

## **Postcolonial Massacres and Psycho-Neurosis in Chinua Achebe's *There Was a Country***

**By**

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### **Abstract**

The Nigeria Civil War was fought from 1967 to 1970 but the nostalgic reflections of the gruesome theatrical experiences, pogroms still trigger mental disturbance among the survivors. Combatants and survivors alike occasionally recount the persistent recurrence of images and memories of the postcolonial insurrection and the pogroms by the federal soldiers and the consequential psychological effects on millions of the survivors. The study therefore examines the psychological effects of the postcolonial massacres of citizens and the psycho-neurotic sufferings of the survivors in Chinua Achebe's *There Was a Country*. Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory is adopted as a framework, exploring the underlying factors responsible for psychological fragmentation of post Civil War victims. Sections of Chinua Achebe's *There Was a Country* which captures the pogroms and the traumatic effects on citizens were purposively selected and subjected to literary analysis. Apart from the primary text, secondary materials gathered from various sources were consulted and their information used to illuminate the textual analytical discourse. Chinua Achebe's narrative presents the horrifically traumatic experiences of gruesome extermination of people during the Civil War. Some of the information for the writing were drawn from people with in-depth knowledge of the national disasters caused by the secessionist struggle.

**Keywords:** psycho-neurotic, insurrection, pogrom, combatants, peace

### **Introduction**

The post-independence Nigeria was characterized by socio-economic and political turbulence that climaxed into historical declaration of secession by Odumegwu Ojukwu in May 30, 1967. The war that claimed millions of lives of citizens and destruction of property lasted for 30 months under the regime of General Yakubu Gowon. The posttraumatic disorders caused by the war still haunt survivors, veterans and combatants in general. The images of the Civil War triggers psychological problems such as phobic-anxieties, posttraumatic stress disorders, seasonal disorders and so on, which are captured in works of literary writers. Bhuvanewari (2017:49) notes that “writers do find the ways of expressing their secret fantasies, desires and observations through their literary works and dreams.” These elements are repressed in the unconscious mind which serves as storehouse but the activation of mental consciousness makes the past suppressed images, symbols and feelings become memorable to writers. It is established that “literature is seen as an analogy to fantasy and is treated as a symptom of a particular writer, and the literary character is treated as if he was a living being within the fantasy” (Bhuvanewari, 2017:51). The above depicts that every literary production emanates from the psychic contents of the writer and this is either based on his personal experience, societal observations or imaginative work.

The interface between literature and psychology cannot be overemphasized because the mind is the epicenter of creativity and writers can retrospectively and consciously produced literary works. Through the various genres of literature particularly the prose fiction, historical, socio-cultural and political happenings which affect human existentiality and psychological wellness are brought to the fore. Stishin (2018:155) notes that “psychology comprises all the mental activity of human beings, whether conscious or unconscious. Literature is also a mental activity of the author who puts forward his views and visions about the persons, events, or world with the great power of imagination.” This argument affirms the interconnectivity between the above fields of study which entails the activation of the unconscious level to a state of consciousness. Stishin (2018:154) asserts that “the writer with his intuitive and imaginative power penetrates into the soul of man and discloses his findings to the public. This is the literary text.” The scholar

implies that a writer has the capability to probe into the psyche of characters to uncover the unconscious materials influencing their thoughts and behavioural patterns in society.

Literary works are also the reflections of the underlying psychological and emotional problems of writers. Shahwan, 2017:2) finds that “the literary texts is the symptom of the author; the work of literature reveals unconscious desires and repressed wishes that can be found in many forms of a text, characters, symbols as well as offensive and defensive writings.” It can therefore be deduced from the foregoing submission that literary writing as mental activity has unquantifiable significance which include activation of mental and emotional feelings, didactic function, social cohesion, purgatory, social and political reformation, among others. NOUN (2014:271) asserts that literature produced by cultures of former colonies serve “as an avenue to probe into the history of society by recreating its past experience with the mind of forestalling the repetition of history.” However, with regards to literary texts written after political independence in former colonized territories, it has been established that “the ultimate for the postcolonial critic is to develop a kind of nostalgia about his historical moment that produces a new dawn in his society” (272). Although the Nigeria-Biafra War was fought fiercely and gallantly several years ago, writers still psychologically reflected on the brutalities carried out by the federal soldiers.

The unpleasant memories of the killings obviously triggered mental fragmentation which influenced artistic productions of Chinua Achebe, Isidore Okpewho, Elechi Amadi, Buchi Emechata and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, to mention a few. In most of the Civil War writings, settings, characters, actions and techniques are presented based on personal experiences or observations of the writers. Kehinde and Mbipom (2011:62) note that, “African literature constantly reflects an attempt at narrating the African experience, the struggles associated with imperialism and its relics of denigration and opposition which seem to remain visible features of post-independence African.” This study therefore examines postcolonial massacres and psychoneurotic condition in Chinua Achebe’s *There Was a Country*. It focuses on the mental fragmentation triggered by the Nigeria military’s gruesome extermination of humanity during national conflicting situation. The research is thematically explored as follows: the role of

intellectuals and creative artists, gruesome massacres, sexual bestiality and looting, economic strategy and starvation, as well as media war. The study further explores the psychological perspective of the narrative, thus: purgatory, sublimation and expository nature of the work.

### Literature Review

Studies on Nigeria-Biafra War abound, however, the aspect of postcolonial traumatic and psycho-neurosis in Chinua Achebe's *There Was a Country* has not received adequate scholarly attention which it deserves. Ige (2019:3) examines the style and ideology nexus in Achebe's and Adichie's Nigerian Civil War narratives. The selected texts are *There Was a Country* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*. The scholar argues that previous critical works focus on thematisation, characterization and pragmatic investigation of the novels. Ige finds that the Civil War provided "inspiration for many writers especially those that were directly involved." As a psychological war novel, "writers poured out their frustration, anger and memories for the world to see" (Ige, 2019:3). Ige's research provides insight into the current study that investigates postcolonial massacre and psychoneurotic condition in Chinua Achebe's *There Was a Country*. Ifeagwazi (2012:257) explores the mental health status of a sample of veterans who fought on the Biafran side during the Nigeria-Biafra Civil War. The scholar asserts that Biafran Armed Forces was formed to defend the Biafran enclave and when the war ended, the men who fought the 30-month Civil War became war veterans. Returnee soldiers in a war are known as veterans." The above study illuminates the present research which explores the postcolonial massacres in Chinua Achebe's *There Was a Country* and also focuses on the psychoneurotic condition of the writer even after the Nigeria-Biafra War fought several years ago.

Adamu's (2016:156) study extends the research of Ifeagwazi by focusing on "the socio-psychological effects of the Nigerian Civil War. The findings show that the conflict was due to "economic, ethnic, cultural and religious tensions among the various people of Nigeria." The study further reveals that "Tribal tensions increased after a military coup in 1966 which resulted in General Aguiyi-Ironyi, an Igbo, taking power as President. This was followed by a northern-led counter-coup a few months later. Aguiyi-Ironsi was killed and widespread reprisals were unleashed against the Igbo"(156). Ogene and Nwakaego (2021:9) investigate how

both fiction and non-fictional works of Ada Okere Agbasimalo's *The Forest Dames* and Alexander Madiebo's *The Nigerian Revolution and the Biafran War* portray the war trauma and other agonizing shades of the war. The above study presents as a conclusion, "the overall impact of the violence, pains and traumatic situations of the war gleaned from the selected works which have continued to serve as great materials for writers on both historical and fictional sides of the war literatures and narratives"(9). Psychological writings are meant to explore the motives behind authorial works, the behaviours and actions of the characters created in the texts whether they are symbolic or fictitious and the effects of the artistic writings on readers.

Saiel (2023:23) investigates Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's the Civil War, *Half of a Yellow Sun* with major focus on the conflicts between ethnic groups, war disputes, race contention, conflicts between cultures, historical disagreement and decolonization. The scholar also explores the novel as a decolonized narrative against war, conflicts and violence. Nwachukwu and Nwachukwu (2017:7) carry out evaluative excursion into Isidore Okpewho's delineation of gender in war and its concomitants regarding actions, inactions, and the mindset of the actors and the acted-upon (victims) of the fratricidal Nigerian conflict within a designated theatre as captured in *The Last Duty*. Emenike, and Asuzu (2020:131) investigate sexual exploitation of women in Nigerian war novels. The scholars specifically focus on women's sexual experiences and the implication of non-consensual sexual relationship on women and the wider society using Isidore Okpewho's *The Last Duty*. The research finds that the experiences of the women are occasioned by the war situation. The foregoing studies illuminate the current research which extends scholarship by investigating postcolonial massacres and their psychoneurotic effects on literary writers including Chinua Achebe.

Engebretson's (2021:1) study centres on articulations of postcolonial sovereignty in the literature of the Nigeria-Biafra War, beginning with novels written as the war was being fought and concluding in the early 20st century." The scholar finds that "a defining trauma of modern Nigerian history, the war produced a rich and sustained vein of writing that stretches from the late 1960s through the present day, encompassing canonical Nigerian novels as well as a number of British and diasporic texts." Critical works on psychoanalytic study of fictions abound across

the world because of the influence the former has on various disciplines including literature. Meiliana (2020:9) corroborates the above by arguing that “literature is a product of human thought. It can be influenced by the environment of the author; even it may contain the author’s way of life. Whilst, most people consider that literary works are mirror of human life. In other words, literary works are used by authors for telling what they feel and see and what they face in the social life involving human activities.” The literary works are channels through which repressed pleasure, pains, instinctual drives, gratification, etc. are brought to public domain. In other words, all unfulfilled dreams, desires or traumatic experiences, images and symbols, are activated from unconscious level to consciousness.

### **Methodology**

This research is library-based and there is no fieldwork that entails gathering of information and data through interviews. Relevant sections of Chinua Achebe’s *There Was a Country* which capture the Civil War pogrom and the traumatic effects on citizens were purposively selected and subjected to literary analysis. The text explores autobiographical and historical characters, events and feelings which must be carefully studied in relation to the affects of postcolonial Nigeria-Biafra War that consumed millions of lives. Apart from the primary text, secondary materials gathered from various sources were consulted and their information used to illuminate the textual analytical discourse.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalytic theory is adopted as a framework to underpin the discourse of this study. scholars across the world apply this theoretical framework traceable to Psychoanalysis, to various fields of human endeavours such as medicine, legal studies, sociology, literature, religion, education and cultural studies, to mention a few. The theory has unarguably influenced the study and understanding of other disciplines. Hossain (2017:1) asserts that psychoanalysis “has been used and helped to understand various fields such as philosophy, culture, religion and first and for most used in literature.” The above submission depicts that the underlying factors responsible for psychological fragmentation of survivors of post-civil war. The above affirms the view of Niaz, *et al* (2019:36) that “an artistic work is a production of the writer’s own particular

mental events. The analysis draws out the unconscious part of articulation through its focus on the relationship in the middle of origin and social division." The scholars acknowledged Hossain (2017:1) who establishes that "psychoanalysis as the modern theory is used in literature and has two meanings: firstly, it's used as methods of treating mentally disordered people. Secondly, it is used to explain human mind and its various complexities." This submission of the scholar implies that individuals including writers who experience traumatic wars can be treated through psychological means and in relation to literature.

Ahmad and Nayab (2019:55) note that "psychoanalysis is a broad field that encompasses the study of human thinking, behaviour, development, personality, and much more. Research in psychoanalysis seeks to understand and explain how people think, act, and feel. Psychoanalyst strives to learn more about many factors that can impact thought and behaviour, ranging from biological influences to social pressures." Devardhi (2009:438) affirms the significance of psychoanalytic theory in evaluation of artistic works by emphasizing that "a literary text gives us a profound understanding of the unconsciousness of the author and in the study of characters and their actions in a literary text, and at the same time provides us with a thorough understanding of the nature of man in general." Kumara (2016:34) observes that "psychoanalytic criticism and theories are applied to literature to understand human relationship at conscious, subconscious and unconscious level." This theory exposes the various levels of consciousness which are germane to the current research. This theoretical framework exposes the intrinsic worlds of writers and the fictional characters in the chosen text. In addition to the foregoing, it helps to uncover the underlying factors responsible for the dysfunctional thoughts and negative behavioural patterns of man in society.

### **The Nigeria-Biafra War Novels**

The Nigeria Civil War served as source of inspiration for several writers and the literary productions of the national historical tragedy are acknowledged in this study. Some of the novels include Flora Nwapa's *Never Again* (1975), Chukwuemeka Ike's *Sunset at Dawn* (1976), Elechi Amadi's *Sunset in Biafra* (1973), Cyprian Ekwensi's *Survive the Peace* (1976) and *The Nigerian Revolution and The Biafran War* (1980), Buchi Emecheta's *Destination Biafra* (1982), Wole Soyinka's *The Man Died* (1971), Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu's *Because I Am Involved* (1989),

Emefiana Ezeani's *In Biafra Africa Died: The Diplomatic Plot* (2012) and Frederick Forsyth's *The Biafra Story: The Making of an African Legend* (1969). This author and journalist exposes the brutalities which the Biafrans suffered in the hands of the federal soldiers and the survival strategies they adopted.

The Nigeria Civil War that chronicled unquantifiable number of casualties also inspired creative works like Anthonial Kalu's *Broken Lives and Other Stories* (2003), Alfred Obiora Uzokwe's memoir, *Surviving in Biafra: The Story of the Nigerian Civil War* (2003). This artistic work explores the war from the childhood perspective. Isidore Okpewho, Chinua Achebe, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Buchi Emecheta and Kole Omotoso have also chronicled the Nigeria-Biafra War in some of their writings.

### **Textual Analysis**

The paper examines experience of the Nigeria-Biafra War that continuously trigger emotional disturbance to the writers particularly Chinua Achebe. The discourse of this research is presented based on the writer's perspective of the historical traumatic event.

### **Intellectuals and Creative Artists**

Nigerian writers play various significant roles on both sides of the national conflict that lasted for three years. First, Achebe employs this autobiographical expository channel to reveals actual casualties of the conflict which escalated to include thousands of lives and destruction of valuable properties across the theatre zone, Eastern part of Nigeria. According to the writer:

We, the intellectuals, were deeply disillusioned by the ineptitude of Nigeria's ruling elite and by what we saw taking place in our young nation. As far as their relationship with the masses was concerned, Nigerian politicians, we felt, had slowly transformed themselves into the personification of Anwu-the wasp- a notorious predator from the insect kingdom (108).

The writer further portrays the dreadful nature of the post-independence politicians thus: "Wasps, African children learn during story time, greet unsuspecting prey with a painful, paralyzing sting, then lay eggs on their body,



which then proceed to “eat the victim alive”(108). Through this narrative, readers can explore the psyche of the writer and understand his emotional feelings over the destructive nature of the political class that caused the national disasters that lasted for three years.

Achebe expresses the emotional disturbance of the intellectuals during the Nigeria-Biafra War and their decision to support either side for their diverse reasons. The author captures that the fact that, “intellectuals had other reasons to despair: We were especially disheartened by the disintegration of the state because we were brought up in the belief that we were destined to rule. Our Northern Nigerian brethren had similar sentiments, but those feelings came from a totally different understanding of the world”(108). In furtherance, Achebe reports that, “so many intellectuals plays an active role in various capacities during the war years. Some of us evolved into “public intellectuals” through the period of the national crisis leading up to the war and exposed distortions and misrepresentations within the political system”(108). The renowned writer identifies the intellectuals that were involved in the war to include Cyprian Ekwensi, Gabriel Okara, Wole Soyinka, Kenneth Onwula Dike, Vincent Chukwuemeka Ike, Florence Nwanzuruahu Nwapa (Flora Nwapa) and Christopher Okigbo, to mention a few.

### **The Asaba Massacre**

Chinua Achebe recounts the national tragedy caused by the Federal soldiers in Asaba. According to his narrative: “the federal forces were soon able to snatch Benin from Biafra military hands and advance quickly toward the River Niger, arriving in Asaba in early October 1967”(133). The writer however reports one of the versions of the massacre, thus: “Murtala Muhammed-Chief Commander (GOC) Division Two- and his lieutenants, including Colonel Ibrahim Haruna, felt humiliated by the Biafran Mid-Western offensive.” The writer psychologically reflects on the drastic step taken to dislodge the Biafran forces and reclaim Benin leading to the popular Asaba Massacre; “Armed with street orders to retake the occupied areas at all costs, this division rounded up and shot as many defenseless Igbo men and boys as they could find. Some reports place the death toll at five hundred, others as high as one thousand”(134). Achebe describes the extent of the

devastation caused by the Federal soldiers during the Civil War as unprecedented with innumerable deaths. The narrative further reveals that:

The Asaba Massacre, as it would be known, was only one of many such postpogrom atrocities committed by Nigerian soldiers during the war. It became a particular abomination for Asaba residents, as many of those killed were titled Igbo chiefs and common folk alike, and their bodies were disposed of with reckless abandon in mass graves, without regard to the wishes of the families of the victims or the town's ancient tradition(134).

The writer externalizes his emotional conflict and condemns completely the cruel extermination of both the traditional chiefs and the helpless downtrodden in the society. He adopts the journalistic reporting style and the visual descriptive technique to reveal his "unresolved emotions, psychological conflicts and so on (Naye, 2019:56). In the narrative, Achebe feels that the Nigeria military violated the primordial tradition of the Igbo of organizing a formal funeral rites for the dead specifically the "titled Igbo chiefs and common folk" (134) who were victims of the Asaba Massacre. The writer employs the narrative as a subliminal strategy to convert libidinal energies caused by the psychopathological condition of the Civil War to mental and physical activity that is productive, socially acceptable and economically profitable.

### **The Calabar Massacre**

This is another traumatic experience recounted by Chinua Achebe in this fictional work. According to the narrative, "The Nigerian forces overran Calabar in the early 1968 without much resistance or investment. A seat of the ancient kingdom of the same name, Calabar is in the southeastern part of Biafra, on the banks of the majestic Calabar River" (137). The writer describes the historic significance of the town thus; "It had for decades been a melting pot Easterners-Efik, Ibibio, Igbo, and others- that had produced a beautiful cultural mosaic of traditions and dialects." The writer also recounts that:

In actions reminiscent of the Nazi policy of eradicating Jews throughout Europe just twenty years earlier, the Nigerian forces decided to purge the city of its Igbo inhabitants. By the time the

Nigerians were done they had “shot at least 1,000 and perhaps 2,000 Ibos (sic), most of them civilians (137).

Achebe interrogates other atrocities committed by the Federal soldiers throughout the region. According to the prolific writer, *The Times of London* “In Oji River” reported that on August 2, 1968, “the Nigerian forces opened fire and murdered fourteen nurses and the patients in the wards.” Moreso, “In Uyo and Ikigwe more innocent lives were lost to the brutality and blood lust of the Nigerian soldiers.” The journalistic style of reportage and the retrospective techniques deployed by Achebe in the historical narrative expose the traumatic war events in the battle zone of Calabar. There are auditory and visual images which enhance imagination of actions of the military in various war zones in the South East, Nigeria. The autobiographical writing is expository and purgatory since several historical issues revolving round the Nigeria-Biafra War are exposed. Also, the narrative serves as a strategy adopted by the writer to release his psychological and emotional pains.

### **Sexual Bestiality and Looting**

Chinua Achebe also captures the sexual harassments of the Nigerian soldiers and their instinctual drives for looting during the Civil War. The writer reports that: “In April 1968, the Nigerians decided to mount a major strategic and tactical offensive designed to cut Biafra off from the seacoast. The over forty thousand troops of the Third Division, led by army colonel Benjamin Adekunle, engaged in an amphibious, land, and air on-slaught on the Niger River Delta city of Port Harcourt. After several weeks of sustained air, land, and sea pounding, a period reportedly characterized by military atrocities- rapes, looting, outright brigandry- Port Harcourt fell to the Nigerians on May 12, 1968”(137). The repressed instinctual drives, desires and gratification of the Federal soldiers are activated during the period of the Civil War.

The writer also reports that, “The Third Division slowly marched north, crossing the Imo River, toward the market town of Aba. With heavy casualties along the way, Adekunle and his men shot gleefully through a fierce Biafran resistance and took Aba in August and Owerri in September” (137-138). Achebe has demonstrated profound knowledge of the Nigeria Civil War, chronicling famous

towns, characters and events that characterized the historical phenomenon. The writer employed dramatic presentational technique to report the movement of the Federal soldiers into Aba and Owerri.

### **Economic Strategy and Starvation**

During wars, various strategic plans are designed and executed by military commanders and government. In the artistic production, Achebe presents the economic measure adopted by the Nigeria government under General Yakubu Gowon to deal with the secessionist Biafran soldiers. There was total prevention of economic flow to the Eastern part of Nigeria. Basic necessities of human existence such as food, portable water and medicines, among others were disallowed into the Biafran territory. According to the fictional writing:

The agony was everywhere. The economic blockade put in place by Nigeria's federal government resulted in shortages of every imaginable necessity, from food and clean water to blankets and medicines. The rations had gone from one meal a day to one meal every other day- to nothing at all. Widespread starvation and disease of every kind soon set in. The suffering of the children was the most heart wrenching (199-200).

The decision of the Federal government was designed to weaken the power of the secessionist soldiers and their supporting citizens within and outside the battle zone. In advancing the foregoing discourse, the writer reports another historical aspect of the economic blockade and starvation which people experienced during the three-year war. According to the narrative: "The Biafrans paid a great humanitarian price by ceding a great deal of territory to the Nigerians and employing this war strategy. The famine worsened as the war raged, as the traditional Igbo society of farmers could not plant their crops" (209-210). The autobiographical narrative also captures the measure adopted by the Federal military government to prevent importation of arms and ammunition as well as foreign supports such as provision of relief materials and medicines. The postcolonial writer captures the foregoing in the narrative thus, "Gowon had succeeded in cutting Biafra off from the sea, robbing its inhabitants of shipping ports to receive military and humanitarian supplies" (210). The supply of humanitarian materials cuts across war zones in the world because several

innocent citizens suffer throughout the period. However, the Federal government prevented the inflow of materialistic and healthcare services as a part of their strategies to conquer their opponents which was achieved in the end.

Achebe reflects psychologically on the unquantifiable consequences of the Civil War which according to him include: "The afflictions marasmus and kwashiorkor began to spread farther, with the absence of protein in the diet, and they were compounded by outbreaks of other disease epidemics and diarrhea. The landscape was filled by an increasing number of those avian prognosticators of death as the famine worsened and the death toll mounted: udene, the vultures" (210). The author employs visual descriptive technique in the narrative to make the horrific experience memorable to reader who might not be privy to the traumatic theatrical Civil War, thus; "By the beginning of the dry season of 1968, Biafran civilians and soldiers alike were starving. Bodies lay rotting under the hot sun by the roadside, and the flapping wings of scavengers could be seen circling, waiting, watching patiently nearby." (210).

In furtherance of the psychological introspections, the writer notes that, "some estimates are that over a thousand Biafrans a day were perishing by this time, and at the height of Gowon's economic blockade and "starve them into submission" policy, upward of fifty thousand Biafran civilians, most of them babies, children, and women, were dying every single month"(210). Although the Civil War ended fifty four years ago, the psychological traumatic experience is still fresh in the memories of war novelists who directly or indirectly witnessed the historical national tragedy. In the minds of these writers including Chinua Achebe, the Nigeria war created an unresolved psychic conflict, leading to anxieties, and traumatic condition. The writer however chose this channel to externalize his pent-up emotions and dysfunctional thoughts.

### **The Media War**

The emergence of the new media such as the television, radio, newspaper and so on, has contributed immensely towards the dissemination of information to people globally. In the autobiographical work under study, Achebe has revealed the deployment of the media through the Nigeria Civil War. The writer observes that "The Nigeria-Biafra War was arguably the first fully televised conflict in

history. It was the first time scenes and pictures- blood, guts, severed limbs- from the war front flooded into homes around the world through television sets, radios, newsprint, in real time" (199). The literary writer further reveals that, "it probably gave television evening news its first chance to come into its own and invade without mercy the sanctity of people's living rooms with horrifying scenes of children immiserated by modern war" (199). The television as an audio-visual method of communication helps political analysts and researchers in critical evaluation and documentation of the national disasters caused by the Civil War phenomenon. For instance, some pathetic images of people especially children murdered by soldiers were covered by journalists and broadcast on television stations.

The novelist also captures the role of world press coverage of the Civil War. According to the narrative, "One of the silver linings of the conflict (if one can even call it that) was the international media's presence throughout the war. The sheer amount of media attention on the conflict led to an outpouring of international public outrage at the war's brutality" (199). A critical study of the historical documentation reveals that the Nigeria-Biafra War was televised by both national and international media which attracted attention of government and individuals across the world. The nostalgic reflections on the horrific events of the War are capable of continuously activating psychopathological problems such as anxieties, emotional distress and posttraumatic disorders.

### **Conclusion**

The study critically examined the psychic and emotional sufferings of Chinua Achebe who even though lives in the diasporic world, psychologically reflect on the extermination of the Biafran secessionists and the people of the South East Nigeria. Achebe's *There Was a Country* presents a Postcolonial nation that was marred with political instability, corruption, nepotism and tribal sentiment, to mention a few. The title of the literary text depicts that the existence of the nationhood called Nigeria was terminated at the declaration of the Republic of Biafra by Odumegwu Ojukwu leading to killings of the rebel soldiers who had taken over several areas as part of their territory. The writer's introspection into the traumatic experience activated pathetic scenes of mass killings, graves, rapes, famine and other dehumanizing acts.

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