

Over the last twenty years, African child soldiers have been a seminal topic in the media and in literature. In narrative genres such as testimony, fiction and film, the persona of the war child has become a trope, a figure of meaning with varying connotations. African and Afrodiasporic authors and filmmakers with roots in different regions of the continent use different narrative, rhetorical and visual aesthetic strategies to represent child soldiers and contribute to an alternative discourse on this ubiquitous figure that goes beyond Western mainstream media.

The interviews presented in this collection feature the opinions of academic teachers, scholars, writers, filmmakers, journalists and readers based in Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and different diasporic locations who have worked on the topic in creative or analytical ways in order to explore African perceptions of the literary, medial and cinematic boom on the African child soldier. The interviews offer important insights into the reception of the child soldier figure and its ambiguities in Africa, while they also show the social urgency on the continent to deal with the aftermaths of wars and their collective traumata in a productive way. Throughout many of the conversations, the difficult balancing act of writing about the reality of child soldiers without perpetuating stereotypes about Africa as well as aspects of commodification are discussed.

By now, a multitude of novels, short stories, plays, testimonial texts, documentaries and fiction films, but also numerous research articles, reviews and dissertations have been published on the topic of the African child soldier. As a relevant tool for further research, the book offers a comprehensive bibliography of this vast body of literature and film material.

The Ubiquitous Figure
of the Child Soldier

Susanne Gehrmann,
Charlott Schönwetter (eds.)

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LKA LITERATUREN UND
KUNST AFRIKAS

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Interviews with African Writers,
Academics and Cultural Activists followed
by a Comprehensive Bibliography



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