Representation of (Step) Mothering and Identity Formation of Children in Plural Marriage Settings in Two Nigerian Children's Narratives

Olutoyin Bimpe Jegede
Department of English, University of Ibadan, Nigeria
E-mail:pamyjeg@yahoo.com.
Tel: +2348034743182

ABSTRACT

Literary scholars and critics have alluded to aspects of childhood and its representation in African Literature. However, enough critical attention has not been given to the study of childhood in polygamous marriage settings and the implication of mothering and step mothering on the identity formation of children in such family settings. Through a text focused approach, this paper fills the gap. It examines how the protagonists' in two children's narratives struggle at negotiating a stable identity. The two narratives are *The Wicked Stepmother* (2001) and "The Wicked Stepmother"(1999). The first one by Uche Eke, is from Igbo background, while the second by Dayo Sanyaolu is from Yoruba background. The theoretical frame for the study is ego psychology, using the models of Sigmund Freud and Norman Holland and through it, identifying the psychic context of the narratives and examining the protagonists' struggles in forming stable identities. The paper posits that polygamy is more problematic for women and children than for the fathers in such relationships. This is because they are faced with more economic, psychological and social challenges which make mothering and stable growth difficult. The paper discusses the protagonists' attempts at identity negotiation through their interaction with others, and identity crises which arise as a result of their 'absent' mothers. It further examines their struggles for identity as Oedipus complex and as a classical condition called 'mother fixation'. Through character analysis, the paper draws attention to the ego psychology of the protagonists by looking at their conscious motives and feelings. The narratives reveal that identities are constructed through difference and relation to others. They further reveal that deprivation and show of preference are negative behaviors which are common in plural marriages and through which identities are constructed. These create lack, boundaries, low self-esteem and polarized identity between "self" and "other" and within the "self". Besides, the content and form of the narratives reveal the symbiotic relationship between oral and written literature in Nigeria. In sum, the paper notes that the narratives raise serious issues of global concern on the rights of children in Nigeria. Step mothering creates complex interaction and socio cultural environments which affect children physically and psychologically. The interest of such children should therefore be protected. Insights

from this study are significant for scholarship in children's literature, mothering and identity formation.

Keywords: polygamous family, mothering, unstable growth, self, other.

INTRODUCTION

Children's literature refers to an imaginative work or collection of literatures written specifically for children and which portray the experiences of children in simple language. According to Britannica Concise Encyclopedia, it became a distinct genre in most developed countries such as America and Britain in the eighteenth century and its subgenres included picture books, classics, and lullabies, easy to read stories, fairy tales and folksongs. The Encyclopedia further explained that books written for adults were originally used as children's literature until the twentieth century when researchers in Europe; like the Grimm Brothers collected German folktales and Han Christian Anderson collected fairy tales, and these were transmitted orally. The origin of children's literature in Nigeria is traceable to moon light tales that were told children in traditional societies. Such stories embody the values and mores of the society; hence they are means of moral instruction, acculturation   and relaxation. Its mode of narration is through fantasy. In contemporary times however, the mode of narration is usually through both fantasy and realism. However, it is still a marginalized area of writing.

Nancy Anderson classified children's literature into six broad categories: picture books, traditional literature, fiction, non –fiction, biography and auto-biography, poetry and verse. The classification is quite insightful and universal. But one wonders whose life is recreated, and who is the principal actor in such biographical writings -adult's or children's? If it is an adult's life, then of what relevance is this classification? Whereas Abiola Odejide classified children's literature in Nigeria according to three common settings reflected in them: These are stories about family, school and adventure. Odejide's classification is simplistic. We share the view that the family is central to the life of the child and indeed sometimes determines the course of his life, setting the pace and determining the challenges that the child faces in both school and adventure. We observe that this classification is fluid and therefore capable of presenting overlaps.

In his editorial article, Eldred Jones observed that African authors have portrayed different aspects and features of childhood as an attempt by writers to locate their roots. He opined that most of their writings exposed the grim "reality of cruelty, harshness, parental ego-centrism and extraordinary bruising of the vulnerable child psyche" (7).In the same volume, Maxwell Okolie analyzed the implication of childhood narration in African literature and identified its role as a means of recalling the past and restructuring the adult self. He condemned the Eurocentric criticism of the African child as a

miserable victim in a harsh world and called for an African centered approach that will display a good understanding of childhood in the African context. To interrogate the "reality of cruelty" and condemn the portrait of the child as a "miserable victim" is to underplay the quality of verisimilitude and remove children's literature in Africa from the realm of reality because the African child's reality, more often than not, consists of gruesome experiences.

Most of the articles in the book attempted both symbolic and literal readings of childhood experiences in selected works of African writers. Besides, many of the articles focused on novels written for adults but which treated different aspects of childhood. Unfortunately this painful reality about the status of children's literature as an appendage of the adult one is the factor responsible for the gap observed by Charity Andzayi.

In her book titled *Children's Literature*, Andzayi provided lessons on both the production and effective teaching of children's stories. She contended that children's literature produced by adult writers are sometimes above the comprehension level of the children. It was therefore observed that collaboration between learners and teachers in the production of texts will facilitate appropriateness of language and readability. In advanced countries like the United States of America, teachers actively engage their pupils in the writing of literary materials through the language Experience Approach. This has helped in the production of materials that children easily relate with. Nigeria needs to take a cue from this and discourage writers who put children's future on the threshold of profit making.

Richard Priebe described thematic patterns in the portrayal of childhood in African literature. He argued that the African child is a product of two worlds and as such is psychologically challenged and left confused. He opined that the confusion of living in these two worlds is the thematic preoccupation of early writings while identity, growth and coping with a trans-cultural world are the focus of later writings. While referring to many examples, Priebe discussed the diverse ethnic and geographical identities inherent in the writings.

N. F. Inyama discussed family and childhood experiences in the novels of Chinua Achebe and Mongo Beti. He explained that childhood experiences are private themes which serve as enabling themes for the public ones emphasized by critics of African fiction. He called for a more robust and comprehensive approach to the criticism of African literature. Onukaogu & Onyerionwu attempted a survey of children's literature in Nigeria in the 21st Century; while making references to writers who have contributed to its development. In an attempt to define it, they looked at its nature, production, general trends, form and content. Of great importance is their comment that genres of fiction like child narration such as Camara Laye's *The African Child*, and Isidore Okpewho's *The Victims* and especially bildungsroman and others that investigate childhood, growth and development should not be taken for children's literature. The study called on writers and publishers to give serious attention to the production of children's literature. The book

justified its inclusion of a chapter on children's literature before discussing it. Besides, the rear space allocated to the chapter on children's literature brings the point nearer home that children's literature is an endangered genre because as they put it, the "literary institution in Nigeria… has ignored" it (232) and indeed Onukaogu & Onyerionwu are apologetic about its inclusion in their book. The panoramic approach adopted did not allow for depth and rigorous academic discourse that children's literary scholarship deserves, and which to date has affected the production of appropriate reading materials. If children's literature in Nigeria must improve, more attention must be given to its scholarship.

In his own study, Ezenwa-Ohaeto focused on the symbolic concept of childhood in Chukwuemeka Ike's *The Potter's Wheel* and *The Bottled Leopard*. Through this, he discussed the development of characters from childhood to adulthood and from illusion to reality. He concluded that this portraiture is the author's symbolic way of suggesting a refinement of socio-cultural value. Yetunde Akorede's examination of intra gender conflict as an instrument of power among, and between women was done through a thematic analysis of selected African novels. The study fore grounded instances of rifts, disagreements and profound sociological problems which arise from polygamy- induced intra - gender conflict. However, Akorede's silence on the implication of these conflicts on the children in such families is a serious oversight, for this, to a large extent determines the child's perception of life and eventual attitude in the society.

Some of the relevant literatures reviewed in this study used examples of adult literatures to exemplify different aspects of childhood and polygamy. However, the texts selected for our analyses are narratives written for children. Besides, in them, children are the principal characters and the narratives are concerned with different aspects of their development from childhood to adulthood and from home to school.

The present paper is a textual study of representation of childhood, step mothering and identity formation of children in two Nigerian children's narratives. The two narratives are titled *The Wicked Stepmother* (1999) (hereafter referred to as Stepmother) and "The Wicked Step mother" (2001) (hereafter referred to as "The Wicked"). The first was written by Dayo Sanyaolu, a female writer from Yoruba background and the second was by Uche Eke, a female author from Igbo background in Nigeria. Our aim is to show how the representations of step mothering in these texts portray its deficiency as a system of family administration, and its capability of producing complex interactions which affect children's attempt at negotiating their identity in such marriages. Using Sigmund Freud's and Norman Holland's models of ego psychology, we intend to identify the psychic context of the narratives and examine the protagonists' struggles in forming stable identities Finally, we will draw attention to the symbiotic relationship between oral and written traditions in children's literature in Nigeria and examine other issues raised by the narratives.

Power Structure and Mothering in Polygamy

Plural marriage is one in which more than one partner exists in a heterosexual relationship. One of the partners may have been separated through death or decision to leave the other partner, while the other partner(s) in the relationship remain(s) in it. Polygamy is a form of plural marriage that is indigenous to Nigeria. In traditional communities, a man's social and economic statuses are enhanced by the number of wives he marries. In such societies therefore, polygamy is an institutional site where men establish authority, ensure their easy movement in the harem, but constrain the movement of the women (Jegede 44). It is also a means of providing (wo) man power and source of cheap labour for family businesses. A man's family forms the work force of his economy.

Structural arrangement and power relationships in such marriages are such that the man occupies the top of the hierarchy and exercises authority over other members of his family. He controls everything and everyone and provides for their material well being as is convenient for him. His authority is followed by that of the senior wife in the family hierarchy. Acholonu said that the senior wife is her 'husband's adviser, highly respected and honored by co wives and other members of the family' (52). Although, traditionally, she is invested with much authority, this authority is sometimes contested and challenged by other wives, especially the 'favorite' wife, who may be any of the other wives, but most likely the youngest wife.

1.

2.

3.

4.
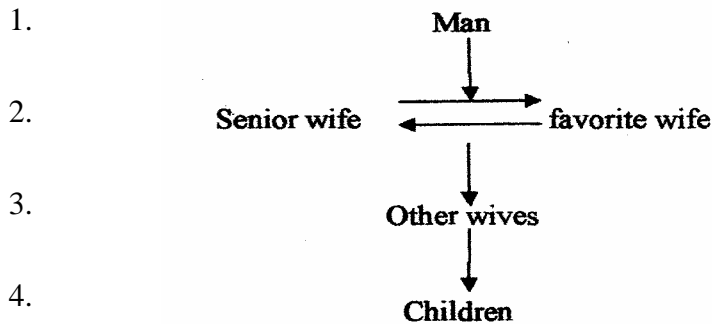
Fig. 1: power structure in polygamy

The hierarchy of power at the second level of authority is not stable. It keeps shifting between the senior and favorite wife. Acholonu explained further that "women have been known to opt for polygamous marriages either for money or for love and have thus ousted the older wives creating problems and untold hardships for fellow women and their children" (52). This situation is capable of generating physical and psychological conflict situations which produce hostility, hatred and suspicion. Akorede opined that in such cases, the senior wife is predictably "the anti - heroic, aggressive and hostile one" (99), but this paper holds that in some situations, the junior wife is the anti - hero. The narratives chosen for analysis reveal the latter case. Children in such marriages share in the consequences of conflicts and suffer identity crises.

Ideas about mothering in the narratives, like in Nigeria, are shaped by these patriarchal ideologies. Motherhood is the anchor, the matrix, the foundation in African society especially the family (Acholonu 31). The fathers are rarely involved in parenting, they only willfully provide the material resources needed for the family. This is because in Africa, like Thenjiwe Magwaza rightly observed:

> There is a normative component of identifying child care with women. At lower levels of education when children are still a huge responsibility, teachers are women who are often mothers... Notions about these positions endorse stereotypical beliefs that children are the responsibility of women (9).

The woman is believed to have exceptional capabilities for lifelong mothering of all people around her: child, husband, relatives and acquaintances and so every woman is everyone's mother. Whether a child's mother is present or not, mothering is the collective responsibility of every woman. This role cannot be quantified and is mostly not appreciated. Norman Holland opined that mothering is crucial to identity formation and "every child receives the imprint of a primary identity from his mother" (Selden and Widdowson 64). Thus in situations where a mother's 'presence' is absent in a child's life, it affects his formation of primary identity. The mothers of the two protagonists in the narratives are 'absent' mothers and so could not perform their functions as mothers.

In Uche Eke's narrative, "The Wicked", the protagonist is Ngozi, who is orphaned at a tender age, so she is brought up by her stepmother. She does all the household chores while her step sisters do little work. One day, she goes to the river to fetch water and is pulled into the water kingdom by water beings. She is detained for seven years and during the period; she cooks for them and becomes their friends. At the end of seven years, the traditional symbol of perfection, Ngozi is sent back to human world. But before coming, she travels to different rivers in India, Ghana and Australia where she picks different precious stones like gold, diamond, rubies, topaz and coral. The story moves from the realm of fantasy to realism by compressing time and

133

bringing Ngozi from the river to the top of a kola nut tree in her compound. The spirit world is the symbolic representation of the ideal family situation that Ngozi longs for and the river goddess is the symbol of the mother- figure that Ngozi desires. Thus, both the mother figure and ideal family setting are condensed into the image of the spirit world.

Her step sisters, Ugo and Amaka dance round her luggage. She gives them more than half of it. Eke writes that despite all these, "three hearts remained bitter, though Ngozi had given away more than half of what she brought to them" (52). They and their mother are jealous of her fortune and so they encourage Ugo to also go to the water kingdom. Ugo goes but does everything wrong from the onset. She could not cook and could not stay for seven years and so she could not get the treasures that Ngozi got. She runs away from the water kingdom, steals many treasures thinking that nobody sees her. The water queen curses her; she falls ill and later becomes mad and deformed.

In Sanyaolu's narrative titled *Stepmother*, Aderele migrated from Igunpa in Ogun State to Aroda in Oyo State. In Aroda, he becomes a successful business man. He marries one more wife, Adufè, to his two other wives, Adeife the first and Jenrola, the second. Adufe the third wife is a naturally beautiful woman. She gives birth to Adereti. Soon, the second wife becomes jealous of Adufe and her son. She lies to their husband that Adufe poisoned his food. Aderele sends Adufe out of the matrimonial home. Adeife the senior wife also falls sick. She leaves her matrimonial home following the advice of her friends. Jenrola the second wife is left with the care of the children and in the process, ill treats Adereti. Despite this, Adereti's performance in school is outstanding. His character and intellect leaves room for comparison between him and his step brothers who are his character foil. One day, Adereti breaks some plates and his father refuses to pay his common entrance examination fees, despite pleas from Adereti's teachers. Adereti's teachers pay the fees and so he is able to go to secondary school. After secondary school, he gains admission to the University and later graduates as a medical doctor. Jenrola's five children turn out to be unsuccessful. She confesses all her misdeeds to her husband and step son, and asks for their forgiveness. In the two narratives, the absence of the protagonists' mothers therefore makes step mothering an inevitable option.

Style

The major quality of Eke's and Sanyaolu's style is in their narrators' use of symbolism and contrast. There is great emphasis on the contrast between what is good and what is bad. The protagonists are good while their step sisters and brothers are bad, their mothers are good but their stepmothers are wicked. The chapters are balanced with contrasting ideas. The first few chapters of Sanyaolu's narrative compare Adereti's character with his brothers: "He was the most beaten of the eight children in Aderele's house"(28) "He was quite unlike the Aderele brothers who though by their

appearance were well taken care of but academically and morally, very poor"(29).In Eke's narrative, Ngozi and Ugo are also well contrasted. When the latter visits the spirit world, her inability to cook and stay for seven years attracts curses to her life whereas Ngozi's ability to cook and patiently wait for seven years is the reason for her blessings.

The figure, seven, which is a universal symbol of perfection is used by Eke to depict the transformation of Ngozi from poverty to wealth. The importance that is given to it as an element is prominent and the author maintains a consistency of meaning, such that when Ugo also visits the spirit world and she could not wait for seven years, she forfeits her chances of getting rich. The selection of words in the two stories is accurate, colloquial and explicit, such that all actions, scenes and ideas are presented with clarity. The words used are ordinary and easy. The sentences are short and convey concrete ideas. In Eke's narrative, the diction is sometimes bookish and esoteric especially when it conveys information from the spirit world. They centre directly on the subjects and actions. Eke employs the use of formal diction whereas Sanyaolu sometimes uses substandard expressions:"they laid down the purpose of their visit…"(36). In both cases, the diction matches the content. The tones of both stories communicate emotions of sorrow for the protagonists go through turbulent times. The protagonists' pain is adequately portrayed and the narrators' sympathy is conveyed.

Step mothering and Identity Formation

Step mothering is a system of relationship and family administration that is peculiar to plural marriage settings. It creates complex and suspicious interaction and socio-cultural environments which physically and psychologically put children in disadvantaged positions; and this affects the shaping of their identity. In the two narratives, the protagonists develop their interpersonal identities through three elements: labeling (calling of names), identification with their family and comparison with others. Despite the fact that Ngozi is very pretty, her step sister calls her a 'useless girl', and says she is like an 'ape' (45) and despite Adereti's exceptional intellectual abilities, his father doubts his paternity and refuses to pay his school fees: "Apparently, he was not ready to send an irresponsible boy like Adereti to the Grammar School" (32) "... his father was not ready to listen to any excuse from a liar" (33). These situations put both characters in deep sorrows. They are victims of hatred, jealousy and violence and are deprived of necessary amenities of life such as food and denied their right to education. These experiences cause them some psychological setbacks.

Adereti is polarized into an idealized intellectual figure and a useless liar while Ngozi is seen as an *exceptional beauty* and an *ape*. These divisions between how their families on the one hand label them and the community on the other see them affect their conception of themselves. The differences between them and the others in their family, mark them out as a threat to

their family's wealth and are therefore deprived of their rights and excluded from luxury and privilege.

Mineke Schipper stressed that "identity mechanisms are reinforced by the way we deal with information" (25). When negative images are internalized, they dement the individual's ego. In line with Stuart Hall's position, this paper holds that 'identity is a product of the marking of difference and exclusion than of identical, naturally constituted unity' (17). The difference between the children's mothers determined the privileges they received. The protagonists, who are children of 'other' wives, are related with, on the basis of their mothers' position and marital status within the family structure, and in both cases, their mothers are no longer a part of the family structure. The stories portray the complex relationship of the protagonists with their polygamous families and their awareness of their marginal existence in their childhood days. But the authors concretize their abstract wishes, fears and desires by establishing them in better relationships with people other than members of their families and through these relationships help them achieve their dreams.

In Freud's structural model of psychoanalysis of the mind, he referred to – id, ego and super ego, and revealed that an individual interacts with internal and external forces through his ego. When the ego is demented, it affects his management of aggression and adaptation to reality. The protagonists negotiate their identity by *struggling* to please others and being at peace with them. Adereti does this by asking his teachers to appeal to his father and also by being of good moral behavior and excelling in his studies. Ngozi gives her step sisters precious gifts in order to placate them. When Ngozi returns from the spirit world after seven years, she brings gold, diamond and rubies and other precious stones. Eke writes that, she sees the hearts of her step sisters: "They were heavy with jealousy. She pitied them. She wanted to cry out. Look it's all yours! Take it all; but at least give me love!" (51). It is the search for a stable identity which materializes in Adereti's academic success and Ngozi's material success. The authors use these to create a positive image for the protagonist's adult identity. The generational conflicts between the protagonists and their stepmothers on the one hand and the rivalry between them and their siblings, coupled with their competing desires, loom larger in the stories than any other conflict.

The Oral- Written Interface

The content and form of these narrations reveal the symbiotic relationship between oral and written literature in Nigeria and the attempt by contemporary Nigerian writers to give their writing a distinct cultural identity that will arise from the use of oral resources. The narratives reveal structural patterns that are similar to those of both trickster narratives and co - wives' tales in Yoruba oral tradition. The step mothers in the narratives are portrayed in the stereotypical image of co - wives as 'wicked' and of the trickster as a 'manipulator'.

The stepmothers outmaneuver their co-wives in their attempts to have the monopoly of their husbands and appropriate the wealth of their families for themselves and their children. In *Stepmothers*, Jenrola deceives her husband into believing that his favorite wife, Adufe, puts poison in his food. This leads to the final exit of Adufe from her matrimonial home. Through this act, Jenrola manipulates her way into the position of the favorite wife. Also in "The Wicked", the demise of Ngozi's parents, gives her stepmother a free hand to ill treat her, every mistake she makes brings insult and beating from her step family. Other children in the protagonists' families are preferred to them.

The themes of wickedness, hatred, suspicion and jealousy are common to co- wives stories and the rate at which they appear in these stories is a function of artistic and effective use of repetition of a structural pattern that sets the protagonist on one side and the antagonist on the opposite. This is done in a frame of confrontation that centers on a quest for different things - Adereti quests for quality education while Ngozi quests for love. This brings them in confrontation with their families. The result of confrontation is frustration for both characters. The action moves from conflict to resolution.

The narratives also feature the traditional triumph of good over evil, the incorporation of moral lessons and the family "living happily ever after". In *Stepmother*, Adereti becomes a medical doctor and in the final resolution, his stepmother confesses the evil she had done against him and begs for forgiveness. So also in "The Wicked", Ngozi's step sister who pursues Ngozi's line of action by going to the spirit world comes back as a mad and deformed girl. This is meant to be a lesson to envious people.

Though Ngozi is a girl, her reverence for her mother is comparable to what Sigmund Freud describes as "mother fixation", a situation in which men show exaggerated respect for their mothers (Barry 108). At every point when Ngozi was confused and needed to do an important assignment, she called on her mother. "Oh Mama, please show me what to do she wailed" (48). Through this, she evoked the presence of her mother into the situation and confirmed the stereotypical image of mother as superhuman. In "The Wicked", actions move between the physical and spirit world. This flow of interaction between the living and the dead on the one band and the human and non - human on the other shows the traditional belief about cosmic ordering and the easy movement between the two worlds. Ibitokun opined that movement is not restrained to 'the physical, tangible plane of existence' (21). In the narrative, Ngozi lived in the spirit world for seven years before coming back to the world of the humans. The figure seven is a number of perfection and is the period of Ngozi's maturation from childhood to adulthood.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the depictions of stepmothers as wicked, selfish and jealous individuals and of polygamy as a site of conflict conform to their representations in folktales. The narratives revealed that in polygamous family settings, conflicts occur regularly and this has disastrous effects on the children. They revealed further that deprivation and show of preference are negative behaviors which are common in plural marriages and through which identities are constructed. Although step mothering is a traditional system of family administration, it has been known to create lack, boundaries, and consequently low self esteem and polarized identities in children in such marriages. This happens within the self and also between the self and other. Besides, the narratives have raised issues of global concern on the rights of children to good education, food and shelter. The paper frowns at a system of family administration that leaves children to look for basic needs of life for themselves and also to spend their lives in perpetual sorrow. If Adereti was not lucky enough to have teachers who paid his school fees, he would have ended up as a drop out. In this regard, the paper recommends the provision of scholarships for indigent pupils.

WORKS CITED

Acolonu, Catherine (2002). *Motherism: An Afro-centric Alternative.* Owerri: Afa   Publishers.

Andzayi, Charity (2002). *Children's Literature.* Jos: LECAPS2.

Akorede, Yetunde (2005). Women and Intra - Gender Conflict in the African Narratives Ph.D Thesis, Dept of English, University of Ibadan, 2005.

Barry, Peter (1995). *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press.

Britannica Concise Encyclopeadia on line www.answers.com/topic/children-s-literature retrieved on 26th April, 2010.

Eke, Uche (2001). The Wicked Stepmother" *Enemy to the Father and Other Stories*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited.

Hall, Stuart (2005). Who needs Identity?" in Identity: A Reader. Paul du Gay, Jessica Evans and Peter Redman (Eds.) London: Sage Publications: 15-30.

Ibitokun, B. M (1995). *African Drama and the Yoruba World – View*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.

Inyama, N.F (1998). Beloved Pawns: The Childhood Experience in the Novels of Chinua Achebe and Mongo Beti" *Childhood in African Literature: African Literature Today* 21, Eldred Jones (Ed.). Trenton & New Jersey: Africa World Press:36.43.

Jegede, Olutoyin B (2008). "The Gender Conflict in African Literature: A Reading of *The Beggars Strike* and *The Triumph of the Water Lily*" *Journal of African literature and Culture*: 35-45.

Jones, Eldred (1998). Childhood Before and After Birth" in *Childhood in African Literature: African Literature Today* 21. Eldred Jones (Ed.) Trenton & New Jersey: Africa World Press: 1-8.

Magwaza, Thenjiwe (2003). "Perception and Experiences of Motherhood: A Study of Black and White of Durban, South Africa" *Jenda: A Journal of Culture and African Women Studies* 4 (1): 1 -26.

Odejide, Abiola I. (1986). *Visions of Contemporary Society in Nigerian Children's Realistic Fiction,* Ph.D Thesis, Dept of Communication and Language Arts, University of Ibadan.

Ohaeto, Ezenwa (1998). "The Symbolic Concept of Childhood in Chukwuemeka Ike's *The Potter's Wheel* and *The Bottled Leopard*" in *Childhood in African Literature: African Literature Today* 21 Eldred Jones (Ed.). Trenton & New Jersey: Africa World Press: 44-53.

Okolie, Marxwell (1998). "Childhood in African Literature: A Literary Perspective" in *Childhood in African Literature: African Literature Today* 21, Eldred Jones (Ed.). Trenton & New Jersey: Africa World Press: 29-35.

Onukaogu, A. and E. Onyerionwu (2009) 'Children's Literature in the 21st Century Nigeria" *21st Century Nigerian Literature: An Introductory Text*. Ibadan: Kraftbooks:232-255.

Priebe, Richard (2006). Transcultural Identity in African Narratives of Childhood" *New Directions in African Literature: African Literature Today* 25, Ernest N. Emenyonu (Ed.). Ibadan: HEB:41-51.

Sanyaolu, Dayo (1999). *The Wicked Step Mother*. Abeokuta: Topdam Publishers.

Schipper, Mineke (1999). *Imagining Insiders: Africa and the Question of Belonging*. N.Y.: Casell.

Selden, R. and P. Widdowson (1993). *A Reader s Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*. Great Britain: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Winnicott, D.W (2005). "Mirror - Role of Mother and Family in Child development" in Identity: A Reader. Paul du Gay, Jessica Evans and Peter Redman (Eds.) London: Sage Publications: 144-149.

Rose, Jacqueline (1992). *The Case of Peter Pen or the Impossibility of Children's Fiction* Philadelphia: University of Pennysylvia Press.