

**COMIC FLUIDITY: RETHINKING ABLEISM IN AHMADOU
KOUROUMI'S *ALLAH IS NOT OBLIGED***

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ABSTRACT

Exclusionary practices ensnaring disabled persons are evidences of man's ill orientation on what it means to be human. In this critical treatise, comedy and critical disability studies question the basis for the perfect affirmation of being. This amalgam of perspectives considers it irrational for the society to craft 'perfection of the body' as a paradigm for humanness? Contending this disorder in a fluid universe, the comic orientation of ableism subscribes to the notion that man can make and unmake circumstances that threaten his existence. It connotes the idea of fluidity which ponders on the boundless possibilities of the human spirit irrespective of bodily impairment. As a counter hegemonic discourse, the social model of critical disability studies dismisses the negative connotations of disability by bringing up the concepts of fluidity and transgression to establish disability as a positive identity, thus creating a new society that is responsive to the yearnings of freedom from the disabled. As seen in Ahmadou Kouroumi's *Allah Is Not Obligated*, from the comical perspective, reveals that the disabled characters, are not deterred either by oppression or the disability itself. Rather, they are fluid in moving across the boundaries of otherness to achieve heroic feats. In its deconstructive nature, this reading discards the negative reception of comedy by disability theorists by incorporating it into a larger emancipatory discourse. The resolve of this paper is that the text is a comic one that critiques the ideology of ableism from the theoretical provisions of critical disability studies. The tandem binding comedy and critical disability studies is located **in** their quest for the emergence of a new human community where life is celebrated, thus, echoing Northrop Frye's mythos of spring. Hence, this reading of Ahmadou Kourouma's *Allah Is Not Obligated* affords the rethinking of ableism, from the lens of critical disability studies and comedy.

Keywords: Ableism, Critical Disability Studies, Humanness, Exclusionary Practices, Fluidity, Transgression, Comic Orientation

Introduction

The literary text as an object of knowledge calls for philosophical enquiries upon itself. Consequent upon this, Amaechi Akwanya suggests that everything in the world and outside can be reflected upon poetically (*Literary Criticism*,50). Hence, philosophy commands the designation of reflecting on the phenomena represented in the literary work. Pondering on the intrinsic nature of Kouroumi's *Allah Is Not Obligated*, it is considered a comedy. And, comedy of "all arts thwarts thought itself. And it is this very aspect of subversion that...ethical theories [insist] on comedy as constituted to expose and correct folly" (Akwanya, *Discourse Analysis*, 50) Ableism is the implied folly in this instance. Going extraneous, this work then reflects poetically on disability as a social and cultural phenomenon.

Quite commendably, disability has been grossly represented in literary works. In the epoch of Greek civilization, the works of Sophocles undertakes the representation of the blind Tiresias who is considered a "sage archetype" (Igbokwe, 240), to announce the interest of literature in disability as a phenomenon. Considered as a prophet, Tiresias is a strategic character in the plot construction of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King and Antigone*. Coming down to the African world, J.P Clark's *Song of a Goat*, maximizes the character of Orukorere, a mentally unstable soothsayer, despised just like Tiresias, but plays a central role in the play. Furthermore, the eponymous Madman, in Chinua Achebe's "Madman," is another representation of disability in African fiction which inaugurates intellectual scrutiny on the issue of cognitive disability. With these aforementioned instances, the relevance of disability can no longer be disputed in literary studies.

Going forward, Kourouma's *Allah Is Not Obligated*, undergoes what Chukwumezie and Odoh calls "logical autopsy" (4). Our postmortem eventually reveals the text's comical undergirding to be providing a platform for critical disability studies to critique the inhumanity of men towards the disabled. Therefore "comedy represents the worse types of men ...in the sense that the ridiculous is a species of ugliness or badness" (, *the Art of Poetry*, 37). These men of baser repute are men who walk with a parochial mindset that esteems the ideology of ableism. Hence, it appears ridiculous and noxious to wield that kind of mindset that appropriates humanity on bodily perfection. Also, part of the burden of discourse is to blur the boundaries existing between critical disability studies and comedy; thus, creating an enabling atmosphere for the progress of human civilization. As such, a collaborative deconstruction will ensue as both share the attitude of 'critique.' Also, the war setting of this text makes it possible

to consider ableism as symbolic of war such that the movement of necessities in the text calls for strategies of mitigation which will automatically usher the society into a new phase of existence where ableism is minimal. This is what Frye considers as the critical goal: “a movement from one kind of society to another” (163).

The field of critical disability studies investigates the lived experiences of disabled characters in literary texts. The predominant findings, especially from the social model of disability, hinge on the appropriation of disability as a socially constructed phenomenon. Tobin Siebers observes that “as a discipline, disability studies contain these contradictory usages and attitudes about disability, developing its own understanding of disability as a positive contribution to society and both critiquing and comprehending society’s largely harmful views about disability” (5). This theoretical disposition is concerned with exposing society’s exclusionary practices which is not only risible, but opens up avenues of thinking about the body and whether or not it affects being the perfect human.

This illogicality of according human status corporeally also provokes comedy into disability studies, whereas it has been despised by scholars of disability. This inattention to comedy has been an inconspicuous oversight as regarding the discursive conventions of disability studies. However, this indifference is not novel. It dates back to Plato and Aristotle’s theorizations which trivializes comedy on the basis of lack of seriousness on subject matter. Hitherto, modern philosophers seem not to have appropriately reconsidered the subject of comedy; notwithstanding, recent intellectual dispensations have eroded this unjustifiable apathy on comedy. Justifying the relevance of comedy, the publications of Northrop Frye, Amaechi Akwanya, Allison Wilde, Dmitri Nikulin, George Meredith, Susan Langer, Henry Bergson, Ernst Cassirer and other scholars reestablish comedy for philosophical reflection. Little wonder why Dmitri Nikulin sees comedy “as the very dramatization of philosophical reasoning and, as such, deserves a central place as a subject of philosophical enquiry” (vii).

It is also pertinent to note that comedy is not peculiar to the dramatic genre alone. In his *Discourse Analysis and Dramatic Literature*, Akwanya reiterates Rodway’s idea that “comedy may take place as drama as well as narrative” (50). This initiates a paradigm shift from the primitive conventions of comedy which focuses solely on the dramatic genre. Moving beyond the dramatic genre, comedy inaugurates discourse in prose fiction. In this way, *Allah Is Not Obligated*, is said to be a comic text based on certain identifiable patterns of comedy which plays out in the work; its social implication in the humanistic mode of thought is where critical disability studies (CDS) dwell.

Allah is Not Obligated, is comic in its attitude of projecting a temporarily disordered universe which bespeaks tragic possibilities inherent in ableism, until it is deconstructed. In this way, there is an alternating sequence of comic and tragic possibilities in the work, but with the creation of a new human community, comedy prevails over the tragic potentials. Invariably, “in this final resolution, the spirit of comedy reasserts itself, and transcend[s] [its] own tragic experience” (*Discourse Analysis*, 61). This is manifest, as the story intersects the pre-war, war and postwar epoch within the plot configuration. The postwar setting enunciates an exodus from the war(ableism), and eventually culminates to the creation of a new human community where the disabled gains freedom to operate unhindered by social orientations of disability. The symbolic implication is that life prevails over death, therefore, bringing the myth of spring to fore.

Fluidity bringing to bear a sense of movement from death to life solely facilitates freedom from ableism. Going with this idea that disability is a fluid state, this paper inaugurates comedy into the larger discourse of disability studies. Comedy comes to assert its claims of emancipation, an enterprise shared by disability scholarship. This emancipation is only realised because the universe is not rigid. Akwanya, while consenting to this, asserts that comedy is a space “where the universe exists for man, and responsive to his needs; so the nets that people are caught in are of their own making, or of the making of their kind (*Discourse Analysis*, 51). Man’s escapist instincts enables him to transgress the disabling boundaries of otherness, which is socially harnessed.

Trailing this path of escapism, Susan Wendell deconstructively pinpoints the manifestations of ableism in her *The Rejected Body*, thus, identifying stigma, stereotypes and cultural meanings as the constitutive elements of cultural construction of disability (44). Obviously, from this perspective, it is not primarily the medical condition of being disabled that brings woe on the disabled, it is rather the product of believe systems arising from cultural orientations of disability. These challenges come under the rubrics of tragedy of the disabled encapsulated in the word ‘ableism.’ Siebers interprets “ableism as the preference for ablebodiedness. At its most radical it defines the baseline by which humanness is defined, setting the measure of body...that gives or denies human status to individual persons” (8). The primal thesis of this paper comes from an ethical perspective that places a demand on men to reconsider their parameters of measuring humanness. The endpoint is an ethical reconsideration of possible inclusionary practices that mitigates ableism. Linton aptly considers this angle that “shows to what extent the ideology of ability collapses once we “claim

disability” as a positive identity, (**Linton** qtd in Tobin Siebers 11). Synonymously, transgressing the barriers of disability is simply to think disability anew, viewing it as one of the variations of the forms of human subject. Specifically, in this case, the object of study remains the literary work of art which reflects poetically upon the world.

In this text, we find disabled characters who direct our gaze on the inconsequentiality of the body in according human status to characters. These characters are entangled in the webs of hegemony until they begin to think and feel differently about disability. We see Yacouba, the itinerant self-acclaimed spiritualist who turns the unfavorable civil war situation to a juicy venture. Analogously, Maman, the child Narrator’s mother, shifts the discussion to a feminist conception of disability where she transgresses the cultural stereotypes of disabled women. Finally, the amputees of Sierra Leone civil war also provide illumination concerning the resilient spirit of man in the face of adversities.

In any case, Ahmadou Kourouma’s *Allah Is Not Obligated* has been read by critics in varying ways. The most observable pattern in these readings is the quest for truth that is laden in the work. Cecilia Addei argues the text to be a rendition of Birahima’s quest to establish the absurdities that characterize the existence of man, especially in a war scenario. With Addei’s approach in view, the text locates its truth in the meaninglessness of man’s existence on earth. For her, the text employs the tools of satire and humour to ridicule the absurd world. Maintaining this momentum, Samson Abiola investigates the use of humour and satire as stylistic devices that enable the author project the dire state of postcolonial African nations. Clamping down the misleading believe of the innocence of child soldiers, Onyekachi Eni et al, consider *Allah is not Obligated*, as a touchstone that actually confirms that child soldiers are not innocent as they appear to be. Their study concludes that child soldiers are motivated by gains and immunity that the military offers. Whereas, Simon Kofi Appiah and Mawuloe Kodah views the text form the angle of religious irrationality and its harmful effects on human progress. As a matter of fact, this paper finds a Launchpad from these readings. Abiola and Addei, for instance affirm the text’s comic potentials. In any case, none has seen it in the perspective of the intersection of comedy and critical disability.

Further Encounters with the Ideology of Ableism

Ableism hosts similar capacity to concepts like racism and sexism. They announce the indices of oppression and segregation on the basis of bodily difference. Contending with this

idea, Campbell makes it clear that “Ableism is a network of beliefs, processes and practices that produces a particular kind of self and body (the corporeal standard) that is projected as the perfect, species-typical and therefore essential and fully human, (44). The driving force in the ideology of Ableism is that its principle for being human is dependent on the perfection of the material body. If the body is maimed in any way, that body is considered a curse. Therefore, this prejudice demeans the human status of disabled characters in this text. This ideology approaches disability from the medical standpoint which views disability as a pathological issue. Siebers argues that “ideology creates, by virtue of its exclusionary nature, social locations outside of itself and therefore capable of making epistemological claims about it” (8). The prejudicial notions of Ableism operate as exclusionary social attitudes that communicates disgust for the disabled body. The notions of ability and disability are the backbones of ableism. Consenting to this, Wendell as earlier mentioned proposes that stigma, stereotypes and cultural meanings are all related and interactive in the cultural construction of disability (44).

The trio, stigma, stereotypes and cultural meanings constitute the ‘othered’ view of disabled humans. The society already disavows disabled bodies, in that It formulated certain myths and narratives that are culturally relevant to the stereotypical views of the disabled as less human. These myths concretize them as the imperfect others (*The Rejected Body*, 63). Working in sync, stigma is the end goal of both cultural meanings and stereotypes. For instance, the Obatala Myth, a cultural account, on the mystery behind the creation of disabled persons, enunciates a negative view of disability. Negatively rendered, this mythology makes a proposition that Obatala, the Yoruba god of creation, created the disabled humans under the influence of alcohol. Therefore, it does not appear surprising the less human quality accorded to disabled characters. Some of these myths create a distaste for associating with the disabled. Hitherto, our understanding of the ‘stigma and otherness’ of the disabled is located in the symbolic meanings of disability.

On the other hand, also inclusive in the configuration of an ‘othered’ view of disability is ‘the norm of rational maturity (Alcott, 22). Alcott coins the expression “rational maturity” to communicate how western enlightenment theory monopolizes epistemology to promote exclusionary practices against the disabled. In his in depth study on stigma, Erving Goffman opens up avenues of thought that enables an understanding of the othered view of disability. Goffman reveals that stigma, “then, is really a special kind of relationship between attribute and stereotypes” (*Stigma*, 6). It is only actualized in the presence of an observer who discerns

the impairment and stereotypes it as a negative attribute. This attribute discredits the victim with either of the three negative attributes identified by Goffman. Thus:

Three grossly different types of stigma may be mentioned. First there are abominations of the body - the various physical deformities. Next there are blemishes of individual character perceived as weak will, domineering or unnatural passions, treacherous and rigid beliefs, and dishonesty, these being inferred from a known record of, for example, mental disorder, imprisonment, addiction, alcoholism, homosexuality, unemployment, suicidal attempts, and radical political behaviour. Finally, there are the tribal stigma of race, nation, and religion, these being stigma that can be transmitted through lineages and equally contaminate all members of a family.

Apparently, abominations of the body, blemishes of individual character and tribal stigma of race, nation, and religion are the discrediting or discreditable valences of stigma. To discredit an individual through either of these is to perceive the person as inferior because of an observable difference in the body. Hence, stigma exists to spoil an identity. This spoiled identity manifests as the prejudices on disability.

Fluidity, Transgression and the Emergence of a New Human Community: The Melting Pot of Comedy and Critical Disability Studies

Melting pot in this case connotes the homogeneity of comedy and critical disability studies. This blend of viewpoints will aid the deconstruction of the harmful ideology of ableism. Working in this trajectory, Dmtiri Nikulin's *Comedy, Seriously*, draws significant attention to the potency of engaging comedy in philosophical reasoning. The 2014 book goes far to reawaken the interest of academic scholarship in the unjust marginalization and stigma that has laden the comic genre on the claims of vulgarity. Using the familiar analogy of identity studies to show the biases in the reception of tragedy and comedy, hence, the former is regarded as the self, while the latter is the 'other'. Aristotle makes this plain in his *Poetics*, 'Now we [are aware] of the successive stages by which tragedy developed, and all of those who were responsible for them; the early history of comedy, however, is obscure, because it was not taken seriously' (37). In a bid to preserve ego, the classical man superimposed vulgarity as a feature of comedy to shield away the revolutionary dimension of comedy which critiques and subverts the folly of man. As an ally to comic apathy, Plato also dismisses comedy because it seems irrational to him to represent man in such level of ignominy.

On the contrary, while Nikulin esteems the importance of comedy to philosophical endeavors, he claims that ‘Comedy is a way of resolving life conflicts so that the solution is satisfactory and commonly acceptable. Its solutions promote human well-being as being together with other people. Comedy must resolve a current conflict; just as dialectical argument must solve a current problem (50-51). It is at this juncture that we begin to look at Akwanya’s conception of comedy as constituting a fluid universe where challenges are always overcome. It intersects with Frye’s mythos of spring where the goal is to enable the emergence of a new human community where life is celebrated. Comedy, in this sense resolves the problem of ableism, by suggesting a fluid turn towards an inclusionary and just society where the center or margin is not static. Hence, the privileged position is open to anyone willing to occupy. It only requires the exercise of superior versions of thought. A situation that ignites one to think differently about disability, in other words, it is a change of mindset, a new habit of thought. When these conditions are met, the body ceases to pose a challenge to the humanity of the disabled.

In rethinking ableism, a consciousness of the body as a servant to the human spirit is of utmost importance. This assumption erects philosophical premise to show that man is not in any way limited by disability. Bearing this burden of emancipatory discourse, in this instance focusing on disability, comic fluidity ‘presupposes purely man-made social reality, or at any rate, one whose complication is brought about by action measurable to that of the characters’ (*Discourse Analysis*, 54). This purely man-made social reality refers to the social constructions of disability. These circumstances are purely external to man, with this in view, it happens that man is governed by his faculties, the mind, making it impossible for circumstances to overshadow him. All these possibilities of the mind exist because the universe is fluid, and can shift borders to adapt to change.

The fluid universe is palpable when the mind is able to think in a way that transgresses the dominant social thought pattern. As a result, orchestrating “the happy ending...[which] marks the actual achieving of restoration which every comedy implies as a possibility”. This happy ending is for the disabled. To perpetuate this, the master narratives of ableism have to be hewn down. This is because ableism exploits the instrumentality of logic and reason to thrive and further sever human progress. The mind is used here to craft the master narrative that victimizes disabled characters. What seems obvious is that the route to dissolving this parochial mindset will also begin from the mind. Arguing this with an intent on deconstructing the strongholds of ableism, Allison Wilde observes that logic is self contradictory. It is a double

edged sword. The European enlightenment theory and some cultural narratives on disability constitute these master narratives that serve as the logic of precedence that justifies ableism. Invariably, Wilde prioritizes comedy as the other edge of the sword of logic which will subvert the master narratives of ableism. From a close citation to multiple scholars, he concludes that:

The value of comedy for undermining and ‘revealing the precarious absurdities on which rationality rests...puts it in a favourable position for questioning notions of normality, abnormality, ideas of difference, and so on. This gives [comedy] a crucial place in the deconstruction of ableism and disablism. (29-30)

Obviously, Wilde is reechoing the critique of comedy as a resource to expose the falsity of the absurd beliefs of ableism. It questions and undermines the logic that aids the proliferation of ableism. It condemns the irrationality of logic in establishing disability as a negative identity. It pokes fun at the myopic nature of logic in not coming to terms with the fact that the body is not the sole essence of man. Man is a spirit and this defines his existence. The body, as earlier stated is a mere servant to the human spirit. Believing on the superiority of the form(spirit) over the matter(body), the philosophical premises of Plato also confirms that: “form (morphé or eidos) is a transcendent notion and a pure essence, which is not encountered in experience, but is only grasped by the mind. Matter is the antithesis, and refers to all sensible objects’ (Akwanya, Verbal Structures, 220). The human body which is subordinate to the spirit is the matter, hence the real essence of man is grasped transcendentally. In other words, the body is an imitation of the real, it is a distortion of the spirit. Standing on this perspective, disability is then in no way an issue to the humanity of any man.

Rethinking Ableism in Kouroumi’s *Allah is Not Obligated*

The war setting of the novel paints a scenario of tragic necessities, which symbolically connotes ableism. Ableism itself is war on the disabled. Tribal wars in Sierra-Leone and Liberia presents a disordered universe that strives for the restoration of order. In the same way, the social reception of disability presents an imbalance in human relationship which needs to be addressed. The narrative is just the story of disorder and restoration of order of newer sort. This resurrection of order is only palpable when the disabled can be seen as proper human beings. It is possible because ableism is a mindset and can be addressed within the reach of man. It requires a change of perspective.

The tribal war as a symbol of ableism, is a humanly generated course of event. It is a social reality that springs out of man's inordinate ambition for power and influence. The foundation of these wars stem from a parochial mindset. This mindset proliferates the career of division and segregation of all sorts which sets the pace for ableism. It subtly manifests in ethnic and tribal schisms such as; the Krahn's and the Gio's, Niangbo and Sanniquelli, NPFL and ULIMO, and the Kamajors and the Kabbah's. The entire war, military coup's and counter coup are motivated by a desire to surmount oppression. This is where CDS and comedy sets in to bear the burden of emancipation. Appropriating the text as an aesthetic of subversion, both theoretical approaches seek to surmount ableism. Aforementioned, the war itself is already symbolic of ableism and as such, needs to be upended through the emergence of peace. To ingrain this social harmony and fuel integration, the actions of these disabled characters are considered critiques of ableism. Quelling ableism by their social conducts, Yacouba, Maaman, and the Sierra Leonian amputees innovate superior thinking patterns as systems of subversion. They seek for refuge in a superior perspective about their humanity and this aids their freedom, that is the emergence of a new human community. They initiate this critique by questioning the validity of this social unevenness. Their actions are indices of critique which aims to disprove and disorientate society's preference for able bodies. Most of these actions asks and responds to this implied ethical question -Why should we [the disabled] be considered lesser humans?

Answering this question, Yacouba, Maaman and the **Sierra** Leonian amputees appear in the ideal comic spirit to navigate the fetters of ableism. Yacouba, for instance is unhindered by the limp he sustains in an auto crash. Instead, he uses it to take advantage of the war and postwar situation in living a happy life. Nevertheless, his life is at some point mangled by this othered view on disability. Giving an insight on this, the child narrator reveals that "Yacouba had a limp, that's why they called him the crippled crook" (Kourouma, , 35). Calling him a 'crippled crook' designates abominations of the body and blemishes of individual character. Thus, he is discredited and as well discreditable with such undesirable attribute. The society wants to capitalize on it as an edge to undermine his humanity.

Resiliently responding to this social stimuli, Yacouba devices itinerancy as his strategy of transgressing the boundaries of ableism. He poses as a spiritualist to gain access to the revered warlords who eventually immunizes him from the social consequences of disability. Unarguably, he stands on the same height as a "sage archetype" with Tiresias in Sophocles *Oedipus Rex*. Yacouba's actions can also be read as the survival and revenge motif of a disabled

character who thinks differently about disability. This, in other words, places him at the helm of affairs in the war zone. He prepares charms for the soldiers, and fortifies them against predators. Considered as an oracle of the gods, he is placed above the soldiers and warlords who are not maimed in any way. With this, Yacouba's disability no longer matters, so long as he remains valuable to the system, he is not less human. This level of freedom from ableism is inspired by Yacouba's comic spirit. This relative, new human community for him is the fruit of an understanding that he wields.

Maaman, the child narrator's mother, also suffers much from the cultural meanings, stereotypes and stigma of disability. The narratives from her birth, like that of Oedipus, already concludes her to be fated for a miserable life. Growing into maturity, she becomes a victim of cultural reception of disability. The prophecy given on her birth manifests when Moussokoroni afflicts her with abscess as a consequence of her unwillingness to marry her son. Implicitly, this is a similar pattern that runs across Aeschylus's *Prometheus Bound* where Hera disables IO to render her unattractive to Zeus. The seemingly dividing line between both texts is that Moussokoroni's ambition is to consummate a relationship, whereas Hera's is to sever. Their point of concordance is a uniformed believe that disability can make the less of a human. In this revengeful action, Moussokoroni unconsciously reveals this ideology to be the coordinates of her mind. Explicitly, her believe that afflicting Maaman with abscess will make her unattractive to men is founded on ableism. Consenting to this this, Wendell asserts that:

Physical imperfection is more likely to be said to spoil a woman than a man by rendering her unattractive in a culture where her physical appearance is a large components of a woman's value: having a damaged leg probably evokes the metaphorical meanings of being 'crippled' which includes helplessness, dependency, and pitifulness (43-44)

While Wendell's claim looks very realistic, the actions of Maaman disproves such orientation. In a bid to enforce her subservience to this orientation, the Malinké tribe further compounds her stigma through allegations of witchcraft and 'soul eater'. These socially regulated responses to her condition are comedy as representation of the worse state of men (mindset, believe systems and actions) in the society. Instead of accommodating her as a human being, the society resorts to stigmatizing her. This state of society's mental depravity is seriously ridiculed by comedy and critical disability studies. This is achieved by representing characters whose actions undermine dominant social ideology. Built in this order of subversion, Maaman proves

to be unhindered in marriage and procreation, something similar to all women. Even with the disappearance of Birahima's father, Maaman does not lose her feminine fervor. Her healer, Balla, still finds her attractive for sex and procreation. In this way, she disappoints the expectations of Moussokoroni and the larger society over her existence. In spite of her painful death, she walked in the ideal comic spirit to overcome the hurdles set for her by the society. The success of her motherhood places her at the same level with other female characters like, Moussokoroni, and grandmother who are not disabled. Therefore, death, cannot be read as triumphant over her because both the able and disabled are vulnerable to it.

Similar to what Moussokoroni does to Maaman, Foday Sankoh's politically motivated action of chopping off the hands of Sierra Leonian citizens images his own avowal of ableism. Reflecting on the possible means of securing his political interest, "the solution spontaneously comes to his lips in a simple slogan: 'no hands, no elections'. It was obvious: someone with no arms couldn't vote. All Foday Sankoh had to do was cut off the arms of as many people, as many of the citizens of Sierra Leone, as possible (Allah Is Not Obligated, 119). Foday Sankoh's confidence rests on social and cultural preference for able-bodiedness, such that any bodily shortcoming disenfranchises an individual. This pattern of thinking is in all fairness ridiculous and bad. It is a problem that calls for resolution. Yet, contrary to Foday Sankoh's expectations, these amputees still find their way to vote in the elections. Sustaining a superior believe system, their disability is not an enough excuse to stay bound. On the same note, Prince Johnson, one of the War Lords in Liberia, commits similar crime of amputation. He takes advantage of an already existing ideology to exploit the American Rubber factory by kidnapping and maiming some of their workforce. Rendering so many armless, Prince Johnson joins the league of individuals who embody a collective ideology of the society. At the slightest instance, these characters tend to deny such mindset, but their actions already speak much about that. It is the movement of these events that sets in the career of a new community which comes after the war. The reconciliatory interference of ECOMOG and other peacekeeping missions from Nigeria at the end of the narrative connotes the triumph of life over death, hence the myth of spring takes precedence. At a symbolic level, these peacekeeping missions are the proliferations of thought patterns that disavow ableism. It is under this atmosphere that the full metamorphosis of the disabled takes place in the lives of Yacouba as an expansive character.

...Yacouba and Sekou. The big-time [merchants] were very happy. The folds of their trousers were heavy with purses full of gold and diamonds and the doctor

had promised to help them in Boundiali so they could get their birth certificates changed. They could get new identity cards so they could openly practise their trade as money multipliers in Abidjan (150).

Changing of birth certificates implicates a new identity that ceases to victimize the disabled. Consequently, freedom becomes palpable as Yacouba is allowed full time practice of his craft even after the war. This is the motivator of his happiness which ideates a happy ending.

On a last note, as regarding the inconsequentiality of the body in according human status to an individual, an awareness that old age and natural disasters can also disable is of much importance in uprooting the strongholds of ableism. Referring to this, Wendell agrees that 'much disability is created by the violence of invasions, wars, civil wars, and terrorism, which cause disability' (36). Disabled personalities in the text were formerly at one point able-bodied, but wars and other disasters altered the state of their bodies. This is factual in that Yacouba's limp develops after his involvement in an autocrash. but with a superior level of understanding, he goes on triumphantly to navigate through life., Maman, Sierra Leone amputees, and the entire war casualties were initially perfect from the lens of ableism, but unforeseen circumstances reconfigure their bodies. Does this bodily change alter their humanity in any way? The obvious answer is no, because all of them were able to perform human and superhuman deeds.

Conclusion

This paper has pondered on the problematic of a habit of thought that victimizes the disabled. It is an ideology that manifests as exclusionary practices that undermine the humanity of the disabled. These actions are commensurate to the beliefs of Meekosha and Shuttleworth: "politics inherent in disabled people's lived experience and the multiple socio-cultural factors that can constrain their agency" (65). This research obviously discerns ableism in the lives of the Yacouba, Maaman and Sierra Leonian amputees. Nevertheless, they mitigate this social prejudice by not allowing their background to keep them on the ground. In other words, these disabled folks clench to Wendell's claim that "one of the most crucial factor in the deconstruction of disability is the change of perspective that causes us to look in the environment for both the source of the problems and the solutions" (46). These characters, existing in the ideal comic spirit that is characterized by fluidity, gazes in to the environment for a solution to the problem that originates from the environment.

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