DISABILITY AS TROPE OF POSTINDEPENDENCE DISILLUSIONMENT IN SELECTED AFRICAN NOVELS

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CERTIFICATION

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God, my Creator and my Inspiration; my love, Pharm. Sunday Adewale Oladeji without whose love, care and supports my educational dream would have been disabled

and

to my fruits: Pharm. Boluwaji Samuel Toluwani; Boluwade Emmanuel Inioluwa; Boluwagbe Daniel Iseoluwa and Boluwape Esther Iyanuoluwa who are my constant joy and inspiration.

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ABSTRACT

Disability, a motif in African fiction, is used as a trope of postcolonial disillusionment and empowerment. Existing studies on disability in African fiction have concentrated mostly on its literal interpretations, with scant emphasis on disability as a trope of the disabled African continent. This study was, therefore, designed to analyse the representations of disability in selected postcolonial African novels, with a view to determining how disabled characters are utilised as metaphors for neocolonial experiences in African nations.

Hippolyte Taine' Sociological Approach to Literature and Lennard Davis' Social Model of Disability Theory were adopted as the framework, while the interpretive design was used. Ten African novels were purposively selected because of their deep engagement with the trope of postcolonial Africa as a disabled continent. The novels were J. M. Coetzee's *Foe*, *In the Heart of the Country* (IHC) and *Waiting for the Barbarians* (WB), Zaynab Alkali's *The Stillborn* (TS), *The Virtuous Woman* (TVW) and *The Descendants* (TD*)*, Aminata Sow Fall's *The Beggars' Strike* (TBS), Ben Okri's *The Famished Road* (TFR), Ngugi wa Thiongo's *Petals of Blood (*POB) and Naguib Mahfouz's *Midaq Alley* (MA). The texts were subjected to literary analysis.

The most persistent concern is the portrayal of disability generated by instances of neocolonial disillusionment through tyrannical governance, unemployment, spervading gender dissonance. Disability is inscribed through tyrannical rule of postindependence African leaders (*Foe, IHC, WB, POB* and *MA*). Inability to hold on to family land generates unemployment (*WB* and *TFR*). The unending quests for power, position and wealth by post independence African leaders are portrayed as restricting and results to outright exploitation of the masses (*POB, TFR, WB* and *MA*). Ghettos and alleys are creation of neocolonial neglect. These are depicted as incapacitating environments (*TFR, POB* and *MA*). A similar structure of neocolonial misrule forces young women into prostitution (*POB, TFR* and *MA*). Female characters are exploited and become victims of double standard, a corollary of gender dissonance, observed in African society which allows men to be labelled as non-disabled and women as disabled (*TS*, *TVW*, *TD* and *TBS*). Neocolonial abuse of fundamental rights of lower class citizens and their incapacity to challenge this abuse is depicted as disabling (*TFR*, *POB*, *MA*, *Foe*, *WB*, *IHC* and *TVW*). Most of the characters that are depicted as disabled share a similar experience of having non-congenital disability which is imposed on them by neocolonial misgovernance and frustrating social environment.

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African novels depict disabled characters as a microcosm of marginalisation of neocolonial African society from decision-making, social life and economic development. Therefore, post independence Africa manifests a continuous struggle for freedom from colonisation, oppression and disablement through the trope of disability.

Keywords: African novels, Literature and disability, Postcolonial African society, Post independence disillusionment

Word count: 474

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the study

The main thrust of this study is the exploration of disability as trope in postindependent African novels. Hence, in this chapter an attempt is made to look at the history of disability in the world at large and in African society in particular. The study showcases the interlinks between postcolonialism and disability. The significance of this study to scholarship is brought to the fore in this chapter.

The issue of disability has always been contentious universally. It can be defined and refined adversely for the most time and sometimes represented indifferently. In a more accessible way, stories on the horrific treatment of the disabled than humane and positive ones can easily be discovered. For instance, stories like how a disabled black man whose disability was speech impediment was put in a cage and paraded to entertain tourists during the Classical period showcases the inhuman treatment being meted out to the disabled at this time. Meanwhile, in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the common practice was to leave defective babies in the woods or throw them into the rivers to die. In the past, babies with one disability or the other were abandoned to death either in the forests or the rivers. In the courts of Kings and Queens, the disabled were appointed as court clowns. In another vein, those that were insane were confined to sanctums and priories. However, disability is regarded as devilish in some societies and some disabled were equally judged and declared as evil.

In Ancient Egypt, for instance, people with disability were treated as equal with everyone else. On the other hand, Ancient Greece, advocated that they should be exterminated with the exclusion of retired soldiers. People with serious congenital deformities were labelled as monsters during the Classical periods. The word ‘monster’ comes about as close as possible to forming a binary opposition with

'human'. Hence, to be a monster is to be something other than a human being. Garland- Thomson (1997) quoting Aristotle posits that a male-child resembles his father and follows his father's footsteps while a female-child resembles her mother and imitates her. However, some do not resemble either of the parents, although they appear human while others do not look like human beings at all in their appearance, but have similar features with a monster. Aristotle goes further to declare women as monster since they deviate from the male norm. Meanwhile, both Plato and Aristotle, for example, opine that babies with any form of disability are meant for extermination. (Albrecht, 1976; Barnes,1998, Garland-Thomson, 1995; Safford and Safford 1996). Religiously, treating people with disability as pests that must be annihilated at all cost could be clearly seen in the pHoly Bible, most especially from the account in the book of Leviticus Chapter 21: 17-21 of those that God expected to come into His tabernacle to worship Him and those that should not. These accounts which are meticulously summarised include dwarfs, the blind and the lame. This list, could be generally said to have covered most ideas of what or who is impaired or disabled.

God refers to the morally disabled in metaphorical terms as the "deaf", "dumb", and "blind". In the Quranic sense, "deaf", dumb" and "blind" are the unbelievers who turn a blind eye and deaf ear to Allah's words (Al Quran, 1999). The belief in, and understanding of, God's words are according to the Quran, the essential measures of ability and disability. Allah punishes those who obstinately reject and corrupt His blessings and messages by refusing to employ their senses and sensibilities to useful and peaceful ends. Divine punishment consists in disabling them more from seeing God's meaning and finding peace. An entire Quranic chapter is devoted to "prophetic" mistakes made by Prophet Muhammed, in regards to a blind man. In the chapter entitled "He frowned" (Al Qur'an, 80:1-8), the prophet ignored and dismissed the blind man who came to speak with him as he was talking to a person of importance, a seeing and non-disabled man of status. This action of Prophet Muhammed, therefore, is an indication that disability has been a thing of negation from time immemorial.

During the Medieval era, being disabled is regarded as divine punishment for sins or misbehaviour or that of one's ancestors. Over the century, disability has equally been viewed as the work of the devil. The disabled were considered as failure, deformed or defective. In essence, a lot of myths surround the disabled. The disabled are looked at

with fear and always stigmatised, ignored, violated or rejected. Those with physical disabilities were even used for entertainments such as royal clowns, curios in circus or freak shows. Not only this, the disabled whether young or old are caged at home, ostracised and separated from the non-disabled. Often times, those benefits which the non-disabled easily enjoyed are withdrawn from the disabled. Benefits such as education, employment, adequate care and recognition in the family become elusive to the disabled. In essence, the differences that are apparent in the bodies of the disabled were regarded adversely. Being unable to do certain things could also be considered as disability in some societies. In such societies, the disabled were abandoned and sometimes forced to beg for alms for sustenance. In a similar vein, the disabled were treated with pity and disdain. Sadly, in some nations of the world particularly in the so-called third world this still subsits. The disabled, who were often helpless, chose to be institutionalised in order to survive the odds confronting them.

The 19th century witnessed disability being regarded as a medical and social condition. Medically, diseases, trauma and other health conditions are regarded as conduit pipes for disability. Consequently, Medical Model of disability was given birth to. This concept of Medical Model of disability posits that disability should be viewed as a medical challenge which could be healed or controlled. Hencpe, the goal of Medical Model is to cure disability. According to the Medical Model of Disability theorists, Medical doctors are presented as specialists endowed with the knowledge of things that are ideal for the disabled since the disabled are assumed to be incapable and helpless. Essentially, in times past, everything about the disabled centred on professionals in Medicine. Apart from this, the disabled are equally being used as trope in Language and Literature. The presentation of the disabled as a metaphor has been habitualised and it evades notice to the extent that Linton (1998: 17) opines that using the disabled in Language and Literature is like bidding a visitor to a banquet without introducing him or her to other people at the banquet. However, in recent times, the environment and social factors are regarded as causes of disability. This is due to the fact that they act as obstacles for the disabled to be active socially and health-wisely. Thus, the disabled, their families and those advocating for them regarded disability as a result of an environment that is not accessible. They, therefore, opted for the Social Model of Disability and discarded the Medical Model. Meanwhile, this study toes the line of Social Model of disability.

Modern history also offers tragic stories of people with disabilities. Halfway into the 20th century, the disabled were being sentenced to death. The disabled were put to death under the Nazi Germany because the society regarded them as worthless and unprofitable (Powell and Dluggy, 1998). For instance, in 1941 the German government bankrolled a movie where a disabled woman pleaded to be released from suffering for her own advantage and that of the government (Darke, 1999). In addition, being mentally disabled was recognised officially from 1552 B.C. In this period, being disabled with a physical defect is viewed as being inferior to the non- disabled. Equally, it was legal for parents to do away with their disabled children and to ridicule them publicly. In another vein, most times, the disabled were employed as palace clowns.

In America, despite the American government' intervention in favour of the disabled, they are still marginally not employed. Many disabled that are educated, trained and yearned to be gainfully employed are not being employed. Only few number of the disabled are employed. By 2000, disabled men and women earned less than the non-disabled despite the same qualification. However, a lot of the disabled are on the paylist of the welfare and social scheme of the government. Looking at it critically, the American Disability Movement centres on the freedom of individuals through the legal system. The disabled are, therefore, tagged as people with disabilities, thereby, emphasising that both the disabled and the non- disabled are equal by putting the term "people" first, with disability as purely a characteristic out of other ones. In another vein, the Movement for the disabled in Britain prefers to address the disabled as disabled people; the intention of this is to cogitate how the society places defective attributes on people in order to render them disabled. However, this study as a whole is going to use the term "the disabled" broadly to encompass all the complex processes of disability.

Within Europe, non-congenital disability, like damage to a spinal cord and diverse disabilities associated with place of work have contributed totally to add to those with impairments. For example, in 1984 when there was a substance evaporation in a factory at Bhopai, the resultant defects become a link between global capitalism and local disabilities.

A critical look at Africa as a continent shows a correlation between poverty and disability. The various battles which the continent has witnessed, are catalysts which triggers disability in the continent. The outbreak of plague (1914-1944) and other diseases were consistently blamed on the indigenous populations by the colonial masters. In the 1913 outbreak of yellow fever and malaria, the French authorities identified the native as the most likely cause for the resurgence of these diseases. Conklin (1998) quoted Governor–General William Ponty (1908-1914) affirming that it is as if the anopheles absorb from black blood, a renewal of its strength, a new vitality, also, black children conserve and sustain the amaryl virus. Hence, Africans were held responsible for the spread of diseases.

This situation of discriminating against the blacks by the colonialists could further be found in the case of Saartje Baartman, known as the Venus Hottentot, a Khoikhoi woman. She was seen as an abnormal being by a colonialist who was a Medical doctor and taken to Europe in 1810 to be displayed publicly and for scientific examination. Garland-Thomson (1999:73) argues that Baartman was made into an archetypal representative of the disabled and anomaly with the intent of defeating the idea of what constitute the standards for sexiness and compatibility in the body especially for the Whites.

Looking at it critically, within the scholars'tradition, fabrication of disability is done through assortment of rhetorics such as adversarial occurrence and obsessive truth which advertise itself. The Sierra Leonean society often views disability as inability. Elsewhere, in Uganda, the government has a very good programme for the disabled people. There is a government sponsorship for them at the Makerere University and the points required for their admission are low compared to those that are not disabled.

As a matter of fact, the heritage of colonialism for the colonised is poverty which is jointly shared among them. This heritage of poverty has given birth to all sorts of disability in different forms like wretchedness, hunger, famine and defects caused by wars. Consequently, the allegorical affinity which links disability to postcolonialism cannot be exhausted. In a way, inability to recognise that sign language in America as unique culturally is defined as a type of colonialism. Modern day relationship which connect patients to doctors is also labelled as colonialism but in a medical way. The `ordeal of tribal segregation and impairments is also compared with the idea of the blacks being regarded as the deformed. Displacement which could be external or inward is also viewed as disability. Goggin and Newell (2004); Wood (1994) have both presented disability as a form of apartheid. In another vein, caring for those diagnosed as mentally deranged is equally regarded to be a kind of enslavement and being disabled is also viewed as dispersal.

Furthermore, the rhetoric of the orientalists focuses on seeking to heal defects in nations of the world. Choi (2001) characterises colonial experiences as being disabled nationally. Quayson (2002) and Kehinde (2006) posit that the long effect of colonialism in Africa is disabling. The kind of culture which colonialism inscribed on the colonised is also regarded as deformity of the minds. While relating the Koreans' colonial experience to disability, Choi (2001) opines that the consequent of colonisation, capitalisation, modernisation as well as urbanisation has transformed the colonised into the disabled. According to him, the Korean intellectuals' quest for proper capturing of the citizens' yearning for yesteryears around the stereotype of disability explains why account of colonisation from Korea projects the citizens as disabled. In addition, Choi asserted that applying disability as a stereotype through a socio-political viewpoint which cropped up is an acknowledgement of the dilemma facing the nation.

Disability, according to the argument of Mitchell and Snyder (2003) permeates the Liberal Arts as an adaptable allegorical tool which establishes differences between what is normal and what is not. In their allusion, using disability in an allegorical way is like a walking-aid on which fiction depends for symbolical strength, unruly feasibility, together with penetrating intuition. Davis (1995) claims that the novel reproduces ideology. Therefore, the novel of the twentieth century shells out concepts

about what is normal and what is not as well as making bodily dissimilitude as differences in ideology. Currently, what relates disability to racism centres on the concept of segregation and an aspiration to exterminate the differences in race and at the same time bodily defects.

In another vein, reverences to those disabled proliferate the perspectives of the Africans. These are evident in the mythologies, legends and folktales of Yoruba in the South West of Nigeria in which the disabled are referred to as Eni oosa (Celestial homos) (Adeoye 1980; Babalola 2001; Kehinde 2009). It is widely acceptable that the albinos (Aafin), the hunchback (abuké), the cripple, the lame and the blind are all divine beings from birth and even at death. They are the friends of Obatala or Orisaala, the god of creation in Yoruba worldview. Consequently, there is an ambivalent attitude towards the disabled in Africa. They can either be revered or treated with disdain as the case may be. Traditionally, their rites of passage are also quite different from those that are non- disabled. For instance, snail, chicken, goat, pepper, palm oil, earthen pot, bowl-like calabash and a roll of white cloth are collected from the relatives of the disabled during the burial ceremony. The corpse of the disabled is wrapped with the roll of white cloth, put inside a big earthen pot (Ìkòkò odù) and covered with a bowl-like calabash. This is taken into the deep forest and placed on a high tree that is only known to those people that are involved in the rites of passage. Later, after the corpse might have decayed, the bones of the corpse that are left in the earthen pot are sold at a high price to herbalists.

The significance of the disabled in the Yorùbá worldview is further seen in the "Oríkì" of "Ìran Olúfẹ̀", the praise poem of Olúfẹ̀ genealogy:

> Mo gbọ́ kìnjin níle
> Balúfon – Adé, mo gbọ́ kìnjin lóde
> Mo lọ rè é wòran
> Mo dóde n ò bónílù
> Èmi ò bóníjó
> Àfín rí mi
> Àfín nà mí
> Arọ ṣọwọ́ gbọ̀gbọ̀
> Ó e gbá mi lẹ́nu.
> (Kehinde, 2009: 9)

I heard a melodious drum sound in town
Balúfon – Adé, I heard the melodious drum sound
outside the palace
I then went there for sight-seeing
I reached the place but I did not see any drummer.
Neither did I see any dancer
The albino saw me
The albino beat me
The cripple outstretched his palms
And used them to slap my mouth.
(Translation: Kehinde 2009: 9).

This 'oríkì' shows that in the past, deformed people in various forms of disability could easily be seen in palaces in Yorubaland especially that of the king of Ifẹ̀, the Ọ̀ọ̀ni.

In a related manner, the 'Oríkì Ìran Ẹlẹ́rìn' (Ẹlẹ́rìn genealogy) tells the story of how a deaf and dumb man was able to help the Elerin's wife. According to the story, the Ẹlẹ́rìn's wife ignored several warnings asking her to desist from visiting the innermost part of a particular river in her community. On a certain day, Ẹlẹ́rìn's wife went to the river as usual to have a bath; she removed her clothes and hoisted them on a tree beside the river. After having her bath, on getting to the tree, she discovered that the tree had metamorphosed into a taller one, and she could not remove her clothes. She ran home naked, in disgrace. Meanwhile, non-disabled men were contacted to cut the tree but could not do so because of the strange and deafening noise coming from the tree. A man that lacks the sense of hearing and the ability to speak was later contacted to chop the strange tree and he was the only one that eventually chopped it up. Ever since then, disabled are reverenced in this lineage. From these genealogies, one could see that the relationship between the Yorùbá society and the disabled is ambivalent in nature as earlier discussed. The society sometimes reverence the disabled as Ẹni Òòṣà (Celestial homos) and on the other hand as an outcast.

A general look at every society in the opinion of Longmore (2003) reveals that the disabled aspire to take over their position. Thus, it is a surprise that the disabled were not accorded any recognition in the eight goals set for the development of the millennial age, they were not also included in eighteen objectives that are fixed for achieving the goals, even forty-eight index of policing the progress of the goals did not

mention them. Consequently, Wolfensohn (2002) declare that reducing or eradicating poverty from the world will be a herculean task if the disabled are not brought to the fore. Not only this, it will also be difficult to educate every girl-child or boy especially at the primary school levels. Disability in the MDGs develop into irrelevance or obscurity due to paucity of citation. Hence, in the discourses surrounding the MDGs goals, disability becomes non-existent. However, a cursory look at the Millenium Development Goals shows that six MDGs are relevant to the disabled out of eight.

At a glance, annihilation of acute destitution as well as starvation is the first objective in the development of the millennial age. The relevance of this to the disabled is due to the fact that disability and poverty are mutually reinforcing. The second goal is for the achievement of Universal Primary Education. This will be impossible to achieve, unless the vast number of out -of- school learners that are impaired in so- called Third World countries are explicitly brought into the equation. The third goal promotes gender equality and empowers women. However, disabled females are confronted with multifaceted ordeal of prejudice and limitation. Hence, non-consideration of disability will serve as an obstacle of reaching the objectives of eradicating disparities between the male and female gender particularly at the educational sector by 2015. Fourth goal is about lessening the infant mortality rate, most especially in the Third World countries where the death toll for impaired infants are on the increase. Thus, emphasis is being laid on how this high mortality could be reduced. The fifth goal improves maternal health. However, yearly, majority of women are affected by disability related to being pregnant and giving birth. The sixth goasl combats all sorts of ailment from the mild ones to the incurable and terminal ones. Meanwhile, due to their level of poverty and total neglect by their family members, which are also a major cause of disability, the disabled easily fall prey to these diseases.

A look at the two remaining goals shows that they could also affect the disabled people adversely. The seventh goal, for instance, affirms the sustainability of the environment. Environmental dangers are potential sources of disabilities. Also, the disabled could not actively participate both socially and economically in the society particularly in an inconducive one. Lastly, the eighth goal is for the development of global partnership. This too cannot be achieved as partnership implies inclusion, which

means everyone, both the non-disabled and the disabled. Hence, despite the fact that the United Nations Millennium Development Goals have been declared since in fighting against destitution and hunger, no visible achievement has taken place due to its policy of not catering to the disabled.

In a similar vein, the Nigerian government on the first of August, 2007 listed a seven-point agenda for eradication of poverty and suffering in Nigeria. It identifies seven critical areas that need urgent attention in the country. However, this objective is not an inclusive approach to eradication of poverty in Nigeria. Negative reactions and comments trail the positive approach of the Nigerian government towards achieving a society which is free of poverty, illiteracy, and disability. Longevity is no longer a possibility in Nigeria, this obviously depicts failure in the Health sector. Essentially, for a nation to develop, the commitment of the government to the disabled and non-disabled needs to be inclusive in the process of development. All the same, if people, especially the disabled, are excluded from developmental processes, then the seven-point agenda cannot work. The disabled must be added to the process of development for Nigeria to achieve the millennium goals.

Poverty, which is the main focus of the seven-point agenda, excludes those who are poor and does not focus on economy. Mainly, the policy of exclusion affects the destitute in the society. However, the way and manner the destitute become excluded from the seven-point agenda are barely discussed. Hence, the strategies of abating destituteness will not be an advantage to the disabled. Interestingly, reactions to disability from each society differ. A person who is considered as being disabled in one society may not be regarded as one in another society. Therefore, it is essential that disabilities should be considered from within the cultural context. For example, disability in children could be viewed from different angles by diverse societies. Generally, in America, the main culture admits that there is a linear correlation which joined biotical difficulties with babies that are evolving. In African and Asian culture, issues like destiny, misfortune, parental transgressions, mother’s meals during pregnancy, demons and the likes are regarded as likely sources of congenital deformity.

These different perceptions influence how the disabled is considered inside a particular custom as well as the kind of assistance that could be rendered to the disabled within his or her home in particular and the society at large. Hence, the ambivalence of conflict which occurs within the relationship of those that are deformed and those that are not is a human situation that predates the world and is still persistent, largely because of constant problem of relational dispositions, which transcend race, colour, gender, and class. This study, therefore, examines disability as a trope of postindependence disillusionment in selected African novels through the uneasy relationship between the disabled and non-disabled.

1.1. Statement of the problem

The scantiness of discourses which are critical regarding the dual challenge of postindependence as well as disability in African scholarly studies engineered this work. Previously, the subjugation of postindependent literature within disability studies by foreign critical discourses was apparent. Consequently, critical voices of African scholars are mostly excluded from these discourses. However, whether at the surface or critical level, exploration of scholarly work from Africa reveal preoccupations about being disabled, being ill and postindependence factors. As yet, regardless of the fact that assortment of writers from Africa invent disability and postindependence issues as a knot which must be untangled, these discourses do not lay emphasis on disability as a trope of the disabled African continent. Therefore, coming on the heels of Bolt (2012:287)'s argument, this investigation endeavours to arbitrate the perceptible crucial evasion which apparently is woven around the controversy enclosing postcolonialism and disability within literary debates in Africa.Through concentrating on a certain emplacement within Africa in a corporeal period of postindependence, this investigation equally showcases the consequences of politics that is deformed and how it creates enslaved Africans historically and culturally especially in African literature.

1.2. Aim and objectives of the study

This study dwells on issues of disability as a trope of postindependence disillusionment in African fiction. The specific objectives of the work are:

i. To examine how the selected postindependence African novelists, depict disability in their novels.
ii. To investigate the images and roles exhibited by the characters in the selected novels.
iii. To critique how the bodies of the characters are marked as able/disable.

1.3. Research questions

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

i. How do the selected writers depict disability in their novels?
ii. What are the images and roles exhibited by the characters in the selected postcolonial novels?
iii. How are the bodies of the characters marked as able/ disable?

1.4. Significance of the study

The justification for the study is informed by the fact that the selected authors are greatly involved in the growth of African literature as well as literary discourses in Africa, and their works have considerable spread not only within their regions or continent but also in some major parts of the world. Most of the texts also provide unique insight into the tropes of disability in postcolonial writings. The selected texts and the entire study may also help to draw from accumulated knowledge and experience of these novelists, information that may be of tremendous benefit to those striving to create institutions of similar stature.

1.5. Scope of the study

Ten (10) postindependence African novels which cover Africa regionally are purposively selected for the study. The postindependence novels are: J. M. Coetzee's *Foe*, *In the Heart of the Country* and *Waiting for the Barbarians*; Zaynab Alkali's *The Stillborn*, *The Virtuous Woman*, *The Descendants* and Aminata Sow Fall's *The Beggars' Strike*; Ngugi wa Thion'go's *Petals of Blood*; Ben Okri's *The Famished Road* and Naguib Mahfouz's *Midaq Alley.* These novels are purposively selected because of their disposition to disability as a representation of the disabled Africa.

1.6. Organisation of the study

The study is divided into five chapters; in chapter One, a survey of the historical development of the concept of disability and non-disability is done. This disability/ non-disability paradigm represents the realities in all the regions of African continent before, during or after colonialism, a continent that never discusses disability for fear of causing offence. In this chapter, there is an oexplanation on how disability studies is overwhelmed with concepts like we and they, indicating a bilateral relationship of being a victim on one hand and being a perpetrator on the other hand together with a normal versus abnormal relationship between the disabled and the non-disabled.

A critical investigation and literature review of disability and postcolonial narratives from literary, philosophical, psychological and sociological perspectives using different paradigms of post-colonialist, sociological theories, feminist and psychoanalyst approaches as applicable in every instance is conducted in chapter two.

In chapter Three, the method used in conducting this research is discussed. The methodology approach used for this study is qualitative which is based on interpretive design. Ten purposive postcolonial African novels were selected across the four regions of Africa. The texts were selected based on their wide range of acceptability across the universe.

The analysis of the selected texts is done in chapter four. An analysis of J. M. Coetzee's *In the Heart of the country, Foe* and *Waiting for the Barbarians* is done in this chapter. These novels, grounded in complex historical and socio-cultural postindependence realities, communicate post-colonial temper and disability with emphasis on racial dissonance.

In chapter Four, disability as a trope of gender is equally explored. Femist representation of disability is evident in Zaynab Alkali's *The Stillborn, The Virtuous Woman, The Descendants* and Aminata Sow Fall's *The Beggars' Strike*. These novels are explored not as explicit representations of women with disabilities but as commentaries on the lifestyles of women living with disabilities at different stages, situated in specific cultural and geo-political contexts.

Furthermore, in this chapter, it is revealed that disability could be metaphorically read as a form of class conflicts as shown in Ben Okri's *The Famished Road,* Naguib Mahfouz's *Midaq Alley* and Ngugi's *Petals of Blood*. These novels identify figures of illness and disability in the post colonial context which challenge dominant paradigms of bodily and psychic health in our society which seek to exclude, deny or eliminate the lived experiences of disabilities in postcolonial societies.

Chapter Five is the conclusion to the study. In this chapter, it is observed that disability conditions can be read metaphorically: illness comes to represent general postindependence alienation; sterility signifies cultural impotence; madness figures patriarchal oppression. Further, the novels considered in this study are intimate explorations of illness, disability, and abjection, but also reveal a critical engagement of these experiences as mutable, constitutive processes open to re-figurations. The chapter also examines the convergences and divergences in the selected writers' fictional representations of disability in their respective works. As represented in the selected works, individuals with physical disabilities in the post colonial society tend at varying levels to be unprotected, marginalised and abused, physically and linguistically. Therefore, a motive of this study is a hope to see the postcolonial disabled Africa better accepted, represented, informed, advised, serviced, employed, integrated and honoured.

1.7. Chapter Summary

The background which led to this present study has been discussed in this chapter. The ambivalent nature of disability in African world view is equally explained while laying emphasis on the gap in the study. Conceptual terms in the study are defined and conclusion is reached by adopting Social Model of Disabilty for the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0. Chapter Overview

Existing relevant literature on the scope, influences and operational praxis of disability studies is reviewed in this particular chapter. The framework on which this study is anchored is also discussed in this chapter. Relevant concepts of disability in literary representations are reviewed. The interrelationship between postcolonial and disability theories is also brought to the fore in this chapter. Previous studies on Coetzee's works and literary discourse in general are reviewed for the purpose of unfolding gap in literary works which necessitated the current study considering the polytypic and multidimensional essence of disability studies, the issues discussed in this chapter are fundamental, however, it is far from being exhaustive.

2.1. Framework

This study is anchored on two major theories namely; Sociological and Disability theories. The Sociological Approach to the study of literature affirms that creative writing is the handiwork of the society. In addition, concept as well as emotion discovered through literary works remain conditional. The society also moulded these concept and emotion culturally. Within the Sociological Approach, literature is never produced in a vacuum. According to the theorists, the specific community where authors reside impact not only them but their writings too.

This approach at the same time believes that there is a reciprocal relationship between literature and society. Meanwhile, the groundwork of approaching Literature through the Sociological point of view was fabricated by early critics like Johan Herder, Madame de Stale, Hippolyte Taine and the likes. Karl Marx and Fredric Engels (1958)

and their followers also contribute to this approach. To Marx and Engels, literary works are viewed as profit-making venture of a specific community. Furthermore, they accorded a novel pivot in regarding literary works through the social sciences. Historically, the notion of approaching literature sociologically has enjoyed a past which is protracted as well as renowned beginning with Plato, Aristotle and the likes. The approach equally commands unique position when it comes to criticism and theoretical approaches in the recent time. A lot of authority has sprung up from this approach and they include Goldman (1967), Lowenthal (1957), Escarpit (1970), Swingwood and Laurenson (1972), Hall (2006) with numerous others. Herder (1744-1803) believes specifically that literature develops through environs which are controlled socially and geographically. Herder additionally opines that literature emerged and developed through racial groups, traditions, norms and politics. In essence, these ideas of Herder regarding literary works hint at an informal relationship within creative writing or literary works and norms, racial groups, traditions and society. Another critic who also linked literature with climatic, geographical and sociological establishment is de Stale (1766-1817). She delves into the impact of establishments on literature socially and politically. Furthermore, she avers that zzzzzzzliterature encompasses activity on thinking which is identified geographically and politically.

This study, however, adopts Hippolyte Taine' sociological approach to literature. The present study adhered to this approach based on the fact that an affinity exists within African history and African literature. Hippolyte Adolphe Taine (1828- 1893), a French historian, turns out to be celebrated as the patriarch of sociological approach toliterature. Taine, in the work he produced in 1871, reveals that a work of arts cannot be divorced from the society that produces it. Taine's work involves a realisation of the key difficulties confronting creative works which centre on the society. Not only this, in the historical record of literary works, Taine's work is also recognised as a turning point. Taine organises literary works scientifically. In his opinion, creative exercises are not just imaginative and intellectual, however, they are records attributed to ways of life of that particular period and a demonstration pertaining to different ways of thinking. Additionally, an orderly blueprint of racial groups, environment together with periods is put in place, inorder to understand and analyse literary works sociologically. To Taine, literature cannot only be an expression of personality.

However, Taine opines that literature could only be a corporate articulation of a ceratin community incorporating the set of ideas and beliefs of the particular time. It is expected that developmental ingredients of the time like racial groups, environment and periods should be incorporated into creative works. This collaboration results into a certain psychological form. This form metamorphoses into the growth of overall concepts in literary works. Essentially, Taine opines that literature has a reciprocal relationship with the society.

On the other hand, Henning Eichberg (1970) explains further on the views of Taine regarding the relationship among racial groups, the environment and time. He affirms that any racial group which is discovered acquired particular attributes through the weather, dry land and substances including exceptional occurrences that confronted the attributes right from inception. In essence, the attributes acclimated this, at the same time diminished it in order to breed a particular life and good looks. According to Henning, that particular concept could be regarded as a ground for planting seeds nationwide. The ground could favour a particular seed and could be the other way round for some. This infers that a certain ground which belongs to a particular nation may yield to such a nation and not yield to nations that are close to it.

This indicates that a literary work which is centred around a particular country and flourishes there may not be suitable for even a country that is close to it. As a consequent, a literary work cannot be divorced from the continent it springs from. Hence, according to Taine's categorisation, fiction could be described as a looking-glass which reflects every part of living including the novel as a portable mirror reflecting all aspects of life and nature. Taine avers that since literary works are the commanding form of societies that are commercialised, environment where the literary work is coming from must be emphasised.

As earlier discussed, Taine categorises fiction as a compact looking–glass which mirrors phases in the universe and essence of living in a particular society. He believes that racial groups, the environment in which the racial groups exist together with periods of existence serve as prime factors in literary works. A look at Hudson (1958:39)'s arguments reveals Taine being particularly concerned with relating literary works to the society rather than ordinary imaginative work. Taine's view is important

to this study as it discovers what the selected texts divulge in respect of the social groups that they are focused on by proffering answers to the questions of which specific group is endowed to dominate socially and which one is not. The reason for the domination is equally proffered. In a similar vein, Taine also suggests that a literary work should answer to questions on what can be regarded as authorised and unauthorised canons, customs and codes of these societies. To Taine, things which transpire whenever someone goes against these canons, codes and customs should be revealed. Additionally, answers are to be given as regards the behaviour of the males and females in the society and the kind of connection between them. Questions about the kind of administrative system which exists in the society under discussion and things which the social groups put in high esteem are also necessary. Similarly, according to Taine, a literary work should equally ask about the distribution of wealth in those societies and how opposing groups (the rich and poor, parents and children, men and women) are relating socially. As a matter of fact, Sociological Approach to literature proffers answers to all these questions.

Consequently, each postindependence novel in this study reflects the social condition of its region when analysed by Sociological Literary Approach. In a nutshell, from the approach of sociology to literary works, any society that does not have its own literary works which will reflect what that particular society practices and believes cannot survive. Meanwhile, literary works cannot subsist on its own without the society. In his own view, Ngugi (1992:16) rightly affirms that it is expedient for literary works to mirror every facet of life of its society for the sake of comprehending the universe exceptionally. In addition, Ngugi opines that in order to aim for significant estimation of a society, literary works are needed. It is this claim that Nnolim (2009) builds upon that Literature as art is embellished with language which is the energy of the story. For the story to be meaningful it must reflect reality of life.

As a consequent, literary works is configured and planned together with display of themes within a community socially, economically, politically and religiously. Basically, literary works are competent to establish certain facts on humanity that leads to an evident transformation within the community. Asika (2015:2) avers that a novelist through the use of words is able to express his opinion regarding his community. Furthermore, with the exclusive aim of liberating his community by his

work, a novelist also serves as the conscience of his community by showcasing the challenges and plights confronting his community. Further, Soyinka (1976:7) opines that a fiction creator is embedded with an inward illumination which is inaccessible to other people. To Soyinka, he is expected to make use of this stimulus including perception in guiding his community to a better tomorrow. Armed with this approach, the study is therefore, engrossed with resolving matters involving the disabled socially, politically and economically in the postindependence novels selected for this study.

In another vein, the referent texts for this study are postcolonial. This is due to the fact that they all indicate complications confronting the societies of the selected authors regionally and continentally before, during and after colonisation. At this juncture, it is crucial that we define postcolonialism from where 'postindependence disillusionment' springs from. Postcolonialism is a rejoinder and an objection to colonial rules socially, economically and politically. The term 'post-colonial' and 'postcolonial' mean different things according to Mcleod (2000: 5). In Mcleod's view, putting an hyphen between post and colonial signifies a specific age in history which comes at the back of colonial rules or following independence or succeeding colonialism. However, Postcolonialism that is not hyphenated is attributed to divergent representational shape, customs and beliefs. These traverse those obstacles enclosed by colonialism as well as liberation of the nations. Hence, postcolonialism is solidly consumed by history and cannot be stereotyped into periods and calendars alone. Consequently, whichever way it is considered, its birth and its operation is linked to colonial experience. However, in spite of the presumable simplicity, postcolonialism is multifaceted and this results in definitional problem.

An approach reckons that postcolonialism is a vague group of digressional processes which are similar to postmodern theories. Some insist that it should refer only to the period after independence while others insist it should designate the sum total of processes associated with colonialism right from the inception of it even till after independence (Ashcroft et al 1997: 177). Postcolonialism has been viewed from different angles by the likes of critics such as Said (1978), Bhabha (1994) and Spivak (1988). The three of them are considered as reference points in postcolonial theory. Selden and Widdowson (1997) affirm that the book which Said produces on Oriental studies in 1978 is engrossed in a triple form with intersecting territories. The first

territory establishes that a cultural relationship exists between the Orients and the Occidents which spans more than four hundred years. The second territory showcases that from the 19th century, there were researches which produce experts in Orientalism. Lastly, the third territory displays the Occidents' construction of the Orients as the Subaltern as well as being morally decadent. As said earlier, a careful scrutiny of all these territories shows that each of them overlap into the other. Essentially, it could be disclosed that Oriental Studies centres on the cultural divergences which occur within the Asians and their Colonial masters.

This last territory most clearly suggests that the colonisers in keeping with their discriminatory notions falsify as well as manipulate the colonised, for the sake of presenting themselvesas the reality and soul of the whole world. In addition, this despotism is opposed by the gagged colonised through multifarious steps. In essence, Edward Said could be said to have laid the ground for postcolonialism regardless of the obvious part played by the likes of Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha. Said (1978) examines erroneous pictures of the colonised as manufactured by the colonisers through their literary writers, theorists, policy makers and the likes. According to Said, these set of people had overtime shown the Orient as the primitive, uncivilised 'other' as opposed to the 'civilised' West.

On his own part, Bhabha (1994) surveys postcolonialism from a bi-dimensional perspective: Complex concept of hybridity and mimicry. In postcolonialism, the term 'hybridity' has become pivotal inasmuch as it involves assimilation of cultures, norms and traditions of the colonisers as well as the colonised. Intermingling, adaptating including assimilating these cultures, norms, customs and traditions, or the inter-relationship between the ways of life of the two could be productive, complementing, compelling and burdensome. Further, Bhabha (1994:123) posits that cultural practices being a blueprint for survival could be universal as well as uniformed Regarding culture as universal is due to the fact that narration about postcolonialism is embedded in supplanting the culture of the colonised by the coloniser. This supplanting of culture runs through the period of slavery and colonialism. Meanwhile, uniformity of culture is seen within the past records of displacement of culture which is followed by globalisation thereby making the issue of culture to be controversial. In all, Bhabha posits that the role of colonialism in culture is ambivalent.

Commented [OSA1]:

Additionally, Bhabha also describes the Postcolonial theory through the concept of mimicry when he states that the quest for change and recognition leads the colonised to mimicking the colonialists. According to Bhabha, the Postcolonial theory could also be viewed as being different and that the narration about postcolonialism is like a double edged sword. In essence, Bhabha infers that the colonised cannot effectively imitate the coloniser without constantly displaying what makes him (the colonised) to be different from his master (the coloniser). Apart from this, the colonised is expected to exhibit deficiencies and surpluses in his nature which will foreground the differences between him and the coloniser. Premised on these differences, both the colonial master and his subject could be said to inhabit similar territory. Hence, imitating the deficiencies and dominion of the colonial masters by the colonised is ambivalent.

In another vein, Spivak (1988) draws elaborately on Marxism and Feminism. By retaining the divergences between these theories, Spivak shows areas of weaknesses in each of these theories and interestingly, her aim is not to amalgamate them. Furthermore, Spivak is preoccupied with the construction of what is right with these theories in preference to flaunting flaws. Additionally, Spivak focuses on the differences which are components of race, category including sexuality by assembling their unsynchronised and paradoxical factor. Looking at this critically, one could see that Spivak develops the blueprint for discussing the structure of disorderliness enforced through colonialism in order to negotiate, investigate including transform the framework internally. In other words, the inscription of identity such as developing countries or a woman from the developing country on the colonised showcases the expectation of the colonial masters for their subjects. This also reveals that any literary work written in the language of the colonial masters requires a subaltern in its construction. Hence, women from the so-called developed countries assumed the roles of being benefactors to their colonised counterparts by constructing them as subalterns who need redemption.

Regardless of the extensive discussions surrounding the complex meaning of postcolonialism, this study utilised the definitions of postcolonial theory propounded by Ashcroft, Griffiths together with Tiffin (2003) and Bhabha (1994). According to

them, what is termed as postcolonialism embraces every way of life, traditions, customs, norms and the likes through the stages of imperialism right from colonisation till date. Relatedly, a continuation of engrossment exists through the course of history engineered by the hostility of the colonial masters towards the colonised even after the latter's independence. To them, this definition equally accommodates a recent theory known as cross–culturalism or pluralism.

This particular definition has been adopted in this study due to the fact that all the novels analysed focus on perceptions and experiences of colonialism written mainly by the colonised. Hence, postindependence novels as used in this study serve as a referent for those writings, theoretical or literary, that interrogate colonialism from inception to this day. All the novels showcase the subversion of, and the struggle against the social, political and cultural problems which create different centres from the one that a typical African man or woman contended with during the pre-independent era.

This study affirms that colonialism is a continuous process even after independence and the 'post' in 'postindependence' does not imply 'after'. Rather, it encompasses all events associated with colonialism right from when colonised till date. Since placing an hyphen between 'post' and 'independence' connotes after colonialism, the present study, therefore utilises the term 'post' without an hyphen in order to cover every aspect of the history of the colonised from the point of colonisation even till the present moment since the effects of colonialism is like an injected poison which cannot be totally ejected from the body. However, this view-point is contrary to that of Bill Ashcroft et al. In their own opinion, they hint that the 'post' in 'post-independence' is a period which comes after colonialism. Essentially, using words like 'post' in 'postindependence' does not allude to the fact that the present world is not aware of the hydra-headed consequences of racial discrimination, holocaust as well as closure of the milieu that connect the coloniser to the colonised. As a matter of choice, the objective is to subscribe to a continuous consequence of attitudes like that, together with the varying patterns attributed to despotism rooted within the connection. This becomes necessary especially with the formation of different types of organisation which aim to liberate the marginalised nation.

In addition, this study equally adopts Loomba (2001)'s stands that the term 'postindependence' does not indicate that colonialism has been eradicated. However, the term points at newer pattern of resisting the hegemony of the colonisers as well as what the colonial master's bequest on the colonised. From this perspective, critiquing postcolonialism could now be viewed to mean the examination of the kind of control which exists among countries, tribes and customs. It is also the recognition of the background which led to the relationship between the colonisers and the colonised.

Another theory which aids this study is Disability Studies from which the study adopts Social Model of Disability Theory. Like the postcolonial theory, this theory is equally fraught with conceptual problems. Whyte and Ingstad (1995:5) clearly point out that generalising the term 'disabled' leads into complication philosophically. They note that 'disabled' as a term often refers to extensive collection of phenomena, covering disability that could be seen physically as well as those that do not manifest physically, such as deafness and insanity. Furthermore, they highlight the need to see disability as a cultural as well as physical problem. In other words, they warn that what is termed as disability in a particular society may not be seen as such in another one.

However, the complex issue of the cultural dimension to disability is raised more fruitfully by Goffman (1963: 6) who points out that physical disability produces its own structure and that those confronting the disabled often have a whole range of attitudes based on stereotypes. These stereotypes continually act around the ego of those with disability, thereby, creating complications for them especially on how they value themselves as Murphy (1987) shows from personal experience. Physical disability, then, may be said to be constitutive of social and psychological relations in a very troubling way. Essentially, in any discussion on disability, the basic determinants will be how it is defined and the terms that are utilised during its perception and interpretation. When formulating policies socially, a large number of developed countries engage interpretation propounded by the United Nations. Meanwhile, Barnes (1992: 6) avers that disability has three distinct features: impairment, disability and handicap. He points out that a leg which is disfigured or any bodily defect whether internal or external, connote being impaired; the consequent of incapability means being disabled and restrictions on lifestyle is regarded as being an handicap. Noticeably, all these features spring from disability.

The picture glimpsed from Barnes' point of view indicates that the disabled is impaired and this has created disability which in turn restricts his standard of living. Hence, it is the impaired person who determines how his disability should be defined since it is the level of his disfigurement that informs the non-disabled how to interpret his disability. From this angle, being disabled centres on habitual and personalised pattern which is acknowledged medically. This medically-viewed pattern is derived from two major factors which are the period of Enlightment that gave rise to the medical profession and industrial capitalism (Oliver 1990). It was during the time of industrial revolution that people began to regard impairment medically as well as utilising the pattern in defining what it means to be disabled. Then, those with one form of disability or the other were being addressed as disabled people (Darke, 1999, Davis 1995, Foucault 1977, Oliver 1990, Oliver 1996). Consequently, in the Medical Model, disability is a disaster of an individual and should not be regarded socially. This implies that disability is the problem of the disabled alone and not the problem of his society

Regarding disability as an individual problem positions the disabled inside a discourse where the recognition of his disfigurement rests solely on the disabled himself or his immediate family. Medically, the disabled seeks to be healed from their disability and in the process abandon their obligations to their society during the healing processes. Thus, nothing connects the disabled to their society in their quests for healing.

Currently, the attention of literary theorists has shifted away from regarding disability as a medical condition which needs to be healed to the ways and manners in which the society behaves towards the disabled. This particular pattern associates disability to varieties of issues like the milieu of the disabled, transportation, jobs, housing but of paramount is the discriminatory reactions of the society to such disability. Henceforth, in this context, being disabled does not connote incapability which emanates from disfigurement. On the other hand, being disabled will now be addressing the milieu that creates complications for the disabled socially which also restricts his standard of living (Davis,2002). At this juncture, being disabled is no more viewed as the consequent of tragedy and disaster but as the product of the society of the disabled. This view-point is recognised as the Social Model. Social Model is not fixated on the

stamina and weakness of the disabled. However, the Model concentrates on the fact that disability is produced by the society and nothing more. From this angle, societal reaction to one's disability creates the differences. This infers that disability is neither an ailment which neither needs to be treated nor given attributes to. On the other hand, stratification of the societies, according to scholars like Herb Grossman (1998:34) triggers fixed concepts like deformity, racism and tribalism. These concepts are now necessary economically and politically. As a matter of fact, if the social system is to be sustained, these concepts are then mandatory. Sustaining these concepts, however, leads to certain ranking which catalyses into limited chances. Consequently, these categories of people are later compelled into moving to the lowest rung of the ladder. Looking at it critically, varieties of interpretation and institutionalised meanings are attached to being disabled.

Confirming that theories related to the disabled do not only focus on the differences apparent in the attitudes of people to the disabled, their physical form, the roles they play within the society, their sense of reasoning and state of emotion, Simi Linton (1998), explains that it is how the society interprets these differences that actually counts. Therefore, Disability Studies become hardly restricted to a rigid interpretation of the body of the disabled, but can be employed to discuss anyone who defies sociocultural or medically– defined norms of health or bodily appearance. This view about disability is mindful of the fact that the disabled has been excluded from the society due to the defects on their bodies by traditions, customs and beliefs engineered by the non-disabled. These traditions, customs and beliefs are entrenched in capitalism and industrialisation of the so-called developed nations. They are capped with varieties of doctrinal beliefs positioned at the highest levels. In another dimension, Hevey (1992: 20) views disability politically. To Hevey, deformity is related to the pitfalls together with limitation of action promoted socially that is not or less mindful of those that are impaired physically or mentally, thereby, excluding them from taking an active part in the society.

Hence, disability is inscribed on one's body by the society. The narrative of disability comes from the society. If the society does not label someone with impairments as the disabled, then such person cannot be referred to as one. Consequently, defining disability socially is predicated on discriminating against the disabled and excluding

them from the society, rooted in the belief about constructing and objectifying disability socially. Thus, disability is not viewed naturally or physically. Consideration of disability socially, therefore, confronts the United Nations' inscription of 'handicap' on the disabled. Not only this, the different definitions of being disabled and being impaired are fused together by those who viewed disability socially. They equally made those definitions unnecessary to the disabled.

Defining disability through the societal attitude to the disabled is triply classified. This classification places emphasis on the kinds of obstacles utilised by the non-disabled in discriminating against and excluding the disabled. The obstacles are: societal attitude to disability, policies formulated against disability and the milieu where the disabled live. Meanwhile, present study employs the social pattern, following in the theoretical footstep of Davis (2016), it identifies disability as a trope of postindependence disillusionment in African fiction. The study shows, reinforces, and validates the marginalisation as well as accommodation of those that are disfigured. Viewing disability socially could be said to have been triggered by the theory on representation. In addition, identification of what establishes the medical pattern of disability could be derived through the social pattern of disability. In a way, definition of disability through the social pattern gives meaning to the medical pattern. At the same time, there is every need to recognise the habitual individuality in it as component of its conceptual framework and method.

Another interpretation for being disabled embraced by the present study arises from identification. On this basis, being disabled which is similar to tribe, sexuality or belief does not connote negativity but as an identification personally or socially. Such identification could be connected to communalism. On the other hand, the identification could be linked to marginalisation, rejection together with being ashamed. Hence, identifying someone with disability medically does not make the person a disabled. However, his being given an identity of disability could be interpreted as someone who appears different from other people in certain or specific manner. Consequently, these differences in him determine the kinds of reactions he gets and the kinds of obstacles which are placed on his paths by the society. The two interpretations about being disabled which the present study embraced become necessary as a result of the controversies surrounding the concept of disability.

2.2. Defining ‘identity’, ‘self’, ‘other’ and ‘disability’

In attempting to define these terms (‘identity’, ‘self,’ ‘other’ and ‘disability’), starting by defining ‘identity’ will be proper due to the complex nature of it and also due to the fact that assorted forms of meanings and applications are attached to it.

In Holland (1981)’ suggestion, from a layman’s view, what is known as identity will be the attribute and nature of somebody. Meanwhile, this nature is based on a single identity that is subjected to continual metamorphosis all through the person’s lifetime. As a consequent, what is referred to as identity is linked to certain idea which is anchored on cocktail of bodily and psychological criteria such as emotions and desires.

In defining ‘identity’ we equally need to define ‘self’ and ‘other’ because the three are inseparable. In a way, Self as a term could be regarded as unique personality or personal identity of somebody, showcasing that both concepts could as a matter of fact be used interchangeably. Daniels (2001) in his view confirmed that self is observed as a meditating, inward motif, which has the aptitude of reconstructing its individuality analytically. To scholars, like Benzon (1993), individual nature could also be regarded as self, the original fundamental being, which nourishes our consciousness, participation as well as distinction. Self is also regarded as a mirage and contingent fabrication according to post-structuralism and deconstruction theories. In these theories, the argument is that there are diverse individualisation in a particular person which could be used in coping with all sorts of passion and affection. Self can assume two different dimensions which are: Personal (individual) and communal (collective). ‘Ipse’ which means ‘self’ and ‘idem’ which is translated as ‘same’ were identified by Ricoeur (1992). These words originated from Latin to mean Self. Furthermore, the word ‘ipse’could be defined as individuality while ‘idem’ could mean uniformity. Hence, self could be grouped into personal and collective identity. Meanwhile, the two types of identity have similar features since they are fashioned in similar manner. However, collective identity acts as ethical issues while necessitating that a person complies with certain duties socially, being a part of a deliberate, accountable group.

Meanwhile, being 'the other' is defined as that which is apart from 'self' personally or collectively. According to the Semioticians, self simply amasses denotation through an organisation of equivalent variations, at the same time, 'the other' emanates from a change of self.

Lacan (1977) explained that what is known as identity starts from when a child recognises himself or herself in the mirror. Consequently, such a child sees himself or herself as a living person. Illustratively, the phases in Lacan's looking- glass mirror are grouped into three. The first phase is when a child identifies himself or herself in the looking-glass especially through his or her appearance and gesticulation. By the second phase, the child in question realises that the form or picture in the looking-glass comes with its own attributes which are personal to it. The last phase showcases the child being glued to the form or appearance in the looking-glass. Consequently, a kind of self-importance ensued from the perceived connection between the child and the form in the looking-glass. Phases of the looking-glass runs through an enduring routine whereby the self-importance a child feels while looking at itself in a looking - glass, perpetually recognises itself with new character with the intention of avoiding fragmentation, separation and dissimilitude produces variations of looking-glasses wherein individualisation together with individuality fluctuate constantly.

In joining Lacan's conceptions with disability, we need to take away the mirror, while still keeping it in mind. A major difference between the gaze of Lacan's baby and that of the non–disabled as he or she gazes at the disabled is that in the second case there is flow of affectivity which relates to emotions in various forms including feeling remorseful, dazed as well as being afraid. Murphy (1987) points out that the non-disabled are also endangered inasmuch as the disabled apparently remind them regularly of a world that is filled with distress, unfairness and injustice. Therefore, at this juncture, a quick look at the definition of disability is needed.

An attempt to define what is meant by disability exposes a concept that is loaded with theoretical quandaries. Being deformed appears in various degrees and manners in the sense that the deformity could be major or minor, it could be visible or non –visible. For example, someone that is deaf or insane will definitely come under the category of disability that is not visible whereas that of a blind man or someone that is badly

injured is visible. Furthermore, according to Whyte and Ingstad (1995), there is also a need to see disability as a cultural as well as physical problem. However, the complex issue of the cultural dimension to disability is raised more fruitfully by Goffman (1963:6) who points out that physical disability produces its own gestalt and that those confronting the disabled often have a whole range of attitudes based on stereotypes. These stereotypes continually manifest in the ego of those that are deformed themselves, creating complications for their ego as Murphy (1987) shows from personal experience. Physical disability, then, may be said to be constitutive of social and psychological relations in a very troubling way.

Essentially, in any discussion on disability, choice of words as well as interpretation are basic ingredients which shape its perception and definition. The definition put forward by one of the agencies of the United Nations is what nearly all the developed countries make use of for the sake of regulations that are beneficial to their societies. Disability has three distinct features which are impairment, disability and handicap. According to Barnes (1992):

> Impairment refer(s) to a defective limb, organ or mechanism of the body, 'disability' as the resulting lack of function, and "handicap" denotes the limitations on daily life which ensue from disability [6].

This infers that the disabled is disfigured and the disfigurement creates disablement. Consequently, the body of the disabled determines the meaning that the society inscribes on his or her disability. From this point of view, being disabled is then grounded upon an incorrigible along with personalised pattern which is recognised medically. This particular pattern is derived from major factors such as the period of Enlightment, growth of specialists in Medicine as well as industrialised trade. It was during the time of industrial revolution that people began viewing being disabled medically. Hence, the disabled were addressed as disabled people. Consequently, in the Medical Model, double calamities from a personal angle confront the disabled which are not manufactured socially.

Foregrounding deformity as the calamity of the person that is deformed positions the disabled inside an allegory whereupon the burden of complying to their deformities is

placed particularly on them personally or on their relatives. Medically, the disabled is saddled with the burden of desiring to be healed, inevitably, suspending obligations socially temporarily in exchange for a sign towards improvement (Murphy 1990; Wendell 1996). Lately, thecentral focus of theorists interested in disability has been refashioned into viewing disability from the social angle especially the disposition of the society towards disability. As a consequent, being disabled through this background does not allude to diminished strength which is derived from defects. However, it addresses the established societal norms and beliefs as well as attitudes which create complication for the disabled and his ability of making an impact in his society. Through this intersection, being disabled is no more considered as the fruit of tragedy but of the society. This belief is known as the Social Model.

Rather than concentrating upon might and weakness of someone, Social Model identifies that the various contrast in a person's abilities and attributes are the creation of the society. Therefore, the differences that are glaring in the physical appearance of a person determines the way and manner that the society acts towards such a person. This infers that it is neither the state of well being of someone nor the arrays of attributes in such a person that determines the person's disability.

In the opinion of scholars like Grossman (1998), social hierarchies, being deformed, evolving from another clan and tribalism is mandatory constitutionally and economically. These ideas integrally sustain the division of a society into classes. Division of people into classes socially is then catalysed into confined chances which forcefully pushes someone to the rear end of the ladder. Hence, excessive interpretation of disability administers a continuous arrangement which extends to an array of elucidative as well as governmental framework. Essentially, Disability Studies has its anchor in differences which occur in the attitude of people, their physical features, the roles they played in the society and their senses of reasoning and additionally the interpretations that people placed on all these differences.

Consequently, in no circumstance is Disability Studies narrowed down within a rigid interpretation of the body of the disabled, but can be employed to discuss anyone who defies sociocultural or medically–defined norms of health or bodily appearance. This view about disability bears in mind that ostracising the disabled through a universe

which is controlled by the non-disabled is entrenched in commercialism which prevails in the Occidental hemisphere. Disability could also be regarded as political. In support of this view, Hevey (1992:9) opines that being labelled as a disabled is purely constitutional:

> Disability: the disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a contemporary social organization which takes no or little account of people who have physical (or mental) impairments and thus excludes them from the mainstream of social activities.

Accordingly, delving into disability through Social Model is predicated on prejudices, segregation and marginalising those with one form of defects or the other which is foregrounded on the preconceived notion that it is the society which inscribes impairments on them. This infers that the impairments on the disabled body are not innate but social. By confronting the United Nations Organisation's interpretation of disability, Social Model of disability does not support that the disabled should be labelled as handicap. The Model equally blends together the Agency's interpretation of both being disabled and being impaired as one. Not only this, both impairments and defects are immaterial to disability by the proponents of Social Model. Essentially, interpreting disability through Social Model is dissected into threefold of prejudice. These threefold prejudice emphasise that obstacles raise against the disabled are equally triply and they are meant to ostracise the disabled. Basically, the prejudice could manifest through the attitude of the society to the disabled; the government could also contribute to the prejudice and lastly, environment where the disabled lives could also be prejudicial to the disabled.

The present study, which is anchored on Social Model including adhering to the intellectual stride attributed to Mike Oliver (1990, 1996), Colin Barnes (1992, 1998) and Lennard Davis (1990), diagnoses the depiction of disability in African fiction. The study additionally exhibits, emphasises as well as corroborates the stigmatisation and acceptance regarding disability in African fiction. The main ingredient in Social Model employed by this study is the creation of philosophy related to theory of representation. In essence, massively pinpointing everything which makes up the Medical Model is what the Social Model utilised. Through the identification of the

Medical Model form of obsessive individuality, Social Model theorists are able to interprete this as well as make use of it in their thought process and method.

In another vein, the present study equally embraces the concept of identity. Within this framework, being disabled is not considered negatively. In view of the fact that coming from a particular tribe or being male or female or being a part of a particular sect is not regarded in a negative way but as an identity, being disabled too should not be regarded as such. It should be considered as an identity too socially and personally. This identification could be linked to emotion or sentiment which could be ambivalent. The emotion could be that of someone that is in unity with his society and proud of it or it could be that of someone who feels different, excluded from the society and ashamed of himself or herself. Looking at it critically, being disabled may not be seen in a medical way but as means of describing a person who lives in a particular society and is being confronted by the attitudes of the society to his or her disability. Such a disabled is also confronted with obstacles that are physical. It is important that two interpretations of disability are adopted for the present study due to the increase in the awareness of theories related to identity which is somehow linked to Disability Studies.

2.3. Disability as medical and social model in postindependence literature

In postindependence literature, inquiries into issues of disability, bodily normalities and normative health keep growing. Hence, efforts are constantly made in disability studies to detach disability from the biomedical model by constructing it as a social category. Wendell (1989) and Thomson (1999) show how disability and illness are socially and culturally constructed or extrapolated from biological realities. They posit that, although physical affective and psychic differences may be real, the disablement occurs on the level of interpretations and material equities. To this end, Linton (1998) declares emphatically that the interpretation which people ascribed to changes and differences in someone who is disabled in the society becomes an important issue than people's attitude to the disability, the physical form of the disabled, his sense of reasoning and functioning of the organs on his body. From this viewpoint, it could be deduced that there is a needed awareness which will showcase disability as a concept which should not be restricted to a strict definition of the person who is disfigured, but can be employed to discuss anyone who defies sociocultural or medically defined

norms of health or bodily appearance. In the same vein, Wendell (1997) and Thomson (2005) view disability not as a strict bodily or psychic category but as healthiness which had been re-arranged within the range of social and physical ethics.

In recent times, researches on disability have shifted away from Medical sciences, Social sciences as well as therapeutics and have metamorphosed into current areas in Literary studies. Hence, from this new area of studies, disability becomes a universal phenomenon of marginalisation which occurs due to specific changes in the body of the disabled and non-disabled. Meanwhile, utilising disability literarily, academically or culturally in writings undeniably becomes an instrument which brings out the true nature of the non-disabled in the society. Based on this, disability is presented as a merchandisable, appalling and scary object. As a matter of fact, Fielder (1978) leans towards this direction. Mythologically and psychoanalytically, Fielder opines that the differences that are apparent on the bodies of the disabled frighten the non-disabled naturally. According to him, as soon as non-disabled catches sight of a diminutive figure, his or her brain receives a message that his or her own growth could be stunted too. In spite of this, the interest of Fielder later moves away from being disabled to the non-disabled. Additionally, his investigation equally changes the notions about the freakish nature of people through regarding it as unavoidable and realistic.

Specifically, he concedes to interpreting disability from the viewpoint of medicine. In his view, it is legitimate for non-disabled to be frightened whenever they come across the disabled because disability occurs normally in order to confound people's understanding. For Fiedler, being disabled, abnormal and impaired becomes a normal occurrence which is extremely disgusting. Furthermore, in his argument, regarding disability as disgusting is just depicted culturally in creative writings. Examining this evaluatively, Leslie Fielder strikes as being oblivious to the concept of embracing disability by majority socially.

Bogdan (1988) shows the social construction of the freak when he tells the story of the meeting between a caricaturist and a man who is very tall. The caricaturist asks the tall man if he would preferred being a man of gigantic stature. This illustration depicts the magnitude for which a gigantic stature becomes lesser evocative of disability than that of advertisement and propaganda. However, neither Fiedler nor Bogdan clarifies more

on disability within the present day fiction. In 1987, Gartner and Joe recapitulate an assemblage of articles bordering on interrogating the creation of disability in the lifestyle and societal values of the disabled relative to books that were produced before Charles Barnes (1992) or Martin Norden (1994)'s researches on history of disability.

Gartner and Joe showcase that the disabled becomes a creation of institution as well as literary studies and education. All twelve chapters in the book are positioned inside an ambience architecture of being disabled through multiple texts. These texts relate in depicting disability as ability. Depicting disability through medicine connotes it as extremely sociopathic which afflicts a particular person. Therefore, the community where the disabled resides is saddled with the obligation of caring and healing his or her disability socially.

Longmore (1987) looks at how the disabled are represented in literature. In his view, literary works are littered with a lot of heroes and heroines who are disabled. Ranging from hideous characters and lawbreakers that are lame including comic strip characters. To Longmore, people easily overlooked disabled characters in literary works since it is an imaginary world where people run away to, hence, it is convenient to discard or ignore unpleasant scenes from one's mind. Perceptively, he argues that pictures of the disabled on non-disabled minds may actually not be a major issue or mind-blogging that could create frights, one could easily control the fear, and another angle to it, is that it may or may not even be the concern of a certain non-disabled. However, by exploring the driving force of disability depictions, Longmore urges that the depictions are functional activities in socialisation. Meanwhile, he could not proceed further on this thought. He, therefore, provides representatives of being disabled which he believes are untoward. He explains that a disabled is designated as such stereotypically because he must have commited a sin which has embittered him as well as making him to seek for vengeance against the sins he assumed that the society has committed against him. Essentially, disability is seen as a threat to non-disabled's psychology as evident by catalogue of inhuman acts towards and abhorrence of disability by a society dominated by the non-disabled. In Longmore's opinion, disability itself discharges furious penchant which ideally would have been restrained through inward procedure of discipline of self.

Two other stereotypes of disability portrayed by Longmore are those of people that have been secluded while accommodating their disability. The second one has to do with undersexed and oversexed disabled heroes and heroines which is centred around the stereotypical disabled who acknowledges his or her disablement. Furthermore, these stereotypes impose burden of complications completely on the disabled. Hence, neither does social exclusion of the disabled imply being totally separated from the society nor does it connote societal rejection. In a way, the disabled elected seclusion due to societal rejection of his or her disability.

Basically, from Longmore's assertion, disability in creative writings and literary studies is considered ideologically from the model that is patterned medically and deeply rooted within most Western cultures. Disability through the medical lens affirms that the disabled requires healing and should not be regarded as socially constructed. Meanwhile, representing disability medically is championed through policies related to the public, constitution, acts of goodwill culturally and socially. In a way, it is normal for a large number of disabled to prefer living in seclusion than living among those that will treat them with disdain in an effort to inhabit the space of the non-disabled.

Jennis Morris (1992), a disabled writer, opines that what becomes essential in the portrayal of the disabled in literary texts is the reactions of the non-disabled to the disabled rather than displaying the lifestyles of the disabled and the coping mechanisms the disabled adopted in confronting their impairments. This infers that existing literary texts which feature the disabled are only concerned with the behaviour of the non- disabled regarding the disabled in the society. Those texts are less-bothered about how the disabled themselves cope with their disfigurement. In the meantime, Cangguilhem (1989) asserts that depicting the non-disabled's behaviour towards the disabled negatively, always, is myopic. This is due to the fact that the non-disabled too are equally affected in a negative way socially. They are similarly cowed by a prevalent societal norms and orders which segregate the disabled from the non-disabled. The hatred exhibited by the society towards the disabled is clearly displayed in the societal ladders, association, processes, and depiction. Consequently, these prevalent societal norms and orders barred the non-disabled from developing a right attitude towards the disabled. This, therefore, confirms that the social norms and

orders put in place in any community aid in treating the disabled of that particular community as inferior. Rojeyet al (1988); Armstrong (1990); Morris (1992) and Turner (1995), therefore, while being specific about characterisation in literary texts, opine that it ought not to involve reprehensible people considering that when this occurs, it leads to a wrong feeling about disability.

In another vein, a favourable depiction of disability materialises when the disabled are portrayed as: Non-disabled, being cured of their disability, those who can be satisfied sexually as well as beautiful or handsome to look at. This view is supported by Lauri Klobas (1988). In Klobas' opinion, transforming the disabled into non-disabled in literary texts equates to a depiction which is positive. However, it must be clearly stated here that the just mentioned fact is not germane to the lifestyles of the disabled. Axiomatically, this opinion consigns the disabled who failed to accomplish this obligation whether in the physical or socially to the bottom of the social ladder. Furthermore, in the view of Dwoskin (1991), the notion that the disabled endures discrimination from news coverage due to the fact that blemish is continually being stamped on them through publicity becomes rational, natural as well as detrimental. However, Dwoskin does not realise that being disabled could only be regarded as detrimental due to the fact that disability manifests in a way which is downgrading. Hence, as a reproach which is constructed by the society, disability is got to be set apart from the non-disabled world. In addition, negative interpretation of disability is exhibited through constructing and labelling disfigurements as what triggers it. Such interpretation becomes necessary for those who affirm that being disabled showcases the reality of life as against those who opine that being labelled as disabled is the creation of the society.

Relatedly, in Gilman (1988)'s opinion, optimistic pictures about differences in physical appearances of people are incapable of surviving within a community which creates such differences. She argues that all pictures created whether imaginatively, clinically, intentionally or naturally towards one's consciousness become conceptual through various events. Considering the construction of the disabled socially through diverse narratives such as untoward ordeals and extreme actuality which expresses impairments, hence, anticipating something crucial, homogenising, aspect of societal narratives in liberating itself from the shackles created by disability itself as well as the

one created by the larger world becomes inadequate. Utilising monochrome photography, derogatory literary texts combined with advertisement which pretends to be benevolent to the disabled in depicting disability are seen as degrading by David Hevey (1992). This is due to the fact that these gestures transformed the disabled into dependants who have to rely on these in order to survive. However, this view becomes defeated since another solution could be proferred whenever benevolent act is non-existent. Non-existence of charitable acts leads to eradication of disability since it is the seemingly helplessness of the disabled which arouses charitable acts, therefore, toeing the line of David Hevey, it is charitable acts which singularly construcs disability. In essence, charitable dispositions towards disability including impaired narratives will always make being disabled to be regarded negatively. As long as being impaired or disfigured is a regular occurrence, typecasting people as disabled is no longer necessary.

In another vein, the values of all the texts that are selected for this study become apparent through the comprehensive clues they contributed towards conventional depiction of disability in African society. The selected texts reveal that identifying the variations in the typecasted disabled is crucial in comprehending the construction of disability. This identification is equally necessary in the protection of a delicate concept about non-disability. As a matter of fact, the constant portrayal of the disabled in literature is that of a body which is quite different to that of the non-disabled in diverse ways. Hence, the present study exposes the procedures wherein affirmation of non-disability becomes acceptable generally whereas typecasting those impaired and disfigured becomes the general norms.

2.4. Disability archetypes and stereotypes

Typecasting disability in disability studies has become complicated over the years. This complication arises from the interpretation given to stereotypical and archetypal disabled. However, bearing in mind that there is the need for elucidation, definitions of these two key problematic areas are provided in this study. According to the first definition, a stereotypal individual is the creation of the society who refuses to accept the societal identification status given to him by his society but supplants it with another option that he supposes as reality although admittedly created by his society.

In a way, such stereotypal people fail to naturally expose the typecasting as the creation of the society, on the contrary, they parade themselves as real. Conversely, archetypal individual acts the same way as the stereotypical one, however, the meaning given to such people is conjectured including being fashioned as general reality beyond interrogation according to its designers, consumers and valuers. In essence, the archetypal individual possesses the quality of an age-long reality which eludes the stereotypical individual. Notably, it is not unusual for an archetypal individual to be transformed into a stereotypical one. This usually occurs whenever an archetypal personality confronts their societal–identification and label. A typical example of this situation is that of the female as feminist. Many women are constantly rejecting being tagged a feminist as confirmed by Derkins (1979). The confrontation of people of colour against racial discrimination is another example. In addition, the cry against being referred to as queer by the homosexuals is another reference. Consequently, between the stereotypical individual as well as archetypal one, undoubtedly, recognition is not given to them as creation of the society. Meanwhile, according to the views of those who evaluate and assess them, the archetypal ones are considered to be real while the stereotypical individual are regarded as fake.

Generally, the picture combined with the truth about being disabled becomes vivid as well as constructed in an archetypal manner as opposed to the stereotypical way. This idea is acceptable generally due to the fact that being disabled as well as being non-disabled remains obvious. As the case may be, justification for viewing the disabled as stereotype can be due to the fact that the meaning ascribed to being a stereotype covers a wide space, to the extent that little escapes its limitless parameters. Accordingly, Barnes (1992:38) observes that typecasting disability medically, patronisingly, criminally, along with dehumanising those disfigured, proliferate literary texts, motion pictures, the screens along with news media. Additionally, he opines that the picture of the disabled as depicted by these broadcasting agencies, to a degree, turns echoic in conjunction with appearing especially permanent. Meanwhile, the way these agencies portrayed the disabled is sufficient for them to be labelled as stereotypes. However, this investigation is specific about the fact that aspect like this cannot ordinarily construct the disabled stereotypically. Further, Barnes lists eleven stereotypes of disability imagery such as the impaired looking despicable as well as miserable; the disabled being regarded as a thing that could easily be brutalised; the disfigured being

depicted as malevolent and wicked; the disabled being portrayed as an environment or monster; furthermore, the disabled could equally be regarded as a thing to be mocked; at the same time, the disabled could be presented as embarking on self-hatred and self-destruction; added to this, impairment could be made to look like a cargo; disability could also be depicted sexually abnormal; someone who is not completely involved in activities in his or her society could also be regarded as disabled; and lastly, the disabled could be portrayed as non-disabled..

The list above showcases stereotype assumptions about the disabled which are constantly reproduced in fiction. In many storylines the disabled are to be pitied and tolerated by the non-disabled. Sometimes, the disabled are portrayed as objects of abuse by the non-disabled. The disabled could also be presented as sinister and evil because he or she looks different from the non-disabled. Barnes explains that this is the most common stereotype in the society. The disabled are also reduced to an object of curiosity by those that are not impaired. Sometimes, being disfigured becomes an object for fun and ridicule. In another vein, the disabled are seen as their own worst enemy due to the fact that they do not see anything positive in their disability. Another typecast is when the disabled becomes an extra load who requires the support of relatives and kinsmen in particular as well as their community at large. In some cases, activities like sexual intercourse ordinarily being enjoyed by those that are not disabled become an herculean task for the disabled. At other times, the disabled could be depicted as not part of the community. They are presented as beings that should be segregated and isolated from the society. The last stereotype is when the disabled are portrayed as possessing extraordinary power when compared with the non-disabled. For instance, a blind man could be depicted as someone with a sixth sense.

Furthermore, disability becomes obnoxious in the society during the era of Classicism especially in the Theatron. According to Barnes, way and manner in which disability is presented in classical Greece Theatre exposes the negative approaches where disability is conceptualised, disvalued and created by the society. In essence, Classical Greek Theatre had, for the most part, shown the disabled to be horrible, cursed, symphatised with and misinterpreted. In litereary texts, featuring the disabled as characters are done mainly in order to evoke pity, trepidation along with repulsion. Interestingly, it is not only the impairments but the characterisation as well which evoke such emotion.

Clearly, in Barnes' opinion, the picture such emotion evokes exceeds being stereotypical. Meanwhile, Barnes neglects bringing the investigation towards a rational resolution. He, therefore concludes that disabled characters in literature are archetypes of culture.

A critical assessment at all these interpretations reveals that an archetypal figure is assumed to be stereotypical in nature but with no recognition given to him or her precisely. On the other hand, this archetypal figure is transformed into a stereotypical one anytime they refuse the societal labelling of being an archetype. In the same vein with Barnes (1992), Cumberbatch and Negrine (1992) categorise all images of disability as stereotypes. In their opinion, stereotyped image characterises people in accordance with their impairments. Consequently, the impaired must be regarded as human beings paramountly without looking at the impairment on their bodies. To them, stereotyped images are labelled as normative fallacy. A critical look at the works carried out by Quicke (1985); Kriegal (1987)); Schuchman (1988) and Norden (1994) exposes corresponding conclusion with investigation of Scott- Parker (1989).

Quicke (1985) comes close to a greater degree of interpreting the image of being disabled. In Quicke's view, being stereotyped as an impaired figure becomes ineffective because whether it is positively or negatively done, it still comes to the fact that a dominating identification number has been ascribed on him or her by the society. According to him, a stereotypical person could be described as someone who does not believe in availability of numerous good fortunes for the disabled. Such people believe that labelling someone through his or her disability in any discourse has limited such people to a certain role in the society. Taking into account that some literary texts stem the flow of chances for all their characters, this investigation argues that the disabled usually exhibit advanced personality traits, to a greater extent than the non-disabled in literary texts.

By contrast, in literary texts, Krieger (1987) catalogues disability into 4 stereotypical characters such as the lame that is satanic; the lame who depends on charitable acts; the lame who is idealistic along with the lame who survives a dangerous event. Kriegel who became crippled at the age of twelve explains that the lame in literature is tagged as demonic when his disability is portrayed as evil and sinister. A good example of

this is Shakespeare's king Richard in *King Richard 111* whose disability is exposed as evil. In another vein, the disabled who become cozy with the fright which fails to acknowledge the humanity in them are labelled as the idealistic lame. Such disabled have accepted their disability and the societal definition attached to it. Lastly, when the disabled accept the reality of their humanity and see it as the root of inconvenience to the non-disabled, thereby, re-programming themselves on how to live outside of the society while still looking in, they are typecasted as the survivor cripples. Hence, from Krieger's list, the disabled who are cast as cripples in literature become an outcast socially. Additionally, such disabled are transformed into captives of societal predictions who have been moulded through the very system which inconvenienced their disabilities.

As a matter of fact, delusion of the society regarding disability is incessantly strengthened through derogatory labels such as 'lame', 'idiot', 'deaf'. 'moron', 'abnormal' and the likes. Meanwhile, these terms may not seem totally incorrect but their meanings, to a marked extent, through which the society viewed disability are regularly being cheapened.

Schuchman (1988), along the same line, categorises the deaf into 8 different stereotypical classes in Hollywood films: The first stereotypes are the dummies; those who pretend to be deaf in order to make people laugh; those that are miserable as deaf; those that are specialists in reading lips; those that wear the tags of fools; those that are consummate orators; along with those whose conditions are treatable. In this way, Schuchman claims Hollywood has inflicted a lot of wounds on the deaf community through these fixed labels which expose the society's jaundiced opinion on disability. Leyens (1994) and Oakes (2002) affirm that those who are disabled are always brave. However, depending on such affirmation is fraught with complications as opined by John Quicke (1985). To him, typecasting someone with disability as brave could be offensive to those disabled, on account of its misshaping of the truth about disability. In this way, personal involvement of each disabled to his or her disability leads to recognising in what manner as well as for what purpose he or she appreciates unfavourable including continuous typecasting as disabled. Dyer's explanation showcases history along with culture as determinant in stereotyping disability (Dyer,

1993:72). For Dyer, stereotype defines, as much as possible, the extent in which the disabled are discriminated against in the society. It also interpretes the placement of the disabled socially including the guidelines for being normal for those that are not disabled as opposed to the disabled. A critical look at all these views indicates that disability is more of sociological than the medical. It is the society as an entity which determines the disability and the level of acceptance. Hence, this study is anchored on Social Model of Disability.

2.5. Literary representations of disability

Although disability cuts across diverse cultures and periods, it was just of recent that literary and cultural critics begin to analyse and acknowledge its presence in literary studies. Hall (2016:31) stresses that in the 1970s and 1980s, disability studies were dominated by social science perspective, which were exemplified by the political and sociological focus of some of its leading organisations and publications. It was not until the late 1990s due to the growth of Cultural studies that Disability studies were taken up in a sustained way. Since then, according to Hall, scholars including Rosemary Garland–Thomson, Lennard Davis, Brendan Brueggermann, Ato Quayson, David T. Mitchell and Susan Snyder have put literature at the heart of their critical examinations of disabled and non- disabled bodies. They analyse texts by authors with disability, texts that depict disabled characters and texts that deal with disability on a level of metaphor. Essentially, the first wave of writing in disability studies was concerned about exposing and recovering works by disabled authors and intellectuals. It also focused on analysing fictional characters and existing works that engage with disability. Davis (1995: xvi- xvii), for example, takes a biographical approach by throwing a question to his readers on whether they had ever thought of certain poets, novelists, playwrights and the likes as disabled. Interestingly, many familiar writers appear on Davis' list, ranging from J. Milton who became completely blind at the age of forty-three, the partially deaf Reynolds Joshua, Alexander Pope who was a frail hunchback, the deaf Harriet Martineau, John Keats who was infected with tuberculosis and died at the age of 25, Lord Byron who was born with a condition known as the club foot, James Joyce whose right arm was disfigured to Virginia Woolf who suffered from mental illness.

Furthermore, he claims some classic works of Cultural Theory for Disability Studies which includes Gilman (2014)'s work which centres on regarding mental illness as impairment; Rothman (1971)' social histories of prisons and asylums along with Leslie Fielder on Freaks. However, Davis' view fails to acknowledge the different range of forms of novels and the agency of critics in bringing different critical models of reading to a particular text. Garland-Thomson (1997) celebrates black women 's literary novels about disability which includes works by Toni Morrison and Audrey Lord. Garland- Thomson focuses on figures of resistance such as Eva Peace, a poor African American amputee who is at the centre of Morrison's novel, *Sula* (1973). Snyder and Mitchell (2006) hint at the way being impaired developed into active sociopathic. To them, during the period that advocated for the betterment of human beings, certain methods of handling impaiments were initiated. Such methods like utilisation of medicine, presumptuous reports as well as severe observation were endorsed. All these approaches, however, have succeeded in transforming those disfigured as topics of investigation.

For scholars like Quayson (2007), disability is so common in literature to the extent that it can be seen as the defining feature of literary narratives. In Quayson' suggestion, for any literary text to be reckoned with, its storyline ought to be examined from the perspective of a disfigured society since this also can be connected to being deformed physically and mentally. In this context, Quayson adopts comparative approach to engaging with representation of disability in Irish, African-American, South African and Nigerian literature. Consequently, he is engrossed in exposing disorder in particular themes including texts which stick around the suave outward display of depiction literarily. Right from the foreword of his book, Quayson clarifies that it is necessary that one becomes observant about the universality of disfigurement. In addition, there is the need to examine disability assiduously in narrative works, culture or lifestyles. This is followed closely with a succinct evaluation in regarding disfigurement socially.

Quayson opines that depicting disability in narrative works mirrors the unconscious dread as well as ethical trepidation universally which come up through the relationship that those who are disabled have with those that are not. In addition, he explains that in literature, the particular apprehension is displayed by chains of artistic exigencies

which encumbered depiction itself. In this regard, he offers an extensive typology of disability representations which could, in a way, authenticate every textual criticism about being disabled. He later moves away from the realm of physical disability to the discussion of mental and psychological states. By focusing on autistic spectrum in literary writing, he re-situates physical impairments within the parameters provided by their state of consciousness.

The texts from different settings which Quayson analysed are connected by the ways in which they exhibit a form of 'aesthetic nervousness'. Accordingly, through these texts, being disabled becomes connected to misfortune, agony and despotism. Not only this, disability becomes an imbroglio, socially excluded and an interpretive difficulty or impasse. By endorsing the social model, Quayson sees the society as disabled rather than an individual. From Quayson' summation, it will be wrong to tag an individual with one form of disfigurement or the other as a disabled in preference to the society where he or she lives. This study benefits a lot from Quayson's view. By contrast, Barker (2012) explicitly challenges Quayson's view of 'crisis' in disability representation. Barker focuses on literary texts from both colonial and postcolonial settings like Nigeria, India, Zimbabwe and New Zealand. Emphasis covers everyday activities and emphatic representations of the disabled. In essence, the disabled is shifted from being a passive text written by a critic with a predetermined agenda or by the hegemonic discourses of society, so as to become an active subject position from which theorising and creative re-imaginings of disability can take place.

Additionally, during her investigation, Barker delves into the artistic as well as political nature of literary works which have their roots in postcolonialism. In her argument, she avers that authors whose writings focus on postcolonialism are also interested in the intricacy surrounding the lifestyles of the disabled. Related to this, those authors equally showcase the manner in which children with disabilities are regularly linked to past events of colonialism and how they metaphorically symbolise the injury and weakness of a nation. Essentially, Barker 's attention zeroes in on creation of normality, political nature of healing, along with interrogating the disabled's rights to abode as well as social inclusion. This is due to the fact that the political and curative sides of being disabled spring up from the interests which authors develop in postcolonialism.

Similarly, disability is depicted metaphorically and allegorically in African literary texts rooted in postcolonialism. A good example of this is J.M Coetzee's *In the Heart of the Country, Waiting for the Barbarians, Life and Times of K, Foe* which are all postmodern allegories. J. M Coetzee works locate the disabled in the centre of the universe and all his texts which are listed here convert particular compelling anxiety in the society to additional macrocosmic features. Consequently, in J.M Coetzee's works mentioned above, disability is made to represent certain degeneration as well as disenchantment in African society. Essentially, utilising disability metaphorically in order to showcase the travails of Africans in their quest for self–discovery becomes a major interest of Coetzee in his writings. Individually, there is an effort of re-inscribing the attributes linked to the subaltern, which is generally applied in order to notarise the Boers' truth. Hence, by making use of characters with one form of impairments or the other in his works, Coetzee appears to insinuate that freedom from racial discrimination and class stratification is obtainable in Africa. According to Coetzee, a stable government along with independent economy could only become possible in Africa through an all-inclusive policy which will cater to those who are disabled and those that are not. As a matter of fact, Coetzee asserts that empowering those that are disabled remains a symbol for empowering Africa herself.

Prominent among numerous intellectuals who analysed and assessed the divergent aftermath of colonialism on those subjugated is Frantz Fanon. Fanon diagnoses the colonial condition of the colonised as nervous. Consequently, Tsitsi Dangarembga applies this term to her novel and titled it as *Nervous Condition* (1988). Dangarembga's titling her novel this way showcases a title which is suitable and loaded with abundant totems of interpretation including imaginative ideas. Depicting colonisation as disability is vividly seen in characters such as Mainimi, Maigurub and Nyasha in Dangarembga's *Nervous Condition*. Nyasha's battle with anorexia is a good reference point in the novel. Tambu, one of the main characters in *Nervous condition* rises above disabling societal illness, such as superior culture of the English, patriarchalism along with colonisation, which ravage her body psychologically. These illnesses really dealt with her, however, she struggles to rise above racial inferiority. She equally frees herself from the devastating hold of patriarchalism by going to school single handedly. Her efforts later become fruitful and she is transformed into a

figure to be reckoned with in the society. From this angle, although Tambu's illness is not physical, yet it could be read as illness psychologically.

A close look at the Yoruba of South Western Nigeria confirms that illnesses appear in various manner. It could appear physically, spiritually, mentally and metaphysically. From the list mentioned, being ill physically, spiritually or mentally could be diagnosed easily and be treated as such. These forms of illnesses could also be treated without having recourse to sacrifices and fetishness. However, if an individual is metaphysically ill, treatment has to move away into the metaphysical arena. As a matter of fact, Yoruba cosmology encompases four realms such as the realm of those that are not born yet, the realm which belongs to those alive, the realm occupying those that have died and the realm of transisting from one world to the other which is also known as the metaphysical realm. This explains the Yoruba belief about children that are given birth to but fated to later die. Some die at birth and some when they have grown. They are referred to as "abiku' (born to die). The parents of such children go to a great length in order to make them stay in the second realm but most times, these efforts usually prove abortive. This is clearly displayed in Soyinka and J.P. Clark' s "Abiku". Soyinka describes the realm of passage to be the gap which exists in the world inhabited by human beings and the one inhabited by the spirits which is linked together by one of the gods (ogun). According to Soyinka, those inhabiting the spirit world are regarded as beings that are not perfectly made by Obatala (the god of creation) and cannot be regarded as human beings. Not only this, it is believed that those beings who inhabit the spirit world were not completely and properly formed by Obatala and they neither belong in the real world which is the second realm nor belong to the third realm. They also do not belong to the first realm since they exist. Hence, the Yoruba believe that they occupy the fourth realm which is the metaphysical realm. These spirit beings are endowed with the ability of moving from the realm of the dead to the realm of the living at will.

On his own part, Amadi (1966) depicts various kinds of impairments in *The Concubine*. These depictions showcase Amadi's disposition to being disabled personally and socially. *The Concubine* features some characters who are disabled such as a dwarf who is regarded as a gossip socially. He moves from one place to the

other bearing tales without being concerned about his deformity. Amadi creates a monstrous picture of a particular garrulous male character that taunts people. He is also fond of self-mockery. Regardless of the rejection cast at him by his society, he is found to be indispensable to the plot of the story. Another disabled character in the novel is Madume who is blind. Madume is not only insatiable; he is also selfish, insolent, and aggressive. The next disabled character is the person who plays the drum. Although his fingers are curved, his dexterity on the drums amazes the villagers. However, he is hot-tempered and crafty. Additionally, Amadi portrays the society's ridiculous and erroneous belief about speech impairment through Wodu Wakiri, one of the characters in *The Concubine* who was a mild stammerer. The last disabled character in the novel is struck with madness and is not accorded much significance in the novel. This is a reflection of how African society views insanity. An insane individual like Otudo of *The Concubine* is regarded as a non-person in Igbo society.

Looking at it critically, all the disability scholars under review proffer representations of disability of the kind that had been subjected to scrutiny. These scholars either examine or interprete disability medically or socially, by focusing on disability as a creation of culture as well as the ways and manners through which depiction of disability shape public along with institutional responses. Meanwhile, this particular investigation relies on the Social Model of disability and centres around Africa due to the fact that it is a continent which seeks to marginalise or erase from view altogether those whose bodies are disabled. Ironically, although disabled metaphorically and literally, it is also a continent that does not acknowledge disability.

2.6. Normality, normative health and abnormality

So far, we have been able to identify and situate the representations of the disabled in literature. It was necessary to do this to buttress the view expressed earlier on the complexity of Disability Studies. At this juncture, it is also instructive to look at the concept of normality and abnormality. Normality is a fascist concept due to the fact that it is a controlling power which favours those that are privileged. 'Normality' as a term can be said to be controversial like 'disability'. Davis (1995); Thomson (1997); Shakespeare (1998) view it as a term which is only justified or created from the existence of abnormality, social exclusion and discrimination in order to measure one

group against the other. In Davis' view, everyone lives in a world of norms and strifes for normality daily or otherwise willfully shuns the condition. Hence, separating being normal from being abnormal from the narratives of disability becomes an exercise in futility.

Considering that ethnicity along with sexual category possesses attributes of normality which are linked to them, so does abnormality which is the state of being not normal. Normality is, therefore, a perspective and philosophy. It is also the reinterpretation of body norms. For Foucault (1979), the distinctions between a healthy, normative subject and its 'other' (s) were crystallised in the transition to modernity. In essence, institutions such as hospital, prison and the asylum practised disciplinary power by two means. The first one is known as twofold operation along with trademarking such as placing insanity by the side of sanity; someone who is dangerous by the side of someone who is harmless and someone who is abnormal by the side of someone who is normal. The second one is that of authoritarian task of polarised sharing (Foucault 1979: 14). Classification of bodies and psyches means that differences and anything considered abnormal often come to be pathologised. Specifically, normalisation occurs at the level of the clinic, the medical examination, the prison, or other less official institution spaces. Often, normalisation is imposed not only through medicalisation (that is, prescriptions and other bodily treatment) but through containment and exclusion. Hence, disability becomes an object which requires mending or accommodated.

The complex workings of power in the Western nations helped define and shape bodies in both metropolitan and colonial, as well as sociocultural categories of health and pathology. As Davis (2006;106) argues that harmonisation along with institutionalisation of embodiment and physical functions of people are needed in the establishment of any commonwealth. Indeed, while no mass confinement occurred in the colonies, the lines of demarcation between mad and sane, disordered and ordered, contagious and clean imposed themselves upon colonial mentalities and policies in important ways. In the colonial context, these distinctions were informed and intensified by the racial and cultural differences of the colonised defined by the West as inferior and deviant.

Essentially, Davis then posits that the rule of normality or normalcy has much to do with appropriateness and cultural expectations, and they can impose themselves in myriad ways. In his study of scientific discourse as well as literature of the nineteen century, Davis illustrates that normalcy was in fact constructed on many levels. The norm structures are not only readings of the body and of health but of gender, sexuality, race, class and even language and literary genres. To corroborate Davis' view, Albrecht (2006:150) opines that culture and context of other systems like medical, social, political and the like determine what is defined as normal. Hence, normality differs now and then in addition to altering of codes culturally, gender-wise, racially, age-wise and nationally. In a way, terms like 'normal' and 'normality' are seen as labelling and discriminatory in Disability Studies. Furthermore, Davis affirms that the issue with normality and abnormality borders on how societies created them. Consequently, the issue does not lie with the disabled himself. As a matter of fact, using 'abnormality' and 'normality' as terms are seen as being beneficial to certain group of people who define, stigmatise and become hostile to those who are deformed through normalisation along with principles which are based on bodies including behaviours. Consequently, from this angle, someone who is deformed should not be judged from his physical appearance as this reduces him socially. In lieu of this, labelling or stereotyping the disabledsocially or culturally as surbodinate or unhealthy brings about diminished dignity, reduction along with marginalisation within a community.

2.7. Connections between postcolonialism and disability

Within Disability Studies, postcolonial themes are commonly used metaphorically. Lupton opines that utilisation of tropes turned out to be a considerable ingredient which can be used to depict conventional torture, disease including impairments. To him, above mentioned tropes have linked being disabled, being ill including one's physical frame to various issues like armed forces, implements, alien, gender as well as imperialism (Lupton,2003). Consequently, the obstacles against a country or continent are continually associated with disability.

Allegorical relationship which occurs within the union of disfigurement and imperialism cuts across an expanse of topics. For instance, in Lane (1993)' s view, an individual who cannot decipher that the deaf and dumb alphabet in America is a manifestation of traditional beliefs of certain group of people has been colonised. Existent synergy connecting those who are sick to those who will heal them is equally described as being colonised medically by Frank (2002). Adrienne Asch (2004) avers that the ordeal of racial discrimination along with impairment can be related to the description of the disabled evolving from the Black race. Furthermore, Rod Michalko (2002) and Terri Thrower (2003) matched impairment with being in diaspora. Corroborating this, David Ingram (2003) describes disability as inner banishment.

In addition, disability is regarded to be a form of segregation (Wood 1994). Treating those who are insane can also be depicted as being enslaved as opined by Thomas Szasz (2003). The developing world's desire for healing from adverse effects of colonialism is also equated to disability in orientalism according to the view of Neil Jarman (2004). However, any flimsy comparison of being disabled together with ethnicity often suggests that the two experiences are interchangeable. For instance, disability is inscribed on Paul, the adopted African American brother, in Dredger (2004)'s *One of Us* just because of his race. Considering that Paul is not white within a locality where

the colour of his skin is labelled as deformity, he becomes deformed socially following the interpretation that the rules guiding disability in America gives to being disabled. Paul's ailment is labelled as defect of the bones by his society. This defect, however, majorly impaired his lifestyles.

In another dimension, inability to talk is regarded as a form of colonisation by Harlan Lane (1993) who posits that those who are hard of hearing belong to the minor group linguistically. Hence, they have been colonised. In his argument, stereotyping Africans negatively is the same thing as stereotyping those who are hard of hearing. According to him, additional kinds of domination culturally which is seen as being colonised are listed as: Being subjugated physically; imposing foreign means of communication on the colonised; along with schools tailored in order to cater to the set objectives of the imperialists. Thus, the colonial masters are the non-deaf people due to the fact that their behaviours happened to be identified through over protectiveness, discrimination,

unfavourable typecasting, construction of fake subservience, as well as exploting people economically.

Meanwhile, he makes no attempt at investigating all the things which constructs colonisation as an exceptional shape that is attributed to domination. Lane also fails to particularly separate colonisation out of the different shapes associated with domination which is beyond embodiment and which could also constitute being disabled. Frank (1997)'s description of the synergy between someone who is sick and the person who will heal him could be concluded as being colonised medically. Frank opines that this form of colonisation could exist forever. In his argument, the success of conventional medicine is based on colonialism. He, further, avers that a sick person who seeks for medical help undergoes colonisation and becomes a colony medically. He also becomes an audience in a play in which he is acting as the main actor. On the other hand, Shakespeare (2000) also compares disability to colonialism and imperialism.

Disability could also be seen metaphorically in writings related to postcolonialism. A lot of postcolonial texts testify to this. Specifically, Choi (2001) equates colonising a country to being disfigured nationally. To him, the political goals and objectives for advancement as a country which was once colonised are captured within the depiction of disfigurement. On his own, Quayson (2002), portrays the periods of colonisation in Africa as when the colonised were disabled. Goonatike (1982) depicts the process of enforcing the values, customs and beliefs of the colonial masters on the colonised as crippling of the colonised's minds. Essentially, this investigation identifies disability as a trope of postindependence disillusionment through selected postcolonial African novels.

Depiction of disabilities as emblems of the destructive side to colonialism is an added crucial aspect in the link between being disabled and being colonised. Illnesses along with disabilities are usually utilised metaphorically as representation of societal nepotism. Meanwhile, those in the field of Disability Studies affirm that Metaphors like these are deliberately used to depict a sick society which needed to be cured. According to the stand of Mitchell and Snyder (2003), disability as an allegorical instrument in literary texts, exploits the chances offered by the physical differences

between the disabled and non–disabled. In their opinion, metaphorically, disability has become a walking tool for literary texts. As a walking tool, it gives power of depiction and ability to analyse issues deeply to literary texts. In the contention of this investigation, impairments likely enlarge the instruments which can be used for literary texts. Not only this, disability also foregrounds postcolonialism as well as personifies the society including the government. From this perspective, this investigation seeks to explore the diverse and compelling nature of the disabled postcolony trope and examine its interrelationship with people with disabilities, in postcolonial cultural locations.

Many disability scholars like Thomson (1997), Davis (2006), Quayson (2007), Linton (2010), Ngue (2011) insist that disability is not a marginal issue in literary and cultural study, rather, it is a central and transformative critical category. Far from replacing the disabled' absences from activities in his or her communities politically and socially, literary writing is seen as obsessively returning to the topic of disability. Several instances showcase the disabled being used as an alternative route allegorically in order to symbolise the apprehension of the society along with buttressing the interpretations given to disability and normality.

2.8. Disability in the African context

Despite the fact that studying about disabilities is largely advanced in developed countries, caution is needed to be applied when using some of the terms attributed to disability in Africa. As Quayson (2007: 101) observes, any attempt to universalise disability can lead to complications theoretically especially in crucial areas. While expanding on this cautionary point, Ingstad and Reynods (1995) posit that the idea of disabilities in literary texts should not be suppositional. For instance, disability as a concept is ignored in some communities due to the fact that it is not regarded as a major issue in such communities and does not need any special attention. Furthermore, such communities do not consider that disability as a term can be an umbrella for all kinds of defects in people. Added to this is the fact that those who could not see, those who could not walk and those who are sluggish by nature are identified individually with their different defects and not collectively as the disabled in local dialects.

Therefore, they opined that the contents of research are to be prioritised as the main determinants for understanding disablement.

In support, according to the view of Lipenga (2014), the way an individual lives through disability ought to be adopted. Consequently, collective approach to disability must be dropped. As a matter of fact, Lipenga's position mirrors the conclusion which was arrived at by members of the International Organisation responsible for solving problems in the world through their congress on the franchises of the disabled. At the congress, it was concluded that the meaning given to being disabled could change from one nation to the other. Thus, contrary to ensuing from disorderliness, the conclusion arrived at in this particular congress allows nations to formulate policies on disabilities which are suitable to each nation's peculiarities. Pivotal at this juncture, is the necessity to identify the different circumstances which led to disability in Africa unlike what obtained in the developed countries. These circumstances are: Inter and intra racial battles fought within various African countries, penury along with illness. All these and the likes contribute in no small measure to disability in Africa.Those who are disabled within African society always battle with challenges of the utmost primary requirements like feeding, access to standard hospitals and drugs, access to basic schools, equipment which can assist them, insufficient amenities, remoteness as well as clean environment and many others. Interestingly, all the afore mentioned are non-issue in the discussion about disability in the developed countries.

Incidentally, ordeals of Africans during the colonial period signify that much importance could not be attached to the issue of disability since colonialism has given birth to issues which are more exigent than disability. Some of these issues are ethnicity, re-colonisation, segregation of one race from the other, effects of colonisation and concerns about the growth of nations in Africa. By focusing on the African continent, this investigation identifies cultural differences to be one of the vital ingredients through which one could understand the complexity that surrounds being disabled. Consequently, this study pays heed to the cultural relativity that is apparent in all the selected texts. The study extracts out of the assertion of Owusu-Ansah and Maji (2013) that certain controversies are attached to being disabled in Africa which are solely peculiar to the continent. Additionally, these controversies could also vary

from one community to the other depending on the environment, changes in status along with religion and the likes.

2.9. Africa and disabled postcolonialism: Link in history, philosophy and theory

The position within this section is a cursory look at the fundamental relationship between disability and postcolonialism in Africa. This approach is imperative because despite independence, Africa, as a colonised continent is the most marginalised by the Western world, the most debt-ridden, the most unstable, both politically and economically. Ihonvbere (1994:1) sarcastically remarks that the colonial masters believe that Africans are some form of modern cannibals who are incapable of thought and rational behaviour. Ihonvbere's opinion here is an indication that the Western nations (the colonialists) have inscribed disability on Africans by labelling them as non-human and irrational. Africa has experienced different stages of identity such as pre-colonial, colonial, resistance and the current stage which is the post colonial experience. Africa, at the initial stage, was a mouldable prospect. This is due to the fact that Africans themselves were not even aware of this and those nations which were addressed as Africa were also not aware that they could be addressed as a continent. In Oni (2014) 's assertion, Africa unconsciously became the kind of property distributed out to those whose tribal differences are the ground where their beliefs, norms and visions are positioned. Further, Africa developed into a continent where those that are the same linguistically, culturally and socially fail to see themselves sharing the same identification, past, present and forthcoming goals. Consequently, during the pre-colonial era, Africans were only identified by their different tribes such as the Zulus, the Yorubas, the Asantes and the like.

At stage two, the colonial masters inscribed the name 'Africa' on the continent as means of identification as well as confrontation. During this stage, Africa became an area which had been subdued and absorbed within the sphere of the imperialists. In a way, colonialism, therefore, shepherded a plethora of different domains into the existent one. At the Berlin Conference, during the 19th century, major European powers came together to negotiate and systematise territorial acquisition of the colonies. Mainly, this was done in order to manipulate the colonised for economic

gains along with dominating them. Significantly, the Imperialists enforced assorted kinds of manipulation together with domination on Africans through selling them as slaves, discriminating against their race as well as colonising them. Accordingly, the continent was transformed in the direction of commercialization by providing the colonial masters an unending flow of inexpensive workforce, natural resources including ready made place for buying and selling their wares.

The third stage brought about oppression and resistance. During this period, the continent evolved into an antagonistic option. This became vivid in their social history, theoretical, conceptual and habitual stance challenging conventional ordinance as well as their expectations. Consequently, this antagonistic option for Africans then developed into rebellious adoption of individualisation along with rejecting the philosophy surrounding colonisation including racial discrimination.

The sudden expiration of colonialism during the Modern period including recognition of the worth of each previous colony culturally has led to the emergence of diverse literary texts presently. The literary texts which evolved during this period established rights to identifying people culturally in order to look beyond legions of expression by those that were formerly stigmatised. In essence, by questioning the established concepts of cultural authority, those that observe culture and those who can interprete past events embraced responses about those alterations effected through postcolonial factors. Meanwhile, it cannot be ignored that the cultural changes through colonisation predate the modern military and economic expansion of American and European powers.

This process did not either come to an end with the emancipation of Africa, Asia, and others as new forms of colonisation emerge. Postcolonial discourse and critical trends provide means to understand such process and to reassess the past as well as evaluate the present in view of regularities that transcend the boundaries and limitation of local collective memories. However, there is the need for the comprehension of the fact that one's intellect including establishment could still be going through colonisation despite becoming independent. Indeed, colonisation is about dehumanisation and control of the other.

Looking at it critically, in Bhabha (1994)'s view, narratives which centre on colonisation intend analysing those who had been colonised by viewing the number of those who became stigmatised through the kind of race they came from. This is done for the sake of justifying their annexation as well as inaugurating government along with rules and regulations. He, further, claims that the colonised are created as a social reality through detectable colonial discourse. Thus, colonialism is normalising ordinances of imperial divergence which also translate into perpetuation of the foreignness of the imperialists. However, complication which could arise from definition like this is that it does not apply to African countries like apartheid South Africa. More so, colonialism which is connected to beliefs politically legalised contemporary annexation, possession including manipulation attributed to occupied areas through mind-boggling external armed forces. According to Hall (1996), postcolonial moment extends across global and cultural diversity groups. These factors are constantly being engraved on colonialism historically. However, according to him, they were meticulously repeated through discourses which are twofold.

Additionally, literary texts which are anchored on postcolonialism tend to be of subjection and enslavement. Such texts could easily be identified by a methodical procedure of influence by the culture of the dominant power. This culture is imposed on the colonised through structures which have been put in place by the imperialists. According to Mishra Hodges (1991), it is understood within colonial narratives that postcolonialism had already been expressed in it. In spite of the fact that, colonisation produces postcolonialism, it is also opposed to colonisation including its developmental processes and it is equally an effective lens in viewing colonisation critically in literary texts.

Basically, the process of colonisation and its effects on the colonies is no more existing without postcolonialism especially when being criticised. The difficulty in ascribing a specific meaning to the term postcolonialism stems from the semantic import of the word. Hence, Postcolonialism like every other post-isms: Post-modernism, post-structuralism and the like is likely to be taken too literally. The prefix 'post'literally means 'after' so there is a high degree of temptation to interpret post-colonialism as 'after colonialism'. Seiden and Widdowson, (1997:43) raised questions

in respect of the appellation ‘post colonialism’. The question is asking if ‘post’ means ‘beyond’ as well as ‘after’ independence and freedom. It also asks whether it means the extension including growth of colonisation which is otherwise known as neocolonialism. The postmodern critics, Best and Kellner (1991), explain that the prefix ‘post’ signifies an active rupture with what preceded it. This definition of post-colonialism as ‘after colonialism’ or ‘after independence’ is however too restrictive, too limiting as it fails to pay attention to the continuing, far-reaching consequences of colonisation.

Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin advise that postcolonial proponents must strongly look at the overall implication of using appellation such as ‘after colonialism’ to mislead people. Loomba (2003:33) corroborates this by contending that the prefix ‘post’ when affixed to colonialism makes things difficult since this is interpreted as a past event in a double way. The first one is transitory which means events that came up when colonialism had already ended. The second one is ideologically positioned to mean events which replace colonialism after its eradication. Romeo (2000) urges that postcolonialism should be defined economically. However, this approach overlooks the local component of culture. Essentially, the questions we need to ask are these: To what extent does the period of colonialism last? Are formerly colonised nations still experiencing a period of postcolonialism? and is it possible for the colonised who had been imprisoned by colonialism to be liberated from imprisonment which is described as prison of the past by Arasanayagam (1991).

In a way, postcolonialism creates various ideological processes that revolve not only around remote implications but also around immediate consequences surrounding coloniality. In addition, postcolonialism equally displays a bid to rise above interpreting the main aim of studying it historically by extending the idea of colonisation from history and politics to diverse forms attributed to man’s inhumanity to man, normalisation, repression and dependency. It also provokes certain complex group which is, however, strong academically as well as philosophical. This group assesses concept including comprehension related to contemporary historical issues, study of culture, textual interpretation, as well as economics of politics.

There are many angles to viewing colonisation critically. This is corroborated by Du Bois (1989) who offers contemporary critics on colonialism and postcolonialism numerous angles. One of such angles, as suggested by Du Bois, is through analysing the basic attributes of colonisation. Another one is through directing the critics to world-historic fluctuations and mutations of colonialism. Olaniyan (1992) argues that Du Bois highlights the different aspect which pertains to colonisation geographically combined with cultural peculiarities of the colonies before coloniality. In Rabaka (2003)'s view, the already stated opinion becomes crucial due to the fact that lots of postcolonial theories tend to disregard specificness together with various levels of colonisation of each colony both in the past and in the present.

Likewise, Du Bois relates being colonised to commercialism. He equally affirms that exploiting people economically cannot be separated from dominating them through violence. Further, he equates discriminating people according to their sex as colonisation. However, his disposition forecasts as well as furnishes certain yardstick tailored towards the narratives including the criticism of postcolonialism. For Cabral, cited in Blackey (1974: 4) there are two major forms of imperialist domination which have affected African people: Direct domination which is also called classical colonialism and indirect domination called neo colonialism. Hence, Cabral's concept enables us to conceive of colonialism as one of the present.

From the point of view of the colonialists, as advocated by Ashcroft, Griffths and Tiffin (1989:188), a continuation of prior occupancy exists in the course of history. Their view tends to agree with the views of other scholars like Cessaire (1972); Fanon; (1967) Nkrumah (1965) and Cabral as cited in Blackey (1974). In essence, postcolonialism points out that the so-called alliance; support and reform are actually another means through which people become dominated politically. Added to this is the fact that theories tailored towards postcolonialism are also a way of dominating people culturally through literary texts. This form of domination by literary texts is also detrimental like colonisation. Therefore, the Postcolonial theory stands to reject those strategies adopted through the literary texts which emanated from the imperialists. One of such strategy falsifies the existence of colonisation including its ordeals. Another one presents those that had been subjugated as inferior to the imperialists. Accordingly, postcolonial theory equally deals with the attempts made by those that had been subjugated in expressing their personalities. It also displays how

they struggle in order to retain their individual national history amidst differences in historical records. Specifically, theory on postcolonialism evolved out of weaknesses of Western theories with dealing in the midst of complexities including assorted societal roots in relation to writings on postcolonialism.

Colonisers repel those they had colonised across perceived dual structure. They abstained from challenging the way and manner through which they regard the colonised. Essentially, the colonisers could only identify the colonised as man-eater through their imagination. According to Jan Mohammed (1985:34)'s argument, the imperialists' unalterable presuppositions as regards their noble supremacy connotes rare questioning of specific authenticity either personally as well as socially. In addition to this, the imperialists are not predisposed to waste time trying to understand the nature of those they had subjugated as this is regarded as a useless venture. Basically, it is assumed through this Western concept that the universe could only be regarded through dual opposing concepts. For instance, assuming that the colonisers are organised, intelligent, virile, positive as well as non-disabled, therefore, those that are colonised are chaotic, irrational, feminine, evil and disabled. However, postcolonial writers and theorists set out to reverse this polarising concept in its totality. Du Bois (1989 :8) feels for the colonised and wonders why the dark body has not been ripped apart due to the double consciousness imposed on him by the colonial masters. The colonised has been given double identity which contains dual hearts; dualised mode of thinking; dual struggles which could not be merged together and the ability of judging oneself in the mind of another person always. Essentially, this particular view reflects the complex identity of the colonised who felt alienated despite their qualifications in a racist society.

2.10. Chapter Summary

This chapter has reviewed previous studies on disability, emphasis is equally placed on disability in African novels. The chapter also reviewed the relevant concepts of disability model adopted for this study which is centred on the society as against medicalised one. Finally, the chapter reviewed connections between postcolonial and disability theories as the theoretical tools in this current work.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0. Chapter Overview

Illustration of the procedure which is adopted for this investigation is presented in this chapter. At the same time, the chapter also furnishes us with clues in relation to the strategy put in place during the course of this investigation. Additionally, a description of the different phases of this investigation is done in this chapter. These different phases of the research include choice of literary texts used in the study, the process of collecting information from the selected texts (mechanism involved in gathering of information) including those methods used in analysing the information (process of interpretation of data). Furthermore, methodological approach undertaken to discover how disability becomes a trope of postindependence disillusionment in selected postcolonial African novels is equally addressed in the chapter. Qualitative approach is therefore adopted to explore this question. It presents the sample which was selected and showcases the method used for data collection along with the process of data analysis.

3.1. Methodological Approach

Basically, literary texts selected across the four regions of Africa were used for this research. The selected texts depict disability as a trope of postindependence disillusionment. The texts were then subjected to literary analysis through the methodological approach. This approach indicates the feasible way and manner of certain items of research. Categorically, methodological approach centres on the way and manner through which any researcher effectively constructs an investigation in order to guaranty an authentic along with a solid conclusion which answers those questions raised in the aims and objectives of the study. In this study, an effective research design is put in place in order to answer the questions raised.

3.2. Research Design

Research design is the same thing as an all–embracing procedure which is set up in order to arrange as well as carry out a specific investigation. Thereby, making it an aspect that is vital in any investigation considering that it embraces the whole essential factors in research. These factors are: Research method, research structure, sampling design including research tools. Design of study is broken up into qualitative and quantitative research. Qualitative approach is used in this study since the investigation done in the study demands interpreting the perception of African novelists and their intended meanings in utilising disability as a trope of disillusionment in Postcolonial Africa.

In as much as the bedrock of Qualitative approach is embedded in the template of interpreting reality of life, describing events in the lives of people in the society and their day by day activities, the present study, therefore, opted for this approach. A critical look at qualitative approach shows that it centres around how people define and understand their societies including the impact which those societies have on those living in them. Hence, utilisation of this approach for the present study. This is done, mainly, in order to understand the reality of disability in the disabled postcolonial African region. The approach is also used so as to investigate the conduct, viewpoint, reaction including participation of the disabled in African society. In addition, the present study also looks at the values of the disabled in the society along with focussing on the customs, beliefs and norms about disability in Africa.

Dealing with case studies, plots, investigation including development of sub-theories are instances of qualitative approach. Data for Qualitative approach are sourced from investigation of specific societies along with the involvement of people living in the societies on one hand and collection of data, interviewing people as well as use of evaluation, records along with books, on the other hand. For this research, ten novels were selected for analysis. Those ten novels will be analysed through lens based on Disability Studies and Sociological Approach. Justification for the engagement of these texts rests on the ability to discover the utilisation of disability as a trope of disillusionment in postindependence African novels.

The present research evaluatively strives to collect data through the selected texts on how the colonial masters, African postindependence leaders and the society at large inscribe disability on the polity. A qualitative approach was considered more relevant to undertake this research as it deals with social interaction and perspectives on disability.

3.3. Interpretive design

As stated previously, each and every qualitative investigation has its root in the meaning made by those who are being studied and who happened to be the focus of the research. The design also encompasses theories and philosophical leanings which are socially generated. It describes the social reality of those being studied, their lifestyles as well as those ordeals confronting them daily. Interpretive design can be referred to as a pattern of investigation elicited from hypothesis showcasing the realities of life in a society is not individualistic or non-subjective, however, it is instead determined through the contact of people with the society including their circumstances socially. Consequently, this study, utilised the interpretive design to analyse disability as a trope in postindependence African novels.

The methods of investigation are critical, descriptive, comparative and analytical of ten (10) purposively selected novels: J.M Coetzee's *Foe (1987); In the Heart of the Country (1977); Waiting for the Barbarians (1980);* Zaynab Alkali 's *The Stillborn (1984); Virtuous Woman (1986); The Descendants (2007)*; Aminata Sow Fall's The *Beggars' Strike (1981);* Ben Okri's *The Famished Road (1996);* Ngugi Wa Thion'go 's *Petals of Blood* and Naguib Mahfouz' *Midaq Alley (1992)*. The texts are purposively selected because they are found to be deeply engaged with the mechanism of postcolonialism in Africa, and they address a common issue which is central to this study: The disabled African. The selected authors are adjudged to be mindful of the complex relationship between literature and disability in Africa. The novels are selected based on the similarities in the historical/political developments of the countries of the authors, thematic and stylistic similarities and the literary modes, disability theory, which the authors employed in constructing their stories

Further, the texts selected showcase how the disabled can be identified including how they are portrayed through varied discourse environmentally, in diverse crossroads of history as well as within non-identical settings along with localities, across interpretation of literary texts

3.4. Chapter Summary

In this chapter, description of the metholodigical approach for the study is done. Qualitative approach is used for the study since the approach focuses on social reality. The study zeroes in on interpretive design in order to make meaning out of disability being a trope of postindependence disillusionment in Africa.

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CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4. 0. Chapter Overview

This chapter analyses the postindependence novels selected for this study. The previous chapter focused on the methodological approach and the research design used for the study. It also proffered reasons for using the type of research design. With this in mind, selected novels of John Maxwell Coetzee which could be said to be symbols of postmodernism that are intimately linked to circumstances in South Africa are examined in the chapter. Mainly, the chapter operates from the templates provided by selected African novelists from the four regions of Africa. From the Southern African region, three novels written by Coetzee were selected. These were: *Foe (1986), In the Heart of the Country (1977)* and *Waiting for the Barbarians (1980).* Relatedly, from the Western region of Africa, three novels by Zaynab Alkali, one from Aminata Sow Fall and one from Ben Okri were selected. The novels selected were: Alkali's *The Stillborn (1984)*, *The Virtuous Woman (1986)*, and *The Descendants (2005)*; Aminata Sow Fall's *The Beggars' Strike*; Ben Okri's *The Famished Road*. From East Africa, Ngugi wa Thion'go's *Petals of Blood* was selected and Naguib Mahfouz' *Midaq Alley* was selected from the Northern part of Africa. One peculiar thing about all these novels is the central representation of the disabled characters in all of them. These texts are read as postindependence allegories and are particularly related to situations as well issues in Africa, an ambience which became debilitated in addition to being wounded through colonisation. The texts also signify the degeneration and disappointment in Africa, a continent that is metaphorically disabled. Essentially, all the selected novels are adjudged to be mindful of the complex relationship between literature and disability. Consequently, these selected texts will be considered through the viewpoint of Sociological Approach to Literature and Disability Studies.

4.1. Disability as postindependence temper and racial dissonance in J. M. Coetzee' selected novels

Disability as a term depends on different factors. For instance, disability gives the impression of being a solid entity, an article to be possessed, and once possessed by someone, is transformed into an object of disability. Meanwhile, possessing along with becoming such object illustrate specific asset which deducts and negates. Hence, the word /dis/ is a negative prefix which when added to a word gives the opposite meaning of such word. Consequently, when the word /dis/ is added to /ability/, it becomes /disability/ which means opposite of /ability/. A critical look at the term 'disability' shows it as a term surrounded with a lot of contentions. Those campaigning for the rights of the disabled have changed the way disability is regarded in the society. It is no longer considered medically but socially. It is also viewed as a way through which a particular set of people could be identified politically. However, societal brand of deformity including abnormalcy remains the accepted attribute for the disabled regardless of other forms of wrong constructions. Significantly, those fighting for the rights of the disabled hardly support usage of disability as a qualifier for the disabled due to the fact that the concept centres around vital questions on fatalities; interrogating cohesion in theories; linguistic functions; along with politicisation in the course of definitions.

Disability seldom enters into the picture as a central concept in novels as opined by Davis (2013). To him, presenting the disabled as heroes, heroines or major characters are uncommon. However, characters with minor appearance such as the one in Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* could appear disabled and this could lead people into pitying them. However, John Maxwell Coetzee's works selected in this study are direct refutation of Davis (highly logical and largely true) claim about the role of disabled characters in novels. In Coetzee's works, the disabled and supposedly deviant characters represent the heroic 'monikers 'of a true postindependence narrative which is struggling to maintain and proclaim its dignity against the disabling narratives of human perfectability and progress proffered by both the colonial masters intending to put down and the national cries attempting to uplift the black people of South Africa in particular and Africa as a whole.

As a matter of fact, the union of those who are disabled together with non- disabled in most postindependence writings is edgy. In some ways, efforts are often made to link the conditions of the disabled to historical epochs. Kehinde (2006: 6) clarifies this issue by saying that thematic foci of postcolonial and postmodernism texts have tilted out of the central towards the previously marginalised position of narratives like disability, poverty, alienation, developing countries and so on. In a similar vein, Spivak (1994) is of the belief that narratives which focus on postcolonialism must be directed at defining those boundaries between the coloniser and the colonised. In addition, the narratives should focus on hijacking those channels representing the marginalised. Spivak affirms that colonialism has imposed a narrative which effectively silenced the blacks and equally displaced them. Furthermore, in the view of Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin (1989), postcolonial theorists who believe in narratives shifting from the central argue that cultural postcolonialism necessitates the insurgency of those that had been placed at the borders in contrast to those at the municipality including the minor as opposed to the major with an experience that has become uncentred, pluralistic and nefarious. In essence, this clearly shows that the conditions and experiences imposed on the colonised by the colonisers have disabled them (the colonised).

Allegorically, African postindependence novelists through presentation of characters with various types of disability such as hunchback, blindness, deafness, madness, deformed limbs and the likes in their novels depict Africa as a disabled continent, a continent abused by colonisation as well as being a continent that is unable to develop an identity apart from the demeaning and emotionally disabling rhetoric of colonialism. In a way, coloniality of the disabled who is coming from the background of postcolonialism could then be regarded as two-fold in consonance with the view of Cindy La Com (2002: 24). This is due to the fact that as a subordinate under the coloniser who is not allowed to be human, the disabled, due to his or her disfigurement is equally not considered as human in the world of the non-disabled. In other words, the disabled Africa is doubly colonised due to her disability. No wonder Ikiddeh (1977) affirms the continual existence of colonial discourse in African literary texts since the sore imposed on Africans by their colonial masters is ulcerous. In addition, the sore is deep and affects the core essence of the people. Also, the sore constantly bleeds whenever it is opened through destructive weaponries.

As a consequent, the wounds inflicted on Africa/Africans have refused to heal, thereby, disabling the whole continent. In an attempt at curing this disability, postcolonial writers like Achebe, Coetzee, Lamming, Harris, White, Atwood, Rhys along with so many others had all at one time or the other re-written certain cannonical literary texts which were initially written by the colonisers in an effort to restructure the truth as presented by the colonialists through the concept of postcolonialism. Essentially, their works are all grounded in experiences of oppression and subjectivity.

Western authors like Cary, Greene, Conrad, Haggard, Defoe, Shakespeare and some others have at one time or the other portrayed Africa and Africans negatively, hence, the African novel, aims at correcting this wrong picture and at the same time aims at demolishing all those dehumanising assumptions about Africa /Africans that are apparent in Western literature. The objective of those novels based on postindependence disillusionment is to interrogate theoretical inferences of the hierarchical order and not to revise the order. Postindependence novels also aim at bridging the cultural gap between the Blacks and Whites. Schipper (1999:37) in his own view, posits that the novel adequately served as an appropriate instrument for literary writers in Africa that have the intention of discussing the truth about colonialism from their own encounter with colonialism. Consequently, through their writings, they eradicate the illusion that the white man is superior to an African man due to riches and power.

Significantly, this is what Coetzee had done in some of his novels selected for this study, through the custom of postcolonial literary texts, Coetzee re-writes a text within the texts of the colonist. The three selected novels, as earlier opined, are adjudged to be mindful of the complex relationship between literature and disability. Cotzee (1992:98) declares that the crippled and diminutive relations between human beings, who were created by colonialism and became aggravated during apartheid, obtained their psychological reprensentation within certain crippled and diminutive internal world.

In this direction, it is vividly clear that apartheid evolves from colonialism and its consequences are deeply rooted. In addition, these consequences are lifelong. Coetzee

(1992) equally describes apartheid as a shameless and deliberate offence towards the Africans. This must have prompted him to verbalise fears and tensions with allegories in his novels. A quick look at South Africa history shows how the Europeans settled in South Africa around the 17th century. This was about the time that Riebeek, who was an adventurer, got to the Northern part of the coastline of Capetown (Table Bay) on the 6th of April in 1652. This brought about the colonisation of South Afrrica which was hitched on an economy that was based on slavery. Meanwhile, initially, the adventurers who were Europeans did not intend to colonise South Africa as it was a place of rest for them. However, by 1655, Riebeeck refused admitting to the truth that South Africa was originally owned by the Khoisan people who were otherwise known as the Hottentots and the Saan who were equally referred to as the Bushmen. In this way, eradication of the blacks practically began in South Africa through racism as well as colonialism.

South Africa became a colony of the British during the 18th century and was shaped into a nation which focussed on racism and capitalism. At the same time, the colonialists while acting out their racial discrimination scripts labelled the Hottentots as being lazy, vagrants and thieves (Coetzee, 1988:3), Foucault (1988:64) describes this situation in which one type of person is imagined to be productive and another not through the ethical values linked to labour as 'disabling'. By 1807, importation of slaves had reduced drastically and the blacks in South Africa at that instant became enslaved. By 19th century, during Boer wars, the British defeated the Dutch which made them to abolish enslavement of the blacks and introduced racism. For the purpose of dividends, the British introduced the Natives Land Act or Black Land Act in 1913. This act determined that the blacks who represented majority of the populace own 8% of the land. Later, this percentage rose to 13% and this, despite a lot of protest and resistance became valid until 1993. In addition, laws which control where people live, work and travel to within South Africa were enacted. This led to the creation of the pass laws which segregated and limited non-whites from the whites.

In 1948, the whites who were in the minority won the elections and they proceeded to install the apartheid legislation. Millions of the blacks became landless through certain laws enacted by the whites led government. Additionally, the blacks also lost all rights and freedom along with becoming the subjects of the whites. No wonder, Fanon

(1967) in a significant way describes the evil of colonialism as a system which is never satisfied with ordinarily holding the colonised in bondage as well as clearing their brains completely. However, through contorted rationality, colonialism resorts to falsifying, maiming including ravaging the history of the colonised.

In essence, this means that the coloniser has moulded a new set of values for the Africans by distorting their history and culture. Subsequently, deconstruction together with displacement of narratives of Eurocentrism through which the developing countries are created do not constitute the entire definition of postcolonialism. Alternatively, postcolonialism equally permits what Bhabha (1994) describes as a form of newness which is not a continuation of the past and present. To Bhabha, postcolonialism brings about a different perspective of an act of rebelling against adapting to the culture of the colonialists. Consequently, the colonial conditions have also created the postindependence temper which pervades many postcolonial texts. Ziauddin Sardar in his foreword to the 2008 edition of Frantz Fanon' work captures particular proper description concerning postindependence temper. He opines that the colonised nations remain in constant battles against extreme rage and that indignation has taken those that were once colonised to a territory that is barren and non-productive. To Ziauddin, the colonised has been taken to an area where he is not seen as being human, where being black is not considered manly. In his view, those living in abject poverty just to survive in cities in Africa are silently screaming with resentment. He avers that the resentment is not from Africans alone but has extended to people from Asia and Latin America and that the anger and bitterness against the Empire are collectively exhibited. The anger comes from those whose culture, intelligence, methods including manners become mocked, dehumanised, proclaimed as subaltern along with being eradicated in certain circumstances.

Further, Ziauddin in an attempt at classifying the postindependence temper properly, equally argues that the anger is neither spontaneous nor is it an outburst, or new-found ardour because of fairness as well as equitability. According to him, the anger is the outcome of crushing knowledge, achingly protracted introspection, including more thoughts along with reflections. Fundamentally, the anger is carefully concealed and headed towards a definite extended objective. J. M. Coetzee, through the trope of

disability manifests this temper in his writings, especially in those texts selected for this study.

J.M. Coetzee, who is described as South Africa's most controversial writer (Poyner, 2009:3), utilises a method known as canonical counter–discourse in his writings. Tiffin (1987:22) explains that counter–discourse manifests whenever a postcolonial writer unmasks and annihilates the primary inferences of a definite canonical text by writing an opposing text in an allegorical manner and often times changing the structures of the text. Tiffin asserts that the counter-discourse text deconstructs all the signs of authority and power apparent in the canonical text, in order to free the counter-discourse text from false representation and social conditioning. The direct result of counter-discourse is Bell (1994)'s idea of Reverse-Discourse. In Bell's opinion, Reverse–Discourse is the rhetorics of the subdued subject of the dominant discourse. Bell states that in Reverse-discourse, the meaning and power of the dominant (subject) discourse is challenged. Thus, in his narratives, Coetzee confronts the edition of the colonialist's.

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4.1.1. The Autism narration of *Foe*

In challenging colonial version of history, Coetzee's *Foe* that was published in 1986 writes back against *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) which was written by Daniel Defoe. As counter-discourse postindependence narrative, Coetzee's *Foe* seeks to unravel the dumbness as well as despotism fundamental to Defoe's classical novel. Although, *Foe is* relatively autonomous, it acts as an extra dialogist which adds and substitutes the original text simultaneously. Coetzee recast the author including Robinson Crusoe who is the main character as characters with minor appearances through a discourse which is anchored by a woman. Coetzee creates a female character (Susan Barton) which is absent in the original text as the narrator. *Foe* opens with the first–person narrator (Susan), saying she could not row further (*Foe*,5). Exhausted from swimming for a long period, she topples over on to an unfamiliar land where an African man that could not speak welcomes her. A cursory glance at Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* significantly reveals a novel that could be described as an archetypical present–day real life fiction. In consonance, Said (1993) opines that, as a realistic fiction, *Robinson Crusoe* specifically showcases a Whiteman who establishes a kingdom of his own on a

remote island which is far from Europe. Said observes that the colonialist's contexts of this work sew the garb which is worn by such colonialists socially and morally.

Consequently, the modality of accounts provided by Coetzee aims at the deconstruction of truisms in the narration of the colonialists especially in *Robinson Crusoe*. The truth which the reader assumes from the original text (*Robinson Crusoe*) is somehow distorted and twisted in Coetzee's *Foe.* Susan Barton, an English woman becomes the protagonist in *Foe,* while the writer (Daniel Defoe) also features as a minor character. Friday in *Foe* is a disabled character, while Friday of *Robinson Crusoe* is not. Also, the 'e' at the end of Crusoe does not feature in Coetzee's *Foe*. Kehinde (2003) opines that by recasting Friday, Coetzee exposes the prejudiced undertone apparent in Defoe 's novels.

Susan, who has been left stranded on an island which is not only remote but also nameless, supplants Cruso as the narrator and author of the adventure. Amazingly, the only occupants of the island are Cruso and Friday. Cruso is a Whiteman while Friday is a Blackman. Cruso, who symbolises the all-important coloniser in *Robinson Crusoe is* consigned to the subaltern position in *Foe* by Coetzee. Not only this, Cruso had to die at the beginning of the novel and could not travel back to England with Friday and Susan.

The storyline in Coetzee's *Foe* is redirected at the silences which surround the protagonist (Friday). Mainly, he is uncommunicative due to the fact that he had his tongue cut off by those who colonised him which he considers as perfect equipment for his roles as a bondman. Overwhelming the discourse in Coetzee's *Foe* is the muteness apparent in the tongue of Friday which is ripped off. The peak of racial bigotry in South Africa witnessed the publication of Coetzee's *Foe.* Hence, speechlessness of Friday symbolises the silence and helplessness of the blacks in South Africa who have been refused certain privileges of being independent nationals as well as contributing to national issues despite their being the original owner of the land.

Quayson (2007) while situating Parry 's argument about the relationship between speech and silence in Coetzee's work points out that Parry's reading is based first on a

structuralist interpretation of the relationship between silence and speech. As Quayson points out, all the identified marginal figures in Coetzee's texts are read together and the silenced characters like Friday are to be understood basically in relational terms and that such relationality defines series of certain positions which are repeated in order to be understood productively.

Quayson says that Parry aligns literary interpretation to a materialist analysis and does not consider that there is a kind of silence which is related to inarticulacy, racialisation and disability in Coetzee's writings. As Quayson describes it, all the depicted mute characters in Coetzee's novels carry physical and cognitive impairments of various sorts. To him, representing the merging of the situations of the disabled physically and socially are those who have been rendered speechless through the racial tools. Relatedly, Poyne (2009: 12) opines that colonialism, which denotes a loss of political voice is consistently apparent in the passive and active resistance of Coetzee's black protagonists. Meanwhile, the long list provided by Kane (1984:14-15) on typologies of silence sheds more light on the different types of silence. According to Kane, there are dumb reticence connected to aparthy, sober reticence of solemnity, fertile reticence as regards disorientation , edgy reticence related to ordeal, gagged reticence linked to violence, antcipatory reticence related to expectation, condemnatory reticence related to reproof, unspoken reticence linked to endorsement, abusive reticence as regards allegation, eloquence reticence related to amazement, alarming reticence linked to threat, serene reticence as regards sacrament, as well as permanent reticence linked to loss of life. Each of these silences is related to disability one way or the other.

Consequently, as Kane pointed out, refusal to engage in the act of speaking connotes withdrawing oneself out of earthly, geographical, including activities of a particular society. Silence, is therefore of various types and importance with far-flung effects. In addition to Parry's analysis of speech and silence in Coetzee's writing, Quayson adds autism and dialogism. He believes that autism is relevant to Friday in *Foe* because of the conscientious silence that Friday infringes upon himself. As such, the silence suggests existence of an intense unease in Friday's mode of communicating socially. This is regarded as autism in the medical parlance.

In Day Smith (2007)'s view, being autistic is a process of defect in an individual during his formative years during which his ability to communicate verbally and non verbally including his ability to interact socially have been affected to a large extent. As Smith points out, other characteristics which are often associated with autism include being involved in practices which are constantly repeated as well as moving from one place to the other stereotypically, antipathy towards changes in the environment or alteration of day-to-day activities including peculiar reactions towards telepathic actions. Technically, ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorders) has been viewed as an extensive concept encompassing 5 (five) conditions characterised through restrictions in 3 (three) aspects which are related to growth. These three aspects are: Conversing with people, associating with people socially, along with behaviours which are often repeated. Meanwhile, those five conditions linked to ASD are: Being autistic (Autism), AS (Asperger syndrome), RS (Rett syndrome), CDD (Childhood Disintegrative Disorder) together with PDD (Pervasive Developmental Disorder).

Being autistic occurs during childhood and it is a condition which is regarded as an intellectual defect which is produced through certain brain-malfunction. As indicated by Powers (2000), this condition could be seen in a baby out of thousands of babies given birth to daily. Further, the whole world became aware of this defect in 1943 through a medical doctor (Leo Kanner) who was a specialist on mental, emotional and behaviour disorders in children. Kanner observes that certain toddlers refuse to develop interests in other children congenitally. He also discovers that their abilities to communicate with others are also delayed and they are fond of moving from one place to the other in a repeated and ritualised manner. However, this concept which is now known as autism was first used during the early century by Bluer (a Swiss psychiatrist) and Kanner later followed in this tradition. Meanwhile, there are divers ways to the exhibition of Autism in an individual and being diagnosed as an autistic is displayed in different ways whenever it is exposed to others individually and socially. As confirmed by O' Connell (2010), Smith (2007), Quayson (2007) and Johansen (2015), it is possible for autistic people to exhibit high intelligence in a lot of ways. Therefore, an autistic endowed with high intelligence is believed to function at a higher level. On the other hand, an autistic whose intelligence is at the higher level apart from communication disorder as well as having records of difficulties in speech could be regarded as an aspergarian (ASD). The term is derived from Dr Hans Asperger.

The autistic syndrome in *Foe* is built around Friday's muteness and extreme silence. Consequently, this study focuses on this silence in order to locate Friday on the autistic spectrum in the field of Disability Studies. In *Foe,* the protagonist (Friday), displays a three-dimensional silence. The first silence seen in Friday is his muteness due to his ripped tongue. The second silence is the one imposed on him through narratives of colonialism while the third one is the failure of the Whiteman who first discovered him (Cruso), Susan and the Whiteman who is interested in writing about him (Foe) in decoding him correctly. These colonialists fail in recognising Friday's resistance towards being stereotyped by them. Paradoxically, Friday remains completely dumb through the people who undertake to give him voice (Susan and Foe). Susan's first impression of the protagonist (Friday) centres around the fact of his being dark-skinned as well as being a wooly-headed negroid. Except for a pair of coarse knickers, Friday is discovered unclothed by Susan. Her examination of Friday's look reveals eyeballs which are lifeless, deep and wide nostrils, broad-lipped, and dark in complexion. Since Friday has a spear at his side, Susan, therefore, concludes that she must have been shipwrecked on an isle where those eating human beings inhabited (an island of cannibals). (*Foe*, 5-6).

Here, by suspecting Friday of practising cannibalism, Susan can be said to be susceptible to racist fantasies. She displays her bigotry clearly when she runs into the corpse of a female child by the side of the road during her travels through Britain with the protagonist (Friday). She becomes afraid of leaving Friday alone with the corpse. Her fear stems from the fact that she does not want Friday reverting to cannibalism by eating the corpse. According to Hulmes (1986:12), this obsessive trepidation about becoming the meals of those eating human beings could be described as certain dread of eradication of decency that is phenomenal.

Coetzee designates Friday as a slave who was shipwrecked while being taken from his native land (Africa) to America. He, therefore, unveils how characterisation of the protagonist (Friday) is enacted through the narratives of colonialism. Like Cruso and Susan, Friday too is a castaway. After the island adventure, it is only Friday and Susan Barton that travel to England, Cruso having died on the way and it is in England that Susan's role in Friday's education and civilisation is revealed. Accordingly, while in England, the protagonist firmly rejects the offer of being assimilated into colonial-

identity. At the same time, Friday could be described as someone who has been disfigured through colonialism due to the fact that his tongue has been ripped off by those white people who subjugated him. It is also suspected that Friday might have been desexed. Hence, incapacity of Friday towards producing progenies apart from removing the danger to colonialism equally strips the ability of re-creating another Friday from him. Like every other people who suffer from autism, Friday is prone to mood swing. Susan confirms that Friday's mopes are constant. It was Cruso that labelled Friday's mood swing as mopes. Susan explains that Friday will sometimes lay any tool he works with down, disappears into an isolated part of the Island, comes back a day later and resumes whatever he has been doing before as if nothing has happened. Susan further explains that Friday often mopes about the passageways or stands at the door, yearning to escape but afraid to go out. As part of his mood swing, he sometimes lies down on the bed, doing nothing while pretending not to hear whenever Susan calls (*Foe*, 78).

It is obvious from this description of Friday's mood that he displays clear signs of social withdrawal pertinent to an autistic condition. This is evident in the twelve features vivid in people with autistic condition as itemised by Quayson. He affirms that an autistic person is more engrossed in inanimate things as well as nature than human beings. In another vein, a child with autism has lower tendency to communicate than other children. He added that someone who is autistic has every tendency of following self-cravings together with self-philosophy instead of looking out for others'. Relatedly, anyone with autism syndrome will always be anti-social. Furthermore, an autistic person is enthutiastic about new ideas and this could go on for a while until it is transferred to another passion later. In another vein, anyone with autism develop an high degree of accuracy in perceiving details of information in addition to higher rates of recall than others. Also, an autistic person's opinion about relevancy including significance of a thing in some circumstances might differs from those who are not autistic. Majorly, an autistic person is fascinated with patterned material which can be visual, alpha numeric, or lists. In addition, he or she is also fascinated with systems which can be simple, complicated and non-concrete. Someone who is autistic exhibits an unwavering determination of collection of all sorts of things such as the tops of bottles, charts including data. Moreover, he or she prefers regulated practices instead of irregular ones. Finally, whereas, someone who is autistic and

functions at the low point takes things at the surface level and does not comprehend metaphorical expressions, in Asperger's syndrome, they learn the meaning of idioms one at a time, almost as if they are compiling a database of non literal sentences and their meanings, which makes them seem more able to cope with figurative language.

It is clearly seen from these features that Friday's endemic silence provides significant clues to the way in which he might be regarded as someone with an autistic syndrome. A lot of instances in the novel point to the fact that Friday is plagued with autism. Early in the novel, Susan, who is puzzled about Friday's behaviour asks Cruso a crucial question of whether Friday is an imbecile and incapable of speech. Susan further asks Cruso if that is what Cruso wants to tell her. Susan emphasises that she finds Friday to be a dull fellow all through (*Foe*, 22). Significantly, Cruso in an attempt to reply Susan positions Friday in a colonial discourse. In Susan's view, Friday has no tongue and that is why he does not speak. To her, it was the colonial masters, the Moors that cut out his tongue. She opines that the Moors ate Friday's tongue because they believe the tongue to be a delicacy (*Foe*, 23). Accordingly, towards unravelling the fact of what brought about Friday's disability, Susan presents Friday with two different illustrations representing how his tongue became ripped off. She does this in order for Friday to reveal the truth about his muteness through those illustrations which were drawn by her. Consequently, Susan's provision of double sides to the story of Friday's disability, unknowingly forces the actual disability she attempts removing. In another vein, Susan becomes perplexed when she realises that her illustrations might be distorted. To her, looking at it through another view, the illustration which depicts Cruso ripping off Friday's tongue might be understood as that of compassionate male parent feeding his child (Friday) with a lump of fish (*Foe*,68-69). Susan's summation here is actually revealing; it delineates a bigoted mind that tries to excuse her kinsman's perjorative act of cutting Friday's tongue. Thereby, turning Friday into a disabled.

Looking at it critically, the silences in *Foe* have been a great concern to certain critics of the novel. In the argument of Critics like Parry (1993), socially, Coetzee's novels rely and exert authority purely from the colonial masters. Parry, therefore, wonders on how such texts could be adjudged to destroy colonialist patterns. Furthermore, Parry posits that the repercussion of inscribing the silence associated with the oppressed as a

kind of freedom from the shackles of oppression may be interpreted as re-creating the fictions which favour colonialism. In his contention, Coetzee does not just transcend Eurocentrism, instead, he imposes that particular colonialism which he strives exposing on the colonised. However, Parry's opinion here is actually faulty. A critical look at Friday' silence in *Foe*, apart from acting as a symbol of the subjugation equally indicates Friday's independence. By filling the gap in the discourse, the mute Friday becomes a symbol of those who have been subjugated through colonialism, on the other hand, Friday equally becomes independent by refusing to reveal himself to those who colonised him when asked to do so.

Susan Barton from the outset of the novel believes in being justified on moral ground to teaching Friday communication. She does this in order to reveal the truth of his story. By giving Friday an opportunity to learn and communicate, Susan intends imposing the speech and culture of the coloniser on him. To Susan, Friday's accessibility to speech and education will make him to be regarded as a human being. Susan's attempt of imposing her own language on the colonised Friday showcases certain dictatorial techniques present in that particular action due to the fact that the colonised becomes enlightened through language. This is corroborated by Shakespeare (1611). Shakespeare avers that the enslaved uses the language he is taught to curse his master. Hence, Foe ignorantly observes that it will not be a big deal to teach Friday such language that will serve his needs. Afterall, the exercise is not meant to turn Friday into a philosopher (*Foe*. 149).

In a similar vein, Susan's attempts at teaching Friday how to read and write equally meets a brick wall as Friday, like every other autistic person, chooses silence while refusing to read and write. Arrogantly, Susan, therefore, postulates that he does not possess any means of communication, discerning Friday to be formless with only a riot of emotion and longing. Just like a child who desires to be born but could not be given birth to (*Foe*. 143). Autonomously, he makes an illustration of arrays of the fifteenth letter of the alphabet. Consequently, Foe hurriedly concludes this act to be the first stage in his learning process. Foe, then, informed Susan to start teaching Friday the English Alphabets by the next day. However, this assumption on the part of Foe is premature and not correct as what Friday illustrates could be said to symbolise a Friday who is resisting the imposition of colonialism and disability on him. In Gayak

Spivak's opinion, that same letter which Friday draws in *Foe*, is a pidginised form of prayer in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe.* Hence, this particular exercise by Friday connotes the remembrance of his past life before colonialism, which represents an act of resisting colonialism. Meanwhile, the final picture in *Foe,* is that noise which Friday produces and which resonates throughout the island. This infers that the silence imposed on Friday by the colonial masters has been healed. His voice could no longer be suppressed.

Eyes in different columns which are placed on the feet are willingly drawn by Friday. He does this while imitating Susan's intention of teaching him language. The eyes seem as if they are walking on the drawing board which he quickly wipes off as Susan attempts to collect the drawing board from him. This is in the same vein with Frantz Fanon's opinion. In his view, wiping off the drawings on the drawing board connotes a fresh start in life. Such empty tablet foresees written words to be the real authority. Specifically, the pattern of decolonisation in which what depicts success rests on changing the whole social structure from down to the top emanates from Fanon (*Wretched of the Earth*, 27). A critical deciphering of Friday's insciptions depicts him as a subaltern who apart from becoming mute and autistic through the oppression of the colonial masters equally rebuffs every attempt that is offered him to reveal his essence and subjectiveness. In a manner, what Friday draws might have presented him as being alert as well as being armed with the ability to comprehend his society. This idea comes up in Fanon's classical novel. In his response towards excruciating performance on self images, Fanon captures the relationship between the eyes and colonisation. Fanon discloses that an encounter he had with a white man's eyeballs had placed a strange weight on him which weighed him down. Furthermore, he opines those who are dark-skinned, in their bodily picture experience difficulties as the white world batters them down with different kinds of wrong labels such as cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetishism, racial defects and the likes. Fanon explained that he had to escape into oblivion in order to overcome what he terms as deformity, an extraction, an outflow that runs through his body with black blood.

According to Fanon, it is glaring that the white man disables the black man by breaking his body into pieces. This act of violence not only disturbs the black man's field of vision, it also affects his frame of reference. Coetzee, in *Dusklands (1974:84)*

while describing the kind of association which occurs within a colony, avers that the imperialists and their subjects use eye as a symbol. The protagonist becomes an eye which looks like a sphere in order to move within the forest and devours it. As someone with an eye which devastates the forest, the protagonist travels across by constructing roads which consume from boundary to boundary. The eye is so powerful to the extent of seeing itself whenever it moves. In this extract, division between a detached, disembodied percipient subject and an objective world is clearly depicted.

Significantly, Friday grapples with knotty and manifold predicament. In the first instance, he is disabled. He is also non-white and a slave. Although, Robinson Cruso has given him a slip of paper which is tied round his neck proclaiming his freedom, it is of no use to him. Even Susan's efforts in protecting him from being sold into slavery the second time is not borne out of love but out of possession. Susan contends that, Friday belongs to her even if she does not love him and he will not be allowed his freedom. Consequently, Friday has to remain in England (*Foe*, 111). This shows that Susan like every other colonialist does not regard Friday as a human being who is entitled to his own humanity but as a thing to be possessed, an object.

Susan's attempt to know Friday through looking upon his body objectifies him. Consequently, the dialect of the coloniser and the colonised which Susan hopes to eradicate could not materialise due to the way she stares at him as a subject. When Susan bumps into him, wearing Foe's robes of authorship, dancing, she is not only amazed at his disfigurement (his ripped tongue), but also the likelihood of his supposed castration is captivating. Susan expresses it this way:

> In the dance, nothing was still and yet everything was still. The whirling robe was a scarlet bell settled upon Friday's shoulders and enclosing him; Friday was the dark pillar at its centre. What had been hidden from me was revealed. I saw, or, I should say, my eyes were open to what was present to them. (*Foe,119*).

The above quotes infer that certain parts of Friday's body which had always been covered is exposed during dancing and Susan could see this when she bumps into him. Accordingly, Susan believes that her fruitless efforts to unearth the truth of Friday's tongue has rendered the truth about his body meaningless. In essence, the ambiguity

surrounding the castration of Friday becomes real as well as metaphorical. Coetzee's failure to divulge the disfigurement of Friday's manhood declines participation by identical objectified illusion around the body parts of people with dark skins where characters like Susan takes part. The story about Friday's genital mutilation is graphically depicted through Susan's fantasies which are gruesome especially through her illustration of the tongue which had been ripped.

In a related manner, the author-figure, Foe, who symbolises Western cannon, seeks to marginalise the story of Friday which the liberal–minded Susan labours to exhume so as to properly confronts the legacy of colonialism. According to Susan, judging her narration as absurd stems from the tenacious maintenance of its dumbness. Susan opines that loss of Friday's tongue is shrouded in mystery. She cannot decode the mystery because it is only Friday who can explain what actually led to the loss of his tongue. To Susan, the colonial disability of Friday can be narrated from different angles. In essence, narration within narration emerges from the tongue of Friday which is ripped by the coloniser. However, real narration lies with the Autistic-Friday himself. Meanwhile, he just cannot do so since he is autistic. Susan explains:

> The shadow whose lack you feel is there: it is the loss of Friday's Tongue....The story of Friday's tongue is a story unable to be told by me. That is to say, many stories can be told of Friday's tongue but the true story is buried within Friday, who is mute. (*Foe,*118)

From this quotation, Susan admits that the real fact about Friday's past can only be divulged by him alone. Foe's failure to distinguish between Susan's authorial silence and Friday's is condemned by Susan. According to Susan, Foe has committed an offence by not clearly differentiating between Susan's silence and Friday's in the sense that Friday does not have the command of words and therefore is vulnerable to being re- reated daily in order to accommodate the appetite of others. While shedding more light on this, Susan explains that Friday becomes whatever she decides to call him. To Susan, if she refers to Friday as a cannibal, then he becomes a cannibal. On the other hand, if Susan decides that Friday is to be referred to as a laundry man, then he becomes one. Susan therefore, concludes that the silence of Friday is a vulnerable one like a child. However, Susan adds that her own silence is as a matter of choice and it is meant to serve a purpose (*Foe,* I21-122). In the above mentioned statement, Susan

stresses her engagement with the ability of narrating and knowing things. The dissonant relationship between the disabled Friday and the abled bodied in his society is equally seen when Susan misconstrues Friday's act of casting petals over the sea. At the initial stage, Susan sees this to be like a glamorous ritual being performed religiously. However, afterward, it emerges that Friday is just observing a memorial service on that particular location where the ship which was taken him to America sunk (*Foe,* 141). Susan, subsequently, unravels that the rite being performed by Friday is his way of remembering the members of his family who probably died during the shipwreck.

Remarkably, within the purview of social model of disability, a disfigured man like Friday has been adequately disfigured by hindrances socially as well as environmentally. Diverse scholars within the field of Disability Studies aver that being tagged a disabled person is never as an exact consequent of defect. However, this derogatory label emanates out of the widespread interpretations given to it socially. It also stems from the moral codes as well as conventions attached to the interpretation of defects in a society. It is possible for the already stated interpretations about being disabled socially to be depicted fleetingly with attributes like inconsequential, defective, catastrophic, helpless, unpalatable, bold, motivating and all the likes (Mitchell and Snyder,1997). The critics opine that disability appears as a flexible title and as a blend of divergent corporeal and rational attributes that often have little in common. This infers that the word disability is elastic, it has the tendency of changing according to the dictates of the society where it occurs. In support, Michael Berube's view as quoted by Linton (1998, vii) avers that disability is the most unpredictable and adaptable of classification. To Berube, disability could be myriads of human conditions and assortment of impairment, from the insignificant to the serious, from undetectable physical disability to incomprehensible maturation setback according to social meanings. Thus, the social meanings ascribed to Magda's condition in Coetzee's *In the Heart of the Country* (1977) is that of insanity.

4.1.2. Gender of insanity and patriarchal suppression: *In the Heart of the Country.*

In literary studies, insanity in the lives of female characters has always been an enthralling issue. This idea becomes visible right from the Victorian period when some female lead characters are depicted as insane. The idea later spreads to literary texts from both the West and the East written during the Modern era. According to Woods (2015), it was Hippocrates and later Plato that promote the idea of women being more susceptible to irrationality and hysterical conditions than men. Biroglu (2018: 45), posits that Sigmund Freud, an Australian Neurologist, can be said to have been influenced by these beliefs. To him, theorisation of Dora, one of the women that Freud used as a case study precipates his theory about signs of hysteria in women emanating from traumatic experiences psychologically or sexually. At a counselling session, the woman (Dora) allegedly confesses to be a recipient of abuse sexually from a close associate. However, the claims are rejected by Freud. Consequently, Freud suggests such claim of being sexually abused by Dora to be just a figment of her imagination. Essentially, Freud believes the fabricated experience is so horrifying as to cause psychological problems for Dora. This experience and others prompt Freud into propounding a theory on different phases of life cycle psychosexually. In Freud's opinion, women are regarded as men who have been deformed because they are without male organs. Therefore, as half-men, learning to accommodate their disability which is deficiency of male organs should be their priority.

Historically, psychological sciences have always been male-oriented. Gulligan (1982) states that in a methodical mode, core psychology has continually misconstrued the female experience. The early psychoanalysts did not reckon with the experiences in the lives of women and they rather preferred to shelter majority of such circumstances under the umbrella of appellations like 'neurosis', which Karen Horney (1955) considers as familiar routine in men and women. However, in female-centred psychology, plights of women remain a main priority. In addition, insanity is regarded to be normal in certain contexts. In a way, females are susceptible to different kinds of assault sexually and domestically at different stages of life. The World Health Organisation (2012) indicates that women all over the world are affected. Some women may become depressed while some may be feeling anxious. In another vein,

some may be distressed psychologically and violated sexually. Spousal abuse and the likes equally play a major role. According to the World Health Organisation, factors attributed to health-related issues in females include, societal-induced stress which emanates from numerous functions, sexism along with consequences of destitution such as starvation, under nourishment, stress, spousal assault as well as molestation. Every factor, which has been previously mentioned, influences to a large extent the degree of wholeness in the sanity of females. In essence, bitter experiences which catalyses into grief, worthlessness, shame and snare can result into melancholy.

Additionally, the Organisation explains that assault on females is universal and it can be minor or major. In consonance with this, some authors subscribed to traditional images of female insanity during the Victorian period. The first Mrs Rochester 's madness is presented in form of an animal on all four baying at the moon in *Jane Eyre* by Bronte. Regarding insanity bestially, in this manner, mirrors the idea of being mad to be a situation when someone moves out of logical thinking. In Parry (2010)'s opinion, number of females in Victorian asylums exceed that of men in many ways. In 19th century, it was generally concluded that females suffered psychologically just by being feminine. A critical look at the literature of that period corroborates this claim through showcasing characters like the maniacal woman (Mrs Rochester) in *Jane Eyre,* Gustave Flaubert's miserable Emma who was also bent on self-destruction as well as the artless women in Stoker's text who later turn into vampire. All these, depict a typecasted picture of insanity. Showalter (1987), while affirming Parry's opinion, equally posits that categorising insanity as afflictions peculiar to only women is dated back to Victorian England. Clearly, this period associated feminity with insanity.

Detecting the relationship which exists within insanity, coloniality, mixed marriages as well as impact of confinement in fictions from South Africa is what Clingman (1991) focusses on. In his argument, insanity can be explained away as a major tool of control during colonisation. To Clingman, chaos and insanity will be a regular feature in any settlement where the colonised are not properly brought under control. Hence, the metaphorical boundary between the coloniser and the colonised becomes another way of depicting colonisation. In essence, madness exceeds the restraints. On his own part, Foucault (1995)'s argument centres on insanity being interpreted as the yardstick for measuring psychological and literal normality. Consequently, examples of using

madness as a trope proliferate Southern African fiction. These can be glimpsed from various examples by novelists all through the ages. Novelists like Schreiner (1883), Gertrude (1924), Plomer (1925), Abraham (1948), Lessing (1950), Head (1974), Coetzee (1974;1977 and 1980), Serote (1981) as well as Duiker (2001), have one time or the other feature madness as a metaphor of the evil of apartheid in South Africa milieu.

In the Heart of the Country (1977) by Coetzee is about neurotic Magda, who resides within a remote farmstead at the Karoo in the Northern part of South Africa in the early stages of 1830s.The novel is written at the peak of the apartheid regime in South Africa. Meanwhile, a critical look at the novel shows that madness takes a centre stage. Probing into sensibility of the narrative power of a woman, Magda, who is from a Boer farming stock, Coetzee depicts someone who dwells within intellectually as well as narratively dangerous location of disability together with feminity. Thus, the novel is preoccupied with a woman's psychological conflict with identification within a depiction of a narrator that plunges into insanity. By choosing to write, she battles against those conditions which oppress and disable her.

A critical look at *In the Heart of the Country* shows the past events where Magda is positioned within the dumbness which is uttered and apparent in her dementia state. In her imagination, Magda experiences alienation through copulating activities which appeared to be going on in her home. For instance, she imagines a kind of sexual activity involving her father and another wife he must have married after the demise of her own mother. She equally imagines another sexual relationship involving her father's black servants (Hendrik and Klein- Anna) and lastly, another one going on between her father and the female black servant (Klein –Anna). Magda declares that because she has been excluded from communion, lines have been drawn. Hence, she experiences both sexual desire and colonialist's delusions about being frightened of the colonised as well as desiring them. Furthermore, her imagination casts her father's male black servant to be a surrogate parent and every imagined female sexual partners of her father and the male black servant (Hendrik) as surrogate mothers. Meanwhile, it appears that Magda has lost her mother to death. At the beginning of *In the Heart of the Country,* Magda refers to the new wife of her father, herself along with her father as antagonists rather than the protagonists (*In the Heart of the Country,* 1). Thus, the

kind of relationship between Magda and her father, in a way, can be said to be similar to the categories of marital relationship between a child and an adult family member (Oedipus complex). This also could be considered from the viewpoint of the feminists. Afterwards, this particular rendition of events becomes crippled when, Magda in another breath, states that her father was not married to another woman after the death of her mother.

In an effort to comprehend those challenges confronting Magda, one needs to deal with certain degrees of despotism. For instance, such level of domination involves domination of women by patriarchal norms, domination of the colonised and insane people. Magda imagines herself as an 'O' which connotes feminity that is realised only negatively. Magda confirms that she is being addressed derogatorily as a hole because she is a woman. Magda accepts the stigma of being an ordinary hole which needs to be filled by a man for her to be whole. The absence of a man who is to fill this hole has led to the creation of another hole in Magda's heart. Consequently, Magda 's opinion showcases a mind which has been conditioned to believe that she cannot exist without a man. It is only a man who can heal her from her disability and ability to reason in this manner is because she is a woman. This infers that a man cannot reason like this because he is more intelligent than a woman.

In essence, Magda finds it difficult reconciling what is necessary to her as a female gender within her status as a coloniser. Magda's classification of her vulva as the 15th letter of the Alphabet (O) or absence of it, parodes the assertion of Sigmund Freud which refers to the vulva as the disabled male organ. Furthermore, to Freud, the female gender could be referred to as gay due to her original lustful craving for her female parent prior to conferring her male parent with love. Typecasting the vagina as a disabled male organ is clearly revealed throughout the novel, *In the Heart of the Country*. Besides this, the vagina equally characterises a twin-meaning of disillusioned passion due to the fact that Magda is sexually untouched. Magda, showing certain perverted rationality is also sceptical about her delusion of becoming a woman through rape (*In the Heart of the Country*, 107). This actually agrees with Fanonian discourse. To Fanon (1967), a collapse of the ego is observed if the psychic structure of the

Negro is weak. In essence, a particular sensitising action takes place, whenever the Negro comes into contact with the white world.

In Fanon's argument, while deconstructing the notion that race is a biological category, being black could become historicised. It could also be the creation of the society. To Frantz Fanon, he could easily relate with the psychological conflict of being a subaltern. He observes that his mission in the world is to discover meaning in things. However, his quest made him to discover himself as a possession among other possessions (*White Masks*, 109). Magda's loss of reason reveals an extensive non-inclusion which indicate a situation that is frightening at the highest level. This particular situation is that of eliminating those spotted as non-human beings from humanity. Significantly, Magda's experience becomes soaked deeply within the discourse of disability to such an extent that one will not be able to read it otherwise. Specifically, a multi -layered narrative of malformation does saturate the atmosphere surrounding the disabled, thereby, vindicating their enstrangement together with the way the society treats them sub-humanly.

When measured by social ideologies of reasoning, Magda 's reasoning is dysfunctional, disabled as well as useless. Socially, as a non-black, Magda's race refuses to grant her a position in the dominating sphere of the colonisers. Not only this, her humanity is equally not recognised. Magda while rejecting subjectivity declares her boldness in recognising her contrition. She, additionally, affirms her uniqueness as an individual. Hence, people should not judge her by her race. To crown it all, Magda confirms her unwillingness to be blamed for any atrocity committed by her race during the process of colonisation.

Magda's insanity eradicates the dominance her whiteness demands of her. This insanity does not only situate Magda as a subaltern together with her feminity, especially her being unmarried, it also defines the power she possesses. Magda's status as a spinster serves as an exaggeration of being marginalised within the milieu of patriarchism which positions women as wives and mothers. Thus, Magda becomes another casualty within a masculine and phallocentric culture. Meanwhile, the hostility Magda experiences daily as a disabled in such a society transforms her into being mute, mad and marginal.

Magda develops emotional problems and becomes psychologically unstable due to overly domination by her father. In Kehinde (2006)'s opinion, issues such as gender discrimination, stereotyping, sexual objectification, oppression, patriarchy and so on are examined through Magda's diary. To Kehinde, Magda's constant repetition of the phrase 'or perhaps' can be described as 'semiotic signifier of mental atrophy'. On his own part, Macaskill (1998) explains that the term is widespread in the novel. The novel is made up of 266 numbered sections, written in the present tenses, narrated by Magda. These sections are referred to as diary entries since they proceed in chronological order and loosely followed the events of Magda's life. Magda, the narrator is a repressed, introverted, spinster of indeterminate age who lives in virtual seclusion on a remote sheep farm with her widowed father, who she regards as a domineering martinet. At the beginning of the novel, Magda is highly troubled emotionally and in need of succour: ''In my solitude I hear voices'' (*In the Heart of the Country,* 36). Surprisingly, she is denied this much needed succour by her only parent (her father) who does not even acknowledge her existence. To Magda, as far as her father is concerned she is 'an absence'. She says:

> My father pays no attention to my absence. To my father I have been an absence all my life. Therefore, instead of being the womanly warmth at the heart of this house I have been a zero, null, a vacuum towards which all collapses inward, a turbulence, muffled, grey, like a chill draft eddying through the corridors, neglected, vengeful. (*In the Heart of the Country,* 2).

Magda is even ignored at meal by her father. She explains that at meals, her father ignores her despite the fact that she sits across him year after year. According to Magda, the silence generated between her and her father is such that she could hear the movement of her tiny teeth (*In the Heart of the Country*, 21). Her attempts at being friendly with the black servants are equally rebuffed. Thus, in her thirst for communication with others, Magda turns to the insects for companionship. Magda depicts herself as a countrywoman that converses with her companions (the insects). Isolation, therefore, becomes Magda's constant companion which made her to suffer heartbreak including series of nervous breakdown. In essence, the father's codes snare the daughter, whose attitude is restricted within hereditary models of imperium along with slavishness.

In the conflict which materialises in the relationship between a father and his daughter in the text, Magda's father symbolises imperialism, an agent of colonisation through which the colonisers have a dictatorial existence. As a colonial subject, Magda is supposed to occupy the position of a master but as a female and a disabled, she occupies the position of a subaltern and a slave. Thus, she finds herself both a victor as well as a villain. Magda, who is linked to the kind of colonisation which represses the culture of the colonised including being dominated by the male gender, tries to confront her status. She equally rises against organised brutality including tyranny associated with it. After a fashion, by creating a discourse which is purely hers, Magda demonstrates her inconsistency as a storyteller. She claims to have made everything she had written in her diary up in order for the stories not to make her up (*In the Heart of the Country*,73). Her inconsistent narratives regarding her anti social personality hint at psychosis such that Heister (2014) suggests that Magda's condition could be referred to as Schizophrenia.

Schizophrenia is interpreted to be persistent as well as an acute psychological illness which influences an individual's thought, feelings and behaviour (NIMH, 2015). Person living with schizophrenia appears to lose contact with realities. In the view of NIMH, whereas schizophrenia remains unusual compared with other psychological illness, its signs could be extremely disabling. In another vein, Magda struggles with derangement that subsequently transforms into insanity. Her problems are generated from the futile outcome of her incestuous behaviour related to her father. By following that path, Setiawan et al support Freud (1933:112-135)'s view which relates neurosis to sexuality. Freud opines that a girl could become neurotic because she is envious of the male penis, this is known as penis envying, leading to animosity towards anyone who symbolises a mother. Penis envying also causes what is regarded as eunuchisation of women or their being disappointed in losing their testicles.

Magda, in line with this, explains that her reason for resenting Klein- Anna is for her to become a woman among women. Relatedly, she expresses her frustration on Klein-Anna who is to her like a metaphorical mother (*In the Heart of the Country*,74). In another vein, intractable headaches synchronise neurosis in certain patients in Sacks (1985)'s assertion. To Sacks, such headaches could act as means of avoiding the

mental struggle which are hidden or expressed by the patients concurrently. This is clearly seen in Magda who suffers from migraines and sleeplessness through out the text. In Sacks'assertion, such patients become miserable and sometimes turn to being neurotic whenever they are prevented from periodical sickness. In essence, a neurotic patient could easily become psychopathic within the shortest time. Meanwhile, Magda becomes completely mad in the wake of delusions.

Neurosis as a concept is woven around a broader aspect of psychological disorderliness such as worry, phobic disorder including serious and continual fanatical uncontrollable disorderliness. To Gourney (2014), psychosis is classified into being schizophrenic as well as being depressed manically. In another vein, psychotic and neurotic were previously united under one canopy which covers all mental illnesses. In the opinion of Wales and Hales (1995), those who are mentally ill are compelled into behaving abnormally everyday. In addition, this abnormal behaviour removes them from real life. Psychotic disorders are related to absent mindedness, expression, speeches including being illogical. However, in the instructional handbook of APA (American Psychiatric Association), psychosis and neurosis have become obsolete in being regarded as main concepts in psychological disorders. Boeree (2002) describes the symptoms of neurosis as:

> Anxiety, sadness or depression, anger, irritability, mental confusion, low sense of self-worth, phobic avoidance, vigilance, impulsive and habitual fantasy, negativity, cynicism, dependency, aggressiveness, schizoid isolation, socio-culturally inappropriate behaviours. (17).

Clearly, Magda could be considered a neurotic due to the fact that she exhibits many of the symptoms listed above. In psychoanalytical theory, neurosis is somehow entrenched in negative tropism. Meanwhile, a neurotic is believed to experience intense agony along with illusive struggles manifesting as psychological disorders in different forms (Jung, 1966). Furthermore, Jung declares that he has often seen people exhibiting signs of neurosis when they become satisfied by deficient and incorrect responses to life's interrogations (1966:40). In Karen Horney's theory, as quoted by Paris (2010), a neurotic views himself particularly and life generally in a deformed manner. This is due to his obsession with himself and not because of being really

involved in his society. From Horney's view, environmental transmission of neurosis to a child occurred at the early stage of such child's life. This transmission manifests in various forms:

> When summarised, they all boil down to the fact that the people in the environment are too wrapped up in their own neuroses to be able to love the child, or even, to conceive of him as the particular individual he is, their attitudes towards him are determined by their own neurotic needs and experiences. (Horney, 1955:132).

A critical look at this shows Horney believing in parental exigencies and affectations distorting early sensibility of children. Thus, any child who is nurtured by parents who have neurosis will definitely be feeling insecured. Such a child could also evolve into a fearful person at an early age. Hence, a child establishes a picture of himself which he believes to be ideal in his fantasy in order to overcome fear. Such a child idealises answers to those questions of life he comes across everyday. Afterward, that particular child yields to and exhibits delusional traits. Meanwhile, as we early noted, neurosis as a concept has gone obsolete but this change has been controversial. In any case, this term will still be used for the purpose of this study.

Coetzee in *Doubling the point (1992)* remains wary of critics analysing Magda as an insane person. To Coetzee, a character in fiction is always passionate about his or her role and Magda too is enthusiastic as expected in any literary text. Coetzee remarked that he sees no further point in calling her mad. However, in this study, we argue about Magda being insane metaphorically as well as realistically. This is based on the mutualistic relationship between realities and metaphors in Coetzee's *In the Heart of the Country.* In essence, realities derive connotation from metaphors and the other way round in the novel.

Significantly, Magda is seen displaying a lot of schizoid and neurotic tendencies in the text. As a lonely spinster, living in a society which sees her spinsterhood as abnormal, being ignored by people especially her overbearing parent, together with his apathetic acolytes, Magda becomes as mad as a hatter. This is vividly seen through the conversation she has with the gods of the sky; the assumed corpse of her parent; talking with her dead father; child-like delight in mundane things like ringing the dinner-bell; talking with insects; lying down in the shallow grave dug to bury her

father's corpse and demanding for sex from a twelve year old boy. As Magda's insanity reaches the peak swiftly, she realises that the bedrock of communication becomes disabled in the community where she has been secluded. Hence, she declares:

> I cannot carry on with these idiot dialogues. The language that should pass between myself and these people was subverted by my father and cannot be recovered. What passes between us now is a parody. I was born into a language of hierachy, of distance and perspective (*In the Heart of the Country*, 97).

Magda due to loneliness, neglect and abuse engages in series of self-conversation which borders on philosophy and the uses of speeches around the house. Essentially, Magda's name that suddenly appears in the middle of the novel through the narrative invites such ridiculous labelling through a certain character (Molloy) in Samuel Beckett's novel, *Molloy*. Beckett explains that he calls her Mag because he had to call her something. In his opinion, the name 'da' in his part of the world connotes father. However, Beckett claimed that calling his character in whatever name does not arise at that period (Molloy, 124).

Essentially for Beckett's *Molloy*, 'Magda' as a name does not have any meaning. Not only this, Beckett insinuates the irrelevance of giving interpretation to the name since it does not exist. 'Mag' in *Molloy* is indicative of the relations between children and their parents during their growing up stage. It is this developmental stage that Coetzee's Magda is anchored on. This twin-face of interpreting of name as well as not interpreting depicts the irrational behaviour of Magda literally and metaphorically. In addition, it is Magda' state of mind which gives rooms for Coetzee's depiction. Montgomery, a disabled writer, captures this concept about interpretation while portraying the enforced ideals of different physical attitudes. Montgomery explains that he knows he has disability by looking at those that do not have. He claims that he has viewed those that are not disabled but have written on the disabled. He has also interacted with the non-disabled and viewed the social and physical worlds that they created for themselves. However, it is the non-disabled that teach him about himself; they inform him about what is strange about his body; they expose him to what is funny about his body; they are the one to tell him that he is different from others due to his disability; they tell him how he is different. Essentially, Montgomery posits that

disability simply means bringing into picture what it connotes to be treated differently from others.

In essence, it is the society that ascribes meaning to the disability of an individual. In the expectation of the society, someone who is not disabled is required to have the following qualifications: youthfulness; manliness; agility, masculinity; industrious, a white man, literate up to the university level, heterosexuality, non- Catholic and the likes. According to Truchan-Tataryn (2007), while many succeed in belonging to the camp of the 'normal/able', many also could not conform to this configuration of natural/ normal. Hence, disability functions as an indicator to being the different Other, an identity of someone who is excused from being non-disabled. Montgomery vividly describes such situation like this:

> If it is true that I know my impairment by looking to others, it is also true that I know my disability by looking to other. I look to those who attempt the same things I do, I look at the barriers they face, and I judge my set of barriers against theirs. If I cannot get into the meeting room, can they? If I cannot find meaning in my teachers 'sound can they? If I cannot get people in power to pause while I make my points, can they? I look to others to tell me what about my life is limited, constrained, disabled. They tell me my life is different, and they tell me which parts of that difference should be accepted, and which should emphatically not. They tell me about disability (44).

Basically, this view confirms the likely, organised, diagonisation of the disabled medically as being non-professional and removing the disabled from normality is an act of injustice. In an effort to put the story of her life on paper, Magda rejects the subjectiveness which culture and history enforce on her. In other words, Magda refuses to be interpreted or defined by her society. Having some intuition of her textuality, Magda endeavours to manipulate her life- story by projecting herself into a different literary trope. Thus, her mode of being insane is dependent upon her mode of being in general. Magda, repeatedly describes herself with the term 'mad' and its synonyms (*In the Heart of the Country*, ;10;79;123;124),'crazed' (*In the Heart of the Country*,50) and 'crazy' (*In the Heart of the Country*,6;1;32). In a manner, her obssessive self-reflections arise from what David Atwell refers to as "displaced subjectivity". Essentially, although, Magda is a whitewoman, she is transformed into a

storyteller that could not be regarded as a main act in the theatre of colonisation and apartheid staged by the whites in South Africa. However, she is situated within those factors engineered by these colonisers. She also suffers from the subjectiveness imposed on her through this particular placement.

Gilbert and Gubar (2000) attribute the madness of Magda's discourse to her "anxieties of authorship which infects all women who attempt the pen, they struggle in isolation that feels like madness and obscurity that feels like paralysis" (51). Basically, such women experience a self-creation not unlike Magda's textual ontology. To Gilbert and Guber, women who are endowed with the gift of re-creating themselves through literary means could liberate other women who have been caged by patriarchalism. Felman (2003), working in a similar direction in *Writing and Madness* applies Paul de Man's rhetorically focused literary approach to representations of madness in literature. In her opinion, madness cannot be thematically utilised in a literary text. This elusiveness of madness as a theme is majorly due to the fact of its figurativeness. For Felman, while literature might not be able to speak directly for precisely the reasons revealed by Foucault (1973) and Derrida (1989), it might yet animate a text rhetorically. In a related manner, Derrida equally suggests a link between discursive types and madness. In his explanation, an ethic of defilement, which could also be referred to as pollution exists. This particular ethic is also the one that governs the rules woven around classification in literary studies. In a way, genre is made possibly engendered by the impossibility of its purity. Derrida further states that his analysis has exposed the characteristics of genre and the insanity associated with it. Thus, these critics suggest some fundamental relationship between Magda's madness and her idea of her essential self.

In another way, an effort to explore race issues in *IHC* (*In the Heart of* the *Country)* shows some critics, like Attridge and Wright overlooking, underplaying, or dismissing Magda's madness instead of seeing Magda's madness as a condition forced on her by others. Wright (2008) in her feminist reading of several of Coetzee's novels portrays Magda as a symbolof the yearning and passion of South African women who are white. In addition, the women are presented as being disregarded by others as well as degrading themselves. Wright also showcases women who are deceitful including those who strongly oppose the policy of segregation in South Africa. In another vein,

Wright equally illustrates the patriarchal expectations for a male-child and the attendant disappointment which regularly manifests whenever these expectations are not met. Nowhere does Wright take seriously the issues of madness in the novel.

Magda is not considered a 'destroyer' (Coetzee, 1999), however, she imagines herself to be one by fantasising to murder her parent. She later desires killing Klein-Anna (her father's servant-bride). Her desire is also to assassinate her parent as well as his lover. She imagines herself breaking a kind of rule through these killings. To this, she admits being culpable. She also affirms her unwillingness to shoulder the burden of guilt. In the same breath, Magda realises she has the corpses of her father and his lover to dispose of (*In the Heart of the Country*, 12). In Magda's imagination, certain pests are about to invade their farm. The fear of this invasion leads her to inform her father' servants (Hendrik and Klein-Anna). Apparently, these pests had earlier invaded the farm. Magda alerts them to another one involving different kinds of insects like caterpillars, wasps and locusts which usually destroy farmlands and crops (*In the Heart of the Country*, 91).

Magda, between fantasies along with reality is sexually attracted to her surviving parent. Her parent, however, ignores and rejects her. Not only this, he equally fails to love her. Unmistakably, the backdrop of colonial-fabricated apartheid supplied an atmosphere for tyranny psychologically, enough to catalyse neurosis in Magda. Additionally, patriarchy is also a contributive factor. In Africa, a daughter is regarded as a second-class citizen while a son is considered and treated as royalty. Consequently, Magda perceives her being undesired by her surviving parent (her father). This is due to the fact that, his expectation was for a son and not a daughter especially coming from an agrarian and patriarchal society. It is widely assumed that a male-child will be more useful in that particular community than a female child. Magda vividly explains:

> My father's first wife, my mother was a frail gentle and loving woman who lived and died under her husband's thumb. Her husband never forgave her for failing to bear him a son. His relentless sexual demands led to her death in childbirth. She was too frail and gentle to give birth to the rough rude boy-heir my father wanted, therefore she died. (*In the Heart of the Country,2).*

She later has nightmare fantasy in which she gives birth to the long-expected son of the father who she believes to be Anti-Christ of the desert.... ''an epileptic Fuhrer" (*In the Heart of the Country* ,10). In a manner, an abnormal relationship exists between Magda and her father, that of husband–wife. This can be seen in Magda's daily routine as the mistress of her father's house: She draws her father's bath, prepares his meals, cuts his hair, takes off his boots and so on. This wifely routine, coupled with their isolation must have led Magda to have an incestuous desire for her father.

Looking at it critically, Magda is the seemingly motherless daughter of a domineering, white colonialist patriarch who designs what is known as absence. Particularly, his absence from Magda's life is the most essential one. Even, when he is around, no warmth is felt at his presence, no light and no feeling. Magda, therefore, concludes that her father's presence during such situation could equally be read as absences. Magda also equates her father's absences to a roaming shade which decays one' soul (*In the Heart of the Country*, 37). In his service are several servants, of which the narrative focusses on two couples, who behind the scene of obsequious behaviours, respect Magda only because she is her father's daughter .... ''Miss is the miss'' and who can never serve as peers for her (*In the Heart of the Country*,30). Magda who is painfully naive and effectively imprisoned in a house that fate has shaped like an H (*In the Heart of the Country*,3) experiences at least four-fold of alienation: Her inability to enter into meaningful and reciprocal relationships at level of family; friendship; romance; and failing romance especially consensual sex. Significantly, Magda like every other disabled is not recognised by others except by herself.

Although Magda's father does not address her by her first name throughout the novel, he actually establishes intimacy with one of the servants, Klein-Anna. This shows that, like every human being, he is capable of feelings and emotions. One then wonders

why he does not extend an iota of these feelings to his only child. When Magda knocks at her father's door during the time he takes Klein- Anna to bed, he tells Magda off and orders her to go and sleep. Magda disregards this order and remains outside her father's door, ringing a bell until her father deals her a blow that Magda feels does not hurt but rather insults (*In the Heart of the Country*,57). In response, she commits patricide through the window with a shortgun which eventually leads to the restructuring of the pastoral power structure.

Meanwhile, as soon as the servants figure out that Magda has no way of continuing to pay them, they begin to assert themselves over her: Wearing her father's old clothes and Hendrik repeatedly rapes her. A deep look at this shows that Hendrik' sexual aggression denies Magda any human recognition. His refusal to face her or talk to her can be said to have threatened Magda's humanity. Magda explains that Hendrik turns her on her face and have sexual intercourse with her from behind like an animal. Apparently, Magda does not like this style of intimacy as she complains that whenever she raises her ugly buttock to Hendrik, just about everying in her dies. This act which leaves her debased, makes Magda concludes that Hendrik engages in this act with her because he desires her debasement. Symbolically, the male servant (Hendrik), like his master (Magda's father) represents the colonial power who repeatedly rape Africa; a condition which left Africa to be disabled.

After the demise of Magda's father and the departure of the servants, a young boy, Piet, who is only twelve years old shows up to deliver a letter for Magda regarding taxes, for which she must sign. Driven at this point, to extreme desperation, Magda asks the boy a question that borders on absurdity. Magda asks if the boy had ever engaged in sexual intercourse before (*In the Heart of the Country*, 125) and with her hands, imitates coitus. When he shakes his head, Magda equally asks if he would like to learn, at which point he runs away making him to be the last person Magda will ever see in the course of the novel. Attwell (1993) reads Piet's appearance as an echo of the boy who visits the hero and the villain in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot.* He interpretes this connection as a clue that Magda is disabled before the dictates of history and is incarcerated by her own desires (67). However, this study believes that Magda's action here, in particular, shows the madness of the colonial structure which manifests itself like an infection as Magda's own madness. In the same vein, this

madness of the colonial structure is equally vivid in the next novel that will be discussed.

4.1.3. The suffering body and the madness of torture in *Waiting for the Barbarians*

In South Africa, a lot of public outcry and debate became rife concerning the way the blacks were being tortured by government–controlled agencies especially during the victory of the minority Whites at the polls in 1948. Repressing and torturing the majority Blacks have become a metaphor of South African situation and an ulcerous wound especially in literary circles. A lot of literary writers from this region remain captivated with these issues of torturing being the signification of the apartheid system of government in South Africa. This is equally confirmed by Coetzee (1989). Significantly, the spark that ignited the rhetoric of torture was the death of Stephen Biko, a student leader who died while in police custody (Poyne, 2009). According to Poyne, following the Soweto uprising of 1976, unrest spread throughout South African townships. The urban Blacks boycotted schools in protest against the shooting of unharmed school children, vandalising official buildings, marching on the streets, and organising stay-at–home strikes. The mass arrest which followed included not only participants in the protests but also many political leaders of the Blacks including Steve Biko. After almost one month in detention, Biko died under mysterious circumstances on September 12, 1977.

On its own part, the government announced that Biko died while on hunger strike and in response to the outcry on his death, clamped down on the protesters. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* which was published in 1980 came on the heels of this clamp-down. The novel is a vivid illustration of state violence and oppression. In Poyne's opinion, the old man who is tortured at the initial stage in the novel could be related to circumstances surrounding the demise of Biko according to many critics. Coetzee and other literary writers from South Africa are able to decipher this form of giving meaning to the South African situation in this regard as a result of protracted hardship in the region caused by demeaning structure. This is equally seen in Wyk's (1987) poem which emphasises the brashness of police brutality in South Africa. In the poem, someone who has been arrested by the Law enforcement agents is alleged to

have commmited suicide by jumping down from a nine–storey building. Another report assumes the victim died by hanging himself while the third report posits the victim must have slipped in the bathroom when he was taking his bath. These different reports on just a detainee shed light on how dictators subject themselves to series of lies so as to cover up their misdeeds.

Evidently, Wyk's poem showcases the paradox of word-play mocking the so-called truth about what happened as declared by the State and the audacity of those lies in police reports is a clear indication of the existence of madness. Coetzee derives the title of this novel from a poem by Cavafy (1904). This poem portrays a hedonistic Empire that awaits the subjugation of the Barbarians which at no time materialises. According to Cavafy, after waiting throughout the whole day, the border guards reported to those in authority that the barbarians that they were expecting could not come. This is because the barbarians no longer existed. Meanwhile, those in authority who were obviously sad at this piece of news lamented that they cannot survive without the Barbarians. They wonder at what will become of them if the barbarians do not come as the barbarians are a kind of solution to their problems. Significantly, just like Cavafy's, no barbarian ever appears in the novel of similar title written by Coetzee. It was only the fishermen and the nomads that appear briefly.

Mainly, the novel centres on the narratives which are directed at non-existing race. This race is prejudicially labelled as the barbarians who never arrive all through the novel. Although, the novel could not present detailed information about the history of South Africa, it successfully depicts a typical dictatorial system of government. Set in a milieu which is not disclosed throughout, the story is narrated by an unnamed Magistrate and right from the first chapter, a bipartite relationship occurs which involves the colonised and coloniser; those oppressing and their victims; as well as torturers and those that are tortured. For the sake of verifying her superiority and civilisation culturally and at the commonwealth level, the Imperial power strives to authenticate the presence of indigenous inhabitants in a colony. Taking into consideration that the arrival of the barbaric is anticipated, every notification of assault; sexual assault; robbery and despoilment becomes directly linked to them. The Barbarians are instantly indicted in place of any unlawful deed such as lawlessness, housebreaking, rape and the like without any evidence to substantiate these

allegations. As a matter of fact, despite the unobtrusiveness of the Barbaric within the community, the law enforcement agents for the imperium cheapen, afflict, and repress the inhabiters. Surprisingly, the fisherfolks in the community are not spared, the soldiers erroneously assumed them to be barbaric for the sake of subduing them. Colonel Joll who represents the Empire and his troops apprehended 12 internees whom they assumed are plotting to launch an assault on the government and each of these prisoners undergoes one form of torture or the other. According to Wenzell (1996), the avouchment of the league of nations on being tortured which was later endorsed in the '70s interprets it in this way:

> Torture means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted by or at the instigation of a public official on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or confession, punishing him for an act he has committed or intimidating him or other persons (32).

From this perspective, those who are unfortunate enough to be subjected to being tortured as well as being suppressed could easily be forced to own up to whatever crime due to acute unbearable torment. It is equally capable of limiting or stopping the victims from no longer speaking of themselves. It also has the ability to make somebody mad. The Magistrate's conversation with Colonel Joll clearly reveals this:

> I bring the conversation around to torture. 'What if your prisoner is telling the truth', I ask, 'yet finds he is not believed? Is that not a terrible position? Imagine: to be prepared to yield, to yield, to have nothing more to yield, to be broken, yet to be pressed to yield more! And what a responsibility for the interrogator! How do you ever know when a man has told you the truth?' (*Waiting for the Barbarians,*5)

From the above conversation, the Magistrate tries to address the conscience of Colonel Joll especially in area of torturing people during interrogation. Colonel Joll's reply to this question is also illuminating. In Colonel Joll's view, a certain tone which comes out of a man that is being tortured actually reveals that the victim is telling the truth during the process of torturing him. To Colonel Joll, it was training and experience that taught people like him about how to identify and recognise this particular tone

during interrogation(*WB,5*). With a tone full of surprise, the Magistrate asks Colonel Joll about how he could possibly pick this tone of Truth in day to day conversation of people. He also questions if it is possible for the Colonel to detect the truth in his present speech. Meanwhile, like every other oppressor, Joll unknowingly reveals the madness of the State through his reply. He demands a certain level of understanding from the Magistrate and explains that his ability to detect whether someone is speaking the truth or not depends on unique occasions. Such unique moments during interrogation when the truth about a crime is forced out of criminals through torturing them.

A major look at *Waiting for the Barbarians* showcases a situation where identification becomes problematic, Identification of a group which defines itself in contradiction to another group. This is clearly indicated in the title's allusion to Cavafy's poem where certain barbarians are being expected at a particular community in order to solve some problems facing the community. Further, Coetzee places the suffering body at the centre of his narrative construction in *Waiting for the Barbarians* as this novel features the body as the paramount site of inscription, of power, history and truth. Bodily deformity and disability, the wounded, mutilated, aging and deteriorated body often stands at the centre of Coetzee's work which is the interpretation of the reality of South African situation. Coetzee's work showcases resistance and another narrative to the endless trials of oppression which faces the blacks in South Africa.

In a related manner, Wondrich (2015) claims that in Coetzee's fiction, the bodies especially the one in pains, the impaired, the disabled dominate Coetzee's fictions. To Wondrich, the resisting imperfect, disabled body, is therefore, the most foundational image and working semantics for the unresisting, unyielding, ungratifying Coetizean text which ultimately eschews all atempts at a thorough and fulfilled intellectual possession and mastery, yet another form of power discourse with which Coetzee refuses to comply.There is then, in all coetzee's novels which figures the body in pain, an immediate closeness between the disabled and the blemish in the subject's identity and self-representation, which the narratives aim to encompass and offer to the reader, though not as self-contained, closed signifying construct but rather as something that opens up a space for the other. Wondrich further explains that the body thus figures as

a liminal, border-like domain marked by a loss or lack which is irretrievable and an often ineffectual, anguished attempt at self- determination in Coetzee's fiction.

A thorough look at the novel reveals the existence of pains and being tortured which cannot be denied. This allegorical reference to a body being tortured changes the dominating story in the narrative. The empire system in *Waiting for the Barbarians,* by defining some people disabled (less than human) desires validating their suffering, as well as their murder and exploitation. Hence, an Empire that is mad and the suffering bodies of the so called barbarians become the dominant features of the novel. A man simply addressed as the Magistrate is posted to a village near the border by the government (Empire) as an administrator. However, the peaceful atmosphere of the village is disrupted by the visit paid by two policemen from the capital, Colonell Joll including his assistant, Warrant Officer Mandel. These two officers are purposively sent into the village in order to guide the border against invasion by the barbaric people. The villagers are brought in for interrogation on spurious charges by Joll. Although, the charges levelled against the villagers are completely ridiculous and illogical, Joll's method of tortures are not ridiculous, they are real. When the policemen depart from the village, the Magistrate starts caring for a barbaric girl who had become lame and blind due to Joll's tortures.

On compassionate ground, the Magistrate guards the girl back to her family. When he returns to his duty post, he is arrested and charged with treasonable offences. He is later thrown into prison, where he is religiously tortured, in order for him to confess to a crime which he does not commit. Consequently, this study focusses on the madness of the series of tortures in the novel, the oppressed's responses to the madness of those tortures and the result of these tortures which produce not only the bodies of prisoners who have been injured, deformed, maimed and scarred but also their shame, agony as well as their afflictions. Interestingly, these oppressors, whose ability of inflicting suffering on their victims cannot be denied, could also be regarded as being marginalised due to their characterisation which reveals their banality.

Although, the Colonel could not be identified as a particular person, he symbolises dictatorship. He is given an unlimited authority and control over his victims. His authority to torture his victims could neither be queried nor censored by anyone. Joll emphatically explains to the Magistrate that he has a commission to fulfil (*Waiting for the Barbarians*,12). On his own part, the Magistrate who is overweighed by the Colonel's wickedness initially tries as much as possible to understand the Colonel's combativeness. In addition, the Magistrate also imagines how the Colonel could be living and carrying on with his horrid and inhuman acts everyday. He assumes the Colonel is aware of taking a trip into the forbidden land. To the Magistrate, from the look of things, it seems that Colonel Joll is involved in the ritual of purification which he carries out behind closed door privately. After purification, the Colonel then comes out to wine and dine with other people *(Waiting for the Barbarians*,13).

However, it is apparent that the Colonel is a creation of the government. Not only this, the Colonel is also someone who possesses the power of cleanliness and uncleanliness (*Waiting for the Barbarians*,13). By the time the Magistrate is arrested and tortured, he re-visits the issues bordering on humanity of his torturers especially the Warrant Officer. Hence, his effort at detecting concern for human beings in the life of his Jailers forces him to ask the Officer:

> How do you find it possible to eat afterwards after you have been… working with people? That is a question I have always asked myself about executioners and other such people…. Do you find it easy to take food afterwards? I have imagined that one would want to wash one's hands. But no ordinary washing would be enough, one would require priestly intervention, a ceremonial of cleansing, don't you think? .... I am only trying to understand. I am trying to understand the zone in which you live. I am trying to imagine how you breathe and eat and live from day to day. (*Waiting for the Barbarians*, 138).

The quote above clearly indicates the state of mind of the Magistrate. When he observes the level of cruelty embedded in Mandel and Colonel Joll, he wonders at their humanity. He believes that a human being could not be as cruel as that to other human beings like him. Mandel's reply to this is a powerful stroke and a curse. In essence, due to the fact that the oppressors are deprived of decency, they are removed from any arrangement pertaining to human beings such as feasting and liturgies. The

Magistrate's experience as both the oppressor and the oppressed is an experience related to an inner conflict divided into two which could result into insanity. Micheal Foucault (1965) argues that madness occurs on the basis of the gaps between logicality which is continually defined by laid down rules and illogicality which is bent on resisting it. To Foucault, during the Middle, Enlightment as well as the Current ages, viewing the concept of madness without associating it within the social purview is no longer popular. Currently, madness is now regarded as a product of the society including being contagious. However, medically, madness could be regarded as illness of the brain which is patterned on the narratives of Medicine.

In the novel, pairing logical and illogicality together with being sane and insanity becomes unmasked within the background which is tailored towards enlightment conceptions. This background is also constructed for the purpose of sustaining the power of the government (the Empire). Apparently, not only is Foucault infatuated with the interpretation of madness medically, he is also engrossed with the kind of relationship which exists between the government and those being governed. Meanwhile, the interpretation given to insanity by the society is being unreasonable as opposed to the societal narratives of reason. Hence, in the final analysis, it becomes a herculean task separating insanity from sanity as well as being logical from illogicality. Meanwhile, barbarous rule of the government; delusions and illusions about the colonisers which Magda in Coetzee's *In the Heart of the Country* describes as an assemble of brown horsemen (*In the Heart of the Country, 140)* represents madness in *Waiting for* the *Barbarians*. However, in some of the other novels by Coetzee such as *Dusklands (1974)* and *In the Heart of the Country,* insanity is obviously addressed by the depiction of chronicler including hero or heroine who are mentally deranged. According to Arif (1991), Coetzee's Empire's treatment of the barbarians is not because the Empire is totalitarian rather it is because totalitarianism is the process of dehumanising the barbarians, this is the madness of torture in the name of civilisation.

Coetzee, in his essay "Apartheid Thinking" recognises that it is not only apartheid that is mad but colonialism in general. Coetzee claims that apartheid and segregationism policy which came before apartheid could be regarded as mad. In his argument, inferring to both periods as mad ages will be saner. Coetzee then concludes with the

question about how myopic could individual ego manifests before it is regarded as not cracy or cracy?

Consequently, Coetzee showcases certain madness and barbarous deeds apparent particularly in apartheid and generally in colonialism within *Waiting for the Barbarians*. In their pursuit of barbarism and in defense of civilisation, Coetzee's Empire in *Waiting for the Barbarians* becomes barbaric. Newport (2016) opines that the difference between civilisation and barbarism gives room for feeling of superiority by the empire which empowers them to laud it over the so–called barbaric. Moses (1994) describes this as an essential difference between the literate and the illiterate.

Madness is starkly apparent in the torture chamber. Coetzee (1992) confirms that affinities within the room where people are being tortured become an allegory, plain and absolute, of linkage which exists between authoritaniasm and its targets. At the chamber where people are tortured, extensive coercion is wielded on each tortured victim physically. This is based on the cover of legalising rules which are actually illegal. Notably, such violence visited on the Magistrate by Mandel especially during the Magistrate's mock execution exposes the madness of the Empire. The Magistrate who has been ordered to put on a woman's calico smock with his wrists tied behind his back in his last statement before his mock execution explains:

> Thinking of him, I have said the words torture…. torture to myself, but they are strange words, and the more I repeat them the stranger they grow, till they lie like stones on my tongue. Perhaps this man, and the man he brings along to help him with his work, and their Colonel are torturers…. He deals with my soul: everyday he folds the flesh aside and exposes my soul to the light; but the care of souls seems to have left no more mark on him than the care of hearts leaves on the surgeon. (*Waiting for the Barbarians,129).*

The above quote showcases the agony of the Magistrate during his mock execution. As someone who is highly disappointed in the colonial structure on ground, the Magistrate provocatively asks his torturers some fundamental questions so as to understand why they devote themselves to the work of torturing people. The Magistrate wonders if they could hear what they felt for him especially since they have greatly hurt him and proposed to kill him (*Waiting for the Barbarians*, 128). In

confusion, he later rhetorically asks himself if he is mad enough to instigate a provocation against his torturers (*Waiting for the Barbarians*, 128). After, a salt- bag is slipped over his head and tied around his throat with a string held by two officers, he is asked to climb a ladder propped against the branches. The empire enforces this brutality on the Magistrate simply because of his seemingly association with the barbarians.

Moreover, just as those taken as convicts are flogged barbarically, keenly watched by the Colonel, the head of the team empowered to enforce the Empire‘s rules and regulations, the barbaric nature of the Empire is clearly indicated as confirmed by the morally sickened Magistrate who puts his own freedom in jeopardy:

> Those pitiable prisoners you brought in- are they the enemy I must fear? You are the enemy, you have made the war and you have given them all the martyr they need – starting not now but a year ago when you committed your first filthy barbarities here! *(Waiting for the Barbarians*, 125).

The quote above depicts the Magistrate as brave and bold. Fearlessly, he confronts his torturers and labels them as the enemy. Hence, it could be inferred that colonialism has made The Magistrate mad. In consonance, Foucault (1979) explains that madness occurs when one confidently departs from logicality with the strong belief that one is being logical. Evidently, Empire’s hatred for the non-existing barbarians as represented by the twelve prisoners is a departure from reason. Coetzee puts it this way:

> The Colonel steps forward. Stooping over each prisoner in turn he rubs a handful of dust into his naked back and writes a word with a stick of charcoal. I read the words upside down ENEMY…. ENEMY…ENEMY…. ENEMY…. Then the beating begins. The soldiers use the stout green cane staves, bringing them down with the heavy slapping sounds of washing–paddles, raising red walts on the prisoners’ backs and buttocks…. The game I see is to beat them till their backs are washed clean. (*Waiting for the Barbarians*,115)

When the soldiers grow tired, not only are they smiling at the helpless and suffering prisoners, they equally offer the canes to the spectators and a girl is allowed to beat

them. This, apart from depicting a certain level of degradation also shows the level the Empire is ready to sink to in order to laud it over the Others. Colonel Joll, the leader of the group of torturers, apparently not satisfied with the level of humiliation and torture of the prisoners decides to use a hammer on them. To which the Magistrate protests vehemently that how could they use hammer to beat human beings since they could not use it on animals (*Waiting for the Barbarians*, 117). A look at the broken and helpless prisoners' posture on the ground further enrages the Magistrate. In annoyance, he wonders at how human beings that are the miracle of creation could be rendered disabled by blows. The Magistrate becomes speechless when he discovers man's inhumanity to man.

Looking at it in another way, Colonel Joll and Mandel typically depict those who are morally corrupt, and this is vividly mirrored in them. Mere looking at their eyes is revealing. Putting on of eye-glasses which are dark by the Colonel seems to function as torturers' platitudes. However, the manner through which the Colonel wears his glasses by suspending them before his face turns out to be a recent development. This infers that such new development could be regarded as being curious about civilisation in a new way (*WB*, 1). Seeing the Colonel wearing dark glasses, the Magistrate wonders if Colonel Joll has turned blind in the opening line of the novel. On his own part, although, the eyes of Mandel are not covered, they are as hidden as Joll's. When the Magistrate looks into Mandel's translucent eyes, they remain see-through and they appear as though crystalline spectacles have been positioned carefully on those eyes. Subsequently, the Magistrate is curious to know about what Mandel sees when he looks at him *(Waiting for the Barbarians*, 84). The motif of eyes and blindness which can be regarded as an obscuring of truth is as a result of madness. The barbarian girl is made blind through torture which is based on prejudicial charges. Meanwhile, the Colonel darkened spectacles which are recent development could be associated with birth of the modern periods.

Joll's henchman, Mandel is described as an actor from behind the mask by the Magistrate *(Waiting for the Barbarians*, 84). Colonel Joll's blindness although not physical could be interpreted as being morally corrupt instead of being truthful. Foucault refers to this blindness as ill-founded beliefs, mistaken judgements and errors. He explains further that all these cannot be separated from madness. While

quoting extensively from an article on Mania in *Madness and Civilisation,* Foucault 's opinion portrays truthfulness as being characterised by an individual's real feelings towards things that could be seen physically or morally. Such feelings will then display a certain degree of insanity.

Thus, the blindness observed by Foucault here is related to the Magistrate as well as the law enforcement agents and not in the girl from the local tribe who has been blinded through torture. In this regard, being blind to reality of life and humanity is considered as being insane. Consequently, the way and manner through which the Magistrate, Joll and Mandel view those who are not from their race as uncivilised and barbaric could also be interpreted as insanity. In another vein, despite being an advocate of truthfulness, Joll, is apparently pretentious morally. Similarly, as an advocate of compassion and humanness, the Magistrate' fanatical attraction to the battered local girl is equally suspicious. In particular, his failure to see the girl without looking at her disability is read as madness. He, however, atones for this when he acknowledges his offering the girl an accommodation as being selfish. In essence, his strong craving for the girl is regarded as madness. This is due to the fact that it is unrequited and egoistic. It is also an illogical disregard for what is truthful which is validated by his fluctuating faith towards his benevolent intentions for accommodating the barbaric girl. Basically, the Magistrate's concern and his fetishistic desire for the barbarian girl is in line with what Mohammed (1985) opines as recognition from other people which is required for someone to be classified and at the same time be awared of himself or herself as an individual.

Eventually, by the time the barbarian girl is taken back to her community, she is no longer recognised by her community as a native but as a foreigner from an unknown world. The general belief is that the girl is just passing–by after being on a journey filled with sad memories. In another vein, the Magistrate is equally guilty of selfishness. This is signaled through his utilisation of the sufferings and pains inflicted on the body of the barbarian girl for his own selfish interest:

> I lose myself in the rhythm of what I am doing. I lose awareness of the girl herself. There is a space of time which is blank to me: perhaps I am not even present. When I come to, my fingers have slackened, the foot rests in the basin, my head droops…. My eyes close. It becomes an intense pleasure to keep them closed, to savour the blissful giddiness. I stretch out on the carpet. In an instant I am asleep *(Waiting for the Barbarians*, 30).

Hence, without any invitation from the girl, the Magistrate devotedly washes as well as applies oil on the mangled feet of the girl every night. In turn, these nightly rituals lull him into a deep-sleep. Meanwhile, it is even strange that the Magistrate is not aware of the girl during these nightly rituals. The wound on the body of the girl satiates him and he falls asleep as soon as he finishes bathing her. In essence, the Magistrate becomes engrossed in the disability which is forced on the local girl by the colonisers. Not only this, he is equally consumed with the desire to discover the true picture of her suffering and the wounds inflicted on her body by her torturers. The Magistrate asserts that pain is the same thing as truth and anything apart from this will be regarded as lies. The Magistrate is of the opinion that his discussion with the Colonel reveals this truth about oppression of the colonised by those who colonised them. In a way, the Magistrate's effort to understand the barbarian girl from those pains and sufferings inflicted on her by her torturers weakens his aspirations of saving the girl at the end of the whole situation. Relatedly, the madness of washing her feet resonates with ethnic cleansing. Wright (2008) suggests that this ritual of washing of feet is an attempt on the part of the Magistrate at purification. The Magistrate believes that his involvement with the government and his dualised status as a defender of an obsolete colonialism demand purification.

Apart from being fixated with the barbarian girl's pains, the Magistrate is also troubled through chains of nightmares where his attempt at given meaning to his double-sided association with the barbarian girl is revealed. To Foucault (1965), nightmares, insanity, illogicality could easily be transformed into series of definition which all require interpreting. A critical look at the Magistrate's dreams reveals how colonialism produces the subaltern in order to denote and connote its superiority over those being colonised. The dreams also showcase the unwillingness of the Magistrate in being a representative of the colonial government. The Colonel later apprehends the

Magistrate and charges him for supposed treason (*Waiting for the Barbarians, 85).* During his mock execution, the Magistrate is cladded in female's frock forcefully and thereby reduces to what Joll's henchman, Mandel refers to as a clown and a madman (*Waiting for the Barbarians,124)*. Mandel, by constructing the Magistrate as a disabled and a fool, even deems putting him into prison as unnecessary. He, therefore, permits the Magistrate to move around without being chained, like a mad man within the community. Somehow, this non-professional platitude of Mandel destroys the allure of the oppressors to the Magistrate. Consequently, abhorring the deeds of the Warrant Officer even becomes difficult for him.

Symbolically, the offenders are consigned and located at the external part of an imaginable territory (*Waiting for the Barbarians, 126)*. In essence, they are removed from the orbits of habitation meant for human beings. Hence, engaging in their characterisation will be worthless since they lack identification. The Colonel and his assistant typify cruel tyrants. Jean-Luc (2005) corroborates this view in his description of a cruel tyrant. To Jean- Luc, cruel tyrant is someone who strikes and breaks. He tortures his victim to the point of senselessness. Ironically, it is not his victim alone that becomes senseless, he too shares from such senselessness. A cruel person's strength can no longer be viewed as ordinary but is undiluted, crass as well as foolish including emotionless energy. Jean–Luc describes a violent person's strength as something that gathers and shapes itself to strike. Initially, the strength lethagically gathers up and launches itself in order to shatter, dislocate and crack open. In essence, cruelty is uncovered in regard to shape which is bereft of shape. It is just like ministration and evidently nondescript.

Jean-Luc, invariably, is saying here that violence is madness. Thus, in *Waiting for the Barbarians*, Colonel Joll as well as his henchman, Warrant Officer Mandel can also be read as mad. Several incidencies in the novel allude to madness. When asked to decipher the codes on the arrays of dug-up poplar-tree slips with queer engravings, the Magistrate, as a cynical critic of the empire, pretends to decipher the poplar slips by playing upon the Empire's paranoia:

> I look at the lines of characters written by a stranger long since dead. I do not even know whether to read from right to left or from left to right…. I have no idea what they stand for. Does each sign represent a different state of the tongue, the lips, the throat? As they combine in the uttering of some multifarious unimaginable extinct barbarian language? *(Waiting for the Barbarians*,121-122).

It can be deduced from this quote that despite the fact that the Magistrate does not know what is written on the poplar, he pretends to read the strange signs in order to mock those torturing him. In a way, madness bars them from seeing that the Magistrate is mocking them in particular and the Empire at large. The Magistrate also satirises the Empire's brutality and dictatorial tendencies through the so-called reading of the slips:

> This one read as follows, 'I say:' "I am sorry I must send bad news. The soldiers came and took your brother away…. Yesterday for the first time they sent a man to speak to me. He says your brother is no longer here…." We went to fetch your brother yesterday. They showed us into a room where he lay on a table sewn up in a sheet…Through each eyelid, I saw, there was a stich. 'Why have you done that? I said'. 'It is our custom', he said. I tore the sheet wide open and saw bruises all over his body and saw that his feet were broken. (*Waiting for the Barbarians,122)*

According to the Magistrate, somebody's brother is arrested and tortured to death by the soldiers. Signs of bruises and swollen legs are observed on his corpse and no apology or explanation is given by the soldiers for this state. Invariably, the true meanings of these slips are equally lost due to the fact that the Magistrate merely mimics interpreting them. The Magistrate, unlike most of Coetzee's narrators, only engages to the barest minimum with the idea of writing. At the end of the novel, it becomes difficult for the Magistrate to chronicle the history of the colonised community, despite accumulating materials related to the history of the community which also includes the mysterious local girl (whom he cherishes). She becomes an unreadable text through her passive acceptance of his ritualised washing which consequently makes the Magistrate to promise himself that he is not going to release the barbarian girl until he could decipher the marks on her body (*Waiting for the Barbarians,*33). His failure to decipher the girl makes him conclude that she is incomplete (*Waiting for the Barbarians*,34). From this, it can be deduced that the

Magistrate like every other coloniser inscribes his own meaning and narratives on the barbarian girl. Since he could not understand the barbarian girl, then to him the barbarian girl is incomplete and disabled.

In another vein, in one of his interviews with Attwell (1993), Coetzee explains that no one grants the suffering body any authority to suffer but the suffering body takes this authority on its own. In other words, the power of the suffering body is unquestionable. Coetzee affirms further that suffering overwhelms him and his thinking is thrown into confusion and helplessness at the suffering of the world. Similarly, in Scarry (2016)'s assertion, physically, real pain allocates definite attributes which are real and evidently physical upon such authority which has created it. To Scarry, torturing those that are being governed becomes necessary to the authority. This is due to fear of instability and shaky power. Neimneh (2014) even opines that suffering body is central to the discourse on the Government in Coetzee's novel. In the novel, a broken body, torn and mute gives interpretation to inquisition, cross-examination as well as probe in an unmistakably clear-cut tone. Meanwhile, a direct opposite of these exposes the meaning of the Empire's torture through out the novel. In another way, the suffering body also distinguishes the narrative of the Empire as presented by her agents including the one which is narrated through their casualties.

Central to this novel are five different suffering bodies; the barbarian girl; the Magistrate; the old man and his nephew; the twelve prisoners. The barbarian girl becomes blind and lame during 'questioning' and is left behind due to her disablity. The Magistrate who rescues her from the street is fascinated with her scars and wounds. Jolly (1996) describes the relationship between the barbarian girl and the Magistrate this way:

> The Magistrate's fascination for the barbarian girl stems from her body as the site of torture, rather than any desire for the girl herself. He worships the surface of her body, the skin, the site of interaction between torture and tortured … He treats her body as a text that, if he pays it enough attention – if he 'reads' it 'properly' – will alert him to the truth behind the scene of torture. (127).

As soon as the Magistrate, who is another suffering body, arrives from escorting the local girl who had been tortured, he is arrested for mutiny. The government accuses him of befriending their enemies. Significantly, words like mutiny, consort, treason and the likes easily and majorly feature in the dictionary of the government all the time. Initially, the magistrate is happy to have assumed the antagonist's role. However, in isolation, time passes slowly for the Magistrate, life out of prison becomes unrecognisable and the reality of his body's basic requirements could no longer be ignored. While portraying his suffering, the Magistrate says:

> The flow of events in the outside world, the moral dimension of my plight, if that is what it is, a plight, even the prospect of defending myself in court have lost all interest under the pressure of appetite and physical functions and the boredom of living one hour after another. I have caught a cold; my whole being is preoccupied in sniffing and sneezing, in the misery of being simply a body that feels itself sick and wants to be well. (*Waiting for the Barbarians,* 96)

In essence, occupying the whole narrative is the Magistrate who also doubles as the story-teller. Interestingly, he increases in size and position with a lot of pains and humiliations until he becomes larger than life in the narrative. As the outer world receeds from his mind what is left is how his body will survive with its need for food, drink and shelter. To the Magistrate, the need to live and be whole even superceed any form of degradation:

> It cost me agonies of shame the first time I have to come out of my den and stand naked before these idlers or jerk my body about for their amusement. Now I am past shame. My mind is turned wholly to the menace of the moment when my knees turn to water or my heart grips me like a crab … (*Waiting for the Barbarians*,128).

Basically, suffering and torturing force the magistrate to disregard the way and manner through which the government has stripped him naked. He could not even conceal his nakedness from people, even his emotion becomes lighter. In another way, his being tortured leads to a mimic assassination which is widely watched by a crowd. During this mimic assassination, his neck is first nailed, this is later followed by nailing his two arms together.

Looking at it critically, the novel opens with the Colonel, who represents the government, interrogating an old man who has been imprisoned. This old man can be referred to as another suffering body. The report of the questioning is given to the Magistrate, who is the administrative head of the outpost. Obviously, there are inconsistencies in the Statement written by the old man. This may be due to torture. The officer who is in charge of investigation confronts the old man with these inconsistencies. These allegations annoy the old man and he attacks the Officer physically. Consequently, the Officer overpowers and kills the old man.

Apparently not satisfied with this report, the Magistrate later asks the guard who is present at the questioning to give a statement, he repeats what had been written on the Charge Sheet word for word. According to him, the prisoner becomes violent and attacks the visiting agent. As a result, the guard is called in to help subdue him. Meanwhile, after the scuffle, the old man is not only knocked out, there is an evidence of blood in his nostrils. Later in the day, the nephew of the man who just died (also a prisoner) is being paid a visit by the Magistrate. Amazingly, this young boy is forced to sleep in the same room with the corpse of his uncle which has been sewn into a shroud. When the burial garment is unwrapped, the Magistrate notices that the facial hair of the old man is blood-soaked. He also notices how his mouth has been disfigured with teeth either removed or broken. He further observes that the old man's eyes have been battered. Unquestionably, this picture of a broken body makes a strong impact on the conscience of the Magistrate. Immediately, he sees the mangled and mutilated body of the old man, the gory picture is engraved on his mind and he cannot escape from it even if he wishes to do so.

Due to torture by the law enforcement agents, the old man's nephew who accompanies his uncle to the village to seek medical attention for an ulcerous wound that refuses to heal (*Waiting for the Barbarians*, 7) confesses to crime including insurrection. Ironically, by crossing a line within the desert along with the fort, he places himself in the role of the victim. After Colonel Joll's interrogation, the boy is placed in the same cell with the corpse of his uncle, the old man. The Magistrate, who is moved by this display of cruelty towards the prisoners, laments that the goal is now between a milieu of righteousness and unrighteousness and the mysteries in administration and government bring about the difference (*Waiting for the Barbarians*, 35). Jolly (1996)

sums up that, Coetzee's Empire in *Waiting for the Barbarians* relies heavily on authoritarian dualistic worldview which places those who oppose them on the bad side of the law while those who support them belong to the good side. Hence, through this worldview, the barbarians are justly identified as the enemies.

The Colonel's method of inquisition, particularly torturing his victims into confessing to assumed crimes, is read as a way of coercing the inhabitants of the land into wearing the garbs of the barbarians who he labels as the enemy. The Empire requires them to be tagged as such so as to enforce the reality of the barbarians. Then again, the Colonel pretends seeking for what is true and making the prisoner culpable of assumed crimes is inevitable for him. In essence, during the process of torturing the prisoners, the Colonel engraves what he deems as the truth on them. Those physical and emotional signs of being tortured on the prisoners are seen as proofs of being guilty. However, what he has extracted from the inhabitants is just what he deems as the truth which he enforces on them. In the novel, certain group of the barbaric are arrested and taken to an arena for judgement. This act reveals the imperialistic nature of the Empire especially in creating the colonised and enforcing the subaltern identification on them. Invariably, the rationale behind the creation of the barbaric remains an inventory which serves the purpose and intents of the coloniser.

Essentially, the novel ends with the empire's loss of dominion while the Law Enforcement Agents who are supposed to be law abiding citizens become transmuted into criminals. In addition, there is mayhem everywhere in the community. In expressing the state of loss along with his lack of cultural belonging, the Magistrate says that the scene is not what he dreamt of. According to him, just of recent, he has left being involved with things because this makes him looks dense. Meanwhile, he likens himself to someone who has since missed where he was going to and still continues travelling the same route which does not lead anywhere (*Waiting for the Barbarians*,156). This shows that he is unsure of his prospects and identification within an unstable colonised milieu.

It is paradoxical that the Magistrate features in the novel as an ensnared person. For someone who has been empowered to see to the affairs of the government, being helpless and powerless in front of the Colonel is indeed ridiculous and ironic. In

Ashcroft (1998)'s view, narratives which focus on postcolonialism and postmodernism commonly utilise satire or irony. This remains a facet which showcases disintegration including fickleness of postmodern circumstances. Ashcroft (1998), when describing the Magistrate's position, explains this as being acutely ironical. Being an administrator, he is supposed to represent and uphold the law. However, the Magistrate is apathetic, discriminating as well as hedonistic. Significantly, despite the fact that he is complacent, refined and self-indulgent, his contempt for the flagrant debauchery of the law enforcement agents sent to him means a confusing status. To sum up, the Magistrate has a dual status: As an adjudicator and adjudicated including being the rule and the ruled.

In essence, the Magistrate is incomplete and disabled. A critical look at all these colonial narratives of Coetzee suggests that the colonisers are fundamentally incomplete because of their inability to define themselves as anything other than 'masters' and the 'able'. More specifically, Coetzee has been deeply involved in presenting disability as a colonial condition. Although, Coetzee (1996) affirms his incapacity at offering contributions towards the controversies surrounding the rights of the disabled and the non-disabled in the society. He, however, cautions people not to be rigid at the type of ethical attention focused on the disabled in their society. Meanwhile, the responsibility of writing the other as the disabled is a crucial aspect in the critical reception of Coetzee's work as postindependence. By displacing the disabled colonial body into a deviant postindependence subject, whose identity is as socially privileged, as it is inherently different, displaced and uprooted, Coetzee offers another standpoint to the interpretation of being disabled in the contemporary postindependence and global world.

The advent of disability in postindependence circumstances goes beyond acknowledging its apparent existence and non-inclusion in global economy according to the view of Quayson (2007). In addition, Quayson explains that its meaning superceeds such view. To him, disability in postindependence situations equally showcases an extensive crisis that is the same as complicated contact with events from the past. Furthermore, in history, colonisation rather than stigmatisation remains the greatest tool which was used to disable those colonised in relation to Quayson's

opinion. Hence, certain contact between disability and postindependence factors in literary realm becomes a conflict which goes beyond and above historical events.

From the above, it is clear that the disabled characters in African novels are not just there, they actually represent a continent which had been disabled by colonisation. Coetzee uses disabled characters symbolically to describe a continent that functions at a disadvantaged and subaltern position. By exploiting the disabled body symbolically as a representative of the failure of the African society, Coetzee is assumed to be suggesting that the black people can break out of the oppressive grips of the coloniser who has disabled and refused to release the continent.

The study has examined how disabled characters are represented in J.M. Coetzee's novels. Three texts were selected for thorough and critical analysis. The selected texts are read through the prism of disability. In order to project Coetzee's message in the selected texts, the study revealed that Coetzee deliberately potrayed his heroes and heroines as disabled so as to serve as a symbol of the African continent which has been disabled by different colonial masters. The study identified how Coetzee uses disability as postindependence temper in his works. The study revealed Coetzee's use of autism, psychosis and madness as means of protest against the disabling agent: The colonisers.

Basically, the selected texts in this section showcase disability in different and complicated manners. They equally convey those characters that are disabled as all-round personalities who influenced the various milieu where they are situated by numerous ways of resisting the non–disabled dehumanisation and their re-writing of their stories. Looking at it critically, disability is seen as an integral component which is visible in various nations which were once colonised. However, it is persistently not being discussed as a major issue in analysis and studies related to postindependence factors.

4.2. (a). Feminist Representation of Disability in Selected Postindependence African Novels

This section attempts to provide an analysis of how Zaynab Alkali and Aminata Sow Fall imagined, utilised, as well as depicted disfigurement and disability within their novels. By adding to the knowledge which exists on disability, this study argues that signs of physical and psychological damage run through the novels of Zaynab Alkali and Aminata Sow Fall which are the focus of this section. Consequently, this particular section opts for Feminist Disability just to understand those complicated wounds of disabled African women who suffer oppression at the hands of their men. These men symbolise the colonial power. Hence, through carrying a crucial margin of postcolonialism to the social science of disability, and a fundamental outlook at the issue of disability in women as postindependence subject, this section explores the intersectionality of disability, feminism and postindependence disillusionment within a postcolonial environment of disablement.

A critical look at the western model of feminism reveals that it advocates: The rights of women to marital relations; their rights to giving birth to children and sexual partners. However, in Africa, the feminist movement that has emerged is basically attracted to the opposite sex, encouraged to bear children and are bothered with the rights of women including their financial powers. The rites of passage such as giving birth to children, getting married and even death display the unique position allocated to women before the end of colonialism and at independence. Meanwhile, the close affinity of women to issues like reproduction and domesticity which was deeply rooted during the colonial era has crept into the postindependence period as explained by Osha (2000:7). The organisation of the society during the period of colonisation in Africa created the sex and gender roles allocated to African women which have resulted into conflicts between African men and women as confirmed by Brian (1976: 12). Amadume (1997: 117) in consonance confirms the tie between the colonisers and the economies of their colonies. He also explains the kind of awareness accorded males in Africa as against their female counterparts in politics and business. Thus, the way and manner an African woman experiences colonialism is twin-natured: The first colonisation is through the Whites while the second one is through the African males. Hence, African women are positioned at the lower end of the ladder by the African man's masculine rejoinder to his being oppressed racially.

Consequently, both abuses are convoluted. Colonialism downgrades the black man. This makes him to develop inferiority complex and the needs to exert authority over his woman turns him into a dictator at home as affirmed by Begum (2006: 104). Story (2010: 29) while following the same line shows how both men and women in Africa were degraded and downgraded right from periods of Slavery and Colonialism. Their bodies were also not considered human. Within Christianity which is the religion of the white colonialists, the idea of blackness symbolises evil, lasciviousness and disrepute. Relatedly, a lot of derogatory labels were pasted on the bodies of Africans and it was not unusual to hear the Coloniser referring to the colonised as animals and dunces. In a similar vein, the same attitude was given to the bodies of women. Right from the outset, the bodies of women are considered as a deviation from those of men especially during the Aristotelian era. In essence, within all facet of life, bodies of women have always been gazed at through sexuality lenses. It could be deduced from this that women have always been valued as sexual objects. This reveals that Africans at large had been disabled right from the age of Exploration and African women in particular had been doubly disabled.

During the 19th century when there was a scramble for Africa, colonisation came on board and the system of taxation was introduced to the colonised. Furthermore, people whose economies were centred locally including being almost cloistered got to be among participants of global commerce and economy. Meanwhile, hard on the heels of such change-over, a lot of socialisation which originated from pre-colonial system of fabrication became deeply disturbed. An example of such disturbed socialisation is that which exists between a man and a woman.

Slave trade and colonialism accelerated the divisions of the colonised into classes despite the existence of stratification during the pre-colonial period as confirmed by Rodney (1974: 6). To Rodney, the position allocated to women socially got reduced drastically through colonisation. A deep look at this shows that a typical male's response, which represents a widespread view on women's place in contemporary society, is that a woman is just created to be a mother and a mother's place is in and about the house. From this viewpoint, processes of subjugating women emanated from the creation of non-extended family through colonisation. Those processes equally

produced hierarchical structures socially. Essentially, under colonialism, African women were subjected to various degrees of oppression from racism to indigenous and foreign structures of male domination. Hence, double colonialism.

Double colonisation is interpreted as the manner through which African women are colonised by both colonisation and patriarchalism concurrently. Double colonisation is coined by Peterson and Rutherford (1986). Resisting subjectivity and subjugation of double colonisation have to be women's prerogative. Consequently, the idea of resisting double colonisation gave birth to what is now known as theories on feminism centred on postcolonialism.

These theories wield a form of power upon the general theories on postcolonialism in their recurrent emphasis on needs for genderisation in postcoloniality. This, then, results into a tense relationship between the two proponents (Postcolonialism and Feminism). Postcolonialism in Feminists' view excludes the interests of women. Therefore, some feminists opine that postcolonialism as a theory is dominated by men and that the theory focusses on male-related issues alone. To them, the theory also exploits the women. Feminists in Postcolonial Studies equally indicted theorists on postcoloniality of expunging participation of the female folks in the quest for freedom from colonialism. They also accused the postcolonialists of distorting the images of women in national narratives.

Scant regard is granted to issues related to women by Critics like Edward Said (1977) in *Orientalism*. Not only this, a handful of female authors are mentioned by him. Homi Bhabha (1990)' s analysis of the duality of narratives on colonialism showcases an existing intimacy between a subject which is colonised as well as an object that is colonised. To this end, Homi Bhabha fails to show how peculiarities of sexuality could affect his example. In another vein, someone like Davies (1994:80) while suspecting those postcolonialists who disregard female issues queries the margins allocated to females in theorising postcolonialism. Thus, the birth of Postcolonial Feminist Theory provides an answer to Davies' question. The primary concern of this theory is the proper positioning of colonised women within their nations and in their colonisers'world as explained by Tyagi (2014:45). The theory opposes the initial narratives on colonisation which garbs the colonised with inferiority. Meanwhile, the

case of the colonised woman becomes harder as she suffers synchronously from oppressive structures erected by both colonisation and patriarchalism. This infers that as someone who has been subjected into colonisation and being a woman within a patriarchal society, she is expected to strive against these colonisers.

Looking at it critically, the theory focuses on the links which exist among feminists who are non-black; those of mixed races and the blacks. In the process of looking out for the interests of women who have been colonised, feminists who are of the white race disregarded peculiarities of race, culture as well as history which showcase different situation of those females who had been colonised. By ascribing their own inscriptions on the colonised women, they metamorphosed into oppressors of their own gender.

Similarly, the colonised woman's counterpart from the opposite sex equally serves as another coloniser by oppressing her daily. This is clearly seen in the way she is represented and situated in colonial narratives by her male counterparts. In addition, the colonised woman is not portrayed properly within concept of feminism which originated from the developed nations. This also becomes glaring through imposition of dumbness and blindness on the colonised woman's race, culture and history. Consequently, it could be concluded that Western Feminism equally oppresses the colonised females.

Meanwhile, women in Africa are depicted as mothers politically and are not expected to hold any significant position in national politics. This notion emanated from the patriarchal hegemony of narratives in African society as explained by McClintock (1995). Meanwhile, McClintock exposes how African men made use of their women to boost their egos which had been deflated by the colonisers. In his criticism of African nationalists like Chinua Achebe, McClintock depicts Achebe's patriarchal nature through the ways he usually portrays Igbo women in his literary realms. Igbo women as depicted by Achebe are always contented with the dictatorial tendencies of their husbands. They also do not see anything wrong in being excluded from making decision and they are also happy to live with traditional words and witty sayings which ridicule them as women.

A critical look at the above stance by McClintock, portrays Achebe as behaving like a typical African man who does not have any regard for women in his writings. In consonance with this view, Stratton (1994) summarises the popular view of female critiques as regards Achebe's portrayals of women in art. Stratton argues that in *Things Fall Apart* (1958), Achebe legitimises the process of exclusion of females from matters of state along with matters related to postcolonialism. Depiction of traditional Igbo communities which are male-centred before the invasion of colonialism in Achebe's writings affirmed this. This practice of centering a discourse around the males and locating the female on the margins is labelled as phallocentrism (Grozz, 1990). In this instance, portraying the male as the non-disabled is a central denominator in a discourse which positions the female as different, disabled, other, and secondary. Meanwhile labelling the colonised woman as the other signifies that she is experiencing what Rutherford and Peterson tagged as double colonisation. However, this is twisted into a threesome by Spivak (1988: 296). To Spivak, any woman who is non-white and lives with poverty is triply colonised. In the same vein, when such a woman is also a moslem, then her oppression is quadruple according to Abu–Lughod (2002:783) and Santesso (2013: 5). Meanwhile, the different approaches to postcolonial feminism indicate the necessity for an approach which will serve as an umbrella for all the sufferings of women within hostile milieux. Intersectionalism caters to this need as suggested by Chambers (2015:6). In Indian subcontinent' issues on migration as asserted by Brah (1996: 10-16), one could have referred to intersectionalism as having the notion of being identified and oppressed in various ways. Such identification and oppression could be that of sexuality, religion, stratification, being disabled and the likes. Furthermore, a racist and a sexist are conjoined twins who cannot be separated according to the concept of intersectionalism

However, a look at most postcolonial texts unveils the absence of discourses on the disabled both physically and psychologically. Assuming that differences, physically and verbally, transform someone into being regarded as the Other one in the society, a woman as a subject in a colony, at this point, becomes different through her physical and verbal structures in the argument of Frantz Fanon (1963). Added to this, her being disabled forces a three-fold oppression on her. Regarding oppression in South Africa in threefold, Lockett (1989: 29) showcases how women who are non-blacks are

basically confronted with gender oppression in only one way. However, the black women are triply oppressed. Firstly, a black woman suffers oppression by being from the black race. The second oppression emanates from social classification while the third is gendered based. Hence, apart from the black women in South Africa, these three-fold oppressions are the plights of every woman from Africa. As much as they tried to escape from these, traditional structures erected by male-centred communities refuse to unchain them. As earlier discussed, disability has become a common trait in postcolonial Africa and not individualistic. Through exhibiting sympthoms of disfigurement physically and psychologically, Africa is diagnosed as being disabled. Asch (2001: 1), while quoting from Americans with Disabilities Act (1994) sheds more light on this. She explains the society's dispositions towards the disabled. Such dispositions as: Restraining them; putting them in isolation; subjecting them to series of inequalities and injustices as well as not allowing them opinions on matters of the state. To Asch, this parochial act is as a result of assumptions which are actually denoting skills of the disabled in participating, and contributing to their communities.

In a way, much of the daily biases against the disabled are not the apparent animus of being shot or lynched rather it is the experience of being denied the opportunity to play the social roles expected of one's non-disabled age peers. Asch, succinctly sums up that the ambivalence of conflict between the disabled and non-disabled is a human situation that predates the world and is still persistent, largely because of constant problem of relational dispositions, which transcends race, colour, gender, and class.

Therefore, this study examines disability as a trope of postindependence disillusionment in selected African novels through the uneasy relationship between the disabled and non-disabled. In other words, the idea here is that disability has less to do with actual medical condition than with the perception and ideas of some people. What then is the relationship between feminism and disability?

4.2(b). Connections between feminism and disability

Feminism and Disability Studies converge in Feminist Disability Studies. Just as Women Studies expands the lexicon of what are imagined as womanly and seeks to understand and de-stigmatise the identity of a woman, so has Disability Studies

examined the identity of disability in the process of integrating the disabled people more fully into the society. Female Disability Studies, therefore, brings the two together to argue that cultural expectations, received attitudes, social institutions and the attendant material conditions create a situation in which bodies that are categorised as both female and disabled are disadvantaged doubly and in parallel ways. Hence, the informing premise of Feminist Disability Theory is that disability, like femaleness is not a natural state of corporeal inferiority, inadequacy excess, or a stroke of misfortune. Rather, disability is a culturally fabricated narrative of the body, similar to what we understand as the fictions of race and gender.

Significantly, understanding pivotal roles of Disability Studies is imperative at this juncture. Disability Studies aims to unsettle age-long stereotypes about people with disabilities. It also seeks to challenge the common assumption about people with a disability while situating the disability experience in the context of rights and exclusions. It equally aspires to retrieve dismissed voices and misrepresented experiences. In addition, Disability Studies also helps in understanding the intricate 9ujrelation between bodies and selves. It illuminates the social processes of identity formation and aims to denaturalise disability. Consequently, Thomson (2005) posits that Feminist Disability Studies re-imagines disability. In consonance with feminism which challenges the belief that femaleness is a natural form of physical and mental deficiency or constitutional unruliness, Feminist Disability Studies questions the general assumptions that disability is a flaw, lack, or excess. The theory, therefore, defines disability broadly from a social rather than a medical perspective. It argues that disability is a cultural interpretation of human variation rather than an inherent inferiority, pathology to cure, or an undesirable trait to eliminate. By probing the cultural meanings attributed to bodies that societies deem disabled, Feminist Disability Studies does vast critical cultural work. First, it understands disability as a system of exclusion that stigmatises human differences. Secondly, it uncovers communities and identities that the bodies considered disabled have produced. Thirdly, it reveals discriminating attitudes and practices directed at these bodies. Fourthly, it exposes disability as a social category of analysis and lastly, it frames disability as an effect of power relations.

Garland-Thomson argues that the first domain of Feminist Theory that can be deepened by a disability analysis is representation. To her, Western thought has long conflated femaleness and disability, understanding both as defective departures from a valued standard. For example, Aristotle defines woman as mutilated males with improper form. To Aristotle, women are monsters. Meanwhile, Tuana (1993:18) refers to women as misbegotten men who become the primal freaks in western history, envisioned as what is called congenitally deformed as a result of what is termed as genetic disability. Even, Feminist Theorists argue that female embodiment is a disability condition in sexist culture. Young (1990: 40) examines how enforced feminine comportment delimits women's sense of embodied agency which restricts women to certain platitude. Young concludes that women in a sexist society are physically handicapped. Fiske, Cuddy, and Glick (2001:67) opine that even the general American public associates feminity with disability. This is seen in a study on stereotyping which shows that housewives, disabled people, blind people, so–called retarded people and the elderly were all judged as being similarly incompetent. All these, clearly indicate the social construct which politicised the female body as being disabled just by being female.

As a matter of fact, disability has long served fiction as a master metaphor for social ills (Mitchell, 2002:15). Trotter (1999:97) describes the meaninglessness of modern life as disability. According to him, modern life often takes the form of injury, because injury disturbs or negates the familiar shape human beings take. Linnet (2013 :30) also points to the inward turn of twentieth–century literature as a basis for its fascination with blindness as a route to an exploration of consciousness and communion with a single other. More generally, Mitchell and Snyder (2000: 145) interpret perversions of the body as symbols for the alienation and fragmentation that characterise canonical modernism. A critical look at this shows that many authors most often use disability as a defect that signals a general state of instability or particular type of social disorder and in some cases the depiction is largely metaphorical. This is what Alkali shows in *The Stillborn (1984), The Virtuous Woman (1986) and The Descendants (2005)*.

The Stillborn centres on a complex particular and localised instance, where disability is highly unstable and not inscribed in a single physically deformed body, but is defined by a common cultural belief that someone who possesses a psychic power way

of thinking is disabled. This categorisation of psychic power falls within the social theory of disability that conceives of disability not as medical impairments but as something imposed on top of social impairments. Not only this, the study is equally based on Li's (The heroine in *The Stillborn*) philosophical statement that everybody is lame in one way or the other.

4.2.1. The lame gender: Feminist disability reading of Zaynab Alkali's *The Stillborn*

In most of Zaynab Alkali's works, except perhaps *The Virtuous Woman* where the leading female character is incapacitated by a physical deformity, it is the male that are portrayed in most circumstances as the lame gender and therefore, incapable of wielding homogeneity in family or community matters while the female protagonists like Li, Sheytu and Magira Milli often come in like the super woman character and make amend for the overall good of family and community. However, this study takes an opposing stance to this by looking at both the female and the male characters in Alkali' s *The Stillborn* as lame.

The heroine of Zaynab Alkali's debut novel, *The Stillborn*, which is set in Northern Nigeria is Li. The story opens with Li at age thirteen, just out of primary school, rejecting restrictive parental authority and full of romantic dreams of a luxurious life. Li's initial quest for independence is defined within the context of her home which has become a microcosm of disabled patriarchal society. The restrictive traditional norms that disabled women are personified in Li's parents, especially her father whose rules Li considers as stupid and unnecessarily rigid (*The Stillborn*, 5). Li thinks of her father in antagonistic terms and vocalises her revolt against domestic confinement when she desires to go and ease herself without having someone breathing down her neck demanding to know where she has been to (*The Stillborn*, 5).

Li, despite the euphoria of homecoming easily gets tired of her home, which to her symbolises bondage. This is vividly depicted when after a few weeks at home:

> Li began to find the atmosphere in her father's compound suffocating. She felt trapped and unhappy. Already she missed the kind of life she had lived at the primary boarding school, free and gay. At home, the little ones were too young to

> understand the restriction and the older ones too dull to react…
> It's worse than a prison. Li complained.
> (*The Stillborn*,5).

The words 'suffocating', 'trapped' 'restrictions' and 'prison' create images of entrapment and asphyxia which aptly describes Li' s claustrophobic feelings about her home and the stifling effect of restrictive traditional norms on woman. Consequently, Li's home could be regarded as a disabling milieu where Li's rights to freedom and choices are amputated just because she is a female child.

Everything about Li, right from birth is unconventional and disabled signifying that she is unusual and disabled. Li is born with the bag of water intact; she does not cry at birth like every other non-disabled child, thereby refusing to adhere to every important tradition in her community; she also has adult features. Awa (Li 's elder sister) puts it this way:

> But what about the rest Li…your hair, ears, and eyes?
>
> ''What about them? Were they missing?'' Li asked mockingly. ''It would have been more natural if they were. Your hair was as kinky as an adult's and your eyes were like old Yakumba's…. As for your ears. They were rolled up like banana shoots. Mama had to cover her head and ears until you were nine months old''. (*The Stillborn*,6).

Awa 's reply to Li's question of why their mother took all those steps in hiding Li' s disabilities is illuminating. Awa, while explaining to Li affirms that their mother decides to hide Li's disabilities mainly to save the visitors and the family from embarrassment. According to Awa, the visitors keep on exclaiming and making embarrassed apologies when they see the disabilities of Li. These visitors' reaction to the disabilities perceived in Li exposes African culture which never discusses impairments for fear of causing offence.

Li's body, although is not perceived as a disabled one but as one that Thomson (1997: 4) tags as an extraordinary body. Thomson opines that extraordinary bodies are different from able bodies. In her view, the body ability is just different in an extraordinary way. According to Thomson, the meanings attributed to extraordinary

bodies do not reside in inherent physical flaws, but in social relationships in which one group is legitimated by possessing valued physical characteristics and maintains its ascendency and its self-identity by systematically imposing the role of cultural or corporeal inferiority on others.

This explains the society 's opinion of Li who is gifted with psychic power which allows her to see into the future through dreams. The dream trait confers on Li the status of a visionary and a clairvoyant. Li's dreams are revelatory and meaningful which add a supernatural dimension to her already unconventional character. In essence, unlike other non-disabled, Li could see into the future beyond the ordinary. The society could not understand this gift of hers, she is thus labelled as a strange child even by her own father. The confirmation of Li's metaphysical gift occurs through a particular tragedy at the town's central mosque which also involves her father. Li had a dream that something bad is going to happen at the Friday prayer meeting which her father attends twenty miles from their village. She quickly warns her father off from the prayer meeting but her father rebuffs this gesture to his own detriment:

> Baba, do not go to the prayer meeting today. Please do not go…. Something bad is going to happen, really bad. She said breathlessly. "Child of the devil" Baba thought. Then aloud with undisguised irritation 'What is going to happen?'…. I had a dream last night, a frightening dream (*The Stillborn, 9)*

Baba who ought to celebrate this supernatural gift of his child sees it as a disability which must be discouraged. After Li narrates her dream to her father, Baba looks at her for a long time, wondering what kind of child she is. He does not know how to tackle a child with such a strong inclination towards evil. He decides there and then to discourage Li (*The Stillborn, 9).* In order to suppress and oppress Li, he condemns and throws Li's dream away into the bin. In his view, Li's dream is strange especially for her age. He wonders at how any child of Li's age could dream like that. Baba, therefore, concludes that Li must have imagined the whole thing. He equally assigns the blame of this strange dream to the devil (*The Stillborn,*10). Baba would later attend the prayer meeting to his own detriment. An accident occurs which leads to death of

many worshippers, Baba, himself is saved by the whiskers. From that day, his health becomes badly affected and starts to deteriorate.

This encounter between Li and her father leads to a shift in the relationship between them. Li from that day becomes less afraid of her father. According to Li, her father's non-recognition of the power of her dream apart from cheapening her (*The Stillborn, 11)* has also portrayed Baba as someone that is economical with the truth. Interestingly, it is not only Baba that disdains Li's psychic power, it is the whole society. Li decries the societal attitude to her psychic power:

> She had had such dreams before and whenever they were accompanied by a certain weird sensation, which she had come to recognise, something always happened. She kept quiet for the rest of the day, unable to confide in anyone for fear of being ridiculed. (*The Stillborn,* 11)

From this quotation we can see that Li's psychic power has plummeted her into an experience of social exclusion and ridicule. Brah (1996: 103) captures Li's feelings of rejection vividly and asserts that anyone whether disabled or non-disabled who arouses dismay, fear and pity in people becomes sickened in the spirit. This is actually what always happened to Li whenever she has her dream. She is always depressed and has to keep to herself throughout the day. She is also helpless in controlling the whole event. A critical look at this indicates that the society's reaction to Li's body and psychic power means that Li is different from the norm. There is simply no room for celebrating her different body and neither is there room for recognising the positive aspects of her psychic power.

Li's father, who represents to her the image of the colonial oppressor, imposes his own definitions and perspectives on Li's ability to foresee what will happen in the future. This, in a sense, alienates and disempowers Li. Furthermore, her psychic power physically assaults and publicly strips her father of his revered invincibility. This could be seen in an encounter between Li and her father:

> Li turned and stared at him fearlessly. Baba stared back with growing irritation. Suddenly, the irritation turned into anger and he trembled. Li had the power to stir such emotion in him.

> He thought she was impudent, but it wasn't just this that worried him. It was something else. He hated to admit it even to himself, but there it was. Those piercing eyes that stripped him naked and saw through his soul, assessing, judging and condemning him, weighing his strength against his weakness. They were no child's eyes. (*The Stillborn*,9)

Mainly, in the figural sense, this experience is for Baba (Li's father), a process of castration from which he never fully recovers physically and psychologically. In another way, Baba's constant illnesses equally operate symbolically to effectively disable him from being a strong and capable head of his family. The Northern Nigerian culture and religion demand that Baba as a father and head of his family must look after the family, nurtures it and sustains its needs socially, economically and morally. However, Baba's method of instilling discipline on the members of his family is seen as unnecessarily rigid and unproductive by members of his family. The foreign culture that Baba is so much in love with combined with modern living also help to disable him. He is referred to as being fragile (*The Stillborn*, 8;26). Fragility is a term that is associated with women in a patriarchal manner. Hence, Baba is reconstructed into a woman through this term which is another means of disability. Equally, his gesture is described as impotent (*The Stillborn*, 24). Consequently, Baba like every other male characters in Alkali's *The Stillborn* is read as someone that has been crippled emotionally.

As a matter of fact, in Alkali's *The Stillborn*, except for the visibly, physically marked bodies of Manu (the hunch back), Baba who is partially paralysed after collapsing in front of his hut and Habu Adams who becomes lame towards the end of the novel, all the other characters seem able-bodied, yet, they all seem to be crucially disabled at some defining points in their development.

Li's mother is disabled by her autocratic husband. Throughout the novel, she is only referred to as Mama with no name to identify her. This somewhat substantiates Thomson's (2013: 8) observation that previous conceptual traditions see the woman's body in terms of a negation or subtraction of the man's. In this vein, all the female characters in *The Stillborn* seem to suffer various kinds of sexual mutilations and were unable to find full sexual expression and satisfaction in their relationship; they seem to live incomplete lives. Li sees her mother's authoritativeness as monotony and her steps

as mechanical. On top of this, she is hard of hearing. To Li, women moulded in tradition as symbolised by her mother are sapped of life because they had been socialised into repeating the same boring domestic activities that Willet (1971:368) describes as the lubricating trivia of the home. This, as de Beauvoir (1952) contends, does not offer a woman freedom from subjectivity and little affirmation of individuality. She becomes a robot fired into the clay of predominance by lack of variety and lack of freedom. She has no prospects for growth, for transcendence. She then shuts herself out of the world that confines and stifles her by being half-alive to its sounds and movement.

This quotation equally explains why marriage to Habu disables Li. Li considers marriage as a redeeming factor from her father's patriarchal oppression but it turns out to be another oppressive and disabling structure. Li's vision and dream about the type of husband she desires are amputated when Habu goes to the city to work and she remains in the village for four years. Li finally decides to go after her husband but she meets a totally different Habu who has metaphorically been crippled by the city, Li nostalgically queries:

> Where is my man? That boyish man with incredible smile and mischievous twinkle in the eye? Where is that proud, self – confident, half-naked lover that defied the laughter of the village just to see me? This man wasn't the man she used to roll with on the sand in front of her father's compound (*The Stillborn*, 70)

The quotes above clearly reveal that Habu who was previously regarded as fun-loving, self-determined and brave has been turned into the opposite by the city. Habu's dalliance with the woman from the South that he met in the city cuts the limbs of his marriage to Li. This is contrary to the dreams they had both grown together with. Li desires to become a well-trained teacher in future. In addition, Li envisages that Habu Adams, her suitor will also become a successful physician who will be competiting with his non-black counterparts. As far as Li is concerned, after being married to Habu, they will later settle down to be living in a mansion with male and female servants. To crown it all, she will no longer be fetching water and going on unreasonable errands to the market (*The Stillborn*, 55).

This infers that Li desires to be trained as a teacher and her husband, Habu, is expected to become a medical doctor. Like the Europeans, Li plans to live a life of luxury surrounded with maids and houseboys. However, this picture gets wounded in the reality of life. Li 's attempt to console herself is by removing the blame from her unfaithful husband and heaping it on the city and the nameless woman from the South. She believes that Habu Adams is a victim of city life which easily destroys and amputates dreams (*The Stillborn*,94).

Li also believes that her husband is a victim of a more experienced woman from the South (*The Stillborn*,91) who takes advantage of his ignorance on his arrival in the city. Based on the report given to Li, both the woman and Habu are working at the same place. As someone new to life in the city, the woman offers to teach Habu how to survive in the city. These lessons involve cooking for him, showing him round and being generally helpful. One thing leads to another and she is impregnated by Habu (*The Stillborn*, 91). The woman later develops complications which leads to miscarriage. Not only this, her womb becomes damaged and the prospect of her having a baby in life becomes doomed.

In this vein, the woman from the South whose name is not revealed throughout the novel is also read as lame. At first glance, she appears to wield all the power in her relationship with Habu Adams but a closer look showcases a woman who has been damaged beyond repairs especially in a society which values children. Li captures the woman's situation vividly when she replies that:

> She is the loser, not me. Remember, she too is crippled, what does she need another cripple for? True, I lost my man to her …. The poor woman has nothing to show for those years. Nothing at all. Just an aching emptiness *(The Stillborn*, 93).

With this, Li infers that the woman from the South, although not crippled physically has become crippled emotionally. She lost her baby and ends up with a damaged womb through her relationship with Habu Adams. She is, therefore, depicted as a disabled. In essence, through Li, Faku, Awa, Grandma and the likes, Alkali paints a

heart rending picture of women who suffer emotional disability and abandonment from the hands of their men.

A cursory look at a typical African Society shows that the value of a married woman lies in her procreation ability and a woman's most important role in the family is realised through motherhood. Hence, barren women experience the disabling effects of both social and cultural oppression which originate from the patriarchal nature of African society. So, no matter her wealth or beauty, a woman that is barren is considered disabled and useless. This issue of barrenness as disability is echoed by Hajiya's husband before his death:

> The building in the heart of the city, behind the Emir's palace is yours. Collect the rents. I no longer have the strength to go out and work, and when I die, they will split my wealth over my corpse, like vulture over a carcass. They will not give you a buck because you have no child. (*The Stillborn*,73).

This quotation clearly reveals that Hajiya is not entitled to any inheritance from her husband's wealth due to her barenness which is read as disability by the society. As a matter of fact, her husband's prediction comes true immediately after his death, in the scrambling for the sharing of his wealth no one mentioned the barren woman (*The Stillborn*, 73). Hajiya is written out of her husband's wealth due to her inability to bear a child for her husband. Her body is also considered deficient in African cultural milieu, with many unsavoury names inscribed on her such as male-pawpaw, evil woman and witch. Essentially, in African society as depicted by Alkali, a woman is considered an outcast, sub-human, and a disabled if she is barren and barrenness is one of the worst stigma a woman has to endure as motherhood defines womanhood. Hajiya aptly describes the agony and torment confronting any woman that is barren in African society when she recounts her life story to Li. As she describes it, she marries at thirteen years and prays for a baby for thirty years without any result. As a devout Muslim who believes in the efficacy of prayer and the holy city of Mecca where it is believed that prayers are answered, she visited Mecca at nine different times. All sorts of spiritual healers were also contacted in order to get solutions to her barrenness. All these efforts equally result into futility. Hajiya encapstulated her life-history this way:

> I married at the age of thirteen and for thirty years. I prayed…for a child. I went to Mecca nine times. I gave all my wealth to Mallams, herbalists and spiritual healers for a child that never came. My husband lost no time in marrying other wives who promptly gave him eleven sons and four daughters. I was the eldest wife and the only barren one. With every birth in the family, I experienced a raw agony…. (*The Stillborn*,72).

The above quotation showcases the plight of barren women in Africa and the extent such women can go in order to be read as non-disabled by a child-hungry society. This agony of a barren woman is indescribable such that Emenyonu (1980: 1) laments about it. Emenyonu describes the agonies, pains, stigmatisation and the likes that a woman that is barren in Africa has to undergo. A woman who has only one child is likewise regarded as barren by the society. According to Emenyonu an African woman is valued based on her fertility. She is not considered as a non-disable if she cannot fill her husband's house with children. Emenyonu, also affirms that a woman who gives birth to only female children is also not regarded as being normal.

This lamentation by Emenyonu aptly describes the pains that a barren woman experiences in African society. In fact, any woman that does not bear any child, a woman that has only one child and a woman that bears only female children are all read as disabled within African society.

Moreover, married women are taught that a good wife does not raise her voice over her husband. One can see this culture of silence operating in the life of Li's mother. She represents the generation of women whose voices have been suppressed and disabled because she believes in silence as a golden rule. That is certainly why she lives an almost non-existent life in her own home as a typical traditional wife without any education. Relatedly, in Hausa Society, being single and unmarried is seen as a form of disability for a woman. Marriage is seen as one of the means of social integration. This can be glimpsed through Sule's comment on Awa. Sule, Awa's younger brother queries the fact that at eighteen years of age, a young lady like Awa should still be living under her father's roof without any prospect of marriage (*The Stillborn*, 3-4). Remarks and comment like this must have led Awa into marrying at the time she marries and even staying in the marriage despite the fact that she does not enjoy her marriage.

Meanwhile, Awa, Li's elder sister has never moved out of the village unlike her younger sister who had travelled to go to school. However, Awa as a traditional and conventional woman becomes disabled through her marriage and her fear of change. Her personality and psyche are stunted as she is forced into bearing both her immediate and extended families' responsibilities at a very tender age. Against her expectations in life, the colonial power disabled her husband, Fiam, who was once the headmaster of the village school. Fiam in turn becomes an alcoholic and an irresponsible man who is not even ashamed to be living off his wife.

Acharya (2012) affirms that disability garners different negative cultural constructs or ideological categories, such as ugly, old, aberrant, deformed, derailed, debilitated or feeble minded, and all of them devalue the human body. Thus, Li's step grandmother could also be referred to as a disable. She is viewed by many of the characters in the novel as a wicked, barren woman who is the root of many troubles, especially for Li's father and grandfather. Li's grandfather brands his wife a witch (*The Stillborn*,25) in a manner that is reminiscent of villainous characters in children's folktales and folklore. This oppressive tradition still exists in contemporary societies.

Women become the first suspect whenever any tragedy occurs in any African community. In most cases, women are labelled as witches, sorceresses and the likes including being accused of working behind the scenes in ensuring that things do not go well within their families in particular and the community at large. This is the fate of Li's grandmother. Grandma, despite her native intelligence and street-wisdom is relegated by her community to a shadowy corner of the village compound and many of her dreams as the title of the novel suggests become stillborn. While grandma remains a disturbing signpost in *The Stillborn* as the woman who finds no medium through which to express her true self, through her tirades, she constantly warns Li (as the new generation African woman) not to forfeit her individual aspirations. She shares her life-history with Li in order to teach her about life issues especially as regards the relationship between a man and a woman:

> Listen to my words. I was married fourteen times in the eastern part of this land. I left for this part because I could find no lion among them. The village was filled with red monkeys, black

> monkeys, jungle pigs, wild cats, toothless dogs and lame cocks… Did I know gods of my fathers that I was coming to meet a worse pack? (*The Stillborn,* 53).

The quotes above infer that Li's grandma ends up marrying a non-Hausa man because she regards men from her tribe as weaklings and lame. Her quest for a brave man to marry leads her into getting married to fourteen different men at different times, her dissatisfaction with the men in her life at the Eastern part of the country brings her back home not knowing that the men at home are even worse than the ones in the East. Essentially, she qualifies the men as lame cocks. Hence, marriage that is supposed to make her whole as an African woman aids in turning her into a disabled. She becomes deaf and dumb metaphorically (The *Stillborn*, 53) through marriage. She also becomes non-productive who because of frustration is always happy at the misfortune of her immediate family members and the society at large.

In another vein, a quick look at Garba's perception of polygamy is quite degrading and disabling. To Garba, a man could get married to as many women as possible without taking care of any of them or being responsible for their welfare. In homes like that, those women will go out of their ways in order to curry the favours of their husband. They will be the ones to provide for him as well as satisfying him sexually (*The Stillborn*, 45). His view is further strengthened by the experience of one of his friends that has wives, about four of them, who are accommodated in separate places within the same city without knowing about the existence of each other. Each of these wives caters to his needs without his being responsible for any of them *(The Stillborn*, 45). From this, Garba who is in the same boat with his friend is depicted as an insensitive, irresponsible and cruel male that makes use of women selfishly. To Garba, women are just pawns on his patriarchal chessboard. The display of spousal abuse is clearly seen in Garba's relationship with Faku who is plagued by Garba's constant absence. As soon as Faku is married to philanderer-Garba, she starts to lose weight. Not only this, her appearance becomes gaunt and unkempt due to neglect, famine of love and poverty. Hence, her educational and vocational disabilities turn her into a helpless woman who is drifting aimlessly within the stages of life *(The Stillborn*, 102). However, like Li, she later rises above her situation.

The city equally serves as a disabling agent in the lives of Habu Adam (Li's husband); Faku (Li's friend); Garba and Li. Li's dreams of going to the city to become a Grade One teacher is truncated as her husband loses interest in her. Faku, Li's best friend is disabled emotionally through her marriage to a serial polygamist in her quest to escape the stifling air of her village by all means. She is ensnared into a marriage to a man who shares his love and time among different women. The son of Audu is depicted as lame and a weakling culturally due to the nature of his job in the city (a cook). In any patriarchal society, tasks like preparation of food, taking care of the house, washing the plates; firewood-fetching as well as provision of water are a woman's job. Hence, the son of Audu is not a normal man but a woman. This is due to the fact that he has become the cook of an influential and rich man at the city (*The Stillborn*, 49). His father is so worried about this to the extent of declaring that this nature of his son's job is going to send him to an early grave. The father, in an aggrieved manner laments the idea of his son turning into a woman (*The Stillborn*, 49).

Reaction to disability in Africa is ambivalent. Sometimes, it could be pity, horror, laughing matter and all the likes. Manu, the hunchback becomes a laughing stock in the whole community due to his disability. The whole community regards him as a symbol of human failure (*The Stillborn*, 50). His wife leaves because he is impotent. He has no visible job. To Manu, his inability to father children can even be a thing of joy as the children born by a disable are not to be associated with in Hausa culture. The madman at the market stall is also a laughing stock.

In a patriarchal society like Nigeria, it is unheard of for a man to kneel down for a woman especially his wife. However, Habu's emotional disability becomes full and obvious when he comes crying on his knees seeking for reconciliation from Li, who refuses this gesture. Li narrates to Awa that Habu is not happy with how events turn out in their marriage. His desire is for Li and his child to return to him. However, Li says she refuses to entertain this idea. His pleas for Li to come back to him fall on Li's deaf ears. As a matter of fact, Li narrates that she outrightly tells him off. To Li, her daughter and she had been surviving without Habu for so many years and they will still continue doing so. Li discovers that they do not actually need him. When Habu hears this: He goes on his knees; places his head on Li's thighs, clasps her legs with

his hands and starts to cry like a baby. Li explains this action as very strange. She has never seen a man crying like that before (*The Stillborn,* 92).

Essentially, Alkali's use of the pair of crutches towards the close of the novel is powerfully symbolic. The crutches may be seen as a reminder that Li and Habu will have to renegotiate their relationship which has suffered emotional disabilities. The Li at the end of the novel is quite different from the Li that Habu marries in Chapter six. As the novel ends, Li has accepted that her romantic dreams will not reach fruition as she had expected but that instead she would have to learn to walk again neither following nor leading the lame Habu.

Habu becomes lame following the injury sustained in a motor accident. He is given a pair of crutches to aid him in walking. The crutches indicate the learning processes that Li and Habu, after previous difficult and emotional injuries, will undergo in order to renegotiate their relationship which is in a fragile condition. Awa, Li's sister could not understand why Li would renew her relationship with Habu who is now lame:

> Awa shook her head thoughtfully, "You are going back to him? Yes", Why, Li? The man is now lame, said the sister. "We are all lame, daughter-of-my mother. But this is no time to crawl. It is time to learn to walk again". So you want to hold the crutches and lead the way? Awa asked. 'No' answered Li. 'What then, you want to walk behind and arrest his fall?' "No" I will just hand him the crutches and side by side we will learn to walk.
>
> (*The Stillborn*,105).

Looking at it critically, Alkali uses disabled characters symbolically from a disadvantaged and subaltern position. Alkali upturns the archetype of the disabled in her imagined portraiture of postindependence Northern Nigeria in particular and Nigeria as a whole. This trope of disfigurement and amputation could be seen vividly in *The Virtuous Woman*.

4.2.2. Trope of amputation and disfigurement in *The Virtuous Woman*

Alkali situates *The Virtuous Woman* in the '60s at a rural area known as Zuma in the Northern part of Nigeria. The title is taken from Proverbs 31:10 and centres on Nana

Ai, a seventeen-year-old disabled girl who embarks on a trip from Zuma to Kudu where her school is located during the beginning of a new session. A road accident involving the death of every member of her immediate family makes Nana Ai an orphan at an early age. Consequently, she ends up living with Baba Sani, her grandfather. Her personality as well as choices, despite being disabled, is what the storyline revolves around. In another vein, being courageous, being strong and well-mannered are characteristics which make her to be different from others. Additionally, her brilliance wins her a schorlarship in a school which is exclusive for girls from rich homes. En route to Kudu, apart from Laila and Hajjo (Laila's cousin) who are from the same village with Nana and who are going to the same school with her, other people equally travel along with her especially the duo of Bello and Abubakar who are schooling at the neighbouring boys' secondary school. Disabilities which are physical and non-physical are clearly seen in the three heroines of the novel; Nana Ai, Laila and Hajjo and every other characters in the novel. Nana Ai becomes disabled due to poliomyelitis, illegitimacy transforms Hajjo into a disabled within a society that reads this status of hers as disability and Laila is boldly sexual in her desires in a society that terms such act as irrational. Apart from these three major ones, there are a lot of characters in this novel with physiques, characters and miens which deviate from normative values.

Nana Ai in the midst of social and sexist oppression desires to love and be loved. Despite being a disabled, Nana Ai possesses a kind of matureness which those who are in the same age with her lack (*The Virtuous Woman*, 11). Nana Ai is brought to her grandfather at six months when she is involved in a motor accident which claims both her parents and her two older siblings on the spot. Nana Ai who has a physical disability and a poor self–esteem privately nourishes the idea of being a physician (this is probably due to the fact that her father was one before his death). However, the fear of rejection and ridicule by the patriarchal dominated society renders her voiceless as she could not share her dream with anybody. Nana Ai comes from a social milieu which ascribes medicine as a profession to the male gender and considers it abnormal for the female gender to aspire to become a doctor. Nana clearly puts it this way:

> "Perhaps", she said to herself, if I were a male, I would be a doctor also. She liked and nursed that idea. It never occurred to her that it was in her to be whatever she wanted to be. The only

> female doctors she had known were Asians and white people: and for some strange reason she never regarded them as women. (*The Virtuous Woman*,10).

A critical look at the above quotation shows that Nana Ai lacks self-esteem and sees herself through the subjectivity of being a female with bad leg. Hence, her view point of herself becomes her mental process until her encounter with certain people in the course of her journey to her school.

In African society, it is considered that there is an extreme masculinity in Medicine as a profession and is, therefore, not meant for women. Hence, it is highly abnormal for females to consider becoming a medical doctor. Even, if any woman is allowed to go to school at all, such a woman can only become a teacher and not a medical doctor. In an interview, Alkali's motive in depicting Nana Ai as brilliant and well-mannered is vividly summed up during an interaction with the Press: Nana Ai, the heroine of the novel is portrayed as a cripple, although not severely impaired. However, being really conscious about this disability has a psychological effect on her. Meanwhile, through self-discovery as well as self-identification, Nana Ai gradually overcomes her disability. According to Alkali, Nana Ai, then realises her self-worth of not being defined by her crippleness. In addition, physical fitness does not define non-disability. In Alkali's opinion, Nana Ai is chosen as the heroine of *The Virtuous Woman* over two non-disabled girls because of her mental and spiritual richness (Alabi: 1998, 43).

The statement made by Alkali during the above interview reveals that Nana Ai is actually the virtuous woman that the whole novel is based on despite her disability. Furthermore, the disparities in the attributes of Nana Ai and Laila's are glaring. Laila, has been offered a schorlarship into the same school with Nana Ai, although, she is not academically brilliant as Nana Ai. As a matter of fact, she repeats various classes thrice prior to her success in the Common Entrance Examination. Laila flirts with the opposite sex instead of guiding her virtues like Nana Ai does. Added to this is her lack of self-control as well as decency. On many occasions, during the trip, she displays herself as a discourteous person. She equally portrays herself as someone who is vulgar as against the good nature of Nana Ai. In essence, Laila is described as being a sixteen-year old girl, curvy, short, and slothful. As someone who is disorganised, Laila also appears like an old person (*The Virtuous Woman*, 6).

Alkali in *The Virtuous Woman* depicts a milieu which is absolutely dominated by patriarchy. The societal values are outrightly dictated by the men. These values affirmed the worthlessness apparent in educating a girl-child and the strangeness of such a venture in the society. One of the reasons given for this is that a girl-child ceases belonging to the family of her father immediately she gets married. However, Nana Ai resists these unacceptable norms and standards set for women within the Northern Nigerian milieu. Her aspiration to become a medical doctor is her own way of resisting patriarchalism. Looking at it critically, the patriarchal society from which Alkali situates *The Virtuous Woman* believes that a female child does not benefit the family where she comes from but could only be useful to her husband alone. This parochial view as expressed by Dogo contends that sending a female child to school is of no use. To Dogo, the husband of a female child gets the benefit of her education. However, the father is blamed and ridiculed whenever a female child turns out bad. The father's name gets dragged in the mud. Dogo aptly sums it up:

> It's my house that becomes her refuge. Whichever way you look at it, the father of the female child is the loser. Let the girls stay at home and help their mother, when it is time for them to get married, let them marry. (*The Virtuous Woman*, 47).

The quotes above showcase the African society's bias against educating the female child. Allowing the girl-child to be educated depletes one's resources including time. However, this is not so as Dogo later learnt to his own detriment. The female children he abandons due to his belief that they are useless are the one who ends up taking care of him. Like in her previous work earlier studied, all the major and minor characters in *The Virtuous woman* are potrayed with one disability or the other. Apart from Nana Ai who is physically crippled, all the remaining characters are not physically disabled but become disabled psychologically, emotionally and socially.

Little Hajjo, a twelve-year-old girl, who lives with her grandparents is doubly disabled. The Hausa society reads her as someone who is illegitimate since her mother is not married to her father, a bastard including being ugly. Hajjo, on her own, is disabled emotionally by the circumstances surrounding her birth. Although, despite her brilliance, hard-working nature, she is treated as an outcast by her family

especially her grandmother who delights in raining abuses on her at any given opportunity because she is an illegitimate child:

> Twice her grandmother in intense anger had beaten her on the head and had called her a bastard. She had decided to be liked by her grandparents, teachers and classmates. So she read very hard and always came top of her class. It gave her tremendous satisfaction, but not the desired effect. (*The Virtuous Woman*,7).

Being called a bastard, child of shame, child of disgrace and the likes go a long way towards indicating the stigma that surrounds illegitimate children in African society. In the case of Hajjo, her grandmother douses her constantly with series of obscene vituperations which serve to entertain people especially the young ones (*The Virtuous Woman*,8). From these, we can see that Hajjo's grandmother disables her emotionally. Hajjo herself observes that she is being treated differently from the other children due to the disability that the society inscribes on her body. To the society, Hajjo is a bastard and nobody seemed to care much about her, nobody is interested in her pains and hurts (*The Virtuous Woman*, 6) including her mother:

> At home, Hajjo had observed that when food was shared, she was always the last to be served and she seldom wore anything new except when her mother visited. She was always called upon to do the chores that no one wanted to do. At first she was not aware that she was being treated differently, but as she grew older it began to dawn on her slowly that she was an outsider in her own home. (*The Virtuous Woman,*8).

This infers that as young as Little Hajjo is, she is being treated as an outcast in her home due to a kind of stigma that is not her fault. Like the prostitute, thief, the disabled and deformed, an illegitimate child in African society is associated with this assorted class of ignoble people who are abhorred socially. An illegitimate child is an emblem of societal abnormality, an incontrovertible proof of opposing moral values. To put it succinctly, an illegitimate child is a problem in the view of the society. Little Hajjo is tainted by the stigma of illegitimacy and like every illegitimate child, she seems to be destined never to escape the mark of illegitimacy that plagues and determines the life she must lead. Hajjo recalls an encounter with her mother at a tender age:

> When she was eight years old and was able to ask her mother about her father "I want to see him" she had wailed. Hajjo gets "an icy stare" from her mother. Although she does not understand the meaning of the

look but she had learnt since then to close her mouth.
(*The Virtuous Woman*, 7).

This quotation clearly reveals that Hajjo must learn not to query the oddity of her birth, she must learn to be deaf and dumb to the label that is inscribed on her body. As a bastard, she is always the butt of jokes of both her family and the society at large. The pain and stigma are so much to an extent that Hajjo hurts a lot inside and she was often scared (The *Virtuous Woman*, 7). To Hajjo, despite the fact that she does not even know the circumstances surrounding her birth, she could not boast of a normal family life (*The Virtuous Woman*, 8).

In another vein, sixty-year-old Baba Sani's joy and life expectations are amputated by myriads of tragedy and disaster. He lost his wife. He equally lost his son who happens to be his only child and the son's family members except six-month old Nana Ai to the cold hands of death. However, his society labelled him as a disabled because he refuses to be defeated by these series of disasters which fate had dealt him, instead he remains strong as ever. His society then wonders about his normalness. To his society, If Baba Sani had been a normal man; he would always curse his luck and would often complain about his ill luck to anyone who comes his way. Since Baba Sani does not do all these, it is concluded that he is not normal (*The Virtuous Woman*, 13). This clearly reveals that the Nigerian society adjures Baba Sani to be a disabled through his sunny attitude to the hands that fate had dealt him. The society expects him to be bitter about his fate but on the contrary, Baba Sani is always happy.

In essence, Baba Sani is depicted as a disabled due to his attitude to the series of disasters that fall on him. His society expects him to feel depressed and defeated. However, Baba Sani does not display any of these. Consequently, it is concluded that he is definitely not normal. As someone with a thorough understanding of traditional medicine, his unusual prowess makes him to be respected by the young and old ones in the whole community. He lovingly nurtures and brings Nana up including nursing her back to life when she is struck with poliomyletis which resulted in her losing partial function of one leg to polio. As Nana matures into a woman, her desire to be a medical doctor like her father who had died and Baba Sani, her grandfather could be linked to Baba Sani' strong influence on her.

Looking at it critically, Alkali's *The Virtuous Woman* mirrors the various challenges which face the women in a male–oriented and chauvinistic society. Apparently, disability is inscribed on the woman's body by the patriarchal society and the novel highlights the inherent biases against female children who are largely considered inferior to male children. The female gender in Northern Nigeria which is a microcosm of Nigerian society continually struggles with the lower status given to her. This is displayed through characters like Musa Dogo. Alkali presents Musa Dogo as a stereotype who sees nothing special in female children. Dogo represents the ideal chauvinist who holds no regard for his female children and sees them as a misfortune. According to him, having daughters and just one son is a misfortune (*The Virtuous Woman*, 46). A man like Dogo does not find fulfillment in having only daughters, he sees himself as a failure despite being a rich and successful farmer in his community. This is predicated on the fact that his ego will be decimated by other men who will see him as weak. In his quest for more male children, he marries a second wife who gives birth to male twins who later died despite the lavish ceremony that was thrown during their christening.

In the same vein, Musa Dogo does not see any need in sending female children to school despite the fact that he has the means to do so. He believes that female acquisition of Western education is a wasteland as such female children end up in their husband house. His reply when his brother's wife queries him about his attitude to training a girl-child is illuminating: what is the use of sending a female child to school? Dogo goes on to highlight the negative effects of such an action that the girl-child simply transfers all the advantages of being educated to her husband instead of the father who paid for her education. To Dogo, the father on his part is blamed for any defect in the education of the girl-child. He then concludes that it is just a no-win situation for the father of a girl child. Falta's effort in changing Dogo's myopic opinion about the girl-child education proves futile:

> But, Dogo, I would say, the world is changing fast. Send at least some of the girls to school, if not all. 'What for?' he would inquire angrily. If I had sons now my name would be carried from generation to generation, my wealth would multiply tenfold, but not so with daughters. They are consumers and they let other people consume your wealth. While your name dies out, the daughters continue the lifeline of another man in another family. (*The Virtuous Woman*,47).

From this we can see the label that the African society places on a female child. Interestingly, it is those daughters that Dogo treats with disdain that are later taking care of him. His obsession about male children amputates his dream of having heirs who will carry on his legacy after his death and this also disfigures him and turns him into a clown, who is not capable of having serious thought (*The Virtuous Woman*, 47).

Boni, unlike Dogo takes special pride in his daughter and granddaughter who have just been given scholarship to study at the prestigious Queen's College in Kudu. Boni is so happy with this development that he is ready to tell whosoever will listen about this fantastic fete. Although, Boni is not disabled physically, he is labelled as a disabled by his society because not only is he poor, virtually all his children are female. He has ten daughters and just two sons in a society that terms this as weakness on his part. Boni, a short middle-aged man is described as a common man. Boni is a tailor with no special ranking in the society. He is said to be a poor, insignificant tailor (*The Virtuous Woman*, 4). Hence, no feast of recognition is given in the village because the children of a common man like Boni are given admission instead of the daughters of the chief of the village who despite his riches and might could not manipulate the result of the Common Entrance Examination in favour of his own children. The community sees this admission of Boni's children into the highly prestigious school as strange and abnormal. In essence, it is difficult for people to believe that a poor man like Boni would have children that are given admission into the prestigious school in Kudu. People see this as strange and not normal. They are bound to wonder and ask how such a poor man was able to get his children into such a famous school (*The Virtuous Woman*, 4).

The Virtuous Woman like every of Alkali's novels has familiar settings located in a usual village landscape typified with farmlands, streams, thatched mud huts, dusty

roads, few zinc roofs and so on. Alkali with this succeeds in her evocation of the peculiar milieu of the Northern Nigerian atmosphere and environments. This milieu is visible in all her novels from the first novel to the recent one, *The Initiates*. Such village setting is usually interspersed with the nearby district head which is more urban than the village and which usually accounts for a rural-urban migration. The landscape Alkali describes portrays an underdeveloped environment which is badly cared for as a result of social factors such as corruption and mal-governance. In a way, Alkali showcases a milieu that has become a site of oppression, entrapment or confinement because it prevents characters like Nana Ai, Little Hajjo, Abubakar and the likes from embracing a fulfilling identity. Little Hajjo is alienated socially, culturally and psychologically from everyone around her except Nana Ai. Abubakar is emotionally disabled because he lacks the kind of dignity that lends an individual respect and dignity. Consequently, he dresses extravagantly so as to cover up an inadequate personality. He always clings to Bello, his friend who comes from a poor background for moral support.

The girl-child in Northern Nigeria remains disabled through divers means. Such kind of disability which stretches from refusing her opportunities to being educated; being dogmatic spiritually; being compelled into matrimony; payment of dowries, including being in a polygamous marriage and so forth allowed putting of obstacles towards the actualisation pertaining to the prospects of such a girl-child. Consequently, such a girl-child fails to be useful to her country. A critical look at Alkali's *The Descendants* equally affirms this salient fact.

4.2.3. Normative values and fractured women in *The Descendants*

The Descendants (2005) by Zaynab Alkali portrays the Northern Nigerian society in particular and African society as a whole as a disabling environment for women which is conditioned by patriarchal normative. Cultural practices such as polygamy, sexual and domestic abuse, societal preference for male child, girl-child bride and the likes all aid in facilitating the affliction, subjugation and oppression of women in Africa. The events in *The Descendants* revolve around Magira Milli's family and the storyline encompasses assorted people inside or related to Magira Milli's family. The novel has been sectioned into two areas. The first section introduces Magira Milli, matriarch of

an extended family in the village of Ramta. She is an old woman that is portrayed as a strong woman who like Baba Sani in *The Virtuous Woman*, is not deterred by the vicissitudes of life. She lost her husband, four sons and a male grandchild to the cold hands of death in quick succession. In part two of the novel, Alkali tells the story of Magira Milli's granddaughter, Seytu who becomes damaged through delivery of a child at the age of fifteen. However, at age thirty-nine, Seytu has become a renowned pediatrician with two failed marriages behind her. A critical screening shows that the novel transcends the garment of matriarchy and dynasty but has been adorned with a more complex meaning: Disabling normative.

Disability is not necessarily Alkali's immediate or direct preoccupation in *The Descendants*. Yet, this novel convulses with characters who suffer various physical, material, emotional and psychological trauma. Immediately striking in the novel is the highly suggestive, overriding tropes of disability in physical as well as psychological terms of both the houseguests and the immediate family members of Aji Ramta. All the houseguests including extended family members of Aji Ramta are in Makulpo to seek for treatment at the Makulpo Memorial Hospital. Hence, Aji Ramta's compound becomes a site of diseases, sicknesses and illnesses, a site of sickening and unhealthy fractured bodies in search of healing at the hospital in Makulpo.

The novel opens with a prayer of supplication by Magira Milli over her family and the houseguests in her compound. This prayer imbues the narrative with suspense and raises expectations over the events that inform the plot of the novel. Through different characters, the narrative leads us to the series of subjugating and limiting experiences which inform the disabilities of each of the characters especially the female gender. After the loss of her husband, Lawani Duna (the head of Ramta), four sons and a grandson to Azreel, the Angel of death, Magira Milli decides to leave Ramta for Makulpo which is more urban than Ramta. Magira Milli settles down at Makulpo with her only surviving child, Aji Ramta and her grandchildren. At Makulpo, Aji Ramta becomes the head of the household and together with his mother, Magira Milli, rule the household with iron hands. As the title, *The Descendants*, suggests, the story details the saga of the Ramta dynastic clan. The novel is considered as Alkali's most complete work to date as it refers to the lasting legacy of a matriarch in a family spanning four generations with a spate of characters. At Makulpo, other people who

are seeking healing from various kinds of illnesses at the hospital in Makulpo stay with Aji Ramta in his big compound and in a way, disability is inscribed on each of these characters. The disabilities that signal the embodiment of each of these characters carry cultural memories, whether they result from emotional disability, physical manifestation of trauma, or childhood illnesses.

A close reading of *The Descendants* showcases Alkali's deep understanding of the structures that are supportive of women subjugation, in her environment. For the Northern Nigeria where these structures subsist at different levels, the two outstanding structures that easily dominate the womenfolk are normative which consists of cultural, religious or ideological and the institutional precepts which consists of the home. These dialectical operations determine a woman's life, shapes her future and her character. In the cultural milieu where Alkali's *The Descendants* is set, the impacts of traditional norms and values start showing their imprints on women very early in her life. In the first instance, boys and girls are predisposed to differential opportunities for self-realisations in life. Girls who are in contrast to boys, nurtured for marriage often times prematurely or with partners other than ones they chose, are barred from education or its pursuits, to some unreasonable extents.

In *The Descendants,* although, the disability of each of the character except few is not physical, every one of them battles with one disability or the other. The four women (Magira Milli, Seytu, Peni and Hauwa) that are the leading characters are each read as damaged and disabled. Not only this, each female character in the text depicts different levels and forms of incapacity in diverse ways. Magira Milli, one of the central characters is doubly disabled. She is disabled by the vicissitudes of life and her femaleness. As a woman who believes so much in education, she has to agree with her husband not to send their sons to school. Out of five sons, it is only Aji Ramta that manages to acquire a little formal education in Borno (*The Descendants*, 6). At the death of her husband, four sons and a grandson which she describes as an ulcerous wound (*The Descendants,* 15), Magira Milli decides to escape the cruel hands of fate by leaving Ramta for Makulpo. She had to desert her homeland, desert the land of her ancestors (*The Descendants,*19). Alkali depicts Magira Milli as a woman who is weighed down by an enormous responsibility (*The Descendants*, 17).

At Makulpo, she could not dissuade her son, Aji Ramta from withdrawing Peni (her grand daughter) from school. As a female who is not allowed by cultural normative to have a say in the affairs of her family, she watches helplessly when the same granddaughter, Peni, at eighteen is forced into marrying an older man, the village butcher:

> Where Peni was concerned, however, she had lost the battle. A few months after the quarrel, she was withdrawn from school by Aji Ramta and was given to Madu Chimba in marriage. Magira Milli could only call on God to witness her good intentions. (*The Descendants*, 20).

Despite the fact that Aji is her son, Magira Milli has to give in to him as the head of the family. Another disabling reality of femaleness captured in the novel is when Magira Milli could not curtail the spendthrift habit of Aji Ramta who is bent on squandering the family fortunes away. Magira Milli's inability to control the family purse strings can be attributed to old age which is also disabling. In her eighties, Magira Milli does not only suffer from acute gout (*The Descendants*, 157) and stays mostly in her room, she has also been oppressively silenced by Aji Ramta as she could not ask Aji for a separate account unlike Meramu and Binta Yawanki. Magira Milli who is incapacitated by old age wonders about how long she had lain down, like a vegetable? She hated to be confined (*The Descendants*, 263).

Magira outlives all her sons. Aji, her last surviving son dies in a road accident. The death of Magira's children in quick succession is regarded as abnormal in African society. Not only this, her surviving all her children and not vice versa is also abnormal in the African worldview. The society attaches a lot of stigma to this as such women could be tagged as witches. Dala, Aji's wife confirms this by holding Magira Milli responsible for all the family's misfortunes since Magira Milli had taken it upon herself to run the affairs of her sons' families single-handedly. Dala believes that this must have led to the death of these children and thereby concludes that they might have died from oppression:

> Abdullai, her dead husband, and all her children had been under Magira's control. Abdullai had been incapable of stepping into her hut without going into his mother's first, and now Aji and the children (*The Descendants*,31-32).

Owing to the above, it is clear that underneath her authoritative and stern exterior, Magira is viewed as meddlesome and imperious. Magira's loss is not considered as normal by the society. Hence, the society is bound to label Magira Milli as strange. As a matter of fact, Magira Milli has a premonition of Aji Ramta's death but she watches helplessly while he drives himself to death despite warning him not to travel. Magira Milli though uneducated is a wise elderly woman. Described as 'yesterday's woman' (*The Descendants*, 13), she is a character who is quick to notice the changes in her society and takes hold of the opportunities such changes provide. Hence, seeing that education is a master key to opportunities for better life, for opening doors, and for providing options in life, Magira Milli makes sure she grabs these options for her grandchildren, and she acts as a propelling force in ensuring the education of her second generation. However, the memories of her sons and grandson's death together with that of her husband's cause deep psychological trauma for Magira Milli which she never recovers from till she died. Thus, her disability is not physical but psychological.

Further, all the female characters in *The Descendants* are trapped in one traumatic relationship or the other. Women like Seytu, Dala, Peni, Mero, Meramu and the likes all exist under conditions of varying torments (physical and psychological kind). Seytu, one of the central characters in the novel is depicted as disabled through marriage. At the age of twelve, Seytu is married to an older man who abandons her due to complications that arose during the delivery of her child, Hawwa. Married to Lawani Dam, a village chief, Seytu contacted Vesico-Vaginal Fistula (VVF). This is a serious disabilty that can be experienced by women after childbirth. It is defined as a hole that develops between the vaginal and the bladder, resulting in uncontrollable leaking of urine through the vagina. According to Odu (2000:1), Vesico Vaginal Fistula patients are usually young girls who have no formal education, no means of livelihood and given out in marriage by their poverty stricken parents to older husbands who may be poverty stricken too. As a result, most of these girls are normally malnourished in pregnancy with no personal income to take care of them.

Majority of these girls do not attend antenatal clinic throughout their pregnancies and they mostly deliver their babies through traditional midwives who are illiterate. Walls

(1998:341-359) highlights some of the physical consequences that may result from Vesico Vaginal Fistula as: Injury to the wide areas of the pelvis; permanent destruction of the urethra; decrease in bladder capacities; cessation of menstruation due to gynaecological injuries and vaginal scaring which can narrow the vaginal. In some cases, it may also lead to infertility. Seytu battles with this medical problem which requires four different kinds of surgeries in order to repair the vaginal walls (fistula repairs). The social consequences for the Vesico Vaginal patients are very severe. The gravity of the problem is described by Walls (1998). Walls explains that the affected woman suffers from a continuous and uncontrollable steam of urine or faeces coming out of her vaginal. To Walls, this condition then becomes both a physical and social catastrophe. In a way, the affected woman finds no possible escape from the constant trickle of urine, the constant ooze of stool, throughout the whole day. Consequently, this woman becomes physically and morally offensive to her husband, her families both immediate and extended) and her neighbours.

Seytu's medical problem becomes a public knowledge in the village (*The Descendants,* 53). Magira Milli equally confirms this when Aji poses a question that should Seytu be exposed to suitors due to her condition? Magira Milli quickly assures Aji that Seytu's condition is not unknown to men in the village. According to Magira Milli, everybody knows about Seytu's affliction. From all indication, it is not a strange site to see young girls battling withVesico Vaginal Fistula disease in the Northern part of Nigeria. Seytu works hard on her uncle's farm so as to afford sanitary towels which she constantly needs due to her condition. Her husband, Lawani Dam who supposes to care for her in this regard abandons her as soon as he discovers she has been damaged in childbirth (*The Descendants,*93). Lawani Dam fails to pay Seytu's medical bills and is not even concerned about what happens to Seytu. Heman, Magira Milli's brother had to sell his farm so as to offset Seytu's hospital bills. Heman becomes penniless because of another man's irresponsibility *(The Descendants*, 93). Seytu and her child, Hawwa, thereafter, live with Magira Milli. With her grandmother's unstinting encouragement, Seytu successfully undergoes surgery for her medical condition. Despite her illness and personal problems, Seytu studies hard and becomes a medical doctor.

Seytu's second marriage to Yerima Gamma, an architect and a wealthy heir to an emirate also disables her. Seytu goes into this second marriage believing that as:

> A victim of an early marriage with all its evil consequences. Married at thirteen, hurt and abandoned by an old man at fifteen, she considered herself fortunate to be given a second chance at marriage. She figured her chances were not many. The missionary doctors had pieced and patched her up. She may or may not have another child…. How many men in this part of the world would settle for a woman in her condition? (*The Descendants*, 166).

Yerima Gamma who has seven children already from different women assures her that he does not mind. A year after his marriage to Seytu, when Seytu's twins are barely a month old, Yerima marries another woman, an Emir's daughter. Yerima, a compulsive polygamist does not see anything wrong in acquiring two more wives after Seytu so as to complete the four permitted to him as a Muslim man. (*The Descendants*,177). Seytu is hurt by this action and she walks out on Yerima, emotionally battered and damaged. It takes four years of separation from Yerima for her to go into another relationship. Seytu who did not know how to drive a car while she was married to Yerima could now do so. This infers that Seytu is able to take up the reins of her life after the failure of her marriage. Yerima observes that Seytu who never had the courage to pull a car out of a garage before, now had no need for a driver. In Yerima's opinion, Seytu had changed in the past four years in so many ways. She now has guts (*The Descendants*, 175). However, rather than being happy with his estranged wife's success, Yerima feels sad by all these developments (*The Descendants*, 176). Yerima's conclusion about Seytu's dissertation of the marital home is also flawed. He believes that Seytu left him because she is more educated than his two new wives. Therefore, she cannot share her man with those less educated than her. Looking at it critically, the failures she undergoes in her first two marriages, leave Seytu disabled psychologically and emotionally.

Seytu's femaleness also disables her. This is vividly displayed during her encounter with Professor Zaki, an Egyptian and the Medical Director of the Garpella Specialist Hospital. Despite the fact that Seytu is highly qualified and fully recommended to work at the hospital as a Paediatrician, she is initially rejected by the gender-biased

Prof. Zaki who had asked for a strong, well-trained, preferably a young man he could lean on heavily. However, instead of acquiescing to his demands, all they did was to send him an obviously timid ailing woman (*The Descendants, 113).* Zaki like every other patriarch believes that female medical doctors cannot work as hard as their male counterparts. However, Seytu is able to prove him wrong. By the time that Zaki retires, he is able to hand over the headship of his much beloved hospital to Seytu. Egya (2011:101) opines that Alkali as a feminist creates Seytu to be the new face of the Northern Nigerian woman. To Egya, Seytu as Alkali's new woman is driven by the passion to outdo men and succeeds in doing so. She becomes a public figure, the greatest pediatrician in her society. She is socially active, transcendental, and mirrors the essence of a radically altered gender. Seytu, then is the fulfillment of Alkali's quest for providing alternative discourse to the dominant, male-authored discourse of social struggles in Northern Nigeria.

From the above, although Egya presents Seytu as a superwoman, culturally and socially she is depicted as a damaged woman. Seytu's gendered self (her vaginal) had been damaged. The vaginal is the bodily indicator of her femaleness and the fact that the walls of the vaginal are damaged is another indicator that the very core of Seytu has been damaged and disabled.

In another vein, polygamy, as a concept as earlier said, acts as a disabling agent to women. A close study of Yerima's household depicts this. Alkali paints a picture of a household that is threatened with the oppressive rule of the head of the family, Yerima.Yaya Ayesha, who becomes Yerima's wife after the death of his first wife is his cousin who has been disabled by both her first marriage and her second marriage. Yaya Ayesha is a sickle cell patient and a divorcee. She is five years older than Yerima. She is forced to marry Yerima by her father in order to protect the family's honour. She is dragged into this marriage of convenience as a surrogate mother to Yerima's three motherless children. She is also advised not to have her own children due to her health challenges. As a sickle cell patient she strongly needs the love of her husband. However, this is sadly lacking in Yerima's compound as she is often times left alone in her room, praying for the whole family. Hanna, is another wife of Yerima that has been psychologically and emotionally disabled through her marriage to Yerima.

Although, her marriage to Yerima does not produce any child, she had brought into the marriage someone else's children, whom her new husband, Yerima has begun to resent (*The Descendants*, 210). Hence, Hanna's expectations in her marriage to Yerima become disabled. Hanna tries to escape this emotional disability and stifling loveless atmosphere by embarking on incessant shopping. A vivid picture of how Yerima sees Hanna is shown in Hanna's encounter with Yerima who forgets to pick her up from her place of work. Yerima passes by her, rather too quickly as if she has the plague. Hanna then turnes to look at his descending figure with dismay. She becomes overwrought with this situation that tears tricked from her eyes and spills down her cheeks. She then realises that he does not care, had actually never cared (*The Descendants*, 209). As a matter of fact, based on past events of divorcing wives at will, it is safe to say that Hanna, at that point, is on her way out of Yerima's place.

Owing to the above, it is clear that most marital relationships in Nigeria are not built on love, compatibility and companionship, but on abuse, subjugation, low or no moral backing which retards the woman's contributions to the nation and society. With reference to the novel, virtually all the female characters are child-brides who are forced into marrying older men that are twice their ages. Seytu at twelve is given in marriage to a village chief, Lawani Dam; Mero at fifteen is married to Usman (her father's friend); Peni, Meramu and the likes are all child-brides. Incidentally, all of them do not have any voice in choosing their life partners. They were all married off to older men against their wishes. Thus, the subjugation of women could be said to have begun at the level of the family in African society. The prerogative of choosing a husband for the women rests in the hands of their fathers or guardians. The woman cannot refuse the choice. Her consent is taken for granted in the choice of the prospective husband although, she is the one to stay with him. A critical look at this shows that in any patriarchal society, the female gender is considered as commodities to be sold for a fee (bride price). They are also considered to possess low cognitive ability and that they cannot reason for themselves but requires a male to do so. In this light, the status of a woman is reduced to the level of a sub-human. Hence, all the couples in the novel have various tales of marital hell to tell.

Mero, a young girl of seventeen, is one of the houseguests in Aji Ramta's compound. Married to Usman, Aji Ramta's best friend, Mero is portrayed as a highly composed young woman who works harder than anybody else in Aji Ramta's household (*The Descendants*, 12). Unfortunately, Mero always had bags under her eyes…Highly strung and inhibited and she rarely laughed (*The Descendants,* 12). This makes her to look older than her age. Mero marries the older Usman after her parent's death through motor accidents. The much older Usman who was her father's friend marries Mero who is not yet fifteen, so as to protect her and her father's wealth which had been entrusted to him (*The Descendants*, 80). Her marriage at a tender age to a man old enough to be her father disables and destroys her youthfulness. Mero's attitude to life is captured this way: Numb to all feelings, she simply went through the motions of living (*The Descendants*,81), and having got a raw deal in life, first from her parents' untimely death and then from marrying an older man, the much jovial and much-loved little girl, turns into an ageing woman overnight, sullen and indifferent to her future. It is as if she had died with her parents (*The Descendants,* 81).

Despite all these, Mero manifests rare courage and selflessness. As her husband-father (Usman) is dying, Mero gives birth to a baby girl, Binta *(The Descendants*, 183). During the delivery, however, she loses much blood and is advised against having more children (*The Descendants*, 86). Mero, a victim of tragic circumstances finds true love again after the death of Usman. She falls in love with Abass (One of Magira Milli's grandsons). In her second chance at happiness, she chooses to efface her own interests. She tragically dies in labour.

Another character in the novel that is disabled through her marriage to an older man is Peni, one of Magira Milli's granddaughters who is given in marriage at eighteen to Madu Chimba, the village butcher. Peni is withdrawn from school and given to Madu who beats her at any slightest provocation. Madu Chimba even beats Peni when she is heavily pregnant and when she is nursing a baby (during the periods when she is weak and vulnerable). In a way, like Mero, marriage to an older man changes Peni too drastically. When Hawwa, Peni's niece, sees Peni immediately after her marriage to Madu Chimba she confirms that marriage has changed Peni. She looks different. To Hawwa, Peni is painfully emaciated with vacant eyes. Her face is bruised and swollen due to the beatings she receives from her husband. To crown it all, she looks heavily

pregnant (*The Descendants*, 27). Hawwa who is four years old then weeps bitterly when she sees Peni in this state. She even expresses fear that Peni's husband, the butcher would kill her aunt, and she would be without an aunt (*The Descendants*, 27).

Meanwhile, in the cultural milieu where Alkali's *The Descendants* is set, Peni is not allowed to leave her abusive husband. Her attempts to do this are always rebuffed by her patriarchal uncle, Aji who does not see anything wrong in a husband beating his wife. Essentially, if disability is the repudiation of ability as Linton and Berube (2011: 105) put it, then most patriarchal systems encourage disablement by assigning privilege and oppression on the basis of gender. It is within the structure of this patriarchal system that Aji shows his displeasure at Peni running away from her husband:

> A little beating from your husband, and you run home like a spoilt child. If your mother had run away each time your father had beaten her, would you have been born? Answer me that one? What are you doing to me? What have I ever done in this village that you seek to spoil my good name? Tell me why you can't remain quiet in your husband's house like other married women.(*The Descendants*, 27-28).

In a way, rather than offering comfort as a parent, Aji only sees Peni's homecoming from an abusive relationship as a plan to spoil his good name. Despite Magira's effort to ensuring that Peni stays in her father's house until she delivers her baby, Aji insists that she returns to her husband's.

The constant spousal-abuse which Peni encounters makes her to leave Madu eventually. She is however, not lucky in her second marriage to a palace guard. She has to leave that marriage too and she decides to stay without any husband and takes care of her children. Peni is disabled in many ways: Intellectually; emotionally; financially and many more. Intellectually, Peni is a school drop-out which affects her getting a good job unlike her cousin, Seytu who becomes a medical doctor which enables her to survive after her disastrous marriage to Yerima. Peni could be said to be disabled emotionally as the failures in her marriage have a negative effect on her, she is depressed and unfriendly even to Seytu, the cousin who accommodates her. As a mother, she is depicted as disabled and a weakling. She fails to control and discipline

her children who have constituted themselves into a nuisance in the community. Peni is also disabled financially. She could not even send her children to school. Peni later retires from matrimony and becomes a liability to Seytu.

In another vein, the preference of sons over daughters in African society is also a disabling agent to femaleness. Usman believes that the baby his wife is about to deliver must be a boy. His desire for a male child as an heir has been a long time ambition. He asks Aji Ramta to name the boy after his friend that has died, his wife's father. However, when Aji Ramta asks him: "What if it is a woman?" Usman is actually surprised that the baby might be a girl. His reaction to this shows the societal disabling attitude towards a girl-child: "A woman?" He jerked his hand from Aji's with surprising strength. He is obviously startled at the possibility. It has never crossed his mind that the child he is expecting could also be a woman (*The Descendants*, 84). Consequently, he promptly hands over the power of naming the baby this time to Aji Ramta: Then name her anything you like "he said without interest" (*The Descendants*, 84). Usman's assumption that his much awaited child must be a male is equally revealed in his added instructions to Aji Ramta on the upbringing of the child: "The boy" he continues weakly, must be brought up under your care (*The Descendants*, 85).

From all these statement, one could easily deduce that Usman like a stereotypical patriarch does not have any plan for a female child. Interestingly, Usman's nonchalant attitude to having a female child as an heir is not strange in African society. It is the norm for a man to wish for a male child as the first born. A male child as the first born proclaims and establishes the manliness of a man while having a female as the first born portrays the man as a female and a weakling.

Looking at it critically, Alkali in all her novels considered in this study, provides a social milieu of Northern Nigeria with its disability story, and skillfully intertwines circumstances with setting for the lonely, trapped, desperate and disabled characters who appear in her novels. The aspect of feminist disability criticism that pertains to defining women's roles in a particular society aptly applies to all Alkali's novels analysed in this study. In fact, critics such as Koroye (1987) and Ojinma and Sule (2005) maintain that Northern Nigeria represents a microcosm of patriarchal society. Hence, Alkali's heroines become victims of a double standard observed in the society

which allowed men to be non- disabled but disabled women. Like Alkali, in Senegal, Fall in *The Beggars' Strike* challenges the way the Senegalese society disables women physically, emotionally and psychologically.

4.2.4. The disabled gendered subaltern in *The Beggars' Strike*

Aminata Sow Fall's *The Beggars Strike (1981*) was originally published in French as *La Greve des battu* which means a calabash or wooden bowl used by the beggars to collect alms from people. The story in *The Beggar's Strike* is set in an unnamed African city. Aminata Sow Fall weaves several social issues around a central theme: Beggars as both a social nuisance and an eye sore and at the same time indispensable for the Islamic obligation of almsgiving. In *The Beggars' Strike*, the government plans to clear the streets of the capital city of beggars whose presence is considered harmful to the tourists who are majorly foreigners. Mour Ndiaye, the Director of Public Health explores this opportunity of getting rid of beggars from the streets as a means of furthering his ambition to becoming the Vice President of the country. Mour Ndiaye with the help of his assistant, Keba Dabo is able to rid the streets of beggars. However, the table turns on Mour Ndiaye as he needs the beggars to return to the streets so as to accept the alms he is mandated to give in order to clinch the position of the vice president of the country. The beggars refuse to return to the streets and Mour Ndiaiye's rival is later announced as the vice president.

A critical look at *The Beggars' Strike* shows the representation of two subaltern figures: The beggars and the women. The process of cultural Othering enables these two figures to be pushed into the margin away from the Centre. Hence, labelling them as the Subaltern. The Subaltern is created and imbued with negatives socially, culturally, sexually or personally. As an underdog, he or she is not allowed to have a real existence in the society. The society equally deprives such people of voices as well as respectability. In addition, such people are also regarded outrightly as nothing, a nonentity or nobody who is absolutely not significant in the society. As far as the society is concerned, they have no value. Relatedly, in Africa, the issue becomes more serious for the female gender. As someone who is occupying the bottom hierarchy socially, she is considered abnormal, anomalous as well as anything representing negativity. In *Beggars' Strike*, Fall remains occupied with the female issues in

Senegal, and indeed in Africa. Sow Fall believes that women are subjugated as well as incarcerated through despotic men. Consequently, the women in the novel occupy the same social ladder as the beggars.

In African society, one of the ways in which women are constructed as the subaltern is through polygamy. Polygamy is a prevailing sign of male dominance. Many African men regard polygamy as means of elevating their status in the society. Mour Ndiaye decides to go for another wife in order to announce his elevation to the world. Despite the fact that he acknowledges his first wife's good qualities, he opts for a younger, literate woman whom he believes will suit his aspired position of the vice president of the country. Mour' second marriage to the seventeen-year-old Sine, a lady he meets at a hotel ends up a disappointment. Sine's behaviour during her marriage to Mour is contrary to expectation. She treats Mour with disdain and disrespect, she smokes cigarette and she is not ready to obey her husband. Apart from this, the marriage is not blessed with any child. Sine declares that Mour cannot walk all over her. She vehemently rejects the disabling role that her husband wants to push her into: No, I'm your wife, so treat me like a wife. Really, Mour, if you think I'm going to let you treat me like a common or garden object, then you've got another think coming! Sarcastically, Sine informs Mour that he simply cannot be disappearing at will without informing her the way he does with Lolli, his first wife. She rejects being labelled as a sheep who follows those who are about to slaughter her willingly without any form of protest.

From this, it is glaring that Sine refuses to be turned into a doormat in her marriage to Mour unlike his first wife, Lolli. However, despite Sine's loud protest and resistance, her marriage to Mour turns her into a subaltern. Most days, she stays alone being unhappy in the luxurious villa which Mour bought for her, smoking cigarette and drinking coffee. Essentially, these kinds of attitude are regarded by radical feminists as rebelling against tyrannical structure which muzzles a woman's voice including suppressing her quest for independence. Mour's effort in treating Sine as a household item meant merely for decorations and not to be seen or talked to is consistently challenged by her. She refuses to be positioned as something meant to serve the impulse and desire of her husband.

Lolli, Mour Ndiaye 's first wife is also in a subaltern position with no social mobility of her own. Her life is socially tied to her husband. Lolli considers marriage as a positive social and customary commitment in which the man is unquestionably the Lord and the Master. Mour Ndiaye acknowledges the good qualities of Lolli this way: Lolli, you know how much you mean to me. You know I wouldn't exchange you for anything in this world…. I appreciate all your good qualities, your patience, your kindness (*The Beggars' Strike*, 27). The marriage between Mour and Lolli depicts a typical African marriage. On the day they get married, everybody emphasises the importance of Mour's happiness in the marriage. All the guests have the following pieces of advice for Lolli:

> Obey your husband; make his happiness your main concern. If you carry out all his wishes you will be happy here on earth and in the life here after. If you don't, you must expect curses from heaven and the shame of giving birth to children who will turn out failures. (*The Beggars 'Strike,*27).

The above piece of advice given to Lolli is meant to convince Lolli that a woman's happiness is greatly dependent on and influenced by her husband's happiness. Lolli remains loyal to the marriage and during the next twenty-four years, she works her fingers to the bone (*The Beggars' Strike*, 31) to uplift the status of her husband. She sacrifices all the money that her father and brother gave for her dowry, paying marabouts (traditional healers) to unlock the door to better times for Mour Ndiaye. She sells her boubous (traditional attire) leaving herself only one boubou which is used to identify her:

> Month in, month out. One solitary boubou that in the end couldn't be distinguished from her skin, so that people didn't say, 'That woman there, that's Lolli Badiane but "that boubou there, that's Lolli Badiane. (*The Beggars' Strike*, 32).

Amazingly, despite all these sacrifices, hardships and difficulties, Mour is ungrateful and disloyal. Mour would not come home till nearly dawn and would disappear for the whole weekend without ever giving his wife any explanations. (*The Beggars' Strike*, 27). Mour displays the highest level of insensitivity to his wife during pregnancy. He is never at home whenever Lolli is about to deliver. On two occasions she has to wake

the neighbours to get them to take her to the nursing home when her babies are due. When she complains to her parents, they remonstrate with her that she is not expected to grumble but should understand that her husband is free, he is not an object that belongs to her. She has to respect, obey, submit and be patient in order to be a worthy wife. In other words, Mour and the society construct Lolli as the Other, a Subaltern. Beauvoir (1972:16) elaborates this position of cultural Othering. In her view, a woman is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her, she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. According to Beauvoir, a man is the subject; he is the Absolute while a woman is the other. This infers that it is only a man that is regarded as essential in the society, a woman is nothing.

The way and manner in which Mour announces his intention of marrying a new wife affirms this position of Beauvoir. Lolli as an inessential object is not meant to disapprove of this move. Even her father condemns her protest. Lolli's father's behaviour encapsulates African perspectives of language and codes of behaviour that construct a wife. To Lolli's father, she is not meant to oppose Mour's wish of marrying another wife. He believes that such an act could easily lead to his death. He quickly throws a question at Lolli:

> Do you want to be responsible for my death, Lolli? You must know that if Mour divorces you, you will be covered with shame. When a woman has got eight children, some of them old enough to be married, she can't allow herself to behave like a child; Mour is your husband. He is free. He doesn't belong to you. (*The Beggars' Strike*, 33).

From these quotes, Lolli's father believes that a woman preserves her dignity and importance by accepting any form of oppression and injustice from her husband. Hence, supremacy is ascribed to the male while powerlessness is inscribed on the female and in the contest of life the female must always lose. As a matter of fact, virtually all the female characters in *The Beggars' Strike* are losers in one way or the other, from the beautiful Sagar Diouf whose husband dumped (*The Beggars'Strike*, 16), to Sine, Mour's teenage-bride who loses her appeal as a woman immediately after her marriage to Mour.

In *The Beggars' Strike*, marriage and motherhood are two major institutions which chained and disabled women. Lolli becomes disabled through her marriage to Mour and remains the prisoner of a generational patriarchy. She reveals this during a discussion she has with Rabbi, her daughter:

> Rabbi, my child, there are things you can't understand. If I left this house today, parents would curse me, and so would all the members of my family. And if they died, people would say I had killed them by filling their hearts with shame and misery. Think hard, my child; I'd have no work, I'd be all alone, and what would I do with you children if I took you with me? And if I left you here, think how wretched I would be. (*The Beggars' Strike*, 34)

This infers that Lolli is disempowered through a socialisation process that creates and reinforces inferior status on women. Hence, Lolli's attempt to question her subalternity is rebuffed by her father and her patriarchal dominated family. In a way, marriage in African society is characterised by two sets of rules which demands that a wife must be faithful, however, the husband is allowed sexual freedom with other women apart from his wife. In Millet (2000:37)'s observation, men manipulate women emotionally. Meanwhile, on their own parts, women do participate actively consciously and unconsciously towards the perpetration of their ordeals in the hands of men. Not only this, women also contribute to the continual existence of patriarchalism. This develops from mere socialising, within cannons including regulations, tailored towards respectability in women. Right from girlhood to adulthood, a woman begins to learn about how to be submissive to the men in her life. She is expected to learn this blindly without questioning the society. All these customs and laws work against the self-esteem of women. From what occurs during the encounter between the polygamous-Mour and subaltern-Lolli, it is clearly seen that Lolli has been pushed to the wall and uncharacteristically screams at her husband while venting out bottled-up rage as well as degradation:

> What! And you tell me to keep quiet, into the bargain! You ungrateful wretch! You bastard, You liar! You want me to shut up, do you? Twenty-four years of marriage! You were nothing but a miserable beggar! You ungrateful wretch, you guttersnipe, you liar! Shameless creature!. (*The Beggars' Strike*, 31)

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Lolli's reaction to her husband's plans of marrying another wife is not regarded as normal in African society. Even Lolli's mother considers her resistance as out of place.

In another vein, the beggars in *The Beggars' Strike*, are equally constructed as subalterns. From the very first page of the novel, an abundance disregard for the disabled bodies becomes glaring through the parlances which are well-ordered as convinction of the disdain and contempt meted out to the beggars by the society:

> The streets are congested with these beggars, these *talibes*, 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… these men, these parodies of human beings….The Capital is crying out to be cleared of them (*The Beggars' Strike*, 1).

Here, the series of derogatory labels attached to the beggars by the society are loaded with contempt and disdain. As a matter of fact, the beggars are regarded as disabled as well as being useless to the community. As an unwanted body, the society needs to discard them in exchange for orderliness and peace. The beggars' existence changes the rules and regulations guiding the society. Their existence equally gives the society a bad publicity. Mour Ndiaye explains that the beggars' presence in the Capital is harmful to the prestige of the entire country. The beggars are described by Mour as festering wounds which refuse to be healed and which must be kept away from public glare especially the capital of the country (*The Beggars' Strike*, 2).

Like the female, the beggars are portrayed as defenseless, deviant, weaklings. All these terms which are inscribed on the body of these beggars conform to the way Loui (2012:4) describes the subaltern. To Loiu, culturally or socially, defining somebody as the subaltern in a particular society revolves round certain marginalised position allocated to the underdogs in such society. In Aminata Sow Fall's The Capital, the beggars could not be considered as members of the society since they are considered inhuman and disabled. Consequently, State Bureaucrats who think beggars discourage tourists from the West, decide to rid the Capital of begging. This policy is implemented through police tactics of harassment, physical abuse and imprisonment of the beggars. Some like Madiabel (a lame beggar) dies from the injury he sustains

while evading arrest by the police. He suffers on the sickbed for five days without receiving any medical care because he could not pay for his treatment due to his incapacitation. This and many other unbearable situations prompt them to organise a protest by resolving never to return to the capital to beg for alms again. They decide to stay at the outskirt of the capital where people take their alms to them. Mour Ndiaye who orders the state brutality against the beggars later suffers for this as he fails to clinch the position of the vice president of his country.

Keba Dabo, a junior officer under Mour who single handedly initiates the attack on the beggars is read as psychologically ill and disabled. Dabo tackles the assignment given to him by Mour to clear the streets of beggars with zeal. His pathological dislike of the beggars has become an obsession. He equally has a morbid fear of driving through the streets and meeting a beggar. He is constantly afraid of meeting beggars and he has a choking sensation in his throat if one should unfortunately cross his path (*The Beggars' Strike*, 14). Expressions such as obsession, morbid fear, choking sensation which are used to describe Dabo's state of mind towards the beggars communicate a state of psychological ill-health. For instance, in an argument with his secretary, Sagar Diouf, who tries to convince him that it is useless to try to rid the city of beggars, Dabo remarks:

> Don't you feel anything when they approach you?...no, it's not a matter of approaching – they accost you, they attack you , they jump out at you!. That's it, they jump out at you!.Don't you feel anything when they jump out at you?. (*TheBeggars' Strike*, 15).

Describing the beggars' approach to people while asking for alms as an attack, as jumping out at people, certainly translates a tensed state of mind. Ironically, Keba comes from a poor background like the beggars. His innate fear of being poor again gives birth to his hatred of the beggars. Apparently, the beggars are a constant reminder of his former position of subalternity, a position he is bent on leaving behind.

Like Keba Dabo, Sallah Niang too is determined to be ascribed a newer name and position: that of the non-disabled. Sallah Niang, is the private owner of a hospice which she bought when she was a beggar. Sallah Niang welcomes all the beggars at her hospice and becomes a local coloniser, a position that is normally occupied by the

patriarch. However, her voice as a wife is often silenced by the very male beggars she leads in matters of strike or economic survival. One of the beggars asks her to keep quiet when men are discussing. He tells her to get back to her cooking. Another one even suggests that she is the one who wears the pants in her marriage (*The Beggars' Strike, 12*). From this, it is clear that even in the beggars' kingdom, women are treated as the subaltern. Despite the fact that Sallah Niang navigates what can be referred to as a beggars' economy; the only buyer of the products the beggars bring to her hospice; their commerce, her market place, she buys their merchandise thirty percent below price market and re-sells it to them at the adjacent grocery shop runs by her husband, she is still treated with disdain as a woman. Her tasks, however, is not to provide for the beggars or to lift them up. It is to benefit from their market. Although, Ripert (2019) does not read Sallah Niang, a subaltern, this study reads her as one. Ripert opines that Sallah Niang by her being a voice to the beggars and her relationship with her husband is not a subaltern. However, Sallah Niang' lack of access to the top of the social ladder places her in a subaltern position. Like other beggars, she has faced the police sent by Mour and Keba but resists arrests by re-arranging her physical appearance to look like a mother caring for her child. Like other beggars, she also struggles to get her own share of the money that Mour Ndiaye throws at them. However, her disabling location equally ascribes to her the status of a subaltern.

The strike embarked on by the beggars, however, changes the label that the society ascribes to them from that of the subaltern to the one controlling the power. The changing of location from the city to the suburbs empowers the beggars to a large extent. The Capital which rejects them initially, discovers that the beggars form an integral part of the society as they need to accept alms from their oppressors so as to fulfill the oppressors' wishes. In a way, the strike places both the oppressed and the oppressors on the same level. Mour Ndiaye supports this view as means of currying favour from the beggars. He tells Salla Niang that "You see, we are all equal, we are all of the same condition, for we are all human, so we should find grounds for agreement on every occasion" (*The Beggars' Strike*, 86). This statement is quite different from the one made by Mour at the beginning of the novel that the beggars are a running sore (*The Beggars' Strike*, 2) and a threat to public hygiene and the national economy (*The Beggars' Strike*, 3).

A close and critical perusal of all the texts studied in this section so far, reveal the attitude of the African society towards the female body. African cultural practices situate the African women in the space allocated to the disabled. Not only this, a lot of disabling-agents which disable women equally exist in the society. Such disabling-agents include: Marriage, Polygamy, Motherhood, Poverty and the likes. However, both Alkali and Sow Fall agree that it is only through education that African women could be healed of all these forms of disability. Alkali and Sow Fall affirm that it is only female characters like Li (*The Stillborn*), Nana Ai (*The Virtuous Woman*), Seytu (*The Descendants*) and Raabi (*The Beggars' Strike*) that can survive in the patriarchal dominated society like Africa. Alkali like Sow Fall sees education as the most effective means of raising the social status of women in Africa. This she says is because education erases the mark of disability and weakness ascribe on the bodies of women by the society. In a particular way, education enables women to have a higher sense of self-worth and self-appreciation as seen in the lives of some of the women in this study. Education brings about a change of mentality and attitude in the lives of women like Li and Seytu to such an extent that they see themselves in a different light, no longer as an inferior to a man or a dependent and disabled who needs to be provided for by a man in exchange for his submission to his will.

4.3 .(a). Disability as a site of expressing class conflict in selected postcolonial novel

This section examines the social relations that produce and sustain disability as deployed in Ben Okri's *The Famished Road*; Ngugi Wa Thiongo 's *Petals of Blood* and Naguib Mahfouz's *Midaq Alley.* The section focuses on how disabled bodies are generated through class conflicts sustained by exploitative social relations. This is with a view to situating the thematic and ideological concerns of these three postcolonial novels within the disability studies as advocated by Davis (2002) in *The Disability Studies Reader*. According to him, disabled people are the ultimate intersectional subject, the universal image, the important modality through which we can understand exclusion and resistance. Hence, Marxist Disability Theory is utilised to explore and understand the concrete material reality that disabled Africans on a daily basis. Erevelles (2011) argues that we can theorise a disabled body only if we situate it within the historical conditions that constitute its material reality. A cursory look at

Marxist Literary Theory will give us a better understanding of Marxist Disability Theory

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Marxist Literary Criticism views Literature as an artistic construct with intrinsic socio-political and economic structures. The Marxist framework reveals that economic system thrives by accommodating various shapes and means of profit making. This happens through the regeneration resources such as dispossession and redistribution of resources through preservation of class-hierarchy. According to Adler (1991:420), the social relationship according to Marx and Engels is a history of class struggles where oppressor and the oppressed stood in constant opposition with one another. To Adler, this fight ends either in a revolutionary reconstruction of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.

This simply means that a fictional work is a composition of literary consciousness inspired by historical facts, social, economic and political events which can influence the novel's narration and depiction of human experiences. Hence, the Marxist critic offers interpretation of a literary work by discussing and evaluating its ideology through the critical lens of Marxism. Essentially, Marxist criticism is anchored on the economic and political ideologies of Karl Marx (1818- 1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1899) who opposed to a greater extent the autocracy of the bourgeoisie class in a capitalist system. In their view, Capitalism is a new form of Feudalism because the gap between the ''haves'' and ''have- nots'' has become polarised to a large extent. This polarity is as a result of the exploitation of the proletariats by the economic class or the bourgeoisie who controls the means of production and distribution.

4.3.(b). Marxism and disability

Disability is presented in Marxism as a trope, a metaphor for the effects of capitalism, particularly of the division of labour. The manufacturers convert the workers (proletariat) into crippled monsters (Erevelles, 2011: 8) by furthering his particular skill as in a forcing-house, through the suppression of a whole world of productive drives and inclinations. This infers that Marxist disability scholarship offers a socio-political analysis of disability that distances itself from the Medical Model. On this note, disability becomes an ideological construction, a construction that is used to

justify not only the oppressive binary cultural constructions of normal or pathological, autonomous or dependent, and competent citizen or ward of the state but also the social divisions of labour. Significantly, the summation of Erevelles illuminates a key point that the marginalisation of the disabled through institutionalisation or special employment scheme threaten to totally strip the disabled of skills. In a way, the imagery of disability has always been used to symbolise the dangerous and inferior. Such imagery is used to hide what scares the non- disabled; remove what repulses them and medicalise what shocks them. The logic is refutable. Disability is, therefore, the ultimate other and definitely related to social class.

Looking at it critically, labelling people as disabled serves as a divider of humanity into two classes: The disabled and non-disabled. The non-disabled are considered as superior to the disabled. The gaps between the rich and the poor also create disability. Consequently, the three novels considered in this section highlight the sad scenario of social inequality and the ever widening gaps between the rich and the poor. As a matter of fact, the non-disabled see the disabled as Other, who differs from them and the systemic way in which society discriminates against the disabled is backed by discriminatory laws and practices of the state which often amount to oppression. Barnes (1991: 204) gives a full account of the discrimination that the disabled encounters in all areas of life. This oppression, according to Barnes has developed from history, myths and beliefs that attribute characteristics to the disabled. Such collections of attitudes usually determine how the non-disabled respond to the abnormal in their midst; how they form stereotypes of the disabled as saint, sinner, super-hero, freak, fiend, victim, obsessive avenger, isolationist, the butt of jokes, burden, or someone to be pitied. This particular form of stereotyped thinking depends on the history of the society, its explanation of how it has come to be and the resultant culture.

In support of this view, Appleburn (1999: ix) argues that mainstream groups create myths based on human features such as race, ability, competency, gender or class and try to convince others that they embody important standards. A binary of insiders and outsiders is thus created. Outsiders are marked, labelled, branded, and stigmatised by identifying names. Hence, centering one group marginalises other groups. If the central group considers itself as normal and able, others become abnormal and disabled.

Furthermore, Marxist Disability Theory affirms disability as a culturally fabricated narrative of the body, a system that produces subjects by differentiating and marking bodies. This comparison of bodies legitimates the distribution of resources, status, and power within a biased social and architectural environment. As such, disability has four aspects: First, it is a system for interpreting bodily variations and secondly, it is a relationship between bodies and their environment; third, it is a set of practices that produce both the non- disabled and the disabled and fourthly, it is a way of describing the inherent instability of the embodied self. Consequently, Marx draws a relationship between physical disability and capitalism. Capitalism is, above all devoted to the pursuit of profit. The specific form of this pursuit is the competitive exploitation of wage labour at the hands of those who own the means of production. In essence, what is essential to the owners of capital is to find labourers willing to work as long and hard as possible for lesser wages. Moreover, these labourers must submit themselves to a division of labour, a pace of work dictated not by their own needs and preferences but rather by the needs of maximal profitability as determined by the market.

In addition, capitalistic system destroys the integrity of the labouring body. This infers that the capitalists try as much as possible to wage war against the honour of the proletariats who sometimes bow to the supreme power of these capitalists. Hence, the use of disability as metaphorical vehicle for the effects of the capitalist division of labourcharacterises an eternal thread in Marxist thought. In a similar vein, Eagleton (1990:104) equates domination with oppression. He equally claims that the oppressors' privilege is to define normalcy and decide who is abnormal, and then choose how to classify those whom they considered to be abnormal. In furtherance of this claim, Young (1990: 177-178) delineates five components of oppression:

- Exploitation: This is when some people exercise their capacities under the control of others.
- Marginalisation: This a condition of expulsion or exile from labour or social life.
- Powerlessness: This is a situation whereby one is subjected to another's control.

- Cultural imperialism: The dominant group at this stage establishes their culture and experience as the norm which renders the oppressed group's perspective invisible.
- Violence: This is the stage where physical attacks, harassment, intimidation, ridicule take place between the oppressed and the oppressor.

The list above is clearly manifested in all the novels selected in this chapter. A critical examination of this shows that the tapestry of contemporary postcolonial African fiction is centred squarely around the class conflicts between the ruling class, whose members are ensconced within the corridors of power and the teaming mass of the African people who are pauperised and disabled by the inanities of the wielders of power who indulge in pillaging the resources of the nations and states of Africa for the selfish use of members of the ruling class. Consequently, this leads to unremitting presence of poverty, unemployment, high crime rates and other social problems in postcolonial Africa. Ben Okri's *The Famished Road* aptly engages this post-independence disillusionment and socio-economic fragmentation through the eyes of a disabled child, Azaro who lives in a ghetto.

4.31. Ghettoisation of disability in *The Famished Road*.

The ghetto, has been a term that seems to have its history rooted in racial and socio-economic conditions. The earliest usage of the modern term, ghetto dates back to 15th century Italy in which the Spanish Jews were forced into the island ghetto, Nuovoon the Northwest edge of Venice, after an infectious outbreak. Ghetto can then be defined as areas of isolated housing for a particular group of people. In *The Famished Road*, Okri evokes the milieu of the ghetto and invests this with the special imaginative capacities of an abiku who is constantly observing the world with a double awareness which is considered as abnormal by the society. Kehinde (2004: 97) posits that the ordeals of wallowing in abject poverty and living in tattered penury by ordinary citizens in postindependence Africa are portrayed by the postcolonial African writers in their various works. These writers depict their continent as a society characterised by misery, squalor, oppression, diseases and overcrowding. All these could lead to disability in one way or the other.

In support of this quote, Okri cites the ghetto where Azaro and his parents live as a product of the colonial masters and the politicians who want the control of the city and who therefore, created a system by which the poor and the disabled would be confined to certain geographical areas. This initiative to limit the space of the poor and the disabled is further perpetuated by limiting what kinds of employments and other opportunities of advancement are offered to them. The ghetto, thus, provides a site for Ben Okri to explore the multiple levels of inequalities experienced by Africans in the disabled postcolonial milieu.

Published in 1991 and set in the crucial moment of Nigeria 's emergence from colonial domination, *The Famished Road* explores the transition to national liberation or the politics of nation formation. It casts a critical glance at the socio-political conditions of Nigeria before independence. The story in the novel is narrated by Azaro, an abiku-child, whose birth, coincides with the birth of the new Nigerian nation. Having decided to break his pact with his spirit companions, Azaro is forced to grapple with an emerging monstrous and dystopian nation. Meanwhile, much of the actions or events in *The Famished Road* take place in a poverty-stricken ghetto and tracks how its dwellers, particularly Azaro's family, eke out a living and respond to the sordid poverty, violence and exploitation that constitute the politics of nation formation. Azaro, being a strange child is read as disabled in this study. Azaro confirms this disability by referring to his condition and nature of birth as strange. Azaro describes himself and his companions as the strange ones, with half of their beings always in the spirit world (*The Famished Road*, 4). Azaro's strangeness is vividly captured by Souliman (2010:10). He opines that an individual who goes through a continuous circle of birth and death as a result of primeval oath taken in the spirit realm in the presence of the Creator and binding on the living is known as a spirit-child in African setting. The oath which the spirit-child takes is believed to be binding on the one who has taken it; the individual has to live in a particular manner throughout his or her usually short span of life. The object of the oath is equally hidden under a huge tree, in the person's palm or in other impressive places.

In the Yoruba cosmology, these spirit-children are known as 'abiku'. The abikus, are therefore, considered as special children who are born with supernatural powers. It is believed that such children have a short life span and they keep on dying and coming

back to life from the womb of the same mother. Thereby, forming an endless cycle of births and rebirths. Okri makes use of these spirit children whom the African society reads as disabled and the metaphysical dilemma that always accomplish them as a perfect metaphor for the crises in postcolonial Africa. To Okri, Nigeria is an abiku country, like the spirit child, it keeps coming and going. One day it will decide to remain and it will become strong. (*The Famished Road, 478).* At the same time, Azaro, the spirit-child narrator documents the multitude of alternative worlds and dreams that co-exist and influence events in the urban world.

Okri, through the creation of characters and scenarios, pragmatically focuses and satirises the internal wrangling of the enabling Nigerian society. Azaro, Black Tyger (Azaro'sfather) and Madame Koto in *The Famished Road* are characters who are products of a ravaged psychology occasioned by socio-historical denigration and dislocation of values in the society. Okri uses the myth of 'abiku' (spirit-child) to highlight the postindependence realities in Nigeria. He incorporates the spirit world with the real world. Hardship, hunger, unemployment, depression, penury and oppression are recurrent motifs of postindependent African State. Hence, *The Famished Road* showcases the plight of the Nigerian nation which after imperialism and colonialism still continues to struggle and groan under the problem of neo-colonialism. The postindependence Nigerian nation is categorised into two different groups: The rich and the poor, the disabled and the non-disabled. Ade -Ajayi as cited by Oko (2010) observes that the most fundamental aspects of post-independence Nigeria has been the elusiveness of development, in many ways the quality of life of the average farmer and family in the village, or a worker in the urban areas, has not improved significantly. To Ade-Ajayi, in the same respects, and in some areas, qualities of life are even worse than in the eve of independence. This infers that Nigeria is yet to evolve stable political structures that are imbued with a sense of national commitment. In few cases, grotesque and abnormal regimes have emerged that preyed on their own people rather than protect them or promote their welfare.

The above assertion accounts for Okri's choice of disability to depict the postindependence Nigerian society. The myth of abiku (a child that is not 'normal') and the road which is always hungry (this also is not 'normal') as used by Okri in *The Famished Road* vividly show the disability apparent in postindependence Nigerian

society. Okri relates these mythical worlds of abiku, the road and sorcery to the instability of Nigerian nation, the economic and political corruption and human effects of war. Azaro deconstructs the instability of Nigerian nation thus:

> The spirit-child is an unwilling adventurer into chaos and sunlight, into the dream of living and the dead. Things that are not ready, not willing to be born or to become things for which adequate preparations have not been made to sustain their momentous births, things that are not resolved…They keep coming and going till their time is right. History itself fully demonstrates how things of the world partake of the condition of the spirit-child. (*The Famished Road,* 487).

This infers that adequate preparation was not made for the independent Nigerian nation. Hence, Nigeria is subjected to the spirit-child condition (*The Famished Road*, 478). Ade, Azaro's friend, who is also a spirit-child presents a clearer picture of the Nigerian condition: ''Our country is an abiku child, it keeps coming and going. One day it will decide to remain. It will become strong. I won't see it. His voice changed, became more natural, almost gentle''. (*The Famished Road*, 478).

In the above lines, Ade, is of the view that one day, Nigeria as a nation will be stable with her reform policies, but this is a prophecy he will not live to witness. In another vein, the description of the three abikus in Madame Koto's belly and their positions has a strong signification in relation to Nigeria. It is through Azaro's super-sensory telepathic and clairvoyant power that this description is made clearer. He says:

> And I saw that Madame Koto was pregnant with three strange children. Two of them sat upright and the third was upside down in her womb. One of them had a little beard, the second had fully formed teeth, and the third had wicked eyes. They were mischievous, they kicked and tugged at their cords, they were the worst type of spirit-children, and they had no intention of being born. Madame Koto straightened, come over to me, and said: "why were you staring at my stomach like that in your bad-luck eyes. (*The Famished Road*, 464).

From the excerpt above, even Madame Koto knows that Azaro is not a ''normal child'' and he brings bad-luck and misfortunes to people especially his parents. Azaro here is likened to the echo of independence and its attendant problems "This

independence has brought only trouble" (*The Famished Road*, 169). Azaro, is therefore, an embodiment of the Nigerian nation that has been born. The three other 'abikus' are Azaro's extension, and their refusal to be born is their inability to become a nation of their own. Going to the disposition of the three 'abikus' in the belly, as observed by Azaro, it is better for them not to be born. By referring to Azaro and Ade as 'abiku', Okri transfers the uncanny ability to die young and be born again to them. Meanwhile, within the Yoruba culture, the word 'abiku' has a negative connotation. A person that is referred to as such is seen as not normal, strange, harbinger of death and sorrow. Hence, Azaro, in *The Famished Road* is read as disabled in this study.

Living with his family in a leaky room in a ghetto, Azaro, as a spirit-child, has passed repeatedly through both worlds. His reticent and observant nature make him to have a privilege view of both worlds; from the top of a tree or a corner in Madame Koto's bar, the crossroads, the market place or the dark recesses of the forests and other night places. Azaro constantly battles between two worlds: That of the spirit and the terrestrial. As a strange child, Azaro could read people's minds, sees into the future, has premonition of evil occurrences and also has the ability to appear and disappear. All these features are not read as normal in African society. Throughout *The Famished Road*, Azaro has the capacity to observe non-human beings enacting the deeds of human beings. Their supernatural status does not preclude these beings from displaying human-like curiosity and appetites, sharing the same hunger as human beings:

> I blinked again and saw a spirit with eight fingers and a single twinkling eye. Another in a policeman's uniform, had an amputated foot. He ate the food with bloodstained hands a moment before the officer did. A ghost, existing as only a pair of milk-white legs, balanced on the head of the woman.
> *(The Famished Road, 25)*

From the quotation above, the non-human beings are portrayed as disabled with all sorts of disabilities and this mode of description runs through the novel. Further, Azaro spends his days roaming the landscape of the human condition, along a shifting nexus of crossroads and dead ends that serve as backdrop agents in both the supernatural and real encounters. He is soon singled out by Madame Koto (a bar keeper), to sit in her

bar and draws in customers. However, Azaro realises that majority of Madame Koto's customers are disabled:

> Many of the customers were not human beings. Their deformations were too staggering and they seemed unaffected by their bodies. They seemed a confused assortment of different human parts, it occurred to me that they were spirits who had borrowed bits of human beings to partake of human reality. (*The Famished Road*, 136)

The above lines clearly indicate that many of those who patronise Madame Koto's bar are not human. Not only this, many of them are deformed in one way or the other. Interestingly, even those that are regarded as human beings are equally read as disabled despite the fact that they are not physically challenged.

Azaro's father, who is referred to as Dad in the novel, moves to the city from his village in search of a better job which he never finds. As a regular customer of Madame Koto, he is depicted as a disable by the society. He has been disabled by poverty which is his constant companion. Like other occupants of the ghetto, he lives in abject poverty. Frustrated and depressed by poverty which his wife believes is driving him mad (*The Famished Road,* 352), he tries his hands at becoming a boxer and a politician. He chooses the nickname Black Tyger for himself. Black Tyger began to train dementedly (The *Famished Road*, 352) as a boxer so as to get rid of poverty which has disabled him. As a matter of fact, Black Tyger represents millions of unemployed able-bodied, homeless and hungry men in postindependence African society. Due to the difficulty of getting jobs, he resorts to carrying loads for people in the market and sometimes works as a night soil man which is the highest form of degradation for a man in African society. He does all these in order to feed his family and pay his rents to a landlord that constantly threatens his tenants with his thugs. Azaro's dad and his neighbours are subjected to constant exploitation by the landlord. Despite the terrible condition of the houses in the ghetto, the landlord increases the rent at wills and oppresses the tenants into voting for his political party.

Looking at it critically, Okri's location of the political-economic struggles and the gratuitous violence at the heart of the ghetto is significant for two reasons: First, as it is set at the transition to independence, it conforms to colonial spatial rationality wherein

the ghetto is the habitation of the native (the colonised). As Fanon argues, the colonial world is a Manichean world with the native consigned to the ghetto which Fanon describes as a place of ill fame, peopled by men of evil repute without space. In the ghetto, the wretchedness of the people is displayed in all of its abysmal forms. However, far from being merely the site of impoverishment, a zone of occult instability and collective auto-destruction, the ghetto is also the place for the awakening of a new national and socio-political consciousness. Moreover, the ghetto accedes with the novel's emphasis on hunger, explicitly captured by ''famished'' in the title. Here too the connection to Fanon is invoked. According to Fanon, the native town is a hungry town. Hunger is not just the absence of nourishment; it signifies anguish, humiliation, and powerlessness. Essentially, Okri's ghetto is plagued by vices where the poor and the weak are at the mercy of the powerful represented by Madame Koto, politicians and supernatural forces. It is a community struggling under the group of one evil or the other. Through his vivid depiction of life in the ghetto, Okri reveals the exploitation of the poor by the rich. Azaro's family is crammed into a single room with almost no furniture. The detailed description of their room presents an index of poverty of the dwellers of the compound. A rope stretched between the walls functions as a wardrobe, and Azaro sleeps on the floor. Fleas, mosquitoes and rats are part of every household in *The Famished Road*. Azaro describes the ghetto as a world which is drowning in poverty and eating the food of suffering (*The Famished Road*, 281). The ghetto, therefore, serves as a disabling agent which disables its dwellers in one form or the other.

The ghetto disables Dad, Azaro's father psychologically, emotionally and economically. Azaro's father as a labourer struggles hard along with his wife, a hawker, to earn a meager livelihood. Their wages are barely sufficient to meet their daily needs. Altogether, there are many structures in the ghetto that are tailor-made to confine its dwellers to penurious scavenging and disability. This explains the scramble for the stale milk brought to the ghetto by the politicians. In a way, what *The Famished Road* portrays is class poverty. Class poverty is described in Encyclopedia Britannica Vol.16:499 as a condition of constant struggle for survival, unemployment and underemployment; it is also associated with low wages, miscellaneous unskilled occupations, child labour, the absence of food reserves in the house, pawning of personal goods and the use of second hand clothing and furniture.

The foregoing is the exact picture depicted in *The Famished Road*. The situation of the poor ghetto dwellers is highly miserable with hunger and deprivation of basic needs of life starkly written on their bodies. According to Okri, the agonising poverty of the ghetto dwellers stems from misgovernance and uncaring attitudes of the rich. This is actually portrayed in the description of the ghetto where Azaro lives with his parents. Azaro gives this vivid picture of the condition of the room he lives with his parents especially whenever it rains. Azaro explains:

> THE RAIN GOD was merciless for two weeks. It rained so much that the sky seemed to have become inexhaustible with water as seas. At night, water leaked through our ceiling, which we soon discovered was full of hole. Mum had to sacrifice her basins and pots used for cooking to catch the water that dripped down…. when more hole opened above us we had to keep moving the bed round the room. It got so awful that we couldn't find a place that wasn't leaking
> (*The Famished Road*, 311).

Obviously, Azaro and family will not be able to sleep whenever it rains. When Azaro's father complains to the landlord about the leaking roof, the landlord rather than repairing the roof threatened to increase the rent further if he fixed the roof (The *Famished Road*, 311). The threat by the landlord effectively silenced Azaro's dad. The fear of increment of rent when the family could barely keep body and soul together put a stop to further demands for a better condition of living. In essence, the oppressive stance of the landlord effectively silenced Azaro's father who could not even afford the current rent.

In a similar vein, many of the inhabitants of the ghetto live under deplorable conditions. There is no proper drainage system in the ghetto. Hence, during the rainy season, the rain water easily comes into their homes like an uninvited guest and afflicts them. Whenever it rains, the street is turned into one big stream. The situation in the ghetto whenever it rains is presented this way:

> Our street turned into one big stream. Water flooded into our rooms from the gutters. Sometimes it rained so much the compound began to stink because of the water that flowed past the pail latrine …. Those who could afford it built little cement dams in front of their rooms to stop the bad waters going in.

> The rest of us sat helpless in our rooms and watched the water rise. (*The Famished Road*, 312)

This attests to the helpless and pathetic situation of those living in the ghetto. The unbearable rain-induced condition of living in the ghetto leads to people catching all sorts of strange sicknesses and diseases. Most times people will be taken back to their villages for herbal treatment. Sanitation is equally non-existing in the ghetto. The way the houses are built with only one pit latrine serving the whole compound makes it difficult for people to maintain hygiene. The rain also affects Azaro'school building. The school building which is roofless crumbles during the rainy period. The situation is so bad that Azaro does not know whether his mother is crying or being beaten by the rain. Essentially, Okri in *The Famished Road*, depicts poverty that means a life entirely without material resources. No electricity, no house, no welfare system, no money, a-hand to mouth existence, a never-ending cycle of poverty. Hence, the ghetto keeps its inhabitants in a cycle of despair.

Okri equally foregrounds a disabled economy in *The Famished Road* where only those who engage in corrupt practices get the best out of life. A disabled world where such people as political thugs and prostitutes get the good things of life without much efforts, while the law-abiding citizens who work so hard to eke out a living get little or nothing to commensurate their efforts. For instance, Madam Koto, her thugs, the prostitutes, the Landlords and the likes do little or no work, yet they wear the best clothes and enjoy the best food, drinks and merriment; whereas such people like Azaro's father and the carpenter engage in all sorts of menial jobs and work their fingers to the bone, together with their wives who walk all the roads of the world in an attempt to sell even a little of their provision but they get little or nothing in return for their labour. These wretched of the earth suffer untold hardship in the face of the harsh economic reality, as well as onlookers or spectators, as their less hardworking counterparts squander the society's hard-earned wealth on wanton and riotous merry-making.

Jeremiah, the photographer is disabled by the agents of the neo-colonial government who tries to silence him. His camera and his glass cabinet which stand as his voice are destroyed and he too is declared wanted by the agents who planned to eliminate him.

The photographer through his camera captures decisive moments in the lives of the ghetto dwellers. These decisive moments are sometimes displayed in his glass cabinet. The photographer valorises ugly incidents that would otherwise, have been excluded in the dominant pattern of the society. It is through the photographer that the world becomes aware of life in the ghetto. The ugly incidence about the stale milk also comes into the limelight through the photographer. It is through the photographer's pictures displayed in the glass cabinet that the society is informed about the ugly incidents that are taking place in the political scene as well as in the social and economic situation in the society. All these actions annoy the neocolonial government and the Photographer becomes a candidate for elimination. As a result of this, he becomes a fugitive. During one of the norctunal visits he pays randomly to Azaro's home,the photographer, with an air of mystery, declares that the agents of the government do not know that he is around the ghetto. He then decides to go away (*The Famished Road*, 362).

Politics, equally serves as a disabling agent to those dwelling in the ghetto. Okri presents the divisive and violent activities of the political parties and the exploitative capitalist machinations of Madame Koto. The activities of the two political parties polarise the ghetto dwellers into warring camps and politicise the public space along party and tribal lines. For instance, people are dismissed from their jobs because they belong to the wrong side of politics; Azaro's mother is denied space in the market on political grounds; Dad's landlord coerces his tenants to vote for the party of the Rich which he supports; Jeremiah, the Photographer, whose pictures capture for the present and posterity, the violence in the community, is forced into exile and anonymity. His studio is attacked and vandalized by political thugs. The result is a deep sense of disillusionment, as aptly expressed by Dad. In Dad's view, people have begun to spoil everything with politics. Dad explains that some even ask for one's political affiliation before allowing someone to carry their loads. To Dad, those who patronise him as load-carrier want to know who he will vote for before they let him carry their load. In addition, since it is the rich that engages the services of a load-carrier, extra burden is placed on any carrier that does not belong to their party (the party for the Rich). Of course, this affects Azaro' dad adversely as he belongs to the party for the poor. He laments that he is not better than a donkey (*The Famished Road*, 81). Dad is not alone,

in Madame Koto's bar, a client equally laments that the newly won independence has brought only trouble and nothing else (*The Famished Road,*99).

Politics as a disabling agent also leads to violence and hatred. After witnessing an afternoon of extreme violence, Azaro is convinced that he had recognised the recurrence of ancient antagonisms, secret histories, and heard the slaking of the road's unquenchable thirst. In Azaro's view, blood has become a new kind of libation. Azaro opines that although the road was young but its hunger was old and its hunger had been reopened (*The Famished Road*, 484). As the political polarisation in the ghetto gets worse, it becomes more difficult for Azaro's parents to earn their living mainly because they refuse to support the party of the Rich. To punish the family, the Landlord, a member of the party of the Rich, raises their rent more than any other tenants in the compound. This wound of the constant war between the rich and the poor is re-opened in Ngugi Wa Thiongo's *Petals of Blood.* Like *The Famished Road, Petals of Blood* offers an epic picture of the emergence of a new nation exhibiting the transition from the old order to the new one and the sacrifice of the peasants for the attainment of riches by the upper classes.

4.3.2. Disability and the war of class in *Petals of Blood*

Classes arise when societies are socially divided based on status, wealth or control of social production and distribution. While sociologists assign classes on the basis of criteria such as occupation, income, education and place of residence, Karl Marx sees class in economic terms as a social group whose members share the same relationship to the forces of production. Classes have their own political ideology and morality which promotes their interest. It is this contrasting nature of class interests that is the source of class struggle in a capitalist society. Marx emphasises that class struggle leads to social change. Hence, the class structure in *Petals of Blood* consists of two broad social classes typified by certain characters. These classes are the capitalists –the Europeans, Asians and the African elites such as Chui, Mzigo, Kimeria, Nderi and the likes on the one hand and the African proletariat such as Munira, Karega, Wanja, Abdullai on the other. In essence, the African workers, peasants and women are the proletariat.

The presence of the Europeans and Asians in Kenya has made the history of Kenya one of racial tension and quarrel. It has also made Africans feeling they have been rejected and subjugated to a certain class and position when they are the actual producers of wealth that feeds, clothes and houses everyone in Kenya, in addition to the one that goes out of the country for export. The relationship between these two classes is therefore, antagonistic and conflicting. The story in *Petals of Blood*, Ngugi's fourth novel is set in post independence Kenya, at Ilmorog, a town which is presented as a remote village at the beginning of the novel and which is later converted to a glistering new town. The title of the novel is from Derek Walcott's poem "The Swamp" (1963) in his *Castaway Poems*. According to Kesava (2015), Walcott uses the myth of Robin Hood who robs the rich and helps the poor. The poet feels that a huge tree prevents little flowers from reaching out into the light. This is similar to the social system of capitalism and imperialism that stifles life.

Petals of Blood opens up with an arson that occurs at New Ilmorog in which three lives are lost. Chief Inspector Godfrey of the Kenyan Police Force conducts an investigation into the murder of Kimera, Chui and Mzigo at the Sunshine Lodge owns by Wanja. Each of the three victims of the arson is a businessman with huge investment in New Ilmorog. Each of them belongs to the elite and upper class. Each of them has been linked in one way or the other, with the four main suspects of the murder. The four suspects are Munira, Abdulla, Wanja and Karega. Munira, Abdullah and Karega are in jail, as suspects. The fourth suspect –Wanja is convalescing in a hospital from burn injuries.

Munira is the recording consciousness of the novel. Hence, the structure of the novel is Munira's recollections as he sits in his cell, writing copious notes in order to clarify, explain, ascertain and to come to terms with himself as well as to satisfy the queries of the probing Chief Inspector Godfrey. This way, Inspector Godfrey's interrogation of Munira's self-introspection and the whole novel becomes a direct interior monologue where Munira's reminiscences are in sequential order, yet they overflow into the various historical period in Kenyan history:

> Within only ten years …how time galloped, he thought, Ilm'orog peasants had been displaced from the land: Some had joined army of workers; others were semi-workers with one

> foot in a plot of land and one foot in a factory, while others became petty traders and behind it all, as a monument to the changes, was the Trans-African Road and the two-storied building of the African Economic Bank Limited (Petals *of Blood*, 302).

The foregoing portrays the kind of changes that goes on at Ilmorog when the government finally decides to intervene. Ten years after walking to the city to protest lack of government presence and development of infrastructure in Ilmorog, a lot of changes which disabled the traditional structures on ground are brought into Ilmorog. The bank that is established in Ilmorog cunningly dispossesses people of their lands and properties. In essence, the bank harvests from Ilmorog people's naivety and illiteracy.

Munira, through the murder case opens a pandora's box of stories within stories that resonate back into the centuries. Abdulla, Munira, Karega and Wanja - the protagonists of the novel – share collective fate as exiles and disabled. All of them have been disabled by the colonial and social structures. Although, it is only Abdulla that has physical disabilities, Munira, Karega and Wanja are all depicted as disabled emotionally, psychologically and socially.

Abdulla, one of the protagonists in *Petals of Blood*, a Mau-Mau fighter, is maimed, imprisoned and later released on independence. He expresses tremendous hope in the new Kenya where jobs and land will be freely available. According to him: "No longer would I see the face of the Whiteman laughing at our effort…. And the Indian trader with his obscenities …he too would go. Factories, tea and coffee estates would belong to us, Kenya people" (*Petals of Blood*, 253). However, Abdullla's hope and expectations are dashed and disillusionment sets in. He laments: "I waited for land reforms and redistribution, I waited for a job". (*Petals of Blood*, 254). Abdulla is the second suspect in the murder case of Kimeria, Chui and Mzigo. The son of an African mother and Indian father, Abdulla has been a freedom fighter in the independence war and has lost a leg in the war. The expected rewards of independence he fought for did not come his way, and he flees to Ilmorog to eke out a living with his donkey. Abdulla becomes doubly disabled by the Kenyan Upper Class who cripples his business. As

one of those freedom fighters who make a change in Kenyan history from colonial to postindependence, he is not recognised by the state but rather becomes marginalised:

> Abdulla had fought for independence…he was now selling oranges and sheepskins to tourists and drinking Theng'eta to forget the forced demolition of his shop. Yes. Nothing made sense. Education. Work. My life. Accidents. I was an accident. I was a mistake, doomed to a spectator's role outside a window from a high building. (*Petals of Blood*, 279).

Here, Abdulla recounts how he fought for his country's independence and series of woes dogging his steps since. As the quote above demonstrates, Abdulla not only feels betrayed, rejected, inferior, incapable of doing anything meaningful, his level of frustration and depression is equally seen when he bursts out that he too was foolish enough to lose a leg for the national cause.

This comment showcases Abdulla's disillusionment with life in general. He arrives from colonial detention after Uhuru as a cripple to discover that his entire family had vanished. Being a cripple without money and connection, Abdulla could not find a job. Ironically, the disability which Abdulla acquires while fighting for the independence of his country is now being used to deny him a job. Dejectedly, Abdulla explains:

> Well, I said: I only wanted a job. 'They said: a cripple? I said: a cripple: must he not eat? This is new Kenya. No free Things. I stood outside the office perplexed. I was drinking my full measure of bitter gall when a man in a black suit came out of a Mercedes Benz and entered the office. All the clerks promptly stood up and put on their best smiles… (*Petals of Blood*, 255).

Here, Abdulla is denied an offer of a job due to his disability. To add insult to an injury, Abdulla discovers that the person that has just entered the office who is being given more recognition than him is no other person than Kimeria who betrays Ndinguiri (Karega's brother) and Abdulla himself. Abdulla then concludes that traitors like Kimeria (a sell-out to colonial rulers) are the one enjoying all the benefits of the new independent Kenya. They are the ones that are eating the fruits of freedom ((*Petals of Blood*, 255). Abdulla could not bear the shock. He decides to go to a distant place where he will not be reminded of people that betrayed the Mau Mau struggle. In his opinion, he wanted to go deep into the country where he would have no reminder

of a betrayal that is so bitter (*Petals of Blood*, 255). He later escapes to Ilmorog with his donkey which he refers to as his second leg. He becomes doubly crippled through the death of his donkey by a plane carrying a team of surveyors which crashed in Ilmorog.

The air crash generates so much publicity that it encourages Nderi (Ilmorog MP) to plan a new exploitative development in Ilmorog. Ironically, it is Wanja and Abdulla's marketing of the local beer, Theng'eta that attracts Nderi and other members of the national bourgeoisie to Ilmorog. Abdulla's effort to stay in business proves futile as he cannot cope with the aggressive and rigorous competition mounted against him by the Capitalist class. Like a greater percentage of the masses, he descends to the lowest rung of the social order. He falls from being a genuine and prosperous business man to a drunken wretch who now occupies a room in a mud-walled barrack of a house. His remaining stock are sold out on credit to the workers who do not pay on time, his stock consequently decreases and he is reduced to selling sheepskins and fruits by the wayside. Miserably, Abdulla tells Karega:

> …all ways, for the poor go one-way traffic: to more poverty and misery. Poverty is sin. But imagine, the poor who are held responsible for the sin that is poverty and so they are punished for it by being sent to hell. Hell to hell
> (*Petals of Blood*, 284).

The quotes above infer that there is no respite for the masses in postindependence Kenya. Furthermore, the kind of accommodation enjoyed by the likes of Abdulla is an illustration of exploitation at the hands of government officials:

> Occasionally, the Town Council has a clean-up, burn down campaign …but surprisingly …It is the shanties put up by the unemployed …which get razed to the ground … some County councilors and officials were allocated them…Free…and then sold them for more than fifty thousand shillings to others who rent them out to women petty traders…
> (*Petals of Blood*, 282)

This quote above showcases how the poor and unemployed people are deceitfully being dispossessed of their land. The government officials, in the guise of cleaning the

environment destroy the accommodation which belongs to the masses. Thereafter, they re-allocate the land to themselves for free and later sell them off to the rich people.

Another protagonist disabled by the elite and upper class in *Petals of Blood* is Wanja. Wanja, like every other woman in *Petals of Blood* is twice marginalised and disabled. First, as a colonial subject, and second, as a victim of social system where husband or the male gender plays the role of the coloniser. Wanja suffers from the unfair mechanism of capitalism. Her education is aborted when she becomes pregnant and is abandoned by Hawkins Kimeria, who seduces and exploits her. Wanja becomes depressed. Consequently, she kills the baby. Her quest for another child leads her back to Ilmorog. Wanja' s escape to the village from the city is seen as being strange. The people of Ilmorog are baffled at how someone could leave the city for a remote village like Ilmorog where nothing works. Wanja, therefore, becomes a major point of discussion among them and disability is inscribed on her by the villagers:

> She was Nyankinyua's granddaughter. This we knew- she often helped the old woman in the daily chores about the house and in the fields- but she remained a mystery: how could a city woman so dirty her hands? How could she strap a tin of water to a head beautifully crowned with a mass of shiny black hair? And what had really brought her to the gates of Ilmorog village when the trend was for the youth to run away?... she would go away we all said. (*Petals of Blood,*31)

This excerpt showcases how the villagers read Wanja's action of leaving the city for Ilmorog as disability. The villagers foretell that Wanja like every other youth from the village will soon leave the village. However, Wanja settles in the village against all odds. Constructed as a remarkable and resourceful woman, Wanja is however, depicted as a disabled by the patriarchal society. Her body is seen as an object that is created to serve men. She is raped mentally and physically and maimed emotionally. Her story evolves out of her resisting the label imposed on her by the society. Colonial mentality and slavery lead Wanja's parents to beat her because she is seen with a boy they tagged as a pagan (*Petals of Blood*, 38). Wanja is deeply pained at this. She equally believes that she got beaten because her boyfriend is poor:

> I was so rebellious in my thought. How could I get my own back? Was it a sin to be poor? We ourselves were not rich: were we sinners? Was it a sin even not to be a Christian? At the same time, I hated the young man who had been the cause of my suffering. I nursed the pain in my soul. I am a hard woman and I know I can carry things inside my heart for a long time. I wanted to find something that would really hurt them and humiliate them as they had done to me (*Petals of Blood*, 38)

As a form of vengeance against her parents, Wanja embarked on illicit affairs with her father's wealthy friend who is married with two female children. When she discovers she is pregnant, having been rejected by her lover on the excuse of his being a Christian (*Petals of Blood*, 40), Wanja runs away from her parents to Eastleigh. She later becomes depressed and suicidal.

A crucial look at Wanja's life reveals a woman who becomes disabled emotionally and psychologically from different men who collectively disable her: Her father, the maths teacher, Hawkins Kimeria and all the likes including Munira who sets her brothel (her means of livelihood) on fire. Even, Karega who she genuinely loves abandons her. As a consequent, she becomes a sad and bitter woman and ends up with capitalist philosophy. She explains her reason for building a brothel to Karega this way: ''The world…this Kenya …this Africa knows only one law.You eat somebody or you are eaten. You sit on somebody or somebody sits on you'' (*Petals of Blood*, 291). Wanja summarises the mercilessness of colonialism and capitalism further:

> You eat or you are eaten. How true I have found it. I decided to act, and I quickly built this house…Nothing would I ever let for free … I have hired young girls… It was not hard … I promised them security… and for that … they let me trade their bodies … what's the difference whether you are sweating it out on a plantation, in a factory or lying on your back, anyway? (*Petals Blood of*, 293)

Wanja's worldview, that you either preyed or you remained a victim (*Petals of Blood*, 294), is a manifestation of how the subjectivity of the colonised is deformed by the exploitative ideology of capitalism. As a product and subject of the capitalist epoch, Wanja defines things along the axis of exchange value where human beings are commodified and deprived of their essence and so she turns her fellow women into sex

objects for profits. By creating a brothel, Wanja falls into the vicious circle of capitalist class which turns her into an exploiter. In this regard, she becomes a victim of capitalism and a predator.

Neocolonialism not only manifests itself in terms of economic oppression, but it also has psychological effects on the colonised subjects. The competitive and exploitative nature of capitalism invites them to think like businessmen who are only concerned about themselves. If they have an opportunity to take advantage of other people, they do not hesitate to do so, or else they would be taken advantage of. In essence, suppression and subjectivity in the hands of the different men in her life turn her into an emotionally disabled woman in search of love which remains somehow elusive throughout the novel. Wanja confirms her non-physical disability this way: ‘’It is as if he is carrying much suffering, not in his crippled leg, but in his heart. I suppose we are all alike’’ *(Petals of Blood*, 73). When Munira discloses that he does not understand what Wanja means by this, Wanja exclaims impatiently that he does. She further clarifies that all of them (herself, Karega, Munira and Abdulla) carry maimed souls and that they are all looking for a cure (*Petals of Blood*, 73).

As revealed in the foregoing, Munira’s soul is indeed maimed. At the beginning of the novel, Munira, is taken to Ilmorog Police Station for routine questioning. At the Police Station, he narrates all the major events and happenings and is asked to record all those moments right from the day he came to Ilmorog. Like Wanja, as a wounded soul, Munira, the school teacher flees from the city to Ilmorog, a remote and drought-ridden village, where nothing works. He is thrown into emotional trauma by his father, Brother Ezekiel Waweru, a wealthy and pious landowner, a collaborator of the whites, who is attacked by Mau Mau rebels. Ezekiel Waweru’s fortune is not affected by the change of regime, in fact, he is bestowed with multiple opportunities. Ezekiel is very proud of his children’ successes except Munira, who, according to him, is moving on the path of failure. After being involved in a student strike at the elite Siriana High School, Munira is expelled from the institution. After several years as an itinerant educator, during which he marries Julia, a Kenyan pagan who converts to christianity so as to ingratiate herself to her powerful in-laws, Munira escapes to Ilmorog as a headmaster of Ilmorog Elementary School. His shame over his father’s collaboration with the whites in exploiting the poor in the name of God and his wife’s taunts to this

effect hurt Munira's consciousness. He is also paralysed by the shadow of his wealthy and successful father who condemns the Mau Mau movement but aids the crony corruption of independent Kenya. Hence, Munira becomes deranged.

As an exile, Munira is at first the brunt of several Ilmorog village jokes. His efforts to reconstruct the dilapidated school are seen as absurd: ''He would go away with the wind, said the elderly folk: had there not been others before him? Who would settle in this wasteland except those without limbs…'' (*Petals of Blood*, 5). Munira is depicted as someone without limbs in the novel. His name means stump in Gikuyu language according to Killam (1980: 9). As a metaphorical stump, Munira is incapable of growth as a human and political figure. Evidence of this is seen from his jealous punishment of Karega for having a relationship with Wanja, from his false pride after becoming headmaster of Ilmorog school, and from his demonstration of false consciousness by burning Wanja's brothel to save Karega. Munira also faces the guilt of Mukami's suicide and his family 's historical association with the betrayal of Mau leader, Dedan Kimathi.

Munira's family belongs to the upper class. However, Munira's non-physical disability begins when he goes against the class and religious interest of his family by joining the strike at Siriana School and by marrying a pagan wife, Wanjiru (Julia). The first born, of a domineering father, Munira escapes to Ilmorog village in search of self-identity. The question Inspector Godfrey asks Munira establishes the fact that Munira is seen as the odd one out even by his family. Inspector Godfrey asks how would Munira describes himself. To the Inspector, would Munira describes himself as a failure or success according to the standard of his family? Would he describe himself as the odd one out or the black sheep of a family who although black by birth but white in thinking, white by association and white by wealth? (*Petals of Blood*,330). In reply, Munira, confirms that he is an accident. However, his journey into self-discovery is distorted by religious fantasies. Palmer (1979:16) asserts that Munira's decision to save Karega from the clutches of Wanja is mental derangement. Munira's mental instability is displayed during his parents visit to him before his trial. His parents are accompanied by Rev. Jerrod Brown. Having refused to answer his mother as to why he commits arson and being peeved by Rev. Jerrod Brown's hypocritical stance, like a judge, Munira puts his father on trial:

> You, my father- Munira called with authority. 'Yes?
> One question, only one question I want to ask you. Do you remember that in 1952 you refused to take Mau Mau oath for African Land and Freedom? (*Petals of Blood*, 341).

Munira's father at this juncture wonders at the relevance of these questions to the shameful situation on ground. He asks Munira about the relevance of those questions to the facts that he has just been accused of murder and arson (*Petals of Blood*, 341). Munira ignores his father's interruption of his questions but continues:

> And yet in 196-, after Independence, you took an oath to divide the Kenya people and to protect the wealth in the hands of only a few. What was the difference? Was an oath not an oath? Knee down, old man, and ask the forgiveness of Christ. In heaven, in the eyes of God, there are no poor or rich, this or that tribe, all who have repented are equal in His eyes. (*Petals of Blood*,341)

What is crucial to note about the excerpt above is that Munira appears to be psychologically unbalanced. His behaviour does not conform with normality in African society. It is un-African to address one's parents in this manner. By the time he starts to interrogate Rev. Brown, his mother frighteningly exclaims ''What has got into his head?'' (*Petals of Blood*,341). No one could answer Munira's mother's questions. Incidentally, Munira's derangement and disillusionment with life generally run through the novel; from his obsession with Wanja; the burning of Wanja's brothel; his jealousy of Wanja and Karega's relationship, to his selfish-interest in only himself. All these point at his mental and psychological instability. As a matter of fact, Munira is regarded as a non-being by his family, always feeling uneasy to facing situations related to life and society.

Like Munira, Karega escapes to Ilmorog in search of answers to issues of life. Karega, another one-time student-rebel, is expelled from Siriana High School after a second strike. As a former student of Munira, he joins Munira in teaching the pupils in Ilmorog Primary School. Karega, the son of a peasant woman, Mariamu, an ahoi (a wage labourer), on the farms of Munira's father is portrayed as the force behind the resistance of the Ilmorog people and workers against an oppressive regime and a profiteering capitalist class. Karega, which means the one who resists (Killam,1980) in

Gikuyu, is willing to confront the history and material reality of his people. As a teacher, he teaches the children about the world outside Ilmorog and actively seeks a deeper understanding of the historical and political nuances of his people especially after meeting the lawyer who represents a political class of revolutionaries but whose fixation on property is faulted. After Karega's dismissal from Ilmorog School by Munira, he leaves Ilmorog despite entreaties of Abdulla and Wanja. He works for five years with Hawkins, the lawyer but later leaves him because of his disillusionment with Hawkins' solution to the problems of the peasants. Moving to Mombassa later, he sees how the Europeans still have a strong grip over Kenyan economy by way of technical expertise. He refuses to favour the Whites over the Blacks, for which he is fired from his job. He, therefore, decides to move back to Ilmorog.

Karega appears to be on the side of the underdogs, the lower class people. It is Karega who comes up with the idea to travel to the big city and confront their parliament representative. In a sense, Karega stands for the community and the welfare of everyone. He takes aim at the political elite and their greed. However, Karega is constructed as a disable in this study. Although, his disability is not physical but his soul has been wounded and battered by colonialism. As a wounded soul, who is psychologically damaged, he flits from one job to the other. He works as a teaching assistant with Munira before becoming disillusioned and leaves for the city. After the epic journey to Nairobi, he becomes enamoured with socialism, and starts to educate himself on its principles and on the law guiding it. However, he later becomes disillusioned with Eurocentric type of Education on African soil. Furthermore, he is depicted as a failure in his relationship with the opposite sex. His girlfriend, Mukami, Munira's younger sister, commits suicide when her father rises against her union with Karega. He abandons Wanja despite all pleas for him to stay. By the time he comes back to Ilmorog, five years after he had left, he treats Wanja with disdain for sleeping with the likes of Kimeria. It appears that women who fall in love with Karega are always doomed. This could be seen in his relationship with Mukami who commits suicide and Wanja whose brothel is razed to the ground because of him. Wanja's condition renders her without any hope. However, her relationship with Karega re-kindles her hope. This is revealed when she says:

> For the first time, I feel wanted … a human being.…no longer humiliated… degraded… foot-trodden… do you understand? It is not given to many a second chance to be a woman, to be human without this or that "except",…without shame. He has reawakened my smothered woman-ness, my girlhood, and I feel I am about to flower (*Petals of Blood*,251)

Wanja feels renew through her relationship with Karega. For this reason, Wanja clings to this relationship with Karega and when it fails, she makes her final descent into prostitution.

In *Petals of Blood,* Ngugi portrays the Kenyan society 's political, economic and social struggle that is dominated by imperialists as class division. Ngugi (1974) opines that only two tribes are left in Africa and these are those that have (the haves) and those that do not have (the have-nots). The masses (the have-nots) remain deprived and disinherited of their natural rights, such as access to the economy and political power. Hence, this class division has brought class conflicts which later led to strike and demonstrations. Ngugi recreates the loss of land by ordinary rural dwellers in post – independence Kenya through the fencing off of small pieces of farmland that are mortgaged for bank loans. The cunning capitalist system points towards multinational land grabbers that leave communities disabled at the loss of their sole source of subsistence and sustenance. The County Council in Ilmorog decides to take a few acres of land from the villagers who are predominantly farmers with the promise of adequate payment of compensation to the villagers. Not only this, the County council promises that the banks will give loans to both the herdsmen and farmers to develop their lands and build ranches:

> A few acres of land would of course be taken from the people for the purpose, but the County Council would pay adequate compensation…People, whether herdsmen or ordinary farmers would be given loans to develop their land and their ranches. But, first, people had to register their lands in order to acquire title-deeds which in turn would act as security with the banks. (*Petals of Blood,* 267)

This infers that land grabbers dispossess naive citizens of their ancestral lands through cunning ways. Nyakinyua becomes one of the victims of the land grabbers. She is forced to forfeit her ancestral land to the bank where she obtains loan from. She never

recovers from the shame of losing her ancestral land to strangers. She later dies as a result of this. In memory of her, Wanja, her granddaughter sells off her thriving business in order to buy back the family land.

Apart from the foregoing, the independence signals the beginning of a class-related conflict of two opposing groups: The new Kenyan elite leaders and the masses. The two opposing groups are all Kenyans but they fail to unite because of their differing status in the society. Class conflict becomes a struggle for freedom between those that have (the elites) and those that do not have (the masses). The elites, though a minority group, are able to exploit the masses because of the power they have. The masses have no voice in the government in independent Kenya. The ruling elites order them around and the masses must follow. Ngugi terms this process as capitalism and a faceless system used by the new Kenyan elite to control the state and treat the poor unfairly. The emergence of the new local upper class after independence shows that nothing changes for the masses in terms of exploitation. Ngugi (1993) asserts that the economic goes hand in hand with polital control. According to him, during the colonial period, political control was often direct through the settler representatives or through a white-controlled native administration, and of course, through the colonial army and police forces. However, after independence, the wealthy elites inherit the political control and it is exercised through them.

It is also important to note that, the masses are disabled and kept under control through the security forces under the elites' order. In this system, political control facilitates an economic system which serves the profits of the imperialist countries. Ngugi describes it this way: This thoroughly colonised petty bourgeoisie was the class that inherited the management of colonial state under new flags raised aloft at independence… Their mission became that of overseeing the continuity of the colonial state in a new guise, the neo-colonial guise. They are able to carry out their mission with absolute conviction because they have inherited the same world outlook which was formerly held by the imperialist bourgeoisie. This is seen for instance in Africa where in a neo-colonial regime the same old disregard of African lives continues.

Essentially, the cases of Chui, Kimera, Inspector Godfrey, Nderi wa Riera and the likes testify to the maintenance and continuation of colonialism by African leaders

who use their newly-gained power to create docile and disabled citizen through religious and sociopolitical organisations. Ngugi not only illustrates the plight of the peasants and working-class people in its material aspects, but he also demonstrates how these people are marginalised and disabled in Kenyan historiography. Ngugi's concern is that the sacrifices made by the peasants in the war of liberation have been erased from national memory. Despite being agents of historical change, they are not given a place in national history which, like the national economy is being controlled by the Upper Class people.

When a recurring drought threatens the existence of Ilmorog village, the former city dwellers like Karega, Munira, Wanja and Abdulla lead a motley group of peasants on a journey to Nairobi. A journey that would perennially change the fortunes of Ilmorog. Ngugi uses the delegation's reception in Nairobi to expose the hypocrisy of the various elite-run institutions, in post-independence Kenya. The drought is significant in that while it suggests the geographical fragility of the area, it also evidently symbolises the hardships which disable the peasants in postindependence Kenya. The departure of the British colonisers does not mean the end of colonial power, on the contrary, the educated elites and Middle Class people who take over the political and economic controls from the colonisers reconstitute the colonial regime and exercise power over their own people. This is clearly depicted in the villagers' encounter with the likes of Reverend Jerrod Brown, a black clergy, Hawkins Kimeria and Nderi wa Riera during the villagers' journey to the city. In what appears to be a dint of irony, Reverend Brown, a church leader, instead of giving the weary and ailing delegation some food, water or shelter offers them mere spiritual assurance. By making a reference to the lame man at the beautiful gate in *Acts of Apostles*, chapter 3, Reverend Brown condemns what he sees as begging and wandering in strong terms:

> What the Bible is talking about is not so much a physical illness as a spiritual condition. For note that the man never went inside the Temple until he was cured of his spiritual lameness. He never begged again. The Bible is then clearly against a life of idleness and begging…Most of us seem to prefer a life of wandering and begging to a life of hard work and sweat. (*Petals of Blood*, 148)

Brown excuses his behaviour on the premise that the delegation needs spiritual assistance more than the physical. Brown thus displays a psychological defence mechanism of rationalisation by providing himself good reasons for his behaviour because the real reason is unacceptable to him.

Looking at it critically, the political independence achieved in 1963 did not lead to amelioration of the marginalised majority but rather exacerbated their lives. *Petals of Blood* underscores this postindependence condition through the characters of Chui, Mzigo, Nderi wa Riera and Kimeria, the revered leaders of the state who ruin a rural habitat named Ilmorog in the name of modernising it. As a major step towards this modernisation, they industrialise the traditional Theng'eta brewing, an indigenous practice in which an alcoholic beverage is produced and consumed ceremoniously. The tradition of Theng'eta brewing dates back to pre-colonial period. Banned by the colonial administration for its alleged connection to the indigenous initiation rites (for instance, the indigenous ceremony of circumcision that became a symbol of protest against colonialism), Theng'eta gained significance in postindependence Ilmorog. On the one hand, it evokes memories of historical indigenous resistance to colonialism, and draws upon indigenous spiritual belief system. Evoking its connection with indigenous circumcision ceremonies, Theng'eta brewing rejuvenates the collective memories of the circumcision controversy of 1930s that discursively transformed the Gikuyu practice of circumcision into an organised revolt against the colonial church and the government in Kenya (Chakraborty,2018:108-109).

In *Petals of Blood*, educational and political institutions which disable Africans illustrate how dominant practices and values of capitalism are reproduced. According to the human rights lawyer, formal education does nothing more than to hide racism and other forms of oppression. The lawyer further explains that formal education was meant to make the blacks accept their inferiority so as to accept the whites' superiority and their rule over the blacks (Petals *of Blood*, 165). In essence, Formal education compels Africans to see themselves as disabled while the colonisers are seen as non-disabled. Under the rule of Headmaster Cambridge Fraudsham, the colonial discourse of progress and order is reinforced in the classroom where the students do not study their own history, but rather the history of the colonial masters. Cambridge Fraudsham's teaching is colonialist in perspective in that it re-inscribes the colonial

rhetoric of the master and slave relationship. To Fraudsham, in any civilised society there were those who were to formulate orders on one hand while there are those to obey the orders on the other hand. In Fraudsham's view, there had to be leaders and the led (*Petals of Blood*, 170). The implication of this is that civilization brings class stratification. However, the striking students refuse to bow to this philosophy, they insist on an African headmaster who will do away with colonial structures.

Unfortunately, the arrival of Chui, who once led his black fellow students to strike against this Eurocentric education, to replace Fraudsham as a new headmaster, however, does not bring any change, for he has become a black replica of Fraudsham (*Petals of Blood*,171). Disapproving of the idea of Africanisation in school, he teaches canonical English Literature such as Shakespeare. Chui's philosophy is that history was history, literature was literature, and had nothing to do with the colour of one's skin. According to Chui, the school had to strive for what a famous educator had described as the best that had been thought and written in the world (*Petals of Blood*, 172). With this, Chui imposes the cultural values of the colonisers on his students and privileging them over the African values.

In another vein, Inspector Godfrey represents the repressive State Apparatuses which disable the proletariat (the working class). He helps maintain social stability and order to protect all kinds of industries and foreign investment. Godfrey, a product of his time is described as someone who had been brought up to believe in the sanctity of private property. The system of private ownership means of production, exchange and distribution was for him synonymous with the natural order of things like the sun, the moon and the stars which seemed fixed and permanent in the firmament. Anybody who interfered with that ordained fixity and permanence of things was himself unnatural and deserved no mercy. People like Karega with their radical trade unionism and communism threatened the very structure of capitalism, as such they were worse than murderers (*Petals of Blood*, 333).

It is interesting to note that to Inspector Godfrey, capitalism is synonymous with nature, a necessary phase of human development. As a protector of nature, he wants to get rid of the harmful weeds from the surface of the earth by the use of force. Inspector Godfrey had always felt that the police force was truly the maker of modern

Kenya. He also opines that the Karegas and their likes should really be deported to Tanzania and China (*Petals of Blood*, 334). Inspector Godfrey believes that if Africa is to develop itself, it will need financial support and investment from outside. Nderi wa Riera, the MP for the Ilmorog area who represents another state apparatus of the government, also shares this world view. Once a man of the masses who opposed illiteracy and unemployment and advocated the nationalization of industries and Pan-African Unity, he now allies himself with foreign-owned companies which give him shares and land for the tourist industry. Like Inspector Godfrey, he advocates the need for people to grow up and face reality. He explains that Africa needs capital and investment for real growth and not socialist slogans (*Petals of Blood*, 174). Hence, people like Nderi, because of personal gains decide to become slaves to the neocolonial government.

Furthermore, urban immigration disables Ilmorog. The village becomes impoverished due to the movement of her youths to the city. The attraction of a monied economy in Nairobi forces the young to abandon the families. As an old woman complains to Munira:

> Our young men and women have left us. The glittering metal has called them. They go, and the young women only return now and then to deposit the newborn with their grandmothers already aged with scratching this earth for a morsel of life. They say: there in the city there is room for only one….The young men also. Some go and never return (*Petals of Blood*,7)

The above foregrounds the mass migration of the youth of Ilmorog to the city. The youths regard Ilmorog as a wasteland. They believe that it is only limbless and disabled people that could live in Ilmorog. The general comment is that no one in his or her right mind would like to live or settle down in Ilmorog. They believe that Ilmorog is a wasteland and it is only those without limbs that could live in it (*Petals of Blood,* 5). Ilmorog as a wasteland can equally be compared with Naguib Mahfouz's Midaq Alley which is regarded as a disabling environment.

4.33. Disabling environment in *Midaq Alley*

Set in Cairo during the second World War, Naguib Mahfouz 's *Midaq Alley* (1947, 1992) showcases a small circle of characters living in an alleyway just off Sanadiqiya

Street in the old quarter of the city. Although, it is described as an ancient relic and a precious one (*Midaq Alley*,1), the alley has clearly seen better days. It is cramped and dingy, a place of fumes and flies. One of the alley' sides consists of a shop, a café, and a bakery, the other of another shop and an office. The alley ends abruptly, just as its ancient glory did, with two adjoining houses, each of three stories (*Midaq Alley*, 1). A close reading of this novel shows that Mahfouz is deeply engaged with how colonialism creates slums in Egypt and the disabling effect of these slums on the lower class citizens. In 1867, following a visit to the Universal Exposition in Paris, the Khedive Isma'il made the decision to modernise the Egyptian capital by constructing a European-style quarter to the west of the old city. Although, Ismail was deposed before this project could be completed, the reconstruction of Cairo would continue under the British, who officially occupied Egypt from 1882 until 1936. Raymond (2000) explains that:

> The trend first manifests in Isma'il 's urban projects of creating two cities side by side intensified. Before 1882, the dividing line separated a traditional sector from a modern one, but after Egypt's colonisation the line also marked boundary between different nationalities … One could now speak of a native city and a European one. (333)

The actual boundary between these two cities may appear invincible, but their profound differences were plain to see. Old Cairo composed of labyrinths and introverted alleyways and dead-end streets, while the design of the New Cairo (European city) was based on a grid pattern of intersecting vertical, horizontal and diagonal avenues. The old city was still essentially pre-industrial in technology, social structure, and way of life while the European city contained all the usual signifiers of Western modernity: expensive departmental stores and shopping arcades, movie theatres, Parisian cafes (Abu-Lughod, 1971:98). As a matter of fact, this dual quality is typical of colonial urban planning and in Cairo as elsewhere, it reflected and served to reinforce deeper social, cultural and economic disparities. While the European quarters were being developed, the old city which houses the blacks was largely abandoned. Raymond (2000: 334) explains further that:

> Its streets were neglected, cleaning was haphazard the water supply was only partial, and the sewers were poor or insufficient. This deterioration was exacerbated by the rapid increase in a population whose density weighed heavily on the crumbling infrastructure and inadequate public services.

The depiction here is that, the area which houses the colonised is neglected without any visible development done to it while the one that houses the colonial masters are properly developed. In line with this, Mitchell (1991) quoting the Egyptian Gazette of 1902 offers a clearer picture of what the masses were subjected to. According to him the poorer classes are being more and more crowded into slums of the worst type. No new houses are being built for their accommodation and the rising rent roll is constantly limiting the numbers that are still within their reach. Hence, in the byways and backstreets of the old city there is an ever enlarging number of houses in which families are packed together in numbers and under conditions that render these places the exact counterpart of the slums of Europe and America.

The foregoing suggestively emphasises the physical duality of Cairo which establishes the European-based quarters as belonging to the rich who are depicted as non-disabled, rich, and normal while the slums belong to the poor, disabled and abnormal people. What is interesting to note here is the way in which this division of colonial urban space takes on a metaphorical quality, so that the topographical differences acquire a large significance. The European quarter or environment comes to signify modernity, teleological progress and the future while the native quarter signifies tradition, entropy, disability and all kinds of stigmatising antiquity.

Mahfouz' *Midaq Alley* is set against this background. Right from the outset, *Midaq Alley* emphasises the alley as a disabling environment. The eponymous alley is associated with times gone by (*Midaq Alley*, 1) and the city is associated with modernity. As a disabling environment, the alley is clearly a graveyard of decaying bones (*Midaq Alley*, 195) and anyone who aspires to be free must leave it by following a defined direction. The alley refuses to bow to modern values and social norms which results in lack of progress in vital are like education, technology, and gender equality. As Mahfouz illustrates, those who try to escape the alley ultimately fail. The physical geography of the alley is such that it exists in almost complete isolation. It was

enclosed like a trap between three walls (*Midaq Alley*, 1). This implies that the alley is extremely confining and intentionally separated fromtheoutside culture. Therefore, the activities and customs inside the alley are repetitive, predictable and destructive to many residents. Throughout the novel, Mahfouz associates dark, claustrophobic, and segregated settings with the alley in an effort to reflect widespread feelings of oppression perpetrated by the alley's apparent rejection of modern values and social norms. As a disabling environment, the alley turns everyone living in it into half corpses. Hussain Kirsha affirms this when he says that everyone in the alley is half dead, and if someone lives in the alley for a long time, then such a person would not require a burial. Hussain Kirsha adds that it is only God who can help such a person (*Midaq Alley,* 35).

Similarly, the population of the alley is socially structured in such a way that there are those at the top of the ladder and those at the bottom. The business man, Salim Alwan, belongs to the top of the social ladder. The other residents of the alley are on the lower social level. With a wide range of characters, majority of them representing the poorer sections of the society, these characters, about twenty of them, each with a distinct and recognisable identity reside in Midaq Alley, an environment which disables them.

The central character in *Midaq Alley* is Hamida, a young woman of uncommon beauty who seeks wealth and material comforts, and with no alternative in sight agrees to be engaged to Abbas, a humble barber who, in the hope of securing a lucrative employment, enlists in the British Army. In Abbas' absence, Hamida accepts another suitor, Salim Alwan, an elderly, wealthy businessman. When Salim is struck down by a heart attack, Hamida does not hesitate to leave Midaq Alley at the invitation of Ibrahim Faraj, a pimp. Persuaded and tamed by the pimp, Hamida ends up as a prostitute in his service. When Abbas returns to Midaq Alley on vacation and is told of Hamida's absence, he goes out in search of her. Abbas discovers Hamida entertaining the British soldiers, her clients. Enraged, he gets into a fight with one of the soldiers and is killed. Essentially, each of the characters in Mahfouz'*Midaq Alley* is depicted as disabled through the disabling atmosphere of the Alley.

Hamida the central character in *Midaq Alley* is doubly disabled by poverty and patriachalism generated from her environment. She is a beautiful and attractive young

lady that draws the interest of the male residents of the alley. She lives with Umm Hamida who raises and adopts her after the death of her biological mother. Hamida and Umm Hamida live in Mrs Saniya Afify 's house. However, Hamida rejects the alley's pervasive confinement; her independent personality and unbridled ambition motivate her desire to escape from the alley. Unfortunately, few viable prospects beyond marriage exist for her. Meanwhile, Hamida does not want to be another alley wife, burdened and trapped by marriage and motherhood. She sees this as disability. Rather than accept such a disabled life, she opts for one of wealth even if it is through prostitution. As an uneducated woman with no technical skills, Hamida who has been disabled by the Egyptian patriarchal society must depend on marriage for support and survival. In acknowledgement of her situation, she notes that if she'd acquired a skill, she could wait and then marry as she wished, or not marry at all (*Midaq Alley*, 133). Hamida recognises that her beauty is her power and she uses it to seduce men in the alley with the hope of landing a better prospect. Hence, it is not difficult for her to switch her interest in Abbas, a struggling young barber to Salim Alwan, a wealthy businessman.

Although, Hamida 's disability is not physical. Her emotional and psychological composition is depicted as disability. Her economic and social status relegated her to the lowest part of the class- ladder. Hamida like Hussein Kirsha, her foster brother, despises her status and constantly desires to escape the alley which has disabled her for a greener pasture. Hamida's plan, to flee from the alley, leads to another level of disability: prostitution. She loses the control of her body to all sorts of men. Once outside the confines of the alley, Hamida succumbs entirely to the temptation of the city. She follows Ibrahim Faraj, a stranger and a pimp, to the city and stays with him in his apartment. These actions are certainly outside the behaviour of a respected unmarried Muslim woman. Faraj succeeds in seducing her by flattering her, a tactic he uses on her due to her naivity and simplicity. For all her inner strength, Hamida remains naïve and simple. This showcases how innocence is easily compromised when faced with poverty and despair. Hamida's psychological disability is pathetic because it is obvious that the only thing Faraj sees in her is her potential profit. The tragedy is that she cannot see it herself. Faraj changes the identity of Hamida by altering her external appearance, renames her as 'Titi' and teaches her English and dancing in order to satisfy her British customers, just like any product made to meet

the demand of its users. Moving her from the alley to a tavern, changing her name and dress, Faraj by these announces his act of possessions and dominance over Hamida's body. Her body, in fact is being exploited. However, there is no lasting freedom for her as her action later destroys Abbas, her former suitor. Hamida, like every other that had left the alley later returns to it.

In Egypt, there are strict expectations for women. Not only would it be considered improper for a woman to walk alone with a man in public, but she could see her marriage prospects ruined. For a poor girl, such a fate would mean a lifetime of poverty and shame. The truth is, Hamida's shame is nowhere near as strong as her ambition. Though, she reacts indignantly to Ibrahim Faraj's initial propositions, it is clear that these reactions are as much an expression of pride as morality. She is not only willing to trade her sexuality for wealth, but in fact is also willing to destroy her past. She sees in Faraj's system, a chance to change her name and personality, through sexual education specifically designed to appeal to the colonisers. As a matter of fact, she has always had delusions of grandeur for which this spectacle directly allows. Despite her shabby and dirty appearance while in the alley, Hamida usually walks majestically down the alley everyday and is fully conscious that the men in the alley do watch her with keen interest. Mahfouz explains that Hamida walked along with her companions, proud in the knowledge of her beauty, impregnable in the armour of her sharp tongue, and pleased that the eyes of passersby settled on her more than on the others (*Midaq Alley*, *41).* From this, one could easily understand that Hamida's daily walk from her street to the next street to meet the Jewish girls is deliberate and provocative. Abbas equally realises that Hamida's afternoon walk which she undertakes daily, is a parade before the street wolves (*Midaq Alley*, 238).

Abbas Hilu, a young man who operates as a barber in the alley is disabled by his insane love for Hamida. Abbas lives with his parents for fifteen years before deciding to share an apartment with Uncle Kamil. Abbas is a very close friend of Hussain Kirsha who happens to be Hamida's foster brother. Abbas is described as gentle, good-natured and a lover of peace, tolerance, and kindness (*Midaq Alley*, 32). Abbas is also a faithful Muslim who hates arguments and quarrel. Initially, Abbas is doing well in the alley by the alley' standards. Intoxicated by love, he survives Hamida's rebuffs and gets engaged to her. However, the quiet life he plans for himself in the alley becomes

truncated by the evil ambition and greed of Hamida. Hussain Kirsha confirms this when he warns Abbas that Hamida is an ambitious girl, and that Abass will never win her unless he changes his lifestyles (*Midaq Alley*, 37). Consequently, Abbas concludes that if the girl he loves is ambitious, then he must acquire ambitions himself (*Midaq Alley*, 37). Against all he stands for, Abbas changes his life when he joins the British army which he hates in order to get rich so as to win Hamida. Abbas is depicted as a disable in this study, although his disability is not physical. The one-sided love that he has for Hamida later turns a once-peaceful loving man into a violent man. It is this love that also kills him towards the end of the novel when he sees Hamida with the British army. Looking at it critically, Abbas's impulsive irrationality to quickly abandon the alley results in his being frustrated. His decision to escape from the alley is somehow difficult. He painfully lists why he should leave the alley thus:

> The young man asked himself why he should not leave. He had lived in the alley almost a quarter of a century. What had it done for him? It was a place that did not treat its inhabitants fairly. It did not reward them in proportion to their love for it. It tended to smile on those who abused it and abused those who smiled on it. Why shouldn't he leave in search of a better life? (*Midaq Alley*, 38).

This foregrounds the reality of the disabling effects of the alley on its inhabitants especially people like Abbas who loves the alley deeply. Abbas believes that people like Salim Alwan are not meant to prosper in the alley but are doing so because the alley is blind, and as a blind and a disable, it cannot identify those who genuinely love it and those who do not.

The failure of the inhabitants of the alley to make a head-way in life is depicted as disability. Everybody in the alley is a failure at one thing or the other. Salim Alwan, the richest man in the alley is a failure socially especially in his marriage and relationship with the inhabitants of the alley. Salim Alwan owns an office which deals mainly in perfume but engages in black market during the war. He has three sons, one is a doctor, the other is a lawyer and another one is a judge and is often frustrated by his sons. He also has four daughters who were all happily married (*Midaq Alley*,64). However, as a family man, he is a failure. Salim has a dysfunctional relationship with his wife. As a man with voracious sexual appetite which his wife is unable to match,

he plans to marry a younger Hamida who is already engaged to Abbas. He has an intense lust for Hamida which is cut short by heart attack. His belief is that Hamida will satisfy him sexually. A fete, which his wife can no longer achieve. However, his marriage plan with Hamida is truncated as he suffers a heart attack. Salim Alwan becomes embittered and he hits back at his wife irrationally:

> As for his wife, she was an easy target for his outbursts and hatred, and he still attributed his ill health to her jealousy. One time he rebuked her by shouting, 'You've had your vicious revenge on my health. You've seen me crushed before your eyes. Now enjoy your peace, you viper. (*Midaq Alley*, 241)

He equally extends his resentment towards his children, his manager, Hamida and virtually everybody he comes in contact with including Sheikh Darwish. In another vein, Alwan basks in his own pride. He believes that his monetary success places him in a position where he deserves anything he asks for and his disparaging remarks about his rival, Abbas Hilu as a simple, penniless barber (*Midaq Alley*, 140) illustrates his egotism. Moreover, his abnormal insatiable nature aided by the aphrodisiac tea specially brewed for him every afternoon fuels his objectification of Hamida, as he reduces her to being nothing more than something he could have at the click of his fingers. He becomes delusional when he discovers that Hamida has left the alley with a man who is not from the alley. In a way, Alwan embodies the gap between the upper class and the lower class. The siting of his business empire in a disabling environment transforms him into a disabled psychologically and socially and his material possessions could not liberate him from such non-physical disability.

Another disabled character whose physical disability is also not physical is Hussain Kirsha. Hussain hates his family and the alley in the same proportion. This is evident in his outbursts. Hussain rhetorically asks in a lamenting way about the ways of life in the alley. A kind of life, that is, never for a single day free from hardship and scandals (*Midaq Alley*, 73). Hussain flees the disabling alley in order to join the British army in an attempt for a new life and material gain. Hussain justifies his leaving the alley this way:

> Perhaps this was the reason he threw himself into the arms of the British Army. His new life had only doubled his dissatisfaction with his home, rather than reconciling and

> calming him. He disliked his family, his house, and the entire alley (*Midaq Alley*, 73).

The image presented above is that of strong determination to escape from a disabling environment. However, despite his escape into a life of affluence and pleasure, the alley draws Hussain back to it at the termination of his appointment with the army which is against his wish. Hussain returns back to the alley with additional responsibilities of a wife and a brother-in-law. Since he is incapacitated economically, he relies on his father, Kirsha, to provide food and shelter for his wife and brother- in – law.

Meanwhile, one of the more deplorable characters in *Midaq Alley* is Zaita. His profession is to create cripples, not the usual, natural cripples, but artificial cripples of a new type (*Midaq Alley*, 55). For instance, Zaita recounts that:

> People came to him who wanted to become beggars and, with his extraordinary craft, the tools of which were piled on the shelf, he would cripple each customer in a manner appropriate to his body. They came to him whole and left blind, rickety, hunch-backed, pigeon-breasted, or with arms or legs cut off short (*Midaq Alley*, 55)

For a fee and a cut of their earnings, Zaita maims men and women who want to become beggars but need a disability to justify it. Zaita is disabled by stark poverty and hardship. Mahfouz explores the depths of the desperation felt by those living in extreme hardship and poverty through Zeita. As a man who maims beggars for money, Zaita's profession seems reprehensible.

This is vividly depicted through the beggars he cripples; they happen to be the only one he can claim power over. Zaita does not live a normal life; his appearance, actions and interactions with people depict him as someone who has fully succumbed to his disabling environment. In essence, Mahfouz showcases the disabling effect of poverty on a society through Zaita. Zaita's dealings with those he maims and his ways of life

put him at the bottom of the social ladder. He is filthy. He does not take his bath; never washes his clothes and does not clean his environment. Consequently, dirt mixed with the sweat of a lifetime had caked a thick layer of black over his body and over his gown which was not originally black (*Midaq Alley*, 55). Hence, apart from his unrefined occupation, Zaita's personality is not pleasant. The only one he gets along with is the alley's self-proclaimed doctor, Booshy. The residents of Midaq Alley do not associate with him due to his offensive odour, for water never found its way to either his face or his body (*Midaq Alley*, 56) and he avoids them as well. He is only happy when someone dies and he would say to himself as if speaking to the dead preson: ''Now your time has come to taste the dirt, whose colour and smell so much offends you on my body'' (*Midaq Alley*, 56). As a sadist and cruel person, he often imagines the kind of torture he will inflict on the residents of the alley.

Dr Boooshy, the self-acclaimed dental surgeon of the alley is engaged in shady dealings with Zaita. Booshy, who does not have any formal training, sells false teeth which he removes from dead bodies at cheap prices to the inhabitants of the alley. Dr Booshy and Zaita often visit tombs and graveyards in the night to perpetrate this evil. They are later arrested and thrown into jail.

Meanwhile, the presence of the British Army in Egypt is depicted as disabling. During the Second World War, the British troops were permanently stationed in Egypt largely to defend the Suez Carnal, and the British heavily influenced the Egyptian Army. Egypt came under attack by the Axis powers because of the British forces, even though Egypt was nominally neutral in the war. In *Midaq Alley*, at the initial stage, the presence of the British Army is portrayed as beneficial to the natives because it is a source of income for people like Hussain, Abbas and the likes to literally and figuratively escape the poverty and backwardness of the alley. According to Hussein Kirsha, the war is not the disaster that fools say it is. The war is a blessing and it was God that sent it to the inhabitants of Midaq Alley to rescue them from poverty and misery. Hussein posits that those air raids by the British army are throwing gold down on them. It makes them rich (*Midaq Alley*,36).

Essentially, as someone who benefits from the war, Hussain believes that the war must not end. However, this later changed. Hamida's full descent into prostitution which is

triggered by Ibrahim Faraj is fueled by the British Army. A clearer picture of the British troops is given by Hussain Kirsha as he describes them as fickle, disabling, and something which can disappear in a moment leaving him poorer than ever before. In a similar vein, when the lovesick Abbas finally stumbles on Hamida in a bar, flirting with the British troops, he becomes insane with jealousy and attacks her. Abbas is later killed by the soldiers in the name of defending Hamida. At the end of the novel, Abbas Hilu emerges as the symbol of what the British hegemony has done to Egypt; taking simple but good men and women away from their traditional lives in Midaq Alley, luring them into drinking, violence and death.

Chapter Summary

One major thematic concern of postindependence African writers, on which this study was centred, is disillusionment of the underclass. The inter-play between postindependence disillusionment and socio-economic as well as political factors surrounding the lives of the underclass that are depicted as disabled in this study, is foregrounded in this chapter. The chapter draws upon the argument that postindependence experiences, as portrayed in the texts analysed, result in disability and disillusionment, which in turn becomes highly responsible for the final act of class stratification.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Summary

As this chapter provides summary and conclusion to the study, there is the need to explore junctures and disjunctures in the representations of disability in the ten postcolonial African novels selected for the study. In summarising the findings of the study, therefore, this chapter offers a comparative analysis of ten (10) novels selected from the four regions of Africa in order to foreground points of convergence and divergence, especially in terms of marginalisation, oppression, subjectivities and the likes of the disabled in postindependence Africa. This is in line with the first objective of the study.

In their narration of disability as trope of postindependence disillusionment, all the selected African writers emphasise certain factors that are responsible for the continuing existence of this disillusionment. There seems to be points of convergenve than divergence in their portrayals of disabling factors fuelling the postindependence disillusionment. From the interrogation of all the postcolonial African novels selected for this study, it is observed that neocolonial neglect plays a major role in disabling Africans. It is this neocolonial neglect that creates poverty, unemployment, mendicancy, disabling environment and the likes. Azaro's father in Okri's *The Famished Road*, the beggars in Sow Fall's *The Beggars 'Strike,* Hamida; Abbas Hilu; Hussain Kirsha in Mahfouz's *Midaq Alley*, Karega in *Petals of Blood* and many others are all victims of poverty-ridden society where they reside. This poor state of theirs fuels their desire to escape to the cities which serve largely as a disabling agent. Many of them find themselves living in disabling environments like the ghetto and slums which are products of colonialism.

Closely linked with disabling environment is the problem of unemployment or underemployment in the polity. This challenge is given primacy by most of the postcolonial novels selected for this study. One major reason many characters in the novels selected leave their villages to the city is to seek a better prospect. Most of them engage in jobs that underpay or do not pay them. Azaro's father in Okri's *The Famished Road* becomes a nightsoil man in order to feed his family. Munira in *Petals of Blood* who does the work of three teachers together with his own is being under paid by the government. Colonel Joll and Mandel in *Waiting for the Barbarians* lose their conscience and humanity because of the fear of losing their jobs. They torture their fellow human beings on spurious charges.

Meanwhile, security personnel are adequately represented in the narrativisation of disability in postindependence Africa. Security agents depicted in the selected novels serve as disabling agents. In Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*, they superimpose disability and death on their victims through the torture chambers. Alkali's *The Virtuous Woman* exposes the corrupt nature of the Nigerian Police Force who mounts road block so as to extort money from road users. In Okri's *The Famished Road*, corrupt politicians engage their services in terrorising innocent people or human rights activists like the photographer. SowFall's *The Beggars' Strike* adequately reveals their brutality, especially in their quest to exterminate the beggars from the streets of The capital. Essentially, it is emphasised that the unprincipled and unethical deeds of security agencies in postindependent Africa induce disability. Security agencies that are supposed to provide refuge for the oppressed and the maltreated in the polity have compromised and connived with the rich and the upper class.

Going by the amalgam of experiences of disabled characters, the narratives may be described as novels of disillusionment. Initially, most of the disabled characters are disillusioned owing to the harsh realities they are exposed to which also culminate in their disability, entrapment and poor state. Without mincing words, leadership has disappointed many Africans. Consequently, many Africans resort to various odd solutions as means of survival. Zaita in Mahfouz's *Midaq Alley* engages in creating disability out of non-disabled. He equally turns to robbing graves in the night with his partner in crime, Dr Booshy, just to overcome the harsh and unfriendly economy of

the Alley. Wanja in *Petals of Blood*; Hamida in *Midaq Alley* and the prostitutes in *The Famished Road* commodify their bodies in order to survive.

5.2. Conclusion

Looking at it critically, this study has made connections between Disability Studies and Postindependence experiences in selected Postcolonial African novels. Although, the two fields are seldom explicitly linked, however, engaging Postcolonial novels through the lens of Disability Studies can offer a rich analysis of the texts in terms of considering what it means in the selected novels to be disabled in Africa. All the chapters in this study moved chronologically and thematically with each highlighting a different intersection between postindependence experiences and disability. From the outset, the most important concept in this thesis has been that of disability. This idea is potentially helpful in extending the ways of reading disability, particularly in African novels. Hence, an approach that pays heed to indigenous contexts, the intersection of identities, as well as creative interventions within the texts is illustrated in this study.

The selected postcolonial novels discussed in this study serve the purpose of bringing to the global discourse of disablement a unique way of regarding disablement that may not agree with pre-conceived Medical Model of disablement. Disability is, therefore seen as what the texts achieved through challenging the Western definitions of disability as well as their intervention, in extending existing epistemologies of disability. This is not the only way of essentialising African experience, but rather of drawing attention to the fact of alternative modes of reading disablement which contribute to broadening and diversifying knowledge of its complexity as a topic and provide access to other forms of it, as understandable experience. Furthermore, disability is depicted in the selected novels as African experiences of colonialism which has broaden and enriched existing theoretical perspectives which have proceeded from narrower and geographically (and ideologically) more restricted contexts. As Barker (2011: 19) observes: Postcolonial disability narratives can also act as a check on the totalising tendencies of disability discourses, both oppressive local construction of disability and the imported Western interpretive frameworks, from which Disability Studies usually operates. Barker indicates here that the challenge is not only to Western definitions of disability, but also to oppressive local constructions of disability, or what Achebe (1988: 148) terms as fictions that are malignant.

Furthermore, this study approaches disability from several angles, the first chapter, through the lens of history establishes that disability is universal and age-long. The second chapter which reviews literature showcases different opinions about disability in literary works. In the third chapter, the methodology used for the research is discussed. Chapter four analyses J.M Coetzee's depiction of disability in *Foe*, *Waiting for the Barbarians* and *In the Heart of the Country* drawing attention to the highly discriminatory world of apartheid South Africa. Coetzee by depicting Friday as autistic in *Foe;* the judge as mad through the power of the state in *Waiting for the Barbarians* and Magda as insane due to patriarchal oppression, challenges the disabling effect of apartheid in South Africa. Incidentally, despite the fact that apartheid system of government had been eradicated in South Africa today, however like an incurable disability, its effects on the polity still lingers on.

Chapter four also discusses the African women as doubly disabled and colonised. A critical study of Zaynab Alkali's *The Stillborn*; *The Virtuous Woman* and *The Descendants* reveals how African patriarchal society inscribes disability on African women through various means of oppression such as polygamy, spousal abuse, discrimination, silencing of voices and the likes. In the same chapter four, Aminata Sow Fall's *The Beggars' strike* equates women and beggars in the African society as the subaltern. Women's voices are not to be heard even if they have brilliant ideas and like the beggars they are not to be seen. In essence, Alkali and Sow Fall address the universal problem of the dialectics of masculine self and the feminine other. This attitude disables women psychologically. However, it is apparent that the women discussed in this chapter are not entirely passive recipients of dominant practices and ideas, but strategically employ confrontation, education and sometimes prostitution to combat the situation which disables them.

In the same Chapter Four, Ben Okri's *The Famished Road*; Ngugi wa Thion'go's *Petals of Blood* and Naguib Mahfouz 's *Midaq Alley* discuss disabling environment of the postcolonial African nations which in turn brings about class stratification: The proletariat (the working class) and the bourgeoisie (the employers and the rich class). The working class are labelled as the disabled. Although, the disability of the working class, is not physical but psychological. Poverty, as an agent of disablement, gives

birth to hunger, poor living conditions, crime, violence, prostitution and the likes for the proletariat. Significantly, all the novelists discussed in this chapter have in varying degrees project respectively the working class' reactions to things which disable Africans. It is believed that the disabling conditions and environment inscribed on the working class can be terminated through violence, strike, education and escaping into another environment. This is revealed in the strike organised by Chui and Karega in *Petals of Blood;* the violent protest of the residents of the slums against the rich politicians in *The Famished Road;* the attack launched at the British Army by Abbas Hilu in *Midaq Alley* and the likes.

One of the disillusioned characters in Ngugi Wa Thiongo's *Petals of Blood*, Karega reveals that everyone is a prostitute. The character reiterates that:

> But we do not have to heap insults on others. We are all prostitutes, for in a world of grab and take, in a world built on a structure of inequality and injustice, in a world where some can eat while others can only toil, some can send their children to schools and others cannot, in a world where a prince, a monarch, a business-man can sit on billions while people starve or hit their heads against church walls for divine deliverance from hunger, yes, in a world where a man who has never set foot on this land can sit in a New York or London office and determine what I shall eat, read, think, do, only because he sits on a heap of billions taken from the world's poor, in such a world, we are all prostitutes. (*Petals of Blood, 240).*

The foregoing foregrounds prevalence of disillusionment which seems to have become a major hallmark of contemporary African society. Essentially, as depicted in the postcolonial novels examined, it has been rightly observed that prostitution is a product of neo colonial misrule and neglect. In this study, prostitution is portrayed as disability. Karega in *Petals of Blood* confirms this.

Injustice, marginalisation, dissonance and unjust silence of cheated characters like Friday in Coetzee's *Foe*; the Magistrates in *Waiting for the Barbarians* and Magda of *In the Heart of the Country* further aggravate the disillusionment of the disabled in the interrogated novels. The effects of patriarchal oppression are visible on Li in Alkali's *The Stillborn*; Seytu in *The Descendants* and Wanja in *Petals of Blood.* Li

marries Habu Adam at a tender age in order to escape the disabling atmosphere in her home. Habu Adam will later disable her emotionally. Seytu is forced into early marriage at age twelve and she later suffers from Intro Vaginal Fistula from her first husband who later abandons her.

The neo colonial African society portrayed in the selected novels is buried in poverty. The wealth is in the hands of a privileged minority with an unending thirst for wealth and material gains. Living standards are steadily deteriorating under neocolonialism, wages are insufficient to provide for the people's basic needs. In postcolonial Africa, the leadership through greed and neglect creates acute poverty in the lives of the citizen. This challenge which is depicted as disability is given primacy in all the selected novels. Contrary to the stereotypical opinion that urban areas are problem-free without unemployment or underemployment, Ben Okri's *The Famished Road,* Naguib Mahfouz's *Midaq Alley* and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood* narrate the unfortunate experiences of Azaro's father, Abbas and Karega to challenge the authenticity of the widespread fallacy. The exodus of youths from agrarian communities to the cities in search of greener pastures has far-reacting effects on African society. In a way, all the selected novels in this study take as their thematic focus the foregrounding of the exploitation of the masses by the ruling class, betrayal of public confidence, administrative bureaucracy, highly decadent and socially stratified society that breeds and nurtures exploitation and oppression of the less privileged in society. The urge and passion of the youths to move away from their local communities, abandoning their farmlands for the glitter of the cities have left tales of woes and suffering behind.

At this juncture, postindependence African novels address a wide spectrum of issues surrounding the citizens in the continent especially the disabled. The postindependence experiences of the various African regions subjected to different European colonial systems have had both similarities and variations. African writers from the various regions have reflected postindependence experiences as disabling from different perspectives depending on their regions' specific unique experiences.

5.3. Recommendations

Based on its findings as discussed above, the study recommends the need for African leaders to embrace an all-inclusive system of governance. The study equally recommends more research work in this regard, specially in the area of re-orientation of Africans 'stereotypical attitude towards the disabled. Meanwhile, this study recognises some areas which could be further researched on. These are aspects of disability studies which need to be explored by scholars. Disability studies has witnessed re-orientation of people's attitudes and reactions to the disabled in different societies and nations, hence, this transformation should be adequately researched and pronounced. Seeing the once-colonised nations through the metaphorical lens of disability is not commonly proclaimed in the works of postcolonial writers. This area which has surfaced as a result of postindependence disillusionment in those once-colonised countries should be further explored by researchers. Criticising Children literature and orature through disability studies' lens could also form an interesting area of research.

5.4. Contributions to knowledge

This study has been able to investigate disability in African novels with a view to examining the trope of disability in postindependence African novels as portrayed by disabled characters using the selected primary texts and other texts germane to the study; identifying the disabling factors responsible for the disability in the disabled characters; critiquing how the bodies of the characters are marked as able or disable.

It is established that disability is inscribed on the bodies mainly by society and not medically. It is the society that gives various tags and labels to disability. In many African societies, what is assumed or perceived as disability may not be read as disability elsewhere. For instance, Westerners regard polygamy as abnormal while this is not so in African society. Through the lenses of disability and sociological theories, the study emphasises the desire of the disabled characters to retrieve and reassert their repressed and ruined personhood, livelihood and destiny, collective and combinatory consciousness.

The study has, therefore, contributed significantly to the analytical and interpretative exploration and critical reception of postcolonial African novels as it investigates a unique phenomenon through literary creativity of postcolonial African novelists. More importantly, the study is a worthy contribution to the field of Disability Studies.

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