

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*: A Transmitted Trauma

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ABSTRACT

War atrocities have always had dreadful consequences. The Psychoanalysis which focuses on the effects of war on the individual psyche, reveals that the outcome of what is called trauma lasts for a longtime and are transferable from an individual to another and even from a generation to another through some defined channels. Backing up on these channels and interviews granted by the authoress, this study shows that Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* is aftereffects of a trans-generational trauma experienced by her parents deriving from the tragic war of Biafra.

Introduction ¹

The pith which constitutes the source of inspiration of a writer is as diverse as the number of those involved in the production of works of art. Most of the time, they are deep rooted in the unconscious as M.A.R. Habib (2005:571) writes:

In a sense, Freud postulated that we bear a form of "otherness" within ourselves: we cannot claim fully to comprehend even ourselves, why we act as we do, why we harbour given religious dispositions and intellectual orientations. Even when we think we are acting from a given motive, we may be deluding ourselves; and much of our thought and action is not freely determined by us but driven by unconscious forces which we can barely fathom. Moreover, far from being based on reason, our thinking is ultimately dependent upon the body, upon its instincts of survival and aggression, as well as obstinate features that cannot be dismissed (...) such as size, color, gender, and social situation.

It is obvious that the writer does not fully apprehend all the influences surrounding his creation, that the forces which impulse his inspiration are somehow unknown and certainly not really mastered. What inspires authors may have its origin in traumatic events they witness or experienced by their relatives. This means that literary works are mirrors of the society and the theme of war and its subsequent atrocities, including psychological trauma has not escaped them.

This urges us to wonder whether a literary production is a response to a Trauma or a transmitted Trauma. Put in another way, what are the mechanisms of transmission from a generation to another?

Since the Nigerian civil war ended almost seven years before her birth, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's commitment to Biafra war may be an answer to an important amount of information given to her by those who have suffered from it either in their flesh or in their soul. The impact of such a trauma is so powerful that it triggers nightmarish narratives years after the event.

Contemporary African literary production on Biafra war is rich enough that it has an acknowledged name of "Biafra war literature". Most of these critical works tackle the political impact of this civil war; others consider its sociological drawbacks. Dealing with "Socio-Cultural Dynamics of Displacement in Adichie's Novels" for instance, O.V. Onyango, K. Magak and C. Muhoma, (2018:464), write:

The experiences of war, with their psychological scars, still haunt many generations of African writers and what is more deeply felt at a social level is not the direct effects of a conflagration (number of deaths, loss of property, political instability), but a sense of insecurity, a deeply felt psychological trauma which destabilizes the entire structure on which the individuals caught in the conflict had constructed their identity.

Similarly, J.C. Harley explores Adichie, Mbachu, and Iweala's works, and concludes that the Biafra war is a "Heritage and a Symbol of hard times". In "Writing Biafra: Adichie, Emecheta and the Dilemmas of Biafran War Fiction", H. Hodges focuses on Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* and Emecheta's *Destination Biafra* which interweave this tragic civil war. However, in "Biafra and Aesthetics aspects of the closure Third Generation Nigerian Novel", K. Madhu analyzes stylistic devices used by four novelists among which Adichie in order to contextualize this dramatic historical period Nigerians went through for about three years.

From the above works, one easily infers that though the authors' sources of inspiration are somehow foggy and unclear, the link between them and the concept of trauma is obvious. However, the study of the different mechanism of the transmission of trauma from a generation to another in African literature is still very rare.

This study purports to fill this lacuna for it explores Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* as a literary platform upon which the socio-cultural trajectories, and mainly the Biafran war trauma have been ventilated upon. The rationale behind our choice of the authoress and her novel is that Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is one of the most prominent and feminist female Nigerian novelists whose novel on the Biafran war has been highly appreciated. In this respect, in the preface to *Half of a Yellow* (2006:5), Chinua Achebe, one of the greatest Nigerian novelists, notes that:

We do not usually associate wisdom with beginners, but here is a new writer endowed with the gift of ancient storytellers.... She (Adichie) is fearless, or she would not have taken on the intimidating horror of Nigeria's civil war. Adichie came almost fully made. (emphasis mine)

In the same wake, praising Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie as a major inheritor of an engaging literary tradition embodied by Chinua Achebe, H. Akubuiro (online) makes the following pronouncement:

Juxtaposed with Chinua Achebe's Aristotle-like praise of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's accomplishment as a historical/war novelist, Joyce Carol Oates' description of Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* as "a major successor to such twentieth-century classics as Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*" (Half blurb) is significant enough to draw attention to what Adichie has made of her inheritance of that which can be discerned as the Nigerian tradition in literature.

The interest of this paper is threefold. First of all, it uncovers the phenomenon of trauma as a source of inspiration in literature. It also sheds light on the mechanisms of transmission of that trauma through generations. Finally, it analyzes its manifestations in the young generation writers' works.

Two approaches are used as the theoretical prism and will overlap through this study. The psychoanalysis which bridges literature to psychology proves helpful to better the focus on this phenomenon of trauma in order to highlight not only how tragic has been the Biafran war on the individual psyche and manifests itself through daily deeds, but how it is transmitted through generations. Indeed, beyond the psychological implication it may have, the concept of trauma deserves also to be analyzed within a literary angle as N. Heidarizadeth (2015:789) writes:

Literature illustrates the mental trauma by the literary studies. It is a social challenge for gaining the new, fresh, and sharp knowledge by self. Interestingly, trauma has an inherently ethical, social, political and historical dimension? Therefore we cannot limit it only in the psychological studies. It influences naturally to the different fields of the studies in order to show its interdisciplinary role and its profound impact that it has both within and beyond the field of studies.

The paratextual approach which bends on all information surrounding the text will also be resorted to for it provides first handed information about Adichie and her writings.

This study is completed through three main points: prior analyzing the authoress' patrimony, it is worth focusing on the concept of 'trauma' itself and considering Biafra war as a trauma.

The Concept of Trauma

In the *Cambridge Dictionary of Psychology* (2009:552), the concept of 'trauma' is referred to as "any event which inflicts physical damage on the body or severe shock on the mind or both." *The Concise Dictionary of Psychology* (p.133), even furthers that a trauma is "a physical or psychological shock resulting from an injury of violent incident". From these definitions, one easily infers that in its widest sense, a 'trauma' carries connotations of an emotional shock, that is to say, an extremely distressing experience that causes emotional shock and may have long-lasting psychological effects. The signs characterizing this trauma are numerous and depend on the traumatized subject. Accordingly, A. Bombay, K. Matheson and H. Anisman (2009:8) write:

Major depression is characterized by either poor mood or anhedonia (diminished interest or rewarding value of otherwise pleasurable experiences or stimuli), accompanied by at least four symptoms related to either weight changes (decrease or increase), sleep disturbances (insomnia) or hypersomnia), psychomotor retardation or agitation, fatigue, feeling of worthlessness or guilty, diminished cognitive functioning, and recurrent thoughts of death (APA). These symptoms differ across individuals, as do the effectiveness treatment strategies.

In addition, the imagery in the novel is striking for almost all issues, all ideas, and most passages are concretized through the narrator's words to arise appropriate reactions the Nigerian society. The imagery of those descriptions thus enables the narrator to explore the psychological implications emanating from the victims' actions to challenge the war atrocities. S. Diena quoting the Ximenes (2005), for example identifies some additional symptoms of trauma when he writes:

Traumas are characterized by physical and emotional neglect, separation from the caregivers, repeated verbal violence and abuses, protracted exposure to serious depressions, paranoid features or other major parental pathologies (included serious and disabling physical illnesses), continuing distortions of the emotional and cognitive competences by the primary objects and many others. These traumatic experiences are less striking than the traumas characterized by physical or sexual abuse, or by the exposure to dramatic violent events, and for this reason, they developed with little acknowledgement of their traumatic nature by the patient and, worst still, by the external environment.

However, subjects suffering from a trauma have tendency to spread it to surrounding vulnerable subjects. All the same, they can pass it down to coming generations if precautions have not been taken. R. Lew-Weisel (2007:76) buttresses this idea when she writes:

The fifty (state of being stuck) as well as post victimization responses will determine later vulnerability or resilience and to what extent the individual's life will change. The impact of a trauma, therefore, its contagion, such as behaviour patterns, symptoms and values that appeared in one generation that was traumatized but also next the one. [...] the trauma will be passed down as the family legacy, whether or not survivors talked or kept silent, even to children born after the trauma.

From the forgoing, the impact and the transmission of trauma's symptoms from a subject to another or from a generation to another become evident. The trauma is somehow contagious that its propagation is manifest and even unavoidable, and responds to certain norms or mechanisms. A deep sight on this concept of trauma in the psychological lens reveals that the tragedy of the Nigerian civil war can be considered as a trauma experienced not only by the witnesses but also by the progeny to whom this tragic story was told.

Biafra war as a Trauma

At the eve of independence, Nigeria has experienced what is still considered as a tragedy which is known as "Biafra war". In fact, Nigeria has been plunged in a bloody war invigorated by tribal tensions between Igbos and Yoruba is reconstructed by O. Owomoyela (1993:33) as follows:

[Biafra war] was occasioned by the secession of the eastern region of Nigeria under Colonel Chkwemeka, Ojukwu in the wake of the killing of Igbos in Northern Nigeria in 1966, the failure of attempts at a rapprochement, and the decision by the military government under general Yakubu Gowon to prevent the breakup of the Nigerian Federation, the war lasted from 1967 to 1970.

During three years, Biafrans experienced the bitterness of war due to the intensity of atrocity of the two opposed parts in presence as Owomoyela renders:

The actions of both Western nations and rival Eastern bloc countries in the support of one or the other side, as well as the grim realities of starvation, carnage, and destruction, intensified the war's devastating effects on the Nigerian people's lives and on their psychological well-being.

These words clearly show the distress people of Biafra went through. They also reveal that beyond the destruction of infrastructure, impact on individuals' mind is important and a continuing one. This idea is reinforced by E. Bird and F. Ottanelli (2014:393) when they write:

[...] the suffering inflicted by federal troops on a community that was part of the Midwest and therefore lay outside Biafra has left an especially bitter sense of grievance, which has had long-lasting effects.

In effect, the soldiers were abrasive and brutal as they forcefully seized people's cars and other belongings. Young girls also became targets of rape by soldiers. The refugee centres were reported to be swelling with people with kwashiokor and other debilities. The effects of this war on people who have witnessed it affect drastically their mind and its symptoms remain even years after the end of the conflict. This conclusively constitutes what psychologists related to as a post-traumatic stress or simply a trauma. Alluding to the issue D. Darie (1996:831) writes:

Research shows that 60-80% people exposed to war and politic violence directly or indirectly suffer symptoms of post-traumatic stress. Research findings also indicate that mere living in a violent prone area where the media is filled with images and reports of horrible violence destruction as we are witnessing in Nigeria presently can result in people experiencing symptoms of post-traumatic. More importantly, children are more at risk than adult during political violence and war.

This quotation evidences that the rate of the impact of this Biafran war upon individuals is manifest and dreadful. Thanks to the impersonal relationship, the aftermath of this war spread to all those surrounding witness mainly

the offspring which constitutes another generation. The coming point sheds light on trauma transmission as contextualized in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: Patrimony

The allusion to the term 'patrimony' relates to the different means used consciously in the transmission of what is her heritage from her parents. Psychoanalysts shed light on a number of tools which participate in the process of transmission of trauma. In the scope to comprehend motivations in the process of writing of Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*, I just consider a sample of some of them since the issue has been abundantly dealt with.

The first I would like to focus on is 'communication' as the central means in the process of trauma transmission. Indeed, communication is basic in the interpersonal relationship in a family, the interconnection between the different family members has patent and an effective influence. Accordingly, R. Dekel and H. Goldblatt (2008:285) write:

In a family of PTSD victims, communication patterns about the traumatic event and its consequences are central mechanisms in the transmission of distress from father to son. Patterns of communication can range from silence to over disclosure.

The concept of communication evoked in this quotation gathers many other aspects which contribute as well in this process transmitting traumas: silence and over disclosure. These elements appear in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's family life. Let it be reminded that affected by atrocities of the war, Adichie's parents resorted to silence over disclosure to catharsizes their traumatic experiences. Interviewed on the reason that prompts her to write a book about the Nigerian-Biafran war, Adichie alludes to her parents' traumas and says : "*[...] because my father has tears in his eyes when he speaks of losing his father, because his mother still cannot speak at length about losing her father in a refugee camp.*"

This excerpt is very evocative of Adichie's ascendants' life. Indeed, the Adichie's parents' way of communicating conveys not only the information in connection with grandparents and the war but also the effects of emotions it raises. Here, is a father traumatized for having lost his father, and a grandmother also devastated by the loss of her father. Sentences such as "*my father has tears in his eyes when he speaks...*" and "*mother still cannot speak at length...*" epitomize the transmission of trauma from her grandparents to Adichie through silence.

Witnessing one's father's tears in whatever situation will always a very distressful experience for the offspring who, in fine, may bear indelible marks of this trauma throughout their lifetime. Indeed, whenever such hurtful episodes of life are evoked, this makes the child aware of what his parents went through. This evocation establishes a bond between traumatized parents and their progeny for there is a kind of intimacy between parents and children as Dekel and H. Goldblatt (2008:284) put it: "*[...] children who have not been directly exposed to their father's trauma develop similar posttraumatic distress through closeness with the father who has experienced a traumatic event.*"

From the forgoing, one clearly infers that affinity between members of a family acts as an efficient tool in the process of trauma transmission. Indeed, the emotion raised by the evocation of a traumatic event leads to some reactions which explain and justify the transmission of this trauma. R. Lev-Weisel (2007:78) lends credence to this idea when she writes:

According to Plutchik's theory of emotions (1989), each emotion tends to have different effects: sadness often caused by people to close themselves up from the world; anger often motivates action; and shame can either motivate people to effect changes or conversely, to dissociate themselves from what they perceived to be shameful.

As it can be seen, the intimacy between the traumatized subject and his progeny can be considered as an obvious means of passing down distressful emotions from one generation to another.

Obviously, these reasons have urged in the writing of *Half of a Yellow Sun*. For the trauma of Biafra war seems to have affected the author due to her closeness with her father. In fact, apart from the tears Adichie's father used to shed, his familiarity to his daughter is revealed during an interview:

Sorry, I just need to read my dad's text. I have the loveliest father in the world. He sends me these texts-and he should be asleep - it's like midnight in Nigeria. He texting me to check that I'm rested, because I came from Seattle, so he wants to know if I've had something to eat before I do my media interview. It's very sweet. He's 81. Anyway.

Sentences such as "*He texting me to check that I'm rested*" and "*he wants to know if I've had something to eat...*" show the extent to which a father is deeply close to his daughter and cares about even when she is away. The evocation of the father's age, "He's 81" years old, is a way for Adichie to underline this confidence which defies time and distance intact for it remains unbroken throughout life time.

In another interview granted to Emma Brookes in *The Guardian* (online), Adichie exalts her father's kindness when he says: "*I don't care what anybody else thinks. My father was central and he was so generous; I had used so many of his stories. It's very painful for him.*" It is then clear that the fact of being in the central position is not only evocative but also interesting in the understanding of this author and the kind of relationship she has with her father. Adichie's words "*I don't care what anybody else thinks*" show the intensity of this closeness since he uses to her father's stories. This also means that Chimamanda knows more about her father whose painful experiences she herself are felt as a transmitted trauma. Indeed, through this complicity, the process of trauma transmission works very well, and the Biafra war experience is handed down to a daughter who will even use it as source of inspiration for her fictional works.

In effect, communication and closeness help to construct the infant's identity. In fact, the more the children listen to traumatized parents, depending on the intensity of emotions their stories raise, the more offspring receive projections from them. Accordingly, R. Dekel writes:

The main mechanisms of direct transmission that is described by psychodynamic approaches are projection and identification. Accordingly, fathers with PTSD have difficulty containing their emotions, and their attempts to mitigate the pain lead to massive use of projection mechanisms, where severe emotions such as persecution, aggression, shame and guilt are split and projected onto their children (e.g., Srour & Srour, 2005). As a result, the children may identify with the projected parts of their fathers' emotions, and perceive his experiences and feelings as their own.

In the same track, drawing inspiration from Hirsch's works, X. Faundes and X. Goecke (2015:107), even go further with the impact of projection in the process of trauma transmission on the offspring's psyche for long.

Postmemory's connection to the past is thus not actually mediated by recall but by imaginative investment, projection, and reaction. To grow up with such overwhelming inherited memories, to be dominated by narratives that preceded one's birth or one's consciousness, is to risk having one's own stories and experiences displaced, even evacuated, by those of a previous generation. It is to be shaped, however indirectly, by traumatic events that still defy narrative reconstruction and exceed comprehension. These events happened in the past, but their effects continue into the present.

This quotation evidences that parental projection is an efficient means to convey trauma to the whole family surrounding. For, as the Ximenas opine, the more children are exposed to "overwhelming inherited memories" or "dominated" by previous narratives, the more they run the risk not only of being "shaped" by these traumatic events, but of having their "own stories and experiences displaced, even evacuated, by those of a previous

generation.” the result of this projection is the building of the child’s identity which is highly influenced by parental trauma.

As it can be seen, parental projection can also lead to erratic and disastrous effects on their children’s mind. For remembering their parents’ emotions, fears, angers, failure, and even their fulfillments create a kind of credo of loyalty to genitor which must be respected at whatever cost. In this connection, R. Lev-Weissel (2007:77), writes:

Children are likely to take on certain emotional issues that originate in older generation to allow that generation to gain closure through them. Yet, certain issues within a family tend to be reproduced in younger generations sometimes out of closure in the older generation. In this view, paying off one’s emotional debt to the parents as well as differentiation of self-reflect similar process of dealing with the unresolved emotional attachments to the parental system and hence, the trans generational patterns and mandates.

Quoting Boszormenyi-Nagy and Park, the Ximenas (2005:28) tackle this issue of loyalty when they pinpoint:

[...] certain *relational guidelines* are transmitted to the members of the family through each other’s loyalty and datedness. Boszormenyi-Nagy and Park argue that there are *invisible loyalties* inside the families, which may explain some *structured expectations* inside the family group, in relation to which all members acquire a compromise. These loyalties mould and lead the individual’s behaviour.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s life fits the indications provided by all the above considered psychologists. For, the closeness alluded to upward, reinforces family communication through parental projection which finally shapes her own identity as a Nigerian and a writer, as she confesses while launching *Half of a Yellow Sun*, in the following passage already mentioned but that I dare quote at a certain length :

I wrote this because I wanted to write about love and war, because I grew up in the shadow of Biafra, because I lost both grandfathers in the Nigerian-Biafra war, because I wanted to engage with my history in order to make sense of my present, many of the issues that led to the war remain unresolved in Nigeria today, because my father has tears in his eyes when he speaks of losing his father, because my mother still cannot speak at length about losing her father in a refugees camp, because the brutal bequests of colonialism make me angry, because the thought of the egos and indifference of men leading to the unnecessary deaths of men and women and children enrages me, because I don’t ever want to forget. I have always known that I would write a novel about Biafra.

From this passage, one can easily infer the connection between the transmitted trauma of the Biafra war and the authoress’s inner motivation to write about these events. Indeed, allusion to Biafra war as Adichie’s loyalty is clear enough from the opening: “...I grew up in the shadow of Biafra”. The image of shadow she uses here evidences how this disastrous war has almost become part of her upbringing. When Adichie says “I don’t ever want to forget”, she considers here literature or writing as a “devoir de mémoire” or a burden to perpetuate her parents’ memories ‘slaughtered’ by “brutal bequests of colonialism”. Indeed, the sentence “I have always known that I would write a novel about Biafra” indicates her frequent exposure to stories about to Biafra war coins in Adichie’s mind her creeds, writing books. A burden that she is shouldering at her best for, though having studied in the United States and incorporated her foreigner experiences into her fiction, Adichie still remains anchored into her parental memories and stands out as an icon for contemporary African female writers.

In the “author’s Note”, Adichie keep on explaining how she is ‘indebted’ to her parents to whom she dedicates this novel (*Half of a Yellow Sun*):

I could not have written this book without my parents. My wise and wonderful father, Professor Nwoye James Adichie, *Odelo Ora Abba*, ended his many stories with the words *agha ajoka*, which in my literary translation is ‘war is very ugly’. He and my defending and devoted mother, Mrs Ifeoma

Grave Adichie, have always wanted me to know, I think that what matters is not what they went through but that they survived. I am grateful to them for their stories and so much more.

The sentence "*I am grateful to them for their stories...*", tells more about the parental permanent reference to war stories which help better understand its drawbacks on the authoress' psyche and, subsequently shapes her identity. As for the sentence "He and my defending and devoted mother, Mrs Ifeoma Grave Adichie, have always wanted me to know, ---", the authoress wants to shed light on her loyalty to her since what she considers as a must has also been hunting them for a long time. Hence, the writing of this novel has had a manifest effect on her father. Adichie's words according to her father's reaction after the reading of *Half a Yellow Sun* is a patent hint as she keeps on explaining it in her biographical notes: "*And then he said to me, 'I knew the novel would be good; I didn't know it would be this good.' I remember thinking, ok, it's over.*" This quotation obviously shows how the parent's trauma which went down orally came then to be codified. The next generation will learn from that dramatic period through the reading of this 'record', but in the same time such 'novelistic' records keep alive the souvenirs of her grandfathers and the dedications of *Half a yellow Sun* are very illustrative. This shows that the feeling of loyalty has efficiently worked as a means of trauma transmission and the novel becomes then a real proof of that loyalty.

Furthermore, the concept of repetition is evoked by scholars as the channel through which traumas are also transmitted. Theorizing on the impact repetition, Amy Bombay (2009:18) lends credence this aspect when he writes:

It has been proposed that chronic or repeated adversities in childhood may lead to an inferential process in which the child attempts to understand why such abusive experiences are happening to them. [...] over time, children may internalize the belief that these adverse events are stable, have negative consequences and are attributable to aspects of themselves.

Here, one discovers the influence of repetition on a child as his permanent exposure to repeated information that predisposes him to perpetuate these 'chronic or repeated adversities' throughout his lifetime. It then clearly illustrated that repetition is, according to the *Cambridge Dictionary of Psychology* (2009:439), carries some psychological implications for its cathartic virtue:

The tendency to repeat unfinished or traumatic events in order to deal with them. The repetition can take the form of daydreams, storytelling, and perception that present relationships are the same as old ones or emotional relations with a therapist that mirror those of childhood. In psychoanalytical theory, this is believed to be an attempt to deal with emotional conflicts from childhood and often takes the form of projections in therapy.

As it can be seen, through repeated 'daydreams, storytelling' and some other above mentioned channels, the transmission of the 'unfinished or traumatic events' is manifest. For the more one refers to the same information the longer this story or event remains in the listener's mind. Hence, thanks to the psychoanalytical theory evoked in this quotation, one easily infers why Adichie's allusion to that fact that she has been brought up under the shadow of Biafra is a clue to the way she has been in touch and familiar with Biafra war realities. In this connection, the Nigerian authoress confesses in an interview (online):

I grew up hearing 'before the war' and 'after the war' stories; it was as if the war had somehow divided the memories of my family. [...] When I was growing up, my paternal grandfather existed in our lives as a warm and wise memory. My father talked- and still talks – about him almost every day, referred to him, recounted his words, even symbolically toasted him at family celebrations.

The allusion to repetition has indeed a manifest effect on Adichie. The amount of information on these grandparents is unquestionably the result of a constant and permanent repeated reference to them. The avowal she does in another interview (online) is a patent illustration:

Both my grandfathers were interesting men, both born in the early 1900's in British-controlled Igbo land, both determined to educate their children, both with a keen sense of humour, both proud. In know this from stories I have been told. Eight years before I was born, they died in Biafra as refugees after fleeing hometowns that had fallen to federal troops.

From the forgoing, the process of trauma transmission through repetition is as obvious as efficient. In fact, the confidence and insurance in the providing of this information is a real proof that the repletion of this has been done for a long time so as to coin every detail in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's psyche. Thus, she talks about them as if she once met them.

It is worth mentioning that aside all means evoked above, it would be a mistake not to consider social disposition elaborated for the transmission of its patrimony to members of that specific community. This socialization is, according to the *Gale Encyclopedia of Mental Disorders* (2003:223), alluded to as "an ongoing process in which a person learns and internalizes the values and behaviours patterns of his or her culture and social group." This socialization is almost observed in every community. It particularly aims at transmitting norms and rules that guaranty the stability of the community. As far as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is concerned, socialization has efficiently contributed to the transmission of Biafra war trauma. Indeed, books, school programs, photos, records, videos, and history among the others, are the different instruments elaborated and used by the community to perpetuate what they consider as their 'common' patrimony. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie herself acknowledges the contribution of this 'socialization' process, to writing of *Half of a Yellow Sun* in the *Story Behind the Book* (2006:3) when she writes:

I read books, I looked at photos. I talked to people. In the four years that it took to finish the book, I would often ask older people I met, "where were you in 1967?" and then take it from there. It was from stories of that sort that I found out tiny details that are important for fiction. My parents' stories formed the backbone of my research notes that I did not end up using because I did not want to be stifled by fact, did not want the political events to overwhelm the human story.

The impact of all these above-mentioned socialization tools is observable throughout the Adichie's fictionalization of the Biafra war. In effect the consequence of these elements (audio and visual) about Biafra on her writing is manifest. In an interview with Susan (online), the Nigerian novelist emotionally makes the following confession:

It nearly killed me. I don't know if I will ever go through something like that again. Though I should never say never. It was difficult technically, because I was turning research into fiction, which I had never done before, but also emotionally, because my grandfathers died in the war and I constantly thought about them as I was writing, particularly my paternal grandfather. I would read about something that had happened and start crying. Was it like that for him, I would wonder.

All things considered, one easily infers how Adichie alludes to the impacts of the Biafran war not only on the Igbo civilians, but how history, literature and trauma theory converge, and how Adichie uses a literary work to mediate her own relation to a traumatic past.

Conclusion

The gist of this study has consisted in enlightening the different sources of inspiration which prompted the writing of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*. The allusion Biafra war which ended almost eight years before the authoress was born has been discussed on one if not the preeminent inspirational event. Since this civil war leads indelible landmarks on her parents' lives, Adichie could not help remember this traumatic event using the tools of literary creation. This allusion to a war that she did not experience has evidenced the existence of trans-generational trauma. The analysis of *Half of a Yellow Sun's* paratextual elements through the psychoanalytical perspective reveals the different mechanisms of that trauma transmission which are as varied as numerous. The revealing of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* as the result of a transmitted

trauma is an interesting clue to the understanding not only of the Biafra war itself but also of its impact in the authoress' family life. The prominence of Nsukka, Adichie's place of infancy and adolescence and setting of her works, either in the production or promotion of the war literature is quite phenomenal. Though at many occasions, Adichie acknowledges that in her *Half of a Yellow Sun* there cannot be but a spectacular indebtedness to the tradition of Nigerian civil war literature in her work for the decade within which she was born can be said to represent, to a great degree, the flowering of Biafran war literature, we have shown how the Nigerian novelist Winner of Orange Prize, was predisposed to address themes and issues that are as cross-generational as they are basically generational. As a final assessment, converting trauma to a well appraised masterpiece enhances Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's value and prestige as a writer. For, her observations are always sharp, intelligent, humorous and humane.

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