

Aspects of Gothic Tradition in the Literary Imagination of Nnedi Okorafor

Robert Sum

PhD Student

Department of Literature, Linguistics and Foreign Languages
Kenyatta University
and

Dr J.K.S. Makokha

Department of Literature, Linguistics and Foreign Languages
Kenyatta University
Makokha.justus@ku.ac.ke

Professor Speranza Ndege

Department of Literature and Languages
University of Embu

Abstract

The Gothic writing has often been perceived as a form of Western fiction-making. This apparently is based on the fact that Gothic genre originated in Europe in the late 18th century and has been widely exploited in the West (Europe and North America). Contrary to these assumptions, it can be confirmed that Gothic mode has indeed been appropriated by many non-Western fiction writers. An in-depth interrogation of Nnedi Okorafor's, selected novels like 'Who Fears death', Akata Witch and The Book of Phoenix reveal that she does indeed appropriate Gothic elements. This article therefore critically examines aspects of Gothic tradition in Nnedi Okorafor's selected novels. It seeks to portray how unique Gothic motifs like monstrosity, villainy and morality have been appropriated, transformed and complicated in Nnedi Okorafor's selected novels 'Who Fears death', 'Akata Witch' and 'The Book of Phoenix'. This study found out that that the three motifs indeed exist in Okorafor's selected novels and are closely related. Gothic Monsters are generally implicated in subversion of social norms and nature. This often renders them villainous and their defeat, as portrayed in the analysed texts, leads to a restoration of moral order in a given society. Yet the findings affirm that physical or moral monstrosity of a character does not necessarily qualify her or him to be a villain. Villainy is tied to innate monstrosity which manifests itself through characters' inhuman, unjust, and oppressive attitude towards the perceived other. This piece therefore concludes that Nnedi Okorafor does indeed appropriate the Gothic motifs of monstrosity, villainy and morality in a manner that offers radically fresh means of highlighting Africa's complex reality.

Keywords: Gothic Fiction, Okorafor, Monster, Villain, Morality

WFD : Stands for *Who Fears Death*
TBK : Stands for *The Book Of Phoenix*
AW : Stands for *Akata Witch*

Introduction

Offering a simple and concise definition of Gothic is apparently a challenging task. Punter and Byron indeed argue that a more appropriate approach to define Gothic genre would be to present Gothic's parameters and 'describe some of the terrain that lies within those parameters' (xx). Early works of Gothic fiction were characterised by a rebellion against constraining neoclassical aesthetic ideal of unity and order with an aim of reinstating a suppressed medieval imaginative freedom (Kilgour, 1995, p.14). In other words, it was an aesthetic revolt against tyranny of classicism and the Enlightenment (1995, p. 14). Gothic writing as such drew on myths, legends and folklore of medieval romances which enabled a re-enactment of fantastic world and tales of knights, monsters, ghosts, demons, corpses, skeletons, evil aristocrats, monk and nuns, fainting heroines, bandits, extravagant adventures and terrors (Botting, 1996, p. 2). These were considered barbaric and retrogressive by the Enlightenment and Neoclassic advocates for they were diametrically opposed to values they espoused. Yet by the end of 18th century, there was a growing fascination with everything Medieval boosted to a certain extent by the rise of Graveyard School of Poetry and Edmund Burke's treatise on the sublime and beautiful in 1750s (Milne, 2009, p. 281). The graveyard poetry, characterised as it was by attention to ruins, graveyards, death, and human mortality rejected vanities and vices and embraced possibilities of infinite bliss of afterlife (Milne, 2009, p. 281; Botting, 1996, p. 15). Burke's work and the graveyard poetry can thus be seen as having provided philosophical, thematic and literary context to the early Gothic fiction.

The Gothic literary movement started with the publication of Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story* in 1765 (Clery, 2002, p. 21). This was to be followed by other publications including William Beckford's *Vathek* (1786); Clara Reeve's *The Old English Baron* (1778); Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and the *Italian* (1797); Matthew Lewis *The Monk* (1796); Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818); and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) among others.

There is, however, no indication that the movement ever came to an end at all. This is so because while the early or the pioneer works of Gothic fiction enjoyed much success in continental Europe due to the ontological Gothic climate, it was later to spread to the rest of the world. Several writers have indeed contended that Gothic genre is peculiarly European and American. Hogle, for instance, holds the view that "the Gothic is a form of Western fiction-making" (2002, p. 7). This is not entirely accurate for genres do undergo transformations especially when topics are added to their repertoires (Fowler, 1982, p. 170). Thus while American Gothic retained several motifs associated with pioneer Gothic, there were also transformations owing to the fact that the New World had its own unique mysteries (Botting, 1996, p. 75). Gothic therefore may have begun as "fixed genre" but it has 'yielded a gothic mode that has outlasted it' (Fowler cited in Balmain, 2017, p. 2). This new gothic mode arguably fits, morphs or is easily appropriated to new settings. It retains several stock Gothic features which could also undergo transformations depending on uniqueness of new environments.

Hughes delves into the similar viewpoint arguing that Asian Gothic should not be seen as “a copy of an original”, but rather as an “indigenous genre with similar themes and concerns to that of the Western Gothic” (cited in Balmain, 2017, p. 2). Hughes’ argument, arguably, has far reaching implication on transnational gothic variants. Like the Asian and the American Gothic, African Gothic is shaped by unique Africa’s history and its complex socio-cultural realities.

One of the African writers who have carried out studies on Gothic is Lily Mabura. In her article *Breaking Gods: An African Postcolonial Gothic Reading of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s Purple Hibiscus and Half of a Yellow Sun*, Mabura sets out to establish how the Gothic motifs have been appropriated in the texts. She identifies Chimamanda Adichie, Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka and Ayi Kwei Armah as African writers whose written works contain some Gothic elements (2008). Toni Morrison, an African American author, also appropriates Gothic elements especially in her seminal novel, *The Beloved* (Punter & Byron, 2004). Postcolonial context emerges as one of the most significant concerns which have shaped the African Gothic. Postcolonialism with its “apparent insistence” on a period ‘after’ is prone to threat of return of the past along with buried histories and repressed traumas (2004, p. 55). The return and haunting are common elements of the Gothic. Postcolonialism can therefore be seen as one of the forces that have influenced the appropriation of the Gothic mode not only by African fiction writers but also by African American writers like Nnedi Okorafor and Toni Morrison.

Folklore is another aspect of African literature which shares a lot in common with the Gothic. Teeming with superstitions, mysteries and monsters; Africa’s folklore aligns well with pioneer Gothic where similar tropes are also found (Botting, 1996). Okorafor’s novels like *Who Fears Death* (2010), *Zahra the Windseeker* (2005) and *Akata Witch* (2005) conjure settings where masquerades, shape-shifting and flying people, flying reptiles, magic, sorcery and traditional African societies thrive alongside the modernity. Such commingling of old or mythic and modern or futuristic historical dispensation(s) arguably aligns well with the Gothic’s role of recuperating pasts which offered stability, permanence adventure and divine mysteries (Botting, p. 15).

As postcolonial works, therefore, Okorafor’s Gothic works appropriate not only the language of the coloniser, in this case English, but also Western forms of writing while at the same time also drawing from the African folklore such as the oral narrative (Ashcroft *et al.*, 2002; Chilala 2016, 2019).

Gothic’s Features in Okorafor’s Fiction

The debut of American-born Nigerian author, Nnedi Okorafor, into fiction writing can be seen as an injection of fresh blood into fields of African fantasy and folklore. Her works, which she collectively refers to as ‘organic fantasy’ because they spring from lived experiences, appropriate elements and motifs which could be considered Gothic (Okorafor, 2009). Her appropriation of the Gothic motifs clearly affirms that Gothic can offer radically fresh means of highlighting Africa’s complex reality. This article therefore attempts to demonstrate to what extent Okorafor’s selected works of fiction appropriate motifs and themes which can be considered Gothic.

It is vital to note that any Gothic works cannot be fully understood and analysed without reference to their antecedents — the early Gothic. Contemporary Gothic fiction arguably draws significantly from pioneer Gothic works such as Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), Matthew Lewis *The Monk* (1796), Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). A good number of features from these original works are considered archetypes to be appropriated in later works of Gothic fiction. Some of these features or motifs include persecutions, paranoia, abuse, imprisonments, monsters, haunting, and terror among others (Punter & Byron, 2004; Botting, 1996). A good number of the above features manifest themselves significantly in Okorafor's fiction. This article however chooses to confine itself to three interrelated features namely monsters or monstrosity, villainy and morality. The aim of the article therefore is to find out how Okorafor adopts, transforms and complicates these Gothic elements in her fiction.

Monstrosity and Villainy

The pioneer Gothic fiction generally associated monsters with vice (Botting, 1996). Monstrous beings in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* are indeed associated with evil, villainy, subversion and vindictiveness. The following extract could shed more light on the role of Gothic monster:

What is primarily important for the Gothic is the cultural work done by monsters. Through difference, whether in appearance or behaviour, monsters function to define and construct the politics of the 'normal'. Located at the margins of culture, they police the boundaries of the human, pointing to those lines that must not be crossed (Botting, 1996, p. 263).

It is apparent that the appropriation of monstrosity into Gothic fiction was primarily aimed at constructing and defining the politics 'normal' and the proper. Monsters, by virtue of their grotesque, odious, extraordinary and often inhuman nature renders them unnatural, abnormal and positively subversive. These characteristics arguably serve to reinforce traditional role of monstrous beings which, according to Asma, is to warn (2009). Monsters warn against transgression of certain societal values and precepts. Cohen, for instance, uses the story of King Lycaon who was transformed into a werewolf because of his inhospitality to his guest to suggest that his monstrosity is a reification of his previous moral state (Cohen, 1996, p. 13). Two fundamental arguments can be deduced from the above story: firstly, physical or morphological monstrosity could be considered a manifestation of innate monstrosity or evil inherent in human nature; secondly, monstrosity arises from transgression of, or nonconformity to norms and values of a given society.

Okorafor's engagement with the subject of monster and monstrosity, however, raises several cardinal questions which are worth considering. Firstly, is peculiarity, hideousness or liminality a genuine measure of intrinsic monstrosity (evil or perversion) in a human? Secondly, is nonconformity or subversion of communal

moral codes necessarily evil? Lastly, are all societal norms and values flawless? In the light of these, it is apparent the domain of the monster or monstrosity is a problematised space indeed in Okorafor's fiction. It draws attention to the fact cultural politics of the normal and proper has far reaching consequences on the way it is perceived in diverse cultural settings. Okorafor, for instance, enacts an African traditional society where a perfectly normal person with right disposition and even nice looks like Mwita and Onyesonwu in *WFD* can still fit into the paradigm of monstrous (Okorafor, 2010). For the Okeke, the *Ewu* were inevitably monstrous. The *Ewu* in the text is a derogatory name used to refer to mixed-race population found mainly among the Okeke people. This group is disparaged, alienated and persecuted because majority of them were born of rape of Okeke women by Nuru invaders (Okorafor, 2010). Ironically, many Okeke People acknowledged Onyesonwu, a mixed-race girl, was indeed endowed with beauty accentuated by her "smooth and delicate" skin (Okorafor, 2010, p. 10). Yet as an *Ewu*, she was condemned to live a life of a pariah, as an untouchable and a scapegoat for her entire life (Okorafor, 2010, p. 220). The *Ewu* lived precarious lives in that there was always a conspiracy to hurt them. Onyesonwu's close relatives, for example, accused her of causing her father's death; as well as being solely responsible for their children's nightmares (Okorafor, 2010, p. 116). In their opinion, Onyesonwu was supposed to be eliminated immediately (Okorafor, 2010).

The *Ewu*, as portrayed in the text, generally lacked sense of belonging. They were never comfortable staying with any of their parents (whether real or adoptive) or their relatives for fear of exposing them to harm (Okorafor, 2010, p. 65). Even those who chose to befriend them were often threatened by their families (Okorafor, 2010). They never really belonged in any community. Jwahir village had offered a home to Najeeba, together with her daughter Onyesonwu, after fleeing her home village. As she grew up, however, Onyesonwu had to content with the fact that she "was never meant to stay" there either (Okorafor, 2010, p. 14).

The attitude of people towards the Onyesonwu since she was young made her feel different. Like any other *Ewu* child, she was regarded as anything but normal. She was regarded as volatile, ill-mannered and bestial (Okorafor, 2010). These stereotypes made her consider herself abnormal. She thought of herself as "a black stain", and "a poison" (Okorafor, 2010, pp. 11-14). To be an *Ewu* was therefore to be abnormal. The abnormal people were bound to be hated whether they do good or wrong (Okorafor, 2010). At Banza town, the disdain and disregard for the *Ewu* was conspicuous. The *Ewu* girls in those parts engaged in prostitution as means of livelihood (Okorafor, 2010, p. 223). They were liable to be treated indecently and even raped in the town and no one would come to their rescue (Okorafor, 2010). The society had apparently locked all possibilities for the *Ewu* to live decently and earn modestly. This perhaps explains why some of them had to resort to the prostitution.

From the descriptions given so far, it makes sense to argue that, from the perspective of the ordinary Okeke people, the *Ewu* were virtually monsters.

Monsters as earlier mentioned are implicated in nonconformity, subversion and abnormality. As already stated, the *Ewu* were ascribed evil, abnormality, violence and pain. To further aggravate their situation, the *Ewu* were involved in prostitution which again is seen as subversion of societal moral codes. By the virtue of all these, the *Ewu* arguably fit into the paradigm of a monster and their presence in the society can be seen as destabilising if not harmful. Carroll indeed confirms that any deviations or nonconformity are concretised in monstrous body (Carroll, 1990, p. 16). One is bound to note how the treatment of the *Ewu* in *WFD* re-enacts people's attitude towards vampire Dracula and the lady vampires in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* in the early Gothic. The vampires' selfishness and tendency to arouse desire for perverted sex was considered an affront to values held dear during the Victorian period (Stoker, 1990, p. 54; Browning *et al.*, 2009, p. 132). Despite the fact that the mixed-race *Ewu* are not innately villainous, selfish and monstrous like the Gothic vampires, they nonetheless suffer the same fate of being excluded from society.

Okorafor's fiction, however, generates a lot of sympathy for the *Ewu* by portraying them as victims of circumstances beyond their control. They are further portrayed as helpful, tender, loving and generally good citizens. Onyesonwu, for instance, uses her extraordinary abilities to heal everyone and even defend her oppressive community from Nuru attacks (Okorafor, 2010). By absolving the *Ewu* from all the negative assumptions and insinuations ascribed to them, Okorafor is in effect accusing Okeke and Nuru of being inhuman, unjust and unfair to their mixed-race citizens. She turns the perceived 'monstrous figures' (represented by the *Ewu*) into what Punter and Byron refer to as the 'sites of identification, sympathy and self-recognition' (2004, p. 265). Onyesonwu achieves heroine status for standing up against social system and individuals who tried to pin her down and deprive her of humanity. She subverts the Jwahirian age-old custom, the Eleventh rite or the female circumcision, by using her extraordinary abilities to help her friends regrow parts which had been cut (Okorafor, 2010, p. 242). Her friends were therefore able to experience sexual delights which had otherwise been withheld from them until marriage (Okorafor, 2010, p. 82). Judging from her friends' joyful reactions, it is apparent that the Eleventh rite was inherently flawed and should have been discontinued. Onyesonwu thus becomes a champion of positive change in the society. The unjust systems which oppress her, however, become what Punter and Byron refer to as "terrifying, persecutory and inhuman" (2004, p. 265). Okorafor thus inverts the notion of monstrosity such that on the one hand those who bear brunt of social exclusion and persecution account of their peculiarity or nonconformity emerge the true heroes and heroines and on the other hand the oppressive systems and individuals become the real monsters.

Villainous character is always considered the chief architect of vices and evils in the fiction. There was a significant link between monstrosity and villainy in early Gothic novels. In some of the novels, the villain was represented by monstrous being (Botting, p.18). A case in point is Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, where the villain character, *Count Dracula*, is an undead, shape-shifting vampire (Stoker, 1990, p. 93, 189). According to Cohen, the artistic generation of monsters as

hideous looking creatures is meant to reify their real moral state (1996, p. 13). The implication of this assumption is that, the repulsiveness and scariness of monsters' countenance symbolises the repulsiveness and repugnance of their moral perversion. Contemporary Gothic, however, have tended to distance villainy from monstrosity. In fact, many works of modern Gothic fiction tend to invite sympathy for monsters (Punter & Byron, 2004, p. 265). Okorafor's fiction does indeed portray many monsters and fantastic beings in positive light. There are many monsters in Okorafor's fiction – masquerades, shape-shifters, and mutants – yet only few of them have villainous traits. Phoenix in *The Book of Phoenix* can be categorised as a monster because she possesses wings; can survive death; and is endowed with superhuman strength (Okorafor, 2015, pp. 36-50). Despite this, however, she is portrayed as heroine. Even when she unleashes tremendous heat on earth to rid the planet of errant and wicked civilisation, she is not considered the villain, but a manifestation of divine wrath (Okorafor, 2015, p. 221). It would seem that Okorafor chooses to design her villains by tapping more into their latent, innate monstrosities than manifest monstrosities.

The Gothic villain was often portrayed as antisocial, self-centered, detached, predatory, demonic, hypocritical, egotistical, fragmented, alienated, sexually perverted, and subversive (Kilgour, 1995, p. 12). Many of these attributes are found among villains in Okorafor's fiction. In *Who Fears Death*, Daib Yagoub, the arch villain, is indisputably demonic, self-centered and perverted. Daib has no qualms about annihilating the entire Okeke community for his own selfish agenda (Okorafor, 2010). He uses his sorcery to instigate his soldiers to murderous rampage and depravity which often engendered violent rape, tortures, and senseless murder of the Okeke people (Okorafor, 2010, p. 76, 395). His perverse nature manifests itself clearly when he brags that nothing thrills him more than bashing Okeke women's heads after raping them (Okorafor, 2010). Otokoto, on his part, is an extremely evil villain who, in his quest to attain greatness, murders and sacrifices lives of many people especially children (309). His malevolence reaches its zenith when he uses his advanced sorcery to summon the dreaded masquerade called *Ekwensu* (the devil) to wreak havoc and destruction on the earth (Okorafor, 2011, p. 324).

The villainous beings in Okorafor's fiction are generally set against the protagonists who, in many cases, are the female. This style, to a certain extent, relates to the Gothic tradition which is characterized by tyrannical and malevolent male figure who is always out to threaten and exert his selfish will over a hapless heroine (Wallace & Smith, 2013, p. 6). The villains in *Akata Witch* and *Who Fears Death*, for instance, are Black Hat Okototo and Daib Yagoub respectively. In *The Book of Phoenix*, the villain is embodied in the LifeGen Technologies. These masculine villains are set against equally strong heroines like Sunny, Onyesonwu and Phoenix. Daib Yagoub, the arch-villain in *WFD*, has been portrayed as sadistic, tyrannical and malevolent to the core. His military powers, influence, and potent sorcery make him virtually invincible. During the confrontation with Onyesonwu, however, he is totally defeated and narrowly escapes death.

One notable shift in Okorafor's fiction is her representation of the female protagonists as strong, brave and self-confident. This contradicts their portrayal in earlier Gothic works as weak, sentimental and prone to 'fainting at the smallest shock' (Botting, 1996, p. 42). Okorafor's heroines are also noted for their possession of extraordinary abilities and endowments which not only enable them defend themselves successfully against their adversaries, but also effect positive changes in their worlds. Phoenix for instance is an extremely intelligent, winged and strong woman. She has ability to willfully emit great heat which has capacity to vaporize vast water bodies and burn down massive buildings (Okorafor, 2015, pp. 218-223). Empowerment of female protagonists could be seen as move towards debunking notions, evoked in many written works of Gothic that women are eternally weak and require the 'knight in shining armour' kind of men to always come to their rescue. That is why Okorafor's heroines depicted here — Onyesonwu, Sunny and Phoenix — have been portrayed as saviours.

Morality

Moral ideal arguably plays a major role in the construction of monsters and villains in Gothic fiction. Botting does indeed affirm that "morality and monstrosity" were the main "hallmarks" of the pioneer Gothic fiction (1996, p. 14). Monsters or villains were often sculpted from characters who did not conform to moral codes of a given social setting. The thematisation of monsters and other medieval relics by Gothic writers' during the era of the Enlightenment led to their accusation of subversion of societal norms (Kilgour, 1995, p. 8). This apparently was not true. In works of Gothic fiction, imaginative retreat from the reality and normative is indulged for awhile, only to be ultimately contained and 'imprisoned by final authority of morality' (Kilgour, 1995, p. 8). Gothic fiction therefore vindicates morality, virtue and reason (Botting, 1996, p. 30).

Okorafor's novels offer perfect examples where the immoral, the subversive and the irrational are indulged for considerable length of time before finally being punished. In *The Book of Phoenix*, the unscrupulous scientists, with protection and support of government and some influential individuals, engage in immoral and inhuman scientific researches which include manipulating, deforming, crippling and enhancing people and other creatures in order to achieve certain selfish ends (Okorafor, 2015). The LifeGen researchers, popularly known as the Big Eye, pursue their venture aggressively and without moral scruples. Driven by profit motive, the Big Eye carry out elaborate and often unsafe experiments using people as guinea pigs and this causes many deaths (219). The scientists appear unstoppable and quite invincible because they had also discovered ways to make themselves immortal (Okorafor, 2015, p. 198). At the end, however, the LifeGen Technologies and all beneficiaries of its researches and inventions perished in fire (Okorafor, 2015, p. 221). The vicious and amoral deeds of the Big Eye are ultimately punished and contained by "final authority of morality". The lesson adduced from LifeGen's tragedy is that subversion of morality attracts divine wrath.

Okorafor applies similar concept in *Who Fears Death*. The evil perpetrated by Daib and Nuru against the Okeke – brutal rape, murders, enslavement, mutilation, castration, and other atrocities– is tolerated for a considerable length of time (Okorafor, 2010). At the end, however, justice prevails, the lie is revealed and the wickedness is punished (Okorafor, 2010). Thus, as per the tradition of the Gothic fiction, vice is ultimately banished and the morality is vindicated (Botting, 1996, p. 30).

Conclusion

The article demonstrated that there are indeed aspects of Gothic tradition in Nnedi Okorafor's literary imagination. Since its inception in Europe in the late 18th century, the Gothic has spread to many parts of the world. The reason for its pervasiveness possibly lies in its versatility and adaptability to the unique realities of different places. As the genre made headway into new, unfamiliar terrains, it added new topics into its repertoire. Its original features underwent adjustments to match the new reality. It has been noted, for instance, that old medieval castles which characterised the earlier Gothic works later gave way to ordinary old houses.

Okorafor conveniently appropriates the Gothic motifs of monstrosity, villainy and morality in a way that highlights interrelatedness as well as significance of the three Gothic features. Monster plays a significant role in Okorafor's fiction. Monster has been problematised in a way that both perpetuates and disavows some of its archetypal aspects. Okorafor presents predicaments of some of those perceived as monsters in ways that elicit sympathy from readers who feel that they are unjustly treated. This therefore implies that peculiarity, bizarreness or nonconformity of an individual does not necessarily render them innately monstrous, evil or perverse. The actual monsters and villains are presented as the systems or the individuals who persecute and alienate others because of their perceived nonconformity, ethnic affiliation, race or alien nature. Okorafor uses tribulations of the *Ewu* as an example to build an argument that innocent and nice individuals can still be wrongly persecuted and dehumanised. On the issue of morality, Okorafor's fiction upholds the view that Gothic works indeed vindicate morality and virtue.

References

- Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G. and Tiffin, H. (2002), *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. 2nd Ed. London and New York: Routledge.
- Asma, S.T. (2009). *On monsters: the Unnatural History of our Fears*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Baldick, C. (2001). *The concise Oxfrd Dictionary of Literary Terms*. 2nd (Ed). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Balmain, C. (2017). East Asian gothic fiction: a definition. *Palgrave Communications*, 3(31), pp. 1 - 10.
- Bauer, L. and Trudgill, P. (1998), *Language Myths*. London: Penguin Books.
- Botting, F. (1996). *Gothic*. New York: Routledge.

- Browning, J.E. and Picart, C.J. (Eds). (2009). *Draculas, Vampires and other undead Forms: Essays on Gender, Race and Culture*. New York: Scarecrow Press, Inc.
- Carroll, N. (1990). *Philosophy of Horror or Paradoxes of the Heart*. New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc.
- Chilala, C.H.K, (2016), Footprints of Caliban: Appropriation of English in Selected African Fictional Texts. *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies*, 39 (2), University of California (UCLA), 59-72.
- Chilala, C. (2019), ‘Anglophone Zambian Prose Fiction: Tradition or Transition?’ *Hybrid Journal of Literary and Cultural Studies*, 1 (1),13-29.
- Clery, E.J. (2002). The Genesis of “Gothic” Fiction. In: J.E.Hogle, (Ed). *Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cohen, J.J. (1996). *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Fowler, A. (1982). *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes*. Oxford: Harvard University Press.
- Hogle, J.E. (2002). *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hughes, H. (2000). Familiarity of the Strange: Japan’s Tradition. *Criticism*, 42(1), pp. 59-89.
- Kilgour, M. (1995). *The Rise of the Gothic Novel*. London: Routledge.
- Lewis, M. (1980). *The Monk (1796)*. Edited by H. Anderson. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mabura, L.G. (2008). Breaking Gods: an African postcolonial gothic reading of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*. *Research in African Literatures*, 39(1), pp. 203-221.
- Milne, I.M. (2009). *Literary Movements for Students: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Literary Movements*. 2nd Ed. New York: Gale.
- Morrison, T. (1987). *Beloved*. New York: Penguin Putnam Inc.
- Okorafor, N. (2005). *Zahra, the Windseeker*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.
- Okorafor, N. (2009). Organic Fantasy. *African Identities*, 7(2), pp. 275-286.
- Okorafor, N. (2010). *Who Fears Death*. New York: Daw Books, Inc.
- Okorafor, N. (2011). *Akata Witch*. New York: Speak.
- Okorafor, N. (2015). *The Book of Phoenix*. New York: Daw Books, Inc.
- Punter, D. and Byron, G. (2004). *The Gothic*. Malden, MA, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Radcliffe, A. (1980). *The Mysteries of Udolpho(1794)*. Edited by B. Dobree. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Shelley, M.W. (2012). *Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus*. 3rd Ed. Edited by D.L. Macdonald, and K. Scherf. Toronto: Broadview Press.
- Stoker, B. (1990). *Dracula, 1897*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wallace, D. (2013). *Female Gothic Histories: Gender History and the Gothic*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- Walpole, H. (1982). *The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story (1764)*. Edited by W. Lewis. Oxford: Oxford University Press.