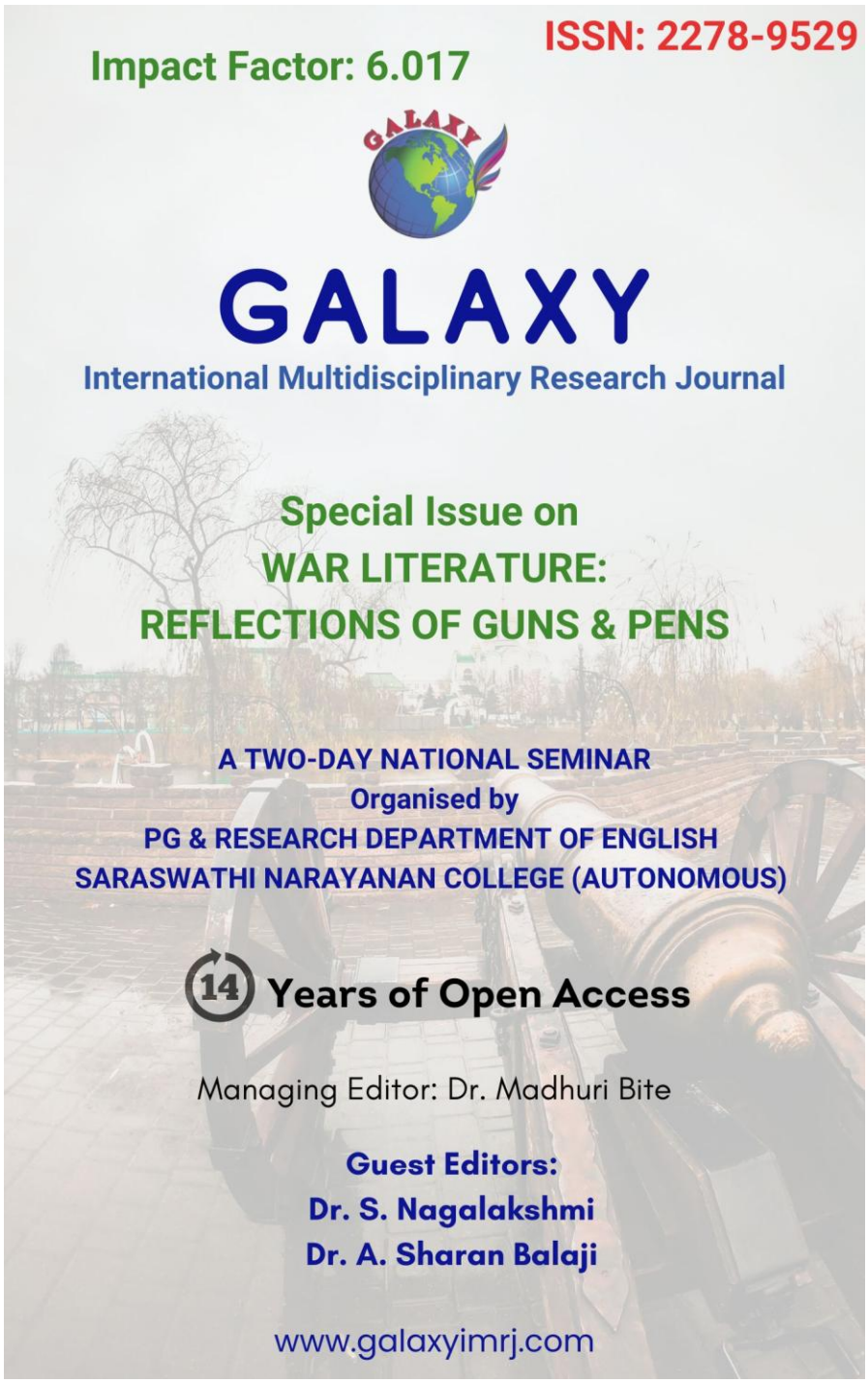


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"No Victor, No Vanquished" Rhetorical Analysis of Historical and Political Dimension of Biafra Civil War Scar

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Abstract:

Wars have basically changed the world order in the recent past. Conflicts constantly exist in the historical and political development of the nation. The struggle for freedom, self-determination, and justice are the main factors for the cause of wars. The paper aims at the exploration of civil war in Nigeria during 1960s to analyse the historical overview of the social, political and cultural conflicts. The paper also highlights the misrepresentation of the Nigerian civil war. It also analyses the social behaviour of the victims during the civil war. War constantly challenges human society and is a predominant security threat. Max Weber's conflict theory is applied with reference to the novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* by Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie.

Keywords: Conflict, Stratification, transmogrification, collective memory, and ethnic tension.

War is the nut of the shell of violence. The distinct features and dimensional delineations are not limitative. As Van der Dennen opines "War or the state of belligerence, is a very special category of violence. The ultimate motive of the war is to bring peace in quite contrary war and peace lie in the same dimension of power." As Von Clausewitz (1911) defines war as an act of violence intended to compel our opponents fulfill our will. There are so many factors behind the tragic scene of civil war in Nigeria. International intervention plays a major role in the broad spectrum of armed belligerence. The revolutionary uprising activities staged by the militants like wars of liberation and secession.

The Nigerian Civil War also known as Biafra Civil War was fought between 1967 and 1970. It is a political and ethnic conflict between Nigeria's federal government and the secessionist state of Biafra. The main causes of the war were ethnic tension, economic inequality, and educational disparities which killed sea of thousands of lives. The eastern region of Nigeria declared its independence from federal Nigeria in May 1967. It was inhabited by most of the Igbo communities and the war lasted for three years.

Historical Perspective

The nature of war and its strategies are transformed in the passage of time after the world wars. The perspective towards conventional war has been changed in the minds of the people. Anyone in the power structure can claim and fix the territorial boundaries of the innocent and ignorant natives of Africa. Imperial forces colonized many African nations including Nigeria which exerts indirect neo-colonial influences over them till today. In 1960s English forces manipulate the Nigerian innocents to be fallen in corruption in want of natural resources.

The North and Southern part of Nigeria were amalgamated in 1914 for administrative purposes, ignoring cultural and ethnic roots between the regions. It is a preplanned conspiracy

to create uneven development and political power conflict. After the independence, they struggled to resolve the rivalries that existed among the different regions. The ethnic tensions plagued by the Igbo officers in 1966 subverted the entire nation. It triggers anti-Igbo states in the North of Nigeria.

Political Perspective

The federal government of Nigeria has captured the power and the economic hardships tend the people to go for corruption and fall into the betrayal of federal troops. The other community Hausa Muslim federals advance terror over the Igbo people and they dominate all sectors of the society. Food and shelter are the basic needs of any human civilization. The civil war is brought intentionally to erase the roots of Igbo traces in Nigeria and so federals blocked food transfers in the relief camps and they attacked people anytime through bombshells and air raids. People are forced to move to survive in their homelands. Evacuation is the expected outcome of the imperial power to benefit for them.

“Biafra will live forever nothing will stop us was the gist of their anthem” (Web) in the Igbo language. The rights of Nigerians were crushed to nothing by killing their Igbo roots. In the name of preserving unity over the entire nation Federal government prevent the dissolution of Nigeria but the primary concern is to take control of the oil-rich Niger Delta in the eastern region. The war attracts international intervention like UK and Soviet Union. Humanitarian concern arises due to the famine caused by the insufficient supply of food in the relief camps.

There was an unfair play of power over the Nigerians and the generals were overthrown if they are not capable enough to stage the show over the masses. People are made to believe through the promising words of generals in radio broadcasting. It is like a computer game where the villains as determined by the coding are zapped with the rise of

executive orders until another villain pops up. It is highly relevant to the unstable ambience of Nigeria and both corrupted generals and federals zap indirectly to throw out the natives.

If there is a raging fire in oil wealth regions of Nigeria, it is the imperial powers that are behind it. If there are bombshells and air raids, it is because of inequality, social threat, ethnic disparity, economic hardships, corrupted armed forces, and poor education. Capitalist nations are grotesquely powerful and Nigerians in its path frequently tend to be powerless. The dream of independence of Nigeria is not completely died. The story of civil war is altogether different in their epic scale of cruelty and envisaged there.

They were under pressure from British neo colonial powers and so forced displacement underwent. No human voices echo over the Nigerian genocide during the civil war. The mass killings and war are because of the natural resources of oil wealth. There is no such Hausa deep resentment of Igbo community and so two state ideologies is ruled out to form one state solution. Skyne R.Uku in his book The Pan African Movement and the Nigerian Civil War describes Nigeria as a country that has gone from a magnitude of hope and possibility down to a level of … economic impotence (Uka 14)

The war comes to an end on January 15, 1970 after Biafra forces surrendered and Federal government announced “No victor, No Vanquished” to bring in reconciliation. The horror face of Biafra civil war is referred in the novel Half of a Yellow Sun by Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie who is a well known novelist deal with theme of civil war tensions, migration, Identity crisis, Survival, economic crisis, socio-political scenario of Nigeria during the war times. The real face of the war history is portrayed in the novel and the entanglements of internal politics and international intervention is well documented through the lives of Olanna and Kainene, Odenigbo and Richard. Ugwu is the narrator of the novel and the entire story is depicted from the eyes of thirteen year old boy Ugwu and how his life is

transmogrified from boyhood to a conscripted soldier. There are many traumatic incidents namely dark swoop, shell shock, paranoia, anxiety and palpitation discussed through the sufferings of the major lives in the novel. The novel is a true reflection of the real Nigerian victims in the war times.

The impact of civil war is continued and influences contemporary socio-political issues related to power dynamics, self determination and national connect. The novel explores the effects of conflicts on individuals, families and communities. The major themes are Identity and belonging, Love and relationships, colonial legacy and gender issues. The novel portrays the deep scar which is left on collective memory of the nation. Based on Max Weber's conflict theory he states, "more than one conflict over property existed at any given moment in any given society." (Web) This ideology helps to explain the enmity between rich and power within any society. His idea provides deep insights into understanding how power, authority, social stratification and cultural values contribute to conflicts within the society.

Applying the concepts of Max Weber in the novel the power dynamics is challenged by the revolutionary leaders and the conflict arise within the two different ethnic communities. The social stratification is framed incorporating status and class. Both determine one's relationship to the means of production and social interactions. The downtrodden people suffered a lot than elite class who still prefers to enjoy their luxurious comforts amidst war times. The commoners are disturbed in the string of puppet play of civil war. Olanna, Odenigbo and Ugwu are the victims and Olanna's father is a sign of brutal elite reality.

The paper analyses the historical and political perspective of Biafra civil war in Nigeria between 1967 and 1970. International intervention and failure of International aid agencies are the main cause of the loss of thousands of lives. It also brings out the trauma and

horrific reality of the victims through several characters. The role of generals and their rhetorical play of words are highlighted to show how innocent civilians are betrayed for their ignorance.

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