

HISTORICO-CULTURAL TRAUMA IN POSTCOLONIAL NIGERIA: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF *HALF OF A YELLOW SUN*

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ABSTRACT

*The present article has critically analyzed the consequences of ‘communal violence’ resulting from the construction of communal identities in postcolonial Nigeria by projecting the historical legacy of colonialism into the fabric of the nation’s identity, leading to the Nigerian Civil War, centered on the novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* looking through the lens of trauma and eventually attempting to bridge the gap by drawing the concept of Edward Said’s *Critical Humanism* (2004) along with Avishai Margalit’s idea of memory and morality. Major Nigerian tribes – the Igbos and the Hausas – construction of ethno-religious communities caused the Civil War in Nigeria, which created havoc in the society stemming from hatred and the superiority complex, a legacy of colonialism which is not only evident in the search for ‘collective identity’ in the name of ethnicity but also the daily lives of citizens, from peasants to intellectuals, i.e. Ugwu to Odenigbo. The colonial legacy in postcolonial situations is deciphered in multiple ways. However, the study has mainly centered on historico-cultural trauma by explicitly linking colonialism and the ethnic and political strife of the new nation (Biafra). Finally, it traces the significance of “thin morality” and the essence of “ethics of coexistence” to confront and overcome the deep-seated historico-cultural trauma in postcolonial Nigeria, based on the evidence from the narrative.*

Keywords: *Nigeria, trauma, construction of community, decolonization, humanism*

Introduction

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's most groundbreaking novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, revolves around the post-independence disorder and the horrors of the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970), the Biafran War of the 1960s, during which the southern region of Biafra unsuccessfully fought for secession. The book's title refers to the Biafran flag, symbolizing rebellion and the pursuit for freedom, represented by a rising sun. The novel follows the lives of major characters such as Olanna,

Odenigbo, Ugwu, Kanene, Richard, and Major Madu, providing insight into the experiences of the Igbo people during the turbulent period in Nigeria's history. The characters are haunted both psychologically and physically, and they grapple with the conflicts between tradition and modernity. Set in postcolonial Nigeria, the book delves into the lasting impact of racism and colonialism on the country, resulting in a historico-cultural trauma. Through its fragmented plot, narration, content, and characters, the novel vividly portrays the disordered state of post-independence Nigeria. The story notably depicts the effects of the brutal civil war on both peasants and intellectuals, represented by the characters Ugwu and Odenigbo, respectively. The book-within-the-book, "The World Was Silent When We Died," addresses the plight of the people during the three-year Civil War in post-independent Nigeria. Adichie employs these varied elements of form, content, and characters to expose the burden of colonialism, highlighting the violence embedded within it that has led to traumatic experiences for the Nigerian people.

This article demonstrates the traumatic disorder in post-independence Nigeria. The fragmented structure of the plot, moving back and forth between the early and late sixties, symbolizes the fragmented and disordered situation of the country. In analyzing *Half of a Yellow Sun*, this article focuses on the historico-cultural traumatic disorder in post-independence Nigeria. It examines the cultural collective identity and the resulting disorder stemming from cultural conflicts by exploring the societal consequences, a topic that previous critics have not extensively discussed. It delves into the historically rooted process of cultural trauma, which emerges from shared values and recollected experiences. People worldwide have suffered from traumatic disorders in the postcolonial era while striving to form distinct cultural and collective identities. This analysis focuses explicitly on the historico-culturally traumatic situation depicted in Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* in the aftermath of colonization.

Trauma as a Theoretical Lens

The etymological meaning of the term 'trauma' is derived from a Greek medical word denoting a mental condition caused by a severe shock, especially when harmful effects last for a long time. It means trauma refers to the action shown by the abnormal mind to the body, which provides a method of interpretation of disorder, distress, and destruction. Freudian concept of psychoanalysis is the central foundation for trauma theory with various accounts of memory and psychological disorders. On the other hand, trauma theory is a broad category that includes diverse fields with a specific focus on psychic, historical, cultural, philosophical, ethical, and aesthetic aspects of the nature, subject and representation of traumatized events and situations. Trauma theory concerns "range from the public and historical to the private and memorial" (Luckhurst, 2006). Gradually, the theorists extended trauma to denote those who were wounded and deeply infected by a problem of a complicated kind. Such a troubled psyche is

called a traumatic one, and this psychic trouble of people is related to psychic trauma.

Caruth (1996) argues about the idea of 'latency,' i.e. when trauma first takes place is uncertain, but that "the survivors' uncertainty is not a simple amnesia; for the event returns, as trend points out insistently and against their will." She emphasizes that trauma can hardly be forgotten. Caruth states the part of latency of the temporary delay, which should not be misunderstood as repression because trauma, by its very nature, displays a vengeance over some time, mainly when triggered by a similar event. The term 'latency' means the period during which the effects of the experience are not apparent in a trauma event. Freud states that it is the successive moment from an event to its repression to its return (Breuer & Freud, 1974). Caruth believes that the crash victim is never fully conscious during the accident. The experience of trauma, the fact of latency, would thus seem to consist not in forgetting a reality that can never be fully known but "as inherent latency within the experience itself" (Caruth, 1996). Trauma, for Caruth, is incomprehensible by nature. Caruth claims that trauma victims are reluctant to express their hidden traumatic truth, unknowingly revealing certain personal truths.

Leys (2000) elaborates on the idea of Sigmund Freud- -anxiety and repression- -and Cathy Caruth- -latency- -and focuses on psychic distress. Moreover, for more precise and specific knowledge about psychic trauma, the idea of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) must be at the core. The concept of PTSD was officially recognized by the American Psychiatric Association in 1980. PTSD is the human disorder of the mind after a post-traumatic period like the Vietnam War. PTSD is the historical construct resulting from the traumatic event and experience in the historical period and its surroundings. In the post-war scenario, people who were observers suffered from mental breakdowns, neurotic distraction, and catastrophic hangovers. Because of such horrific events, they still have Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder on a psychic level. However, this psychic turbulence must have to be dismissed and deferred, solely signalling the ethics of humanistic self-criticism.

Margalit(2004), in *The Ethics of Memory*, focuses on the 'morality/ ethics of memories. Margalit's concept of 'morality of memory' comes very close to Edward Said's idea of 'critical humanism.' Said (2004) in *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* comes with the concept of humanistic culture as co-existing and self-realizing one rather than forming binary oppositions. The concept of 'other' as a hierarchical order is blurred with the idea of 'self-criticism'. The capacity for self-criticism in the third person mode evokes learning the 'Other' and forming one's self as another. The ethics of memory, according to Margalit, are of two kinds: micro-ethics/thick relations (the ethics of individuals) and macro-ethics/thin relations (the ethics of collectives). He promotes developing the macro-ethics/thin relations closer to critical humanism.

We usually lack an attentive concern for the well-being of most members of the human race. We typically care about our parents, children, spouses, lovers, friends, and, by extension, some significant groups to which we belong. But by no means do we care about everyone. For most of humanity, most people are pretty much indifferent and often try to valorize one over the other, which boost up the tussle, resulting in a vicious circle of traumas. This paper focuses explicitly on historico-cultural trauma, highlighting the issues of trauma, memory, and humanism to analyze the novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* critically. The primary aim of this analysis is to objectify the phenomenon of ethics of coexistence (thin relations), a humanistic approach to 'work through' traumas of any sort.

Historico-Cultural Trauma in Postcolonial Nigeria: A Critical Analysis of *Half of a Yellow Sun*

On January 1, 1901, Nigeria became a British protectorate, part of the British Empire. Nigeria was granted complete independence in October 1960 under a constitution that provided for a parliamentary government. In October 1963, Nigeria proclaimed itself as a Federal Republic. On January 15, 1966, a group of army officers, mostly southeastern Igbos, overthrew the NPC-NNDP government and assassinated Prime Minister Sardauna and the premiers of the northern and western regions. It was the first military coup by the Igbos. This kind of ethnic intolerance raised tension in the Muslim Hausa community, which led to another coup by predominantly northern officers in July 1966, which established the leadership of Major General Yakubu Gowon. The subsequent massacre of thousands of Igbos in the North prompted hundreds of thousands of them to return to the Southeast, where increasingly strong Igbo secessionist sentiment emerged. *Half of a Yellow Sun* revolves around Nigeria's traumatic situation in the pre-independence and post-independence eras. The novel captures almost all events and characters from 1960 to 1970. The story primarily focuses on the Nigerian Civil War (1967-70) and its trauma, although it started in the postcolonial context. The narrative includes the main characters, Olanna, Odenigbo, Ugwu, Kanene, Richard, and Major Madu, who represent the Igbo community.

History, Colonial Legacy, and the Traumatic Consequences

Richard, a white character who has converted himself to Igbo, a journalist, and a writer, more actively mentions the history of different ethnic groups and their characteristics in his book-with-in-book: *The World Was Silent When We Died*. He writes about the partition of Nigeria by River Niger into two: the North and the South having a density of major ethnic groups, Hausa-Fulani and Igbo-Yoruba, respectively. He writes:

[T]he British preferred the North. The heat there was pleasantly dry; the Hausa-Fulani were narrow-featured and therefore superior to the Negroid Southerners, Muslim and therefore as civilized as one could get for natives, feudal and therefore

perfect for indirect rule. Equable emirs collected taxes for the British, and the British, in return, kept the Christian missionaries away. The humid South, on the other hand, was full of mosquitoes and animists and disparate tribes. The Yoruba were the largest in the Southwest. In the Southeast, the Igbo lived in small republican communities. They were non-docile and worryingly ambitious. Since they did not have the good sense to have kings, the British created 'warrant chiefs,' because indirect rule cost the Crown less. Missionaries were allowed in to tame the pagans, and the Christianity and education they brought flourished. In 1914, the governor-general joined the North and the South, and his wife picked a name. Nigeria was born (115).

It is all about the historical condition of Nigeria, separated into two: North and South by River Niger. These two parts from the past were also distinct in ethnicity and religion. In the North, the Hausa and Fulani were the major ethnic groups, Islam was the religion, and in the South, Igbo and Yoruba were the central and Christianity was prevalent. The British established the colonial government or empire in the North because it was pleasantly dry, whereas the South was full of mosquitoes and animists. The Igbo people were Republicans, and they hated monarchy or parliamentary government. It was the tremendous cultural binary between North and South. This situation was the formal initiation of cultural trauma in Nigeria, which resulted in three years of horrendous Civil War. No doubt, it is the result of the denial of ethical coexistence.

The sense of revenge marks cultural trauma. The Hausa people also followed the same order with the help of another coup: "Northern officers have taken over. The BBC says they are killing Igbo officers in Kaduna. [. . .] On the radio, the breathless British voice said it was quite extraordinary that the second coup had occurred only six months after the first" (137-38). It was the beginning of the heart-rending massacre of Igbos and the worthless Civil War. The revenge attack turned out to be finishing the opponent:

Many Igbo officers were dead. The killings were organized; [. . .] the Northerners picked out all the Igbo soldiers and took them away and shot them. [. . .] 'They killed Colonel Udodi Ekechi'. [. . .] Northern soldiers put him in a cell in the barracks and fed him his own shit. He ate his own shit.' Kainene paused. 'Then they beat him senseless and tied him to an iron cross and threw him back in his cell. He died tied to an iron cross. He died on a cross (138).

This extract reveals the revenge attack in the form of ethnic segregation among the Nigerians brought the horrendous effect of colonial mentality that of a superiority complex. In the same order, the narration of the butchering of Major Udodi, an Igbo soldier, in a barbaric and humiliating way, exhibits that there is no rule in War.

The most pathetic condition of people out of such cultural intolerance is starvation. Richard further writes about the situation in the Civil War, mainly focusing on hunger in his book:

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 protest 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 neither 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 (237).

This excerpt from a clever book-within-a-book confronts the reader with one of the novel's central ironies. Enforced starvation that crushed Nigeria's breakaway southeastern region, briefly independent and known as Biafra, also brought it the international attention that sustained its rebellion for three years. Starvation also reminded the people of the historico-cultural ordeal of the Second World War as a weapon to recognize the cultural trauma. As a result of cultural suffering, starvation also managed the Western consciousness to pierce neo-colonialism through different aids. In the same order, the trauma of famine fueled many countries like Tanzania, Zambia, and Ivory Coast to recognize Biafra, as an Igbo Independent State.

The colonial agents are the primary power to brush up such ethnic tussle. They use the native civilians and war instruments for their interest: divide and rule, and the natives are behind them 'bombing' their people. In the dialogue between Mrs. Muokelu and Olanna, it is clear:

A common civilian did this with his hunting gun! It is as if the Nigerians are so stupid that whatever works for them becomes stupid, too. They were too stupid to fly the planes that Russia and Britain gave them, so they brought in white people, and even those white people couldn't hit any target (278).

It indicates that even after decolonization, the colonial mentalist's legacy persists in many ways. Even the people who lived peacefully and in harmony started fighting for the supremacy of one over the other. They deeply trust and want further assistance from the colonizer to solve the problems inherent within their community.

Richard writes about independence in his book fragment: *The World Was Silent When We Dead*. He clearly mentions that colonial independence necessitated Southerners to follow the same order within them. He, in his segment, writes:

The South, too eager for independence, accepted this constitution. With the British gone, there would be good things for everyone: 'white' salaries long denied Nigerians, promotions, top jobs. Nothing was done about the clamor of the minority groups, and the regions were already competing so fiercely that some wanted separate foreign embassies. At independence in 1960, Nigeria was a collection of fragments held in a fragile clasp (155)

To boost communal violence, the concept of independence fueled the opportunity the colonial regime provided for the selected people. These aspirations lead people to a clash among the natives. The power politics worked for the related ethnicity or community, dashing behind the minority group. Thus, the functioning of thick ethics after independence brought fragmentation in Nigeria through the construction of a community.

Through his book, Richard represents the 'White man's burden' to make people aware of the War's trauma. He wanted to write about the roped pot and Igbo-Ukwu art under the title, *The Basket of Hands*, changed into *In the Time of Roped Pots* but finally transformed it into *The World Was Silent When We Died* before bequeathing it to Ugwu. The title of the book was named after the expression of Major Madu. Madu suggests Richard for accurately depicting War's brutalities rather than claiming himself as a Biafran. White people always mystify and treat what the blacks deliver as stories: "They want experienced insiders to do stories that are about more than just the number of Biafran dead" (304). Madu argues in supporting Kainene:

[T]hey will take what you write more seriously because you are white. Look, the truth is that this is not your War. This is not your cause. Your government will evacuate you in a minute if you ask them to. So, it is not enough to carry limp branches and shout *power, power* to show that you support Biafra. If you really want to contribute, this is the way that you can. The world has to know the truth of what is happening, because they simply cannot remain silent while we die. They will believe a white man who lives in Biafra and who is not a professional journalist. You can tell them. [D]ifins flown by Russian and Egyptians are bombing us everyday, [a]nd how the British and Soviets are in an unholy alliance giving more and more arms to Nigeria, and how the Americans have refused to help us, and how our relief flight come in at night with no lights because the Nigerians will shoot them down during the day.' (305)

The neo-colonial hegemonic attitude is still working. The whites do not believe the blacks. On the one hand, the colonial legacy of different countries is working in a hidden way; on the other, they are more traumatizing the situation supporting arms to eliminate the Biafran. Madu sees the continued hegemonic sympathy on the side of Richard transforming himself into Biafran. Madu, here, encourages Richard to do something more precious than the neo-colonial motif - to make the people aware of the actual condition of the Civil War. The harrowing situation after the Biafran

noticed the warship supported by the British side, which is self-destructive. Major Madu cautions Richard about unavoidable accidents: “There is a rumor that Britain supplied five warships to Nigeria, so youths have been burning British shops and houses all over Port Harcourt today” (314). This situation represents a kind of cultural trauma in a broad sense. The neo-colonial interruption caused cultural trauma between whites and blacks in Nigeria and, simultaneously, in the blacks of Nigeria.

Richard remains a colonial observer, and Kanene challenges his use of “we” when he titles his latest attempt at a book: *The World Was Silent When We Died*. For him, Kanene is a manifestation of the beautiful pot that drew him to Africa: “I fell in love with Igbo-Ukwu art and then fell in love with her” (310). Despite his effort to erase his European identity, Richard functions as a marker for how colonial epistemology constructs and shapes Africa as an object of consumption. Richard’s final appearance in the novel, the barely suppressed racist attitude toward Kanene’s friend Major Madu, comes to the surface: “Come back, he wanted to say, come back and tell me if you ever laid your filthy black hand on her” (429-30).

However, as the novel progresses, the narration of the traumatic history of colonialism and Biafra transfers from Richard to Ugwu. Perpetrating and witnessing the horrors of War, Ugwu is inspired by a passage in *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*: “Even if it cost my life, I was determined to read. Keep the black man away from the books, keep us in front, and we would always be his slaves” (360). Ugwu becomes the chronicler of trauma as the colonial voice that Richard represents fades into the background, marking the exit of the Western subject from the narrative boundary.

The Urge of Ethnic Supremacy: Fueling up the Disorder

Half of a Yellow Sun, the novel's title, comes from the flag of the Biafran Republic. One of the significant characters, Olanna Ozobia, the mouthpiece of the author, teaches about the flag, which symbolizes the rising sun or half of a yellow sun, i.e. rising of the Republic of Biafra: “Red was the blood of siblings massacred in the North, black was for mourning them, green was for prosperity Biafran would have, and finally, the half of a yellow sun stood for the glorious future” (281). This kind of symbolic representation of the author and the naming of the title proves the author herself is advocating for cultural bias and ethnic segregation. The text itself is written from the Igbo perspective rather than the inclusive one. The flag serves the traumatized setting of constructing an independent community. Being the mouthpiece of the author, Olanna taught her children to create a religious gap for a forthcoming generation:

She taught them to raise their hands in flying salute like His Excellency and she asked them to copy her drawing of the two leaders: His Excellency was burly, sketched with double lines, while Gowon’s effete body was outlined in single lines.

[. . .] Nkiruka, her brightest student, shaded contours into the faces and, with a few strokes of her pencil, gave Gowon a Snarl and His Excellency a grin. [. . .] 'I want to kill all the vandals, miss,' she said, when she came up to hand in her drawing. She was smiling at the smile of a precious child who knew she had said the right thing (281).

This excerpt is enough to dig up the issue of cultural trauma. Despite being a well-educated woman, Olanna boosts the religious hatred among the children. The children are eager for a revenge attack. This cultural antagonism serves the Western representation attempting to establish 'African as ancient tribal hatred and are prone to violence'. Simultaneously, the prose of 'otherness' is valorized through the depiction of hierarchy between two leaders of different communities.

Odenigbo, the revolutionary lover, always sees the continuity of the colonial legacy in the newly independent country. He always seems haunted by the historical trauma of colonialism. Kainene named him a revolutionary lover because of his radical attitude towards the whites. He takes the concept of pan-Africanism as purely the European construction:

'You know, pan-Africanism is fundamentally a European notion.' '[. . .] 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.' [. . .] 'The pan-Igbo idea existed before the white man! Go and ask the elders in your village about your history.' (20-21)

Odenigbo views the colonial legacy as still working. The African identity is not free; it is associated with the traces of colonialism. The historically traumatized subjectivity of the blacks is constructed in binary opposition with white. Odenigbo is also more concerned with his Igbo ethnicity rather than Nigerian identity or humanism. He sees pan-Africanism as the European construction and pan-Igboism as the original one. At the same time, his statements work on two levels: historical and cultural.

On the one hand, he is troubled by the historical trauma of colonization and on the other hand, he excludes the different ethnic groups, focusing on Igbo. The cultural hierarchy among Africans guides this kind of attitude. He seems to be guided by 'thick ethics' rather than 'thin morality' or critical humanism. His statements voice the collective identity of Igbo, eliding the ethics of coexistence. Superiority-complex is working in him.

One reason behind Olanna's attraction towards Odenigbo was his revolutionary manner. She noticed him for the first time in a queue while buying a ticket outside the university theatre where he was shouting at the ticket seller against the hierarchy made by him between white and the native: "You ignoramus! You see a white person, and he looks better than your own people? You must apologize to

everybody in this queue! Right now!” (29). It is the burden of colonialism that the inferiority complex is still working on the side of native people. Another reason behind Olanna’s attraction towards him was the ethnic one. Being an Igbo woman, she was in a serious relationship with Mohammed, a Hausa man, so she overshadowed him by following her own ethnic man, Odenigbo. It is more apparent in the dialogue of Olanna’s cousin, Arize (Uncle Mbaezi and Aunt Ifeka’s daughter), who was also in love with a Hausa man: “If only Mohammed was an Igbo man, I would eat my hair if you did not marry him. I have never seen a more handsome man.’ [. . .] ‘Papa would kill me first of all if he knew I was even looking at a Hausa man like that” (42). From this, it is clear that the central characters are directly obsessed with ethnic bias in practice.

Odenigbo, the freedom fighter, clarifies the real postcolonial trauma that a large number of people are not recognized in this new world (world after independence); they are still living the life of cocoon: “The real tragedy of our postcolonial world is not that the majority of people had no say in whether or not they wanted this new world; rather, it is that the majority have not been given the tools to *negotiate* this new world” (101). He sees the early-independence time as the most dangerous and evil one. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is the main result of colonialism at the psychic level of a person, but it can also be seen at the physical level. PTSD in the form of neo-colonialism creates black evil in postcolonial countries like Nigeria. Programs like the ‘defense pact’ are another form of colonization. These factors are only hidden and more dangerous than sacrificial ones. In a post-independence scenario, the divided psychology of people, few want to carry forward what they imitated from the colonizers, whereas few go against it. This chasm also may result in conflict among the people.

Turmoil, Transition, and the Reawakening

The repeated return of the image of the woman carrying a young girl’s severed head inside the bowl marks one distinct site on Ugwu. The image functions as a symbol of the narrative of Nigeria. Ugwu wants to show an accurate picture of the country out of the Civil War like Frederick Douglas did in his book *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, depicting the pathetic sight of historical trauma, i.e. slavery. He adds in response to that recurring image: “It will be part of a big book. It will take me many more years to finish it, and I will call it “Narrative of the Life of a Country” (424). The missing of Kainene haunts the closing of the text.

Moreover, the traumatic articulation of the Civil War in the form of historico-cultural trauma gets objectified by the shattered lives of all the characters. Odenigbo, the freedom fighter, is faded with alcoholism, forgetting his duties. Richard, a lonely man, remains desperate and even loses his magnificent lover, Kainene. Olanna remains in psychic disorder because of the disappearance of her twin sister, Kainene. Only Ugwu, the real hero of the novel, is determined to do

something to present the absolute horror or trauma resulting from the Civil War by writing the book *Narrative of the Life of a Country*.

To foreground the transitional phase of War, Adichie traces the paradox of nationalism: the impossibility of coexistence and the need for humanism- - acceptance of different cultural coexistence simultaneously. She explores people's inclined ethics through the discourse of Major Madu, an Igbo soldier. The concept of denial of coexistence is also apparent in the gratification of people in each other's defeat. Even the people are praying to God for others' defeat. The novelist is trying to show the post-war transition period, where some people continue persisting hatred among the people of the same country based on religious or ethnic superiority.

However, quite contrarily, Adichie, through the characterization of Kainene, evokes the coexistence among the tribes. Kainene, while working at the refugee camp, presents an outlook of coexistence. She wants to blur the border between different ethnic groups. When a pregnant woman spat Dr. Inyana, a minority tribe doctor, and said: "Saboteur! It is you non-Igbo who are showing enemy the way! It is you people that showed them the way to my hometown?" Kainene performs her rage on the pregnant woman, slapping two hard smacks in quick succession on her cheek, saying: "[W]e are all Biafrans! Do you understand me? We are all Biafrans!" (320).

In a way, Adichie transforms the treatment of bias among tribes into equality among the tribes living in Biafra. She necessitates unity among all the African black people. In the last part of the novel, through the radio broadcast of His Excellency, Adichie presents the need for coexistence and unity among the blacks: "Biafrans will not betray the black man. No matter the odds, we will fight with all our might until black men everywhere point with pride to this Republic standing dignified and defiant, an example of African nationalism" (386). The ethics of coexistence among all blacks is the main motto of the Biafran Republic. From the quotation, the nationalistic concept excels in the tribal bias to form the unitary and secular African nationalism- the acceptance of various ethnoreligious co-survival.

Before closing the novel, Adichie presents the requirement for cooperation among all Nigerians. The reality of tribal War, a never-ending phenomenon, has been realized. There is power in unity; sharing and coexistence can only conquer the brutality of War in a humanistic way. There is certainly a traumatic situation if all the ethnic groups within a nation demand an independent and collective identity. For prosperity and cheerful living, the ethics of humanism, i.e. coexistence and self-realization, should be at the core. If the people do not realize their fault, there is no chance of collaboration and coexistence. At last, His Excellency, the leader of the Biafra army, also acknowledges the fact that there is no option behind coexistence:

I take this opportunity to congratulate officers and men of our armed forces for their gallantry and bravery, which have earned for them the admiration of the

whole world. I thank the civil population for their steadfastness and courage in the face of overwhelming odds and starvation. I am convinced that the suffering of our people must be brought to an immediate end. I have, therefore, instructed an orderly disengagement of troops. I urge General Gowon in the name of humanity to order his troops to pause while an armistice is negotiated. (412)

In this way, to end such trauma of ethnic tussle, the only need is to accept the existence of all with self-critiquing to form equality and coexistence among all tribes, ethnic groups, and religious parties. War is a traumatic and barbaric one. So, to end up such cultural trauma caused by the demand for a unique collective identity, people should acknowledge differences, diversities and heterogeneities and valorize 'ethics of coexistence' and 'self-realization.'

Thus, the Civil War in the search for independence within Nigeria is one of the historico-cultural traumas that remind us of colonialism's historicity and legacy – the treatment of binary opposition, representation, and superiority complex. The novel presents the transformation of colonial mentality evoking cultural, ethnic, or religious superiority within one nation, i.e. Nigeria. Finally, she emphasizes the importance of coexistence in eliminating such ethno-religious conflicts.

Conclusion: The Essence of Coexistence

Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* delves into the legacy of colonialism and its impact on Nigeria, emphasizing the need to deconstruct the binary structures imposed by colonization. The novel challenges the privileged position of Western observers and highlights their role in interpreting historical events through characters ranging from Odenigbo, Olanna, Uguw, Kenene, and Richard. The story revolves around the Biafran War, a historico-cultural trauma from ethnic tensions within Nigeria, leading to violence and communal strife. The characters in the novel are haunted, wounded, and culturally traumatized, seeking collective identity amidst the turmoil. Communal violence driven by ethnoreligious intolerance becomes a hypnotic legacy of colonialism, deepening the distress in the country even after post-colonization.

After analyzing the textual evidence critically, we affirm that Adichie emphasizes the importance of critical humanism and thin morality in addressing the historico-cultural trauma prevalent in postcolonial nations like Nigeria to overcome all sorts of conflict and hatred and repair human relationships. The ethics of coexistence is the only remedy that can finally lead societies from chaos to order, which is implied at the end of the narrative.

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contributed to addressing comments from reviewers, revising, and editing. The second author is also a corresponding author of this article.

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