PERSPECTIVES OF WAR IN CHIMAMANDA ADICHIE’S HALF OF A YELLOW SUN

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Abstract

War fiction is the description of war in different literary works. Writers of war literature relate to the events they describe in different ways. War is one notable social crisis that affects and alters human affairs very drastically. The theme of war has generated so much creative works that literary critics have come to regard this historical event as important in both periodization and the aesthetic development of Nigerian literature. Many critics and researchers have explored these novels from one point of view or the other. In this study, Perspectives on War in Chimamanda Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun*, the analysis was based on the novelists’ perceptions and the examination of the psychic depression of the characters in this text. In Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun*, the unattained psychosexual needs of Ugwu and the war resulted to his psychic depression. The experience of Olanna at Kano and the experience of Richard in Kano airport, with the disappearance of Kainene left them traumatized. And Odenigbo's experience when he was going to Abba to bury his mother led to his psychic depression. The researcher did a textual analysis of the novel using primary and secondary sources of data. The theoretical framework for the study is based on the theories of Marxism as propounded by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. This research concluded that, the texts clearly portrayed the novelists’ perceptions of war as a sad event in human existence and survival.

Keywords: War, Depression, Betrayal, Suffering, Death, Bloodshed, Leadership crisis, Violence

Introduction

War is a state of hostility, conflict or antagonism; a struggle or competition between opposing forces, people or nations for a particular end. It is usually an open and declared armed hostile conflict in which soldiers are armed and equipped with destructive weapons for use in decimating their supposed enemies.

As literature mirrors the society, writers variegate their interests and perspectives in the representation of humanity, human endeavours, happenstances, disasters, upheavals and a host of other occurrences. These writers perform numerous vital roles by drawing the attention of the society and its people to the ills that pervade them. The projection of such societal ills does not however, translate to its endorsement and validation by such writers; but rather, depict the artists’ aversion for such social anomalies as well as their overt or through the sensitization of the public.
In fact, several writings in relation to war have dwelt on highlighting the sufferings, psychological and physical, which people go through in the course of unrests and violence. These writings explore the trauma faced by all men, women and children – especially their truncated peaceful livings, innocence, structured life, and the harmony in society. Thus, the works of most contemporary African writers explore the confusion, catastrophes and wrangling that arose from power mongering, ethnic sentiments and parochial inclinations of the people that have led to wars. These writers' works are reflections of the African society ravaged by wars and their consequences.

As Chinyere Nwahunanya (2011: 55) says in *A Harvest of Tragedy: Critical Perspectives on Nigerian Civil War Literature*, in every age, literature has always mirrored society; and writers have invariably shown concern for the convolutions that beset their societies. In a world where selfish national interests, racism, the struggle for power, and a myriad of other factors keep human relationships in a state of perpetual tension, this tension has often found outlet in political turbulence of national or international dimensions. The American Civil War (1773-1775), the World Wars (1914 – 1918, 1939-1945), the Vietnam War (1958-1962), and the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970) are just few examples of the imbroglios that have resulted from the conflicts between man and institutions in a strife-torn world.

In each of the above cases, writers in the countries involved in war have used the conflicts as sources of materials for creative works. The experience is not of course confined to fiction. The First World War (1914-1918) for instance, produced poets among whom Rupert Brooke and Stephen Spender immediately come to mind. Wilfred Owen emerged as a major voice during Second World War before he lost his life. The Spanish Civil War saw the emergence of such poets as John Crawford, Julian Bell, Ralph Fox, and the famous Garcia Lorca, all of whom were killed during that war. For the novel, we have Ernest Hemmingway's strident voice in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, and the five hundred and twelve novels produced by the American Civil War. These indicate how fertile wars can be as material for creative writings.

The Nigerian/Biafran Civil War of 1967-70 resides in the minds of its survivors. But, like other wars in history, it echoes stridently in the pages of numerous books—fiction and non-fiction, plays and poetry of varying artistic merit—confirming Kole Omotoso's view at the time that the Nigerian/Biafran Civil War is the most important theme in post-war Nigerian writing. The events of the Civil War period in Nigeria were traumatic experiences that threatened the very existence of people as individuals, and of a people as a corporate entity. Therefore, the urge to take a retrospective glance at those events has just been too strong to be resisted by our writers. Just as Nigerian writers responded to immediate post-independence political crises, so also did they see a need for responding to the civil war which was the culmination of those crises. It is, therefore, no surprise that the war became so dominant as a theme in post-war Nigerian writing and remained so for a long time.
As Remy Oriaku in the article "Political Memoirs of the Nigerian Civil War" in *A Harvest of Tragedy* says, “the most obvious common feature of the Nigerian Civil War memoirs is their authors' intentions” (29). They have presented not their inward perceptions of events, as the straight autobiographer would do; rather, they have each recounted external details from a personal, usually biased, perspective. The bias is often obscured by the author's interpretative presentation of his experiences which creates for each text its own relative truth. The author's declared intention which is invariably prompted by modesty is usually different from that discerned by the reader at the end of the story.

Oftentimes, the victims of war are listed as the soldiers who die, the children who become malnourished, the women that are violated, the families that are displaced, the youth population that is decimated, as well as the society that loses its infrastructure, humanity and peace. These results are chronicles of pain, sadness and debilitated psyches.

So, the outcome of a civil war depends on the motivation for the armed conflicts and the military actions of the involved belligerents. Civil wars end with one side surrendering resulting in either the suppression of factions, or a complete overthrow or overhaul of the nation's government. However, similar to interstate wars, civil wars can also end in treaties. As Nwahunanya (2011: 60) says, the 1975-1990 Lebanese Civil Wars ended with the trait agreement which allowed the acting government to remain in place while the parliament was altered to represent all religious groups of Lebanon.

Again, a civil war is also caused by slavery. The reaction of people to the inhumanity, cruelty and death recorded are the burning issues that led to the disruption of the future of slavery. That dispute led to secession, and secession brought about a war in which northern and western states and territories fought to preserve the union and the south fought to establish southern independence as a new confederation of states under its own constitution. It is also "a violent conflict within a country fought by organized group that aim to take power at the center or a religion or to change government policy".

This study therefore, discusses the Nigeria/Biafran Civil War literature as portrayed in the novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun* by Chimamanda Adichie. The war had much disastrous effects on Nigerians leading to starvation, bombing, economic lusts, hatred, death of patriotism, above all disunity. In the Eastern part of Nigeria, many Igbo's died of hunger. The killing of the Igbo's by the Nigerian government was beyond imagination, although the Biafran soldiers also killed the Nigerian soldiers but the death toll which was recorded on the Biafra side was more dreadful.

Several literary works were written from the civil war, such as Jeremiah Essien's *In the Shadow of Death* (1987), Eddi Iroh's *Toads of War* (1979), and *Forty-eight Guns for the General* (1976), I.N.C Aniebo’s *The Anonymity of Sacrifice* (1974), Chukwuemeka Ike's *Sunset at Dawn* (1976), Isidore Okpewo's *The Last Duty* (1976), Cyprian Ekwensi's *Divided We Stand* (1980),

As different accounts, propaganda, versions and messages of the war have been written, some writers made bold steps to recount the war story in a way close to its true historical record. Nwahunanya (2011: 108) observes that "...writers in the country that have been involved in war, have used the conflict and the aftermath as source material for creative literature’. This view of Nwahunanya on war is strengthened by Chinweizu (1980: 45), who rightly puts it that, "it must be a strange war indeed who fails to produce a literature". Emphatically, the ugly historical events of the war and issues which led to it have been captured by many ex-Biafrans in the dramatic unfolding of literary texts.

The theoretical framework for this study is based on the theories of Marxism. Marxism is a political and economic theory of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels that interpret history as a continuing economic class struggle and belief that eventual results would be the establishment of a classless society and communal ownership of wealth of the nation.

Marxism is summed up in *Enearta Reference Library* as a theory in which class struggle is a central element in the analysis of social change in western societies. According to Swingewood Alan (1975: 23) in his book *The Novel and the Revolution*, Marxism maintains that a Marxist writer is one who is conscious and fully aware of his own responsibility in the society. No pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distanced from the oppressed.

The Marxist, committed to human liberation does not become the prisoner of a circle of certainty within which he also imprisons reality. It is of paramount importance to note that since the modern society is a highly stratified one, any committed writer who is oriented towards Marxism automatically sets himself against the political elites. The political elite who is bent on maintaining the status quo cannot imagine a likely push in the great change tendency towards modern literature. Marxist theory holds that conflict which leads to radical ideas for a change are borne out of the displacement of the strata in the society.


Social stratification and inequality are a historical part of our society and these are what Marxist writers are continually lighting against in our society. Through the change significant attention of social structures will be made. This will come in form of a revolution which is the displacement of one class by another (Ngara, 1985: 31).

Ngara says that every Marxist literary work is a protest against the deplorable human conditions against the unbridgeable gulf between what man professes of man when in the firm grip of fate. Man in all ramifications of life hardly gets optimal satisfaction and so protests against those situations and recommends most probable alternatives. The result of this line of thought is a Marxist literature, a proletariat literature that would eventually lead to a classless
order. In quoting P.J. Brown's *The Proletariat Episode in Russian Literature*, Alan Swingewood states:

In a class society, literature serves the interest of a particular class and only through that class does it serve all humanity. Therefore, proletarian literature is such a literature organized by the psyche and the consciousness of the working class in the direction of the final talk of the proletariat as the creation of communist (classless) society (Swingewood, 1975: 84).

The Marxist art, therefore, serves as a mirror with which the proletariats or the masses can see themselves and through which the social consciousness is developed. Ngara (1985:17) in his book *Art and Ideology in African Novel* posits the term Marxist art to refer to "works which depict reality from a Marxist point of view. Works which reflect the social structure of society and which present social struggle from the point of view of a class and promote the ideals of socialism.

This kind of art is geared towards a change in basic mode of production and this change in the mode of production will result in a change in the structure of social classes: the eventual overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of proletarian dictatorship. It is pertinent to note that during the years of proletarian dictatorship, this working class based literature took shape and evolved ideologically into a prominent position in world literature. Some have ascribed this form of literature to Marxist aesthetics and hereafter become popularly known as Marxist literature.

As a result of the endowment of the Marxist art, it has become unique and possesses some defining features. First, it must be faithful to life, that is, realistic to true life experiences and its simplicity is highly commendable. This simplicity of a Marxist literature is not just a question of coincidence but a deliberate one aimed at making it a commonplace interest of great effectiveness. Hence, it is devoid of experiments, individual, religious, mystic, sexual themes and most importantly every sort of formation.

Swingewood in his book also says that "Marxist writers pay less attention to form unlike realistic literature where much emphasis is laid not on what is said but on the way it is said" (17).

Another feature of Marxist art is the positive hero. They must represent the so-called typical. This does not mean what is characteristic of the real state of reality but what would be desired for emulation, in all cases, these heroes are usually a manifestation of the ideal Marxist sense.

Marxist art calls for representation period which were in consonance with the communist theory. The implication of this is that it seems the results of deliberate limitation of the choice of subject matter on the part of the writer. According to Ngara (1985: 31), Marxism, therefore, is a means of consolidating their existing ideology in the socialist world.
Charles Nnolim (2010: 33) in his book, *The Critics of African Literature* talks about "art that contemplates society we expect, art that is propagandist, art that tends towards proletarian concerns and art that has Marxist undertones". Consequently, Chimamanda Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun* is a work borne out of conflicts because of a people’s resolve to liberate themselves from bondage which eventually resulted into war that destroyed lives and properties.

**Perspectives of War in Chimamanda Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun***

Adichie in her own perceptive in the novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* explores different themes that relate to family, love, passion, betrayal, infidelity, forgiveness, broken dreams, identity and the effects of the Biafran war. The effects of the war is shown through the dynamic relationships of the five people’s lives, ranging from high ranking political figures, a professor, a British citizen and a houseboy. The lives of these characters are strongly connected as they undergo experiences of Nigeria-Biafra war, and this is when their individual stories start. Through these characters their families and their connections, Adichie explores a number of themes as stipulated above.

After the British left Nigeria and stopped ruling, conflict arose over what government would rule over the land. The land split and the Nigeria-Biafra war started. The lives of the main characters drastically changed and were torn apart by the war and decisions in their personal lives.

The Nigeria-Biafra war began on July 6, 1967 and lasted until January 15, 1970. The war broke out due to political/ethnic struggles, partly caused by the South-eastern provinces of Nigeria to secede and form the Republic of Biafra. Political conflict between the Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa and Fulani people erupted into two deadly military coups. The Igbos tried to break away from Nigeria to become the Republic of Biafra, but was met with little support. From 1968 onwards, the war fell into a form of deadlock, with Nigerian forces unable to make significant advance into the remaining area of Biafran control. Nigeria cut off humanitarian aid to Biafra, resulting in hundreds of thousands of civilians dying from starvation and disease. Many lives and resources were lost during the war, and even today there are still tensions between different ethnic and religious groups of Nigeria.

The story in the novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, is centred around the war, the author stated. She believes that many of the issues that caused the war remain today. She further comments that the war is very talked about “in uniform and unimaginative ways” and that the war is important to the Igbo people. Her novel features today as it was then because none of the major political events were changed in the novel. Adichie’s novel contained “emotional truth” and the novel showed the war had a significant impact upon the people of Nigeria. Adichie brings relief and succour to the painful history of Biafra in the novel. Adichie’s powerful focus on war’s impact on civilian life and the trauma beyond the trenches are explored in the novel. The Biafra War has exercised a powerful hold over Nigeria’s literary imagination, animating almost every notable Nigerian writer. Adichie may not have lived during the Civil War, but her imagination seems to have been profoundly built by it. Some of the Igbo families survived the war while others did not.
The novel reflects the effects of the war to Nigerians, especially the Biafrans. Many lives were lost, properties worth millions were lost as well. People suffered from kwashiorkor and starvation as a result of the war. Even when Kainene visited Olanna at Umuahia where they took refuge, the suffering and the effect of the war is written all over the place thus:

| Kainene came in the middle of hot afternoon soaking some dried cassava in water when Mama Oji called. Olanna dragged the bunch in front the veranda and Kainene looked warily at it before she sat down and placed her hand on the latter . . (351). |

In other words, Adichie uses the novel to portray the time of abundance and sumptuousness, that is when people lived comfortably and have enough to eat and the period when there is nothing to eat as a result of the war. Still, when Olanna and Kainene visited the refugee camp, the scene was very horrible thus:

| They went into the first classroom. About twelve people were lying on bamboo beds, on mats, on the floor, not one of them reached out to slap away the fat flies. The only movement Olanna saw was that of a child sitting by the door. He unfolded and refolded his arms. His bones were clearly outlined and the wrap of his arms was flat in a way that would be impossible if he had some flesh underneath the skin ( Adichie, 2006: 356). |

This shows the suffering, effects and its consequences to people. More still, the novel explores the theme of infidelity and betrayal. This theme revolved around Odenigbo, Olanna’s lover, Richard, Kainene’s lover and a British writer. Odenigbo slept with Amala, the village girl his mother wanted him to marry. Thus:

| It’s you and not your mother. It happened because you let it happen. “You must take responsibility.” “I am not a philandering man, and you know that this would not have happened if my mother didn’t have a hand.” “Did your mother pull at your penis and insert in into Amala as well? Olanna asked? (Adichie, 2006: 245-6). |

Despite the love Olanna has for him (Odenigbo), he betrayed her in her absence. As a result of Odenigbo’s action, Olanna went ahead and slept with her sister’s lover Richard. Thus:

| She kissed his lips. He pulled her forcefully close and then, just as quickly, he let go and moved his force away. She unbuckled his trouser and moved back to pull the down and langue because they got stuck at his shows. She took her dress. He was on top of her and the carpet pricked her naked body and she felt his mouth limply enclose her nipple. It was nothing like Odenigbo’s bite and suck, nothing like those shocks of pleasures. Richard did not run his tongue over her in that flicking way that made her forget everything; rather when he kissed her belly, she was aware that he was kissing her belly (Adichie, 2006: 238). |

From the above assertion, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie also explores and x-rays the themes of infidelity and betrayal as negative consequences of war through the action of the major
characters in the novel. For instance, Odenigbo betrayed Olanna. And as a result of Odenigbo’s action, Olanna slept with her sister’s lover Richard.

Again, infidelity could be seen or traced between Odenigbo and Alice thus:
   She is a kind of woman who will steal somebody’s husband. Every time you go to Orlu, she will come out and sit with your husband. Olanna stared at Mama Oji surprised, because it was the last thing she had expected to hear and because Odenigbo had never mentioned that Alice spent time with him when she was away. I am only saying that you should be careful with her even if she is not a saboteur. She is not a good woman (Adichie, 2006: 386).

In view of the above, one can declare that infidelity and betrayal mostly revolved Odenigbo.

However, the novel also portrays the theme of forgiveness. This could be traced as well between Kainene and Olanna, Kainene and Richard and Olanna and Odenigbo. After Olanna’s betrayal to her twin sister, Kainene at the end forgave her. Also, Olanna did as well to Odenigbo for sleeping with Amaka. Kainene on her own forgave Richard for sleeping with Olanna.

Furthermore, there are the issues of communication and identification in the novel which were negatively affected by the war .Chimaamanda Ngozi Adichie used language as a means of communication and identification in the novel Half of a Yellow Sun. The Igbo characters in the novel use Igbo to communicate within their own tribe. For instance, when Richard was going to Nsukka University, he discovered that check point had escalated everywhere, tyres and nail studded boards were placed across the road, men and women in khaki shirts with expressionless, disciplined demeanours were standing by. The first two points were easy for him to pass, but near Enugu the civil defenders that blocked the road asked him to turn back. One of them said: “Are you sure you are not an agent of the Nigerian government? It is you white people who allowed Gowon to kill innocent women and children.”

But when Richard said, “Abu m onye Biafra,” the men laughed and asked him, “Where did you learn to speak our language?” (Adichie, 2006: 180). With this, Adichie used language for identification as well as communication.

The novel is written in post-independent Nigeria. It exposes the Nigeria-Biafra War which began on July 6, 1967 and lasted till January 15, 1970. According to Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia, it states that:

   The war broke out to political and ethnic struggles partly caused by the numerous attempts to the south-eastern provinces of Nigeria to secede and form the Republic of Biafra. Political conflict between the Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa and Fulani people erupted into two deadly military coups. The Igbo tried to break away from Nigeria to become the Republic of Biafra but was met with little support.

   Adichie, in order to drive home the message, makes use of certain narrative techniques to conjure up the meaning and they include the use of symbols, imagery, suspense, flashbacks, metaphor, irony, language, rhetorical questions, third person point of view and other figurative expressions.
First of all, in the use of symbols, Adichie’s characters in this novel are symbolic. Adichie uses them to represent or reveal much about the class and economic conflicts found in Nigeria, the issue of moral responsibility, the consequences of ethnic ties, how relationships on a personal level between the legacies of colonialism, racial divisions in post-colonial Nigeria.

The novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, revolves around five major characters: Odenigbo, a professor and Biafra nationalist, whom the war particularly affected. He is an outspoken leader among the missionaries. He is not happy with the Biafran military losses, the genocide against his Igbo people, also the failure of the west to recognise Biafra as a legitimate nation and his personal loss. Ugwu, his thirteen years old houseboy; Olanna, daughter of a wealthy Igbo businessman and Odenigbo’s lover; Olanna’s twin sister Kainene, a more distant character and Richard, Kainene’s lover, a British writer.

The lives of these characters are strongly connected as they undergo experiences of Nigeria-Biafra War and this is when their individual stories start. According to Carolquin in *New York* magazine, “Adichie does not describe historical facts, instead she uses the characters to describe the unfolding of events” (October 11, 2006).

In the beginning of this novel, there is enough to eat. Ugwu, a poor village boy has obtained a job as a houseboy to Odenigbo, a well-to-do intellectual of Igbo decent. In Odenigbo’s compound, there are swimming pools, flowers, and food is in abundance (Adichie, 2006: 58).

However, friends gather at his house where beer, brandy and smoke are in abundance and mingle with socialists revolutionaries who were effectively served by Ugwu, the houseboy who is intelligent, clever, obedient, caring and concerned about his educated middle class with traditional rural tribal humanity conditioned by customs and superstitions and ruled by witch doctors.

On the other hand, Adichie uses orange, beer, bread, cans, chicken as images which suggest good times when one is enjoying life. As the narrator says:

> Ugwu, go to the kitchen, there should be something you can eat in the fridge. He opened it and gasped as the cool air rushed into his face. Oranges, bread, beer, soft drink, many things in packets and cans were arranged on different levels and at the top, a roasted shimmering chicken, but for a leg Ugwu reached out (Adichie, 2006: 6).

From the above point, we observe that people were enjoying themselves but once the civil war broke out, air raids, civilian attacks, mass evacuation, malnutrition, corruption, abuse by soldiers, alcoholism and depressions, all take their own part.

Moreover, the families are forced to flee. People are deprived of food, starvation start its game and families scruple to survive. This brings about the refugee crisis to the extent that Olanna, Odenigbo’s mistress, join the queue for collection of powdered egg for baby, when they have started suffering from shortage of food. Many people are dying of starvation, most especially the middle class and lower class. Even some of them eat lizards (352). Many families lost their lives. Odenigbo, Olanna, baby and Ugwu go to live with Kainene and Richard, where
Kainene is running a refugee camp. As a result of lack of food and medicine Kainene decides to trade across enemy lines and did not return.

Adichie also employs the use of suspense to show the fact that Kainene’s journey keeps the reader in double mind, whether Kainene is alive or she is dead.

When some relatives come from Umunach and suggested that they consult “a dibia” Olanna asked his uncle Osita to go. She gave him a bottle of whisky and some money to buy a goat for the oracle. She drove to the River Niger to throw the copy of Kainene’s photo. She went to Kainene’s house in Orlu and walked around it three times. And she waited for the week that the “dibia” had stipulated, but Kainene did not come home (Adichie, 2006: 437).

The title of the novel is symbolic as it is used by the Biafrans to represent their fledgling independence and yet as a symbol of hope. Again, the Biafran flag is also symbolic. The red symbolises the blood of the siblings who were massacred in the north; black represents the mourning of the people who were killed in the war and the green symbolises the prosperity which the Biafrans will have and half of a yellow sun stands for the glorious future of Biafra.

They sat on wooden planks and the weak morning sun streamed into the roofless classroom as she unfurled Odenigbo’s cloth flag and then what the symbols meant. Red was the blood of the siblings massacred in the north, black was for mourning, then green was for prosperity.

Furthermore, Adichie also adopts flashbacks technique in order to recall the past for the understanding of future developments of the present and Adichie achieved her aim in this technique through Ugwu, one of the protagonists who mostly portrays the act. For instance:

Ugwu examined the scarf tied round his aunt’s head. He could see where it was threadbare, the fabric stretched then. He remembered that when his cousin’s father died, the family had sent word to her in Lagos, telling her to come home because her father was very sick. If you were far from home, they told you the dead person was very sick (Adichie, 2006: 87)

Adichie makes use of this technique in this novel and it helps in the development of the story and character. Another example is when Ugwu recalls of his cousin’s father’s death in which the reader is not aware when he died, but through the technique of flashback we got to know. Also his aunty is one of the characters though she did not participate in the story.

The author makes use of third person omniscient point of view. That is, sees all and hears all points of view. Adichie tells every bit of the story from the beginning to the end with what is known as “the eye of God point of view.” She knows what the characters can do, what they cannot do and what they fail to do. When she took love walks on campus, past the tennis courts and freedom square, she thought how quick leaving had been and how slow returning was (Adichie, 2006: 432). Looking at this place you will find out that if it is not for the omniscient point of view, we would not have known what she has in mind.

Adichie used flies, mat, dirty wrappers as images. These suggest her environment, how the northern areas are during the Nigeria-Biafra war. The writer uses various techniques to
enhance the quality of her work. She further employs rhetorical question. When Ojukwu came to Nsukka University to talk to the students and the lecturers about what is happening, he said: “I came to ask you a question: What shall we do? Shall we keep silent and let them force us back into Nigeria? Shall we ignore the thousands of our brothers and sisters killed in the north?” (Adichie, 2006: 170).

In addition, to this point, it is obvious that the author also employs another technique, which is monologue whereby Ojukwu speaks; people were listening to him silently. Another monologue also takes place as soon as Biafra national anthem burst out, everywhere will be silent, whenever Biafran national anthem starts, people will pay attention and listen until it ends. For example, when the anthem started on the radio, baby was crying, Olanna told Ugwu to take her to the veranda.

Further still, Adichie’s use of language is another interesting style she uses in this work. The novel reflects on language both as a means of communication and of identity. In the novel, the author combines Igbo and English language. Still on the language technique employed in the novel, she uses simple and straightforward language and minute details which an average reader will read and understand. The language is standard, well punctuated and she uses one inverted comma, open and close.

The novelist is a great writer and this is connected to what Chinua Achebe says in Elle magazine as he states:

> We do not associate wisdom with beginners, but here is a new writer endowed with the gift of ancient storytellers. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie knows what to do about it. She is fearless, or she would not have taken on the intimidation horror of Nigeria’s civil war. Adichie came almost fully made (October, 2006).

The writer also makes use of metaphor in the novel. When Odenigbo talks about the members of the Western House of Assembly who punched and killed one another until police came and sprayed teargas on them before they all dismissed, when Ugwu heard teargas, this fascinated him. He wanted to use it on Nnesinachi, when he gets home and said this in Jomo’s hearing, he called him “You are a sheep, aturu” (Adichie, 2006: 211). So from this passage, we observed that Ugwu is being regarded as an animal which metaphorically depicts how foolish and ignorant Ugwu is about what and how dangerous it is for human beings.

Another technique the author adopts in the novel is dialogue technique. Some are long while others are short, such as the dialogue between Odenigbo and Olanna, Richard and Kainene, Ugwu and Olanna. These people, their conversations lasted long, while the one between Richard and Olanna, and Amaka were short.

On the other hand, another narrative technique employed in this novel can be seen in conflict between Olanna and Kainene, Richard and Kainene and Olanna and Odenigbo. Odenigbo slept with a village girl, Amala, whom his mother brought to him under three weeks Olanna was away from home. When she came back, she was very angry about the brief rash lust to the extent that she locked Odenigbo outside:

The first time Odenigbo came to her flat she was unsure whether to let him in, but he knocked and knocked and said, “Nkem please open, biko, please open,” until she did. She sat
sipping some water while he told her that he had been drunk, that Amala had forced herself on him, that it had been a brief rash lust (Adichie, 2006: 275).

Olanna being annoyed about Odenigbo’s betrayal ironically slept with Richard in a moment of weakness:

She placed the wine bottle on the floor and sat next to him and touched the hair that lay on his skin and thought how fair and soft it was, not assertively brittle like Odenigbo’s, nothing like Odenigbo at all. He looked at her and she wondered if his eyes had really turned gray or if she was imagining it. She touched his face, left her hand resting on his cheek. “Come, sit on the floor with me,” she said finally. She kissed his lips. He pulled her forcefully close, and then, just as quickly he let go (Adichie, 2006: 234).

This is irony in the sense that Olanna who is annoyed about Odenigbo sleeping with Amala was on her part also falling victim of sleeping with her twin sister’s lover, Richard in a moment of weakness and this brought a serious case between her and her sister.

Conclusion, Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun* is one of the African novels which the author uses techniques to tell the world the good, the bad and the ugly part of the society. The fact that literature concerns itself with human experiences in life is obvious in this novel. The author uses symbols, images, flashback, suspense, monologue, irony, metaphor and use of language to convey message in the novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*.

**Conclusion**

It is certain that war is the central idea in Chimamanda Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun*. This research work has examined the effects of the Nigeria- Biafra war on the characters of the text. The analysis of the novel has shown and proven that the characters suffered from one form of psychic depression or the other as a result of the war.

In the novel, Ugwu, Olanna, Kainene and Richard were traumatized in one way or the other. Ugwu was psycho-sexually humiliated because he couldn’t realize his sexual fantasy with Nnesinachi and Anulika. He is also dispossessed by the war because the war left an indelible mark in his family. Olanna witnessed the massacre of Uncle Mbaazi and his family and felt traumatized when her twin sister Kainene did not return from the attack market. Her sister's disappearance traumatized her till the end of the story. Odenigbo was traumatized because of the death of his mother and because he was not allowed to go to Abba to bury her. Kainene was also psychologically dispossessed because of the fate of her foster parents as observed by her sister Olanna that, that was the first time she cried since they were children. She was also dispossessed when an air raid killed Ikejide as noted by Richard that she is withdrawn and silent in the middle of conversation. Richard himself is not exempted from the psychological trauma in the story. Though his depression started when he was young because his parents never planned to have him, he is also psychologically dispossessed by the Nigeria- Biafra war as he witnessed the massacre of the Igbo people at the Kano airport. His depression did not stop here, the loss of his lover, Kainene is what traumatized him the most as the narrator observed
that "he knew that he would never see Kainene again and that his life would always be like a candlelit room, he would see things only in shadow" (Adichie, 2006: 54).

It can be deduced that war affects the human psyche, which results in fear, tension and trauma which also takes from him what he holds dearly. In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Uncle Mbaezi and family, Adanna, Ugwu's mother, Odenigbo’s mother, Okeoma, Nnemeka and Eberechi etc, the lives of these characters in the novel are cut at their prime because of war.

The novelist also explores instances of poverty, malnutrition, hunger and the trauma, which the masses experienced in Igboland, and which debased their personalities at the sight of any free flow of food and drinks. The novelist tells the story of the sufferings, pains, disappointment and exploitation of the people especially women and children, who became widows and orphans. The consequences of war as portrayed in the novel is not palatable hence, war should be avoided entirely.

References


