Edgar Nabutanyi

English Department, Stellenbosch University

Fictional Reflections on War and Sexual Violence in Contemporary African Fiction

Abstract

The humanitarian and traumatic toll of children casualties arising out of the recent armed conflicts on the African continent is estimated in the excess of 300,000. This is either as direct armed combatants or auxiliary participants such as porters, spies and sexual partners to the combatants. Given the fact that sexual violation is used as a weapon of war, its impact on the lives of children is not only traumatic, but also raises questions of subverted sexuality that violates both the bodies of children and the ideal construction of childhood as a space characterised by innocence.

In this paper, I investigate Uzodinwa Iweala, Ahmadou Kourouma and Julius Ocwinyo's depictions of child victims of sexual violence within contexts of war in Nigeria, Ivory Coast and Uganda respectively. The respective children: Agu in *Beasts of No Nation*, Birahima in *Allah is not Obliged* and Apire in *Fate of the Banished* are irrevocably damage by the exposure to inappropriate and damaging sexual experiences. In this sense, I argue that the three texts as cultural products not only construct subject formations of childhood in contexts of war, but by foregrounding traumatisation through sexuality, bring the issue to public discourse as a way of dealing with such debilitating trauma in African childhoods.

Introduction

I bring together in this paper two novels set in West Africa with a novel set in East Africa. The core focus of my reading in this paper is that texts that employ affective narrative strategies provide implicit analysis of sexual violence children are exposed to during contexts of war. This in turn provides a reflection on sexual violence that evokes readers' empathy; places the suffering of children during contexts of war in the public sphere for debate and

engages readers' ethical and political responsibility to end the kinds of the often silenced and hidden suffering of children during times of war. Iweala's *Beasts of No Nation*; Kourouma's *Allah is Not Obliged* and Ocwinyo's *The Fate of the Banished* in different ways and using different narrative strategies engage in a fruitful reflection on sexual violence. This echoes John C Hawley observation that *Beasts of No Nation* is one of those recent novels from Africa that "focuses on children and the effects of violence upon them" (22). What is true of *Beasts of No Nation* is true of the other two texts explored in this paper. The reflection on sexual violence in the three texts is effective because of the use of child narrators/protagonists whose perceptiveness and candour enrich the exploration of sexual violence committed against children during contexts of war and mass violence.

Beasts of No Nation which is set in the unnamed West Africa Country is an informative and insightful example of post-1990 African fiction that delves into the horrors to which child-soldiers are exposed to in the multitude of African wars. Employing the present tense and child-like idiom and register, Iweala paints a close-up image of a traumatised child. The beast in the title, with its Greco-Judean connotation of the devil, is a controlling metaphor that gestures towards the inhuman and dehumanising effect of war on children. Similarly, Kourouma's *Allah is No Obliged* which is explicitly set in the West African countries of Liberia and Sierra Leone during the 1990s civil wars, examines the suffering and trauma that children are exposed to during contexts of war and mass violence. The East African novel: Julius Ocwinyo's *The Fate of the Banished* is set in Uganda, an East African country which for the larger part of its post independence history has been engulfed in numerous armed conflicts. Using "banished" as a controlling metaphor, Ocwinyo explores how exposure to violence ostracises Apire from his society. The three novels provide important reflections on sexual violence because, to quote Hron, they utilise the "hybrid space of childhood [...] to address themes that may, in fact, be too large for adult fiction"

(27). Although the three authors are concerned with the exploration of the various forms of suffering that children are exposed to during contexts of war, their reflections on sexual violence child-soldiers are subjected is affectively effective.

This paper is anchored on theories of subalternity and affect as postulated by Gayatri Spivak, Maria Pia Lara and Martha Nussbaum. Although Spivak in her insightful essay "Can the Subaltern Speak" convincingly argues that "in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow," (28) the children in Kourouma's *Allah is Not Obliged;* Iweala's *Beasts of No Nation* and Ocwinyo's *The Fate of the Banished* (who according to Spivak's theorisation would exist in an even deeper shadow) rise above their shadows to reflect convincingly on their experiences as victims of and witnesses to sexual violence. The three children in the selected texts (as witnesses and victims) invite readers to intimately observe the nature and conditions that enact and uphold sexual violence that children have to live with during times of war. This is because the child narrators contradict the conventional expectations that the child must be protected from sexual violence at all cost and that the child cannot speak for himself/herself. In this way, the texts become what Priebe refers to as narratives that explain the unexplainable and "thereby voice our capacity for gestures that touch the sublime even in the most demonic moment" (56).

It should be noted that the three authors approach the task of reflecting on and depicting sexual violation of children during contexts of war differently. For example, Iweala's reflection focuses on the first person reflections of the victim who invites readers to witness his sexual violation. Through the technique of stream of consciousness, Agu places in the public sphere key aspects of sexual violence of children during times of war. His reflections on his experiences of sexual violence underscore the vulnerability of the child, the pain and aberrance of the violation. Through the use of stream of consciousness and first

person narrator, Agu informs readers that the Commandant routinely sodomises him justifying his action by the military code of conduct, saying that that "is what commanding officer is supposed to be doing to his troops. Good soldier is following order anyway and it is order for you to let me touch you like this" (Beast 103). About the pain of the violation, Agu informs readers that even after repeated violation it still feels as painful as if it were the first time. Furthermore, Agu confesses to readers that he does not want to be sexually molested by the Commandant but he is forced to accept the molestation because the "commandant is powerful more than me and he is also sometimes giving me small favours" (Beasts 103). He also compares his sexual liaison with the Commandant to "the way the man goat is sometimes mistaking other man goat for woman goat [...] if you are watching it, then you [know] it is not natural thing" (Beasts 104). Besides, he impresses it upon readers that the sex is painful: describing it as equivalent to placing a fire under his bottom.

Martha Nussbaum convincingly argues that the power of narrative fiction in public judgement is its ability to ensure the convergence of three worlds –the world of the text, the world of the characters and the world of the reader. Nussbaum's argument resonates with Iweala's depiction of sexual violence using a child victim. This because Agu's spatial and experiential portrayal provide a convincing reflection of sexual violation during contexts of war. For example it is a convincingly child voice that tell readers that "my bottom is burning like it has fire in it" (Beasts 104). It is still a child-like idiom and register that creates the pictorial image drawn by Strika of "a man bending down with his hands on the ground and gun and bullet shooting up his bottom" (Beasts 104-5). The combination of a child-like idiom and register with images of fire and the pictorial representation allow Iweala not only to make his child loud and clear in his reflections on the pain of sexual violation, but also evoke readers' empathy as they perceive the child struggling to invent a vocabulary to depict his experiences of trauma. The innovative discursive strategies are further reflected in the

linguistic innovation which allows Agu to innocently compare his sexual violation to a he-goat that mistakenly mounts another he-goat. Ironically what seems to be an innocent comparison that is within the linguistic repertoire of the child is easily perceived by readers as a condemnation of the unnatural sexual experience that a child is exposed to during contexts of war. It is equally important to note that the comparison carries symbolic and allusive reference to the title. The implicitly analytic qualities of the utterance lie in the symbolic allusiveness imbedded in the reference to animals. This is because the reference collapses the Commandant and Agu into animals, albeit one innocent and vulnerable and the other predatory. It is plausible to argue that the two 'he-goats' (Agu and the Commandant) allude to the beasts in the title. The Commandant is the evil beast variously responsible for all forms of inequities. Agu is the innocent and vulnerable sacrificial beast who suffers for the sins of others. It is also important that the reference to the beast in the title is a goat, a beast that in various cultures is construed as a scapegoat. In this sense, readers are made to see Agu as a scapegoat sacrificed because of the failings of the postcolonial state and institutions in Africa. As a scapegoat, Agu automatically elicits readers' compassion. Therefore, the affective and implicitly analytic effectiveness of the image of the beasts in the novel lies in what Sedgwick (2003) calls the "most performative [because] its performativity is least explicit" (6).

Equally implicitly analytic is Agu's innocent revelation that his sexual violation is sanctioned by the military code of obeying lawful orders. Given that Agu's statement is imbued with ridicule and sarcasm, adult readers easily perceive this as a form of corruption and misuse of power by the Commandant to satisfy his sexual desires. In the eyes of readers, it is not a justification but rather a demonstration of how power and authority are subverted during contexts of war to inflict pain and suffering on the unfortunate children caught in the violence. For a child whose life is characterised with all forms of fear, deprivation, constant

danger, little or no food and lack of adequate clothing, exchange of sex for these assumed comforts or its justification under military code, Iweala seems to argue, is unacceptable or a "'wrong' sort of sexual experience for children, violating not only their bodies but also socially constructed ideals of the child who is innocent of sex, work and money" (Montgomery 196). Whereas Agu gives the impression that acceptance of sexual violation is one of the coping and self-preservation mechanisms during contexts of war and mass violence, readers perceive immediately the wrong that has been committed against the child and thus their ethical responsibility is engaged in as far as contemplating what must be done to end such unmerited suffering.

Whereas, Iweala employs a victim of sexual violation who is depicted as an innocent and vulnerable focalier to arouse empathy and pathos in his readers, Kourouma instead uses a cavalierly cocky and insolent narrator/focaliser. Although Birahima gives the impression that he is capable of handling any situation including sexual violation, the tone of the novel demands that readers work through his bravado to get to know the scared and vulnerable child. This is reflected in the opening passage of the novel in which Birahima states that he has used four dictionaries to help him "to look up swear words, to verify them, and especially to explain them. It's necessary to explain because my blablabla is to be read by all sorts of people" (Allah 11). The above passage is a plea by Birahima to readers to understand and empathise with his experiences during contexts of war. It is important to note that unlike Agu whose reflections on sexual violation are personal and immediate, thus acting as a claim for urgency and agency on behalf of the child victim, Birahima's reflection are of two types. He reflects on his own violation and that of other children in the novel.

About his own sexual violation, Birahima adopts the cavalierly cocky attitude. For example, Birahima confides to readers that "the wife responsible for the child-soldiers was called Rita Baclay. Rita Baclay loved me like it's not allowed" (Allah 103). It is clear from

the passage that Birahima is boastful and proud of the interest that Rita Baclay has shown in him. Nevertheless, the implicitly analytic qualities of the above passage lies in two facts: namely that Rita Baclay was in charge of the child-soldiers and that the affection she showered Birahima with was unacceptable. By underscoring the two aspects, Kourouma is placing in the public sphere the forbidden sexual liaison between a powerful person and her subordinate. This means that the bravado and cockiness that Birahima takes in describe this liaison ironically exposes his vulnerability under a predatory woman. In this respect, the revelation is a pertinent reflection on improper sexuality.

Another pertinent reflection on the wrong kind of sexuality is embedded in Birahima's graphic description of his defilement by Rita Baclay. He informs readers that whenever Colonel Baclay was away, Rita Baclay would take him to her hut where she would "coddle [him] with little meals" and after eating "she would kiss my *bangala* over and over and then she'd swallow it like a snake swallowing a rat. She used my *bangala* like a toothpick" (Allah 103-4 emphasis in the original). Unlike Agu who categorically describes his sexual violation as unwelcome, painful and unnatural, Birahima gives the impression that he is happy with what Rita Baclay is doing with or to him. However, underneath the bravado, ironically Kourouma presents an implicit analysis of sexual violation. For example, by referring to the fact that Rita Baclay coddled him with food, he wants readers perceive one of the means used by predators to lure innocent and vulnerable children into sex. Equally significant is the witty and comic reference imbedded in the description that Rita Baclay used Birahima's penis as a 'little toothpick'. This underscores the fact that Birahima is not old enough to have sex with her and therefore, the act—a form of 'using'— is sexual exploitation.

Besides Birahima's own sexual violation, Birahima through his funeral orations reports the sexual violation of other children during contexts of war and mass violence. The

significance of funeral oration as an avenue through which Kourouma reflects on sexual violation is underscored by Birahima's explanation of a funeral oration. He notes that "a funeral oration is a speech in honour of a famous celebrity who's dead. Child-soldiers are the most famous celebrities of the late twentieth century" (Allah 83). Although Birahima's explanation of a funeral oration is given with tongue-in-cheek, they are nevertheless affective and implicitly analytic reflections on the trauma that children are exposed to during contexts of war and mass violence. The bulk of funeral orations are about dead child-soldiers, explaining according to Birahima "how in this great big fucked-up world they came to be [child-soldiers]" (Allah 83). However, four are significant reflections on sexual violation and violence committed especially against the girl child. These are the funeral orations of Sarah, the little girl who is raped in Zorzor, Sita and Mirta. Besides Sarah whose rape and sexual violation takes place before the war, the remaining three girls are raped because wars make it possible for such crimes to be committed.

Using the first person narrator and the innovative technique of funeral orations, Kourouma places in the public sphere for debate the pitiable fates of the girl-child during contexts of war and mass violence. Birahima's description of Sarah's rape is a graphic and informative reflection on sexual violence committed against women and children. Readers are told that a man who pretend to be sympathetic to her plight lures her to a lonesome place and "[forces] her on the ground and raped her. He was so vicious that he left Sarah for dead" (Allah 85-6). It should be noted that Sarah's rape becomes a template that Birahima uses to describe the rape of the other girls. About the unnamed girl of Zorzor, Briahima observes that "one morning, one of the girls was found raped and murdered on the edge of the track that led to the river. A little seven-year-old girl raped and murdered. It was such an agonising thing that Colonel Papa le Bon cried his heart out" (Allah 74). It is with the same emotional intensity that Birahima narrates the rape and murder of Sita. During his sojourn in Sierra

Leone, he reports that "one day a young girl was found raped and decapitated between three labourers' camps. Eventually they found out the poor girl was called Sita and she was eight years old. Sita had been horribly killed in a way you wouldn't want to see" (Allah 181). Furthermore, Birahima reports the rape and murder of Mirta by the Kamojor Warriors at Mile Thirty-Eight. Readers are told that one day a girl is "hunted down by the lecherous hunters who caught her and took her to a cacao plantation. In the cacao plantation they raped her, gang-raped her. Sister Aminata found the girl lying in her own blood" (Allah 183).

Maria Pia Lara in *Moral Textures: Feminist Narratives in Public Sphere* insightfully argues that "the aesthetic and moral interweaving of women's discourse establishes a new view point that profoundly reorders social values and needs" (1). Although Lara's argument is specific to women writings, it is plausible to argue that Kourouma's depiction of and reflection on sexual violence committed against the girl-child during contexts of war and mass violence resonates with Lara's argument. It is unsurprising that it is only the girls that are raped and murdered. The intention of placing these sexual atrocities in the public sphere is as Lara, argues to reorder the social values and needs of society. Kourouma is essentially asking readers to reflect on why rape during war is a weapon directed at girls and women. Such focus, I argue, moves readers to think seriously about measures that can be taken to protect the child during times of war.

Through skilful use of characterisation, description and language, Kourouma artistically present the way forward against the targeting of the girl-child. This is because, besides Sarah whose rape happens before the war, all the other girls are avenged. The reader may have moral qualms with the kind of justice on behalf of the girls that is meted out by Colonel Papa le Bon or Sister Aminata to the alleged culprits. Nevertheless, Kourouma's message demonstrates that someone cares for and is concerned about the welfare of the girl child. Although it is problematic to ascertain whether the right people are punished,

Kourouma shows justice as being done. This is an artistic call upon readers to care for and concern themselves about the plight of numerous girls that are raped and murder in contexts of war and mass violence. Therefore, the creation of eccentric characters like Sister Aminata, Colonel Papa le Bon and Mother Marie Beatrice who not only construct orphanages in which these girls stay, but when they are attacked go a long way to ensure their safety and avenge their death and rape engages the ethical responsibilities of the reading public, each in his/her way to engage in actions that ensure the safety and wellbeing of the girl-child during contexts of war and mass violence.

Martha Nussbaum argues that the role of emotions in public judgement is their ability to make someone imagine a situation of someone different from oneself. This resonates with Kourouma's reflection on sexual violence committed against girls during contexts of war. He is able to engage readers to reflect on this phenomenon by underscoring four aspects of their rape and murder. Firstly, he names each of the girls, i.e. Sarah, Sita and Mirta. Secondly, he uses emotive and evocative language in the description of their respective ordeals. Thirdly, in all the cases he clearly identifies men as the culprits. Fourthly, all the victims are young girls aged between seven and twelve. For example he notes that Sarah was vicious raped and left for dead, Sita's state after the rape and murder was what one wouldn't want to see and Mirta was left in her own blood. The affective impact of the emotive and evocative diction used in these depictions makes the victim an individual whose pain and agency is underscored in the description. Another point that Kourouma underscores is the binary of victim and perpetrator. Whereas the victims are young girls who evoke readers' empathy, the perpetrators are men who in equal measure evoke readers' disgust. This depiction resonates with O'Sullivan's argument that we "cannot read affects, [we] can only experience them" (126). It is plausible to argue that the characterisation, the binary depiction of victims and perpetrators and the emotive and evocative diction enables readers to be affectively connected to the fate of the

victims. In this sense, Kourouma is able to convince readers that such a depiction is a befitting tribute to the victims and also a means towards a more fruitful recovery and reordering of society.

Unlike Iweala who employs the present tense and the first person narrator to give urgency to the plight of the child caught up in contexts of war and mass violence, or Kourouma who uses a cavalierly cocky and insolent narrator as a focaliser of the kinds of trauma children are exposed to during contexts of war and mass violence, Ocwinyo employs the omniscient narrator and flashback as a means of providing a measured retrospective reflection on the impact of sexual violation of the children during contexts of war which "provokes affective response in the readers" (Sadoski, Goetz and Kangiser 322).

Apire is a witness of sexual violence that is possible in the contexts of war and mass violence. This is reflected in the turning point in Apire's life which happens when the state security operatives invade his home, sexually threatened his mother and sister as well as mutilate the body of his dead father. James Berger insightfully argues that "[e]ach text would be, in effect, a site of trauma with which the reader would have to engage" (586). This is true of *The Fate of the Banished* because of the two incidents of sexual violence that Apire witnesses when he is ten. For example, readers are told that the Agent of the state taunts Maria that "Now you're two-that means all five of us can be comfortably accommodated" (Banished 19). He tears Maria's dressing gown leaving her humiliatingly naked in the middle of the room while her children watch. The same fate befalls Betty whose half-slip is embarrassingly removed from her body. The Agent warns mother and daughter that they would not "be able to sit up or walk for several days," (Banished 19) highlights the vulnerability of women during armed conflicts and the use of rape as a weapon. Another episode in the story that is significant for its affective representation of sexual violence is the description of Bruno's mutilated body. Attempting to save his wife and daughter from the

ignominy of rape, Bruno leaves his hiding place in the ceiling and attacks the perpetrators of sexual violence. The sight that Apire sees the following morning is etched in his memory for ever. Apire narrates to his friend and comrade Erabu that the agents of state after killing his father had proceeded to mutilate his body by slicing "off his genitals-scrotum and all- crushed his balls and stuffed the whole lot into his tongueless mouth" (Banished 21).

As a literary representation of sexual violence witnessed by children and an exploration of the impact of such witnessing on the psyche of the child, *The Fate of the Banished* provides readers with an affective and intimate understanding of what it feels like to watch your mother and sister threatened with rape or your father's body horrifically mutilated. This is because *The Fate of the Banished* evokes readers' imagination and places readers beside Apire as he witnesses the sexual violation and disfiguring of his parents. The emotive diction and graphic description demands readers, like Erabu, to interject "The Brutes" (Banished 21). Furthermore, the use of the narrative strategies of the omniscient narrator and flashback allows for a kind of retrospective and reflective engagement with Apire's traumatic experiences and its impact on his psyche. This, I argue, complicates Berlant's dilemma when she asks that "in a given scene of suffering, how do we know what does and should constitute sympathetic agency" (4). For the case of Apire, his experiences of sexual violence evoke readers' sympathy.

Whereas his mother disintegrates as reflected in her drowning her pain and loss in alcohol and later becomes a born again Christian, the impact of these traumatic events on Apire's life is repressed and find expression in numerous acts of violence as variously depicted in the novel. Firstly, he develops apathy to authority as succinctly captured in his retort to Erabu that he would "still fight it if the opportunity presented itself" (FB 22). But the sinisterly significant impact is his unconscious perpetuation of sexual violence, especially to his wife. His wife Florence tells Father Dila that Apire's violence is the kind "he keeps stored

up in his heart and comes out only when you're in bed making love" (Banished 34). It is this repressed violence that explodes with incomprehensive intensity in the dismemberment of Father Dila and Florence. Whereas the crowd of villagers are dumb-fuddled, shocked and bewildered by the intensity of the violence inscribed in the Priest's bedroom, readers have been given a preview of what is likely to happen when children at a young age are exposed to the type of sexual violence that Apire is.

In spite of the different times and geographical contexts of the narratives, the use of affective narrative strategies allows for implicitly analytic reflection on sexual violation during contexts of war. Lara argues that narratives empower the subaltern classes "by performative effectiveness of their claim to recognition and, in doing so they reverse the self defeating image" of the marginalised in society (77). This is true in the case of Iweala, Kourouma and Ocwinyo's reflections on sexual violence in which their child-protagonists are paradoxically victims and competent beings that in various ways expose the often hidden sexual trauma that children are exposed to during contexts of war and mass violence. The fact that the child narrators can explain the nature and causes of their sexual trauma in their respective contexts, demands readers reflection on the convergence of sexual violence and war in contemporary African society as depicted in fictional representations.

Iweala, Kourouma and Ocwinyo's effectiveness in asking readers to reflect on the often hidden sexual violence against children during times of war and mass violence is signalled by their titles. The three titles underscore protagonists whose experiences have been alienated from their societies. For example, the word "banished" in *The Fate of the Banished,* the beast in *Beasts of No Nation* and not Obliged in *Allah is Not Obliged* suggests that the protagonists have been ostracised from their societies. The verb banished, the metaphor beasts and the Quranic allusion "*Allah is not obliged to be fair about all the things he does here on earth*" (Allah 1 emphasis in the original) signal to readers the unease with which the

protagonists exist in their respective societies because of their experiences of sexual violence. The three are skilfully shown as Agu argues standing outside themselves and their societies because of their experience. This depiction calls upon readers to empathetically and ethically engage with the texts and reflect on the nature and impact of sexual trauma on the children. Iweala, Kourouma and Ocwinyo evoke readers' instincts that demand they protect the child victim or at least offer her/him some form of comfort and understanding. This is because the reflection depicted by the child-protagonists in the words of Annie Gagiano "function to validate points about tragic [sexuality] that, if made by an adult observer, might have been less convincing, or suspected of ideological bias" (9).

Another point of convergence in these reflections is the pathos that underscores the fate of the child protagonists. Although Birahima gives the impression that he is capable of handling any situation he finds himself in, the three texts depict vulnerable children who in the words of Birahima live a "cursed, fucked up life" (Allah 5). Therefore, readers are urged to identify with the child protagonists. Agu's argument that he is "standing outside [him] self and watching it all happen" ironically underscores the spatial and experiential locales of the three child protagonists (BN 48). Indeed they exist outside their respective societies and bodies, a state that heightens their vulnerability. In effect, Iweala, Kourouma and Ocwinyo in their depictions are asking readers to take the poor child's side and enact conditions that should address and eradicate their experiences of sexual trauma and violence that target children.

Another significant textual connection among the three authors is their use of child narrators as focalisers of the different forms of sexual violation during times of war and mass violence. The three protagonists are between eight and ten years old. The fact that the three are children and readers' instincts demand empathy and identification with the suffering child makes the three texts effective cultural products that forces readers to reflect on the impact of

sexual violence on children. The focus on the child that is underscored by the use of child narrators/protagonists resonates with Mark Sadoski, Ernest Goetz and Suzanne Kangiser argument that "[r]eaders tend to see the main conflict in the plot in terms of the character the reader empathised with most, suggesting a relationship between affect and plot perception" (322).

In conclusion, it need be asked whether the three authors imbue their endings with significant visions of the future of their protagonists after immersion as victims and witnesses of sexual violence. The depiction of Agu starting a new life in a rehabilitation centre fully aware that what he has experienced belies his age and cannot be shared with Amy the social worker or Birahima driving with his cousin to Abidjan vowing to use dictionaries so that his experiences can be understood by all kinds of people or Apire who hands himself over to police officers underscore the inability to completely recover from trauma. In this sense, the three children's reflections on sexual violence demand readers to place themselves in their positions to understand the long term psychic rupture of their lives. The child protagonists' reflections on sexual violation allow readers to "participate in the process of translating traumatic experiences and [...] re-evaluation that this experience demands" (Vickroy 22). Therefore, readers' engagement with child-protagonists' reflections on their experiences of sexual trauma ensures that the untrusting or hardened hearts of readers are effectively reached by the observing child.

Works Cited

Berger, James. "Trauma and Literary Theory." *Contemporary Literature* 38.3 (1997): 569-582.

Berlant, Lauren. "Introduction to Compassion (and Withholding)." *Compassion: The Culture and Politics of an Emotion.* (eds) Lauren Berlant. New York: Routledge (2004): 1-4.

Gagiano, Annie. “Ice-Candy-Man and In the Country of Men: The Politics of Cruelty and the Witnessing Child”

Hawley, John. C. “Ben Okri’s Spirit Child: “Abiku” Migration and Post Modernity.” *Research in African Literatures* 26.1 (1995): 30-39.

Hron, Madelaine. “*Ora na-azu nwa*: The Figure of the Child in Third-Generation Nigerian Novels”. *Research in African Literatures* 39.2 (2008): 27 – 48.

Iweala, Uzodinwa. *Beasts of No Nation*. London: John Murray, 2005.

Kourouma, Ahmadou. *Allah is Not Obliged*. Trans Frank Wayne. London: Vintage, 2007.

Lara, Maria Pia. *Moral Textures: Feminist Narratives in Public Sphere*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998.

Montgomery, Heather. *An Introduction to Childhood: Anthropological Perspectives on Children’s Lives.* West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

Nussbaum, Martha. Poetic Justice: *The Literary Imagination and Public Life*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1995.

Ocwinyo, Julius. *Fate of the Banished*. Kampala: Fountain, 1997.

O’Sullivan, S. “The Aesthetics of Affect: Thinking Art Beyond Representation.” *Angelaki* 6.3 (2001): 125-135.

Priebe, Richard K. “Literature, Community, and Violence: Reading African Literature in the West Post-9/11.” *Research in African Literatures* 36. 2 (2005): 46-58.

Sadoski, Mark .etal “Imagination in Story Response : Relationships between Imagery, Affect, and Structural Importance.” *Reading Research Quarterly* 23.3 (1998): 320-336.

Spivak, Chakravorty. Gayatri. “Can the Subaltern Speak?” *Marxism and Interpretation of Culture.* Ed. Cary, Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg. London: Macmillan, 1998. 24-28

Vickroy, Laurie. *Trauma and Survival in Contemporary Fiction.* London: University of Virginia Press, 2002.