

Angst of War in Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Roses and Bullets* and Chukwuemeka Ike's *Sunset at Dawn*

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Abstract

Every literary work attempts to mirror the experiences and conditions contemporary with its place and time. This article looks at the time during which the novelists Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo and Chukwuemeka Ike penned down their novels *Roses and Bullets* and *Sunset at Dawn* with a view to opening their vistas on the events of a war and helping us to learn valuable lessons. Before and immediately after the years 1966 -1970, the period of the Nigeria-Biafra war, the angst eating up the Nigerian populace went very deep. Many literary works have consequently expressed their feelings, experiences, observations, sense of sympathy and patriotism. As an instrument of social change, novelists bring to the mind of the people the social vices in their societies and advocate the reformation and rehabilitation of their societies towards a beautiful and glorious future. Adimora-Ezeigbo and Ike portray the images or symbols of dismal situations and pains which are characteristic of war situations, appropriately depicting the conditions prevalent in the era of the Nigeria-Biafra war. They exposed the atrocities of the miscreants, how one evil thought leads to another if not well settled and the negative effects of class discrimination, racism and consequences of violence. This work uses Trauma theory which attempts to understand the different ways by which traumatic occurrences are demonstrated, processed, exposed and repressed throughout a variety of literary and historical texts. The data for analysis were obtained from the two texts above, literature reviews and journals.

Keywords: Frustration, war, anger, hostility, tribalism, dehumanisation

Introduction

The works of most contemporary African writers explore the confusion, catastrophes and wranglings that arose from power mongering, ethnic sentiments and parochial inclinations of the people after independence. These situations arise due to the fact that people's expectations are not realized as the rulers fall short of the promises post-independence hold out. Modern African writers have tried immensely to portray their experiences, interactions, worldviews and the consequences of the interpersonal relationships. Hence, M.A. Ezugu in *Fundamentals of English Language and Literature* says: "Literature is a replica of the world we live in. It reflects a world of fantasy, horror, feelings, various different points of views, ideas, thought, mind. put into words" (132). He further says that "literature is experience of permanent interests inherited in memorable form" (182). Thus, literature portrays the lives, traditions, language, myth and psychology that govern the people's values and norms or attitudes at any given era. As Chinyere Nwahunanya says in *A Harvest From Tragedy Critical Perspectives on Nigerian Civil War Literature*, in every age, literature has always mirrored society; and writers have invariably shown concern for the convolutions that beset their societies, in a world where selfish national interests, racism, the struggle for power, and a myriad of other factors keep human relationships in a state of perpetual tension, this tension has often found outlet in political turbulence of national or international dimensions. The American Civil War, the World Wars, the Spanish Civil War, the Vietnam War, as well as the Nigerian Civil War are just few examples of the imbroglios that have resulted from the conflicts between man and institutions in a strife-torn world (55).

In each of the above cases, writers in the countries involved in war have used the conflicts as source of materials for creative literature. The experience is not of course confined to fiction. The First World War, for instance, produced poets among whom Rupert Brooke and Stephen Spender immediately come to mind. Wilfred Owen emerged as a major voice during Second World War before he lost his life. The Spanish civil war saw the emergence of such poets as John Conford, Julian Bell, Ralph Fox, and the famous Garcia Lorca, all of whom were killed during that war. For the novel, we have Ernest Hemmingway's strident voice in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, and the five hundred and twelve novels produced by the American Civil War, and poetry of varying artistic merit—confirming Kole Omotoso's view at the time that the Nigerian Civil War is the most important theme in post-war Nigerian writing. Part of the explanation for the dominance of war as a subject in Nigerian literature for

many years after the end of the war may be found in Lucien Goldmarm's observation that "periods of crisis ... are particularly favourable to the birth of great works of art and of literature because of the multiplicity of problems and experiences that they bring to men and of the great widening of affective and intellectual horizons that they provoke" (50). But, in addition, writers dwell on wars now first because of what Ogunyemi calls "the sheer urge to record, as truthfully as possible, an excruciating indelible, visceral experience which the author has been physically and/or emotionally involved in" (126).

The events of the Civil War period in Nigeria were traumatic experiences that threatened the very existence of people as individuals, and of a people as a corporate entity. Therefore, the urge to take a retrospective glance at those events has just been too strong to be resisted by our writers. For just as Nigerian writers responded to immediate post-independence political crises, so also did they see a need for responding to the civil war which was the culmination of those crises. It is, therefore, no surprise that the war became so dominant as a theme in post-war Nigerian writing and remained so for a long time.

The war memoirs in particular are interesting for their sometimes triumphant, exculpatory or condemnatory tone. This is true in particular of their authors' accounts of their roles in the war, and their portraits of the Biafran leader, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu. While protecting themselves as people drawn unwillingly into a war they advised against, and as people who either suffered unjustly (for ethnic or other reasons), while giving their best selflessly to the nation, they project Ojukwu as a stubborn leader who led his people to avoidable disaster because of pride, selfishness and a recalcitrant intransigence.

As Remy Oriaku in "Political Memoirs of the Nigerian Civil War" says, the most obvious common interpretative presentation of his experiences which creates for each text its own relative truth. The author's declared intention which is invariably prompted by modesty is usually different from that discerned by the reader at the end of the story. This paper, therefore, explores the angst of war in Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Roses and Bullets* and Chukwuemeka Ike's *Sunset at Dawn*.

Reflections of Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo and The Nigeria-Biafra War in *Roses and Bullets*

Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's novel *Roses and Bullets* has five interconnected episodes each named after the stages of the events. The novel explored among other things the themes of suffering, pain, disappointment, religious crisis, ethnic crisis, exploitation, poverty, oppression, massacre, dejection and their attendant consequences of the people of Biafra/Nigeria under the military regime.

The novel is set in Nigeria of the 1966-1970 during the Nigeria-Biafra War and the military dictators of the period. The use of real places and names of individuals established this fact. For instance, we see names of real places like Awka, Nsukka, Enugu, Uga, Port Harcourt, Mbano, Oji-River, Umuahia, Oko, Bishop Shanahan College Orlu, etc. Real persons like Gowon, Aguiyi Ironsi, Aburi, Chukwuemeka Ojukwu etc. And real events like the massacre of the Igbo in Northern Nigeria and some parts of the West, declaration of the Republic of Biafra, the counter coup staged by northern officers and the kidnapping of General Aguiyi Ironsi, the war between Nigeria and Biafra, there location of markets because of air raids, etc.

Akachi takes a cue to paint a picture of poverty, malnutrition, hunger and trauma that the masses in Igbo land experience during Nigeria Civil War that caused them to debase their personality at the sight of any free flow of food and drink. It tells the story of the sufferings, pains, disappointments and exploitation of the people by the military leaders and the religious crisis that exists between the Muslims and Christians, personalized in the major character Ginika, a young brilliant girl who was in quest for knowledge. Without doubt, "the importance of religion in any human community cannot be over emphasized" knowing that the material and spiritual realms overlap in concrete manifestation within a given cultural context for people's material and ideological expression—a pattern which culminates into peace or conflict (Bienose-Osagiede, Ubuane & Udemba 2023: 217-218). No wonder, Ginika was forced to buy the situation of things in the country to leave Port Harcourt where she was studying and live West due to religious crisis. Those that survive the trauma flee for their lives, followed by the kidnapping of General Aguiyi Ironsi, an Igbo general, and his host, Lieutenant Colonel Fajuyi and his military coup of 1966 and January 1967. Ginika observes this through a feature article: "I was reading a feature article on the counter coup staged by northern officers and the kidnapping of General Aguiyi Ironsi and his host, Lieutenant Colonel Fajuyi. The situation is frightening. This country is in soup" (150). Ginika also says: Most of the people they are killing are Igbo. If the coup were an act of revenge, as the plotters claim, why are ordinary people being killed? Why are they killing innocent civilians who knew nothing about the January coup? (151).

Those wounded and the dead were brought to the east for treatment and burial as the case may be. Train brought the wounded and the dead from the north ... the sight is terrible. (165). The eastern generals brought them so that the people will notify their bodies and as well know the situation of the country. The easterners felt it is right to separate from the northerners to stop the massacre of Igbo people by the Northerners. So Colonel Chukwuemeka Ojukwu declared the Republic of Biafra in May 1967.

After the declaration of the Biafran Republic, the Nigerian government was not happy about it, not because Biafrans separated themselves from Nigerian Republic but because the major source of economic resource is from Biafran lands. "Since the Nigerian Republic declared war on Biafra, Biafrans cannot just fold their hands and watch people attack us and want to kill us, so we must fight back and kill them too before they kill us" (67). The Biafran soldiers gathered young boys to train as soldiers and young girls as constables. So Ginika and other girls were trained as special constables. Men who feel afraid of war front hide inside their houses without coming out. After some times, some of them become tired of staying indoors and decide to join the soldiers, like Nwakaire, Eloka, Uncle Ray etc. While those that have reasonable excuse like doctors and medical attendants were not conscripted since they already have work doing towards the lives of the Biafrans and their soldiers, but with time the drugs in the hospitals finished and some medical equipment damaged due to lack of maintenance.

Men and women in Biafra gave all their possible contributions to make sure that Biafra win the war. Ginika initially when things were still fair wanted to stay at Enugu with Uncle Ray and Aunty Chito to prepare snacks for soldiers as her own contribution. "I'll love it out here. I want to remain in Enugu. Helping to prepare delectable snacks for our soldiers at the Nsukka front is my own win-the-war effort" (19). Vajima I. Lucy and Ajima E. Maria in *Language, Literature and National Consciousness* says:

Ginika's stance at this early stage of the novel displays a remarkable sense of social commitment to her new nation at such a remarkable youthful age. It is not for nothing that the author imbues her heroine with such a sense of social commitment backed up by a display of determination and outspokenness. It is in line with her feminist vision for the women folk (55).

But her father Ubaka Ezeuko and her step mother Lizzy did not allow her stay at Enugu because they were afraid that Enugu will be surrendered by the enemies. And, secondary, they have made plan for her to be trained as constable, as her own part of win the war in Mbano and Ama-Oyi. When Ginika came back to Mbano, she was trained as special constable and helps in training other constables. She acted as mermaid in Eloka's *Mammy Wota*, a "political allegory of the war between Nigeria and Biafra" (48), but is used to entertain the soldiers in order to gather strength and courage to fight.

After the production of the play, Eloka married Ginika but left her after some weeks to join the soldiers in the army, which they called the vandals. *Roses and Bullets* exposes the absurdism in life. The soldiers encouraged themselves with songs like:

"Biafra nwe mmeri and Ojukwu nye anyi egbe"(50),
"Biafra win the war/Victory to the Rising Sun!" (57):
Take my bullet when I die, O Biafra
Take my bullet when I die, O Biafra
If I happen to surrender and die in the battlefield
Biafra, take my bullet when I die, O Biafra (80).

Biafrans produced their own gun, "Ogbunigwe—the mass destruction mine" (200). The Biafran soldiers since being aware that the Nigerian soldiers have more deadly weapons than them, mapped out different plans and strategies to capture the enemy soldiers and kill them or push them out from the lands.

Eloka leads the people towards the plan:

In the middle of the night, the movement began and when they got closer to the enemy they started crawling along on their bellies ... He and his fighting men were now battle ready and about to storm an enemy location with little or nothing—no armoured car, no artillery fire, no planes to clear the way with bombs or rockets or cannon balls. Foolhardy? (383).

The war negatively affected both the Nigerian government and Biafran Republic as both lost the lives of their people. However, Biafrans suffered more than the northerners. Hence, the war is set in eastern region, What Ama-Oyi inhabitants only seek for is a safer and secluded region to continue the practice that make life sustainable to them. They defiled sacredness, moving their Orié Market into the forest to avoid the attention they might call from an army jet. It turns out that their course of action isn't well thought out. They fail to remember that anything Biafran in the glimpse of a federal government's jet plan is a rebel that must be droned for unity to live (207).

Their houses destroyed, those whose houses have not been destroyed cover their houses with leaves. The communities captured by the enemies became a settling place for the enemies, and the people run away from their community in search of refuge.

These refugees became beggars and depend on the relief items brought to them. Even the food sent to them is not enough. Some died as a result of malnutrition, some caught kwashiorkor and later die. Janet tells Ginika:

People eat anything they see and things became costly in the market. She told me yesterday she could not afford the market price of a cup of salt" (322). Roots are eaten without minding the kind of root they are and normal procedures for preparing it before eating.

Crime rate increased that people were forced to do certain things they might not accept to do if things are normal. People steal any item they see relevant. If the item is not eatable, they sell it to get money for their food while some took the risk of travelling to the continent governed by the northerners. Ginika, Eunice were among those that took the risk:

I do not need to tell you that this journey is a dangerous one. We will be together as much as possible and when necessary, but remember that you are responsible for your own safety.

You are to look out for yourself, but this should not stop you giving a helping hand to another person when you are on a position to do so (452).

Some soldiers became rapists and womanisers, some left their duty as soldiers to look for women for pleasure. And girls being the victims of poverty seek them for food items. This gave the soldiers the opportunity to handle them as they want.

Roses and Bullets exposes the inequality and class consciousness of the society we live in, using the characters in the refugee camps. Thus, the better houses and rooms are given to the wealthy families, wives and girlfriends of the soldiers while the poor ones among them are partially discriminated by given them the bad ones. The items sent to the refugees are divided into three portions, one for the people in charge of the refugee centre, one portion for the sharers, and the other portion for the entire refugees. Instead of giving the items to those most in need of it, like the kwashiorkor victims, and the entire refugees sharing them equally without checking the class which the individual belongs, Then Mr. Asiobi refuses to give out chairs in his office because he is keeping them for noble men and the chiefs of the community while the workers sit on damaged benches. Ginika noticed it and tells her friend Janet:

By the way, why do we sit on this uncomfortable bench when there are four single chairs in Mr Asiobi's office? Just see where we sit and work. Let's ask him to give us two chairs. Will that be asking too much? officer, council members like your father-in-law and others (334).

Janet further tells Ginika how the houses are shared:

Look at those houses . . . wealthier and more influential refugees live in those. They were formerly teachers' quarters, but now occupied by "lucky people" I lived in one of the rooms in that long building. Can you see the house over there? That used to be the headmaster's quarters. I was told but it is now occupied by a rich business man from Awka. You may wonder how somebody like me managed to get a room there to myself. . . An air force officer who is my friend helped me . . . See the other house Chiefs lover lives there with her two young children. He visits her regularly and I see him because my room faces the house. She is from Awka and her name is Nwoyibo Moneke (305).

Ginika was surprised that her father-in-law has another woman when the wife, her mother-in-law, was showing him love. When General Ojukwu and other Biafran leaders saw that the war has done much damage and people may not survive it if the war continues because of the structure of the republic, they call for peace and surrender to Nigerian government. Ayinla Mukaiba in Guardian newspaper, "In Dispraise of Achebe," says:

The people became bored after the war. The soldiers sent by the Nigerian government to calm down the eastern people began to treat the people badly. They turn back to mock the Igbo and their environment. They forced the girls into marriage without minding if the girls are married or single. They threaten and kill the husband of married ones if the men refuse to submit their wives. Then, if the girl refuses to marry any of them, they force the girl or rape her. Ginika falls as a victim to them. Ginika refuses to marry Sule, a northern soldier. She told Sule that if she marries an uncircumcised man, that she will die. She used that as an excuse to scare him away but Sule ignorantly went for circumcision and died as result of too much bleeding (47). Then Raymond and Udo went to the commander's office and report the case but the commander neglected the people and their complain because they degraded the people and labelled them rebels until a woman from the class higher than them came. That was when the commander took the case

serious and Ginika was found and released from her trauma, and the three soldiers were sacked from their office.

Akachi used this novel to criticize the military leaders and the political leaders who do not listen to the problems of the masses they are assigned to govern. She sees their actions as ills in the society, which need to be changed. The old Nigerian soldiers that fought for Biafra and the civil workers lost their jobs, except those in teaching profession. Some of them went into business and some, still shocked by their lost relatives and properties, later went into farming.

All said and done, Akachi's *Roses and Bullets* captures the suffering, the pains, the disappointment, dejection and neglect of the Igbo people in 1966 - 1970 under the rule of despotic military dictators. The story follows the massacre of the Igbo in the north and some parts of the country, the kidnapping of General Aguiyi Ironsi, an Igbo leader and military coup of January 1967. The Igbo felt rejected and neglected and decide to separate themselves from northerners. Odumegwu Chukwemeka Ojukwu declared the Republic of Biafra. Then, the Nigerian Republic became offended for the declaration of the new republic and declared war on Biafra. The war that lasted for three years, the novel's narrative moves back and forth in time, beginning with Ginika's life in Enugu when her school is closed due to the war and ending with an admission later given to her to study at University of Nigeria Nsukka. The writer narrates the story using omniscience point of view, to narrate all the actions taking part in the Nigerian Civil War and social structure of the society.

Chukwemeka Ike's Reminiscence in The Nigeria-Biafra War Period

Sunset at Dawn is a story of war seen through one major family, Mazi Kanu Onwubiko's family. It is state of things in Biafra, his ancestral home, consumed him and he is forced to change nationality. As he is wont to, he threw himself wholly into it, becoming the Director of Mobilization and Recruitment, a job he does with so much admirable panache. His return to Biafra, however, does very little to change his previously estranged relationship with his parents, as he remains largely alienated from them by work and perhaps by nature.

He is married to Fatima, a northerner who bore him two sons, Ami Junior and his brother Emeka, which fate later took one away from them. Dr. Amilo later died in the novel and, thus, was seen as the highest pain the enemy has inflicted on both H.E. and the Biafran soldiers.

The novel came to an end after Akwaelumo listened very carefully and took down the semantic sense in Mazi Kanu Onwubiko's speech. Then, the war ended after Fatima was left with only Emeka, while her husband and her first son Ami Junior died in the war.

Sunset at Dawn is set in the post-war period of Nigeria and went deep in x-raying the Nigeria-Biafra Civil War and its devastating effects. Of course, in the Nigerian post-colonial period, especially after the end of the Nigeria-Biafra Civil War, Ike rendered his own account of the war. In his story, he looks into the causes of the war and the negative effects of the war and concludes that it was power struggle and failure of administration of post-independence leadership of the country. So, in this *Sunset at Dawn*, he tries so much to unravel this leadership/ethnic squabbles among the Nigerian political leaders which later ended up with a destructive war that had left an indelible mark in the face of Nigeria till date.

After reading this Ike's novel, one is left in a situation full of questions as to understand it. Is it a historical piece of writing? A fictionalized history? Or both? What is, however, clear in this seeming dilemma of choice is that Ike does not want the gory experience of the Igbo to be understood as fiction; hence, the real names, dates and verifiable accounts included.

According to The University Press, the book is a novel of the Biafran war. It is virtually a blow by blow account of the novelist' following and understanding of the Nigeria-Biafra War from 1967 to 1970. It is a story of the war in all its shades and shadows, in all, its human bestialities and possibilities, and thus, it is a story of different people's responses to a collective decision or to a decision they were forced to live victory for Nigerian soldiers. The novel discusses the experiences of Dr Amilo Kanu's family during the war. He marries Fatima from the northern part of the country and both had to come home to Biafra when Dr Kanu is tricked home on the premise that the father is dead. Fatima, a product of earlier Nigerians, is totally irreconcilable to her new Biafran environment she is not used to. This educated doctor of a liberated feminist kind chooses to be alienated from her husband's people until she experienced a lot of suffering through the personal responses, suffering and tragedy of Halima, an Hausa like she is. She is married to an Igbo, a Biafran, too. She did not allow the loss of her husband and children to sever her bond with her late husband, her surviving son and in-laws. The turning point, however, for the nutritionist Fatima Amilo like Halima's is the point at which she loses her own first son in Biafra from a Nigerian attacker. She also loses her husband who upon the loss of a child chooses to up his game against the

killer of his son by moving from being a Director of Mobilization in Biafra to moving into the battlefield against the enemies of even the Biafran leader H.E.

All these horrible experiences as was caused by this war, Ike shows, are as a result of the corrupt system of governance and failure of the Nigerian post-colonial leadership. Ike here tends to satirize the leaders as they are busy engaging in power tussle which is to the detriment of the governed.

In telling his story, Ike's narrator is so amazingly rich in information that it is difficult to tell if he should be seen as a journalist, a historian or a researcher. Readers are overwhelmed by his big nose for news and information to its minute and most illustrative details. He almost seems a tale-bearer in his village and city colorations, understanding and description of things and situation that never escape his telling prowess. We read, for instance, his sympathies for Biafrans: "It seemed that the vandals having tried all the tactics planned for them by their oversee advisers without gaining an inch of ground had borrowed a leaf from the tortoise" (237).

As it is in every conflict or state of war, truth is often the first victim. The narrator reminds of how Radio Biafra behaves during the war. The Daily War Report, a programme always anxiously awaited by every Biafran every day had been off the air since the beginning of the evacuation of Enugu. So, the narrative voice and Radio Biafra are as such victims of war, denying the required neutrality as every war's followed the loss. Of course, Ike is not just writing lifeless piece of information, he is rendering a moving and emotive lines that not only gets at the head of the readers but at his or her feelings also.

It is pertinent to mention here that as Ike satirizes the government of post-independence administrations, he dwelt much on the negative effects of their actions. War is never a good thing, it carries with it evils and destructions. Ike opens the book in a square-drill-ground, where a young second lieutenant was busy taking many young groups of people who had volunteered and poured into Enugu like soldier ants from all over the young republic on a parade in their training ground, in this medium, the writer reminds us of the cause of the war, the 1966 pogrom. It was this pogrom that led to the mass movement of Igbos and other Eastern Nigerians back to Eastern Nigeria. Now, this is where political satire comes to play; what could have caused that pogrom? Does it mean that the ruling government is not aware of the fact that Igbos in the Northern Region are losing their lives in the hands of the Northerners in the name of tribal conflict? Why should the ruling government overlook the massive killing of Ndigbo in the North since they say that we are one Nigeria? It was also on this cause that Ojukwu propagated the declaration of Eastern Nigeria's secession from the federation as the Republic of Biafra which resulted to the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970). Now, in reaction to this evil deeds by the Northern Nigerians, ten thousand youths parading on the ground of Nsukka Campus maintained that since the situation has turned out this way, thus the war must be fought to the finish, even if it meant using bare fists (4).

On another perspective, one may be right to ask thus, Why the military should plot to take over mantle of leadership if not as a result of the failure of post-independence leadership? The inability of the post-independence leaders to live up to expectation and the human quest for power and authority cum human wanting tendency and insatiable desire of human beings brought about the idea of the coup which did not go well and later a counter coup was initiated which the outcome contributed to these factors that lead to the civil war.

So, in this collective agreement by these youths, had the first prominent character in this novel introduced, the person of Dr Amilo Kanu, who was recently appointed Director for Mobilization. He took the leadership of the war song. As their voice was raking the air, thus, came the first attack of the enemy. In this war account, Ike concentrated mostly on the devastating effects of war and how it affected the Igbos badly. He revealed to the reader how Biafra lost the occupation of mid-western Nigeria. In the same ground had Dr Kanu and his wife Fatima lost their first born, Ami Junior, a five-year-old boy. The attack that brought about this death came from the first Nigerian mortars which landed suddenly with a crash on the Ring Road in front of the Progressive Hotel Chalet where the family was waiting for Emeka their three-year-old son.

Ike moves forward to unveil the fate of Enugu after the tragedy that befell Dr Kanu's family. When the Hausas took control of Enugu, being the Biafran capital city, then it becomes clear that Biafra did not have enough military capacity to keep the Nigerians off the Biafra territories. It was during the capture of Enugu by the Nigerians that Radio Biafra was transferred to Aba without delay, to ensure the contributions of its broadcasts whether or not Enugu fell to the enemy.

On the same scene, Ike exposed a conversation between Dr Kanu and Akwaelumo, a permanent secretary, whose which the reader is made to understand that the state of Biafra in the war was not encouraging:

I don't think it has come to that: Dr Kanu spoke slowly. Biafra does not belong to army officers alone. Even H.E. cannot claim that it is his personal property. Biafra belongs to all

of us. We cannot, therefore, leave its fate entirely to any one group of people. What do we do? Enquired Akwaelumo. Take over gun? "Why not? Do soldiers have two heads.(94).

Looking at the undertone in this conversation, one will discover that Biafra was not prepared for this war and as well had not all it takes to be in warring state.

After this event, Ike who knew best how to handle and link events stylistically introduced a character in the name of Halima, an Hausa who got married to Mr. Uche, a tally clerk in the Railway Corporation in Zaria. The tragedy of the war brought Halima to Fatima. She narrated her ordeal and how the war took her loving husband away from her.

In this tragedy, Ike relates the most assumed painful aspect of the war, the saboteurs and their roles during the war period. Had it not been that these saboteurs worked against their own soil Biafra, the situation of things in Biafra may not have been the way we are hearing it today. Let us consider how the novel under consideration puts it: The second and the most widely accepted explanation was that the discovery of the abortive coup and the public execution of the four principal characters had come too late. The saboteurs had all alone been in close touch with the enemy, passing on Biafra's military secrets and turning the weapons manufactured by Biafra's science group against Biafra. . . They had also, through outright sabotage on the war fronts, systematically eliminated Biafra's combatant officers to ensure easy victory for Nigeria (140).

Furthermore, we see how the novelist maneuvers words to link his narrative to the disaster that befell Nkwo Obodo Market which makes it lack its characteristic noise and vivacity. After two fighter jets raided in the market, like other markets in Biafra, they abandon its well laid out stalls and moved into a dense bamboo jungle without stalls. It was here that Dr Kanu came to discover Biafra's major weakness. He asserted that "their weakness was not only the inadequate supplies of ammunition but a dearth of fighting men" (301). Of course, tracing this, you will know why the idea of conscription came about.

In the subsequent pages, Dr Kami negotiated his way into the battle front where he meets his end. And his end is a big loss for both H.E. and the entire Biafran soldiers. Fatima, Dr Kanu's wife, lamented as she listens to the song being sang or rendered by officers and men of Dr Kanu's battalion as the red earth were being heaped over his body. The dirge/elegy made Fatima weep more as she listens to the semantic sense in the song: "Dibe! Dibe ndidi ka mma, Onye o bialu ya dibe uwa, Biafra nwe mmeri . . ." (338). Due to the manner of presentation of this song, she did not know even what the words meant, yet she was very moved that she demanded for the translation. The following is what she was given: "When your turn comes, take heart. Biafra is sure to win . . ." That was the message the song carried, a message easier to give than to accept. Fatima mourned dearly that she recounted how many times such tragedy has befallen her. She Onwubiko, Dr Kanu's father. He addresses the matter of war. His conclusion over the issue of war was that "the dispute between Nigeria and Biafra cannot be settled by war." (349). He made a comment that touched Akwaelumo:

We are too old now to produce an answer which will be acceptable to young people. I am not sure that even you, Akwaelumo, can find the answer. You all are too involved in the dispute to be able to see the answer . . . The soldiers cannot find the answer, for only what they know is gun . . . you will ask me who then can find the answer, for the answer must be found . . . It is children like Emeka who will find the answer after when we are dead and gone. As they grow up and count the cost of this war, they will have to find the answer. (349).

So the substance in Mazi Kanu's plea engineered the idea that leads to the end of the war. Still, counting on the horrible experience of the war, Ike went further to elucidate on the idea of conscription. How, Biafran's adopted conscription method, which shows that the war was not on their favour. He made this known through an unnamed character known to be a palm wine tapper that was tapping the tree and collecting wine therein for the morning, then, came two soldiers as the foot of the tree. He descended from the tree to meet the two soldiers there, not only did they drain all the wine in the calabash but plainly told him they had come to conscript him into the army. Going further, we see how Ike melodiously conveyed the message this old man had to the readers:

Now why did I insist on seeing you? My words are few. If this war has reached the stage where a man of my age is given a rifle by force and sent to the war front, then, time has come for you who hold Biafra in your hands to blow the whistle and end the war. That is all I want to say (263).

From this assertion you will find out that it is not gain-saying the fact that Biafra had not all it takes to go into warring terms with anybody not to talk of "combined" Nigerians. This is the motif through which a conviction

was created in Akwaelumo's heart that this war has done a lot of evil to them and needs to come to an end. Then, Akwaelumo muttered to himself: "Mazi Kanu is right, war cannot be the answer" (356).

Conclusion

This paper clearly shows Adimora-Ezeigbo and Ike as authors with keen senses of observation, who are interested in the welfare of their people. They spoke acutely at the experiences of their people and discuss the pains they went through and hopes they would not have to repeat their mistakes again. Through her characters, Akachi paints the picture of a "people struggling for survival despite all the traumas they passed through from the hands of the leaders. She also x-rayed the poverty and rejection of the Igbo and the poor people in general during the war period and thereafter in the days of military regime that followed right after.

Chukwuerneka Ike builds the plot of *Sunset at Dawn* in the ovum of war which was characterized by ugly experiences. Every scene in the novel possesses an element of something that could evoke anger, especially when looked from a Biafran eye. It is, no doubt, a most comprehensive story told largely from the defeated or victimized angle. It is a comprehensive history into a literary cloak.

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