



Love and War Nexus in Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Roses and Bullets*

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Abstract— Love and war are two evergreen subject matters whose significance transcends literature. These two themes are major thematic preoccupations of several novelists, playwrights and poets in literary works from different parts of the globe. Previous studies on Akachi-Adimora Ezeigbo's *Roses and Bullets* have examined it as war literature as it is a representative example of Nigerian novels which are inspired by the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970). This study was, therefore, designed to critically evaluate the treatment of love and war in the novel with a view to filling the gap in literary scholarship of the paucity of studies which have concurrently analysed the motifs of love and war in the novel. Radical feminism was adopted as the theoretical framework. The interpretive design was employed. Akachi-Adimora Ezeigbo's *Roses and Bullets* was subjected to literary analysis. The novelist makes the point that during war-fares, people still manage to fall in love and out of love. The intensity of war cannot prevent people from expressing their innate feelings of love, and even getting married. In the novel, war meets ordinary people like Ginika, Eloka, and Nwakire, disrupting their personal plans. Conditional love and dysfunctional love such as love between Ginika and her father, Eloka's mother and Ginika, and Auntie Lizzy and Ginika are all demonstrated. The study makes the point the themes of love and war are so glaring in Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Roses and Bullets* that studying them concurrently is a rewarding literary enterprise.



Keywords— Love, War, Radical feminism, Nigerian novel, *Roses and Bullets*

I. INTRODUCTION

Love and war are evergreen subjects which have been explored by many literary writers in different parts of the globe. This study interrogates the treatment of love and war in Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Roses and Bullets*, a representative example of war literature. *Roses and Bullets* is inspired by the Nigerian Civil War, a war that was fought between the Federal Government of Nigeria and the Republic of Biafra, a secessionist state which had declared its independence from Nigeria in 1967. Nigeria was led by General Yakubu Gowon, while Biafra was led by Lt. Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu (Peter Baxter 6). The war raged between July 1967 and January 1970. It resulted in the wanton loss of thousands of human lives and several properties

There have been a number of studies on Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Roses and Bullets*. Sola Adeyemi (28) explicates on the key concepts of war, trauma and psychotherapy in *Roses and Bullets*. He posits that the novel is a quintessential example of Nigerian Civil War literature as it reminds us of the brutality of the war and its gruesome effects on the characters in the novel. He argues that the novel distinguishes itself from other previously published Nigerian Civil War novels in that "none of the earlier published works has attempted to dissect our minds with the psychological consequences of the war as Ezeigbo has done in *Roses and Bullets*." (28). Imam Abdulkadir (1) x-rays the extent to which Adimora-Ezeigbo captures memories of the Nigerian/Biafran war. It moves on to illustrate how she utilizes the atmosphere of war as an arena for symbolic relationships. It also probes into the deteriorated nature of

these relationships with a hint of optimism. Using New Historicism and Post colonialism as platforms for analyzing the text, the work concludes that despite the greatness of human prospects, individuals or societies end up with little or no satisfaction. According to Imam Abdulkadir (7), the forceful conscription of untrained youths and their release to the battle fronts with little or no war equipment, knowledge or food to protect and preserve themselves and Biafra, is what catches the satirical eye of the author. Grace Motunrayo Ajala (55) critically examines the plethora of feminist issues vividly captured in *Roses and Bullets*. Employing African feminism as theoretical framework, Ajala attempts to find out how the writings of the female writers show areas of convergence and divergence in the presentations of the tenets of feminism. Marriage, negative portrayal of male characters, mother-in-law interference, sexual harassment and gender violence are some of the tenets of African feminism discussed in the study. On mother-in-law interference, Ajala (58) opines that "Ginika's experience with Eloka's mother showcases interference of mother-in-law in many marriages in the African setting. Eloka's mother believes that it is the duty of a woman to ensure her husband gets her pregnant."

Remarkably, while most of the studies on these novels have foregrounded the brutality of the war and crisis in the novels, few have examined love in the novels and how the characters still manage to fall in love in the midst of war, insurgency and crises. In addition, few of these studies have treated the themes together in single studies despite the fact that love and war are two of the major thematic preoccupations of Ezeigbo in *Roses and Bullets*. By critically examining the treatment of love and war in the selected novel, this study fills these afore-mentioned gaps in literary scholarship.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: RADICAL FEMINISM

The theoretical framework for this project will be feminism, with a particular focus on radical feminism. Western feminism is radical feminism. Radical feminism is a form of feminist theory that emphasizes the patriarchy as the root cause of gender inequality and advocates for the complete restructuring of society to eliminate gender-based oppression (Murfin & Ray, 24). Radical feminists argue that violence against women is a product of patriarchal society, and that the only way to eradicate violence against women is to fundamentally alter the power structures that allow for it to occur (Rice 14).

Radical feminism emerged in the 1960s and 1970s as a response to the limitations of liberal feminism, which focused primarily on legal and political equality for women within the existing patriarchal system. Radical feminists

argued that gender inequality is deeply embedded in society and that it cannot be addressed through reformist measures alone. Instead, they called for a complete restructuring of society to eliminate gender-based oppression (Morgan, 1970).

Radical feminism sees the patriarchy as the root cause of gender inequality and violence against women. According to this theory, patriarchal systems prioritize male power and privilege, while women are relegated to a subordinate position. This system perpetuates violence against women by creating and maintaining power imbalances that allow men to exert control over women (Rice 16).

Additionally, unlike liberal feminists, they see paid work as not liberating for women, as they often acquire the "dual burden" of paid work and unpaid housework, which maintains the patriarchal nature of the family. Some radical feminists even argue that women suffer from the "triple shift" of paid work, domestic work, and "emotion work," where they take on the emotional burden of caring for children.

Radical feminists also see rape, violence, and pornography as methods through which men secure and maintain their power over women. Domestic violence, for example, accounts for a significant proportion of all violent crime, with nearly one in four women experiencing it at some point in their lifetime. Women are much more likely to experience this than men, and radical feminists point to these facts as evidence of the systemic nature of patriarchal oppression.

In opposition to this patriarchal system, radical feminists aim to combat gender-based violence, including domestic violence, which has long been neglected or ignored. Through their activism, they have contributed to increasing public awareness of these issues and helped bring them to the forefront of public discourse. The primary objective of radical feminists is the eradication of patriarchy. They place great emphasis on the concept of the body, the reclamation of women's bodies, and their freedom of choice. Radical feminists demand the freedom of sexual and reproductive rights, including unrestricted access to contraception and abortion. Women must have the autonomy to make decisions about their bodies, including the option to engage in non-heterosexual or non-reproductive sexual activities.

Thus, using radical feminist theory as a framework for this study will allow for an analysis of how the selected literary text challenges and subverts patriarchal structures that enable violence against women. By examining the representation of love and war in *Roses and Bullets*, this

study will provide insights into how love and war occur concurrently during war-fares.

Love and War in Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Roses and Bullets*

Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Roses and Bullets* is a novel of war and love. It is the story of two young lovers, Eloka and Ginika, who fall in love with each other and desperately want to keep it, in spite of the searing influence of war and bullets. It is a pointer to the fact that no matter the situation people find themselves, they will still manage to fall in love. The title of the novel is symbolic. Roses represent love while bullets symbolise war. In the novel, love is engendered by tumultuous situations of war. The novel reveals the saga of how many women are turned apart as a result of the Nigerian Civil War.

At the beginning, the love between Ginika and Eloka is a strong and solid one. The love Ginika is deprived of in her father, Ubaka, is salvaged in Eloka's arm. Ginika's dream of a nuptial bliss with Eloka is, however, contended with the invincible forces surrounding the war. Eloka and Ginika's love is sealed when they get married as husband and wife. However, their marriage as well as love for each other was plunged onto quicksand when Eloka gets enlisted in the army. His absence triggered ugly occurrences that put a knife at the heart of the marriage. In Eloka's absence, Ginika, in order to run away from her mother-in-law's cantankerous attitude towards her, had to go partying with a friend and got drugged and sexually molested in the process by an army officer. Enquiring about Ginika's pregnancy, her mother in-law bellowed: "I asked you this question before and I want to ask you again because of Eloka's visit home. Are you pregnant?" (*Roses and Bullets*, 84). This question puts her on edge. As Ginika gets pregnant for this anonymous officer, her mother in-law's family as well as everybody abandon her for such "sacrilege". In the end, the child that Ginika gives birth to later dies. She lost all even her love, Eloka, except her precious life and hope.

Beyond a tale of two lovers, *Roses and Bullets* chronicles a story of didacticism, moralising philosophy and exercise in alerting humanity about the futility in seeking for social change and justice through the prism of war. The novel is wrapped around the story of the Biafra war. It reveals the horrifying condition of women in the civil war. *Roses and Bullets* reveals the devastating consequences of war, especially on women, the weaker sex, and the vulnerable group in human society. The love between Ginika and Eloka is halted and destroyed by the Nigerian Civil War, and further complicated by other circumstances. The novel focuses on the families of these two enigmatic characters, and their conflict-ridden relationship. The happiness that Ginika's family radiates at

the beginning of the novel before things begin to fall apart is evident thus:

They had burst out laughing when the blast of a car horn caught their attention. Could that be Uncle Ray? Ginika wondered. It didn't sound like him. He hardly honked his car horn. If he did, it was always a sharp or gentle hoot. In fact, he would sneak up on everyone, going about the house quickly, even if he had to tug his things along (*Roses and Bullets*, 6).

The novel lends credence to the veracity of the fact that love is an evergreen topic which will always play itself out, no matter the situation. Ginika's life is a symphony of love, war, death, pain, bliss and betrayal. Adimora-Ezeigbo is dispassionate, profoundly candid and devoid of the pretentious bias common among authors of similar stories. Adichie and Adimora-Ezeigbo explored in their narrations of the civil war, those areas most women are reluctant to explore. Amidst the strafes and flaks contending for national unity and advancing of the new Biafra nation is the intense love of Ginika and Eloka. The love Ginika is deprived of in a strict father, Ubaka, is salvaged in the arms of Eloka and the attentive nature of her brother, Nwakire. Ginika's dream of nuptial bliss with Eloka is riddled with the invincible force that characterizes the war. Ginika will hope to return to school when the pogrom ends. She will also nurture the faith of reuniting with her lover- turned-soldier when Biafra finally gains independence. As the characters of Ginika and Eloka are bedeviled with these marshy hopes and murky circumstances, only the flailing consequences of war will define who they eventually become.

Though the book is wrapped around the story of the Biafra war, it does not aim towards achieving reckoning of the horrible civil struggle as many have been wont to. *Roses and Bullet* successfully attains closure of the grim realities of the Biafra time; which, I think is far commendable to the unbiased views that skew the objective narratives of some. As an academic material of information, which is one of the snags in the piece, it irritatingly drip-feeds an unaware reader with the nuances and intricacies of the Nigerian Civil War. That alone makes it so slow-paced that it tries the patience of an uncommitted reader so dearly.

Roses and Bullets is essentially the story of a love relationship that blossoms and dies in wartime Biafra. At a time Nigeria and the secessionist Biafra were locked in mortal combat, these two young people fell in love. The whirlpool created by the pogrom destroyed them and their

love, just as it shattered so many other dreams, lives and beautiful ideas. Ezeigbo tries to capture all these in *Roses and Bullets*.

When Eloka gave Ginika a red rose, it was the finest gesture to convey the depth of his feelings for her. He considered her pure and beautiful and worthy of his sacrifice, both as a lover and as a soldier. Rose is a symbol of love, beauty and purity and the red rose meant all these to Eloka. Red also is the colour of blood; the blood of the youths of Biafra that sacrificed their lives, their talents and their potentials for their fatherland. To Eloka, the sacrifice is double. He was willing to give his life to protect his country. By protecting his country, he would also be protecting his love and his wife, Ginika, his Mermaid as he fondly called her. Eloka demonstrated in the novel that he is capable of self-sacrifice, for the sake of both Biafra and Ginika. The idea of Biafra and the person of Ginika were his ideals and passion throughout the war. And when Biafra lost and he discovered what he regarded as Ginika's betrayal and infidelity, he had no wish to continue living really.

There was an intense romantic love between Eloka and Ginika, a sharp contrast with the intense pathological hatred between Biafra and Nigeria. In the novel, Eloka gave Ginika a red rose (growing roses was his passion). Eloka could be said to love his country more than woman when he joined the war rather than stay behind to protect Ginika from the danger of losing her, if harm were to come to her, which finally came. After all, Ginika said to him once: "I'm sure when you were in the war front, you didn't think of me...except the fight before you." (221). In other words, can we split a red rose and love one part? Eloka once said to Ginika: "Dear girl, if you ask me not to fight, who then will fight in this war?" (185). Eloka knew why he joined the army, "to fight and fight with contentment until victory is won." (109). A trying phase of their love is when Ginika is raped by a soldier. Eloka did not believe Ginika when she said her pregnancy came from a silent rape by a soldier.

Marriage is the culmination of genuine love between a man and a woman. It is an important motif in feminism. Feminist-oriented literary works typically foreground the experiences of women/female characters in their marriages in their novels. Most of the time, such female protagonists do not enjoy their marriage. In Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood*, the protagonist Nnu Ego never enjoys her two separate marriages to Amatokuwu and Nnaife Owulum. In Ifeoma Okoye's *Behind the Clouds*, Ije has been married to her husband Dozie for years but they had no issue. She went to virtually all the hospitals to know to see if the reason for her childlessness can be solved. On the other hand, Dozie's mother never liked her and adding

to the fact that she was childless heightened the whole issue. She kept on persuading her son to take a second but because of the love Dozie had for the wife Ije, he refused heeding to his mothers advice. They kept managing their lives until another woman came in, who claimed that Dozie got her pregnant and she would stay with the father of her baby. Virginia succeeded in talking Dozie into allowing her stay in his house, things fell apart for Dozie and Ije but thank God for Ugo Ushie, Ije's friend who stood by her. It was later found out that the baby of Virginia was not Dozie and he sent her out of his house and then pleaded for the forgiveness of his trip which shows is the cause of their childlessness and they taugth of a better way of solving it. The same bitterness of marriage is evident in Nawal El Saadawi's *Woman At Point Zero* where Firdaus suffers terribly in her forced marriage to a much-older, repulsive man, Sheikh Mahmoud.

In *Roses and Bullets*, the relationship between Eloka and Ginika ends up in marriage. When Eloka introduces Ginika to his parents as the girl she wants to marry, the father noted that Ginika is beautiful and 'unspoiled'. His father smiled, "you chose well, my son. She is beautiful and young, I can see she has not been spoilt. When I see the way girls run after soldiers, especially officers, I cry in my heart..." (169). It should be reiterated that the relationship between Eloka and Ginika is selfless. Unlike some other young girls that run after soldiers, Ginika's love for Eloka is unconditional. Eloka's parents' approval of their son's choice of a wife shows that in Africa, marriage is a very sensitive issue which requires parental consents. The parents did not stop at the physical assessment of Ginika; they also planned to carry out an investigation about her family. However, Eloka is so sure he made a right choice.

"Yes, she seems a good girl. We will make enquiries to ensure she comes from a good family: the type of home we would want our daughter-in-law to come from." "You can make enquiries, if you like," Eloka said, but I would like to marry her as soon as possible." "Nna, that is all right" His mother's eyes were soft and bright. "I agree the girl is verybeautiful" I hope she is well mannered. Agwa bun ma, character is beauty. Let us hope she has a good character." (170)

Adimora-Ezeigbo tells her readers about the traditional wedding ceremony between these two lovers. This is an attempt to make a distinction between genuine relationship between a man and a woman and a short-term

one between those who run after soldiers and are messed up. A true relationship leads to marriage and the girl must receive her parents' blessing before leaving for her husband's house (193-194). The marriage of Eberechi in *Half of a Yellow Sun* who was pushed to a soldier by her parents is a very wrong one. A woman has the right to make her choice of a partner. Perhaps, that was why Olanna insisted on marrying her choice and not that of her parents.

Eloka and Ginika's genuine love for each other is sealed when they get married. Prior to the marriage, they are head-over-heels in love. It is a classic case of love at first sight when their paths crossed:

Throughout that day and evening,
Ginika's thoughts were full of Eloka
Odunze. She could not get him out of
her mind even if she tried her hardest.
His image cast a shadow she could not
ignore- a lively and vivid mental picture
of a figure after her heart. She tried to
imagine a possible scenario where
she would act in a play written, directed
and produced by him (27).

Nevertheless, Ginika never gets carried away. She meditates deeply on the marriage before plunging into it. She knows that marrying Eloka would rather than stop her education, aid it. Eloka had promised they would not have children until after the war. Eloka also plans that when the war is over, Ginika could take the qualifying exam and go straight to Nsukka, where they would be together as they studied. However, their marriage and love for each other experience a major hiccup when Eloka enlists in the army in the cause of the Nigerian Civil War. Eloka and Ginika love each other dearly even after their marriage. Eloka does part of the house chores in order to assist his wife. "Mermaid, I have swept our room and tidied it. You'll like it when you see it..." "Mama will have a fit if she hears you swept your room," Ozioma said. "Don't let her hear you. She will say you're spoiling your wife." (196). Eloka's mother's supposed reaction portrays the belief of the African men that women are acquired properties and one of the reasons for marrying them is to do all the house chores. They believe it is a taboo for a man to be involved in house chores. As a matter of fact, men that cook, sweep or fetch water for their wives are perceived as being hypnotised. As a result, such women are referred to as witches. In spite of the happenings around them, the love between the couple waxes stronger. They had both vowed to remain together till death do them part. Ginika told herself she would love Eloka till death did them part, as she had vowed the day the pastor joined them as husband and wife. She also recognises

him as the best man for her. However, their beautiful home and marriage was affected by communication gap when Eloka joined the army. Eloka's absence gives way to some ugly occurrences which could have been completely avoided if he was around. Eloka's absence gave room to mother-in-law's victimization. Ginika suffers immeasurably in the hands of a wicked mother-in-law who displays a cantankerous attitude towards her. The mother-in-law's attitude shows that women sometimes oppress themselves and they are sometimes their own worst enemies. This point out the fact that, it is not only men that oppress women, hence, both gender need to relate in love and unity for peace to reign in the society.

The problem Ginika faces with her mother-in-law and the loneliness she experiences when the husband is at the war-front made her to accept the invitation to a party that never holds but ends up in ruining her life. Here, Adimora-Ezeigbo is making a point that communication is very important between a husband and a wife. Eloka's absence from home led to happenings that destroyed his marriage to Ginika. This means that a break in communication may cause a fragmentation of social relationship. In Eloka's absence, Ginika, in order to excuse herself from her mother-in-law's hostility and bad attitude towards her, followed a friend named Janet, to a dance party that never holds. Ginika is not really enthusiastic about the party; she only agrees to go with Janet because she becomes frustrated with Eloka's mother and she wants to run away from her troubles. Unfortunately, she is drugged and sexually molested by Lieutenant Ugoro (271). If not for her husband's absence, Ginika would not have had any reason to attend the party. Adimora-Ezeigbo has pointed out here that one of the negative consequences of the civil war is that it caused separation and tore homes apart. Similarly, when Olanna was absent from the home in Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Odenigbo committed atrocities. It was during the period that she impregnated Amala. At another instance, he slept with Alice, when Olanna was not around.

War is central to Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Roses and Bullets*. It is a novel which is inspired by the Nigerian Civil War. When the novel opens, the youthful hero, Ginikanwa, is tormented by a letter she had recently gotten from her dad. In this, the novelist at first forecasts the common war which Ginika's later verbal defiance strengthens. The more extensive anecdotal universe in which a grisly clash seethes among Nigeria and Biafra parallels the confined universe of Ginika with every one of its torments and nerves as she straightforwardly fights with knotty issues emerging from the war.

Her training is put on hold as Ginika moves to her town where she meets and weds Eloka. Eloka enlists in the army, joins the war front, leaving his young spouse helpless before a philandering father-in-law and a relative whose colossal craving for a grandchild puts an undue pressure on the youthful Ginika. As she continues looking for aid, Ginika is medicated, assaulted and impregnated by a Biafran soldier. She is roundly condemned and rejected by her spouse's family, her father and her beloved husband, Eloka.

The mental and physical outcomes of war are broadly worked out on Ginika as best depicted in her appalling appearance when she was protected from the army installation. *Roses and Bullets* efficiently questions the reasonableness of man who plunges into war despite his consciousness of its devastating consequences. The storyline takes the reader to the war zones to observe the detestations of war and presents to him/her once again into various homes and lives to exhibit the outcomes. Voices of exploited people, inside and outside a few fight grounds, talked perceptibly even in their unceasing quiet and quelled presence. Disjoined appendages, headless bodies and incorporeal heads, ruined, spoiled and malodorous tissue all join to strengthen the brilliant declarations of starvation, assault, sexual indiscriminability, sickness, distance, oust, persecution, dismissal and over the top covetousness all reporting the savagery of the so-called humanized man:

However, the political crisis in the country worried Eloka; he saw it as a threat to peace, and a threat to peace is a threat to education and development. He became more concerned as the killings of easterners intensified and got out of hand in northern cities, towns and villages. He watched as easterners, especially Igbo people, returned home in droves (88).

Enervating torment and strengthening delight are portrayed side by side in *Roses and Bullets*. Happiness is punctuated by sorrow while anguish is supplanted by joy. The clear depiction, sensational record and nitty gritty pictorial portrayal of the lucky love connection between Ginika and Eloka injects vital components of joy in that excruciating story and makes an environment of warmth the capacities to splash the tangible pressure incited by the war. That angle is fundamentally in charge of the grand nature of the novel. What's more, the unalloyed help promptly and enthusiastically offered to Ginikanwa by Chito's family is another viewpoint that beneficially attempts to find great even amidst wickedness. This additionally outfits the story

with a basic human face. At the same time, the book inspires great chuckling as much as it causes tragic tears. It along these lines accepts the status of a normal human story past being a story of war.

To just pursue the novel as a story of a past occasion or a recorded piece is to decrease its general hugeness and hence do offensive bad form to the throbbing power and illuminating mission of the novel. Indeed, even today, the growing roses of our reality are routinely battered by savage projectiles activated by common doubt generally developed upon our disparities. It is consequently not an account of 'previously' yet a story of 'now' and a story of 'after', as long as humankind keeps on bowing to troublesome elements of language, ethnicity, religion, class and sexual orientation.

At this juncture, we shall examine the various manifestations of violence and brutality of the war as vividly portrayed in *Roses and Bullets*. Some of these manifestations are highlighted below.

- **Rape**

The motif of rape runs through Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Roses and Bullets*. Many soldiers engage in the nefarious act of raping innocent women and ladies who become the casualties of assault of the war. This is on the grounds that this circumstance breeds malevolent and moral wantonness in the general public. Armed force officers frequently take opiates and liquor to enable them to withstand the pressure and sight of what they witness and, all things considered, they may end up acting preposterously. Ogbazi states that, "as a rule, the ladies endure the worst part of various dimensions and types of underhandedness and corruptions in struggle circumstances." (27).

In *Roses and Bullets*, Ginika is kidnapped and secured up a room in the Barracks. She is blamed for executing Sergeant Sule Ibrahim, who circumcised himself so as to marry her. In the room, three warriors sprained her lower leg and assaulted her

She struggled to free herself but they held her and pushed her to the ground.

She screamed and one of them clamped a rough hand on her mouth. Divesting himself of his clothes, the sergeant grabbed her legs and prised them open...

I go fuck you, ashawo. You kill Sule. He be better man pass all your rebel brothers.

Dat thing you no give Sule, I go take am today. Ashawo!... Make you do your

own, he said, pointing to one of the soldiers (295).

Ginika's rape propels the plot of the novel. She is sedated and sexually assaulted when she goes with a companion (Janet) to a military camp as a result of the hostile conduct of her mother-in-law. Accordingly, she gets pregnant for the nowhere-to-be-found soldier. The pregnancy ends her marriage and prompts the disaster in the novel.

- **Starvation**

Starvation is one of the negative impacts of war. Chinua Achebe vividly captures this in his civil war memoir, *There Was A Country*, where he posits that the federal government deployed the weapon of hunger and starvation to conquer the secessionists. Adimora-Ezeigbo in *Roses and Bullets* exposes the impacts of starvation on the general population particularly the vulnerable group, women and children. There was abnormal state of starvation in the land as can be found in the graphical portrayal of destitution in the novel as being experienced during the civil war.

The rate at which many individuals contract kwashiokor was disturbing. The destitution was not constrained to the poor of the land alone yet even the alleged white collar class and rich additionally endured a similar confidence as the methods for getting sustenance was winding up slight because of besieging of the land and different causes. This can likewise be affirmed in the life of Auntie Chito and her kids. She used to be alright and had enough to eat. In the later part of the novel when the war had negatively affected the family, they scarcely had enough to eat every day. Truth be told, the starvation and neediness was severe to the point that Ginika chose to risk her life by going behind the adversary lines to purchase things.

So I am planning to go to Ahia attack-attack market next week...Udo, I have to go.

Perhaps I'll be able to bring back food. The situation is desperate as to you can

see. (322).

The above portion demonstrates the dimension of starvation in the land and the dimension it drives Ginika as she was prepared to chance her life to rescue their neediness stricken circumstance. In another point in the novel, Udo needed to act like a shell stunned officer to get alleviation materials for them not to bite the dust of starvation.

- **Disruption of Academic Activities**

War disturbs scholastic exercises of any society. During the war, schools were either shut down, demolished or utilized as displaced person camps. The quick consequence of this conclusion of schools was early marriage and extramarital

perversion, which offered ascend to undesirable pregnancies. This is on the grounds that an inactive personality is a fallen angel's instrument. In *Roses and Bullets*, Ginika wedded Eloka despite the guardians' dismissal and hostile conduct towards her since she was inactive. Notwithstanding the war, she would have been in her school at Elelenwa considering how to make her future brilliant.

Ginika can walk the length and breadth of the Biafra boundary without fearing sudden conscription to fight for the land's defence. It is true she does not have to surmount the attacks of the vandals (the Federal soldiers) at the war front. But the helplessness created by the loved ones taken abruptly from her will redirect the course of her life. After Nwakire, her brother, joins the Biafra troops to further the noble cause of Biafra, Ginika struggles to live under her uncaring father (Ubaka) and her nagging stepmother, Lizzy, who is a semblance of a caring mother. Ginika later finds comfort in the loving arms of Odunze Eloka. That is not to last too. The cocoon Eloka's love ensconces her with is torn when Eloka proudly enlists himself into the Biafran force. This triggers the origin of Ginika's definitive sorrow as she battles with tearing challenges from her mother-in-law. In her resilience to overcome her multiple pains, she is defeated by the unbridled semen of a Biafran lieutenant at Nkwerre. {*Roses and Bullets*, p. 371-376}

Eloka and Nkwere (Ginika's brother) might have indeed outplayed forced call-up into the army. As the only choice of honour, Nkwere and Eloka answer the patriotic beck of the new nation. What their contemporaries do in conscription they undertake in voluntariness. The horridness war does to humanity change their destinies with irredeemable taints.

During the civil feud, Nigerian government's campaign of unity is carried out through mass pogrom and distortion of its citizens' psychology in the new Biafra nation. I wonder how the flicker from Ejike Okoro's lantern becomes the spotlight of an armed camp of Biafran soldiers. Ejike Okoro does not deserve what he encounters. He is innocent just like those being internally displaced by the war. He is no rebel. He hasn't ever been to the war front. What Ama-Oyi habitants only seek for is a safer and secluded region to continue the practice that makes life sustainable to them. They defile sacredness, moving their Orie market into the forest to avoid the attention they might call from an armed jet. It turns out their course of action isn't well thought out. They fail to remember that anything Biafran in the glimpse of a Federal Government's jet plane is a rebel that must be droned for unity to live.

It is just the end of war. Ginika's only desire is to redeem her marital honour when her husband, Eloka comes

home. She hopes for forgiveness when Eloka listens to her woes. She doesn't need the love of Sule Ibrahim to be whole. All she hopes for is the unfastening of the burden that weighs her soul. That Sule Ibrahim circumcises himself before she gives him attention is just a scarecrow she puts up to remain Eloka's own. Why should she be violated by the Federal Government armed men who have come to request the blood of Sule Ibrahim from her? She has no hand in his death. Sule Ibrahim is a subject of his foolery. Why should he have been driven by infatuation to circumcise his genitals at his age?

Udo and Ginika are the perfect allegory of the psychological torture children were subjected to in the war. Udo's experience at the battle front robs him of his puerile innocence. After the war is declared done, the hunger and horror Udo witnesses will make a new being of him. The discomfort of Amina Yaro, a northerner in Ganika's class, signals the cut of the taunting rope of the seemingly unity between the North and the East. Amina Yaro can't bear the conversation the portended civil war is generating. Out of self-volition, Amina stops coming to school. She perceives herself as a threat to the East. She returns to her homeland.

III. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the research had been able to extensively look into the different realities of love and war in postcolonial Nigeria, using Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Roses and Bullets* as case study. Without mincing words, the study will make meaningful contributions not only to literary scholarship but also to the Nigerian society at large. Love and war are evergreen subject matters in Nigeria and across the globe.

Despite the high level of poverty and economic hardship in Nigeria, people still manage to fall in love. The love sometimes culminates in marriage. Love remains an important thing keeping many Nigerians happy despite the different layers of hardship in Nigeria. Mercifully, since the Nigerian Civil War ended in January 1970, there has not been any civil war in Nigeria. However, to eke out daily livelihood in Nigeria can be likened to waging a daily existential war.

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