

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie as a Hierophant of the Biafran Civil War: A New Historicist Approach to *Half of A Yellow Sun*

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Abstract

Review Article

Almost half a century after it breaking out, the Biafra Civil war (1967-1970) has been and remains the focus of an abundant literary fresco collected under the caption of 'Biafra literature'. It seems to beat the record of topicality of the Nigerian writers of the second and third generation who, as historians or hierophants of their Nation-building cause, keep alive and evoke in their works powerful memories of the Nigerian past which still haunt the lives of their contemporaries. The gist of this paper is to analyze the contextualization of Biafra by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, one of the Nigerian feminist leading figures, in her second published novel, *Half of A Yellow Sun*. Drawing from the New Historicism which helps not only to describe the past, but rather to bring back to memory a retrospective and coherent succession of selected facts to investigate the past, this study shows that in African literature, a political commitment grows out of a historical experience as the basis for the creation of a work of art. The exploration of the novel under consideration buttresses well this thought for Adichie re-visits socio-political and economic situation in Nigeria before that civil war, and onwards. The analysis of these historical features and the authoress' rhetoric as well, clearly reveals Adichie's political and ideological commitment to denounce the dramatic impact of the civil war on individuals in her homeland. *Half of A Yellow Sun* is really a chronicle of a Civil war the drawbacks of which continue to shape life in Nigeria.

Keywords: Biafra, Civil war, Hierophant, Ideological commitment, Social chronicle.

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INTRODUCTION

Modern African Literature has come a long way to imprint its relevance on the literary history of Africa- as a literary mode of expressing the worldview of Africans. It has developed out of historical experiences and is always characterized by realism and factualness. These factors raise the issue of the role of the writer in a changing society, as Chinua Achebe (1965:4) emphasizes it:

The writer cannot except to be excused from the reeducation and regeneration that should be done. In fact, he should march right in front. For, he is after all [...] the sensitive point of his community. [...] I would be quite satisfied if my novels did no more than teach my readers that their past with all its imperfections was not one long night of savagery from which the first Europeans acting on God's behalf delivered them.

As a staunch advocate of the African cause throughout his lifetime, Achebe believes that the deeds and history of those heroes who fought against the exploitation and domination from foreign forces should be recorded for children of future generations to read. And African writers, as hierophants or historians must keep the African memory alive in their works and, shoulder their status of "Teachers of the society" capable of telling stories or histories history of Africa. S. Okechukwu Mezu quoted by *G.D. Killam*, ed. (1973:96), lends credence to this literary propensity when he accordingly writes:

The modern African poet has chosen to sing, chant, shout, be angry, rave, curse, condemn and praise when occasion demands it in the interests of his people. Because his people's preoccupations are of revolutionary nature, African poetry recently, contrary to traditional, has by and large been revolutionary.

The perusal of some narratives like those by the Nigerian feminist writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie buttresses the above truth. Her second published novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), which is the focus of this study particularly shows a political commitment that grew out of a historical experience as the basis for the creation of a work of art. Adichie uses fiction to evoke powerful memories of the Nigerian past which still haunts the present. Accordingly, she portrays the effects of the Nigerian-Biafran war on civilian populations through the lives of the characters in the novel.

The purpose of the present work is then to show how the Nigerian Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie dramatizes the historical event, the real motivation of the antagonistic forces on the ground as well as the drawbacks of the Biafra civil War in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. One important interest of this study is our attempt to analyze the above mentioned novel as a chronicle of a civil War, the historical implications of which still gives birth to a variety of interpretations.

The Biafran civil War (1967-1970) has been the focus of an abundant literary fresco collected under the caption of 'Biafran literature'. According to Hugh Hodges (2009:1)

Adichie's list of Biafran War literature is not by any means a comprehensive bibliography; that would include more than thirty-five works of fiction and a dozen autobiographies. However, it is a fairly representative collection, ranging in publication date from 1974 to 2003.

Most of these works are histories or political studies, but the list also includes works of fiction such as Chinua Achebe's *Girls at War and Other Stories* (1972), Flora Nwapa's *Never Again* (1975) and *Wives at War* (1984), Chukwuemeka Ike's *Sunset at Dawn* (1976), Cyprian Ekwensi's *Divided We Stand* (1980), Elechi Amadi's *Sunset in Biafra* (1982), Kalu Okpi's *Biafra Testament* (1982), Ossie Enekwe's *Come Thunder* (1984), Anthonia Kalu's *Broken Lives and Other Stories*, to mention only some.

In "Remember Biafra: Books & Culture" (2008: 29), S. VanZanten Gallagher maintains that *Half of a Yellow Sun* met with critical acclaim, and its authoress mostly praised for accurately and skillfully drawing her readers into the terror and brutality caused by the war:

She (Adichie) was also praised for representing the diverse groups of people who make up Nigeria, such as the wealthy elite, feisty and brutal soldiers, simple village people, intellectual nationalists, corrupt politicians, well-meaning but ineffective priests, and the British and American expatriates.

Analyzing Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* and Emecheta's *Destination Biafra* which, he thinks interweave this tragic civil war, Hugh Hodges (2009:1) asserts that Adichie's novel particularly:

Invites a re-reading of the novels Adichie lists, both to find out what *Half of a Yellow Sun* owes to them and what it adds to them. It is also an invitation to reflect on the fact that although Biafran War literature has, as an oeuvre, been deeply concerned with the problem of closure—a full and final accounting—the oeuvre itself continues to grow and evolve.

As for (J. C. Hawley, 2008, p.15), Adichie, like her contemporaries "assesses the war's impact on Nigerian cultural expression in the twenty-first century and, portrays the war as a backdrop for interpersonal ethical questions." In the same wave, J. De Mey's Doctorate thesis entitled "The Intersection of History, Literature and Trauma in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*" (2011), explores how history, literature and the trauma theory converge, and how Adichie uses a literary work to mediate her own relation to a traumatic past.

Drawing from the Psychoanalysis which focuses on the effects of war on the individual psyche, A. D. Makosso's "Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*: A Transmitted Trauma", reveals that the outcome of what is called 'trauma' lasts for a longtime and is transferable from an individual to another and even from a generation to another through some defined channels. In this perspective, and echoing the ideas put forward by J.C. Harley exploring Biafra war as a "Heritage and a Symbol of hard times", and H. Hodges's "Writing Biafra: Adichie, Emecheta and the Dilemmas of Biafran War Fiction", Makosso (Ibid., p. 163), even furthers:

The writer does not fully apprehend all the influences surrounding his creation, that the forces which impulse his inspiration are somehow unknown and certainly not really mastered. What inspires authors may have its origin in traumatic events they witness or experienced by their relatives. This means that literary works are mirrors of the society and the theme of war and its subsequent atrocities, including psychological trauma has not escaped them. Backing up on these channels and interviews granted by the authoress, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of A Yellow Sun* is aftereffects of a transgenerational trauma experienced by her parents deriving from the tragic war of Biafra. (p.163)

In her article "No Humanity in War: Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*" Umelo Ojinmah (2012), shows how Adichie uses fiction to evoke powerful memories of the Nigerian past which still haunts the present. Accordingly, she portrays the effects of the Nigerian-Biafran war on civilian populations through the lives of the characters in the novel.

This somehow overall critical well reception of Adichie chef-d'oeuvre is however alleviated by Yacoubou Alou criticizes Adichie's perspective of the Nigerian Civil War as a subjective and skewed one, as he contends (2017:107):

Half of a Yellow Sun is a description of the symbol on the Biafran flag. It's important to note Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is an Igbo. The title of the novel alone suggests where she stands. She seems to display a general disdain for Hausa people and defining them primarily by their ethnicity and religion instead of more personal, humanizing characteristics.

In the present work, I purport to analyze the contextualization of Adichie's novel with regard to an historical event still very much alive in the memory of the civil war in Biafra. This is wherein the interest of my work lies. For this study makes it possible to appreciate points of convergence, divergence, complexity, bias, objectivity, subjectivity, and the impact that literary works have on historical understanding of contemporary Nigeria.

In this respect, I hypothesize that *Half of A Yellow Sun* is a chronicle of a civil war. Indeed, the novel brings the readers back in Nigeria before and during the civil war (1967/1970). It jumps between events that took place during the early and late sixties, when the war took place and even extends until the end of the war.

Hence, this study draws from the New Historicism which has the merit to establish the intertextuality between what really happens with the fictional world the writer depicts in his work. Indeed, practitioners of this approach argue that New Historicists do not describe the past, but rather bring back to memory a retrospective and coherent succession of selected facts to investigate the past, Kofi Agyekum (2013:216-207) theorizes:

New Historicists emphasize the place and time of the creation of a literary work as very crucial. To them it is always better to understand fully the socio-cultural and political background of the time and the social world from which the work emanated. Such understanding serves as a cue that will trigger literary works for future generation.

In so doing, the analysis will draw from the history of Nigeria some of the references linked to the period before, during and after the civil war in Biafra to show how History and Fiction mingle. This tallies what Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o (1972: xv) underlines: "*Literature does not grow and develop in a vacuum, it is given impetus, shape, direction and even area of concern by social, political and economic forces in a particular society*". The Kenyan theoretician thinks that society is a complex reality which can only be understood through the comparison of intermingled social facts and

phenomena that a creator of art generally draws inspiration from, as he even furthers:

A writer after all comes from a particular class and race and nation. He himself is a particular product of an actual social process. Eating, drinking, learning loving, hating and has developed a class attitude to all these activities, themselves class conditioned. (p.6)

Three main points will be considered in the completion of this study. Prior focusing on Adichie's reference to the social-political upheavals, as well as the her esthetisation of the Biafran War civil war, it is worth focusing on the critical reception of the novel to see how far it can be read as a chronicle of the Biafran upheavals.

I- Critical reception of Adichie's *Half of Yellow Sun*

A peruse of Adichie's *Half of A Yellow Sun* reveals that this novel is a poignant testimony of the civil war in Biafra. It is therefore a realistic and factual novel. It should be reminded that at the moment when the war broke out, the writer was not yet born. According to her, this novel is the result of witnesses' testimonies about the civil war. In an author's note at the end of novel, Adichie remarks that she could not have written the book without her parents, who "*wanted [her] to know... that what is important is not what they went through [in the Biafran War] but that they survived.*" (p.434)

Adichie's novel is remarkable since, in a very lucid intelligence and compassion it recreates the souvenirs of the 1966 massacres and the violence of the civil war. It is important to say that the novel appears as a landscape in which different characters from different social classes (the rich and the poor), different ages (young and old people) and from different ethnic groups like the Yoruba (Miss Adebayo), the Hausa (Mohammed) and the Igbo (Olanna), represent the complexity of point of views about the civil war and the massacres. In this regards, facing a situation which became as time went on confusing, all characters, above all the intellectual ones, have forgotten sensible debates they were having during their meetings at the university campus in Nsukka. The violence of the civil war gave birth to hatred and mistrust. All of the characters whose life was peaceful and prosperous for others in the early sixties, will see all their lives become linked to one another and survival during the war would be their common experience.

As a matter of fact, *Half of A Yellow Sun* has been praised by a number of other writers as well as many institutions like Newspapers and Magazines. One of them, the *Chicago Tribune* writes:

A novel that [uses] fiction to its best advantage, telling the stories of ordinary people— loving, fallible, passionate and vulnerable—ineluctably caught in savage circumstances of chaos, breakdown and violence.... Written with unflinching clarity, what

Adichie's novel offers is a compassionate, compelling look at the nearly unfathomable immediacy of war's effect on people. (p. 6)

Hence, from an historical point of view, the novel first foregrounds the ethnic tensions after independence that eventually spurred Biafra's secession from Nigeria and the war it brought. Second, it combines the struggles, sufferings, and losses the characters faced. Therefore, one can easily assert that Adichie intended to show the people outside of Nigeria the dramatic and traumatic effects the civil war had on the people, especially the Igbo. In other words, the novel is then an attempt to recreate the inner turmoil which the Igbo struggled against, as well as the struggles they faced in regards to the war going on around them. J.C. Harley who thinks that "*Adichie portrays the war as a backdrop for interpersonal ethical questions*" (2008:15), helps buttress this view when he writes:

Some of those closest to the Biafran fighting wrote scathingly and with immediacy, naming names and particular places as if the writers were reporters seeking to draw the world's attention to an ongoing injustice that had to be attended to and stopped now. (Ibidem, p.17)

The specificity of this novel is that its setting seems to be taken from a real country and period of its history. The novel is set in Nigeria from the early sixties to 1970. For this reason, the setting appears as a dominant element in the understanding of the novel as an historical one. There is the presence of real names the writer gave to some of her characters like Ojukwu and Gowon. These names refer to specific people who played an important role and place which were determinant in the proceeding of the real war. In addition, there is a description of the real geographic locations like Nsukka, Kano, Enugu, Abba, and Port Harcourt, to mention only some. The setting namely the place: Nsukka, Abba Ummunachi, also reveals the writer's family background influence. Actually, like all Igbo, Adichie's family endured the sufferings and losses brought by the war, as she confesses in an interview with Uzoamaka Azodo (2008:1):

My father is from Abba and my mother is from Ummunachi, both in Anambra State. I grew up in the university town of Nsukka, where my parents worked. I did not know my grandfathers, as they both died in the Nigeria-Biafra war. My grandmothers were strong, interesting women. I am the fifth of six children.

It is important to note that this title alone suggests where Adichie stands as a hierophant of the Biafran history since she is an Igbo descendant whose family was strongly affected with the loss of Adichie's both grandfathers who died in refugee camps during the Nigerian Civil War. Though she wasn't alive and didn't personally experience it, but it still affects her and her family's lives to the point that Adichie dedicates *Half of*

a Yellow Sun to her late grandparents other tribesmen members who tremendously experienced the war.

From the forging, one now easily infers why Adichie chooses to make of Nsukka the common place where all of the major characters are linked, and her choice of leading them to Abba for refuge is not purposeless. This choice is rather significant to the extent that it reveals her attachment to her roots, her homeland.

II- Reference to the Nigerian Socio-Political Situation

A critical reward of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of A Yellow Sun* requires an appropriate knowledge of the contemporary political, social and economic situation prevailing in Nigeria before the civil war since some of the historical aspects linked to that situation are woven into the narrative. The authoress essentially draws the reader back to the socio-political upheavals that characterized Nigeria in the late sixties.

The exploration of the contemporary history of Nigeria reveals that, like for most countries South of the Sahara, Nigeria, formerly ruled by the British is very rich, and consists of many ethnic groups, a situation fostered by the British colonial power in its policy to divide and rule. To start with, though the cultural diversity of the country is huge and because of the colonizer's policy of regional partition, political parties were created on the basis of ethnic group and regional membership. Yet, Adichie contextualizes aspects of the British colonial Indirect Rule in Nigeria, the ethnic issue, the Hausa-Igbo confrontation and the instrumentalization of religious beliefs. In *Half of A Yellow Sun*, she shows plot favoring the Northerners when she writes: "*They (the British) fixed the pre-Independence elections in favor of the North and wrote a new constitution that gave the North control of the central government. The South, too eager for independence, accepted this constitution.*" (HYS, p. 210)

This shows up the strong opposition and division concerning the strategies and objectives of the struggle among the three major parties, inspired by their ethnic diversity and differences. It is in this logic, that three of these parties became pro-eminent because each commanded the support of the dominant ethnic group in the region in which it was based. The concerned parties are: the Northern People Congress for the Hausa in the North, the Action Group for the Yoruba in the West and the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons for the Igbo in the East.

As can be seen, the political situation before independence constitutes a source of ethnic conflicts to the extent that the amalgamation of traditional states did not create an appropriate political structure suitable to the ethno-political situation in Nigeria. The

inappropriate political structure and system has continued to fuel ethnocentric ideologies until present day Nigeria as it is believed, rightly or wrongly by the various ethnic groups in Nigeria. The adherence to such ideologies is the only means to secure maximum protections of ethnic identity and maximum protections against political domination and economic marginalization.

Another fact worth mentioning is that members of a tribe and in a larger measure of an ethnic sometimes identify their location as being a micronation; then they lead their living in the framework of the boundaries which delimitate their space. In doing so, they cannot even be able to transcend cultural diversity in terms of religion, language and social differences. This is what Adichie shows in *Half of A Yellow Sun*, when the Hausa in Kano slaughter and cast out the Igbo from their Land shouting like a slogan: “*The Igbo must go. The infidels must go. The Igbo must go*”(p.199). Evidently, these utterances sound like an imperative, a declaration of war between the two communities.

Furthermore, *Half of A Yellow Sun* cross-refers to ‘Sabon Gari’ and the ‘1945 Pogrom’. Indeed, it is a matter of critical agreement among historians that the social situation in Nigeria before the civil war was dominated by the clash of two ethnic groups, namely the Hausa from the North and the Igbo from the South-East. This confrontation took a dramatic dimension that Adichie dramatizes with reference to two important historical landmarks: the ‘Sabon Gari’ and the ‘1945 pogrom’, in consideration of the human tragedy they brought about.

Borrowed from Hausa language, the term ‘The Sabon Gari’ was used to qualify strangers’ quarters, that is to say a section of cities and town, especially in Northern Nigeria whose residents are not native of the Hausaland. The latter were established in the North to minimize contact between Muslims and non-Muslims, except for commercial purposes. Indeed, known as non-native quarters, the Sabon Garuruwa, the plural of Sabon Gari, were quarters located in the great cities of the North. They were largely inhabited by the southern Nigerians especially by the Igbo. Books of history relate that the first Sabon Garuruwa were established under the colonial rule by the year 1911 when the British favored and imposed the creation of nonnative communities in all of the largest cities in each of the three regions. It was thus formalized by the law in 1917, as A.F. Usman (2015:1) writes:

The purpose of the Sabon Garuruwa in those days was to house agents of European merchants’ organizations, southerners who were mostly traders and administrative officials and of course Christian missionaries. As the northern part of Nigeria was less developed and modernized in reference to the western and the eastern

ones, by the 1940s a wave of immigrants settled in Sabon Garuruwa.

The Igbo migrated to the Northern region especially in great cities like Jos, Kano, Kaduna, and Maiduguri, where they brought prosperity in creating commercial institutions in developing industry. All this caused hatred from the other ethnic groups mostly the Hausa, who are the largest group for the size of its members. Therefore, that hatred is expressed by means of violence which progressively turns into an ethnic conflict. The massive immigration caused a problem of claim over the land. Because there were more and more immigrants than Sabon Garuruwa could accommodate, the quarters grew overcrowded. The southerners who lived in the Sabon Garuruwa came along with their native culture: ethnic identity, customs, way of living, and religion. These immigrants intended to live and enjoy life as they used to do on their homelands. Knowing that each major group in Nigeria has its specific culture and traditions, the influence of Sabon Garuruwa’ dwellers culture and traditions is observed, as A.F. Usman (2015:3) writes:

Christianity, Animism and their way of life, constituted a great threat to their host Northerners who are Muslims. The latter considered that way of living as an offense to their native cultural and traditional institutions. In this respect, the law enacted in 1912 prohibiting non-Muslims from living in Holy City and getting married to native Muslims was reissued, this is the case of the city of Kano in Kano state.

Considering these differences, as Sabon Garuruwa continued to develop in their specific pace, but contrary to the native culture, they became the battlefield of major national crisis especially those turning into South-North conflicts and Christians-Muslims conflicts and divisions. Yet, Adichie’s description of the Sabon Gari goes along with the aforementioned features of the real special area. Accordingly, she presents the Sabon Gari as the place where only people from the Eastern region especially the Igbo live. They live there in a very shut-in community called the “Igbo Union” because of the hostile and xenophobic attitudes of their hosts, the narrator evidences:

They held meetings in his yard. She had sat in a few times, and she still remembered the meeting where irritated men and women talked about the northern schools not admitting Igbo children. Uncle Mbaezi had stood up and stamped his foot. “Ndi be anyi! My people! We will build our own school! We will raise money and build our own school!” After he spoke, Olanna had joined in clapping her approval, in chanting, “Well spoken! That is how it shall be!” But she had worried that it would be difficult to build a school. Perhaps it was more practical to try and persuade the Northerners to admit Igbo children. Yet, now, only a few years later, her taxi was on Airport Road, driving

past the Igbo Union Grammar School. It was break time and the schoolyard was full of children. (HYS, pp.57-58)

Likewise, Adichie portrays massacres perpetrated against the Igbo in the North through the character of Olanna who flees from Mohammed's house in Kano for she thinks that the Sabon Gari is safer, then she says to Mohammed: "I'm going back to my uncle's house in Sabon Gari." (HYS, p.198) The Sabon Gari is then remembered as flash point of the terrible Hausa-Igbo mutual massacres of the mid 60s that immediately precipitated the Biafran secession (1967-1970). It would be interesting to mention that these massacres also reach the highest rate during the pogrom of 1945, another historical landmark woven into the novel.

Coined by the Russian during the Tsar rule in reference to the riot against the Jews in Odessa in 1821, 'pogrom', meaning 'to destroy', is commonly used by the Russians in reference to violent attacks or riots including the pillage perpetrated against a community of people living in their non-native land by the native population, with somehow the assent of local authorities. In the Nigerian context, this term carries connotations of the different outbreaks and uprisings the country went through in 1945 especially in the Northern city of Jos, Plateau State, where about hundreds of Igbo died and lost their properties. In *Half of A Yellow Sun* Adichie alludes to 'the 1945 pogrom' when she writes:

It is imperative to remember that the first time the Igbo people were massacred, albeit on a much smaller scale than what has recently occurred, was in 1945. That carnage was precipitated by the British colonial government when it blamed the Igbo people for the national strike, banned Igbo-published newspapers, and generally encouraged anti-Igbo sentiment. (HYS, p. 224)

Sentences such as "Igbo people were massacred ..." and "That carnage was precipitated by the British colonial government when it blamed the Igbo..." obviously show that the 1945 pogrom ethnic confrontation stimulated by hatred and jealousy, enhances the course of this dramatic event. For, during the pogrom, some Hausa living in Jos, imbued with feelings of xenophobia perpetrated violent attacks and pillage of property against innocent Igbo without the local authorities' reaction. Hausa's xenophobia is to be found partly in the colonial amalgamation. About the 1940s, the city of Jos in the Plateau State was in majority controlled by the Igbo through the different activities they practiced, they were also present in the public administration. This was badly perceived by native Northerners, the Hausa who saw in this attitude of Igbo opportunity to establish and extend their economic hegemony in the North. To stop them some individual group of Hausa began to attack Igbo and savagely destroy their property. The confusion provided

by the Igbo in attempt to claim for more protection against their oppressors made things worse as Hausa attacked the Sabon Gari, killing more than one hundreds of people.

Considering the high level of education and the technical and intellectual abilities of the Igbo elite, there is no doubt that the 1945 pogrom was primarily about the protection of strategic British interests in Nigeria. The departing colonialists had secured the collaboration of the Northern region, which was vehemently opposed to the African independence. Thus Hausa elites played a role in the perpetration of the pogrom. Britain played an instrumental role in the pogrom.

Therefore, this attitude undoubtedly boosted up a momentous development in the people's consciousness and aspirations as they drawn across the whole South of the country including workers, women, students and the youth. Accordingly, on 22 June 1945, workers launched a massive movement of general strike that paralyzed the country. They demanded the increase of their wages and the improvement of working conditions.

Hence, *Half of a yellow Sun* also refers to the causes of the war, but the point here is not to narrate the proceeding of the war, that to say according to how books of history present it, but to show how Adichie's fictional civil war in Biafra causes are inhabited by what those books say. To her, the causes of that war are complex too because they are deeply rooted in the political organization and the conquest of power by the belligerents. She then considers the 1966 massacres in Kano and the non-respect of the Aburi agreements as the 'casus belli', as evidenced in the following passage: Then she heard Okeoma say "Aburi." It sounded lovely, the name of that Ghanaian town, and she imagined a sleepy cluster of homes on stretches of sweet-scented grasslands. Aburi came up often in their conversations: Okeoma would say that Gowon should have followed the agreement he and Ojukwu signed in Aburi, or Professor Ezekia would say that Gowon's reneging after Aburi meant that he did not wish the Igbo well, or Odenigbo would proclaim, "On Aburi we stand. But how can Gowon make such a turnaround?" Okeoma's voice was louder. He agreed to confederation at Aburi, and now he wants one Nigeria with a unitary government, but a unitary government was the very reason that he and his people killed Igbo officers. (HYS, p. 215)

Furthermore, many social issues were central to that military confrontation. But one the most sensitive and relevant ones may be inscribed in the country's ethnic diversity, as J. M. Soungoua (2010: 28) asserts:

Les origines profondes de la guerre civile du Nigeria sont sûrement faites de la vigueur du

sentiment tribal dont la politique coloniale se saisit pour s'assurer le contrôle d'un pays considéré comme une véritable mosaïque humaine où l'on compte plus de deux cents groupes ethniques et linguistiques. La colonisation se superpose donc à l'organisation tribale, en utilisant à l'échelon local les chefs coutumiers, provoquant ainsi des aspirations centrifuges néfastes à l'unité nationale.

This quotation highlights the boiling and explosive nature of relationships between the Hausa and the Igbo before the burst of the civil war in Biafra. This sensitive issue that endangers and tears apart the Nigerian social tissue has brewed a series of factors which enhanced mistrust, xenophobia, exclusion attitudes and oppression. Chinua Achebe (2013: 74; 77) subtly renders the confrontation between the Hausas and Igbos as follows:

The Hausas feared for their ability to control their own destinies in a fast changing society Igbos, on the other hand, were typically among the most educated, wealthiest, and prosperous people of Nigeria. Their backgrounds enabled them to fulfill high ranking, senior positions such as administrators, managers, technicians, civil servants, and more. Igbos were partly helped by their culture, which embraced change and competition, unlike Hausas, who were hindered by their conservative and traditionalist society. [...] They were also helped by the culture of educational excellence they acquired from the British. The British as a Christian colonial power naturally favored the predominantly Christian Igbos over the predominantly Muslim Hausas as well. These are some of the factors that gave Igbos an unquestioned advantage over other groups in securing credentials for their own advancement in Nigerian colonial society, and this caused deep resentment for the Hausas.

Moreover, *Half of A Yellow Sun* echoes the warring factions in time of turmoil. Indeed, as aforementioned, the Biafran war which lasted three years and opposed two main belligerents: the Nigerian federal army mostly dominated by the Hausa-Fulani people and the Republic of Biafra, mostly comprised of Igbo people who wanted to secede from Nigeria. In her attempt to better enlighten the reader on the genesis of the civil war in Biafra, Adichie sheds light on the warring factions engaged through an accurate characterization, which, according to K. Agyekum (2013:214) is a narratological device referring to "the way or skills which a writer uses in creating his characters, i.e. persons in a story or novel. In other words, his/her ability to create these imaginary or fictitious people to make them real for his/her readers." Indeed, Adichie's fictional civil war in Biafra also opposes the federal government dominated by the Hausa against the Biafrans: the Igbo. She also presents the two coup d'état carried out respectively by the Igbo and Hausa officers as the stimulator of the massacres:

Northern officers have taken over. The BBC says they are killing Igbo officers in Kaduna. Nigerian Radio isn't

saying anything. (...) on the radio, the breathless British voice said it was quite extraordinary that a second coup had occurred only six months after the first" (HYS, p.188)

Also, Adichie uses one of her main characters Odenigbo in order to contextualize and illustrate the animosity and mistrust between the Hausa and the Igbo. Actually, known as a brilliant Professor of Mathematics at Nsukka University, Odenigbo is presented as an extro-active character that is to say a radical and revolutionary character, strongly anchored in his logic of struggle against the evil forces: Nigeria, the Hausa in particular, in order to defend and save the integrity of his people. All this is proved through his radical opinions towards his colleagues on his identity:

Of course, of course, but my point is that the only authentic identity for the African is the tribe [...] I am Nigerian because a white man created Nigeria and gave me that identity. I am black because the white man constructed black to be as different as possible from his white. But I was Igbo before the white man came. (HYS, p. 34)

Towards Miss Adebayo on her sympathy about the Igbo massacre in Kano:

Did your cousins die? Did your uncle die? You're going back to your people in Lagos next week and nobody will harass you for being Yoruba. Is it not your own people who are killing the Igbo in Lagos? Didn't a group of your chiefs go to the North to thank the emirs for sparing Yoruba people? So what are you saying? How is your opinion relevant? (HYS, p. 234)

Towards Olanna when she tells him that Mohammed, her ex-lover might be upset about the situation in the country:

What's the matter is that you are saying that a bloody Muslim Hausa man is upset! He is complicit, absolutely complicit, in everything that happened to our people, so how can you say he is upset? [...] Am I joking? How can you sound this way after seeing what they did in Kano? Can you imagine what must have happened to Arize? They raped pregnant women before they cut them up! (HYS, p. 256)

Finally, the novel subtly gives a picture of life during the war, a brutal, cruel conflict which turns out to become a very dramatic experience for the Biafrans. As they fight to secede from the federation of Nigerians, in the early days of the war, the Biafrans are full of hope for victory and could not blame the revolutionary action they undertake. As the war goes on, the situation gradually begins to change. Life becomes a challenge, a real struggle for survival against starvation, diseases and the permanent danger bring by the Nigerian army continual air raids.

This fact does not change the situation as the well-equipped Nigerian army inflicts them to lose their

major cities in the East. This is the case of Ogoja, Nsukka, Bonny, and Enugu the capital city, Umuahia, Port Harcourt and Owerri. Both armies keep their positions and the Biafran civil population being trapped and fearing massacres, are compelled to support the Biafran army, and move from camp to camp to feel more secure. It is important to say that these cities are the key centers where namely food supplies come from. With all of them under the Nigerian custody or in battlefield, the federal army initiate a land and sea blocus to prevent the humanitarian aid to reach Biafra, not mention that the vandals hijacked food supplies convoys. Because of this, the Biafrans are short of food supplies, and then at the door of a disastrous humanitarian crisis. Adichie epitomizes these aspects in the following passage:

Gowon sent them to bomb Awgu Market in the middle of the afternoon while women were buying and selling. He has refused to let the Red Cross bring us food, refused kpm-kpam, so that we will starve to death.

The next time Olanna went to the relief center, Okoromadu was talking to the crowd at the gate. Some women held rolled-up mats under their arms; they had spent the night outside the gates. We have nothing for you today. The lorry carrying our supplies from Awomama was hijacked on the road. (HYS, pp. 369; 356)

As a result of this, some people are compelled to spend hours to wait in lines in order to fight for a little food. Some other are even tempted to abandon their children because they do not have any food to feed them:

Come on Monday, and maybe we will be open. A woman walked briskly up to him and thrust her baby boy into his arms. Then take him! Feed him until you open again! She began to walk away. The baby was thin, jaundiced, squalling. Bia nwanji! Come back, woman! Okoromadu was holding the baby with stiff arms, away from his body. (HYS, p.499)

Consequently, a great many children have been affected by diseases as they were not well-nourished. A great number of them suffered from malnutrition and kwashiorkor, as it goes out from 'The World Was Silent When We Died' a poem included in the novel:

Did you see photos in sixty-eight
Of children with their hair becoming rust: Sickly
patches nestled on those small heads,
Then falling off, like rotten leaves on dust?
Imagine children with arms like toothpicks,
With footballs for bellies and skin stretched thin.
It was kwashiorkor—difficult word, A word that was
not quite ugly enough, a sin.

Apart from the shortage of food supplies that brought starvation, there are also continual Nigerian air raids. Those continual air raids were responsible of a

great number of civil human losses. Yet, Adichie describes it as one of the greatest threat that villagers had to risk daily. This brought property and school institutions destruction and created a kind of paranoia in the mind of people, who sometimes spent hours and days in bunkers, as the narrator explains:

Olanna jumped each time she heard the thunder. She imagined another air raid, bombs rolling out of a plane and exploding in the compound before she and Odenigbo and Baby and Ugwu could reach the bunker down the street. Sometimes she imagined the bunker itself collapsing, squashing them all into mud. [...]She worried, instead, about air raids. She had a recurring dream: She forgot about Baby and ran to the bunker and after the bombs had fallen, she tripped on the burnt body of a child with its features so blackened that she could not be certain it was Baby. The dream haunted her. She made Baby practice running to the bunker. She asked Ugwu to practice picking Baby up and running. She taught Baby how to take cover if there was no time for the bunker—to lie flat on her belly, hands wrapped around her head. (HYS, pp. 346, 377)

Since the continual air raids also destroyed many houses, refugee camps were settled to welcome the vast influx in disables and vagrants while others sought refuge in schools and churches. With the transformation of schools into refugee camps due, no parents found it anymore a priority to think about their children school education, as Ugwu wonders: "I was asking Headmistress if we could be relocated, and she looked at me and started laughing. We are the last. All the schools in Umuahia have become refugee camps or army training camps." (HYS, p. 377)

From the forgoing, one easily infers that during the war the life of people changes. For the many characters who used to lead a peaceful and pleasant life in the city, become suddenly immersed in world of daily suffering in the village as the situation worsens. As the war goes on, the trauma becomes more and more noticeable and the horror of the death caused by bombings begin to ruin the breach of hope the Biafrans had in the beginning of the conflict.

Though the situation keeps on worsening day after day, the Biafrans remain optimistic and galvanized mainly when they listened to the Biafran national radio displaying any positive news about their army's position. As a matter of fact, in the novel, Odenigbo and Olanna would always listen to Radio-Biafra or the BBC. Indeed, it is through the radio that characters learn about the massacres in Kano, the fall of Enugu, Nsukka and Port Harcourt, but also about the recognition of Biafra by Tanzania as an independent nation:

The radio was turned on very loud. She ran out to the back, to the outhouse, carrying it in her hand. Odenigbo! Odenigbo! Tanzania has recognized us! [...] Let's hear it from others. Voice of America was

reporting it, as was French radio, which Olanna translated: Tanzania was the first country to recognize the existence of the independent nation of Biafra. Finally, Biafra existed. (HYS, p. 390)

Though the secession seems to be a perilous adventure, and almost a no issue path, the secessionists keep on exhibiting an indefectible determination and mobilization for a struggle they hope could bring about ethnic revolution. Freedom fighters are booted and given a strong impulse by General Ojukwu's address to Easterners and their enthusiastic reaction:

Fellow countrymen and women, you the people of Eastern Nigeria: Conscious of the supreme authority of Almighty God over all mankind; of your duty over posterity; aware that you can no longer be protected in your lives and in your property by any government based outside Eastern Nigeria; determined to dissolve all political and other ties between you and the former Republic of Nigeria; having mandated me to proclaim on your behalf and in your name that Eastern Nigeria be a sovereign independent Republic, now therefore I do hereby solemnly proclaim that the territory and region known as and called Eastern Nigeria, together with her continental shelf and territorial waters, shall henceforth be an independent sovereign state of the name and title of The Republic Of Biafra.

Yes! Yes! Ojukwu, nye anyi egbe! Give us guns! Iwe di anyi n'obi! There is anger in our hearts! (HYS, pp. 218; 230)

This even convinces the Rich Igbo business people who became then enthusiastic to contribute in donating money to form and equip the Biafran troops. This is visible when Kainene says: *"I've already donated money and I won't be held up in the hot sun just to help further Ojukwu's ambition. It's about a cause, not a man."* (HYS, p. 245)

In a similar tone, Odenigbo exhibits his enthusiasm for the seceded country when addressing the students: *"Biafra is born! We will lead Black Africa! We will live in security! Nobody will ever again attack us! Never again!"* (HYS, p. 220)

Adichie underlines another aspect showing that is that the Igbo are sick and tired of being victims of Northerners and being under total control of the government:

The Second World War changed the world order: Empire was crumbling, and a vocal Nigerian elite, mostly from the South, had emerged. The North was wary; it feared domination from the more educated South and had always wanted a country separate from the infidel South anyway. But the British had to preserve Nigeria as it was their prized creation, their large market, their thorn in France's eye. To propitiate the North, they fixed the pre-Independence elections in favor of the North and wrote a new constitution that

gave the North control of the central government. (HYS, p.228)

In so doing, they prepared every necessary measure in case of an armed conflict, as Odenigbo warns: *"Wrap your certificates in waterproof bags and make sure those are the first things you take if we have to evacuate. Wrap your certificates in waterproof bags [...] In case of war tips"*. (HYS, p.228)

Biafran leaders of course were aware of the natural resource richness, particularly oil, they possessed and were very confident for the great vision of the future they had as well, knowing that the federal government would not give up on them, as Kainene worries: *"It's the oil. They can't let us go easily with all that oil. But the war will be brief."* (HYS, p.242) They strongly believed in the victory of their revolutionary act even if they began losing territories and hope of success became slim months after months. It is important to say that though the secessionist did not achieve to maintain the republic of Biafra as a highly recognized and independent nation, it is obvious to emphasize the ethnic revolution attitude expressed by the Igbo which was born from that process.

At this level, it is also important to investigate on Adichie's reference to the consequences since all the wars around the world generate aftermaths when they end. This after event ranks from humanitarian catastrophes, the destruction of infrastructures and other dramatic things. In the case of Nigeria, the conflict has brought about psychological or moral, political, social and economic consequences.

Talking about moral and psychological drawbacks, it is worth noticing that as the war goes on, the situation worsens, and people have to face more and more problems in addition to starvation and diseases. Among these life challenges, one may consider prostitution and the different atrocities soldiers exerted on women, such as raping and all others ill-treatment. Food supplies were neither enough to feed all families nor able to reach all villages during the war. The lack of food and money brought despair, then compelled women especially young ones to practice prostitution. As a result, there was a great depreciation of customs and moral values in reference to the upsurge in the rate of prostitution that in turn, gives an impulse by the lack of education. Sounoua (2010:72) makes it clear when he quotes Buchi Emecheta:

Many women, however, were victims. They saw life as purposeless anyway. They decided to enjoy their freedom while they had it, and why not with a strong young soldier who could fill one's belly! Tomorrow would take care of itself, and besides there might never be a tomorrow anyway.

Yet Adichie emphasizes on the representation of the violence and cruelty of the war in the mind of the

people, which creates a kind of 'trauma', which according to the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, (2005 1575) carries connotations of "a psychological injury caused by a severe shock, especially when the harmful effects last for a long time." Indeed, she links the traumatic after-effects of the massacres in Kano and those of the civil war which impact negatively the mind of characters. The image of her relatives' bodies and that of the woman who carried her daughter's head in the calabash on her way back from Kano after the massacres and that of the air raids, really trouble Olanna's mind and makes her feel bad or sometimes she feels like crying.

What strikes the readers the more is the particular emphasis that Adichie puts on the way soldiers ill-treated women, raping them with an incredible savagery, as evidenced in the following passage.

They are even looting toilet seats! Toilet seats! A man who escaped from Udi told me. And they choose the best houses and force people's wives and daughters to spread their legs for them and cook for them. (HYS, p.376)

Furthermore, teenagers are taken from their families and enrolled into the army without their consent and any real military training. Adichie alludes to this aspect when she writes: "*Stories of forced conscription were everywhere. He did not doubt that a boy down the street had been dragged away in the afternoon and taken, with a shaved head and no training, straight to the front in the evening.*" (HYS, p.375)

In spite of moral and psychological consequences, there are also social and political consequences after the civil war. In the social and political domain, one of the immediate causes of the civil war was the lassitude of Easterners to being massacred like animals. But, it is evident that long before the massacres of 1966, the social situation and relationship among the three major ethnic groups, namely, the Hausa, the Yoruba and the Igbo were boiling, because of mistrust, animosity and a desire of a kind of hegemony that each of them wanted to have on others. In this respect, the civil war did not change but increased hatred, mistrust and animosity which constituted for long the ferments of conflicts. Even years after that conflict, the country's stability was not recovered yet as it had undergone the succession of military regimes, as Dele Adetoye (2015:2) writes: While some diverse countries in the world have taken advantage of their diversity, in Nigeria it [has] remained an insurmountable difficulty. The nation's diversity continues to threaten the unity of the country and the deepening of her nascent democracy thereby making the future of the country unpredictable. This reflected in the occurrence and re-occurrence of ethno-religious and

political conflicts and violence before and after independence.

Another consequence is that the civil war in Biafra is responsible of millions of human life losses. Actually, by the end of the war, about 100,000 soldiers and about 2 million of innocent people, in majority Igbo, died. The blocus causing starvation that some defenders of human rights came to consider as the 'genocide of the Igbo', as Adichie epitomizes: Starvation was a Nigerian weapon of war. Starvation broke Biafra and brought Biafra fame and made Biafra last as long as it did. Starvation made the people of the world take notice and sparked protests and demonstrations in London and Moscow and Czechoslovakia. Starvation made Zambia and Tanzania and Ivory Coast and Gabon recognize Biafra, starvation brought Africa into Nixon's American campaign and made parents all over the world tell their children to eat up. Starvation propelled aid organizations to sneak-fly food into Biafra at night since both sides could not agree on routes. Starvation aided the careers of photographers. And starvation made the International Red Cross call Biafra its gravest emergency since the Second World War. (HYS, p.314)

Here, the word 'starvation' used eight times finally alerts the activists of human rights about what is going on in Nigeria where "Starvation was a Nigerian weapon of war" by the Federal Army.

At the individual level, the Biafran War has dramatically impacted the lives of the Youths, namely those of women from backgrounds who live in a patriarchal society, and challenge the established literary canon that has shaped such images of female inferiority and subordination in order to define themselves and articulate their roles, their values, their aspirations, and their place in society. Adichie fictionalizes two categories of them. The first comprises women such as Olanna, Kainene and Miss Adebayo, who though from different emotional profile, have some features in common: They belong to the Nigerian upper class, and have attended Western Universities which predispose them, as Mama Odenigbo's mother criticizes Olanna, her daughter-in-law: Too much schooling ruins a woman; everyone knows that. It gives a woman a big head and she will start to insult her husband. What kind of wife will that be? [...] These girls that go to university follow men around until their bodies are unless. Nobody knows if she can have children. Do you know? Does anyone know? (p.98)

In Mama Odenigbo's narrow-minded view, a high-learned woman is inclined to be pompous and arrogant enough but cannot make a good wife. Olanna's education even propels Mama to underestimate her domestic abilities, as she keeps on yelling: "*I want to a proper soup for my son. [...] I heard that all the time*

she (Olanna) was growing up, it was servants who wiped her ike when she finished shitting. [...] This is why I came. They said she is controlling my son." (HYS, pp.96; 98)

Arize too shares Mama's retrogressive view, and even furthers that high education delays women's chances at marriage, as she rebukes her sister Olanna who advises her to focus first on sewing lessons and make money rather than rushing into a precocious marriage:

It is only women who know much book like you who can say that, sister. If people like me who don't know Book wait too long, we will expire. [...] I want a husband today and tomorrow, oh! My mates have all left and gone to their husbands' house. [...] Is it sewing that will give me a child? Even I had managed to pass to go to school, I would still want a child now. (HYS, p.41)

Most of the time, these high-learned women are portrayed as beautiful 'flowers' who stick to modernity to which they are greatly influenced, and as such, accused of leading a luxurious and frivolous life. This is true for Olanna, presumably objectified throughout her life, mainly when her father uses her as a means of bribery in order to get a better deal with Chief Okonji. Olanna's radiant beauty predisposes her to be treated as a sexual 'toy' by Okonji, as the narrator, dramatizes one of their romantic sequences:

He [Chief Okonji] pulled her to him, and for a while, Olanna did nothing, her body limp against his. She was used to this, being grabbed by men who walked around in a cloud of cologne-drenched entitlement, with the presumption that, because they were powerful and found her beautiful, they belonged together. (HYS, p.33)

The sentence "*she was used to this, being grabbed by men who walked around in a cloud of cologne-drenched entitlement...*" clearly indicates that Olanna is an easygoing girl who uses sex as a sedative since lovemaking has almost become pleasurable and empowering, probably the only means of catharsis for war traumatizing experiences. In effect, she and her twin-sister Kainene even break societal standards in sex matter since, at many occasions, they initiate lovemaking, wanting to have sex for their own enjoyment rather than at the initiative of their male lovers, as Olanna for instance, yearns for her boyfriend Odenigbo and does all maneuvers to trigger the latter's sexual emotions:

'Touch me', She knew he didn't want to, that he touched her breast because he would do whatever she wanted, whatever would make her better. She caressed his neck, buried her fingers in his dense hair, and when he slid into her, she thought about Arize's pregnant belly, how easily it must have broken, skin stretched that taut. She started to cry. (*Half of A Yellow Sun*, p.160)

Similarly, for Kainene, she makes of sex a routine with Richard her love maker:

They would go out to the veranda and he [Richard] would push the table aside and spread out the soft rug and lie on his naked back. When she climbed astride, he would hold her hips and stare up at the night sky and, for those moments, be sure of the meaning of bliss. It was their new ritual since the war started, the only reason he was grateful for war. (HYS, p.308)

With narrations such as "*She [Olanna] caressed his neck, buried her fingers in his dense hair, and when he slid into her, she thought about Arize's pregnant belly, how easily it must have broken, skin stretched that taut. She started to cry*" or "*When she [Kainene] climbed astride, he would hold her hips and stare up at the night sky and, for those moments, be sure of the meaning of bliss*", Adichie lampoons these shameless and easygoing girls. For, though intimacy turns to be a new ritual of appeasing traumatic memories, but way high learned girls ostensibly get in shows symptoms of moral depravation.

Besides, there is traditional woman that Adichie stereotypes either as an angel or as a brainless housewife, for though she is not educated, but she is much anchored in the tradition, and is given a certain value for she exhibits courage, creativity and a sense of sacrifice to take care of her progeny. The perfect illustration of this in the novel is Mama, Odenigbo's mother who is reported as both as a virtuous mother and a wife. Indeed, though Olanna has not got a child of her own, but Mama really expresses the motherhood attitude in taking care of Baby, with keen affection, love and even expressing her fear when Baby is sick. Hence, solidarity is visible though the fact that Olanna does not want Baby to go and play at the neighbors', or when the mothers who are present where Olanna and Ugwu teach village children. Olanna then plays her role as an African wife to educate her daughter. In those difficult moments Olanna always love and respect her husband even if he does not earn enough money to provide for the family. All the same, when the man of the house Odenigbo is almost never at home all the time. Here, the traditional woman symbolizes security, safety, and mutual assistance for when the cruelty and brutality of the war made life become like a dramatic daily experience, she advises to take refuge and comfort in love and sense community ties in the village, which represents the last refuge for everybody.

Though Adichie underscores and praises women's achievement since it goes beyond their biological and social roles, fighting daily to help their household survive and support their men on the front and taking an active part in the war, it is also obvious they are also victims of different ill-treatment which disgrace them. Yet, Adichie doesn't shy away from describing in great detail the devastating consequences

of the war nor thrusting her female characters into situations in which they must face these consequences.

Raping represents the emblematic case of women's victimizations. Indeed, the authoress discusses rape as a form of women's oppression in the Roman Catholic Church where some clergymen shamelessly use their position to abuse Biafran women sexually. This is the case of Father Marcel who takes advantages of his position to abuse many little girls during Biafran war, as Kainene, out of rage denounces: "*He fucks most of them before he gives them the crayfish that I slave to get here*". (HYS, p. 530).

Father Marcel, for example, perpetrates his bestialities in the presence his colleague Father Jude. Hence, when informed, Kainene exasperatedly shouts at him:

How could you stay here and let him spread the legs of starving girls? How will you account for this to your God? You both are leaving, right now. I will take this to Ojukwu myself if I have to! There were tears running down her face. There was something magnificent in her rage. (HYS, p. 530)

Father Jude's silence reveals the existing complicity among religious men and their disregard of women. In short, through these priests' attitude the writer wanted to show that Religion contributes to women's oppression.

All things considered, the civil war inflicted upon individuals moral and psychological consequences on the one hand and socio-political ones on the other hand. One can easily assert that Adichie intended to show the people outside of Nigeria the dramatic and traumatic effects the civil war in Biafra had on the people, especially the Igbo. In other words, the novel is then an attempt to recreate the inner turmoil which the Igbo struggled against, as well as the struggles they faced in regard to the war going on around them. A quick glimpse at this novel reveals that her political and ideological perspectives are shown through her rhetoric. Yet, some appropriate paratextual and narratological devices chosen by the authoress to dramatize the situation prevailing during the civil war are worth analyzing.

III. Adichie and the Aesthetisation of the Biafran War

The examination of the authoress' rhetorical devices highlights aspects of the paratext and the narrative techniques and figures of speech to mention only a few. Indeed, the paratext proves to be one of the helpful features in the critical appreciation of fictional work. This is the case of the title of *Half of A Yellow Sun* for instance which according to the meaning it conveys, directly links the novel to the short-term living republic of Biafra. For critics agree that '*Half of A Yellow Sun*' is a description of the symbol on the Biafran flag. This title actually takes its name from the

Biafran national flag which is tricolored: red, black with a half of a sun in yellow, and green. This symbol also appears as an emblem on the Biafra's army uniforms like it is clearly illustrated in the novel: "*At the gates, Biafran soldiers were waving cars through. They looked distinguished in their khaki uniforms, boots shining, half of a yellow sun sewn on their sleeves. Ugwu wished he was one of them*". (HYS, p. 241) Hence, the title of the novel drives the reader, through the symbol of a yellow sun, back to Biafra:

They sat on wooden planks and the weak morning sun streamed into the roofless class as she unfurled Odenigbo's cloth flag and told them what the symbols meant. Red was the blood of the siblings massacred in the North, black was for mourning them, green was for the prosperity Biafra would have, and, finally, the half of a yellow sun stood for the glorious future. (HYS, p. 371)

As can be seen, through the title of the novel, Adichie intends to show her burden by exploring and recreating the short existence and the eventual demise of Biafra with a particular emphasis on the effects it had on the ordinary people. In effect, the title appears not only as Adichie's attempt to pay a tribute to the victims, but also as a way to perpetuate the memory of that often forgotten dramatic event in making her readers as witnesses of the birth and eventual short term-life of Biafra.

As far as the inner structure of the novel is concerned, it is interesting to say that the novel has four parts and thirty seven chapters as well. Part one and part three have a balanced number of chapters, six each, but part two and part four have an unbalanced numbers of chapters: twelve and thirteen. This can be explained by the fact that they correspond to the drastic changes and the unbalance living conditions of people during the war. The beginning of each chapter is marked by a number followed by a bolded sentence which is supposed to be, according to our interpretation, the title of the chapter. The subtitle of each chapter begins by whether Ugwu's, Olanna's or Richard's point of views. These subtitles are supposed to show that the story is told through the point of view of these three major characters.

The most outstanding narratological devices used by Adichie dramatize the situation prevailing during this chaotic period of the Nigerian history. Description, the resort to insults particularly draw our attention.

Writing on description in *Half of A Yellow Sun*, means showing the way Adichie presents her story. In this regard, the first element that seems more visible is the way she tells the story. There is not a chronological order in the proceeding of the story, but there is rather a kind of jumps between the past and the present expressed through "the early sixties" (part one

and three) and “the late sixties” (part two and four). These flash-backs and flash-forwards unveils the writer’s intention to show the movement of characters between love and hatred, a peaceful living and a struggle for survival, life and death, hope and despair in relation to different experiences, information and rumors before, during and after the civil war.

As the story unfolds, one has the impression that the narrator is telling the story from three main characters’ points of view. Actually, the story is told by an impersonal narrator who seems not to be affected by the events in the story. A peruse of *Half of a Yellow Sun*, helps the reader discovers a large range of descriptions of settings expressing the intense desire of the writer to make the reader visualize the entire environment through which the story takes place. One of the emblematic descriptions is that of the single room Olanna, Odenigbo and those leaving under their responsibilities found themselves living in as the crisis grew more chaotic:

The long strip of a building had nine rooms, side by side, with doors that led out onto a narrow veranda. The kitchen was at one hand and the bathroom at the other, next to a grove of banana trees. Their room was closer to the bathroom and, on the first day, Olanna looked at it and could not imagine how she would live here with Odenigbo and Baby and Ugwu, eat and dress and make love in a single room. Odenigbo set about separating their sleeping area with a thin curtain, and afterwards Olanna looked at the sagging string he had tied to nails on the wall (HYS, p.326)

As the novel opens, the setting is static: Nsukka. After the secession, the characters move from a place to another to look for refuge. At this time, the setting becomes dynamic, sometimes closed, sometimes opened. Adichie makes it very alive as she describes sequences of the setting like in a real war circumstances:

Dust swirled all around, like a see-through brown blanket. The main road was crowded; women with boxes on their heads and babies tied to their backs, barefoot children carrying bundles of clothes or yams or boxes, men dragging bicycles. Ugwu wondered why they were holding lit kerosene lanterns although it was not yet dark. (HYS, p.241)

As far as the narrative language, it is rather standard, but sometimes it can appear figurative and connotative with a bombastic diction. For, as some of the characters in the novel such as Odenigbo’s colleagues of the University of Nsukka represent the elite, Adichie chooses to put in their mouth words and a language that is beautiful, but difficult to understand for ordinary people.

However, the tenor of voice varies sometimes and even becomes vulgar, namely Adichie purposely resorts to insults as a parody or in a satirical way.

Actually, she uses certain insults that deliberately appear humorous and amusing. This is the case of insults on the Hausa: “*Those black-as-he-goats Northerners, those dirty cattle-rearers with jigger-infested feet*” (p. 212) which may offend a Hausa man, but rather sound hilarious to the reader.

Conversely, this vulgarity of language proves satirical generally, with some ordinary people such as Olanna, Richard, and Kainene. This is for example manifest through Kainene’s reaction when he discovers that her twin sister Olanna had sexual relations with Richard: “*The good one shouldn't fuck her sister's lover.[...]Of course it meant nothing. It was just fucking my lover, after all.*” (HYS, p. 337) The most convincing passage of the vulgarity of the Adichie’s diction is proved when Odenigbo is ruthlessly insulted by Arize, Olanna and Kainene’s cousin: “*Wild animal from Abba. His rotten penis will fall off soon. Doesn't he know he should wake up every morning and kneel down and thank his God that you looked at him at all?*” (HYS, p. 298). In the same wake, Auntie Ifeka’s comment on Odenigbo’s betrayal is expressed in a discourteous tone: “*Odenigbo has done what all men do and has inserted his penis in the first hole he could find when you were away.*” (HYS, p. 299)

From the forgoing, one easily infers that Adichie’s resort to an unrefined style, though humorous, but satirical since she purposefully puts crude and debasing words in her characters’ mouth to criticize or condemn an act or a behaviour. Indeed, the above profuse insults aim at condemning and blaming Odenigbo’s act of betraying Olanna when he slept with a village girl. Being a woman, Adichie convicts this attitude that is rather considered as not only a total lack of respect to the woman, but also a proof of irresponsibility and infidelity.

Furthermore, to shine a spotlight on experience during one of the most violent, chaotic, and life-defining events in Nigerian history, Adichie has among other rhetorical devices resorted to situational Irony, paradox and metaphorical stances as well.

Irony is generally referred to as a figure of speech in which words are used in such a way that their intended meaning is different from the actual meaning of the words itself. This tallies Robert Di Yanni’s position that “*irony almost always arises from a contrast or discrepancy between what is said and what is meant or between what happens and what has been expected to happen.*” (2002:1197) Apart from ‘dramatic’ irony which may increase the tension of the plot for an “*important character in a play information the audience knows and behaves in a way that is diametrically opposed to his or her known best interest*” (Kofi Agyekum, 2013: 149), situational irony, also referred to as irony of circumstance, creates a contrast between what characters think is the case and what in

reality is actually the case. For as Agyekum (2013: 150) keeps on:

Irony of situation is the difference between what a character says and what a character does or what is expected to be performed by a character and what he actually performs. For instance, if a character claims to be very brave but runs at crucial point when his bravery is much needed, there is a sigh of situational irony. We also meet situational irony where a character expects one thing to happen but instead something else happens.

As a hierophant of the Biafran War, Adichie resorts to situational irony when she depicts the republic of Biafra as a great and prosperous nation when it seceded from the Nigerian federation. In reality, the Biafrans and their leaders were hopeful and highly determined and confident that they had all assets to be successful in their revolutionary act and they would defeat Nigeria, as Odenigbo shouts out: *“Biafra is born! We will lead Black Africa! We will live in security! Nobody will ever again attack us! Never again!”* (HYS, p. 220)

The presentation of Biafra as a great, prosperous, and independent country established out of the Nigerian federation is situational irony. It is situational to the extent that Adichie in the final end talks about its collapse and reintegration into the Nigerian federation. Here, the situation of Biafra described at the time of secession, in relation to the people's hopes and expectations, ends up in quite a different way than what was predicted and expected by the secessionists. In effect, what the Nigerian novelist attempts to show and emphasize through this figure of speech is the illusion of the Biafran rebellion as fighters based their expectations and hopes for a better and prosperous future more on appearances than on reality. Hence, they 'ironically' comfort and strengthen each other, as evidenced in the following passage:

Madu told me today that the army has nothing, absolutely nothing. They thought Ojukwu had arms piled up somewhere, given the way he's been talking, 'No power in Black Africa can defeat us!' So Madu and some of the officers who came back from the North went to tell him that we have no arms, no mobilization of troops, and that our men are training with wooden guns, for goodness' sake! They wanted him to release his stockpiled arms. But he turned around and said they were plotting to overthrow him. Apparently he has no arms at all and he plans to defeat Nigeria with his fists. (HYS, p. 246)

This passage really justifies the reason why Biafra couldn't hold its position in the territories the army capture, and why it began to lose its territory as cities fall one after one until the nation eventually collapsed.

As can be seen, situational irony bears similarities with 'paradox', another rhetorical device

through which Adichie identifies differences between two things, people and ideas. According to Kofi Agyekum (2013:191), 'paradox' is *“a term in rhetoric for situation or statement that seems self-contradictory and even absurd, but may contain an insight into life.”*

Adichie sometimes uses paradox to address a number of characteristics of some characters by contrasting them from one point to another. This is the case of Odenigbo and Olanna. Indeed, the personality of Odenigbo is paradoxical for the authoress depicts him as an intellectual, a 'fervent' revolutionary entirely dedicated to the unity and the pacification of the nascent Biafran Republic. The reality is that Odenigbo with his radical and exaggerated stands on racial and tribal issues, is rather a hopeless tribalist. Indeed, as the story unfolds, one realizes that during the Biafran secession process, the intellectuals like Odenigbo fuelled the masses with ideas of tribalism through propaganda, on behalf of ethnic loyalty, dignity and protection, without admitting that they were tribalists. In effect, through love that links him to Olanna, though both are Igbo and favorable to secession, actually, they are rather different in their vision of society.

Similarly, Adichie portrays Richard and Susan in a contrastive way though both are British expatriates. Being the embodiment of British superior culture, Susan is rather racist and accordingly looks down all the Nigerians, and sees nothing edifying about the Igbo. As a matter of fact, she disheartens and warns Richard about befriending Igbo girls to avoid infesting himself with a disease. But, Richard is rather a nice man, opened and who finally falls in love with Kainene, an African and Igbo woman who finds a reason to stay in Biafra.

Finally, Adichie resort to 'paradox' when she depicts Biafran soldiers victimizing other Biafrans they were meant to defend and protect from the Nigerians. But, as the war goes on, these soldiers who were meant to fight for Biafra in order to restore freedom and peace, have paradoxically turned against their initial target and mission. They have successfully acquired such an unjustified hatred toward their female fellow compatriots that led them to rape them. Consequently, many Biafran young girls and women are raped both by white mercenaries and by freedom fighters as well. Hence, the protectors of the Biafrans have contrastively become their dreadful victimizers.

In her 'esthetisation' of the Biafran war, Adichie also resorts to a series of metaphorical stances. In this regard, in recreating this event in her story, the writer here intended to allow her readers to understand, from inside, why and how that dramatic event happened and the profound negative effects it had on innocent people. The first metaphor she uses is the 1966 massacres in Kano. As carnages that historians document to be perpetrated by the Hausa who

reportedly slaughtered the Igbo, immersing then the country into a boiling ethnic conflict, leading eventually to secession. Adichie echoes this xenophobic assaults with regard to Nnaemeka's slaughter:

The side entrance burst open and three men ran in holding up long rifles. (...) where are the Igbo people? Who is Igbo here? Where are the infidels? 'You are Igbo' the second soldier said to Nnaemeka. No, I come from Katsina! Katsina!' The soldier walked over to him. 'Say Allahu Akbar!' The lounge was silent. (...) 'Say Allahu Akbar!' the soldier repeated. Nnaemeka knelt down. (...) He would not say Allahu Akbar because his accent would give him away. (...) the rifle went off and Nnaemeka's chest blew open, a splattering red mass. (HYS, pp.152-153)

Here, the repetitive questioning "*where are the Igbo people? Who is Igbo here? Where are the infidels? 'You are Igbo'*" clearly indicates how often the reported killings are systematically perpetrated either by the army or the militia on the basis of mother tongues and accent to detect citizens from different tribes.

Another metaphor is rape. The novel is pervaded with images of women victims of rape perpetrated by soldiers and even by church men. The authoress presents rape as man's abuse of power, or as a way of exchanging favors, or of showing their manhood. This is the case of Ugwu, who takes part in the rape of a young bartender, as the narrator dramatizes this humiliating sequence:

Ugwu's head ached. Everything was moving so fast. He was not living his life; life was living him. [...] he got up to urinate [...] When he finally went back inside, he stopped up at the door. The bar girl was lying on her back on the floor, her wrapper bunched up at her waist, her shoulders held down by a soldier, her legs wide, wide ajar. She was sobbing, 'Please, please, biko'. Her blouse was still on. Between her legs, High-Tech was moving. His thrusts were jerky, his small buttocks darker-coloured than his legs. The soldiers were cheering. 'High-Tech enough! Discharging and retire!' High-Tech groaned before he collapsed on top of her. A soldier pulling him off and was fumbling at his own trousers when somebody said, 'No! Target Destroy is next!' (...). 'Target Destroy, aren't you a man? On the floor, the girl was still Ugwu pulled his trousers down, surprised at the swiftness of his erection. She was dry and tense when he entered her. He did not look at her face, or at the man pinning her down, or at anything at all as he moved quickly and felt his own climax, the rush of fluids to the tips of himself: a self-loathing release. He zipped up his trousers while some soldiers clapped. Finally he looked at the girl. She stared back at him with a calm hate. On the floor, the girl was still. Ugwu pulled his trousers down, surprised at the swiftness of his erection. She was dry and tense when he entered her. He did not look at her face, or at the man pinning her down, or at anything at all as he moved

quickly and felt his own climax, the rush of fluids to the tips of himself: a self-loathing release. He zipped up his trousers while some soldiers clapped. Finally he looked at the girl. She stared back at him with a calm hate. (HYS, pp. 364-365)

Though, in the beginning Ugwu was not at all willing to do it, but he finally did it, as he did not want to be called a coward by the rest of his crew. Taking part in the gang raping was what would justify his manhood. With narrations such as "*He did not look at her face, or at the man pinning her down, or at anything at all as he moved quickly and felt his own climax*" or "*He zipped up his trousers while some soldiers clapped*", the authoress gives rape a very ugly and horrible image which in turn reveals to the reader the tragic abuse to the woman dignity.

Furthermore, Adichie resorts to the metaphor of 'Baby soldier' in order to show the gloomy side of the effects of the civil war. In effect, as these disastrous hostilities went on, the Biafran army which soon became short of soldiers, looked and enrolled many young boys by force into the army. As a result of their blind obedience to their crew who forced them to do very horrible things, these 'war-boys' fighters changed and turned into pitiless and cold-blooded monsters. This is the case of Ugwu who, after being forcefully recruited into the Biafran army, participates in the gang rape of a bar girl evoked just ahead.

This reminds of what J. M. Sountoua (2010:4), calls "*paradoxe de la banalité et stupéfaction*". Dramatizing the anonymity of the recurrent Nigerian civil War through the piteous fate of 'War kids' in Ken Saro Wiwa's *Sozaboy: A Novel in Rotten English* Sountoua further posits:

Le roman de guerre se définit également par la description des situations résultant d'un destin inéluctable dans lesquelles les personnages réagissent aux événements quand ils ne les subissent pas. [...] La violence, l'horreur, les traumatismes et la peur de mourir induisent, chez l'homme, la nécessité de mettre en œuvre des mécanismes tendant à se protéger contre les affres de la guerre, à la dépasser. (pp.7, 12)

The depiction that Adichie makes of Ugwu's 'embrigandement' is not a far enviable for himself and his fellows. For not only does his gang's crusade against the army's air raids and bombing interrupt Odenigbo's wedding with Olanna (p. 202), but at the end, Ugwu is seriously wounded after being struck by a shrapnel. (HYS, p. 367)

Finally, Olanna and Kainene's attitude toward both their parents and their lovers is remarkably considered as another metaphor. Indeed, being a very beautiful and attractive woman, Olanna's father thinks that she can use his daughter to obtain favors from government officials for instance. Her parents persuade

her that Odenigbo is a wrong choice for her. As for Kainene, she is a strong woman too, and she does not easily fall under the influence of neither her parents nor that of her lover Richard. She even took great risk to trade within the enemy line during the war. In effect, Kainene is responsible of a refugee camp, because she could not stand seeing people suffering. Of her, Adichie reports that she ‘courageously’ travels to a Nigerian occupied market in hopes of obtaining food for the refugee camp she runs and never returns. This leads the reader to conclude that she had been gunshot. (HYS, p. 405) Furthermore, both Olanna and Kainene even refused their mother’s offer to flee to London during the war. In so doing, these two female characters unveil Adichie’s feminist stances since she shows the refusal of the Nigerian woman to be under the insufferable influence of men and her commitment to make her own path, proving that they are, as men, capable of taking good decisions and being key elements of the development of the society.

It is also important to note that at deepest level of narratology, ‘kwashiorkor’ and ‘religion’ have been resorted to as metaphorical devices which purposely unveil the devastating effects of the Biafran War. Talking about Kwashiorkor, it is obvious that when the world began to hear from the dramatic situation in Biafra, the first images people had seen were those pictures of skinny children with bloated bellies. These are patent symptoms of Kwashiorkor which made a lot of victims among children suffering from malnutrition. Adichie then uses this symbol to denounce the destructive aspect of the civil war, a way for her to reveal the civil war in Biafra to the world as the children killer. There is also the notion of death and massacres caused by air raids in which children died in mass as well.

As for the metaphorical use of religion, Adichie highlights the role it played during the war. Even if religion is somehow badly portrayed by the writer as well, through Father Marcel’s sexual abuse on young girls in Kainene’s refugee camp, it is obvious that it has really contributed to maintain people hope for survival, to the extent that God is the almighty and endowed with the capacity to create or destroy anything. The Igbo (Biafrans) who are Christians in majority, use religion as one of the ideological weapons while fighting against evil forces of Gowon and Nigeria in their prayers:

When their singing stopped, Pastor Ambrose's morning prayers sounded even louder. “God bless His Excellency! God give Tanzania and Gabon strength! God destroy Nigeria and Britain and Egypt and Algeria and Russia! In the mighty name of Jesus! [...] Jehovah destroy Gowon and Adekunle! Pastor Ambrose screamed. (HYS, pp. 448, 449)

In addition, the exploration of the novel reveals that Adichie also resort to the ‘metaphor of

insult’ in order to provide her readers with an entirely different meaning of the relationship between these two major ethnic groups, which is rather deeper and more significant. Indeed, through different insults on the Northerners (the Hausa) on the one hand: “*The Igbo must go. The infidels must go. The Igbo must go*” (HYS, p. 212), and the Hausa slogan against the Igbo on the other hand: “*Those Muslim Hausa people, those black-as-he-goats Northerners, those dirty cattle-rearers with jigger-infested feet.*” (HYS, p. 199). The authoress highlights the relationship between the Hausa and the Igbo has always been boiling and made of clashes even long before independence. The different issues that have brewed animosity, hatred and perpetual clashes between them have turned their conflictual relationships into North-South confrontations. The writer here emphasizes the Kano massacres in 1966 as the consequence of mistrust and search for a kind of hegemony that was born from all this. As a result of this, the South-Eastern part of the federation experienced a bloody war ever in their history.

Adichie also uses Richard, a British expatriate as a metaphor of the Britain’s failure in Biafra. Actually, long before independence, the British colonial administration failed in the Igbo area. As a result, they imposed the system of warrant chief to bring the people under control, but the native people showed resistance to this policy. The British colonizer in return, did not forgive the Eastern region for that resistance. During the civil war in, the opportunity to hammer the Igbo came when the Britain along with the United States of America, the Soviet Union and Egypt threw weight behind Nigeria. In this regard, Britain along with its allies wanted to erase and keep the world oblivious of the Biafrans tragic situation during the civil war. Adichie echoes this historical aspect through Richard, an American reporter:

Richard knew his type. He was like President Nixon's fact finders from Washington or Prime Minister Wilson's commission members from London who arrived with their firm protein tablets and their firmer conclusions: that Nigeria was not bombing civilians that the starvation was over flogged, that all was as well as it should be in the war. (HYS, p. 493)

As a matter of fact, Richard was accepted before, during and after the war as part of the Igbo community. For, he has a black fiancée, speaks Igbo fluently, works on Igbo historical legacies, works with the Igbo scholars, fights with his pen and paper and cares for Biafran refugees. Here, the writer intends to show that the complete swallow of Richard by Biafra is the picture of the British failure to erase Biafra, as Richard, a British expatriate deeply shows his commitment to the survival of Biafra.

From the forgoing, one easily infer that Adichie subtly uses all the selected rhetoric materials to produce a chef-d’oeuvre which is a social chronicle of

the horrors of war and what it does to people. As can be seen, these narrative techniques reveal the writer's intention to embark her readers inside the war to be witnesses of people's dramatic experience. For, through descriptions, symbolic and metaphorical stances for instance, one clearly infers the characters' points of view of the civil war, their hopes, fears and trauma as well.

CONCLUSION

In a world of expanding voices, accuracy, fairness and impartiality are the foremost principles and the foundation upon which everything else is built: context, interpretation, comment, criticism, analysis and debate. As hierophants or historians of their times, writers must be independent voices, distillation objective information grounded on facts, rather than on behalf of special interests whether political, corporate or cultural... . A peruse *Half of A Yellow Sun* reveals that this novel can be read as the contextualization of the civil war in Biafra to the extent that it reveals Adichie's political and ideological perspectives and commitment to denounce the consequences of the civil war of Biafra which is an historical event still alive in the memory of the victims. Through intertextuality, Adichie has presented the real facts of the civil war in Biafra which she has successfully mingled with ingredients of her literary world, not only to denounce and bring out of oblivion consequences and trauma that changed the life of people, but also to pay a special tribute to the victims as the novel here is like an inside testimony of the victims of the war themselves. The intertextuality in this analysis then recreates, through some references, the original circumstances and periods of the war and depicts their chronology, with the main warring factions, and its power of destruction. The novel really immerses the reader in a fiction world that seems to have some facts of the real Biafran war as its referent, making the novel at once like a mirror of the Biafran war. As a final assessment, this study posits that *Half of A Yellow Sun* is the chronicle of the civil war in Biafra, if not a symbolic representation of the plot in fragmented order which moves from early sixties to later sixties, symbolizes the fragmented and disordered situation.

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