

**VIOLENCE, PAINS AND DEPRESSIONS IN NIGERIAN CIVIL WAR: A STUDY OF
CHUKWUEMEKA IKE'S *SUNSET AT DAWN* AND ADEWALE ADEMOYEGA'S *WHY WE
STRUCK***

Prof. Mbanefo Stephen Ogene

Department of English Language and Literature

Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

Email: sm.ogene@unizik.edu.ng

&

Obi Gladys Nwakaego

Department of English

Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University

Igbariam Campus, Anambra State

Email: nwakaegoobi@yahoo.com

Abstract

Wars bring heavy casualties to man. This makes wars destructive events. The First and Second World Wars, and the Nigeria-Biafra Civil War all made man suffer casualties. This is because people suffered pains, violence and depression over the killings and injuries they experienced in those wars. This study focuses on how these casualties appeared in Nigerian literature and analyses the factual account on war from different perspectives and presentations of these two writers: Chukwuemeka Ike's *Sunset at Dawn* and Adewale Ademoyega's *Why We Struck*. The study uses the post-colonial theoretical framework to analyse war issues. It also uses trauma theory to explore the impact of trauma in literature and society. This study shows how these writers have used their characters to highlight the psychological, political, economic and social unrest and sufferings of people during the civil war. The study concludes that in as much as it deals with fact and fiction, no one of these writers has any positive thing to say about war. All their claims point to the negativity of war to man and humanity. The totality of casualties faced by man during war.

Keywords: War, Casualties, Civil, Pain, Experience, Fiction, Fact

Introduction

Violence is an act involving physical force that is intended to hurt, damage or kill somebody or something. Pain is a mental or emotional suffering after being hurt. It occurs when something hurts, causing an uncomfortable or unpleasant feeling. Depression is a serious illness that negatively affects how one feels, thinks and acts. These and more are heavy casualties people experienced during the Nigerian-Biafran War.

Casualty, in the simplest terms, denotes a person killed or injured during war or accident, a person or thing adversely affected by an event or situation. It also connotes a person that is harmed, lost or destroyed (during the event of a war). But in the context we use it in this research to undertake the effect of the Nigerian Civil War of 1967-1970, casualty extends from denoting just the people who were injured or killed during the Nigerian Civil War to accommodate other people who may not have fought or witnessed the war, or may not have lived within the geographical entity where the war happened but nonetheless, were and are still inadvertently being affected by the effect and lasting impact of the civil war.

This augurs well with J.P. Clark's position in his poem, "Causalities" written against the backdrop of the civil war. In the poem, Clark laments that the casualties of the Nigerian Civil War are not just those who died, arguing that they are already well out of the mayhem rather the casualties, include and extend to those who survived the war but are forced to live with the trauma and depressing experiences of all they lost and witnessed even as they are compelled, in the face of their anguish, pain and lost, to join again the task of building a unified Nigeria. They also include the generation that will still be born, who will be told the stories of the dehumanizing acts, the pogrom, genocide, marginalization, intimidation and exploitation of the war with little choices available to them other than to fashion ways to live and cope with the heart wrenching experiences of the pre-war, war and post-war Nigerian society just as we

are witnessing today, over fifty years after the war. In tandem with this, Ajakah (2020:1) notes from J.P. Clark's "Casualties" that: "Five decades after the civil war, Nigeria is still stuck in a rut. In fact, even those who were born years after the war have innocuously been enlisted as "casualties" whose fate hangs in the balance as a consequence of the imbroglio with the very soul of the country irredeemably set on the edge of a precipice. The poet believes the real "casualties" are the survivors, ranging from the harbingers of the war, the political elite to innocuous victims who are inexorably caught in the ensuing inferno: 'The casualties are not only those who started a fire and now cannot put it out. Thousands/ Are burning that had no say in the matter' (1) It is in this regard that the research selects fictional and non-fictional war literature to investigate war casualties from the varying perspectives.

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 the cruelest and painful events man can experience. Following the records of wars fought around the world, war proves itself a destructive exercise against life. Even at the end of every war, both the conquered and conqueror are left in regret. The natural and economic destructions caused by war, are the main casualties that come with war. Because even when the war is over, the two stand as insignia that reminds the survivors that war is regrettable. It is the bitter experience Ojukwu (1969: 178) had during the Nigeria Biafra war that made him say: "Any form of war is a regrettable incident, because nobody likes blood-letting. One would certainly wish there were no more wars in all parts of the world, because no war in history has ever solved the problem it sets out to solve." (178). Apata (2006:69) adds that: "wars respect no age or gender, colour or creed" (69). This tells how dreadful and deadly war can be since it affects every human not minding the age, gender or status as much as inflicting heavy casualties on them.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopts post-colonial and trauma theories as its theoretical anchor. It is worthy to note that the concept of war is often associated with post colonialism. This is because war has been considered to take a new dimension in African literary discourse as one of the fruits of colonialism. It is the key aspect that unveils the decay of post-colonial era. The concept of post-colonial theory is often associated with ideas, experiences, happenings and philosophies of what come after colonialism. It is therefore the interest of this school of thoughts to see how political, religious, economic, and educational institutions were able to carry out their duties after their independence. This tells that this theory focuses on the experiences of oppression, struggles for freedom and political domination in post-independent countries especially, Africa; where political and economic mismanagements are mostly found among their leaders even as portrayed by these writers. Hence, bad leadership after the colonial era brought about the war.

Another interesting theoretical anchor that guide this research is the trauma theory. Trauma theory is an offshoot of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory. The writers no doubt represented the traumas and experiences of the war on the casualties in different perspectives. According to Nebeife and Kanu on the word Trauma, the word trauma is used to "describe experiences that are emotionally painful and distressing and which therefore overwhelm people's ability to cope, leaving them powerless. Trauma has sometimes been defined in reference to experiences that are not normal for humans" (92). The characters of these writers were traumatized due to the casualties they encounter during the civil war. Therefore, this work examines the representations of different aspects of war casualties from a fictional and non-fictional account of the Nigerian Civil War. It also concludes that war is depressive and extremely evil and should be avoided by all means.

Casualties of war in Chukwuemeka Ike's *Sunset at Dawn*.

Chukwuemeka Ike's *Sunset at Dawn* is an imaginative literature on the Nigeria-Biafra war. Through his work, he showcases his experiences on the war event. From his observation, the Nigeria-Biafra war incurred a lot of casualties on both two nations. Through this book, Ike narrates several ways people meet violence, pains and depressions during war. From his narrative, he was able to give a bitter-truth that the war which was hoped to settle the Nigeria problem, failed on what it was expected for, rather than exposed lives to more dangers which inflicted heavy casualties on humanity. The narrator through his artistic intelligence tells his readers that everyone in war experienced casualties when he said: "every human being in Biafra no matter what his station in life, had a part to play in the war" (19).

Through this quotation, the narrator tries to prove to his readers that the casualties meted against Biafrans in war respect no age or rank. A similar statement is made by an old man who met Dr Amilo Kanu after being conscripted into the army. The palm wine tapper said to the Doctor: “for no person who breathes will say that he has no part in this war” (263). The palm wine tapper simply maintained the point that, casualties which come with war, spared no one. The palm wine tapper had already had his pain in war by losing his first son. This bitter experience is what he narrated to Dr Amilo Kanu, thus: “My first son, the boy who should have succeeded me when I die, joined the army voluntarily and with full backing. He was a brilliant boy, always first in his class. He was in his last year at school when the war began. He was killed in Port Harcourt” (263). Losing such a brilliant boy, a first son for that matter, simply made the palm wine tapper a casualty of war.

The chief character of the novel, Dr Amilo Kanu was not far from such pain when he lost his first son, Amilo junior. The narrator tells that:

Dr Kanu’s wife, Fatima, and their elder son, five-year-old Amilo junior were standing outside their Progress Hotel Chalet, waiting for Emeka, the three-year old son, who had gone to the toilet. Something suddenly landed with a crush on the ring road in front of their chalet. Almost simultaneously, Fatima heard a whistling sound followed a split second later by a cry of agony from Ami junior, standing beside her. He was a blood heap before she could wake up from the nightmare. (29)

This casualty brought heartbrokenness to Fatima, Dr Kanu’s wife, who blamed her husband for the cause of her son’s death. Her casualty for her son’s death is what the narrator expressed:

Here he comes, she cried. Gallant Biafran! Hero of Biafra! See whether you can recognize your first born son wrapped up there! If you could have spared just a little time for your son if not for me, if you could have listened to the words of your nagging wife, we should have been out of these mess a long time ago and Ami junior would not have been lying there dead. (29)

The above cries of regret simply tell that Fatima over the death of her son, is psychologically injured. And with that, she therefore becomes casualty over her son’s death: The death of this little boy also inflicted casualty to his father, Dr Amilo. The psychological injury he had over this is what the narrator states thus:

Oh no! he shrieked as the outline of a smashed skull showed through the blood-soaked sheet. He shut his eyes tight but that could not hold back tears. Yes, his worst fears had come true. Those awful sounds... came from the enemy, and the first to land selected his innocent little son and instantly smashed him to death. (30)

The point from the above quotation is that the family of Kanu was the first to become casualty of war over their son’s death. To prove this, the agony which Mazi Kanu, the father of Dr Kanu has over the incident is what Ike puts thus: “No. It is my little Amilo. Doctor’s first son. Five years and three months old. It is him that the Hausas killed yesterday. Just tell what evil I have ever done to any Hausa man or woman, that they should pursue me to my house and kill a child who does not know his right hand from his left hand...”(64).

The death of Amilo junior is a symbolic description on how most innocent children were killed by mortars and Jet planes. These children become casualties of war with their parents who get psychological injuries on their deaths.

The fall of Enugu, the Biafra Capital Territory is another violence and pain of casualty the Biafra government faced during the war. It is important to note that great casualties occurred before Enugu fell to the enemy as Biafrans would call the Nigerian troops in the novel. There was indeed a massive killing caused by indiscriminate bombings and demolitions of buildings. What makes Biafrans casualties on this great event is that:

Radio Biafra was to transfer to Aba without delay, to ensure the continuation of its broadcast whether or not Enugu fell as “Radio Biafra Enugu“. Similarly, all

establishments transferring from Enugu to new locations were retained to their Enugu address for correspondence. The Post Office would be advised of their new locations, to ensure that their correspondence gets to them. (87)

Considering how important media was in the war, especially to the Biafrans, tells that the fall of Enugu meant a great casualty to Biafrans.

Bassey is a casualty of war. Bassey lost all his property as a result of non-stop and ceaseless fire-arms and demolishes of buildings in Enugu. Another fall which brought Bassey another casualty is the fall of Onitsha. The pains that struck him in these falls made him recount his lost fortunes. He tells his friends: "...having lost all I had in Onitsha, including everything I evacuated there from Enugu, not to mention my real estate in Enugu. And you must have seen how empty my supermarket is because of the blockade..."(141). Main market, the biggest and largest market in West Africa was destroyed when the big market was bombed by the Nigerian troops. The casualty this bombing caused to humanity made Bassey concludes that: "War is evil" (147).

Biafran soldiers did not fail to incur casualties from the Nigerian soldiers. The casualties these soldiers met was what the narrator puts in these words: "The Biafran shore batteries took care of them. In their thousands" (152). The dead bodies of these soldiers littered all round Onitsha environs and filled the legendary river, called River Niger. Another casualty that emanates from this event is what the narrator further tells "... the thousands of bodies of Nigerian soldiers scattered along the bank of the Niger..." (153).

Helima, a Hausa lady, is another pathos character whose horror of war inflicted horrible casualties in both her and her children. Having lost her husband, Uche who was among the Easterners otherwise called the *nyamilis* that were casualties of Northern massacre. Despite her tribe as a Hausa, she traced her husband's village. Her coming to Obodo to see Fatima was a great risk which would expose her to casualty at that time of war if not that Obodo people considered her plight.

Narrating how her husband, Mr Uche becomes casualty to 1966 Igbo Massacre she tells story with tears: My husband crawled back quickly into our room squeezed himself into the outer wall and jumped out. He ran very fast-he is a fast runner-and before the soldiers could go after him he had gained a good lead. In fact, according to my brother he could have escaped alive if his pursuers had not begun firing shots in his direction and shouting catch am, nyamili! Without knowing it, my husband ran into another group of murderers who were searching for their own marked men. A shot got him on the stomach and he fell. To punish him for resisting capture, the soldiers who had failed to catch him plucked out his two eyes, ripped open his stomach and then left him in the open air to die painfully....(128)

Mr Uche's death caused a sever casualty to his Northern wife, Helima. Again, Helima's surviving son became casualty of war through a war disease called Kwashiorkor that inflicted heavy casualties on children in war. The narrator tells of the child's condition as a result of war:

For several seconds Fatima could not utter a word. Her eyes took in Halima's surviving son who had gone off to sleep in his mother's lap... The symptoms of kwashiorkor... were clearly evident on him- the distended stomach, the swollen ankles and feet and those features hitherto found only on the white man: a pale complexion and the white man's wavy, reddish or golden hair. He was naked, and you could count his ribs as he took each breath. (131)

To painstakingly give a lucid picture that this condition caused Halima an unbearable casualty, the narrator simply tells his readers: "Helima herself was no more robust looking, except that she still retained the complexion and hair of the African. Her blouse was dirty and full of holes through which could be seen two dangling breasts, as flat as pancakes" (131).

From the above quotation how the effect of war has caused casualty on Helima. Her sufferings become symbolic through which the novelist depict how most women suffered casualties in war. Similar to this, Helima died with her son which made both real casualties of war. Their death is what the narrator

expresses by saying that: "Fatima had been too dazed to shed tears when Chief Ukadike broke the news of the death of Helima and her son". (205)

Other pathetic experience that made other characters' casualties of this is event that comes through the narrator's narrative. The most painful part of this casualty is about a man who lost both his life and his entire family. The narrator says that:

He was clearly outside the circle of death when he recognized the war plane and rushed back to his compound to ensure the safety of his family. The devastating bomb took care of them all, father, mother, and five children, smearing what was left of the battered gate with their blood and fragments of their flesh... The bomb turned all four of them into minced meat. (195)

The above narrative expresses how these individuals become casualties of war. Indeed, the casualties were unbearable to these Biafrans. And their attempt to push the invading enemy from causing more casualties on them went into guerrillas' attack. The novelist says how this attack inflicted casualties on the Nigerian soldiers: "Biafran guerrillas attack several locations simultaneously, blowing up a fuel dump, destroying a ferret, and inflicting casualties by throwing grenades into a hut which had been converted a mess". (323)

Guerrilla warfare was the greatest war strategy the Biafrans used and inflicted heavy casualties on the Nigerian soldiers. With such fight, 'hit and run' Obodo people were saved from their enemy. But this did not last, it was a short lived peace because when the Nigerian soldiers regained from the shock and came back, the result became a heavy casualty that claimed the life of Chief Ofo. Ike gives the account thus:

The Nigerians quickly recovered from the shock, regrouped outside Obodo and advanced on the town with ferrets and all. They met with no resistance whatsoever... Collins could not save Chief Ofo. An angry soldier had blown his brains out without receiving instructions (323).

The point to pick from the above extract is the casualties these soldiers caused to the town with their ferrets. The casualties which Biafrans had on the above mentioned Biafran intellectuals remains a stuck pain and injury throughout the war. Casualties never ceased in war neither do people in war avoid it. It is discovered in the novel that hunger caused great casualties to people.

This casualty is what the narrator described using life in refugee camp as he says of a man:

...a man stirred the contents of a small earthen pot boiling on the fire-some vegetation collected from the nearest bush, boiled without salt, without pepper, without palm oil. He needed something to supplement his ration of garri. His skin from the waist up looked as if it had received a first coating of whitewash. It was no longer thick enough to hide the outline of his ribs. (324)

The casualty which hunger inflicted on people during war is death. Steady occurrences of death in refugee camp as a casualty of war is what the narrator says of a dead man: "The dead man corpse was still warm; he could not have been dead for more than an hour or two" (324). The narrator made it clear in the novel that the refugees in the camps dropped to death every moment of an hour. It was a great casualty that even the surviving ones are close to their graves. The casualty which the Nigeria-Biafra war meted against humanity took so many lives to their early graves.

Those who escape from this fate faced another side of casualties that made them look like a living ghost. Ike tells Bassey's experience on women and children in such casualty:

It is an experience I'll never forget... the sight of these women and children. You couldn't say they were ghost. You couldn't call them witches... Their bones could be seen under their skin, more clearly than on an X-ray film. Most of the children had no energy left even to cry; they crouched on the floor at a corner of the transit camp, looking like diseased chimps. (249)

The above view vividly depicts those women and children who are half dead as casualties of war. Bassey who discovered this gory sight is still experiencing casualties. Having lost his wife, Nma and children. Bassey finally found himself in the hospital which portrays him a casualty of war.

Dr. Kanu is a casualty. It is his attempt to make this emphatic 'No' to casualties of war that led him into war front. It was in the war front that Dr. Kanu experienced terrible casualty heavier than those he had before. It was a mercenary fighting for Nigeria that inflicted the casualty on him. Dr. Kanu was taken to Queen Elizabeth Hospital. For safety reasons, the hospital was taken to a new location in Orlu. While Dr. Kanu was recovering from his battle wounds, another casualty took place. The Nigeria plane has attacked the newly located hospital and targeted only the ward for V.I.P.s and shattered every existing human being to death. It was in this incident that Dr Amilo Kanu met his death. The casualty that came with his death is expressed in the elegy below: "Dibe! Dibe! Ndidi ka nma. Onye obialu nyadibe uwa, Biafra nwe nmeli!" (338).

Biafrans as the victims of war used the above song to exercise their endurance, patience and great perseverance in the face of ugly difficulties, conditions and situations that brought casualties upon them. To this end, the way individual Biafrans fought the war and with the pathetic experiences they encountered in their struggle for survival, made every Biafran casualties of war.

Casualties in Adewale Ademoyega's *Why We Struck*

This focuses on the extraction and analysis on the casualties in Nigerian-Biafra civil war as portrayed by Adewale Ademoyega in his *Why We Struck*. Adewale Ademoyega as critically observed did not fully participate in the civil war but experienced its full blow while in the prison. He becomes a real casualty of the war following the way he was moving from one prison to the other during and after the war.

As one of the January 15 1966 coup plotters and executors, he vividly narrates his involvement with the coup, his punishments and sufferings for being part of the event. The novel portrays every casualty that came during the Nigeria political crises, the coup, the counter coup and the war. The killings of the civilians and military during these ugly events caused severe casualties to both sides of the parties.

As one reads this historical novel with a critical mind, one discovers that war caused unbearable casualties to humanity than arm struggle. Therefore, it is good to note that the injuries and deaths caused by war events are what the text explained that expose almost the entire nation to casualties. The point to take into consideration is that Adewale presents every event and how they made individual character casualties. For example; "The TIV war against the oppressive Sarduana government warmed up and showed no sign of abating. It careered on, until the coup of January 15, 1966" (27).

The above point clearly demonstrates the war that existed among the Tivs against the oppressive government of Sarduana. With a critical mind, one imagines the casualties that went with this war because there is no war without bloodshed. The point is this, as the war careered on without sign of abating, lives were exposed to severer casualties. These endless casualties went on till the 15th, January 1966 coup where certain top northern leaders became casualties of the event. Before this coup, the October 1965 Western House of Assembly election brought casualties to the Western Nigerians when Akintola and his NNPP government were forced and announced into power against the people's choice. With this, people of western Region interfered, rejecting Akintola as:

They sang war songs and fought on the streets. They invented the "Wetie" (meaning "Soak him up"), a practice in which a political opponent and his house or property were sprayed with petrol and set ablaze. Somehow, in "Wetie", only the intended victim suffered. (29)

The 1965 Western election caused some unbearable casualties that most political opponents were set ablaze. Their houses and property met the same fate. It is seen from the author's narrative that why the havoc was on; "the hoodlums took advantage of the situation and started molesting innocent citizens, while they damaged and looted their property" (30).

The innocent citizens at the same time became casualties to the event following the way they were molested and their property damaged and looted. It will be right here to say that the 1965 Western election exposed both the politicians and the innocent citizens to some unbearable casualties. The killings and destruction of houses and property are all the casualties that went with the event. The

narrator further portrays how the finance minister became casualty of the coup with others involved in the killing, he says that:

Then I ordered the corpses brought down and taken into the bush. The arrested finance minister was in the truck and it was no longer expedient to carry him around with us. As such, he was taken into the bush and shot. Since there were no digging implements, a few soldiers were detailed to remain there on guard till digging implements were brought to bury the bodies. (108)

It is important to note that these corpses who were buried with the finance minister were military officers who became the victim. These officers were arrested by the revolutionaries, and when the revolutionaries saw that their arrest might turn up against them, the narrator declares: “those officers were taken away and shot. It was also at this point Lieutenant Colonel Largema who had only arrived in Lagos late on the 14th, bringing down Sarduna’s last message on “the walloping of the West,” was arrested and shot”. (106)

These military officers became casualties simply because they were killed by the revolutionaries during the coup attack. The narrator displayed an idea that revolution involves casualties To vividly narrate the extent of casualties of the coup, Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sarduna of Sokoto, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa among few Northern military and civilian leaders were killed. Their deaths seem to made their northern brothers casualties because they suffered the pains of their deaths as what make them term the coup, an Igbo coup. The Northern military officers appeared to suffer the casualties more than their civilian brothers, with that, a counter coup was carried out which caused severer casualties to the Easterners. The narrator puts their attack in these words:

They struck first by late evening perhaps in anticipation of a night attack by the Igbo officers. However, because they were already poised for this action, they did not delay to communicate with Lagos, Ikeja and Ibadan wherein the same Northern group went into action and slaughtered off several Eastern officers and men. By the next morning, Ironsi and his host, Lieutenant- Colonel Fajuyi the Military Governor of the West, were both arrested by major Danjuma and his accomplices. They removed the arrested leaders to a nearby bush, tortured them and shot them. (165)

The northern officers’ counter coup resulted to some heavy casualties among the Eastern officers. The worst of these casualties is the death of the then military leader Major-Colonel J.T. Aguiyi Ironsi and his host, Lieutenant-Colonel Fajuyi. It is a great casualty that these military leaders experienced their deaths while alive following the way they were tortured and shot. To give an estimate of these casualties caused by the counter coup, the military narrator says: “All told, about fifty officers and one hundred and thirty other ranks had been shot in the counter-coup. The remained were displaced and dispersed from their barracks” (171). Most of them sustained injuries before they were forced out of their barracks. Even after being scattered for their safeties, their northern enemy still hunt their lives. It is recorded that some of the coup executors who were detained in prisons after the coup became casualties while in prisons. These detainees according to Adewale Ademoyega, says: “Two of our officers: Majors Okafor and Anuforo who were detained in the West and both been killed in a most brutal way during the July 29 atrocities ... some northern troops who came to Benin from Lagos, for some special duties, broke into Benin prison and carted the detained soldiers away. All of them were badly beaten, and many were injured and some were maimed. (198).

Following the deaths of these detainees and other Eastern officers it is right to prove this point which according to the another says: “The rebels of July 29, 1966, then performed a million times worse assault on officer corps of Nigerian Army than we could be accused of” (199). This point remains as unhidden truth following the number of lives that were lost during the attack. Comparing the two tragic events, one would really be understanding the point Ademoyega made that the counter coup of July 29 was dreadful than the 15th January coup. All the same, the point is this, the two unforgettable events caused a lot of casualties. Following the author’s narrative, this counter attack exposed almost the trapped Eastern officers serving in the north to being casualty. A careful reader would understand that even before this Northern attack, there had been May riots, which had already made the Eastern region

Nigerians casualties. To elaborate this point, the narrator says of Chukwuemeka Ojukwu, the then Eastern governor, and his effort to heal the wounds of the injured Eastern origin Nigerians after the violence. According to him; “Ojukwu accepted the effects of the May riots with stoical mildness. He appealed to his people for calm. He washed their wounds and rubbed some balm on them. He encouraged them to go back to the North”. (173)

The atrocities that followed the May riots brought a lot of casualties. The damage and destructions of lives and property that came with these riots run in the speech Ojukwu, the then Eastern governor, made. The Ademoyega gives the report that:

Lives and property have been lost; many have been made homeless; others were bereft of their loved ones; confidence has been shaken; fear has replaced faith in one towards the other. These are sad reflections which must remain a source of guilt and shame for all who, by deliberate acts of insinuations, were responsible, directly or indirectly, for them... we cannot restore the lives which have been lost nor the blood which has been shed. But we should not ignore the fact that they have been valuable lives and blood. It must, therefore be our prayer that the innocent blood thus shed will be accepted as the supreme purchase price for the solid and everlasting unity of this country and that the events which led to the situation will, forever, be the worst that this country should experience. (174)

The sad reflections of the May riot as read by Ojukwu depict the extent of casualties that came with the crises. What made the events tragic is that many lives were lost and blood was shed. Other violence that caused casualty to the Igbos are spelt out:

Nonetheless, it was the report of a fresh outbreak of violence and atrocities against the Southerners in the North, especially against the Igbos... This time the violence was so intense and was such a cataclysm, that the term “pogrom” seemed to be an understatement. If any single event could be so termed, it was that September – October pogrom, staged throughout the Northern Region and directed in the main against the Ibos, that made the civil war inevitable. (183)

It is note-worthy that after the coup, the Easterners otherwise called the Igbos faced diverse dangers that caused them casualties to those Northern ethnic attacks. These attacks grew heavier till it graduated into pogrom where much number of the Igbos met violence that inflicted more casualties on them. The narrator added that the war which Biafrans wage against the federal government of Nigeria is a casualty the Biafrans exposed themselves to. He backs this point up following what he said about Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu that:

Their Governor, now Head of State, had always assured them that they would “fight to the last man” – which in some quarters was interpreted to mean that even in the face of defeat, Biafrans would rather die than surrender... adding that when his men were finished, the grass would fight... I realized that Ojukwu knew what he was talking about. He knew that he was ill – prepared for the fight and that if it came, he had nothing to send against the enemy except the bodies of his own citizens – no guns, no armour, no planes, no ships – only flesh and flesh and flesh – what a suicide plot... (196)

The above point reveals the writer’s idea that Biafrans who had no planes, no guns and armour and went into fight against the federal government of Nigeria who were supported by two great nations, Russia and Britain with bare hands inflicted casualties upon themselves. The idea the narrator tries to elaborate here is that Biafrans are the real casualties of the war. The reasons are seen on the fact that Biafrans mostly experienced death and injuries during the struggle. The first shock of this casualty to the narrator is the death of his friend, Kaduna Nzeogwu, who died three weeks after the outbreak of the war. He states that:

Three weeks later, I heard it over the NBC that Nzeogwu had been killed in the Nsukka Sector of the war. I was utterly chagrined... the federal side confirmed the report and claimed that he was thoroughly identified and that he was given “a hero’s burial with full military honours”... Gowon also paid a tribute to him, saying, He was a gallant

soldier, with principles. Many other Nigerians paid glowing tributes to his memory and everybody believed that he died a Nigerian, though fighting on the Biafran side. (201)

Following the way by which Nzeogwu's corpse was identified, the state burial given to him by the Nigerian government and Gowon, the then Head of State's tribute to his memory with many other Nigerians who paid him tributes, vividly described that the death of Nzeogwu caused Nigeria government a great loss. With this, Nigeria became sympathetically pained over Nzeogwu's death.

Research shows that it was in the Mid-West the author first experienced the Nigeria-Biafra war as a soldier. The exchanged firing of arms during the Nigeria attack inflicted him and his liberation Army a few assaults and casualties. Following the effects of the attack, he says: "We had sustained quite a few casualties, which were evacuated to the Military Hospital in Benin". (210)

The Mid-West war caused some great casualties to both the liberation Army and the Nigerian Force, who were accompanied by the white mercenaries. The weapons these warring forces used against each other caused severer injuries and deaths upon themselves as: "One claimed to have wounded himself while trying to escape from the area of military firing and was hospitalized throughout the period of the mid-west war" (227). Both the hospitalized, and the dead become casualties of the mid-west operation. The reason lies on the fact that both the injured and the dead received the blows of the war.

In highlighting the author's trauma and depressions while in prison, the author's third detention after the war exposed him to another trauma and casualty by the beatings, he received from the prison keepers or warders. This experience caused him depressions. At a time in the novel, the author recounted all casualties that he had met and this he puts as disheartening and dehumanizing.

The loss of individual persons and properties critically highlights the extent of damage the war caused to human life. With this, we can rightly conclude that the greater number of lives lost during the war, environmental destructions and economic setback made both Nigeria and Biafra, casualties of war.

Conclusion

It is clearly observed that most Nigerian authors on the historical events of the Nigeria-Biafra war present their experiences and observations as they witnessed the events. Therefore, every factual and imaginative work on the effects of the Nigeria-Biafra war highlights the violence, deaths, sufferings, injuries, pains and trauma of individual persons during the struggle of political, economic and ethnic dominations through which humanity and environment were destroyed. As reliable information or knowledge, the above points try to show that these authors' narrative and portrayal of these tragic events help the general readers understand the real effects of war and how extent individuals become casualties of the war.

Works Cited

- Ademoyega, Adewale. *Why we struck. Evans Brothers, 1981.*
- Adimora-Ezigbo, Akachi. *Fact and Fiction in the Literature of the Nigerian Civil War. University Press, 2019.*
- Asika, Ikechukwu and Akabuike, Ifeoma. "Rekindling the Travails of the Past: The Dreams of the Poet in the Quest for National Integration and Global Reconciliation" *Ansu Journal of Language and Literary Studies vol. 1 No. 4*
- Apata, Gabriel. *Kindness Without Borders. Lantern Books, 2006.*
- Ike, Chukwuemeka, *Sunset at Dawn. University Press, 2014.*
- Madu and Dozie. "Literature and Global Reconciliation in the 21st Century: Exploration of war, Bloodshed and Ethnic Reconciliation in Akachi Adimora Ezeigbo's *Roses and Bullets*". *Ansu Journal of Arts and Humanities, vol. 2 2015.*
- Madiebo, Alexander. *The Nigerian Revolution and the Biafran war. Fourth Dimension, 1980.*
- Nwankwo, Chimalum. *Muted Index of War in African Literature and Society". War in African Literature Today, 2008.*

- Nwankwo, Arthur. *Nigeria: The Challenge of Biafra*. Rex Collings, 1981.
- Nwahunanya, Chinyere. *A harvest of Tragedy: Critical Perspective on Nigerian Civil War Literature*. Springfield, 2011.
- Obasanjo, Olusegun. *My command*. Kachifo, 1980.
- Odumegwu-Ojukwu, Chukwuemeka. *Because I am involved*. Spectrum Books, 1989.
- ... *Biafra Selected Speeches with Journals of Events*. Harper and Row Publishers, 1969.
- ... *Biafra Random Thought of C. Odumegwu Ojukwu General of the People's Army*. Harper and Row Publishers, 1969.
- Offodile, Chudi. *The Politics of Biafra and Future of Nigeria*. Safari Books, 2016.
- Obiezuofu-Ezeigbo, Chiemenem. *The Biafran war and the Igbo in Contemporary Nigerian Politics*. Pan Negro Continental, 2007.
- Ofori, Naomi. "Challenges of Post-Independence Africa: A Study of Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a yellow sun*." Ph.D Thesis, Department of English, Kwame Nkuruma University, 2015, web.
- Ogunde, Sophie. "politics and Human Right in Non-Fiction Prison Literature". In *war in African literature Today*, 2008.