CHAPTER 7

Framing the Colonial Child: Childhood Memory and Self-Representation in Autobiographical Writings

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Introduction

This chapter examines the memory of childhood in the autobiographies of 30 Nigerians born between 1900 and 1950.[1] The identities of the autobiographers cut across multiple ethnic as well as gender lines, and are drawn from both the southern and northern parts of the country. My primary concern is how colonial children as autobiographers remember their childhood, with emphasis on their encounter with colonial modernity and how location and sociocultural transformation influenced child-rearing practices as they were growing up. Unlike in North America and Europe where a distinct subgenre of childhood autobiographical writing has emerged, in Nigeria, with the exception of Wole Soyinka's *Ake*, Tanure Ojaide's *Great Boys*, Olu Bajowa's *Spring of a Life*, and Adelola Adeloye's *My Salad Days*, among others, self-narration of childhood is usually a portion of a general life history spanning from birth to adulthood.[2] Be that as it may, the memory of childhood in autobiographies represents one of the largest repositories of documentation about children's life under colonialism. They reveal children's everyday encounters with "traditional" order and colonial modernity, and render a textual window into the realities of colonial domination and its enduring legacies.

This chapter makes three broad theoretical and methodological claims. First, writings comprised of recollections are a dense and

rich cultural trove. They are literary, artistic, and historical microcosms that depict authors' understandings of changes in social structure under colonial rule. Second, writing about one's life in such a personal way is an inevitable political act. Nigerian autobiographers believed that self-narration of their childhood could help empower young readers to work hard to improve themselves and contribute meaningfully to the development of their society. Depiction of childhood poverty and a gradual ascendancy to success reflected a political project supposedly meant to encourage "disadvantaged" children to envision light at the end of the long dark tunnel. Third, both written and unwritten self-narration of colonial childhood are coded in the rhetoric of "good" and "bad" childhood and generational tension between people raised during the colonial period and their postcolonial counterparts. In romanticizing life under imperial rule, colonial children paint an idealized image of a disciplined colonial society characterized by communal living, which Obafemi Awolowo described as "corporate, integrated and well regulated."[3] Whereas autobiographers occasionally viewed the colonial society in which they grew up as "traditional," characterized by "mechanisms of traditional culture for environmental conservation, morality, respect for others," the postcolonial is rendered as a decaying society, featuring the negativities of "modernization, politics, oil exploration; and above all of changes in morality and ethics and human relationships," to use the words of Ojaide.

With the exception of very few autobiographies, such as those written by leading politicians in the 1960s and 1970s, most have been published from the 1980s, when the culture of self-documentation of life history increased exponentially. This era is infamous for the almost complete breakdown of law and order and the infrastructure of decent living in Nigeria, and thus provides much contrast to the colonial period. The colonial child usually depicts himself or herself as a lucky child, trained by highly disciplined parents, taught by knowledgeable teachers, and raised by an entire community of responsible adults committed to the wellness of all, as opposed to the highly individualistic worldview of contemporary Nigeria.

Scholars across disciplines have highlighted the limitations of using childhood memory for scholarly work.[4] As Colin Heywood has noted, autobiographies of childhood "are likely to reveal as much about the author at the time of writing as about his or her past."[5] Not only is the boundary between conscious fabrication and everyday forgetting easily blurred, the often undisguised political purpose of recounting the childhood past contravenes some of the core elements of scholarly

research such as objectivity and historical specificity. This problem becomes more evident in autobiographical novels. Indeed, it could be difficult to evaluate how much of recollective writing is memory and how much is imagination as autobiographers search for an "authentic" past. Not all writers are self-critical about this. But some are. In the foreword to his second autobiography *Ibadan: The Penkelemes Years*, Soyinka complicates the daunting challenge of differentiating between fact and fiction: "Ibadan does not pretend to be anything but fiction, that much abused genre which attempts to fictionalize facts and events, the proportion of the fact to fiction being totally at the discretion of the author."[6]

While not counteracting the affirmation that autobiographies are riddled with embellishments or are generally "ego documents," which pose limitations to researching childhood history, I posit that autobiographers are more likely to distort the adult phase of their lives than the childhood. The reason for this is not far-fetched. Memoirs or autobiographies are mostly written by popular personalities, who seek to use them to make significant political statements, clarify controversial aspects of their careers, or simply present their perspectives on major issues of domestic and international importance.[7] I contend that conscious or unconscious fabrications of childhood memory have less political consequence than those of adulthood. What seems more important for a researcher is the task of placing narratives of childhood within the broader context of the sociopolitical and economic transformations of the era and cross-examining them with other published and unpublished sources.

Autobiography, Literary Culture, and the Politics of Representation of the Self

Olaudah Equiano, also known during his lifetime as Gustavus Vassa, is widely recognized as the first black person to publish an autobiography. Titled *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself*, and published in 1789, the book entered its ninth edition by 1794 and would subsequently contribute immensely to the anti–slave trade movement and the development of black literary culture in the Atlantic world.[8] Scholars have doubted the credibility of Equiano's account, especially his claim that he was born in Africa, where he was captured around the age of 11. While S. E. Ogude considered Equiano's book "a historical fiction rather than an autobiography," Paul Lovejoy contends that "his autobiographical account is nonetheless accurate, although

allowing for reflection and information that was learned later in life."[9] Lovejoy goes on to argue that Equiano's reflections on Igbo cultural features "indicate that he had firsthand experience of his Igbo homeland and that he was about the age he thought he was" when he was taken from Africa around 1754. Nonetheless, Equiano's childhood memory remains one of the earliest documented accounts of the Igbo culture and the Bight of Benin. He not only tells a personal story, he weaves into his narrative the broader cultural life of his place of origin—a literary tradition still evident in most African autobiographical writings today.

If Equiano's pioneering work had a strong impact on literary culture and the proliferation of slave narratives in the Americas during the nineteenth century, it was not until the twentieth century that continental Africans would put documented self-narration at the center of self-fashioning. The reasons for this are quite obvious. Most African societies did not document their past in written forms until the introduction of Western literacy through Christian missionaries and colonialism from the nineteenth century. The life histories of precolonial Africans were mostly condensed into popular sayings, praise songs, poems, and stories transmitted orally from one generation to another. One of the earliest, fully documented Nigerian autobiographies that I have seen is that of Segilola, a popular Lagos prostitute born around 1882. It was initially serialized in the *Akede Eko* (*Lagos Herald*) newspaper between July 1929 and March 1930, and was later published as the first novel in the Yoruba language in July 1930.[10] Another prominent autobiography of the colonial era is that of cultural nationalist and politician Mbonu Ojike, titled *Portrait of a Boy in Africa*, published in 1945 by the East and West Association. During the 1960s and 1970s, prominent politicians like Awolowo, Nnamdi Azikiwe, and Ahmadu Bello published their autobiographies, which, as one would expect, helped reinforce their well-established political status.[11]

However, it was not until after 1980 that Nigerians began to publish books about themselves in increasing numbers. Whereas most autobiographers up to the 1970s were politicians and diplomats, the post-1980 period saw the efflorescence of writings by civil servants, academics, literary icons, and artistes, among others of the class of educated Nigerians. One could attribute this new development to the expansion of low-cost printing technology and the rise of local publishers—most of the autobiographies prior to 1980 were published by prominent UK- and US-based publishers. Moreover, several of the authors who were children during the colonial era were

now retiring from public lives and took to writing to stay mentally active and political relevant, while fulfilling the popular ambition to record their past for their families and communities.[12]

One consideration when it comes to documented self-narration is that the difference between an "autobiography" and a "memoir" is sometimes not well marked. Some full autobiographies, such as those by academics G. O. Olusanya, Austine Okwu, and Kalu Ogbaa, and by Fatayi Williams, a Second Republic chief justice, have the term "memoir" in their titles despite containing narratives of the authors' life history from birth to adulthood.[13] Similarly, although Olu Bajowa, a retired military officer, titled his life account an "autobiography," his book qualifies more as a memoir because it focuses entirely on his boyhood days in Ikaleland in southwestern Nigeria.[14] And while the titles of Chinua Achebe's *Education of a British-Protected Child* and Phebean Ogundipe's *Up-Country Girl* could lead one to think that they deal only with the authors' childhood, that is not the case. Achebe's book takes an episodic voyage through his childhood in Ogidi, his birthplace in the 1930s, to his impression of the 50-year anniversary of his classic *Things Fall Apart* in 2008.[15] The same goes for the autobiography of statistics professor Biyi Afonja, titled *In His Hands*.[16] Few Nigerians have written well-marked memoirs, detailing a specific phase in their adult life and career.[17]

Be that as it may, most recollective self-narratives regardless of ethnicity, generation, social class, and other distinctives conform to a well-defined project—using childhood experience of deprivation to empower people in the present. Awolowo declared one of his motives for writing thus: "I believed that certain events in my life and the manner in which I have faced them may serve as a source of inspiration and hope to some struggling youth."[18] Awolowo dedicated the entirety of chapter 4, titled "I Fended for Myself," to how the death of his father when he was only 11 and his quest to acquire a Western education compelled him to work in often abusive and exploitative situations. By 14 he had worked as "houseboy" to four masters and in menial jobs, which included road construction, tree felling, and clay pounding.[19] Afonja, like Awolowo, lost his father in childhood. Promotional material for his book connects his childhood experience to his ascendancy to prominence: "The book is about how a village boy who became fatherless at the age of five transited from rural Nigeria into the modern world and into academia."[20] Similarly, Bajowa, who was born in 1940, declared, "In writing this book, I intend to provide a literature which will serve as a source of inspiration to children born under seemingly disadvantaged environment. I hope such

children get the message that any disadvantages can be converted into an advantage."[21] At least one autobiographer, Ambassador Tanko Yusuf, infused religious sentiment into his writing by attempting to influence children to embrace their spiritual convictions by depicting how his father punished him for turning his back on Islamic education to embrace *karatun Boko* (Western education) and Christianity when he was only nine.[22]

All forms of self-narration involve selective memory. The ability to retrieve childhood experience is based largely on the aspects that an author believes are important while neglecting others he or she judge as less significant.[23] Throughout most of the accounts of childhood in Nigeria, authors clearly alert the readers to notable life events such as festivals, initiation into age grades, first day in school, first visit to a big city, first encounter with Europeans, and serious punishment for wrongdoing, among others—those events that tended to be remembered because they had a significant impact on the individual, family, or community.[24] At times, however, important events could not be retrieved, not because they were unimportant to the authors but because of the limitations of human memory. Some authors are humble enough to admit such limitations as they attempt to reflect over certain periods of their lives. In his book *When We Were Young*, Saburi Biobaku, one of the founders of modern African historiography and a respected university administrator, begins: "Human memory is short."[25] For Soyinka the inability to fully recall the past has a ghostly effect. "The completion of that childhood biography," Soyinka remarks of his earlier autobiography, *Ake*, "rather than assuage a curiosity about a vanishing period of one's existence, only fuelled it, and fragments of an incomplete memory returning to haunt one again and again in the personae of representative protagonists of such a period."[26]

The snag of human memory is complicated by the gulf between when the author is writing and when events actually took place. Most autobiographers wrote about their childhood as older adults, when the chance of age-related memory loss is higher. Adeloye, "one of Africa's most distinguished neurosurgeons," was 74 in 2009 when he published the memoir of his elementary school days. So too, in the case of Biobaku; born in 1918, he was 74 when his autobiography was published.[27] One notable exception is T. E. A. Salubi, an Urhobo leader and cultural nationalist born around 1906. Described as a "serial and disciplined diarist," Salubi began to write about his childhood in 1938, and by the time of his death in 1982, he had "left behind extraordinary cogent records of his life experiences."[28] Throughout

several chapters or sections of autobiographies, it is typical to come across such phrases as "I have a few fragmentary recollection" and "I cannot now remember" that reveal the author's recognition of the challenges of presenting an authentic or complete past.[29]

Although autobiographers attempt to convey their earliest memories as effectively as they can—sometimes providing a drawing or sketch of their village homes and school, all in an attempt to bring the past to life—narratives occasionally commence with descriptions of events that predate a given author's birth but that shaped his or her childhood.[30] So important was the prebirth narrative to Buchi Emecheta's representation of the self in her autobiography that she dedicates an entire chapter to it, titled "What They Told Me."[31] Descriptions of unexpected weather changes or unusual signs before and during birth were part of an established practice of mystifying the circumstances of birth of children who would later in life be extremely successful. For example, a local diviner predicted that Okwu, a Biafran ambassador who later became a college administrator in the United States, would become an *onye beke* (white man's person); and Azikiwe likewise relies on an octogenarian Sierra Leonean who had lived in northern Nigeria for 60 years for the following statement about the unusual weather that heralded his birth: "The eve of my birth was signalized by the flash of a comet, which set the tongues of different sections of the Zungeru community waggling."[32] What is more, memories also often include a depiction of certain aspects of childhood that authors did not understand until they become adults.[33] "I didn't know why" it was done, remarks Ojaide, the University of North Carolina literature professor, about the integration of children into religious observances and the "chalking" of women's and children's bodies in the shrine.[34] "I cannot recall the full details of their discussion," writes Awolowo in an attempt to remember adults' perceptions of the ambivalent actions of the colonial masters who helped stopped slavery and the Yoruba civil wars, but who refused to leave after such benevolence.[35] Like most children of her age, Emecheta heard (but was unable to refute or confirm) the popular wartime propaganda that their parents were mobilized to fight in the Second World War because Hitler had said that "all Africans had tails and should be killed."[36]

"She Loved Me More than I Realized": Raising the Colonial Child

Studying both the changes and the continuity in family structure remains the best way of locating the transformation of colonial

childhood. Indeed, the earliest references to children in Africanist literature are often embedded in the narratives of the sociopolitical and economic activities of the family. In rendering their childhood past, autobiographers generally start with the narrative of their family genealogy, weaving it into the broader history of their community. They provide information of varying depth and quality about how individuals in their family influenced their upbringing.[37] For much of the first half of the twentieth century, family structure continued as it had the preceding century—large extended families living in a close-knit compounds or big houses, supervised by an elderly woman or man. Because the family was a unit of social and economic production and identity, narratives largely center on what impact the tradition of the family and its place within the community had on early childhood experience. Until starting elementary school or leaving for the city or abroad to acquire higher education, the colonial child's early economic activities included farming, fishing, and craft production—the mainstays of the rural economy.[38] Some autobiographers, like Babatunde Olatunji, a renowned drummer, and Ambassador Yahaya Kwande, experienced a royal childhood in addition to an agricultural one. A respected social activist and educator who lived in the United States from 1950 until his death in 2003, Olatunji did not attend elementary school until he was 12 because he was being prepared to become a chief in his village of Ajido, near Badagry.[39]

Religion was one aspect of the family tradition that influenced not only how a child was raised but also his or her social status. During the first half of the twentieth century, people's religious affiliations were generally grouped as either Islam, Christianity, or paganism—that is, adherents of traditional, indigenous faiths. Religion made up a significant component of Nigerian and African daily existence. Hence, a sizable portion of childhood memories dwells on children's involvement in religious activities and initiations into age grades, both of which placed them at the center of communal life and sometimes served as significant markers of progress toward adulthood. Colonial children tend to recount the history of the introduction of Islam and Christianity to their communities, and the tension between adherents of different faiths.[40] Most of the colonial children profiled in this chapter had a Christian childhood, their parents having converted to Christianity before or during their childhood years.[41] Even children whose parents remained non-Christians during their lifetime stood the chance of having a Christian childhood because the European missions, which controlled up to 99 percent of schools in

Figure 7.1 Thomas Ona of Ijebu Ode teaching wood-carving to his son
Source: *Nigeria Magazine*, No. 14, 1938.

1945, normally required conversion to Christianity as a precondition for enrollment.[42] Christianity in colonial Africa was not just about religiosity; children who acquired a Western education through the missions stood a higher chance of escaping poverty and occupying significant elite position within their profession, community, or the nation in general. On the first page of his autobiography, Olusanya, a former college professor, respected public intellectual, and Nigerian ambassador to France, makes a connection between his Christian childhood and upward mobility: "The only thing of significance," he writes explaining the circumstances of his birth, "was that I was born into a Christian and literate family. . . . Being born into a Christian and literate family automatically provided me with an opportunity for education which was a means of achieving success under new [colonial] dispensation."[43]

Christian missionaries' practice of proselytizing children through Western education did not go unchallenged. Many parents refused

to enroll their children in missionary schools because they feared their children would be converted.[44] In some parts of the South, especially Lagos, Muslim parents were able to effectively advocate for, and succeeded in establishing, schools that blended Islamic culture with Western education in order to prevent their children from converting to Christianity. Williams, who had an Islamic childhood, attended one such school, Talimul-Islam Ahmadiyya Primary School.[45] However, in the North, the British as part of their attempt to please the local ruling Islamic elites shielded much of the region from Christian missions' outreach and spearheaded the establishment of schools that merged Western and Arabic education.[46] Bello, who experienced an Islamic childhood, attended one of these schools, Sokoto Provincial School, the only "modern" school in the whole of Sokoto Province.[47] Yet, not all children that attended mission schools converted to Christianity. One of the many exceptions was Biobaku, who hailed from a family of Yoruba Islamic clerics (Figure 7.2).[48] Kwande, born in the Middle Belt village of Kwande, managed to combine the competing faiths in an uneasy quest to satisfy educational requirements and social obligations imposed by his

Figure 7.2 Children in Islamic School in Northern Nigeria, c. 1940s. Courtesy of the Nigerian National Archives, Ibadan

family: “As a child, I was a Muslim at home, a Catholic in school and a pagan among my royal kinsfolk.”[49]

One of the major debates about child rearing during the 1930s and 1940s was whether corporal punishment was the best means of correcting children’s wrongdoing, as well as what impact it had on child–parent relations.[50] Some commentators, like the neotraditionalist *Lagos Daily News*, believed that children should be regularly punished if they went off course; however, advocates of “modern” child rearing contended that corporal punishment “hardened” the heart of the children and was counterproductive.[51] Generally, some people considered corporal punishment as an evidence of lack of parental love for children. A writer in the “Focus on Women” column of the *Nigerian Daily Times* who self-identified as Beatrice rendered a connection between corporal punishment and motherhood love in a manner that spoke to the prevailing controversy: “The other day a neigbour’s child broke a plate and my, what a beating he got! Some how many Nigerian mothers do not bother to demonstrate their love for their children. We are simply too impatient and rather cold when it comes to applying the tonic of tenderness.”[52] The absence of parental love, it was claimed, not only created fearful emotions in the child; it prevented him or her from establishing a strong relationship with the parents. Alison Izzett, a European officer of the Colony Welfare Office, a government institution established in 1941 to address juvenile delinquency, noted in an article titled “The Fears and Anxieties of Delinquent Yoruba Children” that although the Yoruba parent “sometimes pets and wheedles his child . . . on the whole, disciplines rests primarily on inculcating fear in the child.” She contended that hard punishments “create the very delinquencies which they are attempting to cure.”[53]

A somewhat neutral position toward this debate came from Miss Silva, the pseudonymous editor of the *West African Pilot*’s “Milady’s Bower,” a leading newspaper column of 1940s and 1950s Nigeria. Her position, expressed in a February 1945 entry titled “Parents and Children,” dovetailed with the often contradictory practice of selectively appropriating aspects of Western culture deemed “good” while rejecting those considered “injurious” to African culture. She argued that African parents did love their children, but “affection is being driven out of existence almost through a persistent lack of freedom on the children’s part.” She based her observation on how Europeans expressed love for their children in public—“the ways parents and children embrace one another” and “the fondling and kissing,” which African parents hardly tolerated even at home. She ended her entry

with strong advice for parents, "Please if you are a parent, do not be a terror to your children. Show them that you love, and let them be interested in the real sense of it."[54] However, in another entry she raised a point about the impact of strictness on children's growth and future: "I do not understand why human happiness should be denied to our children when they are being trained for good future citizens. . . . While I like the idea of children being trained in a proper manner, yet I abhor the process which makes our children timid and coward when they grow up."[55] Other writers who dealt with issues of discipline and corporal punishment attempted to draw a line between "decent" and "cruel" beating and by establishing checks on parents when they inflicted corporal punishment. In his doctoral thesis approved by the University of London in 1939, later published posthumously as *The Sociology of the Yoruba*, Nathaniel Fadipe painted a picture of how children attempted to escape from beatings by taking refuge with other members of the household. When a beating was "getting excessive," Fadipe pontificates, an "authoritative voice"—usually a senior member of the household—intervened to stop the punishment.[56]

What did colonial children come to think about corporal punishment and the notion that parents who practiced such discipline did not love their offspring? Autobiographers tended to tie being raised by disciplinarian parents and guardians to their success both as a child and later as an adult. They generally did not accept the notion that strictness was cruel, nor did they think their parents did not love them. "Whenever the argument of love or no love broke out between us," Bajowa recalls the difficult times he had with Iye, his grandmother, "[she] would insist that she loved me, but hated my stubbornness." "She loved me more than I realized," Bajowa submits.[57] Olatunji depicts a two-way situation regarding corporal punishment: "When I did something right I got praised by everyone. When I acted like a little boy I got smacked by everyone." He goes on to explain the procedure that usually accompanied punishment by drawing on a Yoruba proverb: "They say, if you spank a little boy or little girl with your right hand, what do you do with the left? You pull him toward you with the left hand."[58]

Generally, autobiographies tried to paint a picture of an innocent, good, and obedient child. "I liked being a good boy—I liked obeying rules," Kwande wrote of his boyhood character.[59] They rarely tell why they were beaten or what were the circumstances that brought them into conflict with the status quo. Even when they do

say why—such as in the case of Yusuf, who was punished for converting to Christianity—they typically try to justify their fault, blaming "innocent" attitudes unique to children's development phase. One should not be surprised by this given that narratives of childhood generally are meant to romanticize the colonial past in order to demonstrate children's strict compliance with the established order—attitudes that most biographers have tended to see as being eroded in the "postmodern" age of what they consider "bad" parenting. It is only in rare cases that self-narrators clearly take full responsibility for socially unacceptable behavior, such as lying. For example, after dropping out of Baptist Boys' High School following his father's demise and the inability of his family to pay his fees, Awolowo confessed to lying to the principal when he was 15 in 1924 that he had completed his elementary school education.[60]

Perhaps no autobiographer is as explicit about his childhood wrongs as Bajowa, who boldly renders an image of a rebellious child, in "constant clash with the status-quo." In five chapters, he gives an "honest" image of a rural childhood detailing his antisocial behavior, which included shunning home chores and lying to his parents. In one instance, he denied a charge of stealing food and was compelled to tell the truth only when threatened with *Okorowo*, the community's traditional means of detecting lies. "The method involved digging a hole in the ground and filling it with water and some other stuff which would then be drunk by those involved," Bajowa recalled.[61] When he asked one of the elders what would happen to anyone who drank the water from the hole, he received the following response: "If you are innocent, nothing will happen to you, but if you are the culprit, your stomach will swell up and you will die within twenty-four hours." Bajowa immediately confessed and received a beating. Elsewhere in his interesting narrative, he tells the story of a false alarm he caused. He rang the village church bell, causing an entire congregation to gather for an "emergency" prayer session.[62] Bajowa was only seven when he and his friends terrorized the home of a local elementary schoolteacher to "punish" him for his "wickedness" toward his pupils. He received 24 strokes of cane for this offense. Bajowa offers no excuses for his misconduct. Rather, he attributes his behavior to the discrepancy between his evolving personality and societal expectations:

> I was trying to discover and define myself within a traditional setting. This did not prove easy. I discovered I was one of those kids who

> rather than start inside of society's cocoon, started outside it. And for a long time, a true understanding of my position eluded me. I lost time wandering along with those around me why I did things differently. But later developments in life proved that I was able to retain my sanity by worrying less about who I was.[63]

Kwande is another autobiographer who depicts his punishment for deliberately contravening rules. On one occasion, he went out with his friends instead of doing his usual chores of fetching grass for the family's horse. When he returned home for dinner, his father took the following action: "As I swallowed the first morsel and was just following it with a second one, my father reached for me from behind and grabbed my wrist. He shook the food out of my hand and put the scythe in its place. 'The horses have life, and so they too eat,' he said. 'Go and get their food, and then you can come and eat yours.'"[64]

The narratives of corporal punishment lead us to that of emotion. Historians of North American and European childhood have examined the change and continuity in children's emotions since the Middle Ages.[65] The history of childhood emotion, like the broader history of children, poses a lot of methodological and theoretical challenges, which include the paucity of data and evolving conceptions of fear and grief. "We don't know as much about children's emotions as we would like, even about today's children and certainly about children historically," opines Peter Stearns, a revered Americanist historian.[66] If data and scholarship about American and European children's emotion is rare, that about African children is rarer still.[67] But autobiographies of childhood do present some useful insights. It reveals that emotions cannot operate outside the context of cultural norms—that is, emotional impulses and cultural practices are inseparable. Two types of fearful emotions—namely, the seen and the unseen—are discernible in the narratives of childhood. The fear of the seen, or external, world includes fear of punishment by teachers, parents, or guardians for wrongdoing. Both Awolowo and Azikiwe described the impact that conflict within their polygamous families had on their emotions.[68]

Besides humans, children were also fearful of some animals and other living creatures, and of violence in its many forms. This type of externally directed fear reflected the natural environment in which children were raised and their sociocultural conception of nonhuman creatures. Hence children could not be afraid of visible situations that did not form a significant component of their daily lives or society. As I have shown in a related study, Lagos boys feared vagrancy, crime,

poverty —all of which might not be sources of anxiety for village boys, who were usually insulated against these problems by communal parenting. But children in rural settings faced fears of their own. So terrified was the village boy Awolowo of snakes and insects at his first visit to his father's big farm when he was around six that he did not want to repeat the adventure.[69] In addition to being afraid of animals such as snakes, mice, and frogs, Ojike was fearful of natural phenomena such as thunder, lightning, and darkness.[70] Similarly, Bello describes his fear of dangerous animals like hyenas that regularly visited the village to hunt livestock; he also received the following advice on how to behave if one ran into a lion in the forest: "Stand quite still and then put down your weapons, move two or three paces slowly towards the lion and make obeisance on your knees. After all, he is the King of the Bush. Then you can go back and pick up your arms and the lion will not notice you."[71]

It would appear that the fear of the unseen played a greater role in the imagination of children. From the narratives of Ojaide, Biobaku, Adeloye, and Yusuf, among others, one realizes the strong emotional implication of the death of parents and siblings due to common diseases such as smallpox and malaria.[72] The high rate of child mortality, especially in the villages placed the realities of death and dying at the center of their imaginations at a very early age. "After they buried my first sister behind the house," wrote Ojaide relating his fears of death, "I was always scared to bathe in the sheltered space. . . . The mound grew smaller and smaller until the constant rains ate it up." So gruesome was death in his consciousness that he thought of escaping it: "I asked Grandma without telling her my fears whether it was possible to build a ladder that would take one to the sky. I wanted to escape death by climbing to the moon to hide."[73] Adeloye was about seven and ten years old, respectively, when he lost his brother to cerebral malaria and his sister to smallpox. Seeing loved ones succumb to smallpox was as painful as being prevented from crying—it was a taboo to cry for someone killed by the disease. He goes on to narrate his mother's explanation of death and how he managed to escape being killed by smallpox.[74]

Death was not the only cause of childhood fear of the unseen. In most, if not all, Nigerian cultures, supernatural entities, like witches, that had power to inflict pain or hardship were assumed to be present and thus were prominent in people's consciousness. Death in the family and misfortune were often attributed to the power of the vampires that terrorized the community in search of blood to suck. Children—especially those predicted to have a good

future—were inexorably drawn into the culture of fear of the unseen, in part because, as a family's most significant asset, they were to be protected from unseen spiritual forces in the same way that they were given food and shelter. Whether it is Awolowo, who ate "sacrificial meat" composed of chicken or pigeons recommended by a Yoruba priest, or Onyemanze Ejiogu, the only child of his parents who received a strange bath from her mother as a protection against evil, the narrative of fear is reflected in how some autobiographers recount their past.[75] The fear of the spiritual attack might have been even stronger in the daily existence of colonial children than the autobiographies reveal. In 1955 Izzett ranked the fear of witches as the highest of the fears that delinquent Yoruba children confront. She also noted that some boys "attributed their misdeeds to their carrying out the orders of Esu [the devil]." They were least afraid of the police, because according to her they were "more outlaws from the family than outlaws from society."[76] Izzett noted that "Eru ba mi" (I am afraid) was one of the first Yoruba phrases she learned from children of about ages of six and seven and others appearing before the juvenile court.

"I Had Thought That the White Man Was a Superman": Encountering Colonial Modernity

The autobiographers surveyed here were among the first Nigerians to encounter colonial modernity—that is, the institutions, culture, and infrastructure of western Europe that arrived first through the introduction of Christianity from the first half of the nineteenth century. One might think that urban children were the first to encounter colonial modernity, because the city took the lead in the entrenchment of Western culture and values. However, this was not always the case; as a result of numerous factors associated with geography and the politics of the spread of Western ideas of governance such as the Indirect Rule system rural, children encountered aspects of colonial modernity at almost the same time as did their city counterparts. For instance, Bello was born and raised in a very rural Rabah village in Old Sokoto Province, where his father's status as the head of a district comprising about 60 villages inhabited by 3,000 people allowed him to experience the working of imperialism before he left for Sokoto about the age of ten. His home included a rest house where visiting colonial masters stayed with his family while on tour. Although

minors were hardly active participants in the core debates about colonial politics, especially taxation matters and political appointments that regularly brought the district heads and the British colonialists into constant conflict, they learned what they could, as Bello recalled: "We children used to hang around in the bush outside the rest-house compound and watch everything that went on."[77]

Regardless of the remoteness of a place, agents of British imperialism, such as clerks or tax officers, police, and sanitary inspectors, provided children with an early and enduring memory of the imperial presence in their communities.[78] Some autobiographers recount that they themselves wanted to become agents of imperialism because of the enchanting uniforms they wore and, more importantly, the authority they wielded among the people. In the introduction to his autobiography, Omo N'oba Erediauwa, the present king of Benin City, who experienced a royal childhood weighed the political strength of the colonial masters against traditional authorities in justifying why he wanted to work for the imperial government: "I had always wanted to be a District Officer . . . in order to know what made the 'white man' the all-powerful he was in his domain—more powerful, so it seemed to me, than the Oba (king) himself."[79] Awolowo's father enrolled him in elementary school because he wanted him to become "an outstanding clerk in Lagos."[80] The documented memories of children's experiences such as first time in the city, first sight of a white man, entry of the first car into the village, first use of various electronic gadgets, and first railway journey, among others, provide useful information about the level of technological development in their homeland and the impression it had on their childhood.[81] "A groaning iron and wood house moving on the road!" is the statement Ojaide uses in describing his first site of a motorcar at his home village of Ibada in the Niger Delta.[82]

But most children did not encounter modernity until they enrolled in school. Although most schools throughout the first half of the twentieth century were run by missionaries, the entire school culture conformed to the predominant ethos of imperial education. Schoolchildren were indoctrinated with stories of the greatness of the British Empire and the need to be loyal to it. The curriculum focused on basic literacy skills such as reading, writing, and arithmetic useful for the creation of a lower cadre of manpower for the expanding government and private ventures. From the late nineteenth century, the colonial government began to monitor mission education, not only by providing conditional subventions, but by ensuring that the curriculum did not contravene the core hegemonic philosophy of

imperial rule. Throughout the colonial period, education at any level remained a privilege. Except for the children of the Saro, ex-slaves from Sierra Leone, Lagos, and Abeokuta, most schoolchildren in the first half of the twentieth century were the first in their families or village to receive a Western education and in some cases to be converted to Christianity (Figure 7.3).

It is in the light of this that self-narrators render the memory of their first day in school, which tended to have enduring significance since it involved extra preparation and hardship such as walking a long distance.[83] Abubakar Imam, a northern politician and administrator, was 11 in March 1922 when he trekked 90 miles over 15 days from Kagara to enroll in elementary school at Katsina.[84] Olusanya was barely four when he was enrolled at the Roman Catholic School in Zaria, to which he was sent "because I used to cry a lot at home and was therefore a nuisance."[85] Except for Soyinka, who sneaked into school at the age of three because he was jealous of his elder sister's interesting school routine, most autobiographers were unhappy on their first day in school. School enrollment not only deprived children of their playtime, it also placed them under a well-defined

Figure 7.3 A'ishatu Yola learning arithmetic
Source: *Nigeria Magazine*, No. 34, 1950.

regimen that was in stark contrast to their highly cherished preschool freedom.[86] School activities such as morning and afternoon physical exercise, gardening, and construction work were not fun to some.[87] "I didn't just feel part of it," recalls artist and musician Twins Seven-Seven.[88] Awolowo claimed he would have enjoyed physical exercise but for the manner in which it was conducted, which was like a military drill: "The entire school lined up in order of height, and the lone teacher stood in front of us and rapped out the orders: 'At-te-e-n-tion! Right turn! Left turn! Ab-a-a-out turn! Hands up! Hands down! Expand! Fold! Fist! Chest! Right turn—Quick march! Halt!' After a few repetition of these orders, it was all over."[89]

But what made the memory of the first day in school enduring for some colonial children was the procedure for enrollment—ascertaining the children's dates of birth. Not all colonial children knew their birth dates—Afonja, Kwande, Ojike, Okwu, and Salubi, among others, relied on significant events and year of enrollment in elementary school to speculate as to the year in which they were born.[90] The absence of official birth certificates (especially for rural children) compelled the government to adopt a crude method called the "arm over the head test" to determine the attainment of school age.[91] Adeloye gave a description of this procedure: "If a child could put one arm over the top of the head and touch the opposite ear with his/her fingertips, then he/she would have likely reached the age of 6 years. The child must stand up straight, as I did, or sit in an upright position holding his/her head straight."[92] Oral and written histories of colonial childhood are replete with mixed opinions as to the validity of this test. While some, notably Adeloye, believe it was fairly accurate, others thought their education was delayed because they failed the test. Ejiogu thinks the test deprived him of starting school even though he had mastered his English alphabet and *The Queen Primer*. He noted that being turned away from school because his hand could not touch his ear, a situation he likened to "wasting away," is one of his clearest childhood memories.[93]

It would appear that corporal punishment, more than the reduction of play time and the strict regimen, was the most important reason colonial children hated school. As we have seen earlier, the debate over the usefulness of corporal punishment at home divided Nigerians. But there was little the critics of corporal punishment could do to stop its use in schools, since it had been a significant element of Christian education culture since the nineteenth century.[94] Students were not unjustly punished in most cases. Achebe, who enrolled in

elementary school in 1936, recounted that one was "walloped not for laughing when a mistake was made, but for making it."[95] Although flogging was usually administered by teachers, occasionally instructors attempted to "promote" learning and competition by allowing pupils to flog each other. Ejiogu describes this type of flogging, which he believed was more painful than that inflicted by the teacher:

> The teacher would pair up his pupils in order for them to ask each other questions. You would ask your opposite number for instance to spell the word "psychology." If he failed, you gave him six strokes of your ruler on his palm and he awaited your turn. To get his own back he would think of a difficult word like "Mediterranean." If you get it right, he would wait for another opportunity to take his revenge if he was lucky to meet you again"[96]

Empire Day (celebrated every May 24) was perhaps the most significant moment that placed schoolchildren at the center of imperial politics. Although it started as the celebration of the birthday of Queen Victoria, the British later used it as an opportunity to reinforce the power of the British monarchy and secure the allegiance of the colonial subjects, especially schoolchildren.[97] None of the autobiographers surveyed in this chapter remember the content of the lectures delivered by colonial officers.[98] However, they did print with regularity slogans such as "God Save Our Gracious King" and "Rule Britannia," and sang such lyrics as "On the 24th of May (drum), the Day When Queen Victoria was born. We shall all rejoice (drum beat)."[99] But like most events and activities constructed to enhance imperial loyalty, schoolchildren made their own, different meaning out of the celebration. They did not interpret the importance or the highlights of Empire Day beyond the rare opportunity to see the white colonial masters and highly ranked traditional rulers, and the impression that the colorful parades of the military, police, ex-servicemen, Boy Scouts, and interschool athletic competitions had on their childhood.[100]

The Empire Day celebration added a significant element to children's traveling culture, providing an occasional opportunity for them to escape parental control as they traveled from their villages to the district or provincial town where events were usually held. "If you are lucky enough to be selected to witness the great ceremony, the distance to walk meant nothing to you,"Afonja remarked about walking from his native village of Jogo Orile to Ilaro, the divisional headquarters.[101] Achebe was ten in 1940 when he witnessed his first

Empire Day, describing it as "indeed memorable." He trekked to Onitsha, seven miles from his village of Ogidi, to participate in an event he remembered for its splendid color and for seeing schoolchildren from all over the district marching before a British Resident, "who stood on a dais wearing a white ceremonial uniform with white gloves, plumed helmet, and sword."[102] The celebration of Empire Day also gave children, especially boys, the opportunity to showcase their emerging masculinity. Achebe described how interschool competitions like the tug-of-war separated big boys from the small boys and added a tense dynamic to intrafaith politics—schools operated by missions were in constant competition with each other for religious conversions and school enrollment. Other highlights of the day were of greater personal importance to Achebe. Not only was he able to eat as many groundnuts as he liked, he also saw the highly famed J. M. Stuart Young "walking down New Market Road bare headed in the sun, just as legend said he would be."[103]

"*Alamgba Eko, Eko Ni Gbe* (The Lizard of Lagos Stays in Lagos)": Location and Work

The autobiographers surveyed in this chapter recognized the significance of space and place in positioning their narratives. While weaving personal interiority with the progression through life and the broader history of their family and community, they also created interesting narratives that explain the ways in which their physical environment shaped their childhood experience. Many of their memories of the environment are tied to the changing geographic space where their childhood took place. Like adults, children were also highly mobile colonial subjects. They would join adults in partaking in a myriad of opportunities enhanced by the Pax Britannica and the advancement of the colonial transportation system. As they moved from one part of the country to another, they experienced new aspects of childhood dictated by the physical and cultural geography of their changing environments. Hence it was not unusual for children to experience childhood in multiple locations, influenced by the sociocultural and economic structures of each place in which they lived.

By age ten, Azikiwe had lived in Zungeru, the northern town where he was born; Onitsha in the southeast; and Lagos in the southwest.[104] When his father became "apprehensive" that he might lose Igbo, his mother tongue, he sent him to live with his aunt and paternal grandmother in their ancestral home in Onitsha.[105] His account

of his journey, first from Zungeru to Onitsha and later to Lagos in 1914, focuses on the modes of transportation used and the impressions made by the various places encountered while plying the Niger and other, smaller bodies of water: "It was the first time I had been to sea. It was majestic," Azikiwe wrote of his first experience of Lagos and its environs. But life in Lagos not only brought him into closer contact with colonial modernity, it exposed him to more than just Nigerian life—especially the culture of returnee Brazilians (Aguda), which, according to him, "wrought many changes in my life."[106] Like Azikiwe, Bello did not leave his native homeland of Rabah until he was around ten. In 1920 he rode 20 miles on horseback, instead of using the river—which had, "oddly enough, never been used for transport: in the rains it is too wide and swift, and in the dry season it is too shallow"—from Rabah to Sokoto to begin his experience with Western-style education. His "wailing" family escorted him for about mile: "[I] could hear their lamentations long after we were out of sight. The path followed the foot of the rising ground beside the river, and Rabah was soon lost to sight behind low spur."[107] By age eight, Olusanya, who was born in Abeokuta in 1936, had lived in Zaria and Kano (both in the North) and Lagos.[108] He explains that his residency in northern and southern Nigeria defied the Yoruba saying *Alamgba Eko, Eko ni gbe* (The lizard of Lagos stays in Lagos).[109]

The recollection by autobiographers of memories of migration and exposure to different cultures are often directed toward a political end. When they narrate the numerous places they lived or visited as a child, they sometimes try to elucidate the impact it had on their outlook as a "detribalized" Nigerian, committed to the difficult project of a united Nigeria. It is not difficult to comprehend the broader political intention of Azikiwe, who became a nationalist as an adult, when he recounts how playing with boyhood friends of diverse ethnic backgrounds in schools and on the streets of Lagos influenced his fervent commitment to a united Nigerian state. He claims to have been a "Hausa boy" until he moved to Onitsha, and later Lagos. At 11, Ejiogu spent quality time traveling on the train with his father, a locomotive engine driver, to several parts of the country—Lagos, Port Harcourt, Umuahia, Makurdi, and Kafanchan. Weighing the pros and cons of his childhood itinerary, he concludes, "While it adversely affected my early education, I became a true Nigerian at quite an early age."[110]

It is evident in the autobiographies that location also influenced the manner in which child labor, one of the major topics in contemporary African discourse of underdevelopment, is dicussed. The

major criticisms against child labor include the exploitation of children by capitalism. Critics of child labor believe it exposed children to the dangers of the streets, such as crime and rape, and prevented them from acquiring an education that they needed for upward social and economic mobility. But as Tokunbo Ayoola (in this volume) and other scholars have shown, children have always been a significant element of capitalist enterprise. Scholars of course admonish us to be more sensitive in deploring categories that originated in the West in attempting to explain African situations. What passed for child exploitation in Western societies was readily interpreted as a core element of child rearing in many African societies. None of my autobiographers depicts children's rural family-related economic activities as exploitative, dangerous, or violent. Rather, the memory of such work as fishing, hawking of goods, and farming is rendered as a significant element of childhood socialization, which they believe prepared them for the rough challenges of adulthood.[111]

However, urban children tended to view their involvement in economic activities as "real" work. This is probably because the arm of colonial capitalism that promoted child labor was far more entrenched in nonagricultural sectors, such as in the cities and mines, where children worked for nonrelatives, usually for cash. Awolowo differentiates between helping his parents on the farm in rural Ikenne and working under several masters when poverty forced him to move to Abeokuta in 1921 following his father's death. There Awolowo worked in road construction, fetched water for local residences, and collected sheaves of dried elephant grass used by local potters in firing earthenwares—all before the age of 12. Commenting on raw clay pounding, another task children performed at pottery shops, Awolowo wrote, "This was a grueling piece of occupation." Like numerous other urban children who "worked for their own fees," he earned six pennies for a whole day and two for less than half a day working with pottery makers (Figure 7.4).[112]

Aside from direct labor for pay, the "houseboy" phenomenon also placed children at the center of the urban economy amid entrenched class and racial differences. One of the characteristic features of colonial society's upper- and middle-class culture was residency in large single-family homes, with a semi-attached small dwelling popularly called the "boys' quarter," which housed those who performed all manner of domestic chores ranging from cooking to child care. Indeed, being a cook in a European's household confirmed a lot of respect—some children and young adults purposely migrated to the city for just that reason. While some houseboys received a monthly salary, many, especially

Figure 7.4 Children in the market place. Lokoja. Courtesy of the Nigerian National Archives, Ibadan

those working in African homes, exchanged their labor for free room and board. Some generous masters paid school tuition for their houseboys. While working as houseboys provided a great opportunity for boys to acquire education and be exposed to colonial modernity, violent abuse and maltreatment was not uncommon. Between 1922 and 1924, Awolowo worked as houseboy with five often exploitative masters, exchanging for free accommodations all sorts of paid and unpaid work, which included helping a blind professional letter writer to transcribe. Salubi was around 13 in 1916 when he took a two-week canoe voyage on creeks and rivers to Lagos from his native town of Ovu in Urhoboland. His experience is similar to that of Awolowo—he served as a houseboy of European and African masters and worked as a caddie at the Europeans-only Golf Club at Ikoyi. “I was very serviceable to my master,” wrote Salubi, recalling his ability to do numerous house chores, including cooking European food.[113]

Conclusion

This chapter has identified autobiographies of childhood as a historical, artistic, and literary trove. Through them, we can learn much

about colonial childhood experiences, as variously shaped by circumstances of birth, family's social status, and location. We are thus able to retrieve children's perceptions of colonial modernity and how they adjusted and adapted to it. Documented memories of childhood provide valuable perspectives on the social and economic transformations under the colonial rule. Like all sources of history, however, autobiographies of childhood have their limitations. Not only do they contain frequent embellishment, but the line between imaginative and factual representation of the past often becomes blurred.

Notes

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2. Soyinka, *Ake*; Ojaide, *Great Boys*; Adeloye, *My Salad Days*; Bajowa, *Spring of a Life.*
3. Awolowo, *Awo*, 6.
4. See, among others, Aoileann Ní Éigeartaigh, "Angela's Ashes: An American Memoir of an Irish Childhood," *Irish Journal of American Studies* 13, nos. 12–14 (2004–5): 81–92; Richard N. Coe, *When the Grass Was Taller: Autobiography and the Experience of Childhood* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984); Heather Scutter, "Writing the Childhood Self: Australian Aboriginal Autobiographies, Memoirs, and Testimonies," *The Lion and the Unicorn* 25, no. 2 (2001): 226–41;Loius Irving Horowitz, "Autobiography as the Presentation of Self for Social Immortality," *New Literary History* 9 (1977):173–9.
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6. Soyinka, *Ibadan*, ix.
7. Emecheta, *Head above Water*; Soyinka, *Ake*; Ojaide, *Great Boys.*
8. Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself* (London, 1789). Other examples of self-narrative of slavery and abolition include, Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass An American Slave Written by Himself* (New York: New American Library, 1845, 1968); Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2001, 1861); William Wells Brown, *Narrative of William W. Brown, a Fugitive Slave, Written by Himself*, (London: Penguin Books, 1982, 1847).
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11. Awolowo, *Awo*; Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*; Bello, *My Life*.
12. Olusanya, *Memoirs of a Disillusioned Patriot*, vi.
13. Olusanya, *Memoirs of a Disillusioned Patriot*; Okwu, *In Truth*; Ogbaa, *Carrying My Father's Torch*; Williams, *Faces, Cases and Places*. See also Mora, *Abubakar Imam Memoirs*.
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15. Achebe, *Education of a British-Protected Child*.
16. Afonja, *In His Hands*.
17. Kolawole Balogun, *Mission to Ghana: Memoir of a Diplomat* (New York: Vantage Press, 1963); Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa, *Memoirs of a Nigerian Minister of Education: Professor Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa* (Ibadan: Macmillan, 1998); Isaac Fadoyebo, *A Stroke of Unbelievable Luck*, ed. David Killingray (Madison: University of Wisconsin, African Studies Program, 1999).
18. Awolowo, *Awo*, ix.
19. Ibid., 38–52.
20. Afonja, *In His Hands*, back cover.
21. Bajowa, *Spring of a Life*, xi.
22. Yusuf, *That We May Be One*, 20–2.
23. Bajowa, *Spring of a Life*, 32.
24. Olatunji, *Beat of My Drum*, 66–7; Adeloye, *My Salad* Days, 57–9, 84–5; Bajowa, *Spring of a Life*, 57–65; Kwande, *Making of a Northern Nigerian*, 25–6; Biobaku, *When We Were Young*, 18–25.
25. Biobaku, *When We Were Young*, 1.
26. Wole Soyinka, *Isara: A Voyage around "Essay"* (New York: Random House, 1989), v.
27. Biobaku, *When We Were Young*.
28. Salubi, *T.E.A. Salubi*, back cover.
29. Adeloye, *My Salad Days*, 5; Bajowa, *Spring of a Life*, 51, 53; Awolowo, *Awo*, 31.
30. Bajowa, *Spring of a Life*, 15–16; Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 7; Yusuf, *That We May Be One*, 11; Ojaide, *Great Boys*, 5–9. For historical drawings and sketches, see Bajowa, *Spring of a Life*, 17; Ojike, *Portrait of a Boy*, 5, 10, 27; Adeloye, *My Salad Days*, 11, 55, 64, 78, 81; Ejiogu, *A Nigerian Life*, 36; Bello, *My Life*, 9.
31. Emecheta, *Head above Water*, 6–11.
32. Okwu, *In Truth*, 9; Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 7.
33. Yusuf, *That We May Be One*, 21; Awolowo, *Awo*, 17; Bajowa, *Spring of a Life*, 20.
34. Ojaide, *Great Boys*, 35.
35. Awolowo, *Awo*, 17.
36. Emecheta, *Head above Water*, 12.
37. This is occasionally carried out through a family tree. See Bello, *My Life*, x.

38. Ojaide, *Great Boys*, 25–30; Afonja, *In His Hands*, 1–9; Ogbaa, *Carrying My Father's Torch*, 3–12; Ojike, *Portrait of a Boy*,1–18; Kwande, *Making of a Northern Nigerian*, 14–29; Awolowo, *Awo*, 6–7.
39. Olatunji, *Beat of My Drum*, 65.
40. Kwande, *Making of a Northern Nigerian*, 69–85; Bajowa, *Spring of a Life*, 66–72; Awolowo, *Awo*, 1–11.
41. Awolowo, *Awo*, 21–24; Achebe, *Education of a British-Protected Child*, 10–12; Bajowa, *Spring of a Life*, 66–72; Olusanya, *Memoirs of a Disillusioned Patriot*, 1–14.
42. J. S. Coleman, *Nigeria: A Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958), 113.
43. Olusanya, *Memoirs of a Disillusioned Patriot*, 1.
44. Yusuf, *That We May Be One*, 20–22.
45. Williams, *Faces, Cases and Places*, 4.
46. See, from *Nigerian Daily Times*: "Young Ansar-Ud-Deen Society in Aid of £20,000 Education Fund: Salvage of Skins of Rams Slaughtered during the Bairam Ileya Festival," December 16, 1942; "Mass Meeting of Muslims in Glover Hall: Ansar-Ud-Deen Secondary School Scheme Discussed," June 5, 1943.
47. *Bello*, *My Life*, 20.
48. Biobaku, *When We Were Young*, 18–25.
49. Kwande, *Making of a Northern Nigerian*, 70.
50. See, from *West African Pilot*, all by Miss Silva: "The Unruly Children," March 25, 1939; "Wayward Children," June 16, 1939; "Child Training," July 15, 1939; "Parents and Children," February 7, 1945; "Influence of Parents on Children," February 24, 1944; "Children and Discipline," November 1, 1945; "Dismissal of Wayward Children from School," November 21, 1945; "Do Not Frighten Children," January 6, 1946. See also, "Editor of 'Akede Eko' Calls on Parents to Suppress Rebellious Spirit in Boys," *West African Pilot*, June 6, 1947.
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52. Beatrice, "Let's Show Our Children Love," *Nigerian Daily Times,* August 7, 1956.
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56. Nathaniel A. Fadipe, *The Sociology of the Yoruba*, ed. and with an introduction by F. O. Okediji and O. O. Okediji (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1970), 103.
57. Bajowa, *Spring of a Life*.
58. Olatunji, *Beat of My Drum*, 57.
59. Kwande, *Making of a Northern Nigerian*, 69.

60. Awolowo, *Awo*, 45.
61. Bajowa, *Spring of a Life*, 28–29.
62. Ibid., 51–52.
63. Ibid., 34.
64. Kwande, *Making of a Northern Nigerian*, 20.
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66. Stearns, "Childhood Emotions," 158.
67. See, for example, Saheed Aderinto, "'O! Sir I Do Not Know Either to Kill Myself or to Stay': Childhood Emotion, Poverty, and Literary Culture in Nigeria, 1900–1960," *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 8, no.2 (forthcoming 2015).
68. Awolowo, *Awo*, 20–1.
69. Ibid., 31.
70. Ojike, *Portrait of a Boy*, 9.
71. Bello, *My Life*, 5.
72. Ojaide, *Great Boys*, 68–71; Biobaku, *When We Were Young*, 35, 41; Awolowo, *Awo,* 33; Adeloye, *My Salad Days*, 93–101; Yusuf, *That We May Be One*, 13–5.
73. Ojaide, *Great Boys*, 69.
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75. Awolowo, *Awo,* 14–5.
76. Ibid., 32.
77. Bello, *My Life*, 6.
78. Ojaide, *Great Boys*, 31–2.
79. Erediauwa, *I Remain*.
80. Awolowo, *Awo*, 30.
81. Awolowo, *Awo*, 12, 36; Ojaide, *Great Boys*, 34.
82. Ojaide, *Great Boys*, 34.
83. Erediauwa, *I Remain*, xx–xxi; Afonja, *In His Hands*, 11–2; Olusanya, *Memoirs of a Disillusioned Patriot*, 15.
84. Mora, *Abubakar Imam Memoirs*, 9.
85. Olusanya, *Memoirs of a Disillusioned Patriot*, 15.
86. Kwande, *Making of a Northern Nigerian*, 51–68; Afonja, *In His Hands*, 10–24; Adeloye, *My Salad Days*, 25–61; Biobaku, *When We Were Young,* 26–43; Ogbaa, *Carrying My Father's Torch*, 41–63;

Bajowa, *Spring of a Life*, 46–56; Olusanya, *Memoirs of a Disillusioned Patriot*, 15–25.

87. The press decried some of these activities as inhumane. See from the *Eastern Nigeria Guardian*: “School Children are Buried in the Pit: They are Employed to Dig for School,” January 31, 1945; Moore A. Chukudi, “Autocracy in Schools Deplored,” June, 24, 1948.
88. Twins Seven-Seven, *Dreaming Life*, 14.
89. Awolowo, *Awo*, 25.
90. Afonja, *In His Hands*, 6; Kwande, *Making of a Northern Nigerian*, 15; Ojike, *Portrait of a Boy*, 3–4; Okwu, *In Truth*, 11; Salubi, *T.E.A. Salubi*, 59.
91. Yusuf, *That We May Be One*, 21; Bajowa, *Spring of a Life*, 46; Adeloye, *My Salad Days*, 12.
92. Adeloye, *My Salad Days*, 12.
93. Ejiogu, *A Nigerian Life*, 15.
94. From the *Eastern Nigerian Guardian*: “Paddy Earlington Ekwerekwu, “Slapping in Schools,” April 24, 1940; “School Children and Bare Bodies,” August 17, 1940. “Cruelty to Children,” *Southern Nigeria Defender,* April 23, 1946.
95. Achebe, *Education of a British-Protected Child*, 10.
96. Ejiogu, *A Nigerian Life*, 24.
97. The literature on schoolchildren’s experience of Empire Day in Nigeria is underdeveloped. For more about Empire Day in other British colonies, see Anne Spry Rush, *Bonds of Empire: West Indians and Britishness from Victoria to Decolonization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), chap. 1.
98. Nigerian Daily Times: “Empire Day,” May 24, 1941; “Empire Day Message from Colonial Secretary,” May 26, 1941; “Empire Day Sports in Lagos and Ebute Metta: Governor’s Deputy Addresses Children,” May 26, 1941; “Empire Day,” May 23, 1942; “Empire Day in Lagos: Governor’s Moving Address at Sport Meeting,” May 25, 1942.
99. Afonja, *In His Hands*, 13; Ejiogu, *A Nigerian Life*, 21.
100. Bajowa, *Spring of a Life*, 54–5; Achebe, *Education of a British-Protected Child*, 15; Adeloye, *My Salad Days*, 50–4; Ejiogu, *A Nigerian Life*, 20–1; Biobaku, *When We Were Young*, 31–2.
101. Afonja, *In His Hands*, 12.
102. Achebe, *Education of a British-Protected Child*, 14.
103. Ibid., 15. For more on Stuart see Stephanie Newell, *The Forger’s Tale: The Search for Odeziaku* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006).
104. Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 9.
105. Ibid.
106. Ibid., 18.
107. Bello, *My Life*, 8.
108. Olusanya, *Memoirs of a Disillusioned Patriot*, 1–18.
109. Ibid., back cover.

110. Ejiogu, *A Nigerian Life*, 19; Olusanya, *Memoirs of a Disillusioned Patriot*, 17.
111. Ejiogu, *A Nigerian Life*, 30–31; Okorie, *Audacity of Destiny*, 31.
112. Awolowo, *Awo*, 46.
113. Salubi, *T.E.A. Salubi*, 56.