

Representation of Fictional Characters with Disabilities in Selected Crime Novels of Ọládẹ̀jọ Ọ̀kédìjì

Oláléré Adéyemí,
Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages,
University of Ilorin, Nigeria
adeyemiolalere@yahoo.com

Abstract

Scholars of Yorùbá literary criticism have not done much in the area of disability studies; therefore, there is a paucity of critical works on the representation of people with disability in Yorùbá novels. This study is intended to fill the gap. The objectives of the study, therefore, were to examine the representation of fictional characters with disabilities in Ọládẹ̀jọ Ọ̀kédìjì's crime novels particularly *Bínú ti rí* and *Àgbàlagbà Akàn*; assess the message of the novelist, and the implications of those representations for the society within the social and charity models of disability theory. The findings of the study showed that Ọ̀kédìjì represents the blind and cognitively impaired persons in a positive manner through his modes of projected characterization. He identifies with the plights of a person with a disability, they are mostly victims of poverty, hunger, and crimes in the Post-colonial Nigerian society; and treats all the fictional characters with dignity and honor in line with Yorùbá thoughts and beliefs. Ọ̀kédìjì rejects through his characterization technique and use of proverbs, the insidious kind of social categorization and stigmatization that carry with it a 'devalued status' for disabled people prevalent in the modern time as against the Yorùbá culture which regards those living with disability as 'Èni-Ọ̀rísá' (offspring of the deity). The paper concluded that the message of the novelist about people with disabilities is that disability is not an element

of inability; there is ability in disability if society projects a positive image of people with disabilities.

Keywords: representation, crime novel, disability,

Introduction

In Yorùbá literary studies, critical works looking specifically at the subject of disability and /or disabled characters in literature are very recent unlike in the United States of America and Britain where disability studies are recognized as fields of study in literature. According to Nasrullah (2018), disability studies began to emerge in the west in the late twentieth century because of the disability rights movement and the seminal works of a few scholars thus, it is a flourishing enterprise. In the traditional Yorùbá society; oral literature such as folktales, (àlò onítàn), Ifá literary corpus (ẹ̀ṣẹ̀-ifá), praise poetry (oríki), legends (ìtàn akọ̀ni), myths (itàn iwásẹ̀) and incantations (ọ̀fọ̀), include people with disabilities as heroes, heroines, and participants in their narratives but there is an apparent lack of engagement between Yorùbá novelists, scholars, and those of children literature in the contemporary time. The approach of children's literature can have a significant impact on the children reading it, whether they personally experienced disability or not; literature, according to Denman-west cited in Adeyemi (2013, p.88) 'has proven to be an agent capable of influencing attitudes and acceptance of impairments'.

The apparent lack of engagement between literary scholars and those of children's literature neglects the needs of huge numbers of young readers whose ideas are formed by misinterpretations. Many of them will have to renegotiate their misunderstanding of the nature of disability later in order to successfully manage disability, whether their own or others' private or public life. The current movement to include children, youths, and adults with disabilities into the mainstream society in politics, socio-economic and social life has not really been acknowledged by Yorùbá modern novelists, unlike Nollywood filmmakers who include disabled characters in some of the social and Yorùbá metaphysical films such as Jimoh Aliu's Àrélù, *Fópomóyò* and *Àgbò Méjì* among others. The paucity of scholarly criticism on disability and disabled characters in Yorùbá written literature may be attributable to the unavailability of novels that include disabled characters as either the main hero/heroine or functional characters in their texts. While some of the novels of Fágúnwà such as Ògbójú *Ọ̀ḍẹ̀ nínú Igbó Irúnmọ̀lẹ̀* and *Adiitú Olódumarẹ̀* among others make use of people with disabilities as background characters, modern Yorùbá social, historical, political, feminist, and crime novels do not make use of fictional characters with disabilities. Apart from Qdúnjọ's *Kúyẹ̀*

that makes Kúyè, the deaf and dumb character the main hero of his fiction, leading Yorùbá novelists do not usually include people with disabilities as characters in their literary works.

One novelist that stands out in the comity of Yorùbá writers is Oládèjọ Òkédìjì, a literary icon, generally known for detective and thriller novels' writing; he includes fictional characters with disabilities in two of his novels namely *Bínú ti rí* and *Àgbàlagbà Àkàn*. This study attempts to answer the following questions: How disability is represented in the selected texts of Oládèjọ Òkédìjì? What message does it seem to deliver about disability and people with disabilities? What are the implications of those representations for individuals in Nigerian society? The objectives of the study, therefore, were to examine the representation of fictional characters with disabilities in the selected texts; assess the message of the novelist as portrayed in the mode of his characterization, and explicate the implications of those representations for individuals in society.

The research methodology is descriptive. It involves a critical reading and content analysis of the two texts purposively selected for the study. The selection of the two texts is significant for two reasons. First, out of all the major novels written by Oládèjọ Òkédìjì such as *Àjà ló lẹrù*, *Atótó Arére*, *Òpá Àgbélékà*, *Ògá ni Bùkólà*, *Ààrò Olómoge* and *Kárin ká pò*, the two selected novels have fictional characters with disabilities. No other novels of the author include characters with disabilities as either a hero/main character, functional or background characters. Also to the best of my knowledge, the two texts have not been subjected to literary disability criticism even though Òkédìjì's literary texts are popular among critics and lovers of Yorùbá novels; who have done extensive and scholarly works on Òkédìjì's crime novels using other theoretical frameworks.

The academic value of this study would not only add to the few existing works on Yorùbá literary disability studies. It would shed luminous light on the representation of people with disabilities by one of the Yorùbá literary icons of the twentieth century who has just passed on to glory in 2019 and show the cultural perspectives and attitudes of the Yorùbá people to people with disabilities. It would also have social relevance, by changing the negative perception of post-colonial Yorùbá people who view people with disabilities with pity and as an unfortunate burden on society.

Disability Theories

In Yorùbá literary scholarship, not much has been done in the area of disability studies to the extent of formulating a particular theory of disability as we find in Britain, Russia, and the United States of America. The approaches

to disability studies tend to be eclectic, drawing from both our cultural and historical background and Britain and USA postulations. There are many theories of disability in vogue, but we shall discuss just three of them in this study. The first one positions people with disabilities as welfare recipients. This is what Yeatman (2008) calls dependency theory. The dependency theory is based on the medical, lay, and charity models of disability. The three models embody a worldview, which constructs disability around the notions of disputed degrees of impairment, feared states, and perceptions of disability as a personal issue rather than a public responsibility (Fulcher, 1989). All three models, according to Newell (1998) undermine the status of people with a disability and support the notions of dependency.

Out of the three models of dependency theory, the medical model is the oldest and most popular among medical scientists. The model views a person with a disability as a problem or a burden. Disabled people are regarded as people with permanent illness or injury that makes it difficult for them to use part of their body normally, thus, they need sustained medical care. Some of the assumptions of the medical model are disabled people need to be cured; they are sick and incapacitated; they need institutional care because they are not normal; and they are a burden to society. The medical model fails to look at the causes of exclusion or at the reasons for social barriers but rather attempts to 'fit' the person with a disability into the existing system. The lay discourse of disability emphasizes the 'otherness' of disability in that body 'disabled' are unfavorably contrasted against the 'able-bodied' (Fulcher, 1989). The lay model is linked to the issue of fear that people have for people with disabilities and the discourse is focused on perceived 'abnormal' physical appearances. The charity model defines people with disabilities as those needing help, who are objects of pity, personally tragic, dependent eternal children, and low achievers by the ideal standard.

Postcolonial theorists such as Synder and Mitchel (2006) reject the narratives of dependency theory and the pity model. They advocate the decolonization of reading practices and offer an alternative model based on culture. Davidson (2008) asserts that (Post) colonial histories punctuated by disabling events such as war, population displacement, and civil unrest as well as ongoing poverty. In such societies, disability may consequently be 'as much about national and cultural power differentials as it is a matter of medicine and bodies' (p. 175). Quayson (2007) states that the main interest of scholars in this field has been to shift the discussion of disability away from the medical discourse that had dominated many discussions previously and to see disability from impairment but speak to the built and social environments that generate difficulties for people with disabilities.

The rejection of dependency theory leads to the independency theory of disability. The independency theory of disability views people with disability as individuals with civil rights of access and equity recognized. The independency theory is based on the social model and the universal human rights model of disability. The social model insists that the discrimination against disabled persons has little to do with their disabilities but more to do with how society is constructed and organized.

The social model recognizes the fact that disability affects every aspect of our lives, not just health. It shows the need to address disability at every level: social, economic, and political. People with disabilities have the right to enjoy their lives like their non-disabled friends and siblings. Some of the factors affecting people with disabilities in society are segregated education, inaccessible transport, poorly designed buildings, poverty, and discrimination. The model states that social and physical barriers, prejudice, and discriminating practices further disable people. The Universal Human Rights model of Independency theory recognizes that persons with disabilities are entitled to enjoy the full range of internationally guaranteed rights and freedom without discrimination on the ground of disability. The various models of dependency and independency theories of disability emerge from the critical methodologies of the western, middle-class academic contexts, good, as they may be, some of the models lack attention to constructions of disability outside a western framework. Synder and Mitchel (2006) support this view when they assert that:

The field needs to [...] grow more in its critique (and less Eurocentric in its models). The future of the field depends upon its ability to take up this challenge in a way that does not replicate the global commodification of other identities. This entails a thoroughgoing recognition that Western-based methodologies have limited utility for apprehending disability in other cultural contexts (pp. 198-199).

The message of these critics is that the application of disability theory from the perspective of western epistemology alone is not sufficient with the views of non-western countries. As noted by Adeyemi (2010) disability and people living with disabilities are viewed from two perspectives in Yorùbá society. The first view premised on the religion of the people. Òrìṣà-ńlá is the sculptor-divinity who has been given the prerogative by Olódùmarè to create as he chooses so that he makes a man of shapely or deformed features. The hunchback (*abuké*), the cripple (*arọ*), albino (*àfín*), the blind (*afọ́jú*), the mentally retarded (*arindin*) are regarded to be special marks of prerogative either as a manifestation of his displeasure at the breach of some taboo or to show that

he could do as he likes. Thus, each person with a disability in this category is called *Ẹni Òrìṣà* (ward of the divinity). The second view of disability is on the people who experience disability due to accidents or brought about by the victims. The Yorùbá people's attitude towards those who have brought misfortunes on themselves without the agency of the divinities is rather different. In the Yorùbá pre-colonial society, those living with disabilities are not regarded as a tragedy or victims to be pitied. They are respected as special children of the gods. They are treated with respect and dignity because of the gods. It is a taboo to stigmatize, insult, or mock those with disabilities this is reflected in the following excerpts from incantations;

Arọ ni mí, wọn Kì í bú mí
Aràrá ni mí, wọn kì í nà mí
Abuké ni mí, ẹ má bà mí lókùn

(I am a lame person, no one dares rebuke me
 I am a dwarf, no one dares beat me
 I am a hunchback fellow, no one dares bind me)

Other verses from Ifá literary corpus place symbolic respect on disabled people e.g.

Òwò, ọ̀wò, ọ̀wò
Òwò kókó lá fi wọgi
Òwò Òrìṣà lá fi wọ ẹ̀fín

(Honour, honour, honour
 It is the honor due to the tree that is given to its knot
 It is the honor due to the divinity that is given to the albino).

By the virtue of the Yorùbá religious beliefs, taboos placed on the people against stigmatization or discrimination against those with disabilities, so the dependency theory particularly the medical model may not be adequate to handle the views and perspectives of the Yorùbá people regarding disability. This is because within the context of Yorùbá belief, disability goes beyond the realm of human beings and involves the active participation of Yorùbá deities, especially Òrìṣà-ńlá (Adegbindin, 2019). However, in this study disability models such as the social model and charity models are contextualized within the Yorùbá cultural purview to analyze the two selected texts.

Brief Review of Existing Works on Yorùbá Literary Disability Criticism

The emergence of disability studies has given unprecedented visibility to the concerns of persons with disabilities in developed countries of the world. However, in most African countries, especially Nigeria, scholarly attention has not been given to the content of motives behind and social effects of the ways in which individuals with disabilities are represented in literature. There are few critical works on Yorùbá literary disability studies. Most of the works on people living with disabilities are not related to Yorùbá literary criticism; see for example, Idowu (1967), and Jeje and Daramola (1967) among others.

Other critical works on disability and disabled persons in Yorùbá studies come from the field of religion and philosophy. The latest of such works is Adegbindin (2019) entitled “Disability and Human Diversity: A Reinterpretation of Èni-Òrìṣà 1 Philosophy in Yorùbá Belief”. Adegbindin’s work examines and demonstrates the limitations of the medical and social models of disability within the context of Yorùbá belief. His paper concludes that Òrìṣà-ńlá does not mold ‘deformed’ or ‘abnormal’ human forms as a way of punishing certain individuals rather, the deity molds aesthetically differing human forms to communicate his idea of normalcy in material terms. He cited relevant data from ifá literary corpus and written poetry of Adebayo Faleti, particularly *Ìgbéyàwó kan ni `iletò mi*, where Akande, the physically challenged, generous man is the hero. Having a goiter that makes him feel shameful did not cause any stigma or ridicule even at his wedding. In Adegbindin’s view, the medical and the social models of disability theory are not capable enough to capture the conceptualization of disability and disabled people in Yorùbá society.

Adéyemí (2010) examines how selected Yorùbá novelists influenced by their social environment with regard to the representation of people with disabilities. The paper analyses the literary work of J.F. Oduño especially Kúyè and his representation of characters with disability within the Marxist sociology of literature. The paper asserts that, Oduño creatively exposes and condemns all forms of discrimination against people with disabilities. The main character of his novel is Kúyè the deaf and dumb, raised from Zero level to become a hero. He creates the ‘hero’ to challenge Nigerians to develop positive mindsets towards people with disabilities in the post-colonial dispensation.

Adéyemí (2011) is entitled: ‘Disability and the disabled people in Yorùbá proverbs’ written in honor of Professor Oládélé Awobuluyi, the great icon of African Linguistics and Yorùbá studies. The Department of Linguistics and Languages, Adekunle Ajasin University published the paper. The paper

examines the positive and negative representations of people with disabilities in Yorùbá proverbs and concludes that in the traditional Yorùbá society, negative proverbs that underrate the dignity of people with disabilities are rarely used because the positive image held by the people on them increases their motivation to live a normal life. Adéyemí (2013) seems to be the first book on Yorùbá literary disability criticism. The book covers an area of topics such as the place of children in Yorùbá society, people with disabilities in Yorùbá thoughts and beliefs, modern perspectives on disability and people living with disabilities representation of people with disabilities in Yorùbá oral literature particularly Ifá literary corpus, and folktales among others. In the text, Adéyemí asserts that even though D.O.Fágúnwà's novels provide an interpretation of Yorùbá culture and civilization, which gives readers materials and ideas to reflect upon yet his representation of disability, has the coloration of stigmatization and discrimination.

Fictional characters with Cognitive Disorder in Òkédìjì's *Bínú tí rí*

Bínú tí rí is a collection of eight narratives, one of which is entitled: Àyínnike where a character with a disability is the main character while abled persons are functional and background characters. The name given to the disabled character is Mólà Owógidi. His nature of disability is cognitive disorder. He treks from one street to another, from one village to another. He does not beg for money but wherever he gets to, he amuses his audience with his illogical utterances. He is not violent but looks very untidy and unkempt. The narrator describes him as follows:

Wèrè òhún ló n bọ ní tòótọ. Irun àtàrí rẹ ran bójóbójó bi irun orí Dàda Èwù àkísà ló wọ sọrùn, ó n ẹjú pín, pín, pín bi kòkòrò tannátanná lálẹ, Ó n rẹrìn ín àdàrín, ẹrìn iyàngì... (o.i.50)

(Truly the mad man is coming. The hairs on his head is weedy like the head of Dàda. He puts on the garment of rag. He blinks like a night insect. He laughs alone, useless laughs..)

He speaks the Yorùbá language but claims to be an Hausa man. Whenever he meets people and he is given money of higher denominations, he rejects and picks the coins. Akande who knows him very well narrates to Olúwoḷé and few minutes later Mólà Owógidi appears. The following dialogue ensues:

“Mólà Owógidi”? Èmi lò n ké sí ègbón” mú kan nìbẹ, kó o rí ǹnkan ẹjun”

“O sẹ̀ ègbón. Ísì.” Ó mú silè kan, ó sọ́ ọ́ sápadò ọ̀kòtò, ó pẹ̀yìn dà (o.i. 53)

(Mòlà Owógidi!) “I am the one you are calling brother” “Take the one you like, for your food”. “Thank you brother.” He picks one shilling, keeps it in his pocket and goes away

In this episode, Akande and Oluwòlẹ̀ put down money in different denominations- one shilling, ten kobos, ten pounds and fifty pounds, and ten naira and ask him to pick one. He picks one shilling out of them. The shilling coins are no longer in use in Nigeria rather it is naira and kobo. They expect him to pick either fifty naira or twenty but as usual, he picks the shilling coin, laughs joyfully, and walks away. Whenever they ask him why he is not picking the currency, he would say that the coin is real money. So the narrator asserts that the man is an ‘arindin’ imbecile and not really a mad person *Wèrè gidi mà sì kọ́ o, dindinrin lásán ni; Ori rẹ̀ kò pé. Akíndanidání, arindin lásán ni. Wèrè yìí wá rẹ̀rin in gidi, ó ní; Èmi ò fẹ́ owó bébà, owó gidi ni mo fẹ́. Isì (o.i. 55)* He is not a real mad man, he is just an imbecile. The mad man bursts into laughter, he says; ‘I don’t like your currency, it is the genuine money that I like).

The representation of a fictional character with disabilities in *Bínú ti rí* is not discriminatory either directly or indirectly. The attitude of the society of the text is not negative toward the characters with disability. Ezejideaku (2003, p. 167) notes, “The greatest obstacle to the person with a disability is the attitude of the society towards him. If society makes those with disability feel accepted, wanted, and loved, it will go a long way in alleviating the psychological trauma that is inherent in disability”. Even though Mòlà Owógidi is mentally impaired, he is cared for, accepted, and loved by the people. His inability to recognize the worth of currency over the coins does not lead to stigmatization or a special and insidious kind of social categorization, which carry with it, devalued status. The novelist is however silent about the second fictional character named Dájúgbáú who is mentally impaired too. What the narrator says about him is that he is violent and can become injurious unlike Mòlà Owógidi who is harmless and friendly.

Òkédijí’s Projection of Characters with Disabilities in Àgbàlagbà Akàn

Àgbàlagbà *Akàn* is the first crime novel published in 1971 by the Longman Publishers has been reprinted many times. The storyline of the novel is simple and straightforward. The story starts with Lapade the main character, a retired police officer set to go back to his farm but could not go due to the high rate of crimes in Ibadan and its environs. The police under the leadership

of Audu Karimu could not curtail the wave of criminal activities such as kidnapping, stealing, armed robbery, drug peddling, planting of cannabis, and burglary among others. Lapade and his close servant Táfá Ìgìrípá, decide to pursue the criminals, recover all the stolen materials, rescue the kidnapped people, and expose them. In order to expose Oyeniyi Seriki, the ringleader of the gang in the Ègbèdá axis, Lapade disguises as a blind man from the Northern region of Nigeria as a beggar. Thus, in the novel, disability is projected in the sense of prediction-disability to be.

According to Sigmund and Anna Freud (1996), projection is an emotional defense mechanism, whereby one attributes one's own negative or unacceptable thoughts and emotions to others. It is an act of thrusting or throwing forward, an act that causes an image to appear on a surface. It is a form of projected "otherness". Lapade the hero of the novel disguises himself as a blind old man, a destitute desperately looking for alms and help. He walks like a blind old man with a very dirty beggar's calabash plate. He walks like a famished beggar in the town and the police officer on patrol in Idi-Aro gives alms until he escapes from the city and gets to Ègbèdá.

He walks up to a shoemaker and seeks for directions to the house of Seriki (the criminal gang leader in the region). Everyone in the town is afraid of Oyeniyi Seriki because he is the accredited head of the thieves of Ègbèdá. The shoemaker shows compassion to the blind beggar, cautiously points, Seriki's house but adds *Şùgbón má sọ pé èmi ni mo tóka fún ọ... kò sí ẹnì tí ó lè bi ní gbogbo ilẹ̀ yì kó nawọ ilẹ̀ Seriki fún ọ* (But do not say I am the one who has directed you to Seriki's house. If you ask anyone in the whole of this town, no one will show his house). He gets to the house of the location where the criminals are having discussions on how to share the loot of their operation. The narrator says: *Ènikan dide, ó mú silè kan, ó nà án sí Lápàdé. Lápàdé rẹ̀rìn ín, ó dúró tandi ó ẹ̀ bi afọ̀jú. Onítọ̀hún sọ owó sínú igbá rẹ̀, ó dún pọ̀pọ̀pọ̀. Lápàdé fọ̀wọ̀ tá inú igbá náà, ó mú silè kan yì Ó fi kan orí rẹ̀....* (o.i 49) (Someone stood up, he took one shilling and offered it to Lápàdé as alm, Lápàdé smiled. He stood erect; he posed like a blind man. That person dropped the money on the calabash plate and there was sound, Lápàdé took the money from the plate and touched his head with it).

The scene focuses on the humor of the representation of a body that does not fit. When we view an able-bodied character playing a person with a disability, we have the same experience of exaggeration and performance as when we view a man playing a woman. Just as modern society underrates disabled people and takes them for granted," Lápàdé the blind man" in the episode gives a surprise package to the gang. He takes them by surprise and he uses his disability to project the strength of disabled people. Adenrele one of the gang members leads the blind old man to go out after he has given him

his alms but Lápàdé falls down because he could not see clearly. The following scene ensues:

Nígbà tí ó kù díẹ̀ kí wọn dé àgánrándì `ita, Lápàdé tún şubúlułẹ̀ kòbìtá. Adenrele pòşé Ó ní “Tiẹ̀ ti jẹ́, baba yì! Bó o bá fẹ́ kú, o ò kọ́rísí àtàn lọ kú sí, kí o má dẹ̀rùpa ẹ̀nikẹ̀ni! Sí tiẹ̀ já títì bó o bá fẹ́ kú. Ẹ̀rú ijoba lò ó dà ní títì. Bí o bá kú síhinín, ẹ̀mi lo fẹ́ dá wàhàlà rẹ̀ sí lórùn.” Adenrele tún bèyẹ̀ mólẹ̀ láti fà á gòkè. Ọ̀jìjì ni Lápàdé sọ̀ ọ̀ lẹ̀şẹ̀ẹ̀ lágbon, tó tún ta á nípà á nìkùn..... Ó kàn lọ silẹ̀ bèyẹ̀ ni, kò tilẹ̀ dura rará...ó dákú (o.i.51)

(When they are about to get to the outdoors, Lápàdé falls down flatly, Adenrele hissed the lament “what is wrong with you old man? If are about to die, go to the dung hills and die, and don’t be a burden to anyone here! Get to the road if you want to die. You will be government property. If you died here, you will put me into trouble. Adenrele tries to lift him suddenly; Lápàdé gives him an uppercut in his chin and a heavy kick on his stomach.... He falls down and faints... (p. 51).

At that time the other criminals are not aware, they are still debating on how to share their loot, which results in hot arguments and a serious fight. As they were fighting, Lápàdé the projected blind man snatches the bag of the disputed money, exposes the criminals to the police officers on parade, and escapes with the money. In the episode, apart from Adenrele, another member of the gang stigmatizes the blind beggar. This is in line with the cultural and religious beliefs of the Yorùbá people that abhor discrimination or stigmatization of people with disabilities. The statement of Adenrele to the beggar that ‘go and die by the road and you will become the property of the government’ is a sad commentary on the changes brought about by colonialism on Yorùbá society and the negative perception of people living with a disability. Adenrele however died in the episode while the character with a disability survived.

Another fictional character with a projected disability in Àgbàlagbà *Akàn* is Tàfá Ìgìrípá ọ̀mọ̀ Láwálé. He is physically strong but intellectually incapacitated. He was once a criminal and now he hates crime. He becomes Lápàdé’s servant and follows him everywhere to expose crimes. He is bold and powerful but deficient in intellectual reasoning. Ọ̀kédìjì uses an aspect from Yorùbá cultural pool of *oriki* inagijẹ̀ (Cognomens) to depict him. Tàfá Ìgìrípá ọ̀mọ̀ Láwálé is heartless and derives joy by inflicting pain on another person. His projection as a mentally disabled character is reflected in his below-average responses in dialogue and statements in the plot of the novel. Mental disability here means sub-average intellectual functioning. He has a strong body posture, and the tendency to burst into violent behavior is evident in how the ways

he treats captured criminals. It is usually difficult for him to think on any matter, rather, he finds it easy to react to issues by action. He talks too much with no substance in most of his speeches especially when he is drunk. Whenever Lápàdé asks for his advice, he is usually silent, because it is difficult for him when it comes to brainstorming but inflicting pain on others is easy, he is very strong and bold to face criminals and he is never afraid of Audu Karimu the Police head. His peculiar *oríkì-ìnagije*, which he himself loves to repeat, shows his physical acumen:

Èmi Tàfá Ìgìrìpá ọkunrin ogun. Èmi Àjàó Àró ọmọ Láwálé... Èmi ijànbá ilé, ijànbá ọde, Ijànbá oko, ijànbá ojú-ọ̀nà, ijànbá egàn, ijànbá igboro. Èmi ẹ̀bọra tíí jade lósàn, èmi Eégún tí í jó lóru. Èmi lékèélékèé tí í fò lójò, èmi Şàngó tí í jà lẹ̀ẹ̀rùn. Èmi ni jàndùkú tí í na iyá oniyà, o ku ẹni tí yòò na t'emi. Èmi òbùkọ dé òórùn dé.... (Àgbàlagbà Akàn, o.i. 84-85).

(I, Tàfá Ìgìrìpá, man of war. I, Àjàó Àró son of Láwálé.... I, mishap at home, a mishap outside, a mishap in the farm, a mishap on the road, a mishap in the farm, a mishap in the bush, a mishap in the city. I, the spirit that walks in the day, I, the masquerade that dances at night, I, the cattle egret that flies in the rainy season. I, the god of thunder that strikes in the dry season. I, the thug that flogs other people's mothers who dare flog my own. I, the he-goat have arrived, bad odor is here...).

The cognomen of Tàfá Ìgìrìpá shows that only a pathological sadist could bear such names and descriptions. He has the desire to inflict physical pain on another person and derive joy from it. He has an impairment in interpersonal functioning. There is a lack of concern for the feelings or suffering of others in Tàfá Ìgìrìpá. He does not care or has concern for the feelings or problem of others. When Lápàdé asks him why he shows no remorse about the negative or harmful effects of his action on the dying man who escapes to Lápàdé's house, the following dialogue ensues:

Tàfá, o jorí ahun ni? Áánú èniyàn kì í şe ọ ni? Bẹ̀ẹ̀ ni iwọ náà kì í şigi... Tàfá rẹ̀ ohùn rẹ̀ sílẹ̀, ó ní, Ẹ má bá mi wí ọ̀gá mi, ojú áánú mi ló ti fọ̀, tìkà ló kù sí mi lágbarí. Ojú áánú mi ti jò dànu, o ku tìkà... o ku tidẹ̀rù ba ọmọ ọlọmọ... (o.i. 8)

(Tàfá, why are you so heartless? You have no pity on anybody. You are not a tree yourself Tàfá lowered his voice, and said, master, do not vex. My eyes of compassion are blind It remains the eyes of a sadist. The eyes of

mercy have leaked; it remains wickedness, what I have now in my socket is wickedness, oppression, and terror against other people's children)

Tàfà Ìgìrìpá manifests features of mental impairments in the way and manner he treats other fictional characters in the novel. Tàfà Ìgìrìpá appears 'normal' to people because his bodily configuration is not impaired, thus, with a hidden disability. This is what Davis (2005) calls 'invisibility disability' p. 153. She contends that the sort of stigmatization faced by persons with anomalous bodily configuration may not be different from that of those with invisible disabilities.

In the novel, the projected fictional characters with disabilities are not victims of discrimination or pitied rather they rise up to make the abled people be victims, especially the thieves. The blind man is treated with respect by all other characters including the police officer and criminals; they give him alms in line with the tradition of "be your brother's keeper" which has roots in the Yorùbá communal system. Even though the projected blind man is a Hausa man who comes from the Northern region, he is helped by the shoemaker to locate the abode of Seriki. The only person that victimizes the blind man in the narrative dies. The novelist succeeds in his representation of disabilities as another aspect of humanity that is ignored. In Yorùbá literary texts and it is helpful in a provoking discussion that can reduce the wrong perception of those living with disability, discrimination, and stigma they encounter, he tries to oppose in his mode of characterization manifest in some of the rhetorical devices, especially Yorùbá proverbs, which he uses, some of such proverbs are listed below;

1. *Adètẹ̀ kó èpà, wọn ní kó dúró gba èni, ó ní èyí tí òun fi owó rà, òun tì ri ọwọ̀ kó o délé na o.i. 6.*
2. *Abarapá ti gbogbo ènìyàn, òkùnrun ti ẹni kan soṣo o.i.10*
3. *Şé kí odi lè gbọ̀rọ̀ la ẹ́ ẹ́ sí ọ́ nísojú ọmọ ẹ́ o.i. 11*
4. *Arọ́ tí ó ń mu òògùn iyàgbé ní ó, wàhàlà níí dá sílẹ̀ fún ara ilé ẹ́ o.i.104*
5. *Àfàìmò kọ̀ ní ajá kò fi ní ẹ́ òkú adití bá yìi, Òun ló dífá fún adití tó dákú, tí akólòlò ń pọ̀fọ̀; Adètẹ̀ ń wá abẹ̀fẹ̀lẹ̀ tí yóò fi sin in ní gbẹ̀rẹ̀; afọ̀jú mú àdó lówọ̀, ó fẹ̀ rọ̀ òògùn sí i lẹ̀nu. Baba àgbàlagbà akáyín da ataare sẹ̀nu, ó ń jẹ̀ ẹ̀yóò tú u sí adití lójú kí ó lè tají. Arọ́ tó jókòó kalẹ̀ wá ń sunkún, ó ní kò sí ẹni tí yóò gbẹ̀lẹ̀ bí adití bá kú, àfi òun arọ́ yìi nikan. N jẹ̀ àfàìmò kọ̀ ní ajá kò fi ní ẹ́ òkú adití o.i.115*

1. A leper bought groundnut, he was asked to wait and get extra, he replied that the one he bought, he has no hand to carry them home;
2. The abled body belongs to all, but the disabled is on his own;
3. A message is related in the presence of his/her child, so that he/she can inform him/her;
4. The lame that is taking drugs to excrete with ease is creating troubles for his household;
5. It is likely that the dog will eat up the corpse of a deaf. This is divined for a deaf person that fainted, the stammered one is chanting an incantation, the leper is looking for a blade for incision; the blind holds a gourd of medicine to put in the mouth of the deaf. A toothless old man is chowing alligator pepper to pour it on the face of the deaf so that he can recover. The lame person who sat down bursts into tears, he said that if the deaf person died, he would be the only person to dig the grave. Is it not sure that the dog will eat the corpse of the deaf person]

The above proverbs seem to reinforce negative stereotypes, which are not in line with the Yorùbá worldview on people with disabilities. The proverbs seem to represent them as pitiable, helpless, and voiceless, which reinforces the tenets of the medical model of disability. On the other hand, I do not think the writer intends to use proverbs to stigmatize those living with a disability. Known among Yorùbá writers as a specialist in the use of proverbs for aesthetic ornaments and symbolism. Proverbs essentially deployed to portray the conditions of the people with disabilities in the post-colonial Yorùbá society in particular and Nigeria in general. In most states in Nigeria, people with disabilities are treated as ‘pitiable receivers’ who are helpless and have to receive care and cures from able-bodied people for their survival. The political class remembers them during important festivals when donating food and materials following the tenets of the charity model to people with disabilities.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the representation of fictional characters with disabilities in two crime novels of Ọládẹ̀jọ̀ Ọ̀kédìjì namely *Bínú ti rí* and *Àgbàlagbà Akàn*. The novelist adopts the projection technique, naming, and physical description of characters as modes of description to represent those living with disability in the texts. The findings of the study showed that Ọ̀kédìjì represents the blind and cognitively impaired persons in a positive manner; he identifies with the plights of disabled people who are mostly victims of poverty, hunger, and crimes in the Post-colonial Nigerian society; and treats all the fictional characters with dignity and honor in line with Yorùbá

thoughts and beliefs. Òkèdìjì rejects through his characterization technique and use of proverbs, the insidious kind of social categorization and stigmatization, which carry with it a 'devalued status' for disabled people in the modern time as against the Yorùbá culture that regards those with a disability as 'Èni-Òrìsà'. The paper concluded that the message of the novelist is about people with disability, emphasizing that is not an element of inability and that there is ability in disability if society projects a positive image of those living with a disability.

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