felt he had been ignored and had tried to make rain. He was struck down on that very day by a thunderbolt while collecting herbs by the Wayside. It all went to confirm that a man could not wrestle with a god (8-9).

Then in chapter four, we get detailed information of the gods and their power over the masses. The result of any offense or suspected offence against these gods is alienation which can take any form depending on the gravity of the offense:

Igwe, the founder of Omigwe, was forced to leave Omokachi when one of his babies cut its upper teeth first. This was a terrible omen signifying that Igwe had done something very wrong, though no one seemed to remember exactly the nature of the offence. Some whispered that he went to work on a Great Eke: others that he accidentally killed a vulture, the sacred bird of Ojukwu. Whatever it was, the sacrifices needed for absolution were too involved and costly. Among other things the medicine man had mentioned seven rams. Igwe could not collect these things and to ward off the wrath of the gods the villagers ejected him from the village (13).

Though armed with machete, Madume cannot fight the enormous serpent that spits into his eyes nor the neighbours, they can only stand and watch because it is a god. From then on, there is a

gradual and systematic withdrawal from him starting with Anyika and finally his own family. For his blindness, he no longer participates either in hunting, wine-tapping, farming or any other economic activity, he becomes deviant and self-alienated, which evidently climaxes in suicide. Even in death, his ostracism is complete when he is thrown into the evil forest by strangers rather than fellow villagers:

Late that afternoon, Anyika arrived back in the village. Armed with amulets and powerful charms, he cut down the body. He fortified two strangers, who were to bear the body, against evil spirits. Then began the long trek to Minita the forest into which bodies rejected by the earth were thrown.(76)

In *The Beggars' Strike*, all the characters with disabilities are powerless before their oppressors. They are objects of charity and social outcasts. State bureaucrats, who think beggars discourage tourism from the West, decide to rid the city of begging. The policy is implemented through police tactics of harassment, physical abuse, and imprisonment of beggars. Life for the disabled is brutal and unbearable yet, all they could think of is satisfying the whims of the givers no matter how badly treated. Aminata Sow Fall leaves no one in doubt of the powerlessness of persons with disabilities before the state and fellow citizens. What she seems to be saying is that they do not have what it takes to be organized or to mount resistance. She asserts this assumption beginning from what she says concerning Madiabel:

He had been a tinker in his native village, mending pots and pans. But fewer and fewer people brought cooking-pots with holes needing to be patched up or old saucepans needing new handles to be fixed. He couldn't sell any more cookers, for the agent who collected them and took them to the City to dispose of them had

disappeared one fine day without paying him for the results of a whole year's work (10).

Here, there is neither protest nor litigation; rather he resorts to begging which is shown to be the only thing he could do and the only means of survival:

Madiabel had two wives and eight children to feed and clothe, so one day he upped and left for the City and became a 'battu-bearer' - without a *battu* - simply holding out his hand for alms. Business was much better and he was able regularly to send his family clothes and money for food (10).

Finally when he has the accident that leads to his eventual death, a situation is created where he desires to live but has no means of doing so having been economically alienated:

Madiabel had died of his injuries. He had lain at the hospital for five days without treatment, because he hadn't a penny on him, and to prove he was a pauper he had to have a certificate from the local authority; and as he was too badly injured to go and get this certificate of indigence which would exempt him from having to pay for treatment, he had lain in a corner, behind a general ward, whose inmates expressed sympathy for his suffering by endless exclamations of *-Ndeisan* Shame! Shame! whenever he groaned and writhed with the pain that racked him" (21).

When blind Ngirane-Sarr on the two occasions following Madiabel and Papa Gorgui Diop's death articulates the situation and suggests a way forward, he is considered a dreamer by his fellows, in other words, it is a feat impossible for them to achieve. Then a religious coloration is brought into it which in the words of Karl Marx, "is the opium of the masses". Only Salla possesses such abilities because she has no disability. She exploits the situation under the pretext

of caring and being one of them manipulates them to suit her own purpose. The moment she takes over, focus immediately shifts from the beggars to feminine issues with a lot of quality and strength given her and so the author too becomes guilty of alienation. The following paragraphs in chapter four, five and the last lend credence to this view:

Salla Niang collects the subscriptions, acting as banker and making no compromises or concessions. She's a woman with plenty of guts and knows how to call to order any recalcitrants who claim their takings from the day's begging are less than the one hundred francs needed to put down.

—It hurts you to have to fork out the dough, eh! And when you get the chance of pocketing it, *Bissimilai!* Then you're happy enough. You just listen: don't try your tricks on me, you hear! Out with the dough! Nobody's allowed tick. You can't tell me! Even on the worst days anyone can collect more than a hundred francs.

—Not at every corner!—someone in the crowd ventures.

—You'd better learn to speak the truth! Name me any part of the City where it isn't everyone's first action, first thing in the morning, to give something to the beggars. Even in the white areas; the black *Toubabs* and the white *Toubabs* all respect this ritual. And if you're talking about the poor districts, then you've come to the wrong shop with that story; everyone knows the poor give more readily than the rich. So hand over the lolly, you bunch of skinflints!

There is universal laughter as Salla Niang, from her chair in the doorway of her room, harangues

the impressive crowd of beggars who fill the courtyard, carrying their *battu* - the calabash which serves as a begging-bowl. Salla Niang holds a winnowing-basket on her lap and as she speaks she counts the money in the basket. The crowd comprises men and women of all ages and sizes, some crippled, some hale and hearty, all depending on their outstretched hands- for their daily pittance (8-9).

Within these paragraphs we see them robbed of freedom of choice, movement, and decision both by the state and individuals and, above all the right to life particularly the state as mentioned above.:

JogJ°t na! Jog jot na kal! Itø time we did something! Itø really time we did something!ø

As she speaks she points her right forefinger at the audience. When nobody reacts to this serious warning she goes on, -Itø time we woke up, lads. Nguiraneø right. People donø give out of love for us. Thatø quite correct. So, letø get organised! For a start, donø letø accept any more of those worthless coins they throw us, that wonø even buy a lollipop. Eh, my little talibe's, døyou hear! Spit on their one francs and their two francs; spit on their three lumps of sugar; spit on their handful of rice! Døyou hear? Show them weøre men as much as they are! And no more prayers for their welfare till weøve received a good fat donation! Are you agreed, lads?ø

÷Ah, loolu deyomb na. Thatø quite easy.ø

÷Yes, indeed. If one looks into it, what youøve just said makes good sense.ø

Sa degg degg lefli mot naa seetaat. Yes indeed, we must look into it. Let us do as Salla suggests.

Agreed, agreed. We're all agreed.

They have confidence in Salla. They know she is a woman of experience. She has had plenty of opportunities of getting to know the world (23-4).

The preceding sentences give insight to the stuff she is made of and so taking full advantage of the situation, she becomes despotic over them and this is evident in her language. Moreover reference to "cooking" talking about food, a basic necessity of life and her feminine power captured thus, "She is wearing a camisole that is pulled in at the waist and shows off the curves of her hips (38-9) reflects the depth of her influence:

She reached out to the assembled crowd a hand stained with henna arabesques.

Now, my friends, the hour has come to make our choice: to live like dogs, pursued, hunted, tracked down, rough-handled, or to live like men. Gorgui Diop's reason for living was always to bring a little cheer to men's hearts. But these madmen have forgotten the meaning of cheer. Since Gorgui Diop has not been spared, Gorgui Diop who made people laugh, no one will be spared. So now, let's have no more of this stealing in and out on the sly; let's have no more of this running away like mad; let's have no more distress and fear. Let's all stay here! Do you hear, we'll stay here... (38-9)!

Salla Niang's despotism over these disabled characters is evident in the way she controls their mind to the point of taking decisions. In chapter thirteen when Mour visits, she admits being in charge and plays it out completely. She further economically exploits or rather alienates them:

Mour is pleased to see that Salla is in the midst of the scrum; that's a good sign, he thinks. To placate her and to make her better disposed towards him, Mour throws a whole wad in her direction so that she can easily catch a good share. She has lost her headscarf in the scuffle. Mour interprets her broad smile as an undoubted victory for himself. He is jubilant. It is only now, he thinks, that he has managed to break down the wall that separated him from the beggarsí .

Kouli doesn't take his eyes off Salla Niang; he hates her for her behaviour just now towards his employer, "And yet she made a rush for the money!" Kouli is sorry for his employer, deeply sorry for him (93).

They are completely mentally enslaved by Salla:

After Mour's last visit some of them, moved by the supplications of someone who didn't give the impression of being a bad man, and anxious to respect the pact that they had made together - he by giving his money, and they by giving their word - had decided to go to take up their positions in the streets. With her last energy, Salla Niang harangued them.

"What! It's out of the question; it's completely out of the question! Just because he threw his money at us, we have to give in to his whims! No! If he threw his money about, it's because he's got his pockets full, it's because he can afford to throw it about by the handful. What we managed to pick up - sunu wersek la! - is just our good luck! If you go out on the streets you'dl seem like miserable weak-kneed creatures, with no dignity, who can't be relied on... (95).

We find the disabled characters politically alienated. It begins from the savage persecution meted out on them and their final ejection from the city which gives rise to the apathy we see embodied in Nguirane Sarr the blind beggar:.

As he reaches the gate again, Mour starts: he sees the cheeky blind beggar with the guitar still sitting on his chair, with his guitar on his lap, motionless as a block of stone. Clearly he has never moved (93).

Neither Mour's oratory nor money arouses his interest.

Persons with disabilities view begging as a legitimate trade because religion teaches so whereas the state frowns at it because, according to them; it discourages tourism from the West and therefore undermines the national economy. These two opposing views generate the conflict that runs throughout the text. Mour Ndiaye is caught in this conflict.

In the *Drummer Boy*, Akin suffers a number of alienating situations. First, he is socially alienated which begins from his own family. This is shown in his conversation with Ayike:

"Where do you come from?" asked Ayike.

"From far away. And I'll keep on moving unless you want me to come with you."

"But, your parents. Won't they object?"

"I have no parents."

"Ooh! We're sorry."

"No need to be sorry. They're not dead. They've merely thrown me out, because I'm blind, and a burden to them. But it isn't their fault. I'm of no use to them. Please don't blame them" (36).

Self or human alienation is reflected in Akin who though desires to be a nurse someday yet, runs away from being educated for fear of being ridiculed by normal boys and claims satisfaction only in his drum:

...he had decided instead to roam the countryside.

öWith this samba of mineö, he concluded, öI shall always be happyö (36).

Akin suffers alienation in form of powerlessness when he cannot protect himself against Herbert and his gang. They not only rob him of his money but his freedom as well. His plan to give money to Mr. Fletcher for the Boys' Forest Home is aborted, he is incapable of exposing them to the police and so he submits to them:

They stripped Akin of his jumper. He heard them laughing and struggling over the contents, and then:

"Phew!" whistled one of them. "This boy has money."... "One hundred pounds, ten shillings and eightpence ha'penny...."

Akin's throat was dryí . The men told him that they were going to stay by him while he made all the money. "Do not try anything clever, like trying to reveal us to the police. If you do, we'll kill you. And remember, you're blind. You can't run away. We'll see you and catch you. D'you hearí ö?"

After that, they went from one town to the other, playing only at night. They never failed to raise both money and admiration. Akin was becoming a national character; loved by his people, able to stir the deepest emotions within them, and so harmless that everyone gave and gave freely whenever he played. And behind him hung that shadow of Herbert and the murderers (65-7).

He suffers economic alienation as has already been shown in the hands of Herbert and his criminal friends as well as in the hands of Ayike who never thinks of paying Akin nor replacing his samba for all his labor till the day he speaks of leaving:

"I'm going to leave you, Ayike. You've treated me very badly, and I shall never speak to you again."

"You don't mean that, Akin." There was fear in her voice. "What am I going to do? Akin, I beg you to stay. I'll do everything for you, my little boy. I'll buy you clothes, and a new drum; I'll get other people to play with you" (42).

We find Akin at conflict with Madam Bisi, Nurse Joe, Martial and Fletcher in the sense that they see Akin as useless without formal education whereas Akin is already a fulfilled useful entertainer.

"I have taken a fancy to him. To my mind, beating a samba is not the thing for him. He has talent, he's quite fit, only he's blind. So I thought I could train him to be useful to himself and to the country. I've already made all the arrangements... (19).

In response to this imposition of idea, Akin abandons his hospital abode:

Akin was beating his samba along a street of no great importance.

He was alone with the trees and the birds, and his hands moved over the face of his little drum with no conscious effort of his own. Rather, it was as if those hands

told his listeners of his inner unhappiness. The rebel in him was awake and he was determined to be alone, free to follow his life in his own way.

He sat down by the roadside and gently caressed his beloved drum, murmuring a little tune to the accompaniment of the slow rhythm. If he had had eyes, he might have seen that he was in a part of Lagos slightly outside the usual tarred roads and storey-houses, for here were trees and birds and grasshoppers (19).

In *The Voice* the characters with disabilities are faced with various forms of alienation. Okolo the protagonist is battered and ostracized from Amatu and while in Sologa, he is assaulted, imprisoned and threatened to be put in asylum. When he returns to Amatu, having been rejected in Sologa, he suffers the worst and extreme form of alienation, execution by drowning. It is important to note that Okolo, per se is not mad as is seen by Izongo and those under his influence: he suffers all the rough handling meted out on persons with mental /intellectual disability that are hardly made public. Okara unintentionally explores these salient but often-ignored experiences of this group of people in society. This is shown in the following passages:

The people snapped at him like hungry dogs snapping at bones. They carried him in silence like the silence of ants carrying a crumb of yam or fish bone. Then they put him down and dragged him past thatch houses that in the dark looked like pigs with their snouts in the ground; pushed and dragged him past mud walls with pitying eyes; pushed and dragged him past concrete walls with concrete eyes; pushed and dragged him along the waterside like soldier ants with their prisoner. They pushed and dragged him in panting silence, shuffling silence, broken only

by an owl hooting from the darkness of the orange tree in front of Chief Izongo's house (38-9).

Not only is he battered but bound, confined and excluded from society:

On and on they pushed and dragged him. Round and round they went with their blind feet. This way they turned and that way they turned like a dog with a piece of bone looking for a corner. Nobody talked, nobody whispered. They pushed and dragged him in tramping silence with buzzing mosquitoes....

He was now between sleeping and waking, thinking and not thinking, floating between sky and earth. The fly settled on his mouth. He tried to move his hand but his hand would not move! Then suddenly fear opened his eyes wide, in spite of his strong chest, and he came down to earth. And as he gazed at the ceiling, he saw yesterday's night passing before his eyes. Okolo shut his eyes to shut off the nightmare and spoke with his inside....

A fly stood on his face. He tried to lift his hands but they would not move so he shook his head and the fly flew off. He opened his eyes and rolled to the edge of the bed and throwing over his feet he sat up. He looked at his hands. They were bound with a rope. Could this be a real thing? But the rope told him it was real. He tugged at his hands. The rope would not give. He stared at his wrists. A fly hovered and stood on the rope. It screwed its head this way and that way and rubbed its forelegs as if washing its hands of the squabbles of man (39-41).

Chief Uzongo prides himself in the ostracism of Okolo:

Yesterday I and the Elders swept from this town a stinking thing. (Here there was a great applause.) A stinking thing like a rotten corpse which had made us all, you and me, breathe freely more for the many years past. Now we are free people be, free to breathe. `It was a great task I performed, my people. A great task in sending him away. A dangerous task, but it had to be done for the good of us all. We did it with our eyes on our occiputs, for it is a strong thing be to send away one who is looking for it. Only a mad man looks for it in this turned world (69).

In Sologa Okolo is arrested and confined which goes further to show that the fate of one with mental disability is the same both in the country and in the urban area:

The white man raised his eyes and looked at Okolo from head to foot. Then he rested his elbows on the table and clasped his hands in front of him.

-You speak English, of course?ø

-Yes,ø answered Okoloí .

-My instructions are that you are to be taken to the asylum. You are not wanted here. You have given too much trouble already in Sologa. You are to be confined here in a room until you are taken to the asylumø(86-7).

Ukule, the cripple, despite his sense of good judgement and foresight does not count to Izongo nor the people of Amatu. So when Chief Izongo summons all the inhabitants of Amatu to his compound, he Ukule and other characters with disabilities are just at the rear to which they are relegated. From this vintage point, he sees and hears everything leading up to his political alienation. He withdraws from there choosing to identify with Tuere and Okolo:

As the people drank and drank, a cripple who was at the rear, looking and listening between legs that looked at nothing, crawled quietly away. He crawled away as if, making for his own houseí . And when he reached Tuere's hut the door opened and in he crawled. In he crawled to the darkness of the room with the living flame in the hearth, a living flame creating Tuere's shadow on the wall.

‘I hear them singing,’ said Tuere.

‘Yes,’ the cripple said, ‘yes, they are singing with voices like a piece of earth, and drinking with throats that pick nothing, and shaking the world with their looking-at-nothing feet.’

‘What is the bottom of this?’ Tuere asked.

‘Zongo in this town wants Him no more. If he shows his face in this town again, he and anyone like him will be sent away forever and ever’ (73).

CHAPTER FIVE: LITERARY DEVICES IN THE SELECTED WORKS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Literary Devices in *The Drummer Boy*, *The Concubine*, *The Voice* and *The Beggars' Strike*

Literary devices are tools that an author uses to help readers visualize what is happening in the story. In this segment, there is going to be an identification of those elements which the authors have used to embellish their works. There would also be identification and analyses of other elements like characterization, setting, plot, narrators' points of view, language, characterization, etc. Ekwensi, Amadi, Aminata and Okara employ these elements to help readers visualize disability, and as well drive home the points made by their various themes. The subject of disability being a complex one requires that a number of these devices be employed in order to bring to light what these authors want to express about it.

5.1.2 Imagery in Disability Representation

Imagery is used in literature to refer to descriptive language that evokes emotional responses. It is useful as it allows an author to add depth and understanding to his work. It is an author's attempt to create a mental picture (or reference point) in the mind of the reader. Imagery is language that appeals to the five senses; auditory (hearing) gustatory (taste) tactile (touch) olfactory (smell). (http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_is_imagery) Metaphors, similes and onomatopoeia are also common forms of imagery used in literature. The four texts under review abound with imagery, three of them in particular as they are faced with the description and portrayal of persons with disabilities. Their use of vivid or figurative language to represent the subject of disability results in bringing clarity and mental pictures to the reader, and further reinforces the misunderstanding of the subject of disability and the on-going negative stereotype.

Aminata effectively employs imagery in her work because she understands the task facing her, and knows as well exactly what she has to do in order to drive home to her readers the reality of her subject; disability. She is good **at creating visual imagery when she writes about the beggars and the people. Furthermore, she paints a sharp descriptive but contrasting picture of disabled and able-bodied beggars. She makes disabled characters loathsome and obnoxious, thereby creating an abominable picture for readers. She devotes considerable time in describing not only their physical appearance but also their language through the use of omniscient narrator** in order to explicitly highlight the nature of disability as perceived by her. She devotes the beginning of the initial chapters and other parts of the story to describing in full detail her characters, painting very vivid pictures of them. For instance, the beginning of chapter one gives attention to describing them metaphorically, giving them a quantum of vulgar language:

The streets are congested with these beggars, these talibés, these lepers and cripples, all these derelicts. The Capital must be cleared of these people - parodies of human beings rather - these dregs of society who beset you everywhere and attack you without provocation at all times. You hope that the traffic-lights will never turn red as you approach an intersection in your car! And once you overcome the obstacle of the traffic-lights, you have to get past another hurdle to reach the hospital, force your way through a bombardment to get to work in your own office, struggle, to emerge from the bank, make a thousand detours to avoid them at the markets, and finally pay a ransom to enter the-House of God! Oh! these men, these, parodies of human beings, as persistent as they are ubiquitous! The Capital is crying out to be cleared of them...(1)

She paints this bizarre picture reflecting how irritating contact with disabled persons can be and how it is perceived in the society she writes about:

Now, everyone knows that on Fridays the streets are clogged up with beggars. Just as a young man was coming out of the shop, a beggar was feeling his way in and hit him with his stick. The young man swore at the beggar; the latter came back at him with some choice obscenities, to everyone's stupefaction.

'How dare you use such language to me?'

'Oh! just because we're beggars, people think we're dogs! We're beginning to get fed up with the way we're treated!'

This just beats everyone. And it certainly beats Keba Dabo, when it is in fact his job to free the streets of this conglomeration of humanity (1).

In one other place she equates their presence in the city to that of a foul smelling putrefying wound:

'You realise, the latter went on, their presence is harmful to the prestige of our country; they are a running sore which should be kept hidden, at any rate in the Capital. This year the number of tourists has fallen considerably, in comparison with last year's figures, and it's almost certain that these beggars are to some extent responsible. We really can't let them invade our cities and form a threat to public hygiene and the national economy (2).

The beginning of chapter two focuses on describing the beggars. Aminata gives a graphic depiction and as such gives a great insight into their personalities or rather her assumption of

them. At this point, the image of the body of disability is not presented from the point of view of those opposed to them but rather that of the narrator and what do we find? Eyesores, squalor, stench and cacophonies. Within the same pages, the able-bodied receive admirable description:

There is universal laughter as Salla Niang, from her chair in the doorway of her room, harangues the impressive crowd of beggars who fill the courtyard, carrying their battu the calabash which serves as a begging-bowl. Salla Niang holds a winnowing-basket on her lap and as she speaks she counts the money in the basket. The crowd comprises men and women of all ages and sizes, some crippled, some hale and hearty, all depending on their outstretched hands for their daily pittanceí .

And among the faces like masks with darkly protruding eyes, among the hoary heads and ulcerated limbs, covered with the pustules of scabies or eaten away with leprosy, among the rags which leave half-naked bodies which have long been innocent of any contact with water, among the beggarsøcrutches, sticks and battu, there are some adorable little tots who smile happily at life, twittering in rhythm with the clatter of pewter jugs (8).

Whenever she describes the female characters, she does so with a special flare to project them to a desirable ideal position. The language she employs is such that appeals the attention of the five senses in a pleasant way:

Narou, Sallaø husband, happens to be passing at this moment with his kettle to go to his ablutions. He is- delighted to hear the compliments addressed to his wife. Sallaø boubous are very fine and she knows how to wear them. What is more,

under her boubou she wears a pagne, and under this pagne she wears an immaculate little loincloth, and under this she has strings of white bead' round her hips. Women nowadays disdain this custom, not realising how much of their sexual attraction they lose thereby. The tinkle of these beads in the silence of the night in the Savanna, combined with the intoxicating smoke of cuu.ra.ye incense and the captivating perfume of gongo - what words can express the exhilarating effect this has on Narou!

–The old gossips in the districtø he says to himself, –will never understand that.ø

–Narou is a weakling,øthey say.

–Salla wears the trousers.ø

–Heø not really a man.ø

–They can go on slandering me; not one of them will ever know what ties me to Sallaø(11-12).

This contrasts sharply with the nauseating image of disabled beggars she paints before presenting Salla. For instance, when projecting her charisma and leadership qualities, she first presents the disabled in a helpless hopeless situation with an image laden language and Sala as the only light at the end of the tunnel:

The atmosphere had suddenly grown silent. Ears are pricked up; eyelids flicker, but remain closed. Little by little the mantle of twilight settles on the dark silhouettes which fill Salla Niangø's courtyard (22).

She is so committed to painting this kind of image to leave no one in doubt of the point she wants to drive home. The great disparity between the image of the disabled and the able-bodied makes the reader imagine that the decay among the disabled beggars enriches the likes of Salla Niang and gives them importance and this is effectively achieved with the use of simile:

Mour is struck by the sight. Astonishment rather than compassion. He has never seen, as if simultaneously projected onto a screen, the image of so many physical defects, so much physical decrepitude and human disintegration from which, it is true, some patches of light stand out, like this Salla Niang whose face gleams like a bronze bust, fashioned by a master sculptor. By spontaneous association of ideas he begins to think of certain insalubrious districts of the City, certain slums in the middle of which stand a few buildings in ostentatiously luxurious style, like castles standing in solitary state (79-80.)

Within the same context, she gives attention to the beautiful penetrating authoritative voice of Salla Niang which is a direct opposite of Ngirane's shrill voice and the impression she wants to create about it:

'Mba jamm ngeen am? Are you in peace?ø

'Tabarak Allah! We give thanks to God!ø

'Who is the master of this house?ø

Only now does Salla Niang raise her eyes to look at the visitor.

'What do you want?ø

'Iød like to speak to the master of the house.ø

Tom in charge here.

A clarion-call of a voice, clear and crystalline like a stream of molten silver. Mour is silent for a moment, then begins to wonder what kind of links there might be between this lady and these beggars (80-1).

The blind seems to be in the author's mind the prototype of disability and begging. She is always particular when describing the blind in both dressing and speech. For instance, when Mour's attitude towards the beggars softens, the image and symbol of begging is captured thus:

He had seen in a city in the north of the country, the extraordinary case of a beggar who attracted the respect and admiration of the whole population. This man only begged once a week, on the night of Thursday to Friday. This was for him the occasion to pay tribute to God's might and sing the praises of the glory of the Prophet. When the people who had waited for a whole week for this moment and had already prepared their offerings heard his voice which penetrated deep into their hearts and cast its spell over them, they rushed zealously to their doors, where he waited only a few moments ; they offered him money, rice or millet and they had the chance to admire the immense height of the old man, dressed majestically in an ample white or indigo boubou stiff with starch, worn over an equally ample turki, from which a kind of small tab, at the neck, pressed against the Adam's apple of the venerable blind old gentleman, leaning on his stick (94-5).

Prior to this time, she accredited "choice obscenities" to the first nameless blind character introduced to the readers.

In *The Drummer Boy* Ekwensi creates the image of the effects of music on the high and the lowly in this part of the world and how Akin with his melodious voice and samba stirs up the deepest emotions in them. When he introduces Akin, he uses such imagery that in his own concept best describes a blind beggar boy talented in music:

That rich, tender voice came out again: at first gently, singing about love. The bells around the drum scarcely jangled; then the singer became more excited and his voice grew louder, ever louder. He clapped his drum with such force that the crowd went wild. In the heat of the excitement, someone touched Bisi on her wrapper. It was her little maid, Shola. But Bisi was not looking. She had eyes only for the drummer boy. There he stood at the foot of the tree: tall, with nothing on him save a pair of white pants. The samba was under his left armpit, and he slapped at it firmly with his bare hands. His lips were parted and the sweet voice which came out moved her to the point of tears. The boy stopped again as abruptly as he had done the first time, and this time Madam Bisi herself felt a pang of sadness surge through her. The taxi-driver had also joined her, but Bisi paid no attention to him. She opened her purse and took out a ten-shilling note. She forced her way through the crowd, and by the time she got as far as the boy, she was panting. "Akin," she called. "Akin!" The drummer boy turned round. There was a smile on his face, but his eyes were closed. Madam Bisi pressed the note into his hands. "Take this, boy, and God bless you." He smiled again, but did not open his eyes. And then it dawned suddenly on Bisi that this boy had not

merely closed his eyes out of the excitement of the day. He was blind. Such an attractive boy, too; and he was blind (4-6).

Ekwensi is artistic in the use of imagery when describing Akin's emotional state and loneliness in the world. However, he ends up in paradox which reveals the inherent erroneous social assumption of blindness:

Akin was beating his samba along a street of no great importance.

He was alone with the trees and the birds, and his hands moved over the face of his little drum with no conscious effort of his own. Rather, it was as if those hands told his listeners of his inner unhappiness. The rebel in him was awake and he was determined to be alone, free to follow his life in his own way.

He sat down by the roadside and gently caressed his beloved drum, murmuring a little tune to the accompaniment of the slow rhythm. If he had had eyes, he might have seen that he was in a part of Lagos slightly outside the usual tarred roads and storey-houses, for here were trees and birds and grasshoppers. But even though he couldn't see, he had wonderful ears (19-20).

He plentifully uses vivid imagery, and yet leaves enough for the imagination. He thus makes use of a lot of descriptive imagery-filled words. For instance, in describing the effect of his music, he even uses exaggeration and onomatopoeic words to describe the kind of sound and noise their response produces:

Akin placed his drum under his left armpit and slapped it three or four times. He tilted his head to one side, and his lips parted in a smile. Then he struck again,

varying the intensity of his strokes, moving the drum so that the bells sang out a stirring tune.

The boys began to shuffle in their seats. They knew the song he was singing, and they joined him. That made Akin more excited and he raised his voice and quickened his tempo. That did it. In a moment, those boys had forgotten everything about their manners. They sprang to their feet, and with agile leaping and swaying, executed the most intricate bodily movements. They abandoned themselves to Akin's music and sang till their lungs creaked.

And suddenly Akin stopped drumming. Then the boys went wild with excitement. They yelled and screamed, and implored him to continue, but he was firm (25).

Whenever he focuses attention on the drummer boy, the imagery used in describing him is such that carries more of sound and little of visual effect. In the place where he meets Herbert and the three musicians, nothing that seriously engages sight is mentioned:

Akin was making his way on foot along the highway when he suddenly heard loud footsteps behind him. He knew that someone was following him, and he tried to hurry. There was a lot of money in his pockets and it wouldn't do for him to lose it. He had to get back to Lagos as early as he could.

Presently, his followers caught up with him, and, as they did so, he heard the sound of a guitar, accompanied by a bottle and a gourd, all playing a tune which he knew only too well: the story of the woman who lost everything. Without waiting to find out who it was, he put his samba in position, and joined them. He

was wild with joy. He beat his little drum as he had never beat it before. The men took the chorus, shuffling their feet to the rhythm of the tune.

"Ha, ha, ha, Akin...! We've met at last" (69).

It is obvious that whenever Akin is the focal point in the story Ekwensi uses such imagery that will be appreciated from a blind person's point of view. This is shown in the confusion that ensues at the discovery of Herbert:

Where he sat playing his samba, Akin heard these alarms, but he did not understand what was going on.

When he stood up, he heard a man shout: "There he is! The small boy, there he is...! Hold him!"

Confused and a little terrified, Akin decided to stand where he was. Then someone ran past him, shouting wildly to him to run "for his life". It was Herbert; but why was he running? What had gone wrong? Why was his voice so full of terror? Akin began to move. He remembered how often an innocent man could be mistaken for the guilty. He did not want to wait for bad luck to overtake him.

He quickened his pace.

"Stop!" cried a voice behind him. "Stop, there! D'you hear me? If you don't stop, I shall shoot! By Allah! I shall shoot. Take this!"

A shot rang out.

"Oh!" groaned the blind boy. "Oh!. . . I'm dead. . . . They've killed me!"

He fell in a heap.

The soldier came up to the fallen boy.

"Get up! If you d run another step I'd have shot to
kill."

So I'm still alive! thought Akin. "Iô I'm not a thief, only a beggar. . . ."

The soldier looked at Akin's eyes, and immediately saw his mistake. He helped
Akin to his feet. Just then another shot rang out.í

The man on the stretcher began to moan, and Akin in his terror recognized the
voice: one of the musicians of the eating-house.

One of the soldiers put something down and it fell with a chink. "We collected
their tools, a guitar, a gourd and a bottle" (71-4).

In *The Concubine*, Elechi Amadi paints a horrifying picture of Madume in his blindness that even the environment and domestic animals are not spared from the terror he unleashes. One of the elders describes him as barking on people thereby creating an image of an angry vicious dog. This is captured in the following passage:

Madume swallowed hard. 'You are bandying words with me, are you?' The blind man's face twitched with anger. He fingered about for his walking-stick as casually as he could. Wolu instinctively moved back a pace or two! The stick missed her by the length of a finger. A hen foraging with her young ones hard by

clucked loudly and puffed out her feathers as the stick whizzed past. The children looked on with fear in their eyes (72).

He is sarcastic when describing Mmam. The same person said to give the drums more beating than is really necessary in a few moments later is said to caress the edge of the female drum with his crooked fingers which is highly ironical.

In *The Voice*, Okara uses more of the imagery that will be better appreciated by people living in the coastal region and some more common in the tropics when describing his characters. For instance, Chief Uzongo refers to Okolo's voice as "the voice of mosquito which had driven even sleep out of their eyes." One of the most disturbing part of a tropical night is the buzz of mosquitoes after a weary day that denies one rest and sleep. And this calls to mind the story of the proverbial mosquito whose marriage proposal was turned down by the ear on account of his frail looking frame that he would not last. He therefore vowed to daily remind the ear that he lives. The image of a rotten stinking corpse is further employed by Okara to show how loathsome and unacceptable madness (mental disability) is viewed in the society although that is not his original target. But we find the image of confusion recurrent in Okolo who is always stuck in conflict of ideas but always ends up following that which lands him into trouble.

The blind and the deaf are the most undeveloped characters in the text. They are mentioned only about three times in the entire work with such imagery that can only excite disdain. They are given neither speech nor thought even with the omniscient narrator employed by Okara. He uses simile to sharpen this image reflecting how their existence hangs on others. This is shown in the following quote, "Even the deaf and dumb looking at lips as a hungry person looks at the mouths

of people eating, hurried; and the blind, staring hard at nothing, guided by stamping feet and voices, groped" (69).

They are always placed at the rear showing that they have no mind of their own.

5.1.3 The Use of Metaphors and Simile Representing Disability

A metaphor is a figure of speech that identifies one thing as being the same as some unrelated other thing, for rhetorical effect, thus highlighting the similarities between the two. It is therefore considered more rhetorically powerful than a simile. While a simile compares two items, a metaphor directly equates them, and so does not apply any distancing words of comparison, such as "like" or "as." Elechi Amadi in *The Concubine* makes use of metaphor and simile in describing the disabled characters which creates an alienating and stereotypical effect in the novel. Madume's anguish when he becomes blind is considered weak and unmanly hence, the comparison with a woman's hysteric behavior, "He kept to his room and wept like a woman" (71).

He equates him with a hostile dog that knows no friend, "Well, he has only himself to blame. I don't see why he should bark at people," Wosu said (73).

When describing the speech impediment of the priest of Amadioha, his so-called mild stammering turns to the rumbling of thunder, "He was a mild stammerer. Wodu Wakiri always said he rumbled like thunder when he spoke" (9).

In *The Voice*, Okara's mention of the deaf is only a figurative expression commonly used in the society showing how stubbornly the people have chosen not to listen to the voice of truth which

Okolo represents just because of what Uzongo offers. The metaphoric use of the blind equally points out the ignorance and foolishness of people who just ape the behaviour of others.

5.1.4 Disability and Symbols

A symbol is the use of a concrete object to represent an abstract idea. When used in literature, it is often a figure of speech in which a person, object, or situation represents something in addition to its literal meaning. Elechi Amadi's development of the character Madume and his consequent blindness symbolizes the idea of poetic justice which is central in the society he writes about. Many of the characters who are closely associated with Madume express this view by word, thought and action: when Ihuama sees Wulu clad in mourning cloth, she at once attributes the death of Madume as a consequence of being "big-eyed".

Unconsciously, Ihuoma stopped her cracking and began to think of Madume's death. Somehow she had been convinced that something bad must be in store for a man who was so "big-eyed". It was impossible for the wicked to go unpunished, the ever watchful gods of retribution, Ofo and Ogu, always made sure of that. They were not particularly powerful gods but they reminded stronger gods of those due for punishment (76).

Earlier on, Chima and Nwosu in their discussion reflect the same view which is encapsulated in a proverb: "Madume's big eye may cost him his life eventually. Like the hunter who was never satisfied with antelopes, he might be obliged to carry an elephant home one day and collapse under the weight" (15).

According to AO Ashaolu, "It is common knowledge that Okolo in Ijaw means the voice"; but in the world of Okara's novel, it is a voice in the wilderness, the voice of wisdom and of meaningful dissent which is heard by no one except Tuere, the alleged witch, the Ukule, the cripple, both of

who are themselves symbolic extensions of Okolo's identity and predicament in Amatu." Ukule the cripple therefore, in *The Voice* symbolizes people who are often ignored in the society but they are full of knowledge and foresight, who though may lack the power of immediate action but possess the power of lasting change. Okara equates him with the little flame Tuere blows with all her "shadow" till it comes up. At first curled but then steady illumining the dark room. , Okara is careful to stress an affirmative presence and the continuing influence of a forward-looking alternative to desolation. "Your spoken words will not die" says Ukule the cripple, as he moves into the outside darkness (127).

5.1.5 Narrative Voice/Point of View

All the authors of the texts under study employ the third person point of view and omniscient narrator which enable them to bring out the different experiences, frame of mind and actions of characters in the novels. But somehow disturbing is the fact that the omniscient narrator in *The Beggars' Strike* is also blind and deaf to the mind of characters with disabilities. The only things readers hear and see are but the speech and actions without any report of the inner-workings of their mind. This is not the case with able bodied characters. It is however, a reflection of the norms in the society where others want to think and talk for the disabled. Although the disabled seem to be the focus in the novel, they are not the filtering consciousness, they are seen either from the viewpoint of Salla Niang or Mour Ndiaye. The same is applicable in the *Drummer Boy*. Akin who is seemingly the protagonist is not the filtering consciousness through whom we see other events in the novel.

Rather, there are four principal characters who, like a relay race present him to the readers namely, Madam Bisi who opens the story, Nurse Brown who tells how his blindness came about, Ayike who uses him to grow her business, and Fletcher who tries to educate him.

5.1.6 Characterisation

Many of the characters with disabilities in *The Beggars' Strike* are portrayed as insolent, dirty, unreasonable and good for nothing but beg.

In *The Concubine Madume* in his blindness is presented as an insolent wicked ingrate and Mmam terribly short-tempered but highly skilled in drumming irrespective of his crooked fingers.

Akin in *The Drummer Boy* is portrayed as strong-willed not knowing what is good for him and therefore, needing others without his opinion to channel him to real success and usefulness. This is reflected in the concluding part of the text:

Just then,they heard the sound of drumming coming from the woods.

They went over, all of themô Bisi, Ayike, Nurse Joe and Fletcher. They stood a good distance away, so as not to attract the drummer's attention.

Akin wore a dark blue jumper that came down to his knees. His feet were bare, and his long bony hands held the tambourine, the samba; not in the usual manner under his armpit. He had the samba in the palms of his two hands, and his elbows were raised high above his head, and he was beating the samba in the air and the bells were jingling and his feet were tapping. The boys, the delinquents, the dangerous criminals, the thieves, the liars, the run-aways- from-home, they all

crowded around him like rats around the Pied Piper. And they danced and sweated.

And just at that moment, as if even Nature herself had been conquered, the evening sun came out in one last red glow. The entire sky was transformed into a dazzling arc of red so that the white clouds were tinged and they stood out against a red-blue sky. The trees stood out dark

and silent, and all Nature seemed to focus its last effort in that red glow of Nigerian sunset.

Madam Bisi and Joe held hands. Ayike looked on, like a child lost in wonder. Akin had brought with him some form of magic, some strange enchantment and power, over Fletcher's Forest Home. She glanced at Fletcher. His eyes were misty. Bisi, too, was trying to conceal a tear, big and bold, that was quickly stealing down her cheek. She looked quickly away to the woods, where Akin the Drummer Boy was radiating happiness, in a manner to make everyone think only of doing good, of being good, and of living a clean life (81-2).

In *The Voice* whereas the characters with disabilities are nameless excepting their disabilities, only Ukule the cripple has a name with the tag of his disability. He only among others possesses the ability of speech and thought and the reader hears him say his disability is a choice.

5.1.7 Language

The tone of language used by the authors of the texts under study seems to be one in describing characters with disabilities. For instance, two blind characters in *The Beggars' Strike* namely,

Ngirane-Sarr and the second nameless blind old gentleman are connected with music. The former plays the guitar and at a point is referred to as "Mr Guitarplayer" while the latter sings with an enchanting voice that penetrates deep into people's heart

The same description is found in *The Drummer Boy* about Akin who thrills a whole crowd with his little Samba.

Mmam in *The Concubine* is equally credited with such expertise in drumming that both the old and young alike are forced into dancing.

Then Aminata Sowfall and Ekwensi though from two different geographical/religious background are almost identical in describing the blind characters. For instance, Ngirane-Sarr is portrayed as correctly dressed in navy blue suit and a distinguished air of bending his head slightly to the left.

On the other hand, the narrator in *The Drummer Boy* tells the reader that Akin looks more dignified when he is dressed in a blue jumper and, when asked to play for the boys of Ilekan College, "He tilted his head to one side, and his lips parted in a smile." (25)

5.2 Conclusion

In this work, a close consideration has been given to disability representation; how persons with disabilities are presented in the selected works; how the different socio-ethnic groups and cultures view disability; how these attitudes have been enshrined in the traditional, moral and ethical norms; what disability means for the subject and the imagery that is recurrent in these works. The works under study are Aminata Sow Fall's *The Beggars' Strike*, Elechi Amadi's *The Concubine*, Cyprian Ekwensi's *The Drummerboy*, and Gabriel Okara's *The Voice*.

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