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AUTHOR Olabode, Afolabi
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ABSTRACT

The process of embedding, a term used in generative grammar to refer to a construction in which a sentence is included within another sentence, is examined as it occurs in Yoruba literature. Examples are drawn from Yoruba praise poetry, in both written and oral form and within Yoruba novels. Forms of embedding identified include those to draw attention to the subject of a poem, to digress from the main topic and provide brief relief from it, bring humor into a tense circumstance, and make direct or indirect comment on the situation or character. Two additional forms of embedding are noted: the embedding of minor stories within the main story, sometimes using incantation or proverb, and that of poetry. Implications of the analysis for creative writing and for evaluation of an author's work and style are discussed briefly. (MSE)

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STYLISTIC EMBEDDING IN YORUBA LITERATURE

Afolabi Olabode

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Afolabi Olabode

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Linguistic models and concepts can be of immense advantage to the analysis and arriving at plausible interpretation of literary works when they are carefully applied. Since the classical definition by Roman Jakobson (1960) of the nature of poetic language, using linguistic principles and concepts, and the publication of Freeman(1970) and others, the linguists have been more than ever before allowed to have good say in literary discussions and analyses. And, the enterprise has been yielding good dividends to the two disciplines -- linguistics and literary criticism. Although there seems to be some doubts yet among some scholars as to the extent and limit of linguistics in the analysis of literature. The opinion of some scholars has been that linguistic involvement in literary interpretation can only be a means to an end and a half-way house to what can be called a comprehensive literary interpretation (Olabode 1981,1984). In fact, to some literary scholars (see Bateson in Fowler(1966b)), literary interpretation still remains a 'no-go' area for the linguists. However, the fact remains that whatever may be the misgiving about the two disciplines regarding the extent of the involvement of one in the other, linguistic principles and concepts should be allowed in literary interpretation for the purposes of objectivity and justification by verification especially in the present day realisation of the enormous mutual advantages that abound in inter-disciplinary enterprises even among widely related disciplines¹. The case of linguistics in literary interpretation therefore seems more imperative as the two are closely related and deal with the same phenomenon -- language, although in different ways.

In this paper, embedding², a concept or term used in Generative Grammar to refer to the process or construction whereby a sentence is included in another one, is projected on to the analysis and interpretation of the Yorùbá literature³, with a view to identifying what constitutes embedding and the forms it takes in the literature. While the basic concept of

embedding in syntax is restricted to description and analysis at the sentence level, we have used longer linguistic units/constructions like whole poem, a drama text and the whole novel within which we identify the embedded elements in them. It is based on our assumption that a poem, a drama and even a novel is a 'long sentence', in which the literary artist can embed as many elements (that are discernable) as his resourcefulness can allow him, to achieve his aim -- to create a work of art. This is in agreement with Chomsky(1968) that 'there is close relation between innate properties of mind and features of linguistic structure.' Thus in the process of literary creation, whether oral or written, the mind of the author can be likened to a kind of solar system into whose orbit all categories of things are attracted and language, motivation, plot, personality, culture, experience etc. are only satellites of the mythological entity (Leo Spitzer,1970).

One of the prominent features of Yoruba Oríkì (Yoruba praise poetry) is what Olatunji(1984;93-97) called multiple reference to the subject of the oríkì. According to him, a person is referred to by several different kinds of names and the geneology of the subject of the oríkì traced by linking him with his ancestors and offsprings by the use of phrases like: omọ..., baba..., and ọkọ...; 'offspring of...', 'father of...', and 'husband of...' respectively. Usually this is used by the oríkì chanter to whip up the subject's sentiment and emotion as it reminds him of his past, his present and what is expected of him to bequeath to his offsprings. In the process of creating the above feature, the chanter may make use of embedded elements. These can be in form of either sentences or the occasional proverbial or idiomatic expressions. For instance in:

1. ... bí a mọ kóókò orí òkè lójú

Omọ Adúdúbásẹ̀gişogba,

Aríwọnmásàá, yio ga ju ti 'lẹ̀lẹ̀ lọ

(Babalọla 1975:18)

... if one looks at the shrub on the hill with scorn
Offspring of the one who is equally dark as sègi bead,
He that does not run away on seeing them (his enemies)
it would be taller than the one on the plain.

and:

2. Igba abéré kò tókó, ọmọ Adúdúbásègìşogba

Alàmú ọmọ Ayílárá

Afọlábí baba şe'ilẹ

Ajíbíkẹ, igba ìràwò kò tó 'şù

Egbèìndínlógún onírìkíşí, ọmọ Orídìdààmú

Afọlábí

Aríwọnmásàá, gbogbo wọn kò t'Ọlọrun Ọba

(op.cit. Babalọla)

Two hundred needles can't equal a hoe, offspring of

Adúdúbásègìşogba

Alàmú offspring of Ayílárá (He that rolls in relations)

Afọlábí (He that is born with honour), Father-left-property-behind

Ajíbíkẹ, two hundred stars cannot equal the moon.

Three thousand two hundred conspirators, offspring of

Orídìdààmú (He whose presence strikes confusion in others)

Afọlábí

Aríwọnmásàá, all of them cannot match God the King.

(in Ọlátúnjì 1984:95)

where:

bí a mọ kóóko orí òkè lójú, yio ga ju ti 'lẹ̀lẹ̀ lọ,

and the parallel sentences:

Igba abéré kò tókó

Igba ìràwọ kò tóşù

Egbèìndínlógún onírìkíşí, gbogbo wọn kò t'Ọlọrun Ọba

constitute embedded elements in quotations 1 and 2 above respectively. Here, the embedded elements are allusions to an aspect of the life of the subject of the Oríkì-Afọlábí. In them, the chanter is trying to emphasise the fact to the subject that no matter the degree of deliberate act on the part of the subject's detractors or conspirators to look down on the subject, and indeed whatever their number, his social status which indeed is hereditary, cannot be denied. This type of embedded element performs the phatic function (Jakobson, 1960), that is, calling the attention of the subject of the oríkì to:

- a) the fact that he has many detractors (whether real or imaginary)
- b) that his social (high) status although may be despised by many detractors cannot be denied in spite of (a) since it is hereditary and,
- c) that he will certainly overcome the detractors.
- d) comparison based on the imagery of kóoko orí òkè and that of ilẹ̀ẹ̀lẹ̀.

The embedded elements are thus foregrounded and the oríkì is backgrounded meanwhile so as to attract the attention of the subject and his well-wishers, not minding even if a member of such detractors was around. In the context of a live performance of this type of oríkì with this type of embedding, there is always a feed-back as it will have emotional effect on the subject. Thus, it is natural that the subject too will reflect on the embedded sentences and predicate them of his past and present life experiences and so will be emotionally moved such that he will be ready to give out anything as gift to the chanter. As a result, the oríkì chanters always make use of this stylistic embedding to their own advantage especially in live performances. Indeed, this type of embedded elements usually draws out certain possible responses from the subject of the oríkì or his well-wishers in the audience as: Bẹ̀ẹ̀ ni, 'Yes, it is so'; O ẹ̀e é, 'Thank you' in the case of 1) and in the case of 2) one would not be surprised to hear response like: Bẹ̀ẹ̀ ni, wọ̀n ò ló bẹ̀ẹ̀; 'Yes, it is so, they are no match at all.'

In the two examples above, the embedded elements are deletable while the original structure and theme of the oríkì is not disrupted. The embedding is purely a creation of the oríkì artist and the choice of elements to be so embedded depends on different contextual situations and the fact that the artist may want to foreground in situ. Thus any other wise saying can be substituted and so embedded based on the mood, experience, ingenuity, motive and virtuosity of the artist.

Another element that is usually embedded in the Yoruba literary art is what can be called digression. As the word suggests, this type of element almost always may not have direct bearing to the theme of the work, and even when they do, they create some overstatement or boredom. It is observed again that if the element is deleted from the context, no noticeable damage is done to the major work in terms of content and form. Usually they appear in the form of the chanter's/author's comments, interior monologue and sermonization. For instance, we see Qládẹ̀jọ̀ Okediji's own personal comments on the social ills and the wave of crimes⁴ in the contemporary society which his novel, Ajà Ló Lẹ̀rù, is trying to depict, put in the form of an editorial comment of a newspaper thus:

3. Enia nsọnu lọsan gangan, sugbon àwọn
 Qlọpaa kò rí ìranlọwọ kankan se. Olè nfi
 agbara gbowó laarin títì lọsan gbàìgbáí,
 kò sí ẹnì tí ó le dá wọn lẹkun. Ilé ñjọ,
 a kò mọ ẹnì tí ñkun wọn. Omọ nsọnu
 kaakiri, àwọn enia n mu igbo laarin títì.
 Omọbinrin kò gbọdọ dá rìn loju ona leti ìlú...

(pp.61-62)

People get missing in broad daylight, but the Police has no help to offer. Robbers extort on the streets in the day time, there is no one to

check them. Buildings get burnt we know not
who is responsible. Children get missing all about,
people smoke hemp on the streets,
it becomes unsafe for young girls to walk
freely in the city outskirts...

(from Ogunşina, 1992:155)

As if this was not enough a comment on the ineffectiveness of the Police Force to combat the wave of crimes, the author again puts it in the form of an interior monologue of the hero of the novel, Lapade, as:

4. Ta ni tun ku ninu işe Ọlọpa? Enia gidi
ti tan nibẹ. Adebisi ti lẹ...Badaru ti lẹ...
Adenrele ko si mọ, o ti de ni orun... Ailera,
àìgbadun lo jẹ ki Kelebu fişẹ sile. Audu
Karimu nikan lo ku ninu işe Ọlọpa ninu gbogbo
awon ti won jọ nşişẹ pọ latijọ... Nigbati
Komisonna ko rí adan mọ ni o fi òdòdè şẹbọ...

(p.2)

Who else remains in the Police Force? It is now devoid of responsible people. Adebisi has left... Badaru has left... Adenrele is no more, he is dead... Ill-health causes Caleb to leave the job. Of those who were working together before, only Audu Karimu remains in the Force. Since the Commissioner cannot get what he wants, he has to want what he gets

(from Ogunşina 1922:156)

This device is not a monopoly of the novel, it is also common in oral poetry especially the Yoruba Oríkì. For instance, in an excerpt from the oríkì of Aníkúrá⁵, we find a total digression from the praise of the subject of the oríkì to the chanter's own comments on and satire of the

Police on its ineffectiveness in combatting crime and apprehending the principal crime kingpin, Aníkúrá. In the praise of Anikura we have:

5. Ògbójú olè tí ñdábòro
Àgbà olè abàsùnwòngbòòrò
Jàgùdà kékèké lólòpàá Èkó n mú
Aníkúrá n bẹ níbẹ wọn ò le mú un
Bí wọn bá m'Aníkúrá
Owó ñlá
Aşo ñlá
Níí i fi í dí baba wọn lẹnu
Ayìnlá baálẹ̀ jìbìtì
Ayìnlá baálẹ̀ wàyó
Ó gbowó lẹ̀bù
Ó fi dẹ̀wù ẹ̀tù sílé

(Ọlájubu 1977:10)

The great robber that wears fez
The renowned robber that has a long purse
It is petty thieves that the Lagos police can arrest
Aníkúra is there, they dare not arrest him
If they arrest Aníkúrá
Big sums of money
Big garments
That is what he uses to block their father's mouth -- i.e.
bribe them
Ayìnlá past master in fraud
Ayìnlá past master in dishonesty
He stole an lẹ̀bu's money
And spent it to make an expensive ẹ̀tù woven
garment for himself

(from Olatunji 1984:82)

In all the above i.e. 3, 4 and 5, the embedded element's function is merely to elongate the piece, and serve as mere gap fillers. However, in the case of the oral artist as in 5, it serves the additional function of creating enough time for him to remember the forgotten part in an oríkì corpus. This is because as an oral performer, who has to memorise many and various oríkì, he has the tendency to forget the trend and this type of embedding in the form of digression will help to save him from the embarrassing situation of having to look up into the thin air. During the period of creating such embedded elements he can bring in as many of such elements till he is able to recollect and catch up with the line of thought of the main art.

In the case of dramatic texts, digressions usually perform the function of attenuating a hitherto tense situation, when the climax is reached. Thus, a digression in form of an episode is embedded to bring a brief period of relief. The reader/audience can heave a sigh of relief during this time. This is where the playwright, author, or chanter or the director in the case of drama being staged, gives adequate consideration to his audience in his artistic creation. An example from Işola's, Efúnşetan Aníwúrà⁶ pp.31-33 is where a scene is created to illustrate the traditional Yoruba extended family setting and we see the performance of (ìyakò jíjẹ) what can be called extended family domestic jokes. In it, the relations of a woman's husband exchange jokes (which sometimes may look and sound too expensive to a non-Yoruba person) with their cousin's wife. In the case of our example, the ìyakò jíjẹ 'family domestic jokes' is between Tòrò, Akingbade's wife and Ogunniyi, who apparently is a junior cousin of Akingbade.

This type of stylistic embedding may also perform the function of creating humour in a thoroughly tense atmosphere. In the first two novels of Okediji, Agbàlagbà Akàn and Ajà Ló Lerù, one finds this in the self-praises of one of the characters -- Tàfá who always creates episodes to

attenuate the tense situation and create humour by adding various praise phrases to his name. Two of such praise songs he always uses are:

6. Emi Tafa Igìrìpá ọmọ Lawale

Ajáníláyà bí àìlówólówó

Àìlówólówó baba ìjayà

I, Tafa, the powerful one, offspring of Lawale

The-one-that-frightens-one like having-no-money-at-hand

Having-no-money-at-hand, father of fright

or

7. Emi Tafa Igìrìpá ọmọ Lawale

Ajáníláyà bí okùn şòkòtò tó já lówùjọ

I, Tafa, the powerful one, offspring of Lawale

The-one-that-frightens-one like the trouser's belt

that breaks in the public

Similarly, the same character creates some neologisms which are of course a sort of digression to perform the function of creating humour as we see in one of Tafa's discussions with Lapade when he plays on 'mílì' of the English loan word 'family' which is rendered 'Famili' in Yoruba, as if 'mílì' is a possible Yoruba morpheme to generate Yoruba names in:

8. È ti di famili kan na niyẹn. Lapade

ni irọ o, Emi pẹlú wọn kìí ẹ Famili rárá.

Tafa ní, a jẹ pé Ogunmílì niyín, Oyámílì,

Ọşunmílì, Şàngómílì, Awomílì

(Agbalagba Akan, p.170)

You have therefore, become the same family.

Lapade responded, Oh, no, they and I are no

relations at all. Tafa then said, it means

you are Ọgúnmílì, Qyámílì,

Ọsúmílì, Sàngómílì, Awómílì

Here, Tafa uses false derivations to create non-existent words with the effect humour and he trivialises the hitherto serious context.

Related to the above is also the embedding in the form of direct and indirect comment on either the situation or the character. 'usually, the author uses the embedding to amplify, qualify, or express the situation as a kind of imagery for didactic purposes'. The example we shall use here is from *Atótó Arére* where the author presents his comments on the frustration that has always become the lot of the hero of the novel, Alàbá, 'in spite of his determination to succeed through hard work'. In the comment when Alàbá found that all his money had been stolen from his pockets on his discharge from the hospital, the author presents the situation by piling up short parallel sentences to amplify three traditional proverbs to qualify the hero's feelings in almost two full pages. And all through, one cannot but see that the author is padding', in order to occupy space and time. Let us quote just one example of how the proverb:

Ọkéré gorí ìrókò, ojú ọdẹ dá

'The squirrel has got to the top of ìrókò tree,

there is nothing the hunter can do'

is amplified in the book:

9. Ó yẹ inú àpò rẹ wò, àti tẹwù, àti ti
şòkòtò. Kò sí owó kan kan nínu aşọ rẹ.
Ọkéré şẹşẹ wáa gorí ìrókò ganan ni,
ó şẹşẹ wáa gorí ìrókò pátápátá;
ó wáa gorí ìrókò, ọwọ ọdẹ kò le tó o mó.
Ìbọn ọdẹ kò le tó o. Ọgèdè ọdẹ kò le
já a tílẹ. Èpè ọdẹ kò ràn án,
Èbè ọdẹ kò lè tẹ ẹ lórùn, èdè ọdẹ kò le mú un...

He checked all his pockets, the shirt's and the
trouser's. There was no money in his clothes at all.
The squirrel has now climbed the iroko tree;
it has really got to the top of iroko, the hands of the hunter
can never reach it again. The hunter's gun cannot reach it.
The hunter's incantations cannot make it fall down.
The hunter's curse cannot affect it, the hunter's supplication
cannot satisfy it, the hunter's spell cannot have effect on it.

Another common phenomenon in the Yoruba novel is the embedding of stories or story-lets within the main story. Also, in oral literature, the Yoruba *Ayájó* which is a form of incantation, makes use of this type of story embedding by incorporating a myth based on analogy before the incantation is applied to express the chanter's wishes on the target. Bamgboşe(1974)¹⁰ has well described this element in the case of the novels of Fagunwa and Olabode and Ajayi(forthcoming) deal with the same with regard to the novels of Oladejò Okediji. In the case of Fagunwa, one finds the examples of the story of *Ajàntálá* in *Ogbójú Qdẹ* and the four moral stories told by the sage, Baba Onírungbòn-yéúké, in *Igbo Olodumare* which are as of right, each one an already existing traditional folktales integrated into the adventure story of Fagunwa.

In the case of Okediji's novels, he makes use of what can be called *Itàn-dòwe* i.e. a story that turned out to become proverb. An example is *Akọgbatúbaká*¹¹ in *Ajà Ló Lerù* which just elaborates a point which the author wants to impress, namely, stupidity in expending too much effort for almost nothing. Usually, the embedding is used to elongate the story in an attempt to illustrate a point or the theme in the main story. It is also used by the author to make his personal opinion on certain matter known as he can add his own embellishments. However, one can observe that the embedding of this type runs the risk of creating intrusion and

imposition of the author's views on the reader. In the case of the traditional *Ayájó*¹² mentioned above, it is simply created to serve some symbolic function. It is a way to justify the case of the wish of the *Ayájó* chanter by a type of analogical equation, that is, since the result was x in time t, therefore all other conditions being equal, it should be x in time t...n.

As can be guessed, especially when the embedded story is deleted, the main story is not in any way adversely affected. The problem is even more glaring when such stories do not blend properly with the main story and they keep dangling, and even when they serve the illustrative function in the main story, they can be boring. Bamgboṣe(1974:29) commenting on this device in Fagunwa novels says:

The stories and incidents taken from the sources are often never properly integrated into the plot. Most of them are retained as stories to be told by one of the characters. In the story-within-story framework which Fagunwa adopts in his novels, these borrowed stories remain obtrusive and extraneous to the main plot.

However, if storylets are properly integrated and are not frequently used in a novel, the embedding may serve the useful functions of illustration, didacticism and emphasis.

When it is extensively and repeatedly used as in the case of a novel writer, it produces negative function. Thus it brings about the culpable defect of 'inside trading' by the artist and gives the impression that such author is out of creative wits.

Another stylistic embedding especially in the novels is that of characterisational elements, and as expected, they are used for character identification and description¹³. In it, the character's physical appearance is described to the minutest detail. In the traditional Yoruba

oríkì, the subject's physical features and geneology are embedded to achieve appositive functions as Qlatunji(1984) says he is referred to in many different names and ways. Apart from the physical features of either the oríkì's subject or character in the novel, the moral and social status are also described. For example in Aiye Daiye Oyinbo, the hero, Babalọla is described as;

10. Babalọla jẹ abami omọ lati ìgbà èwe rẹ,
Ko nyára sọrọ, ki nyára hùwà, a ma wò su
nígbà púpọ, a sì ma dáhùn ohun díẹ.
Akólòlò ni ... (p.7)

Babalọla is a strange character from childhood.
He is slow in speech and action, very observant
and inquisitive.
He is a stammerer ...

(in Ògúnşina 1992:118)

Poetic embedding is also a common feature in the Yoruba novels. Most of the Yoruba novelists are fond of this. The question as to the propriety of this type of embedding in the novel can be answered by the fact that it just shows that it is difficult to create the artificial separation in the Yoruba literary tradition between prose and poetry. The two go together even in real life situation other than in literary contexts. And as Qlatunji(1984) has shown, in the performance of oral literature, there is always the embedding of various poetic types when one is being performed and also in folktale sessions, there is always the interpolation of songs in the form of leader-chorus or responsorial pattern. And even in social discourses, it is regarded a mark of good communicative competence for any speaker to be able to weave appropriate proverbs, wise sayings and analogies into discussion, hence it is said that 'the proverb is the vehicle of speech.' So, in the Yoruba novels there are occasions where

poems are embedded in the course of narration to either emphasise the point being stated or to give the character a poetic portrait. Thus we find in Işola's Ó le ku, a number of such poems used for the above purpose. An example is;

11. Ani Lọla lẹwà ó yàtò
Lọla lẹwà ó yọ gedegbe
Ká dúdú ká tun máa dán
Ká bùrìn bùrìn, ká dá gòjogòjọ
Ojú bíi t'angẹli
Abitan bii itan afára oyin
Bó o pọo dá a tó Lọla
Iwa rẹ ó tó ti Lọla
Bó o sì pọo níwà tó pọ
Ọgbón rẹ ò le jinlẹ tó tọrẹ mi

(p.35)

Indeed Lọla is beautiful, beyond comparison
Lọla is beautiful, she is imposing
Being black and glossy
Rocking in graceful steps
Facial appearance like that of an angel
Her thighs like the thighs of a beehive
If you claim you are as beautiful as Lọla
Your character falls below Lọla's
If you claim great morality,
Your intelligence cannot be as deep as my friend's own.

Most of the poetic embeddings in the Yoruba novels constitute unnecessary diversion and obtrusion, and they serve only the boring purpose of space filling and time wasting. This is because we feel that whatever the

author wants to do in terms of character portrait can be achieved in the character's various interactions in the story and not necessarily put in the form of a poem. This is also true of the case when the embedding is not properly integrated or is tautologous in content. When it is however properly integrated and gives new information on the course of the story, it serves the traditional useful functions of entertainment and emphasis, which the songs in the folktales perform. This style exhibits its worst occurrence when it keeps dangling in context. One finds this unfortunate style in the case where the author inserts the traditional Yoruba poetic genres like *Èṣẹ Ifa*, *Oríkì*, *Ijálá*, *Èṣà Egungun* etc. in a story merely to show off his familiarity with such traditional poetic genres at the risk of what we earlier on referred to as 'inside trading' or padding.

It is our opinion that the success of any type of stylistic embedding in literature depends largely on the narrator's/author's resourcefulness in harnessing it so that the work can invoke the hearer's/reader's physical (in the case of oral literature), emotional and even spiritual involvement in the course of the literary work and active participation of the latter by sustaining his interest. When properly managed, it may be used to a great advantage by the artist to invoke the empathy of the hearer or reader.

This work has some implications for studies in creative writing in the Yoruba language. Firstly, it can help in providing ways of identifying what constitute the core of a literary piece which can be likened to the super-sentence in syntax. As we pointed out, the core when so identified, keeps the pillar of the text erect. Secondly, and by implication of the above, the embedded element will be identifiable. At this point, the type of element embedded will be ascertained and the function it performs in the text known. Thirdly, and also arising from the second point is the need to know whether the embedded element serves any good purpose in the context or not. The point is, whether or not if the embedded element is

deleted, the remaining part of the work will be affected in one way or another. This also has the implication of using this style for evaluating the artist's work and style. Fourthly, by identifying the embedded elements and knowing which one is used often or peculiar to an artist in his works, the style of a particular writer, chanter or genre can be discerned. And finally, in the teaching and learning of the technique of plottal construction, deconstruction and development, both the teacher and the learner of creative writing will know which, what and when an element can be embedded into the creative works to achieve the desired artistic goal or effect.

NOTES

1. For further details see Freeman, D.C.(1970) 'Linguistic Approaches to Literature'. On the place of linguistics in literary criticism he says "... linguistics is as much entitled to a place in the baggage of the literary critic as history, biography, bibliography or psychology ..." because according to him and quoting Harold Whitehall, "no criticism can go beyond its linguistics." He concludes that "linguistics gives literary criticism a theoretical underpinning as necessary to that undertaking as mathematics is to physics. A good critic is perforce a good linguist."
2. For details, see Crystal,D.(1991) p.120.
3. Here we refer to both the traditional oral literature and the written literature in the language.
4. For more details on the Yoruba Crime Fiction, see Ogunşina,B.(1992) and Adebowale,O.(1994).
5. Aníkúrá was a one-time notorious robber in and around Lagos in the 1940s and he became intractable by the Police then. In fact, a record was waxed to praise him.

6. This is a play based on a historical woman chief in Ibadan who was very rich and had many slaves and even her own army. She was accused of gross cruelty to her slaves, especially the female ones, who she killed on suspecting that the female slave was pregnant. The name calling by the male chiefs might have been a result of conspiracy borne out of envy on the part of the latter. She eventually committed suicide.
7. For a full discussion of direct comments embedded in the Fagunwa novels, see Bamgboṣe, A. (1974) p.70. In one of his comments on the device he says, "This direct method of presenting the didactic elements is unsatisfactory because it is obtusive. The moral comment interrupts the flow of the story and tends to divert attention away from it..."
8. This novel, Atótó Arére is based on the philosophical theme or question of the problem of evil -- where it is difficult to explain failure attending to hardwork, prosperity of the wicked ones and frustration of the honest ones in real human life situations.
9. As Bamgboṣe (1974) has observed in the case of Fagunwa, the quality which Okediji's work has is the powerful and effective use of language which makes the comments less boring. He is able to manage the embedded elements with some good measure of craftsmanship.
10. See Bamgboṣe (1974:105) where he points out the disadvantage of this style in Fagunwa novels. He comments that while the stories that are being incorporated are interesting in themselves, they contribute nothing to the main narrative and that all they do is to "divert attention from it and to give impression that the author is merely 'padding' to increase the length of the novels ... these passages are generally digressions in the narrative."
11. In this storylet, Akogbatúgbaká 'one-who-made-200heaps-and-scattered-them-over', the thoughtless farmer dismantled all the 200 heaps he had made to look for his snuff container when he wanted to have another dose and could not find it in his pocket. Remembering he had a dose at the

start of the day's work, he thought it would be in one of the 200 heaps -- the particular one he did not know. So, he had to dismantle all the heaps starting from the last to the first one.

12. For examples of the Yoruba Ayájó, see Fabunmi, M.A. (1972)

13. For more examples of this type of embedding, see Olabimtan, A. (1969) p.6 where the social status of Badejò, the father of the hero of the novel, Àlàbí is described.

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Afolabi Qlabode
 Dept. of African Studies,
 Osaka University of Foreign Studies,
 Osaka, Japan.