

the iafor

journal of arts & humanities

Volume 4 – Special Issue – Winter 2017

Editor: Alfonso J. García Osuna



ISSN: 2187-0616

iafor

The IAFOR Journal of Arts & Humanities
Volume 4 – Special Issue

IAFOR Publications

IAFOR Journal of Arts & Humanities

Editor

Dr Alfonso J. García Osuna, Hofstra University, USA

Editorial Board

Rodolfo González, Nassau College, State University of New York, USA

Anna Hamling, University of New Brunswick, Canada

Sabine Loucif, Hofstra University, USA

Margarita Esther Sánchez Cuervo, Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain

Minni Sawhney, University of Delhi, India

Er-Win Tan, University of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Nour Seblini, Wayne State University, USA

Published by The International Academic Forum (IAFOR), Japan

Executive Editor: Joseph Haldane

Editorial Assistance: Nick Potts

IAFOR Publications

Sakae 1-16-26 – 201, Naka Ward, Aichi, Japan 460-0008

IAFOR Journal of Arts & Humanities

Volume 4 – Special Issue – Winter 2017

IAFOR Publications © Copyright 2017

Individual articles are published under the
Creative Commons 4.0 Attribution Non Commercial International license.

ISSN: 2187-0616

Online: ijah.iafor.org

Cover image: Unlpash/Henry Be

IAFOR Journal of Arts & Humanities

Volume 4 – Special Issue – Winter 2017

Edited by Alfonso J. García Osuna

Table of Contents

Notes on Contributors	1
Introduction Alfonso J. García Osuna	2
The First World War and Women as the Victims of War Trauma in Virginia Woolf's Novels Mahinur Aksehir-Uygur, Atalay Gunduz, and Eda Burcu Cetinkaya	3
Life and Death in Verses Case Study: The Writing of Lili Kasticher, the Only Woman who Wrote in Auschwitz Lily Halpert Zamir	13
Arthur Hugh Clough's "Amours De Voyage": A Poetic Account of the 1849 Siege of Rome Cora Lindsay	23
Transgression, Desire, and Death in Mai Al-Nakib's "Echo Twins" and Arundhati Roy's <i>The God of Small Things</i> Shahd Alshammari	33
Photography and Visual Representations of the American War in Viet Nam Er-Win Tan and Ted Engelmann	43
Sense and Senselessness of War: Aggregating the Causes, Gains and Losses of the Nigerian Civil War, 1967–1970 Johnson Olaosebikan Aremu and Lateef Oluwafemi Buhari	61

Notes on Contributors

Shahd Alshammari (PhD) is Assistant Professor of English at the Gulf University for Science and Technology, Kuwait. She has authored an academic monograph, *Literary Madness in British, Postcolonial, and Bedouin Women's Writing* (2016). Her latest work is a collection of short stories *Notes on the Flesh* (2017), a biomythography that deals with gender, race and disability in Kuwait.

Johnson Olaosebikan Aremu (PhD, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria) is a Lecturer in African History and Diplomatic Studies at the Department of History and International Studies, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria.

Lateef Oluwafemi Buhari (MA, University of Ibadan, Nigeria) is a Lecturer in Nigerian History and Peace and Conflict Studies at the Department of History and International Studies, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

Ted Engelmann is an independent scholar, veteran of the American War in Viet Nam (1968-1969), and freelance embedded photographer in Iraq (2008) and Afghanistan (2009).

Cora Lindsay is Tutor in English for Academic Purposes, at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Nottingham, UK.

Er-Win Tan is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of International and Strategic Studies at the University of Malaya. He holds a PhD in International Politics from the Department of International Politics, Aberystwyth University and an MA with High Distinction in Strategic Studies from the Australian National University. His research interests include US-North Korean interaction, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and security and diplomacy in the Asia Pacific Region. He has published numerous articles and papers relating to northeast Asia relations and security.

Lily Halpert Zamir, head of the department of Adult education and director of the center for Women and Gender Studies, in David Yellin College, in Jerusalem, was born in Eastern Europe in 1956, as the only child of the second family of two Holocaust survivors. She holds a PhD (1993) in Comparative Literature from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. For the past ten years, she's taught a range of subjects at David Yellin Teachers College, from English language and literature to foreign language pedagogy, and stereotypes of women in literature, advertising and cinema, as well as adult education and the media.

Introduction

With its fanfare, chauvinism and flag-waving, war often creates an environment that is decidedly favorable to the perpetuation of a society's asymmetrical power arrangements. For the citizen of a nation at war, such an environment generates partisan narratives that rationalize the need for compliance and conformity. Even in democratic societies, the habitual prominence given to individual rights diminishes when a state engages in armed conflict, as personal entitlements transubstantiate into collective requirements. War represents a shared, common threat that inspires generous feelings and attitudes such as comradeship, loyalty and self-sacrifice in defense of perceived commonalities; as such, citizens can attenuate their self-preservation instincts and become amenable to relinquishing their privileges in the service of god and country.

But armed conflict has also offered points of departure from where many intellectual trends have begun their confrontation with society's tired, outdated values and preconceptions. In recent decades, war has inspired insightful analyses of its invisible victims' sufferings. The obvious casualties of war – the dead and maimed soldiers and civilians – are the physical manifestations of its attendant horrors, yet lost in the process are understudied groups such as women and minorities who make up an amorphous underclass that has been ignored almost as a matter of course.

With this special issue of the *IAFOR Journal of Arts and Humanities* we hope to shine a light on those disregarded groups and, consequently, draw attention to concealed human dimensions of war in original and trendsetting ways. Additionally, by bringing together complementary viewpoints from various fields of inquiry, we aim to bridge disciplinary gaps that often impede collaborative, comprehensive endeavors.

The articles herein have been selected for their importance in uncovering this hidden world of the silenced victims. Mahinur Aksehir-Uygur, Atalay Gunduz and Eda Burcu Cetinkaya focus on women as victims of trauma in the First World War using the novels of Virginia Woolf; Lily Halpert Zamir discusses the work of Lili Kasticher, the only woman who wrote in Auschwitz during the Second World War; Cora Lindsay takes us to the French army's siege of Rome in 1849 as seen through the eyes of English poet Arthur Hugh Clough's "Amours De Voyage"; Shahd Alshammari examines similarities between Mai Al-Nakib's "Echo Twins" and Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, considering how the "ghost of war permeates the narrative" in the Kuwaiti text; Er-Win Tan and Ted Engelmann reflect on the ways in which iconic photographs taken during conflict can have a deeply powerful symbolic impact and capture the imagination and attention of the public, having thus a significant influence on the decision-making process of that conflict; and Johnson Olaosebikan Aremu and Lateef Oluwafemi Buhari examine the general outcome, in human terms, of the Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970).

It is my hope that the journal's readers will understand, in a more profound way, that the visceral, morally complex drama of war reaches far beyond the battlefield.

Dr Alfonso J. García Osuna
Editor

The First World War and Women as the Victims of War Trauma in Virginia Woolf's Novels

Mahinur Aksehir-Uygur
Manisa Celal Bayar University, Turkey

Atalay Gunduz
Dokuz Eylul University, Turkey

Eda Burcu Cetinkaya
Manisa Celal Bayar University, Turkey

Abstract

For more than the obvious reasons, the First World War was a devastating experience for Europe. As the first war in history in which the death toll would be immense – due to the extensive use of weapons of mass destruction – it was a traumatic experience even for those who were not directly involved in the armed conflict. The dehumanization introduced by the war caused disillusionment regarding the ideals of enlightenment and the progress myth of the Modernity Project. One of the preeminent writers of the period, Virginia Woolf was among those writers who were deeply traumatized and disillusioned by the experience, even though she was not an active participant in the conflict. In her novels *Jacob's Room*, *Mrs Dalloway* and *To The Lighthouse* she offers a depiction of gender polarization and women as traumatized victims of the war. This paper, thus, aims to evaluate the First World War and the trauma and disillusionment caused by it as experienced by women through the novels of Virginia Woolf.

Keywords: Virginia Woolf, disillusionment, war trauma, *Jacob's Room*, *Mrs Dalloway*, *To The Lighthouse*

“Not by the battle fires, the shrapnel are we haunted;
Who shall deliver us from the memory of these dead?”
Margaret Sackville

The Impact of the War

The Great War caused a significant increase in the number of patients that suffered from war hysteria, as observed in autobiographies such as *Good-bye to All That* by Robert Graves, *The Complete Memoirs of George Sherston* by George Sherston, *Undertones of War* by Edmund Blunden, and *Instinct and the Unconscious* by W. H. R. Rivers. W. H. R. Rivers (1922), for instance, recounts a traumatic memory about an officer who, as the result of an explosion, fell on a German soldier that had been dead for days, his head penetrating the perforated torso of the dead soldier. This officer was subsequently haunted by the ensuing “persistent images of taste and smell” (p. 192). The war was a disaster for all the countries in Europe: Italy lost 600,000 soldiers, France lost 1.7 million, the British Empire lost 1 million, and Germany lost 2 million (Scardino Belzer, 2010, p. 17). As Jay Winter (2006) suggests in *Remembering War: The Great War Between Historical Memory and History in the Twentieth Century*, many people essentially lost their minds as a result of horrific experiences (p. 280). As Wilfred Owen defines them, they were men “whose minds the dead have ravaged” (quoted in Winter, 2006, p. 280).

War neurosis and women

However, studies concerning war neurosis were mainly limited to men and not much research was conducted on war neurosis or war hysteria as experienced by women. The reason, as Claire M. Tylee (1990) suggests, is that war is still generally evaluated as an exclusively male zone (p. 7). However, this is misleading, as the accounts of war written by women such as Mary Borden’s *The Forbidden Zone* (1929), Evadne Price’s *Not So Quiet . . . : Stepdaughters of War* (1930) (written under the pseudonym Helen Zenna Smith), Irene Rathbone’s *We That Were Young* (1932), Sylvia Pankhurst’s *The Home Front* (1932), Storm Jameson’s *No Time Like the Present* (1933), and Vera Brittain’s *Testament of Youth* (1933) suggest. Debra Rea Cohen (2001) proposes that women’s accounts of the Great War were highly tainted by the illusions and self-censorship that she calls “mental petticoats”; these, she proposes, were enabled by cultural myths and propaganda that tended to perceive the war as a necessary evil and a legitimate struggle for civilization (p. 37). In spite of it, women writers like Sylvia Pankhurst kept accounts of “the violently repressive militarism of the British state during the Great War and the working-class woman’s acute suffering under that state” (Buck, 2005, p. 105). As Buck (2005) further suggests, writers inspired by Pankhurst, such as Sheila Rowbotham, Chris Hannan and Pat Barker also wrote about the not so heroic aspects of the war (p. 105). Sarah Cole (2003) argues that Vera Brittain’s *Testament of Youth* is a similar example in which the writer focuses on the “smashing up of [her] own youth by the War” and how “the early ideals of the War were all shattered, trampled into the mud which covered the bodies of those with whom I had shared them” (p. 176). Tylee (1990) also highlights Mildred Aldrich’s description of the first bomb that is dropped somewhere near her home:

For two hours we saw them rise, descend, explode. Then a little smoke would rise from one hamlet, then from another; then a tiny flame – hardly more than a spark – would be visible; and by dark the whole plain was on fire, lighting up Mareuil in the foreground, silent and untouched. There were long lines of grain-stacks and mills stretching along the plain. One by one they took fire, until, by ten o’clock, they stood like a procession of huge torches across my beloved panorama. (p. 23)

Writers such as Antonia White also fictionalized the aftermath of the war and the traumatic effects of the war through the characterization of Clara, who is haunted by wounded soldiers and experiences their pain and suffering over and over again through a delusional state of mind.

Therefore, although most of the women living in Europe did not play an active role in the war, they “found the war difficult to avoid” (Scardino Belzer, 2010, p. 1). The obvious reason for this reluctant involvement was that the effects of the Great War were not limited to the battlefield. Civilians were also targeted through air raids, and women were attacked, robbed, famished, raped and used as prostitutes and, because their families were being held hostage, some of them were forced to work as spies for the enemy (Tylee, 1990, p. 97). So these women were broken by the trauma of the war just as much as the fighting soldiers. They were haunted by a sense of helplessness and paralysis which “is crucial to the traumatic nature of war, since the victim cannot adequately retaliate, only withdraw upon himself” (Krockel, 2011, p. 33). If one were to judge by these personal accounts, the war was equally traumatic for men and women. They “suffered equally from the repression of their memories of traumatic experiences, and from a common vulnerability to the myths of imperialism” (Tylee, 1990, p. 187). As Evadne Price puts it in *Not So Quiet*, they were all “war-sick”, a “stricken generation”, “a race of men bodily maimed and of women mentally maimed” (quoted in Tylee, 1990, p. 189). Obviously, as Tylee (1990) suggests “[t]he mental scars, different, but cutting to the quick of sensibility, were also borne by women” (p. 249). Nevertheless, it is astonishing to see that women were mostly excluded from the making of history concerning the Great War.

Elaine Showalter (1993) focuses on the fact that, before the Great War, hysteria was broadly perceived as a female disease. Throughout the 19th century and the period that leads up to the start of the Great War, patients of hysteria were exclusively women. That is why she suggests that hysteria seen in men as a result of the war was called by several other names, such as war neurosis or shell shock. In her own words, “hysteria has been constructed as a pejorative term for femininity in a duality that relegated the more honorable masculine form to another category” (Showalter, 1993, p. 292). Showalter (1993) also suggests “shell shock was described as the product of womanish, homosexual, or childish impulses in men” (p. 323). So it is that women’s breakdowns were called hysteria and men’s shell shock or war neurosis. Showalter’s evaluation explains one reason why women are excluded from the narratives of history and war trauma. She also explains (1993) the reasons for the disregard concerning the traumatic effects of war on women, suggesting that first of all “women’s fears seemed less important” and that, with the emergence of the New Woman and “the passage of women’s suffrage in England and the United States, it was believed that female hysteria declined and even disappeared” (p. 326).

Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar are outstanding feminist critics who argue that the war had a positive effect on the socialization of women. They suggest that war had a liberating effect on women because thanks to war women found a place for themselves in the public sphere, and thus it was a liberating experience for them. Gail Braybon’s analysis also shows that women’s employment increased by millions in various areas, from industry to banking, during the war. Yet women lost their newfangled position right after the war ended, and they were sent back to domestic service while being forced to yield their well-paid jobs to men, adding to their trauma (Tylee, 1990, p. 11).

Another reason for this negligence is the cultural myth of the self-sacrificing, strong woman/mother that heals the wounds of the war. Scardino Belzer (2010) in a work in which she focuses on Italian women during the war, suggests that “[a]cross Europe, women who lived safely behind the lines participated actively in the war effort. Asked to boost morale, conserve goods, buy war bonds, and take care of everyday activities, women at the home front formed the “Other Army”, as Minister of Munitions Alfred Dallolio described them” (p. 45). Although women actively participated in the war as nurses, spies, as well as in many other roles, their contribution is seen as the one of a mother having to fight outside the domestic space for the sake of the domestic space. For many, a major female role was to prepare the way for men to be heroes (Scardino Belzer, 2010, p. 42). No matter what the reasons, women are generally absent in the making of history concerning the Great War, and this exclusion is only challenged after the 1970s, as Tylee (1990) suggests (p. 8–9). This is why this study focuses on this aspect of the effects of the war, especially through Virginia Woolf’s female characters that are victims of war neurosis.

Mrs Dalloway

Mrs Dalloway is set in 1923, five years after the end of the war but, as Woolf points out, the work has to do with the “shock of the War which cannot be forgotten” (quoted in Tylee, 1990, p. 150). Although Septimus is the outstanding figure representing war neurosis in the text, Clarissa Dalloway appears as the ignored victim of the very same trauma. Septimus was haunted by his experiences, Clarissa by fear, a sense of loss and helplessness. The constant emphasis on her cold, hard and lonely nature parallels Vera Brittain’s depiction of the “unfriended” victim of war trauma. Sarah Cole (2003) comments on Vera Brittain’s depiction of her experience of war as a nurse, indicating that:

Brittain depicts the tragedy as an experience that severs all the war’s generation from the rest of society, not so much setting women and men against one another as destroying an extremely close male community that also includes a select group of women. For Brittain, like so many combatant writers of the period, the war’s greatest abomination is its shattering of intimacy, an assault on personal ties that occurs in several keys. Most clearly, Brittain describes the terrible trauma when her beloved friends and relatives are killed in combat: “So incredible was our final separation”, she writes of the death of her brother, “that it made life itself seem unreal. I had never believed that I could actually go on living without that lovely companionship that had been at my service since childhood, that perfect relation” (*Testament*, 444). For Brittain, the death of her brother means the end of a flawless embodiment of friendship. Her language of perfect community recalls similar moments in the poetry of Owen and Sassoon, where idealized and all-important friendships are shattered by the war, and such killed intimacy provides the key to war alienation. (p. 176–7)

This account of Brittain’s sense of the loss of intimacy and alienation is especially echoed in the characterization of Clarissa Dalloway’s denial of sensationalism, which also parallels Mildred Aldrich’s account in *A Hilltop on the Marne* (1915):

By 10 August, with the planes still flying overhead, and with stern, silent groups of men walking past her hedge, accompanied by their women and leading children by the hand, she writes revealingly: ‘It has all been so thrilling that I find myself forgetting that it is tragic’. What she finds thrilling is not the blatant intoxication of war-fever but the idea of a people silently united . . . The apparent denial of sensationalism is what makes her account so compelling. (quoted in Tylee, 1990, p. 21)

As defined by Peter Walsh in the novel, this coldness and hardness is a symptom of “the death of the soul”.

Rezia is another “unfriended” woman in the novel. And she also perfectly fits the categorization offered by Scardino Belzer (2010) in her study of Italian women during the war, wherein she points out that the female identity changed in three steps during and after the war: “[t]he prewar feminine archetype praised the obedient wife whose life was restricted mostly to the home and family responsibilities: the *donna brava* (good woman) (p. 2); “[d]uring the Great War, she entered history, and a new prototype developed: the politically active female patriot sacrificing for victory—the *donna italiana* (Italian woman)” (p. 3); and lastly *donna fascista* (fascist woman) who accompanies Italy’s evolution towards a fascist state. Rezia is a great example of the second category. Scardino and Belzer (2010) further comment that

[a] *donna italiana* was supposedly willing to send a loved one to the front with a smile or deny children a filling meal. She had to reorder her priorities. For the war to succeed, it was necessary for her to see herself first as Italian, sacrificing for an Allied victory, and only second as female, sacrificing in an appropriately feminine manner. During the war, patriotism trumped gender as women’s predominant identity. (p. 3)

Rezia’s illusory perspective of Septimus’s situation, her denial of the destructive effects of war on him and her insistence of seeing him as a war hero rather than a victim is a sign of this. However, no matter how committed she seems to be, Woolf reveals the signs of her suffering, indicating that she is traumatized as much as Septimus himself.

For she could stand it no longer. Dr Holmes might say there was nothing the matter. Far rather would she that he were dead! she could not sit beside him when he stared so and did not see her and made everything terrible; sky and tree, children playing, dragging carts, blowing whistles, falling down; all were terrible. And he would not kill himself; and she could tell no one. 'Septimus has been working too hard' – that was all she could say to her own mother. To love makes one solitary, she thought. She could tell nobody, not even Septimus now, and looking back, she saw him sitting in his shabby overcoat alone, on the seat, hunched up, staring. And it was cowardly for a man to say he would kill himself, but Septimus had fought; he was brave; he was not Septimus now. She put on her lace collar. She put on her new hat and he never noticed; and he was happy without her. Nothing could make her happy without him! Nothing! He was selfish. So men are. For he was not ill. Dr Holmes said there was nothing the matter with him. She spread her hand before her. Look! her wedding ring slipped – she had grown so thin. It was she who suffered – but had nobody to tell. (Woolf, *Dalloway*, 2005 , p. 141)

So she is unfriended, with no one to talk to, alienated and traumatized by both the war and its effects on Septimus. Unfortunately, Septimus ends up committing suicide, although Lucrezia tries to prevent the unjustifiable treatment the doctors force him to accept. As Septimus hears the doctor trying to force him to rest, he thinks how he does not want to die: “(He sat on the sill). But he would wait till the last moment. He did not want to die. Life was good. The sun hot” (Woolf, *Dalloway*, 2005, pp. 221-2). After this procession of thoughts, Septimus jumps out the window right after the doctor walks inside the room.

The remarkable thing about Septimus's suicide, though, is Clarissa's response to it. She is told about the incident during her party, and that is precisely where the parallel experiences or the mental states of Clarissa and Septimus are highlighted: they are both victims of the trauma caused by the war.

Always her body went through it first, when she was told, suddenly, of an accident; her dress flamed, her body burnt. He had thrown himself from a window. Up had flashed the ground; through him, blundering, bruising, went the rusty spikes. There he lay with a thud, thud, thud in his brain, and then a suffocation of blackness. So she saw it. [. . .] Death was defiance. Death was an attempt to communicate; people feeling the impossibility of reaching the centre which, mystically, evaded them; closeness drew apart; rapture faded, one was alone. There was an embrace in death. [. . .] Somehow it was her disaster – her disgrace. It was her punishment to see sink and disappear here a man, there a woman, in this profound darkness, and she forced to stand here in her evening dress. [. . .] There! the old lady had put out her light! the whole house was dark now with this going on, she repeated, and the words came to her, Fear no more the heat of the sun. She must go back to them. But what an extraordinary night! She felt somehow very like him – the young man who had killed himself. She felt glad that he had done it; thrown it away. The clock was striking. The leaden circles dissolved in the air. He made her feel the beauty; made her feel the fun. But she must go back. She must assemble. She must find Sally and Peter. And she came in from the little room. (Woolf, *Dalloway*, 2005, p. 243–5)

Clarissa identifies herself with Septimus although she has never met him before. She does not know him but at the same time he is very familiar. They have been sharing the same experiences, which is pointed out by the fact that they both place their emphasis on the heat of the sun.

To the Lighthouse

To the Lighthouse also portrays the mentality of the civilians who are not directly involved in the war but had to live under constant threat, which the sounds of the war do not let them forget. These sounds reach them like

the measured blows of hammers dulled on felt, which, with their repeated shocks still further loosened the shawl and cracked the tea-cups. Now and again some glass tinkled in the cupboard as if a giant voice had shrieked so loud in its agony that tumblers stood inside a cupboard vibrated too. Then again silence fell; and then, night after night, and sometimes in plain midday when the roses were bright and light turned on the wall its shape clearly there seemed to drop into this silence this indifference, this integrity, the thud of something falling. [A shell exploded. Twenty or thirty young men were blown up in France, among them Andrew Ramsay, whose death, mercifully, was instantaneous]. (Woolf, *Lighthouse*, 2005, p. 342)

Beside this never-ending reminder of ongoing death and destruction that continually haunts Mrs. Ramsey, she also experiences the loss of Andrew Ramsey. So, just like Clarissa Dalloway, Mrs. Ramsey suffers from the traumatic sense of loss, fear, helplessness and alienation. Before the war everybody liked her but after the war she became a different person, as is obvious from the following passage: "But dear, many things had changed since then (she shut the drawer); many families had lost their dearest. So she was dead; and Mr Andrew killed; and Miss Prue dead too, they said, with her first baby; but every one had lost

someone these years” (Woolf, *Lighthouse*, 2005, p. 344). In this sense, Mrs. Ramsey is another character that experiences the death of the soul. Besides, her devastation is projected onto the wrecked situation of the Ramsey home. Mrs. Ramsey is falling apart bit by bit just like the house which “was all damp in here; the plaster was falling. [. . .] gone mouldy too. And rats in all the attics. [. . .] The house was left; the house was deserted. It was left like a shell on a sand hill to fill with dry salt grains now that life had left it” (Woolf, *Lighthouse*, 2005, p. 344-5). Life had left Mrs Ramsey as well, and as Cam kept repeating her father’s words they “perished, each alone” (Woolf, *Lighthouse*, 2005, p. 364).

Jacob’s Room

Jacob’s Room, on the other hand, narrates the life of Jacob in fragmented episodes from his childhood to his death in war. The devastating effects of the war are revealed ironically through Jacob’s commitment to civilization and modernity, humanism and optimism. But Jacob is not the only foil to highlight the effects of the war. Betty Flanders’s state of mind is also revealed as terribly affected by war. Her perception of the sea, the waves and the sun are all used as a foreshadowing of the approaching disaster and, moreover, echo the trauma and disillusionment that she experiences. In the opening pages of the novel, “the salt gale blowing in Betty Flander’s bedroom window”, curiously makes her realize “the oppression of eternity” (Woolf, *Jacob*, 2005, p. 37). Vincent Sherry (2005) suggests that the wind blowing into Betty Flanders’s bedroom reminding her of the oppression of eternity is decidedly the wind of violence that blows as a result of the world war (p. 131). The wind blowing into the bedroom, an individual’s most personal space, is also the sign of the war affecting even the most personal aspects of people’s lives. Sherry (2005) goes on to argue that “Betty Flanders’s family name also calls up the site of the conflict’s most famous battlefield and mass grave” (p. 131–2). Although Woolf never clearly indicates that Betty Flanders is oppressed by the traumatic consequences of the war, she can obviously be thought to suffer from oppression, fear, helplessness, loneliness and loss as indicated in the following passage from the novel:

“The guns?” said Betty Flanders, half asleep, getting out of bed and going to the window, which was decorated with a fringe of dark leaves.

“Not at this distance,” she thought. “It is the sea.”

Again, far away, she heard the dull sound, as if nocturnal women were beating great carpets. There was Morty lost, and Seabrook dead; her sons fighting for their country. But were the chickens safe? Was that someone moving downstairs? Rebecca with the toothache? No. The nocturnal women were beating great carpets. Her hens shifted slightly on their perches. (Woolf, *Jacob*, 2005, p. 123)

She is not, however, the only one to suffer from the fear and the threat caused by the war as highlighted in *Jacob’s Room*. Some women are victims of a more direct impact:

But the red light was on the columns of the Parthenon, and the Greek women who were knitting their stockings and sometimes crying to a child to come and have the insects picked from its head were as jolly as sand–martins in the heat, quarrelling, scolding, suckling their babies, until the ships in the Piraeus fired their guns.

The sound spread itself flat, and then went tunneling its way with fitful explosions among the channels of the islands.

Darkness drops like a knife over Greece. (Woolf, *Jacob*, 2005, p. 123)

Greek women suckling their babies became unforeseen victims of the war, contributing thus to the fear and sense of loss that terrorized the whole continent.

Conclusion

Some scholars have suggested that women could not bear the terrible consequences of the war so they decided to ignore it. It was argued that women were indifferent to the war or just unable to comprehend it. However, the works studied herein make it patent that women experienced all of the troubles and devastation of the war, only in a different way: the sense of loss, lack, fear, and the compulsory forfeiture of sincerity. As pointed out in *Mrs Dalloway* (2005), all of these women suffered under “some venerable name; love, duty, self-sacrifice” (p. 192).

References

- Buck, C. (2005). British women's writing of the great war. In Vincent Sherry (Ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of the First World War* (85–112). Cambridge: Cambridge UP. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL0521821452.005>
- Cohen, D. R. (2001). Encoded enclosures: The wartime novels of Stella Benson. In Patrick J. Quinn and Steven Trout (Eds.), *Literature of the Great War reconsidered: Beyond modern memory* (37–54). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cole, S. (2003). *Modernism, male friendship and the first world war*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511485046>
- Krockel, C. (2011). *War Trauma and English modernism: T. S. Eliot and D. H. Lawrence*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230307759>
- Rivers, W. H. R. (1922). Repression of War Experience. In *Instinct and the unconscious: A contribution to a biological theory of the psycho-neuroses* (2nd ed.) (185–204). Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
- Scardino Belzer, A. (2010). *Women and the Great War: Femininity Under Fire in Italy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Sherry, V. (2005). The Great War and Literary Modernism in England. In Vincent Sherry (Ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of the First World War* (pp. 113–140). Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
- Showalter, Elaine (1993). Hysteria, feminism, and gender. In Sander L. Gilman, Helen King, Roy Porter. G.S. Rousseau and Elaine Showalter (Eds.), *Hysteria beyond Freud* (287–335). Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press.
- Tylee, Claire M. (1990). *The Great War and women's consciousness: Images of militarism and womanhood in women's writings, 1914–64*. London: Macmillan. Tylee, Claire M. (1990). The Great War and women's consciousness: Images of militarism and womanhood in women's writings, 1914–64. London: Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-20454-0>
- Winter, Jay (2006). *Remembering war: The Great War between historical memory and history in the twentieth century*. New Haven and London: Yale UP.
- Woolf, Virginia (2005). *Jacob's room*. In *Selected works of Virginia Woolf* (7–124). London: Wordsworth.
- Woolf, Virginia (2005). *Mrs. Dalloway*. In *Selected works of Virginia Woolf* (125–252). London: Wordsworth.
- Woolf, Virginia (2005). *To the lighthouse*. In *Selected works of Virginia Woolf* (253–392). London: Wordsworth.

Corresponding Author: Assist. Prof. Dr. Mahinur Aksehir-Uygur

Contact e-mail: mahinuraksehir@yahoo.com

**Life and Death in Verses Case Study:
The Writings of Lili Kasticher,
the Only Woman who Wrote in Auschwitz**

Lily Halpert Zamir
David Yellin Academic College of Education, Israel

Abstract

This paper focuses on the unique works of a young woman named Lili Kasticher, written at the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp from April to November 1944. Lili, the only woman known to have written at Birkenau (Shik, 2012), risked her life by stealing pieces of paper and pencil stubs to write poetry and encouraged her friends to do the same, offering them a prize – a portion of her bread. The notes bearing her writings were concealed on her person until her liberation in the spring of 1945. The possession of a piece of paper or writing implement was absolutely forbidden in Birkenau. Anyone caught with such contraband was immediately sentenced to death. Consequently, inmates at Auschwitz produced no written material, with rare exceptions, such as the records kept by the *Sonderkommando* or the postcards that Germans ordered their victims to write, as discussed below (Levi, 1995).

Keywords: Sonderkommando, Auschwitz–Birkenau, death camp, underground writing

Introduction

This study introduces the unique, authentic works of Lili Kasticher, written at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Lili may well be the only individual inmate who was willing to risk her life by writing. Possession of a piece of paper or a pencil stub was absolutely forbidden in Birkenau. Anyone caught with such contraband was immediately sentenced to death. Consequently, inmates produced no written materials, with rare exceptions such as the *Sonderkommando*, that documented everyday life at the camp, concealing their records in jars that they buried near the crematoria in the hope that someone would find them after the war, as indeed occurred (O. D. Kulka, 2013, p. 15).¹ Jewish inmates were ordered by the Germans to write postcards to their relatives, describing the “decent” living conditions in their “new place of residence” (O. D. Kulka, 2013, p. 10).² In *Moments of Reprieve*, Primo Levi describes a love letter that a gypsy inmate asked him to write, indicating that he endangered both their lives by doing so, just to gain half a portion of bread.

Historical Notes

Auschwitz, the largest and best known of Nazi concentration camps, was built in 1940 when the Nazis realized that they had more prisoners than prison space. It was liberated by the Red Army on January 27, 1945. Nine days earlier, as Soviet troops drew closer, all inmates capable of walking – 48,342 men and about 16,000 women, along with 96 prisoners of war – were dispatched on foot via Austria to other locations in Nazi-occupied Europe. These evacuation campaigns would later be known as Death Marches. About 6,000 inmates remained in Auschwitz-Birkenau, including some 4,000 women. The last of the Nazis left the camp on January 24, three days before its liberation.

In the inferno that was Auschwitz-Birkenau, various regulations were imposed with the sole purpose of maintaining a repressive system that sought to break the inmates’ spirit and utterly destroy all traces of humanity among them. One such edict was an explicit ban on possession of paper and writing implements. Those who violated this prohibition were sentenced to death. We are aware, however, that the *Sonderkommando* systematically documented the destruction of their brethren – not only in writing but also photographically – realizing that they were the last and perhaps the only inmates who could attest to the annihilation of European Jewry. Had they been caught in the act, they would have been executed at once. In any case, they were living on borrowed time because the Germans, at Adolf Eichmann’s

¹ The *Sonderkommando* were Jewish able-bodied prisoners forced to work disposing of the bodies of gas chamber victims. Some of the *Sonderkommando* used those same jars to conceal poetry or diaries, such as the diary of Zalman Gradowski that was discovered among the Auschwitz crematorium ruins. These *Sonderkommando*, who faced certain death as a consequence of their documentation, were also members of the underground that planned the October 1944 revolt at Auschwitz.

² These postcards included cryptic references warning their addressees not to believe the ostensibly optimistic messages. For example, they might say: “Every day, we welcome Uncle Hlad (Czech: Starvation)’ or Uncle Mavet (Hebrew: Death).” The cards were sent by inmates of a Birkenau camp populated by families dispatched there from Theresienstadt. They were dated March 25, but the people who wrote them were annihilated on March 7, over two weeks earlier. The entire family camp was wiped out in July 1944.

orders, exterminated the *Sonderkommando* every few months and replaced them with new ones, so that their secret would go with them to their deaths and not find its way outside. The only exceptions to this decree were people with special jobs, such as expert mechanics, furnace tenders, “Room Service”³ personnel, etc., as Rudolf Hess testified at his trial in a Warsaw court shortly after the war (for a more detailed explanation, see Gutman and Berenbaum, 1998).

Shlomo Dragon, one of the few *Sonderkommando* survivors, attested that he and his comrades wrote out of a sense of mission. Besides keeping records, they collected the diaries they found among the items left behind when people were ordered to undress before entering the gas chambers. The *Sonderkommando* concealed these items by burying them in jars and boxes in the courtyard of Crematorium II, hoping that someone would find them at the end of the war (Greif, 2005, p. 54). In his testimony, Dragon, who had worked in the “Room Service” unit of the *Sonderkommando*, said he made sure that Zalman Gorodovsky, who kept a diary and documented the events of each day in meticulous detail, would be given a bunk near a window, so that he would have light by which to write. After liberation, Dragon recalled where Gorodovsky had hidden his documentation and began digging among the crematoria ruins until he found it. He also provided Gorodovsky with thermos-like jars in which to bury his works. Leib Langfuss, known as the *Magid* (preacher – for more detailed information, see Cohen, 1990, p. 312) joined Gorodovsky in his writing efforts. His comrades assigned him easy tasks so that he would have time to write. At the end of the war, Shlomo Dragon submitted all the material to the Soviet Extraordinary State Commission that came to investigate Auschwitz. His brother Abraham, who was also a *Sonderkommando* survivor, stated that they knew no one would remain alive and that they had to leave testimony for future generations. Inmates serving as *Kanada Kommandos*⁴ risked their lives to smuggle in pieces of wax to the *Sonderkommando*, so that the writers could seal the jars and containers in which they hid their notes. *Sonderkommando* Ya’akov Gabai, of Greek origin, wrote about 500 pages of documentation about the annihilation of his brothers. Gabai was unable to carry all he wrote on the Death March to Matthaussen, but submitted them as testimony from his memory after liberation (Greif, 2005, p. 223). Another *Sonderkommando* of Greek origin succeeded in writing a note reading: “If anyone finds this note, please give it to my wife and tell her that I’m dead”. He hid it in the courtyard of Crematorium II. Fortunately, as it turned out, he survived. Writing the note, a heroic act in itself, was possible only because the *Sonderkommando* had special living conditions, including quarters isolated from the rest of the camp and an exemplary organizational structure that ultimately led them to mount a rebellion in October 1944.

Another well-known writing enterprise at Auschwitz–Birkenau involved the postcards distributed among inmates before they were sent to the gas chambers. They were ordered to write to their relatives in German (those who did not know German were not permitted to write), telling them that they had arrived at a labor camp where the work is reasonable and

³ A *Sonderkommando* unit responsible for quarters, ongoing maintenance and food management.

⁴ A work detail whose job was to sort goods that victims left behind on the ramp before those goods were dispatched to Germany. At times, these inmates had the opportunity to smuggle some of these goods into the camp, risking their lives by doing so, of course. Usually, they looked for food, medicines and the like.

the food is satisfactory; they are well treated and in good health and hope to see their families soon. These postcards usually were dated several days after they were actually written, after their writers had already been turned to ashes (Levi, 1995, pp. 39–46).

In his story *The Gypsy* (1995), Primo Levi documents postcard writing and the distress felt by inmates who did not know German and did not participate in the Germans' deceptive postcard campaign. One of them, "the Gypsy", asked Levi to write something in German for him in exchange for a half portion of bread. To Levi's surprise, he pulled out a sheet of paper rather than a standard postcard, asking him to write a letter to his sweetheart. This was a strange and unique situation, not only because the Gypsy had a sheet of paper but also because he showed Levi a picture of his girlfriend that he managed to smuggle with him into the inferno (*The Gypsy*, 1995). It is clear that the punishment for possession of either or both of these two "treasures" would be a beating or death, depending on the whims of the officer in charge. Similarly, we know of Polish inmates, most of them political prisoners or people in contact with them, who kept records in Auschwitz and managed to save their work.⁵

The writings of Ruth Klüger describe experiences in Auschwitz but were recorded in Gross-Rosen, as Klüger confirmed in 1994 (Nader, 2007, pp. 52–53). Eva Golgevit's poems were also presumed to have been composed in Auschwitz, but as she noted in her book *Ne pleurez pas, mes fils . . .* published in France in 2000, all her poems and songs were transcribed from memory after the liberation and not during her internment.

From a historical perspective, Lili Kasticher's Auschwitz writings are worthy of special attention – not so much for their literary value but because of the unique and marvelous human story they tell of a young woman whose heroism challenges and bests death by means of the written word.

Lili Kasticher's works may be divided into three principal groups. The first, to be discussed below, was written in Auschwitz–Birkenau and comprises a collection of poems, some of them decorated with miniature drawings, mostly her own.

Among the notes she saved from Auschwitz were two additional interesting items:

1. A Yiddish letter of unknown authorship. According to Lili's son Alexander Hirt and daughter Daniela. Lili did not know Yiddish at all.
2. A poem dedicated to Berta, describing hunger. It bears neither name, date nor signature, but its content and the handwriting on the original copy indicate that it was most likely written by Lili. It begins with the verses: "I feel ashamed / but I am hungry / I should

⁵ Dr Wojciech Polosa, Archive Director at the State Auschwitz–Birkenau Museum in Oświęcim, submitted the following items on June 22, 2016: Jerzy Pozimski's notes, in Polish, from June 24 to December 23, 1940; notes in Polish that Wincenty Gawron took with him when he escaped from Auschwitz in May 1942; *Tango Tesknoty*, a poem written by Tadeusz Borowski after his arrival in Auschwitz in the autumn of 1943 and saved by Polish political prisoner Mieczysław Szymkowiak; a handwritten Polish note of unknown date and authorship, discovered in Auschwitz in 1958; a handwritten Russian poem of unknown date and authorship.

have been given more food” and concludes with “There are no boys here, only girls / I must not think about food.”

Only two poems were written by her friends and partners in suffering whom she urged to write. Piri, Inmate No. 86855, dared to write a satiric poem about “recreation” in Auschwitz, comparing the death camp to a special resort where the inmates swim in their own filth instead of a pool. Juci Abraham submitted a poem as well, entitled *A Sweet Dream*. Both poems are dateless. In her Auschwitz diary, Lili mentions that she had to persuade her friends to write these poems in exchange for her bread portion.

The *Code of Behavior* that she would later develop at the Gross-Rosen Labor Camp in Oberhohenelbe, attempting to institute social order and mutual assistance among female inmates, was written on the reverse side of Auschwitz requisition forms. The *Code* is of immeasurable importance, as it represents an unequivocal promise that within the chaotic realities of the camp, in which every movement and every breath was dictated by the Germans, several Jewish women joined forces to draft their own rules, thereby declaring their moral superiority and freedom of opinion against an oppressor that sought to render them subhuman.

The second category comprises a much larger set of poems and drawings from the Gross-Rosen Labor Camp in Oberhohenelbe,⁶ to which Lili was dispatched from Auschwitz in late December 1944, while the third consists of the Auschwitz diary that she reconstructed from memory after liberation.⁷

Lili Kasticher was born in 1923 in Petrovaselo, Yugoslavia, and subsequently lived in Novi Sad (annexed by Hungary in 1941). She was deported to Auschwitz–Birkenau in April 1944 and had the K. C. number 8965 tattooed on her arm. From there, she was assigned to Gross-Rosen, where she worked at the Lorenz factory until liberation in May 1945. In December 1948, she immigrated to Israel where she remained until her death in November 1973.

It is common knowledge that female inmates at Auschwitz–Birkenau did not write because of the severe prohibition against possession of even the most rudimentary writing utensils and paper scraps (Shik, 2012). Lili insisted on writing nonetheless and even encouraged her fellow inmates to do so as a means of maintaining a last shred of human dignity. These “written signs” from the inferno also engendered an intuitive therapeutic empowerment, now referred to as *bibliotherapy*, that helped them face their horrible fate and gave them the aim and purpose that are so critical in the human struggle for life and survival (Frankl, 1970).

In an interview published in the Hungarian-language Israeli newspaper *Uj Kelet* (New East) on February 23, 1951, Lili explained how she stayed alive, revealing the ways she obtained pencils and crayons in Birkenau. She had once read a book on handwriting analysis and palmistry and would read palms for the inmates, always promising them an encouraging

⁶ These writings will be addressed separately. Lili Kasticher’s manuscripts were submitted to the Yad Vashem Archives in 1973, including memoirs written in Israel in 1951 (File No. 4-14/0.48 (4064459)).

⁷ This diary exemplifies Naama Shik’s (2012) theory concerning autobiographical writings by Auschwitz survivors immediately after liberation.

future. One day the Kapo (often a common or political prisoner assigned by the Germans to supervise work at the camp) approached her, asking to have her palm read. Excited by Lili's reading, the Kapo asked her to analyze letters from her boyfriend at the front, wanting to know if he really missed her. Lili's interpretations always confirmed what the Kapo wanted to hear. Subsequently, the Kapo asked Lili to write and illustrate her letters to her boyfriend. That's how Lili obtained writing implements. She picked up paper from the office floor, hid them in her pocket and took her booty back to her blockmates. This story was repeated in a letter she wrote to a Mr. Halmi on December 15, 1963.

Lili wrote mostly at Birkenau, while her friends did so primarily at Gross-Rosen, where the living conditions were slightly more bearable. Lili organized writing contests, for which the prizes consisted mostly of food that she had set aside from her own minimal portions.

Lili's Writings in Auschwitz

In Auschwitz, Lili wrote five poems with date-bearing headings and two – *The Song of The Camp* and *Where Is Our Homeland* – whose headings mentioned only the location: Auschwitz. *The Song of the Camp* describes the women's yearning for the landscape of the Danube and their "homeland": Green, flower-laden fields, small cottages and the sweet sound of bells ringing in the valley. *Where Is Our Homeland* opens with the eponymous question and concludes with a prayer for success in finding that homeland, where they will be free and where "mother is waiting to be hugged and kissed". The two poems appear to have been written about the same time, as their themes are similar and no mention is made of the camp and its hardships.

As its title suggests, *One Night in Birkenau* was written in Auschwitz-Birkenau on May 31, 1944, not long after Lili's arrival, on a piece of paper filched from the camp office with German writing on the other side. It opens with the verses:

Thousands of nighttime fears are chased by the wind, in the night . . . (Kasticher, 1951)⁸

The poem's content expresses the tortures of life in the *Lager* (camp), with all its terror, loneliness and hopelessness. The inmates lived with their nightmares, in which they see their children asking for a cup of chocolate milk. Then, the alarm signaling the start of the workday cut the dream short:

Rise, the sound of the alarm,
The camp bell high in the sky.

They are thus returned to the real world, one in which they have been separated from their children, who were slaughtered in the gas chambers. To the left of the poem is a miniature illustration of the muddy camp and its wooden barracks.

To the Doctor at Auschwitz was written at Birkenau on June 15, 1944 in the same manner – in pencil on a piece of used paper, with a miniature sketch in the upper left-hand corner

⁸ The poems were translated into English by Suli Bruck in July 1973, with subsequent minor emendations by Zvi Ofer.

depicting tiny women raising their hands towards heaven. In a diary that she subsequently wrote in Israel, Lili recounts that the poem was dedicated to a Jewish woman doctor who risked her life by tearing a piece of cloth from her smock to bandage a wounded inmate. The poem describes the inmates' physical and mental torture and their yearning for words of encouragement:

Stand strong! We shall overcome...
Cursed hands will not drain our blood!

The Jewish physician indeed offered inspiration and substantive assistance through her kindness and soft words.⁹

The Germans routinely ordered inmates, men and women alike, to sing on the way to and from work. Lili's poem *The Parade is on the Way* (July 30, 1944) was thus included in the women's marching repertoire, sung to the tune of the well-known march *Mariska*, and describing the inmates' lives with much humor and irony:

The parade is on its way, out of the gate
Whoever stays in place gets a kiss on "the place" . . .
Oh, how wonderful is our fortune of plenty

This poem includes a miniature illustration of marching women at its upper left corner.

The Women of the Camp (November 11, 1944) deals with the joy that another week has passed and all are still alive. It describes the terrible starvation that the inmates suffer, yearning for bread as they listen to the sounds coming from their empty stomachs.

Spring 1940 (December 3, 1944) was probably Lili's last poem written at Auschwitz. Unlike all the others, it describes the horrible historical events of the spring of 1940, incidents where she witnessed people killing one another as the Danube flowed peacefully through the beautiful green forests Europe. Lili's postwar notes call the poem *Dreaming of Novi Sad 1940*. Its most remarkable feature is the absence of any reference to the misery of Auschwitz, instead focusing on Lili's account of the Third Hungarian Army's butchering of Serbs and Jews as it passed through the region. This event preceded the mass shootings of Serbs and Jews along the Danube in winter 1942, known in Serbian history as "the Cold Days".

Most of the writing at Auschwitz-Birkenau was composed by Lili herself, who tried to minimize the risk when encouraging her friends to do the same. At the Gross-Rosen Labor Camp in Oberhohenelbe, Lili organized literary competitions, but hardly wrote herself. At both camps, the prizes were always taken from her bread portion, reflecting her heroic, altruistic personality and leadership.

Lili's Auschwitz-Birkenau writings, all in Hungarian, included *Rules of Behaviour*,¹⁰ a guidebook influenced by her socialist views. She declared that the only way to survive the

⁹ Concerning the altruism of Jewish physicians and nurses, Wilner (1998, pp. 28–30) reports that they carried dysentery and typhus victims, at risk to their own lives, so that the Germans would not notice them and send them to the gas chambers.

hell of Birkenau is to act as a mutually supportive group that adheres to the moral values upon which its members were raised: “Here, there is no longer ‘I’, there is only ‘we’. And as ‘we’, we will be saved if we behave sincerely, sacrificing ourselves for others, displaying good will, never bearing grudges or reporting others. Only thus can we maintain human dignity”, concludes Lili (Kasticher, 1951). This manifesto illuminates Lili’s personality as a socialist leader and reveals that the real purpose of her writing initiative was to preserve a modicum of humanity for herself and her friends.

Lili’s diary, written in 1951, describes the birth of a baby in Birkenau. The women realized that it would mean disaster for the mother and everyone else. After considerable hesitation, they decided to give him up. They wrapped him in a blanket and placed him at the entrance to the block, without revealing the mother’s identity. Lili describes this warm and sweetly breathing creature, painfully addressing the difficult moral dilemma and subsequent decision to give him up, thus saving the life of his mother and those of the others in her block (see discussion of *One Night in Birkenau*, above).

Lili’s Auschwitz works reflect starvation, humiliation, beatings, hard labor, poor hygiene, crowding, fear of death and uncertainty, all of which rendered life unbearable. But her work also expresses hope for a much better life in Israel after liberation, as exemplified by the final lines of *Homeland*:

Those who suffered
Will rejoice again one day.

One may discern signs of moral behavior within this inferno, but such ethical conduct would come at great sacrifice, as this was an environment wherein people risked their lives when acting in the service of others. But these risks were taken by people such as the Jewish doctor who saved a wounded inmate or by Lili herself, who stole pencils and paper and gave away what little bread she had despite her own overpowering hunger. As she wrote in her diary: “Soft words are life itself. [. . .] As long as we write, sing and create, we will remain human” (Kasticher, 1951, pp. 12, 15).

¹⁰ A handwritten manuscript found in Lili’s diary. Lili’s granddaughter recalled her mother’s informing her that *Rules of Behaviour* was written in Birkenau (Sela Ben-Ami, 2007).

Conclusions

Lili's writings in Auschwitz-Birkenau raise several interesting points concerning her struggle to defeat death both physically and morally. Had she been caught, her punishment would have been death. Yet her writing was her struggle to defeat death, so the price was taken into account.¹¹ Second, the moral dilemmas she described in her poems and to a certain extent in her diary (Kasticher, 1951), especially the one concerning the woman doctor, always had altruistic solutions that accord top priority to others and their needs. Such behavior is also described as overtly feminine in educational contexts (Noddings, 1994).

Her own works and her attempts to encourage her friends to write¹² are heroic and unique measures of resistance, expressing her struggle against the Nazis as well as her fight to remain human and help her friends do so. She realized that as long as the breath of life was within them and their spirit continued to resist the Nazi oppressor, they still had some chance of survival. She derived great mental and spiritual satisfaction from her ability to create, proving her humanity even in the hell of the labor camp. Above all, she exacted her triumph over the Nazi oppressor who wanted to turn her into an *Untermensch*.

The therapeutic empowerment of Lili's creativity saved her and many of her friends by raising their self-esteem and pride in the horribly sadistic and humiliating atmosphere created by the Nazis. These women and their works may well be remembered long after the Nazi era fades into oblivion.

In a recent newspaper article, Prof. Otto Dov Kulka (2013, April 8) inquired: "[What] was the essence of Nazi Antisemitism? . . . The Jews, by race, were the biological source of the Jewish spirit. . . [that] was the enemy because of its ideas about the unity of the world and equality of humanity. . . The opposite idea was a conception of inequality among races. . . and a constant war for survival. They wanted to return the world to its 'natural order,' that is contrary to the humanistic ideas originating in Judaism." This study uniquely identifies the transformation of accepting one's fate into a source of creativity that accords dignity and strength to life in a world of brutality and violence, as exemplified by Lili Kasticher, whose creative verses of life and death turned the chaotic world of Auschwitz into an island of possible survival.

¹¹ It is important to note that unlike the *Sonderkommando*, she had no organization to support her writing but rather relied on her own initiative and efforts.

¹² Female inmates' participation in the prize competitions that Lili organized intensified in the Oberhohenelbe Labor Camp, where living conditions were slightly improved; this had a positive effect on the overall atmosphere as well. The inmates were working for the Lorenz plant, which manufactured radio receivers and other electronic devices. They slept on mattresses and two-person platforms in an attic and, above all, once every second Sunday, when the factory was closed, they had time for personal hygiene. Lili used her free time for social activity because she knew that a reinforced spirit would deliver her comrades from death.

References

- Cohen, N. (1990). Diaries of the Sonderkommando in Auschwitz: Coping with fate and reality. *Yad Vashem Studies*, 20, 273–312.
- Frankl, V. (1970). *The will to meaning: Foundations and application of logotherapy*. New York: Plume.
- Greif, G. (2005). *We wept without tears – Testimonies of the Jewish Sonderkommando from Auschwitz*. New Haven: Yale UP.
<https://doi.org/10.12987/yale/9780300106510.001.0001>
- Gutman, Y. and Berenbaum, M. (Eds.). (1998). *Auschwitz – Anatomy of the Auschwitz death camp*. Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press.
- Kasticher, L. (1951). Yad Vashem Archive 0.48/14.4 (submitted in 1973).
- Kulka, O.D. (2013, April 8). *Haaretz*.
- Kulka, O.D. (2013). *Landscapes of the metropolis of death: Reflections on memory and imagination*. London: Penguin Books.
- Levi, P. (1995). The gypsy. *Moments of Reprieve: A Memoir of Auschwitz* (trans. R. Feldman). New York: Penguin Books, pp. 39–46.
- Nader, Andrés (2007). *Traumatic verses: On poetry in German from the concentration camps, 1933-1945*. Rochester, NY: Camden House.
- Noddings, N. (1994). *The education of teachers*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Sela Ben-Ami, L. (2007). Memories from Auschwitz: The testimony of Lili Kasticher. M.A. seminar paper, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem [Hebrew].
- Shik, N. (2012). Early autobiographical literature concerning Auschwitz, 1945-1947: Uniqueness, gender and lack. In E. Bar-Yosef (ed.), *Theory and criticism*, vol. 40. Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuhad / Sifriyat Poalim, in cooperation with the Van Leer Institute, p. 293.
- Wilner, V. (1998). Yad Vashem Archive 03/10862. (Submitted October 1, pp. 28–30).

Corresponding Author: Lily Halpert Zamir

Contact e-mail: lilyzami@gmail.com

Arthur Hugh Clough's "Amours De Voyage": A Poetic Account of the 1849 Siege of Rome

Cora Lindsay

School of Education, University of Nottingham, UK

Abstract

In this paper I talk about Arthur Hugh Clough's epistolary poem *Amours de Voyage*, which describes Clough's first-hand experience of the events of 1840s Europe, a time of uncertainty and rising nationalist agendas. *Amours de Voyage* was largely written during Clough's stay in Rome from April to July 1849, the brief period in which the Roman Republic existed and the city was under siege from the French. The poem is an unusual, unromantic and bemused depiction of nationalistic conflict. By the time it was finally published in Britain in 1862, the Italian struggle for independence had become one of the most celebrated and romantic causes of the century. Clough, with his questioning turn of mind, was inherently wary of such emotional responses. This poem epitomises the detached and constructive scepticism with which Clough approached political and national manifestos, questioning blind certainties and often undermining the pomposity of fanaticism through humour.

Keywords: Arthur Hugh Clough, Risorgimento, 1849 Siege of Rome, *Amours de Voyage*

The poetry of Arthur Hugh Clough (1816–1861) is generally little known in Britain, and when I talk about his work, I usually have to add that he was a contemporary and friend of Matthew Arnold writing at the same time as Tennyson and Browning. These days he is possibly best known for the much-anthologised “Say Not the Struggle Nought Availeth” – a poem of optimism for times of darkness, which was quoted by Winston Churchill in 1941 to celebrate the US entry into World War II.

Amours de Voyage is, I would argue, Clough’s greatest poetic achievement. The poem, or epistolary verse novel, was largely written during Clough’s stay in Rome from 16th April to the end of July, 1849. It is made up of five cantos or chapters, and consists primarily of a series of letters in verse written from the Rome of this time by Claude, an English Oxford undergraduate, and Georgina and Mary Trevellyn, two sisters in a English family travelling in Italy.

The narrators or letter writers are each in some sense typical of the travelling English of the later nineteenth-century Grand Tour. Claude is the archetypal student who is visiting Rome for its classical past; the Trevellyn family are representative of the emerging new type of family and Thomas Cook tourist of the kind that we also see in Dickens’s *Dorrit* family.

As its title indicates, *Amours de Voyage* is fundamentally a love story. Alongside the love story, however, the letter writers record their responses to and experiences of the political events of the spring of 1849 in Rome. 1848 was, of course, a year of European revolutions, and is sometimes known as the time of the Spring of Nations. Clough had been in Paris that year during the establishment of the French Second Republic and he travelled to Rome in 1849 partly because of his interest in the Italian independence cause, although he was certainly never a revolutionary in the Romantic Byronic manner. The poem is, among other things, a powerful account of an individual experience of developing conflict and a creative interpretation of Clough’s own first hand experiences in the 1849 siege of Rome, one of the key episodes in the Italian fight for unification and independence.

By the time *Amours de Voyage* was finally published in Britain in 1862, the Italian Risorgimento and struggle for independence and unification had become one of the most celebrated and romantic causes of the century. It has been termed “the most mythologized political and cultural movement in 19c Europe” and a “revolution marked . . . by heroic sacrifice, cooperation and high-minded ideals that endorsed the validity of the principles of nationalism” (Davies, 2000, p. 2).

Amours de Voyage is set within the events of the spring and summer of 1849, in the aftermath of the flight of the ruling Pope from Rome, the establishment of the Roman Republic and its subsequent defeat by the French after a siege of some weeks. The new president of France, Louis Napoleon, who wanted to prevent Austrian domination of Italy, saw the restoration of the Pope as a way of doing this and of extending his own power in Italy. The French attack and subsequent siege of Rome became central to the romantic narrative of Italian independence. The fight of the small republican army holding out against the imperial French forces was for some not only “the most significant and moving scene of the Risorgimento” but also “a poet’s dream” (Trevelyan, 1907, p. 3).

Giuseppe Garibaldi was the most dramatic of the personalities both in the siege of Rome and in the subsequent events of the Risorgimento. He is generally depicted as the honest, brave, but simple patriot taking up arms against the evils of Austrian, Bourbon and Papal rule and

occupation. The *Illustrated London News* in 1849 described him as “a most picturesque ruffian, the ideal of a brigand – eminently handsome, with a red blouse, braid belt full of pistols, dark wide-brimmed hat and green feather” (*Illustrated London News* 14 June 1849 p. 379), while the Anglo-American writer and historian Elizabeth Wormely Latimer describes him as “beautiful as a statue... mounted on a white horse which he sat on like a centaur” (Wormely Latimer, 1897, p. 379).

With its Roman setting, its account of a siege, its heroic warriors and its use of classical metres, *Amours de Voyage* contains implicit reference to Virgilian and Homeric epic in both its content and form. But while the somewhat effete Claude is most evidently not a heroic figure comparable to Aeneas or Ulysses, any consequently implied criticism is double-edged, and Claude’s scepticism towards the militarism of the Roman Republic serves also as comment on the naïvely unquestioning heroism of other epic warriors.

Matthew Reynolds, in his account of the relationship between poetry and nation building in the mid-nineteenth century, notes that the standard romantic response to Claude’s situation in the Rome of 1849 would be to “fight for liberty [and] make a daring escape with Garibaldi” (Reynolds, 2001, p. 146). Claude, however, excuses himself from patriotic martyrdom, and makes a number of half-ironical lame excuses for his refusal to succumb to death and glory in the Roman cause:

Why not fight? - In the first place, I haven’t so much as a musket;
 In the next, if I had, I shouldn’t know how I should use it;
 In the third, just at present I’m studying ancient marbles;
 In the fourth, I consider I owe my life to my country;
 In the fifth - I forget, but four good reasons are ample.
 (*Amours de Voyage* III. iii. 68–72)

Both in his own correspondence from Rome and his poetic interpretation, Clough notes the mundane, the sense of confusion, and the slightly surreal aspects of a city imminently or already under siege. In a letter to a friend written from Rome on June 21, 1849, he noted the apparent ordinariness of a city under siege:

It is curious how like any other city a city under bombardment looks. – One goes to ... the Palatine to look at the firing; one hears places named where shells have fallen; one sees perhaps a man carrying a bit of one.
 (Mulhauser, 1957, Vol. 1 p. 260)

It is this element of ordinariness, and the correspondingly banal details that yet take on significance and emphasis, which Clough captures so successfully in his poetic interpretation of the siege. In one of his letters, Claude describes the beginning of the French attack:

Yes, we are fighting at last, it appears. This morning, as usual,
 Murray, as usual, in hand, I enter the Café Nuovo;
 Seating myself with a sense as it were of a change in the weather,
 Not understanding, however, but thinking mostly of Murray,
 And, for to-day is their day, of the Campidoglio Marbles;
 Café-latte! I call to the waiter, - and *Non c'è latte*,
 This is the answer he makes me, and this is the sign of a battle.
 (*Amours de Voyage* II. v. 95–101)

The letter opens with what appears to be an emphatic exultation, which is very quickly undercut by the more tentative “it appears”. It continues in narrative mode, with a fluency created by the mirroring of syntax and metre. Claude’s everyday routine as tourist in the city is emphasised by the repetition of “as usual”, the timetabling of sights, and the dependence on Murray (the standard and much-celebrated travel guide to the region). The slowing of pace created by the double trochee in “Café Nuovo” reinforces the semantics of the semi-colon. Clough uses a double trochee again to end line 100 (“Non c’e latte”), only this time it is the apparently throwaway aside (an impression reinforced by the feminine caesura in the fourth line, and the consequent pause before the unaccented “and”) from the waiter, which is given a weighty significance. Clough uses to advantage the first syllable emphasis of the hexameter, so that “this” in line 101 is rendered ironically emphatic. The repetition adds weight to the culmination of the sentence in “this is the sign of a battle”.

After his “milkless nero” Claude watches the first French bombardment of the city from the Pincian Hill, a venue usually recommended to visitors as a viewing point from which to admire the monuments of Rome. He gathers with a group of foreign travellers to watch the French attack almost as if it were another of Rome’s tourist attractions. The central concern of the international spectators, whose passivity is reflected in the alliterative and passive verbs (stand, stare, see), seems to be the risk of getting caught in the rain. The specification of the time, a banal detail in the context of war, reinforces the impression of an organised event, which culminates, however, in the quietly forceful image of “smoke, from the cannon, white”:

Twelve o’clock, on the Pincian Hill, with lots of English,
 Germans, Americans, French, - the Frenchmen too are protected, -
 So we stand in the sun, but afraid of a possible shower;
 So we stand and stare, and see, to the left of St. Peter’s,
 Smoke, from the cannon, white...
 (*Amours de Voyage* II. v. 113–117)

In contrast to this apparently relaxed response to the initial events of the siege, Claude’s letter vii of Canto II captures the uncertain and unsettling atmosphere prior to an escalation of conflict and alludes to the real life episode of the mob killing in Rome of a man suspected of being a Jesuit priest. Claude’s letter begins by aiming at a tone of casual cynicism but soon shifts to a sense of bemusement and disquiet. He has seen something, but does not quite know what it is he has seen:

So I have seen a man killed! An experience that, among others!
 Yes, I suppose I have; although I can hardly be certain,
 And in a court of justice could never declare I had seen it.
 But a man was killed, I am told, in a place where I saw
 Something; a man was killed, I am told and I saw something.
 (*Amours de Voyage* II. vii. 162–166)

Despite the apparently jauntily dactylic and exclamatory beginning, Claude soon slows down into a confused and pensive consideration of what he believes he has seen. The four balanced clauses of lines 162 and 163 reflect a progression growing from conviction to uncertainty. The jerkily short and repetitive clauses are a dramatic articulation of Claude’s startled and disoriented state of mind. The letter moves from an affirmation of the fact in blackly comic

dactyls (“So, I have seen a man killed!”), through tentative withdrawal (“I suppose”, “I can hardly be certain”), into denial (“could never declare I had seen it”) and back to confused affirmation again (“I saw something”). The penultimate line of the section echoes the first but emphasises its difference through the transformation of the jaunty dactyls of the first line into an opening double trochee (“But a man was killed...”), significantly slowing the pace and heightening the emphasis on “was” as statement of fact.

Claude’s sightseeing agenda becomes ever more entangled with the disruptions of the conflict. After the forcefully disjointed and uncertain description of the possible murder, the letter shifts into Claude’s documentary and precise account of his return from St. Peter’s:

I was returning home from St. Peter's; Murray, as usual,
Under my arm, I remember; had crossed the St. Angelo bridge; and
Moving towards the Condotti, had got to the first barricade, when
Gradually, thinking still of St. Peter's, I became conscious
Of a sensation of movement opposing me...
(*Amours de Voyage* II. vii. 167–171)

The physical progression from landmarks of the Eternal City to landmarks of a besieged republic is obscured by Claude’s habitual reliance on Murray, but finds a mental analogue in the diversion of consciousness from St. Peter’s to the barricades. This drama of recollection and heightened awareness is enforced through a series of rhetorical and metrical effects: the repeated placing of the main caesura after an unstressed syllable, the suspended monosyllables which end lines 168 and 169, the gathering weight and abstraction of lines 170 to 171. The enjambment of “when / Gradually”, is followed by the weight of the trochee in “thinking”. This slows the verse down, but the pace shifts radically as Claude moves on to recount the confusion of the killing:

Ha! bare swords in the air, held up? There seem to be voices
Pleading and hands putting back; official, perhaps; but the swords are
Many, and bare in the air. In the air? they descend; they are smiting,
Hewing, chopping - At what? In the air once more upstretched? And
Is it blood that's on them? Yes, certainly blood! Of whom, then?
Over whom is the cry of this furor of exultation?
(*Amours de Voyage* II. vii. 181–186)

After the fragmentary syntax and viciously active participles (“hewing, chopping, “smiting”) of this dramatic passage, Claude proceeds to cross-examine himself at length about the event he has witnessed. At the end of this letter, however, he returns to his persona of sauntering tourist:

But I am thankful to say the government seems to have strength to
Put it down; it has vanished, at least; the place is most peaceful.
Through the Trastevere walking last night, at nine of the clock, I
Found no sort of disorder; I crossed by the Island-bridges,
So by the narrow streets to the Ponte Rotto, and onwards
Thence by the Temple of Vesta, away to the great Coliseum,
Which at the full of the moon is an object worthy a visit.
(*Amours de Voyage* II. vii. 210–216)

The radical shift of tone and pace from the frenzied movement of the violent crowd to the sedately casual stroll of the tourist is indicated by the emphatic first syllable stress on “but” in line 210. From the main caesura of line 213 (after “at least”) the writer’s manner becomes relaxed and contented, with more than a hint of self-mockery. The self-contained clause “the place is most peaceful” seems to close the episode of confusion almost as if it had never occurred.

Elsewhere Claude deflates the casually glorifying aphorisms of war, transforming them into statements to be ironically questioned and deflated:

Dulce it is and decorum no doubt for the country to fall, - to
 Offer one’s blood an oblation to Freedom, and die for the Cause; yet
 Still, individual culture is also something, and no man
 Finds quite distinct the assurance that he of all others is called on...
 (*Amours de Voyage* II.ii.30–33)

The apparent affirmation of “it is” is balanced syntactically and metrically by the more interrogative “no doubt”. The fact that the metrical patterning of the second line mirrors that of the first conveys the impression of a self-contained and incontrovertible couplet, but that impression is undermined and counteracted by the suspended monosyllable “yet”. The repeated enjambment, with two monosyllables suspended at the end of each of these four lines, reflects the need to pause and reconsider an apparent truism, and the initial monosyllables “still” and “finds” give the following lines a meditative and explanatory note.

The Horatian aphorism is picked up again at the end of the same letter, and this time is mediated through the constantly tentative language of Claude, in which “it is” becomes “It may be”, and “no doubt” becomes “Perhaps”. Paradoxically, the suspended monosyllables which end each of the last three lines signal a return to decisive statement; but Claude’s endorsement of Nature’s “plain intentions” (“I shall”) prepares the way for his rejection (“I shan’t”) of the challenge posed by the Horatian aphorism. That rejection, given emphasis by its position at the end of both line and letter, offers a confident two-part prediction which the reader knows to be untrue of “the Romans”, but broadly true of Claude himself:

Sweet it may be and decorous perhaps for the country to die; but,
 On the whole, we conclude the Romans won’t do it, and I shan’t.
 (*Amours de Voyage* II. ii. 46–47)

In another letter the heroic version of war is set in antithesis to the reality:

The smoke of the sacrifice rises to heaven,
 Of a sweet savour, no doubt, to Somebody; but on the altar,
 Lo, there is nothing remaining but ashes and dirt and ill odour.
 (*Amours de Voyage* II. vi. 153–155)

The archaic concept of sacrificial smoke reflects a sense of the archaic nature of human sacrifice. Line 156 builds up through alliterative dactyls to a mythical “Somebody” who demands such sacrifices, made emphatic by the preceding trochee, but is immediately undercut by the stressed “but”. There are echoes of biblical phrasing in the last line, but these serve only to indicate the ultimate futility of the realities of “ashes and dirt and ill odour”. The political polemicist and classical scholar, F. L. Lucas, writing in 1930, felt Clough’s

underlying sentiment in this section of the poem to be a relevant one in the context of his own time:

Some of us may, perhaps, find that odour not unfamiliar, remembering 1919: and, seeing Mussolini stand where stood Mazzini, may wonder if Clough was, after all, so wrong as our fathers must have thought. (Lucas, 1930, p. 64)

On July 3rd the French army finally entered Rome and Garibaldi escaped with a large part of his army to begin his adventurous trek across Italy, continuing only to enhance his romantic reputation in the English periodicals and elsewhere:

If Song still lived in the Sabine mountains, many a future lay ought to tell how the outlaw of Italian liberty left this conquered city, fooled his French pursuers and gained the mountains (Mariotti, 1851 p. 521)

Ultimately Claude and the Trevellyn sisters also escape from French-occupied Rome – the Trevellyns return to England and Claude travels on to the East. Claude ends with disillusionment towards nationalist conflict and any cause which asks individuals to sacrifice their lives. “Whither depart the brave?” he asks, and responds, “God knows; I certainly do not”. (*Amours de Voyage* V. vi. 6, 16)

Clough died in Florence in 1861, and so did not see the final unification of Italy. When *Amours de Voyage* was finally published in Britain in a posthumous edition of Clough’s poems in 1862, the Risorgimento and the siege of Rome were popular poetic themes and had inspired massively emotional epic length poems. Some of these are Harriet Hamilton King’s *The Disciples* (1873), Ernest Myers’s *The Defence of Rome and Other Poems* (1880), and Swinburne’s chanting, bloodthirsty tirades against priests and monarchs such as “A Song for Italy” (1867). Amidst an abundance of emotional responses to the nationalist rhetoric and romantic associations of Italy, Clough’s *Amours de Voyage* maintains a detached and quizzical attitude, and his sympathy with the right of the Italian people to their own political state is counterbalanced by his suspicion of emotional militarism.

It was the maturity of Clough’s sceptical view of emotional militarism that Graham Greene recognised when he referred to Clough as one of the few “adult” poets of the nineteenth century (Greene, 1973, p. 58). Greene’s *The Quiet American*, set in Indochina prior to full-scale American involvement in the region but at a time of escalating conflict, takes its epigraph from *Amours de Voyage*:

I do not like being moved: for the will is excited, and action
Is a most dangerous thing; I tremble for something factitious,
Some malpractice of heart and illegitimate process;
We are so prone to these things, with our terrible notions of duty.
(*Amours de Voyage* II.xi.270-273)

Conclusion

Amours de Voyage is a powerful representation of a historic event and a depiction of an individual experience of conflict from a unique perspective and in a unique form. Clough conveys very successfully the individual's sense of the build-up to a conflict – the small uncertainties in single episodes, the increasing mania of nationalist populism and the sense of an individual perspective on events outside his control and comprehension which must inflict many caught up in war and conflict.

References

- Clough, A. H. (n.d.). The Project Gutenberg ebook of *Amours de Voyage*. Retrieved from <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1393/1393-h/1393-h.htm>
- Davies, J. A. (2000). *Italy in the Nineteenth Century*. Oxford: Oxford UP.
- Greene, G. *The quiet American* (1973). London: Heinemann & Bodley Head
- Illustrated London News* (1849)
- King, H. E. H. (1873). *The Disciples*. London: Henry King & Co.,
- Latimer, E. W. (1897). *Italy in the Nineteenth Century and the Making of Austria-Hungary and Germany* 2nd edition. Chicago: McClurg and Co.
- Lucas, F. L. *Eight Victorian poets* (1930). Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
- Mariotti, L. (1851). The defeat of Italy. *Edinburgh Review*, 93, 498–535.
- Mulhauser, F. L. (Ed.). (1957). *Correspondence of Arthur Hugh Clough*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Myers, E. J. (1880). *The defence of Rome and other poems*. London: Macmillan.
- Reynolds, M. (2001) *The realms of verse 1830–1870. English poetry in a time of nation-building* Oxford: Oxford UP.
- Swinburne, A. C. (2000). *Poems and ballads & Atalanta in Calydon*. Kenneth Haynes (Ed.). London: Penguin.
- Trevelyan, G. M. (1907). *Garibaldi's defence of the Roman Republic*. London: Longmans, Green and Co.

Corresponding author: Cora Lindsay

Contact email: Cora.Lindsay@Nottingham.ac.uk

**Transgression, Desire, and Death in Mai Al-Nakib's "Echo Twins"
and Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things***

Shahd Alshammari
Gulf University for Science and Technology, Kuwait

Abstract

This paper addresses the theme of transgression in two texts: "Echo Twins" by Kuwaiti author Mai Al-Nakib and *The God of Small Things* by Indian author Arundhati Roy. Both writers exploit the theme of transgression by employing transgressive female protagonists. These protagonists persistently call attention to the subtle nuances of love and desire and, by doing so, are able to expunge commonplace borders that separate male/female, self/other and colonizer/colonized. Persuasive and compelling, these characters are able to assert their own voice and as a result place themselves in an evident position of agency. However comprehensively the subject of love and desire may be generally understood, for the authors of both of these texts desire is conceived purposefully as a site for the subversion of power hierarchies. Herein, by placing the Kuwaiti text alongside the Indian text, it is anticipated that relevant similarities between the female transgressive characters will lead the reader to such a conclusion. Both writers, furthermore, create a critical space of analysis and locate it beyond the merely symbolic in order to furnish an innovative interpretation to the power of the "maternal".

Keywords: transgression, desire, female protagonists, Kuwaiti, postcolonial, semiosis

Transgression

Transgressive female characters in fiction tend to cause a disruption in conventional frames of reference and in the contextual schema by which truth is imagined in the public sphere. Transgression in itself is an act worth pausing at and evaluating in order to assess its impact both on the protagonist and on her surroundings: the family, the environment and the wider community. Mai Al-Nakib's collection of short stories *The Hidden Light of Objects*, set in Kuwait, has one story that contains such a character. The collection has been recognized for its innovative character: it won the Edinburgh International First Book Award in 2014. Al-Nakib writes boldly and thoughtfully about personal histories in Kuwait, narratives set against the backdrop of the broader history of that small country. These stories share a common melancholic tone, a mourning for lost people, objects, memories, and a desire to reclaim that which has been changed or lost throughout time. One of the stories, "Echo Twins", stands out in its treatment of desire, transgression, and death. The female protagonist, Mama Hayat, dares to enter into transgressive space when in 1937 she falls in love with a foreigner, a white man, at a time when "Kuwait was overrun with oil diggers, many of them blond and British" (p. 39). The portrayal of her transgression is very similar to Arundhati Roy's rendering of the love affair between Ammu and Velutha in *The God of Small Things*, a work that won the Booker Prize in London in 1997.

I submit that these two representations of desire and death are inherently similar in many ways. Al-Nakib writes about the private domain in a Kuwaiti setting while Roy tackles the caste system both in the private and the public sphere. While there are certainly subtle differences, the overarching similarity that may commonly be observed in transgressive female protagonists is apparent in these two narratives. The gynocritical approach used here aims to argue for the recognition of a strictly female literary tradition by exploring the intertextual relations between women's narratives and their treatment of specific themes. As such, the treatment of love in "Echo Twins" and *The God of Small Things* is similar in that it grants women agency through transgressive love.

Societal pushback to these women's actions becomes evident as the plots unfold. For one, as we read we gradually come to the daunting realization that desire, transgression, and death are interconnected and complementary in both of these texts. This means that the cost of transgressive acts of love, acts viewed as revolutionary, is usually the death of the male counterpart: both Velutha (the Untouchable) and Alexander disappear from the narratives, thus reasserting the social order.

Chris Jenks's *Transgression* provides a solid foundation for understanding the overall subject of transgression, giving a critical overview of the term and its multiple definitions and interpretations. He proposes a straightforward definition of the term: "Transgression is that which exceeds boundaries or exceeds limits" (p. 7). Jenks's definition makes clear that transgressive behavior is essential in the preservation of social order, as it reaffirms its importance:

Transgressive behavior therefore does not deny limits of boundaries, rather it exceeds them and completes them . . . The transgression is a component of the rule . . . it ensures stability by reaffirming the rule. Transgression is not the same as disorder; it opens up chaos and reminds us of the necessity of order. (p. 7)

And yet, because of the way female protagonists threaten the male “order” of social norms, constructions, customs, traditions, and the law, they are successful in creating a subversive female space, a space that may be found in art, poetry, literature, and in the erotics of the body. Female desire becomes a form of expression, a detected voice and a source of agency, even if order is re-affirmed in the end, as Jenks emphasizes. Narratives of desire and agency, such as these two, are poignant in their creation of subversive space for transgressive female characters.

Intertextuality

Kuwaiti literature is mainly written in Arabic, and very few works are translated into English. Al-Nakib’s work is atypical because it is written in English; it explores the multiple cognitive and emotional dimensions of being trapped between a vanished past and the present moment. Kuwait, a relatively small country in the Gulf region, has undergone vast changes over the past fifty years. In the nation’s literature it is uncommon to find a collection of short stories dealing with one overarching theme as happens in Al-Nakib’s stories: therein, Kuwait is suspended between past and present, and the characters are unable to find a space that is both comforting and liberating. The ghost of war permeates the narrative, and while the stories oscillate between different narrators and their perspectives, they all congeal at the end to re-affirm overarching preoccupations: the nearly ineffable nature of loss and the emotional disarray caused by fractured identities. The text almost echoes a postcolonial narrative, one that questions assimilated and hybrid identities as it substantiates the effects of colonization and/or globalization on the nation. Although each story is told from a different perspective, most of the stories remain faithful to the pursuit of charting Kuwait and Kuwaitiness on the cultural map. This is a very distinct Middle Eastern culture that is often neglected or dismissed from cultural studies and literature. As such, the collection is significant in its portrayal of Kuwaiti identities and the tensions between modernity and the nation’s history.

When comparing “Echo Twins” and *The God of Small Things* it is not difficult to find a parallel plot line and the similarity in their characterization of the two protagonists. In one essential similarity, the two are markedly different from your commonplace individual: both strike the reader as particularly bold and dangerous women. Their similarities stem from intertextual correspondence. Intertextuality maintains that texts are carriers of particular ideologies and cultures while at the same time speaking to and from each other. In *Intertextuality*, Graham Allen states that “authors do not create their texts from their own original minds, but rather compile them from pre-existent texts...in this sense, the text is not an individual, isolated subject, but rather, a compilation of cultural textuality” (p. 35). As such, there are pre-existent texts that both Al-Nakib and Roy write to and from, that is, the ambient cultural texts of transgression, colonialism, desire and their repercussions. Al-Nakib’s text speaks almost directly to Roy’s rendition of desire in a postcolonial setting, while Roy’s text fleshes out the ins and outs of their common theme of transgression. The dialogue between them is readily apparent.

To begin with, the characters speak to each other’s beliefs regarding sexual freedom. Hayat, like Ammu, is a rebel, an outcast, different from the rest of the women in the community. She was the only independent woman in a conservative society, uninterested in marriage. In Kuwaiti tradition and cultural norms, this is a taboo in itself: An unmarried woman is dangerous. An orphan already on the margins of society, she occupies a space beyond the norm:

The townsfolk wondered whether anyone would ever stoop so low as to marry the brazen orphan girl . . . But Hayat wasn't there for the taking. She had made the decision never to marry. Late at night, she would sneak out of her house, walk to an isolated scrap of shore, and plunge into the forgiving warmth of the Gulf. Some nights...she even dared to swim without clothes. She knew marriage would mean giving up midnight swims and cheeks to the sun. (p. 41)

In the case of the Indian woman, Ammu is divorced, not an orphan, but is described as a social anomie all the same. After her divorce "She spoke to no one. She spent hours on the riverbank . . . She smoked cigarettes and had midnight swims" (p. 43). Both women enjoy the liquid space that engulfs them and separates them from society, disconnecting them from its norms. In other words, these "midnight swims" bring freedom. Swimming is reminiscent of a maternal space, of the womb, a place of all-embracing immersion. The protagonists' love for swimming is an indulgence in desire, an accessing of the semiotic *chora*, a stage wherein, as described by Julia Kristeva, the child cannot distinguish the difference between itself and the mother's body, a body that provides a peaceful, comforting space to alleviate the child's sense of disorientation. It is only in this sheltered space that these female characters are able to gain agency.

Thus, transgression is that crossing of boundaries described by Jenks, but it is also the breakdown of the border that separates self and other, it is the claiming of a third, shared space, of a place that redeems the maternal, the feminine, a protected space where the chaotic geography of love can be charted, a space crucial to women's reclaiming of the body and of the self. As such, it is a space that resists patriarchal traditions and taboos. When Hayat meets Alexander she is aware that he parallels her desire for crossing boundaries, for he is as "daring" as she is: "She turned to look back at this unusual Alexander, daring to follow an Arab woman in the streets . . . She walked over the raised threshold and left the door ajar, daring Alexander a little further" (p. 43). Hayat, like Ammu, dares to urge Alexander into her territory. Ammu waits for Velutha near the river, "as though her life depended on getting there in time. As though she knew he would be there. Waiting. As though he knew she would come. He did" (p. 314). Both female protagonists take their lovers, Alexander and Velutha, into the *chora*, away from the social structures that separate and divide. In asserting her power to attract the male to her own space, Hayat is able to disrupt the male/female power dynamics and initiate the sexual act, upsetting the mechanism of domination (usually the man dominates) and subjugation (normally the woman is subjugated). Hayat and Ammu are protagonists that shift the expected roles in the binary man/woman and instead step into a more active sexual role. They challenge gender roles and our expectations as readers and ultimately dismantle any preconceived notions of female protagonists and their relation to male characters. Rather than being defined in relation to the male characters, they are the center of each narrative, and the male characters function in relation to them, serving as tools for their subversive acts.

There are other acts of transgression committed by the female protagonists. But these transgressive love affairs are not simple acts of breaking rules or crossing barriers: there is a terrible cost associated with transgression. As Roy aptly puts it: "Two lives. Two children's childhoods. And a history lesson for future offenders" (p. 318). The twins, Rahel and Estha, are forever traumatized by the breakdown of the family and the loss of their mother Ammu. Furthermore, Velutha is brutally murdered and the twins are separated from each other.

Both affairs are constructed in the narratives as a celebration of desire and women's socio-political agency. In the Kuwaiti narrative, when Hayat chooses Alexander, she has chosen the British man, the *other*. She calls him "Iskandar" re-naming him, appropriating him by adjusting his name to an Arab name (p. 44). In the same vein, Ammu's Velutha is "The God of Loss. . . The God of Small Things" (p. 208). The love between the couples is that of temporary happiness, transitory moments of pleasure and ecstasy. What happens after this transgression is that Alexander, like Velutha, is brutally beaten, harassed by the townsmen (although this is not explicitly told):

Alexander was seized firmly by the arms and escorted to an alley close by, not out of view . . . He was kicked solidly three times in the ribs and twice in the groin. . . . A stream of saliva, blood, and teeth seeped through his swollen lips . . . They had scared him, asserted their irrefutable ownership. (p. 45)

Order is re-affirmed and Alexander is put back into his place as the *other*, the colonizer, the British man. It is not Hayat who is punished. In the same vein, Velutha is the Untouchable who is beaten and murdered by the police. Ammu remains untouched, but is driven mad and eventually dies of heartbreak. The physical description of Velutha's murder is strikingly similar to that of Alexander's beating: "His skull was fractured in three places. The blood on his breath bright red . . . Both his kneecaps were shattered" (p. 294). Order is restored as the police attempt to correct the transgression and teach him a lesson: "they were exorcising fear . . . They were merely inoculating a community against an outbreak" (p. 293).

The transgressions are dealt with in both narratives by agents of patriarchal societies; they act swiftly and violently to restore the social order. Both Indian society and Kuwaiti society have eliminated the transgressors, expelled them not only from the community but also from life, from the narrative. But both Alexander and Velutha, although expunged, continue to haunt the narratives. Ammu remembers Velutha, and her twins, so close that they seemed one person, evoked his memory throughout the years. He is never really gone. The novel shifts back and forth between the past and the present, dipping in and out of scenes, flashbacks, and memories. All along, the memories continue to reconstruct and recreate the trauma, the affair, the transgression that led to death, to loss.

Interestingly, in Al-Nakib's "Echo Twins" we are also introduced to twins, Mish'al and Mishari, two boys whose names begin with 'M'. The twins, like their mother, are immediately shunned, the products of a transgressive union. They were called "little yellow-haired, fair-skinned doubles" (p. 35). Everything that surrounds the twins is a repetition, an explicit dissolution of any boundary that might exist between them. Everywhere they went people looked with unease, as "uncanny repetitions generate discomfort" (p. 35). The twins' function in the story is to reiterate the borderless state of being for which Hayat longs. She has always repeated "One becomes two. Two becomes one" (p. 35). This is her mantra, her constant prayer, her repetitive line, the very same statement she teaches and repeats to Alexander, to whom she also refers as "Two-horned Alexander the Great" (p. 44). This emphasis on numbers and duality asserts the importance of presenting the boundary between self and other as an illusion; this is the female bringing the male to the *chora*, the place where there is no division, no separation between self/other. The power of the *chora* is in its allowing a break from constraints and divisions, even in language. This breakdown of borders is present in Hayat's repetitions and in her boys' speech.

The twins have an obsession with language. They speak together and echo each other's words: "The volume of their voices would decrease as the repeated portion of their statement or question shortened . . . Mama Hayat never seemed to notice her sons' echoed speech. Misha'l and Mishari spoke as one and their mother heard them as one" (pp. 33–35). Herein we find the splendor of the borderlessness of language, the breaking through borders and boundaries, the nuanced repetitions, the almost rhythmic movement of words. Even words are broken down into syllables when the twins echo each other's words:

"A compass."
 "compass."
 "pass."
 "ss." (p. 52)

This breakdown of language's structural coherence is part of the transgressions in "Echo Twins." The boys do not adhere to the patriarchal structure of language, being, as they are, fatherless. They never ask about their father. He is absent and present, a secret letter that cannot be unfolded. He is the object, the space that is separate from their mother, from their liminal view of the world. Only at the very end of the story do the twins touch a part of their father's presence, tucked away in a secret box. Only upon the mother's death do they finally conclude that it is "time to go" (p. 53). It is now the right time, the moment where they must leave the maternal safe space, the *chora*. The object they find is a compass, a compass that is symbolic of Alexander's foreignness, otherness, and of his place outside of Kuwait. All the twins have is an object that stands in place of their father. Kristeva understands metaphor "as movement toward the discernible, a journey toward the visible" (Kristeva, 1987, 30). The object that is found is metonymic; it is an extension of the lost object/subject Alexander.

Analogous to Al-Nakib's fascination with language, Roy was a precursor in breaking open the language, in remolding English, claiming it, changing it and re-creating words and meanings. Roy does not pay attention to capitalization, spelling, "proper" usage of the English language, and repeats her words for emphasis. In that very act is a transgression. The twins Rahel and Estha speak as they wish and are always corrected by their aunt, Baby Kochamma. They find their own space, like Mish'al and Mishari; that space is the maternal space that fosters their connection to Ammu: "Because you're our Ammu and Baba and you love us double" (p. 142). This doubling is similar to Hayat's mantra of "one becomes two." The children in both texts are immersed in the mother's space.

Both Al-Nakib and Roy write in English, which is not their native language. As such, there is in both a process of transforming English, a process that is not equivalent in the two. Roy expresses this re-claiming of the colonizer's language clearly, while Al-Nakib's work does not reject its rules and boundaries, but uses rhythm, tone and repetitive utterances, expressed through the twins' childlike expressions, in order to disrupt it. Both Al-Nakib and Roy use poetic language and seem to oscillate between prose and poetry, meaning and meaninglessness. Both texts, in their speaking to and from each other - in their intertextualities - show the authors' rejection of any monologic manner of conceiving their narratives. When the twins speak and echo each other, the text makes use of 'double-voiced' discourse (Bakhtin's concept). Roy's novel, written in its rejection of chronology and structure, embraces dialogism in a network of different utterances and speech. Language itself is freed from constraints and rules and what emerges instead is a re-envisioning of spoken and written speech.

Hayat and Ammu are mothers to twins. They both symbolize the lost “motherland”. In Al-Nakib’s text, the motherland is the lost Kuwait, the longing is evident for the Kuwait that existed before the Gulf War, before its rapid turn towards “modernity”. Throughout the stories in *The Hidden Light of Objects*, Al-Nakib’s tone is one of lament, loss, nostalgia, and the desire to reclaim what has vanished. The ghost of old Kuwait ties all of her stories together. As the ghost of a lost Kuwaiti past hovers over every page, so does the ghost of a lost past hover over Roy’s India, a postcolonial nation that has undergone the trauma of colonization. That collective trauma is written into these private, personal acts of love and transgression, so the personal lives of Hayat and Ammu are essentially political. Both mothers are reclaiming a lost land, a lost identity, and are struggling for agency.

Context

Al-Nakib’s text deals with old Kuwait: an unknown and mysterious Kuwait, one that remained secluded from the rest of the world until the post-oil era. Little is known about the lives of Kuwaiti women during the 1930s-1960s and only a few Kuwaiti historians have commented on women’s status during that time in history. In her work, Haya Al-Mughni offers an invaluable scholarly study of Kuwaiti women. I will refer to Al-Mughni’s sociological study to contextualize Kuwaiti women’s lives in a very small community. Women in Kuwait “lived their lives from birth to death in the mud-walled town. They knew nothing of the seafaring voyages, of the charm of Indian cities” (p. 44). Completely alienated from the outside world, there was barely any contact with men who were not relatives. In that sense, Hayat’s affair with Alexander is an intimate contact with the British, the colonists, and with a man who is not a relative. The British remained involved in Kuwait’s internal and external affairs “between 1909 and 1961” (p. 28). Because women were secluded from the public domain, they had no access to people outside of their immediate families and homes. Al-Mughni mentions that most Kuwaiti women did not have to work. They were relatively wealthy and as such stayed within the domestic sphere. This was the norm for women, and those who did work only did so at “Suq al-Harim (the women’s market), female traders gathered to sell their goods: “silk fabrics, kohl, henna, wooden combs” (p. 49). As such, the women’s market was the place where women experimented with business and experienced a certain sense of agency, however small. It comes as no surprise then that Al-Nakib chooses the women’s market as the place that Hayat meets Alexander. It is not an inconsonant setting; the market is an in-between place, a place between the public and private spheres.

Women’s bodies were also controlled and regulated by Kuwaiti traditions. No woman would leave the house unveiled: “Women had to drape themselves in a long black cloak, known as the *abbaya*, and veil their faces with a thick black cloth, the *boshiya*” (pp. 45–46). To leave the house without the *abbaya* would be a cultural transgression. Hayat does wear the *abbaya* but does not cover her face. She refuses to adhere to this social norm and claims ownership of her body through this simple (yet revolutionary) act. Al-Nakib uses this foreshadowing technique to set the stage for Hayat’s future transgressions. Hayat does not adhere to cultural norms and instead enters very dangerous territory. Hers is a transgressive and offensive body, one that is essentially the site of cultural nonconformity and functions as a rejection of society’s regulation of women. Bodies that do not conform are immediately annulled. Hayat’s rejection of the dress code for women is a part of her reclaiming of her body. A body that finds itself outside of the norm has the potential for claiming agency. If she is already crossing boundaries between normal/abnormal, good woman/bad woman, then she can push the envelope further. The first step is the rejection of the dress code, the second would be the

claiming of her body and going beyond all social taboos. This is a transgressive body that reclaims ownership of itself.

Hayat's union with Alexander is subversive in its crossing of boundaries, its transgressive willingness to defy social norms and taboos. Kuwait is a very small country, a closed community, a society that is not prone to miscegenation. Blood is pure and social hierarchies are clearly set. Hayat's rejection of these social rules is evident. No woman would dare to choose her life partner, let alone a man who is an *other*, a foreigner. In the same way, Ammu's cross-caste affair with Velutha brings to the fore the idea of personal transgressions versus public politics. By attempting to subvert the category of Touchable/Untouchable, Ammu and Velutha enter into the muddled arena where resistance to public politics transpires. Sadness permeates both texts. Desire eventually leads to death, to expulsion, and yet, at the same time, those transgressions live on. The transgressive affairs are passed on to the twins, to younger generations that are aware of the familial transgressions and of their dire consequences. Yet, in the end, the female protagonists Hayat and Ammu have inaugurated essential revolutions through intimate acts of love and desire.

References

- Allen, G. (2000). *Intertextuality*. London: Routledge.
- Al-Nakib, M. (2014). *The hidden light of objects*. Doha: Bloomsbury Qatar Foundation.
- Al-Mughni, H. (2001). *Women in Kuwait: The politics of gender*. London: Saqi Books.
- Jenks, C. (2003). *Transgression*. London: Routledge.
- Jervis, J. (1999). *Transgressing the modern: Explorations in the western experience of otherness*. London: Blackwell Publishers.
- Kristeva, J. (1987). *Tales of love*. New York: Columbia UP.
- Roy, A. (1998). *The god of small things*. New York: Harper Perennial.

Corresponding Author: Shahd Alshammari

Author email: alshammari.s@gust.edu.kw

Photography and Visual Representations of the American War in Viet Nam

Er-Win Tan

Senior Lecturer, Department of International and Strategic Studies
University of Malaya

Ted Engelmann

Independent Scholar, Veteran of the American War in Viet Nam (1968-1969), and Freelance
Embedded Photographer in Iraq (2008) and Afghanistan (2009)

Abstract

“A picture says a thousand words”, as the aphorism goes. This certainly applies to the realm of photography. Yet, do photographs speak for themselves, or does the backdrop of photographs matter in underscoring the deeper underlying issues in wartime? As this manuscript shall examine, iconic photographs taken during conflict can have a deeply powerful symbolic impact in seizing the imagination and attention of the public. In so doing, and depending on the context of the conflict being fought, such iconic imagery of war may impact not only on the decision-making process of that conflict, but also be adopted by other observers in the post-conflict to underscore underlying metaphorical themes in warfare. The authors propose to examine this in the form of five particularly iconic photographs from the Viet Nam War (known in Vietnam as “The American War”).

Keywords: war, photography, iconic imagery, dissent, public opinion

Introduction

“The weight of words, the shock of photos.”
(Advertising slogan for *MATCH*, Paris, 1949)

“A picture says a thousand words”, as the aphorism goes. This certainly applies to the realm of photography. Yet, do photographs speak for themselves, or does the backdrop of photographs matter in underscoring the deeper underlying issues in wartime?

With the international community set to face the continuation of war in the foreseeable future, it is necessary to ponder how wartime photographs reflect the deeper themes that frame the conduct of warfare in human history. The authors propose to examine how iconic photographs of the Viet Nam War (commonly referred to in Viet Nam as “the American War”) capture the various controversies in that conflict. The authors propose to do this in the following four sections, beginning with a discussion of the characteristics of what makes an iconic photograph during wartime. The second section of this manuscript examines the geopolitical backdrop of the American War in Viet Nam and why these factors render iconic photographs from this conflict a particularly interesting case study for visual representations of war.¹ The authors will then proceed with a third section that delves deeper into five particularly iconic images from the American War, and how they represent that conflict. This manuscript will then conclude by considering the implications of photography as visual representations of conflict in contemporary international relations.

Photography as a visual representation of war

Although iconic images have been associated with various conflicts in human history since ancient times, it is only recently that any attempt has been made to undertake a particular in-depth analysis of the characteristics of particularly iconic images of warfare. A recent contribution to this field comes in the form of *War/Photography: Images of Armed Conflict and its Aftermath*, by Anne Wilkes Tucker, Will Michels and Natalie Zelt. Reviewing this manuscript in 2014, H.R. McMaster (then a IISS Consulting Senior Fellow who has since been appointed National Security Advisor in the Trump Administration) remarked that,

photography’s ability to evoke the human and psychological experience of war gives the genre its unique value ... photographs contradict the notion that armed conflicts might be waged without profound human consequences, both for combatants and the civilians among whom wars are fought, as well as non-combatants who are often targeted deliberately by terrorist or military forces. (McMaster, 2014, n.p.)

Further underscoring how particularly gripping photographs of conflict underscore the human tragedy of warfare was another article, published in 2014, in which Kenneth Jarecke reflected on a particularly gripping image of a corpse of an Iraqi soldier who had been burnt alive on the “Highway of Death” during the 1991 Gulf War. *Time Magazine* initially declined to

¹ The authors refer to the American War in Viet Nam in recognition of the US-initiated political conflict through President Johnson’s 7 August 1964 Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. In Vietnam, the conflict is referred to as “The American War”, holding responsible the invading country. Furthermore, in seeking to emphasise that Viet Nam is a country and not a war, the authors spell the country as “Viet Nam”, without diacritical marks, throughout the article. See also Ted Engelmann, personal interview with photojournalist, Philip Jones Griffith, NYC, 8 September 2008.

publish Jarecke's photograph, "Incinerated Iraqi, Gulf War" (26 February 1991), due to its graphic content.



Photograph: Kenneth Jarecke, "Burnt Iraqi Soldier", Highway of Death, Iraq, February 1991, <http://rockcitynews.com/photos4c/iraqwarphotos/images/jarecke-nasiriyah.jpg>

As a result, the image in question did not reach public eyes until well after the conflict was over. Yet, the impact of Jarecke's image in capturing the human cost of war must be emphasized; as Tony McGrath, the *Observer's* pictures editor noted, "There were 1,400 [Iraqi soldiers] in that convoy, and every picture transmitted until [Jarecke's picture] came, two days after the event, was of debris, bits of equipment ... No human involvement in it at all; it could have been a scrapyard" (McGrath, cited in Rose, 2014, n.p.). Set against this backdrop, in capturing the last horrific moments of a man's life in conflict, Jarecke's image reflected the tone of General Sherman's observation that "war is hell" insofar as the human impact of warfare is concerned. (Sherman, 1879)

In this sense, Jarecke's iconic image strikingly underscored what warfare is all about: a period of mass-organized, politically-motivated violence during which people perish. Yet, it is not enough that an iconic photograph of war capture an image of sheer carnage; if anything, a photograph whose entire frame is filled with carnage is rather more likely to induce "corpse-fatigue" on the part of a viewer. Rather, it is more important for such iconic photographs to stand apart in a category by themselves in projecting into the popular consciousness a symbolic representation of the human impact of war. Such an ability to capture the popular imagination is further reflected in how certain iconic portrayals of war have a pivotal impact on decision-making during the conflict itself, as well as how such iconic images are borrowed or referred to by later commentators.

Backdrop of the American War in Viet Nam

Several characteristics of the American War in Viet Nam make it an ideal case study for this manuscript. The most iconic photographs of US involvement during the Second World War were consistent with the then-prevailing historical narrative of American exceptionalism as part of the wider struggle against the militarism and ultra-nationalism represented by the Axis Powers. The most iconic photographs from the Second World War were images such as the

devastation inflicted by the Japanese air raid on Pearl Harbor, of troops storming ashore at Normandy, of six US marines raising the “Stars and Stripes” at Mount Suribachi during the battle of Iwo Jima, and the mushroom cloud forming after the atomic bombing of Nagasaki.

The connotations commonly associated with these images invoke sentiments of patriotism in justifying the US entry into World War Two. Such a perspective was reflected in the beliefs held by the World War Two correspondent Ernie Pyle, who saw the press as acting as a “cheerleader” for the military in encouraging Americans in military and civilian sectors alike to support the war effort (Tobin, 1997).



US battleship sinking at Pearl Harbor, December 1941
<https://media1.britannica.com/eb-media/81/71381-004-534732C4.jpg>

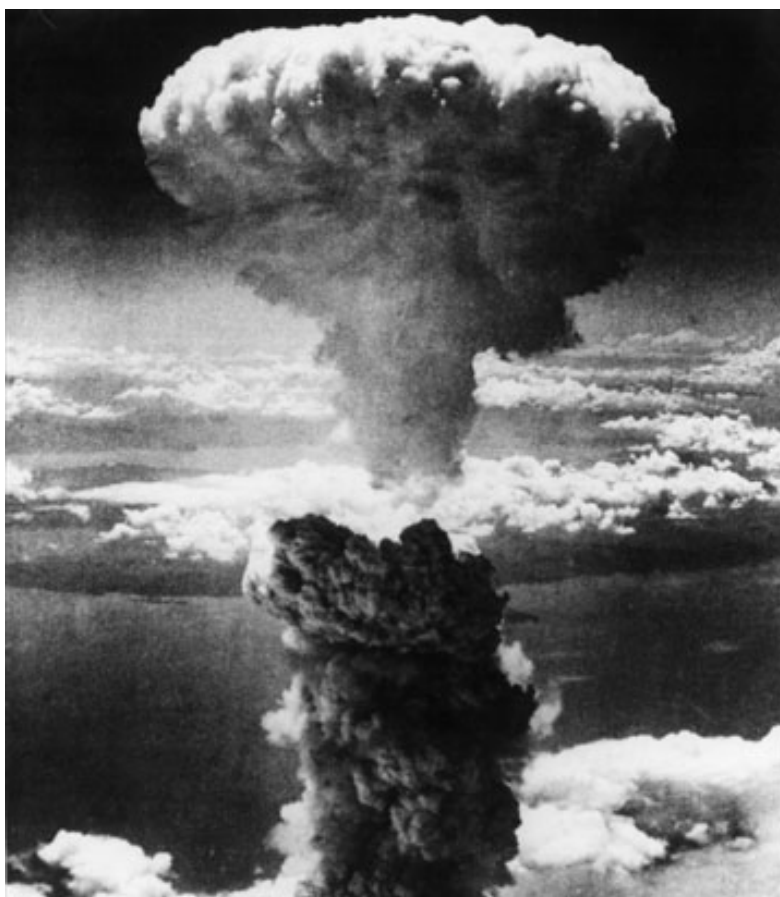


Robert Capa, “US troops landing in Normandy, France, June 1944
<http://warfarehistorynetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/The-Battle-for-Omaha-Beach-The-Men-of-the-D-Day-Invasion-2.jpg>)

The bombing of Pearl Harbor, for instance, was cast by US media as a sneak attack (without mentioning the US imposition of sanctions on Japan that had convinced Tokyo that it faced geostrategic encirclement in the first place). In a similar light, whilst Robert Capa's image of US troops landing in Normandy stands as a highly symbolic representation of the US involvement in the liberation of Europe from Nazism, such a historical perspective is outweighed by the extent of the Soviet war effort on the Eastern Front. Joe Rosenthal's 23 February 1945, "Raising the Stars and Stripes at Iwo Jima," captured the public imagination due to its symbolic summary of the hard-fought efforts by the US Marines during the island-hopping campaign in the Pacific, as well as the symbolic impact of the national flag being raised on newly-captured enemy soil. What that image did not mention, however, was the fact that this was the second American flag raised at this location, and the battle for Iwo Jima raged on for several more weeks. Yet, the role of photographers as cheerleaders for the war effort trumped accuracy in the depiction of warfare. Finally, whilst the image of the mushroom cloud forming after the atomic bombing of Nagasaki marked the event that led to Japan's surrender as well as symbolizing the start of the nuclear age, the same image said nothing of the impact of the atomic bomb on the civilian population of Nagasaki. Taken in sum, the aforementioned iconic images of World War Two provide a historical image of participation in war as part of a Manichean struggle against Nazi Germany and militarist Japan.



Joe Rosenthal, 'Raising the Stars and Stripes Over Iwo Jima', February 1945
https://www.strikes.com/polopoly_fs/1.407519.1466700592!/image/image.jpg_gen/derivatives/landscape_900/image.jpg



Mushroom cloud forming over Nagasaki', August 1945

<http://www.atomicarchive.com/History/twocities/nagasaki/images/H21.jpg>

In contrast, the American War in Viet Nam marked a distinct disruption to the then-prevailing historical narrative of American exceptionalism.² Although the Johnson Administration had authorized the US intervention to prop up the collapsing South Vietnamese Government as part of the wider American strategy of strengthening the “Free World” by containing Communism, the reality was that Washington’s successive clients in Sai Gon were neither democratic nor politically enlightened. Rather, the French colonial cultivation of a ruling class of Catholics had contributed to significant stratification of Vietnamese society, with privilege, wealth and influence concentrated in the hands of a corrupt, incompetent Catholic minority that was largely alienated from the Buddhist-majority nation. If anything, the heavy-handed nature of the counter-insurgency campaign undertaken by President Ngo Dinh Diem and his successors, by involving the forced displacement of rural communities, delegitimized the Sai Gon regime in the eyes of the Vietnamese peasantry.

² The authors choose not to use iconic photographs from the Korean War for their case study for a number of reasons. The outright nature of the North Korean invasion of South Korea in June 1950 made it easy for the US to characterize its intervention as being on behalf of a victim of armed invasion. Furthermore, although the government in Seoul in 1950 was an authoritarian one, the ROK’s more recent transition to democracy (as opposed to the continued existence of the authoritarian state in Pyongyang) marks the US-led intervention in Korea as a poster child for a justifiable war. As our case study indicates, the *American War in Viet Nam* was one where the US rationale for its military intervention was far murkier, as well as a conflict that ended in the ignominy of US military withdrawal and the collapse of Washington’s client state (and one which never got to shed its authoritarian nature).

Further grounding the American War in Viet Nam as an ideal case study of the importance of photography as visual representations of war was the nature in which US involvement in that conflict was increasingly marked by polarization and discord within the United States. Overall US public opinion during the initial stages of that conflict remained largely optimistic, in line with the then-prevailing, post-1945 patriotic sentiment that saw American exceptionalism as an important component in affirming US leadership of the anti-Communist world. Yet, as Susan Sontag noted, “the war America waged in Vietnam, the first to be witnessed day after day by television cameras, introduced the home front to the new tele-intimacy with death and destruction.” (Sontag, 2003, p. 21) Although dissent began to grow, particularly within liberal circles and university campuses within the US, 1967 ended with the overall assumption by most Americans that US military firepower had the Vietnamese National Liberation Front (also known as the “Viet Cong”) on the run, as reflected by MACV Commander General William Westmoreland’s November 1967 Congressional testimony that the US was winning the war. The shock effect of the 31 January 1968 Tet Offensive, however, brought the reality of the War into stark relief. Not only was the Viet Cong still very much in the fight, it held the initiative over the Sai Gon regime, as reflected in its ability to launch large-scale insurgent attacks throughout the country at short notice. In so highlighting the ongoing stalemate of the war, the 1968 Tet Offensive and mounting US casualties convinced increasing sections of American society that the only way to victory lay in further escalation, beyond a level that US public opinion was willing to accept. Such growing dissent was reflected in the events that followed the 1968 Tet Offensive. Nixon’s escalation of the war with the secret invasion of Cambodia and bombing of Laos in an attempt to sever the Ho Chi Minh Trail was greeted by growing domestic dissent within the US, most tragically reflected when, on 4 May 1970, the Ohio National Guard opened fire on anti-war demonstrators at Kent State University, killing four students and injuring thirteen.

Five iconic photographs of the Viet Nam War

Given the sheer number of photographs that were made during the American War, it fell upon the authors to address the challenge of selecting the most iconic images of this conflict. Our selection of the following images for our case study is based on how they characterized various dynamics of this conflict. We believe that the following five iconic photographs of the American War in Viet Nam are particularly noteworthy of further discussion:

- 1) Malcolm Browne’s (AP) photograph of the self-immolation of Buddhist monk, Thích Quảng Đức, in Sai Gon, 11 June 1963;
- 2) Eddie Adams’ (AP) photograph of South Vietnamese Police General, Nguyen Ngoc Loan, executing a Viet Cong Prisoner in Sai Gon, 1 February 1968;
- 3) Ronald L. Haeberle’s photographic coverage of The My Lai Massacre, 16 March 1968;
- 4) John Filo’s photograph of 14 year-old runaway, Mary Ann Vecchio, kneeling over the body of 20 year-old, Jeffery Miller, fatally shot by the Ohio National Guard on the campus of Kent State University, 4 May 1970;
- 5) Hubert van Es’s (UPI) photograph of an Air America (CIA) helicopter evacuating Vietnamese from 22 Gia Long St., residence of the CIA deputy chief of station, Sai Gon, 29 April 1975.

The self-immolation of Buddhist monk, Thích Quảng Đức, in Sai Gon, 11 June 1963

On 10 June 1963, two Western journalists (David Halberstam of the *New York Times* and Malcolm Browne, Sai Gon AP Bureau Chief), attended a Buddhist demonstration against the

Sai Gon regime. During the event, Browne photographed a Buddhist monk, Thích Quảng Đức, setting himself ablaze in protest of Ngo Dinh Diem's oppression of Buddhists. Browne questioned what might have happened if he had not made his Pulitzer Prize-winning photograph, reflecting

I've had this searing feeling of perhaps having in some way contributed to the death of a kind old man who probably would not have done what he did - nor would the monks in general have done what they did - if they had not been assured of the presence of a newsman who could convey the images and experiences to the outer world. Because that was the whole point - to produce theatre of the horrible so striking that the reasons for the demonstrations would become apparent to everyone.' (Browne, 2003)³



Malcolm Browne, "Buddhist monk sets himself ablaze", Sai Gon, June 1963
<https://vietcongonline.files.wordpress.com/2010/03/210.jpg>

The graphic death of Thích Quảng Đức marked a watershed moment in the US involvement in Viet Nam. From the establishment of Ngo Dinh Diem's anti-Communist regime in 1955, the US had largely sought to downplay the less savory aspects of Ngo's rule. Touring Southeast Asia in 1961, then Vice-President Lyndon Baines Johnson hailed Diem as the 'Winston Churchill of Asia', as an attempt to cloak the South Vietnamese leader in the overtones of a heroic US ally resisting foreign aggression. (Johnson, 1961, cited in Karnow, 1997) Public press coverage of the monk's death, however, forced US viewers to begin

³ Ironically, there is no known photograph of Norman Morrison, a 31 year-old Baltimore Quaker, immolating himself under the office window of Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara, at the Pentagon, 2 November 1965, in protest against McNamara's escalation of the war.

questioning the nature of the regime in Sai Gon that their military was propping up. As President John F Kennedy reflected, “No news picture in history has generated so much emotion around the world as that one” (Kennedy, 1963, cited in Smith, 2010).

This was reflected in the aftermath of the self-immolation of Thích Quảng Đức. Diem’s sister-in-law, Madame Nhu, further illustrated the ruling Catholic indifference to the feelings of the Buddhist majority nation by referring to the monk’s death as a “barbecue . . . Let them burn and we shall clap our hands”, even going so far as to offer to provide matches for the next would-be self-immolator (Nhu, cited in Cosgrove, 2014). Furthermore, swelling South Vietnamese anger against the Ngo Dinh Diem regime culminated in a coup that toppled and assassinated Diem in November 1963, leading to a succession of short-lived regimes that culminated in the Nguyễn Văn Thiệu’s ascending to the office in 1967.⁴

Growing US disillusionment with the war in Viet Nam was reflected during and after the Tet Offensive in early 1968. Following the passing of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution in August 1964 (granting President Johnson discretionary powers to authorise the direct involvement of US forces in combat operations in Viet Nam), Johnson and General William Westmoreland, Commander of Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV), undertook a combination of strategic bombing of North Viet Nam (Operation Rolling Thunder), search-and-destroy operations in an effort to root out suspected Viet Cong strongholds in the countryside, and the ‘Strategic Hamlets’ program (that sought to cut off the Viet Cong from their supporters and sympathisers in the villages). By November 1967, it appeared that this combination of strategies was winning, to the extent that Westmoreland felt confident enough to return to Washington to testify to Congress that “we have reached an important point where the end [of the war] begins to come into view” (Westmoreland, cited in Willbanks, 2008). Westmoreland’s optimism was misplaced; presumably reflecting his experience in waging conventional warfare, he took the “body count” ratio of US to Viet Cong casualties as equating to progress in defeating the Communists. Yet, his opposite number, Commander in chief of the People’s Army of Vietnam General Võ Nguyên Giáp, had no intention of fighting a conventional war. Acknowledging the firepower superiority of the US in Viet Nam, Giáp knew that he stood no chance of waging a successful conventional war against Westmoreland. Instead, Giáp had responded by turning to Viet Nam’s time-honoured doctrine of guerrilla strategy, in seeking to sap US political will through small raids and ambushes whilst eschewing set-piece battles.

In January 1968, believing that a series of nation-wide raids on major urban centers would lead to a general uprising against the Sai Gon regime, Giáp launched the Tet Offensive (so-named as Giáp took advantage of the element of surprise by attacking during the Tet Lunar New Year truce). Although Giáp’s hopes for a general uprising were not borne out, the Tet Offensive had a significant impact on US confidence in the war. The fact that the Viet Cong had been able to launch a spectacular series of attacks across the entire country despite supposedly being on the brink brought home to US public opinion the extent of North Viet Nam’s resolve to continue the conflict.

South Vietnamese Police General, Nguyen Ngoc Loan, executing a Viet Cong prisoner in Sai Gon, 1 February 1968

Amidst the Tet Offensive, one particular iconic photograph, by Eddie Adams, showed the

⁴ Kennedy himself was assassinated three weeks later, with his successor, Lyndon Baines Johnson, overseeing the escalation of the “American War”.

Chief of the South Vietnamese National Police, Brigadier General Nguyễn Ngọc Loan, executing a Viet Cong operative, Nguyễn Văn Lém, with a single pistol bullet to the head. This photograph is noteworthy for several reasons. The fact that a member of the South Vietnamese Government executed a surrendered enemy combatant in cold blood was taken by the media and US public opinion as further confirmation of the unsavory nature of the regime that the US military was fighting to support. Yet, such a portrayal was one-sided; it is known that the Viet Cong operative had murdered the families of South Vietnamese officers that his unit had captured. Adams himself regretted how his photograph had painted an unfair image of Loan, going so far as to apologise to the general for not portraying the full background of the event. In 1998, Adams reflected that,

two people died in that photograph: the recipient of the bullet and General Nguyen Ngoc Loan. The general killed the Viet Cong; I killed the general with my camera. Still photographs are the most powerful weapons in the world. People believe them; but photographs do lie, even without manipulation. They are only half-truths. (Adams, 1998)



Eddie Adams, “General Nguyễn Ngọc Loan executing a Vietcong prisoner, Sai Gon, February 1968

https://3.bp.blogspot.com/-TOTyNF8KUZM/V2SCSItpyCI/AAAAAAAAKY0/-deXpZZt__AjtgAtrzldezoVusDglHOMwCLcB/s1600/Saigon%2Bexecution%2BMurder%2Bof%2Ba%2BVietcong%2Bby%2BSaigon%2BPolice%2BChief%252C%2B1968.jpg

Be that as it may, the damage to the US will to continue the war (not only from this photograph, but also the Tet Offensive) was done. Westmoreland's credibility as a commander providing honest battlefield assessments was undermined, as reflected in his being “kicked upstairs” to the position of Chief of Staff of the US Army. Moreover, the celebrated journalist Walter Cronkite responded to the Tet Offensive by observing that “it seems now more certain than ever that the bloody experience of Vietnam is to end in a

stalemate” (Cronkite, 1968). Johnson, aware of the growing anti-war sentiment in the country, and aggrieved at the extent to which his adventure in Viet Nam had diverted his attention on his hopes for bringing wide-ranging social reform under his “Great Society” vision, chose not to run for re-election in 1968, well aware of the likelihood of being humiliated at the polls.

Photographic coverage of The My Lai Massacre

The third iconic photograph in our study was taken during the My Lai Massacre in March 1968, when a search and destroy patrol by the 20th Infantry Regiment murdered an estimated 500 Vietnamese villagers in the Son Tinh District. Army Photographer Ronald Haeberle’s coverage of the massacre included a particularly gripping image of a group of persons that comprised an elderly woman, a female teenager, and a number of younger children, moments before they were killed by the US troops. In a recent re-evaluation of this photograph, Valerie Wieskamp directs our attention to what initially appears an anomalous detail in the photograph: “you can see that the teenager . . . is buttoning up her blouse . . . Why would she be preoccupied with a button while the other people in the photograph were terrified of being killed? Why was the button undone to begin with? (Wieskamp, 2013).



Ronald Haeberle, “Vietnamese villagers at the My Lai Massacre”.
<http://www.readingthepictures.org/files/2013/10/my-lai-black-blouse-girl.jpg>

Probing deeper into the background of the photograph, Wieskamp found eyewitness testimony by Haeberle that confirmed that, at the time of the photograph, the female teenager had just been sexually assaulted, which accounts for her attempting to rebutton her blouse. Yet, as Wieskamp noted, then-contemporary coverage of the massacre downplayed the element of sexual assault during the massacre. This is no isolated trend, given the growing numbers of US servicewomen who have testified to receiving sexual assault, as well as the crude sexual acts that occurred during the Abu Ghraib scandal in Iraq in 2004. Such under-reporting of sexual violence in warfare presumably reflects the masculine culture that has traditionally dominated the military establishment; it has enabled sundry miscarriages of justice, as demonstrated by the fact that none of the US soldiers involved in the My Lai Massacre faced prosecution for sexual assault.

Girl kneeling over body of student shot by Ohio National Guard

The fourth iconic photograph we highlight shows 14 year old Mary Ann Vecchio kneeling over the body of Jeffery Glenn Miller, one of four students slain by members of the Ohio National Guard attempting to suppress an anti-war demonstration on the campus of Kent State University in Ohio.⁵ Upon assuming the Presidency in 1969, Richard Nixon had begun covert escalation of the war into neighbouring, neutral Cambodia, with the launching of airstrikes in a bid to interdict the Ho Chi Minh Trail that North Viet Nam had been using to infiltrate personnel and weapons to support the insurgency in the South. This was followed by Nixon's decision to launch a ground invasion of Cambodia in April-May 1970.

Already outraged by the growing publicity surrounding the My Lai Massacre, and fearing that Nixon's escalation of the war would only prolong an increasingly bloody stalemate, anti-war sentiment erupted into growing demonstrations against Nixon. On 4 May, 1970, student photographer John Filo was observing one such demonstration on his campus, Kent State University, when the Ohio National Guard indiscriminately opened fire on students, leaving four students dead and thirteen wounded.



John Filo, 'Mary Ann Vecchio kneeling over the body of Jeffery Glenn Miller', Kent State University, May 1970

<http://sites.psu.edu/hannahirossblog/wp-content/uploads/sites/31795/2015/10/BUZRQ6Ph.jpg>

⁵ Only two of the slain students were actually involved in the demonstration, with the other two students merely passing in the area.

Filo's image of Vecchio kneeling over Miller's body brought home to the public the tragic reality of war: Vecchio's open arms of despair, the open mouth in mid-scream, her kneeling posture indicating there was nothing she could do for the slain Miller were visual symbols of anguish and hopelessness. The image carried a visceral message beyond any caption. On a further level, the Kent State shooting brought further revulsion to American society, with the realization that the American military was killing American college students. Protesting the war in Viet Nam had become a potential death sentence.

Helicopter evacuating Vietnamese from Sai Gon

The last iconic photograph of this study is Hubert van Es's image of an Air America UH-1 Huey helicopter evacuating Vietnamese from the collapsing South Viet Nam, using the rooftop of the residence of the CIA Deputy Chief of Station as an improvised helipad.

By the end of 1974, US appetite to continue support for the Sai Gon regime had collapsed, as reflected in the withdrawal of all US combat forces from South Viet Nam in 1972-1973.⁶ With the growing chaos resulting from the Watergate Scandal and Nixon's resignation from the White House, North Vietnam undertook a probing attack against a series of isolated South Vietnamese outposts. The complete absence of a US response was taken by Giáp as a sign that the US had no remaining will to expend resources to prop up the Sai Gon regime. If anything, the weak-willed response of Thiệu and his coterie of (mostly) incompetent military subordinates led to further incursions during the early months of 1975. On March 1975, with one South Vietnamese province after another falling without any effective riposte by Sai Gon or US intervention, Giáp ordered the launching of the "Ho Chi Minh" Campaign to unify the country under Ha Noi before the onset of the 1975 rainy season. These developments underscored the extent to which US attempts to prop up an effective, militarily self-reliant South Viet Nam had failed. Endemic corruption, nepotism and a non-existent professional civil-military relationship between Thiệu and his commanders meant the complete disintegration of the South Vietnamese military in the face of Giáp's Ho Chi Minh Campaign.

Such chaos is reflected in van Es's image. With the collapsing Sai Gon regime, South Vietnamese who had supported Thiệu and/or the US military effort began fleeing the country. Van Es's image reflects how the unexpectedly rapid collapse of the South Vietnamese military forced the hastiness of the US evacuation from Sai Gon. Although a somewhat more orderly process of evacuation was simultaneously underway with chartered airliners and Chinook helicopters at Tan Son Nhut Airport and the grounds of the US Embassy respectively, what was underscored by the image was the sheer number of Vietnamese on the ladder to the rooftop seeking evacuation. Van Es counted no less than 30 persons on the roof seeking access to the helicopter; yet, as he noted, "there was no possibility that all the people on the roof could get into the helicopter, and it took off with 12 or 14 on board"⁷ (van Es, 2005).

⁶ Although US ground combat forces were withdrawn by the beginning of 1972, Nixon continued to commit air and naval support to South Viet Nam, most notably during Nixon's launching of Operation Linebacker I (In May 1972 in response to the North Vietnamese Spring Offensive), and Linebacker II (in December 1972 to coerce North Vietnam to the negotiating table).

⁷ The UH-1 Huey was itself designed to carry only eight passengers.



Hubert van Es, “Helicopter evacuation from Sai Gon, April 1975”
<https://static01.nyt.com/images/2009/05/17/arts/15vanesobit.jpg>

On a further ironic note, van Es’s image further reflected how US military strength had failed to subdue the Viet Cong. The UH-1 Huey helicopter had been the workhorse of the US Army and Marines during search and destroy operations against the Viet Cong, with the US losing a total of more than 3,000 UH-1s of various sub-models. During the war, the UH-1 represented the heyday of search-and-destroy operations in the counter-insurgency effort against the Viet Cong – on the war’s last day, it represented the rapidity with which the Sai Gon regime had collapsed into chaos, and the failure of Washington’s attempt to prop up its client state in South Viet Nam.

The cultural impact of van Es’s photograph also made its presence felt in the post-1975 entertainment scene. In an evocative scene in the Broadway musical “Miss Saigon” that depicts the evacuation, a Marine posted to the US Embassy is forced onto the last helicopter leaving the roof of the Embassy building,⁸ leaving behind his Vietnamese wife and unborn child amidst the chaos of South Viet Nam’s collapse.

⁸ It should be noted that van Es’s iconic photograph was taken several blocks away from the Embassy itself.



Evacuation from Sai Gon, as depicted in the musical Miss Saigon.

<https://qph.ec.quoracdn.net/main-qimg-e547e6f4a01521bc65132713cdad3def-c>

More recently, the iconic image of rooftops being used as makeshift helipads has become a more general metaphor for ignominious US military withdrawals from ill-defined quagmires and military adventures overseas. The Bush Administration's controversial invasion of Iraq in 2003 over a non-existent Weapons of Mass Destruction program was followed by a prolonged stalemate that many compared to the desert equivalent of the American War in Viet Nam. Amidst the growing dissent, cartoonist Michael Ramirez published a cartoon that saw "Iraq" added to the wall of a building whose roof was similarly being used as a makeshift helipad to evacuate Bush from Iraq.



Michael Ramírez

<http://www.ncobrief.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Iraq-Embassy-Evac.gif>

Conclusion

Photographs have a special place in history, even though they can lie. According to Susan Sontag, in *Regarding the Pain of Others*, “history based only upon images is fiction. General understanding of history is more important than images pertaining to one historical event” (Sontag, 2003). Since its withdrawal from Viet Nam, conservative circles in the US have pointed the finger at the role of the media in undermining public support for its involvement in that conflict. Presumably acknowledging the potentially pivotal role of highly iconic photographs during wartime, since the Persian Gulf War in early 1991, the US military has increased control over the access of photographers and reporters in the war zone. This has included increasing rules for journalists wishing to embed themselves with the US military. Yet, such recent attempts to limit the media’s ability to capture the unsavory aspects of warfare have not changed the fact that war remains the business of human carnage and the dehumanization of the enemy. Whilst Pentagon attempts to regulate media access to the battlefield, coverage of the human impact of warfare will continue to characterize humanity’s continued involvement in organized, politically-motivated acts of violence in international relations.

References

- Adams E. (1998, July 27). Eulogy: General Nguyen Ngoc Loan. *Time Magazine*. Retrieved from <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,988783,00.html>
- Browne M.W. (2003). The Buddhist Protests of 1963. PBS. Retrieved from <https://www.pbs.org/weta/reportingamericaatwar/reporters/browne/protests.html>
- Cosgrove, B. (2014, July 29). Remembering Madame Nhu: The Polarizing Face of South Vietnam. *Time Magazine*. Retrieved from <http://time.com/3880653/madame-nhu-polarizing-face-of-vietnam/>
- Cronkite, W. (1968, February 27). Final Words: Cronkite's Vietnam Commentary. (Re-broadcast 18 July 2009). Retrieved from <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=106775685>
- Karnow S. (1997). *Vietnam: A History* (2nd ed.) New York: Penguin Books.
- McMaster H.R., (2014, April-May) Photography at war. *Survival* 56 (2). Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2014.901761>
- Rose T., (2014, August 8). The war photo no one would publish. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from DeGhetththttps://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/08/the-war-photo-no-one-would-publish/375762/?utm_source=atlb
- Sherman W. T. (1879, June 19). Speech at the Michigan Military Academy. Retrieved from <https://blogs.lib.msu.edu/red-tape/2017/jun/june-19-1879-general-sherman-declares-war-hell-pontiac/>
- Smith I.K., (2010, April 1). The self-immolation of Thich Quang Duc in Saigon. *New Statesman*. Retrieved from <http://www.newstatesman.com/culture/2010/03/thich-quang-vietnam-browne>
- Sontag S. (2003). *Regarding the Pain of Others*. New York: Picador.
- Tobin J., (1997). *Ernie Pyle's War: America's Eyewitness to World War II*. New York: Free Press.
- Tucker, A.W.; Michels W.; and Zelt N. (2012). *War/Photography: Images of Armed Conflict and its Aftermath*. New Haven, CT: Yale UP.
- van Es, H. (2005, April 29). Thirty Years at 300 Millimeters. Retrieved from http://www.mishalov.com/Vietnam_finalescape.html
- Wieskamp, V. (2013, October 29). My Lai, sexual assault and the black blouse girl: forty-five years later, one of America's most iconic photos hides truth in plain sight. *Reading The Pictures*. Retrieved from, <http://www.readingthepictures.org/2013/10/my-lai-sexual-assault-and-the-black-blouse-girl-forty-five-years-later-one-of-americas-most-iconic-photos-hides-truth-in-plain-sight/>
- Willbanks, J.H. (2008, March 5). Winning the Battle, Losing the War. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/05/opinion/05willbanks.html>
- Wood E.W. Jr. (2008). *Worshipping the Myths of World War II, Reflections on America's Dedication to War*. Lincoln, NE: Potomac Books.

Corresponding Author: Er-Win Tan

Contact e-mail: erwintan@um.edu.my

Sense and Senselessness of War: Aggregating the Causes, Gains and Losses of the Nigerian Civil War, 1967–1970

Johnson Olaosebikan Aremu
Department of History and International Studies
Ekiti State University
Ado- Ekiti, Nigeria

Lateef Oluwafemi Buhari
Department of History and International Studies
Ekiti State University
Ado- Ekiti, Nigeria

Abstract

This study is a post-mortem examination of the causes and impact of the Nigerian civil war of 1967–1970. It was conducted to ascertain whether war was the only feasible alternative for the preservation of the nation. The paper notes that despite the great losses and the agony suffered by the nation during the “war of unity”, Nigeria is still far from being united forty-seven years after the end of hostilities. This is confirmed by the recent altercations between the Northern youths and their Igbo counterparts, who are calling for the exit of “alien” groups from their domains at the latest by 1 October 2017. This paper notes that the current scenario of inter-ethnic conflagrations is a replica of the events that precipitated the 1966 pogroms suffered by the people of eastern Nigeria, pogroms that originated in various northern Nigerian cities; that strife was one of the fundamental factors that led to the outbreak of war in 1967. This study further submits that the Nigerian civil war presents a mixed record of positive and negative results. The encouraging results, for some, would be the continued unity and preservation of the country’s territorial integrity, a situation that prevails to date, albeit secured by force. The results of the war could alternatively be regarded as senseless and wasteful in view of the relentless agitation of groups, representing most ethnic nationalities, calling for the balkanisation of the country. Such agitation began in the 1990’s and is continuous. Data for this study was sourced extensively from secondary sources; it was analysed using descriptive and narrative methods of inquiry.

Keywords: Biafra, civil war, ethnic rivalry, Nigeria, pogrom, propaganda, starvation

Introduction

The Nigerian Civil War of 6 July, 1967 to 15 January, 1970 remains an episodic event of landmark impact on the post-independence history of the country. The war, which pitched the Federal Military Government of Nigeria against the secessionist Eastern Region, marked the climax of a series of unfolding turbulent events that began in January of 1966. The conflagration posed the greatest challenge to the continuing existence, unity and territorial integrity of Nigeria as the largest multi-ethnic federation in Africa. However, while it is true that the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) succeeded in taming the secession attempt, the war seems to have failed to resolve the salient issues that brought it about. This has necessitated this research in order to examine the causes of the war vis-à-vis the purported gains and losses it caused. This study aims to provide a lucid interpretation of the present state of the Nigerian Federation and the many problems confronting the country's unity agenda since 1970.

Understanding The Concept Of Civil War

Numerous definitions of civil war exist. Gersovitz and Kriger (2013, pp. 160–161) see civil war as “a politically organized, large-scale, sustained, physically violent conflict that occurs within a country principally among large/numerically important groups of its inhabitants or citizens over the monopoly of physical force within the country”. In a similar vein, Kalyvas (2006, p. 17) defines civil war as an “armed combat taking place within the boundaries of a recognized sovereign entity between parties subject to a common authority at the outset of the hostilities”. In a more expatiated description, the United Nations Security Council submits that a civil war

consists of one or several simultaneous disputes over generally incompatible positions that (1) concern government and/or territory in a state; (2) are causally linked to the use of armed force, resulting in at least 500 battle-related deaths during a given year during the conflict; and (3) involve two or more parties, of which the primary warring parties are the government of the state where armed force is used, and one or several non-state opposition organization. (cited in Cockayne et al., 2010, p. 43)

Lastly, Doyle and Sambanis (2006), making further clarifications, define a civil war as an armed conflict that meets the following criteria:

a) the war has caused more than 1,000 battle deaths; b) the war represented a challenge to the sovereignty of an internationally recognized state; c) the war occurred within the recognized boundary of that state; d) the war involved the state as one of the principal combatants; e) the rebels were able to mount an organized military opposition to the state and to inflict significant casualties on the state.

Gersovitz and Kriger (2013, p. 161) add that “civil wars usually have incumbent governments that control the state and have a monopoly of force before the civil war and challengers – people who have not effectively challenged the monopoly of others before the outbreak of the civil war”. They stressed further that the challengers may, however, seek to replace the incumbents in control of the monopoly of force within the extant territory of the state, or they may seek the secession of part of the original territory (Gersovitz and Kriger, 2013, p. 161). The Nigerian civil war of 1967–70 occurs in line with the second motive, as the Igbos of Eastern Nigeria had planned to exit Nigeria and set up their own independent State, which

they christened “Republic of Biafra”. Interest in waging war, for of both Nigeria and Biafra, was grounded on the same narrative of national survival, though the interpretation diverged, for while Nigeria’s basic aim was to keep the nation united as one, Eastern Nigeria’s leadership aimed to break Nigeria up in order to create a new nation (Tedheke, 2007, p. 416). Having presented a conceptual background for the broad-spectrum nature of civil war, it is expedient at this point to offer a detailed survey of the causes of the Nigerian civil war.

Causes of the Nigerian Civil War

The plethora of events, actions and perilous inertia that characterised the national scene between January 1966 and July 1967 prompted the catastrophic Nigerian Civil War. These included the 15 January, 1966 coup and its attendant ethnic connotations; Major General Johnson Thomas Umunnakwe Aguiyi Ironsi’s miscalculated stabilization policy, which necessitated the replacement of federalism with unitarism, causing furious reactions from the North; the 29 July, 1966 counter-coup and its ethnic connotations; the emergence of General Yakubu Gowon as military leader and the refusal of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, (military officer and politician that at the time was serving as the military governor of the Eastern Region of Nigeria and became the leader of the breakaway Republic of Biafra from 1967 to 1970), to recognise Gowon’s leadership; the breakdown of the Aburi Accord and Gowon’s creation of twelve states in May 1967; the secession of the Eastern Region to form the Republic of Biafra, and Gowon’s determination to foil the attempt. A full discussion of the factors follows.

The 15 January 1966 coup and its attendant ethnic connotations

Nigeria’s first military coup d’état took place on 15 January, 1966. The bloody coup, which put an end to the civilian administration of Prime Minister Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, was staged by a group of five majors led by Major C.K. Nzeogwu (Mainasara, 1982, p. 8). Nzeogwu and his cohorts had accused Balewa’s government of corruption, inept leadership, ethnicity and nepotism.

The coup claimed the lives of notable Nigerian military and civilian leaders, mostly from the Northern and Western Regions. Those killed included Alhaji Tafawa Balewa, Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, Brigadier Zak Maimalari and Lt. Col. Abogo Largema, all of whom were prominent Northern leaders. Others killed included Chief Festus Okotie-Eboh (from the Mid-West Region), Lt. Col Unegbe (an Ibo from the Eastern Region), as well as Chief S.L. Akintola, Col. Shodeinde and Brigadier Samuel Ademulegun (all from the West), (Akinseye-George, 2002, p. 451; Elaigwu, 2005, p. 37; Achebe, 2012, p. 276). It is unfortunate to note that the sectional nature of the killings raised the question of ethnic colouration of the coup. Without any doubt, the coup opened a sharp chapter of suspicion in the annals of Nigerian history creating suspicions about the intent of the coup plotters.

Aguiyi Ironsi’s miscalculated introduction of unitarism as against federalism and the attendant reactions from the North

The 15 January, 1966 coup was foiled by the military and the dissident soldiers were arrested. This brought Major General Aguiyi Ironsi to the corridors of power as Nigeria’s first military ruler. In trying to stabilize the turbulent political atmosphere of the country, Ironsi suspended the constitution and, by Decree 1 of 1966, the Federal Military Government was given the power “to make laws for the peace, order and good government of Nigeria or any part thereof

with respect to any matter whatsoever” (FGN, 1966: A1 53 cited in Elaigwu, 2005, p. 14). Furthermore, Ironsi abrogated federalism and instituted a unitary system of government through Decree No 34 of 24 May, 1966. The Decree abolished the regional structure, scrapped the regional civil service and created a harmonised National Public Service (Elaigwu, 2005, p. 16; Achebe, 2012, p. 80; Ikime, 2002, p. 61).

Northern opposition to the Decree was vehement and sporadic because of the fear of marginalisation in the public service. This quickly provoked anti-Igbo sentiments in the North. There was growing anger and disaffection among officers from Northern Nigeria who wanted revenge for what they saw as an Igbo coup (Achebe, 2012, p. 80). The Northern press also accentuated the level of grievance against Ironsi’s government.

The electronic and print Medias of the North were reported to have unleashed a campaign of verbal hostilities against the South, rejecting proposals for a unitary government. (Abiola, 1990, p. 9 cited in Olukotun, 2002, p. 386) Northern leaders and the press eventually succeeded in whipping up public sentiment against the unitary system of government. By the last week of May, 1966, suspicion had become rife in the North that the January, 1966 coup was an attempt by the Igbo to dominate Nigeria (Elaigwu, 2005, p. 16; Ihunna, 2002, p. 327; Abubakar, 2002, p. 253; Ikime, 2002, p. 61). This instigated violent demonstrations, riots and killing of Igbo individuals in the North.

The 29 July, 1966 counter-coup and its ethnic connotations

Between June and July 1966, the Northern ruling élite made a number of demands on the Ironsi government. These included the revocation of the government’s controversial Decree 34 of 1966; the court-martial and punishment of the leaders of the 15 January, 1966 coup; and the suspension of any plans to investigate the May 1966 massacres of Easterners in the North (Achebe, 2012, p. 81). The failure of Ironsi to meet these demands led Northern Military officers to stage a counter-coup on 29 July, 1966. It was essentially a vengeance coup against the Igbos. Aguiyi Ironsi was assassinated along with Adekunle Fajuyi of the Western region. Many senior Igbo military officers were reportedly killed in a bid to restore the hegemony of the North in Nigerian politics (Achebe, 2012:82, Ikime, 2002, p. 61). Between July and November, 1966, Achebe (2012, p. 82) reported that the killing of the Igbos became “a state industry in Nigeria” as Northerners turned on Igbo civilians residing in the North and unleashed waves of brutal massacres that Colin Legum of *The Observer* (UK), described as a proqram (Achebe, 2012, p. 82). Over thirty-thousand Igbos-civilian men, women and children, were slaughtered. Hundreds of thousands were reportedly wounded, maimed and suffered arson and looting of their property (Ibid; Abubakar, 2002, p. 204). The ineptitude of the government to curb the attacks on Igbos caused Igbo intellectuals to regard it as a premeditated plan to exterminate their ethnic group. (Achebe, 2012, p. 83). This led to a mass exodus of people of Eastern Nigerian origin from the North. They headed for the safety of the East.

It is instructive to note that the two coups of 1966, to a very large extent, “altered the political equation and destroyed the fragile trust existing among the major ethnic groups” in the country (Niven, 1970: Nwolise, 2002:164). The coups led to calls for secession by the Northern Region, who named the 29 July coup as “Operation Araba” (meaning secession or call to separate); this was followed by the outright declaration of secession by the Eastern Region on 30 May, 1967 (Abubakar, 2002, p. 254; Ikime, 2002, p. 61, Achebe, 2012, p. 83).

The 15 January, 1966 coup was interpreted as a plot by the ambitious Igbo of the East to take control of Nigeria from the Hausa/Fulani North. On the other hand, Easterners felt marginalised and regarded themselves as subjects of extermination by the North. A battle line was almost drawn between the two ethnic groups.

Emergence of Yakubu Gowon as military leader and the refusal of Odumegwu Ojukwu to recognise his leadership.

Following the killing of Major General Aguiyi Ironsi in the 29 July, 1966 coup, Lt. Colonel Yakubu Gowon emerged as the new Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Nigeria. Lt. Col. Emeka Odumegwu-Ojukwu refused to accept the authority of Gowon, claiming that Gowon was his junior. Apart from Brigadier Babafemi Ogundipe, who was then Chief of Staff at Supreme Headquarters and the most senior officer in the Nigerian Army, other officers who were seniors to Gowon included Lt. Col. David Ejor and Lt. Col. Odumegwu Ojukwu (Umoru-Onuka, 2002, p. 288; Elaigwu, 2005, pp. 17–18; Ikime, 2002, p. 62).

The accession of Gowon over and above his seniors no doubt created a problem of control and command for the army as it violated, with impunity, the established military hierarchy in the Nigerian Armed Forces. (Onyeoziri, 2002, p. 95; Onumonu and Anutanwa, 2017, p. 44). Beginning from early November 1966, Ojukwu refused to accept Gowon's leadership and declined from attending the Supreme Military Council (SMC) meetings from now on (Ikime 2002, p. 62, Eliagwu, 1986, n.p.). However after much persuasion, Ojukwu indicated his willingness to attend the SMC meetings provided such meetings were held outside the country or within the territory of the Eastern Region. This, according to him, was because his personal security could no longer be guaranteed anywhere in the country except in the Eastern Region (Ojukwu, 1969, p. 14). In December 1966, General J.A. Ankrah, the then Ghanaian Head of State, offered to host a mediation meeting to broker peace between Lt. Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu and Lt. Colonel Yakubu Gowon. Hence, Nigerian military leaders and senior police officials met at Aburi in Accra, Ghana between 4 and 5 January, 1967 with General Ankrah as the mediator (Madiebo, 1980, Gailey Jr., 1972, p. 210; Forsyth, 2001; Uwechue, 2004; Ojukwu, 1969).

An agreement popularly called the Aburi Accord was signed at the end of the meeting. Its terms included: the Army should be governed by the Supreme Military Council (SMC) under the Chairman of the Head of the Federal Military Government and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces; establishment of a military headquarters in which each region was to be represented which would be headed by the Chief of Staff; establishment of an Area Command in each region under an Area Commander; the SMC was to deal with all matters of appointment and promotions of people in executive posts in the Armed Forces and the Police and; Military Governors were to have control over Area commands in their regions for the purpose of internal security (Elaigwu, 2005, pp. 18-19; Oluleye, 1985:42; Obasanjo, 1971:47; Aremu, 2014:53-54).

Breakdown of the Aburi Accord and the Unilateral Creation of Twelve States by Yakubu Gowon in May 1967

It is interesting to note that the agreement was never implemented by the Federal Military Government because it was viewed as representing no more than a victory for Ojukwu. Gowon's refusal to carry out the Aburi Accord and Ojukwu's insistence that "on Aburi we

stand, there will be no compromise” eventually led to the breakdown of the Accord (Aremu, 2014, p. 54). On 27 May, 1967, Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon announced the creation of twelve states in Nigeria and thereby abrogated the regional political structure. The Northern Region was divided into six states, the Eastern Region into three states, the Western Region into two states while the Mid-Western Region became the Mid-Western State (Elaigwu, 2005, pp. 38:39). Meanwhile, Lt. Col. Odumegwu Ojukwu, the embattled Governor of the defunct Eastern Region, declined to recognise the new states on the ground that Gowon created them unilaterally without his (Ojukwu) consent. Ojukwu regarded this act as a conspiracy and tactical declaration of war against the Igbo as the newly created Igbo State (East Central State) was landlocked.

Ojukwu quickly summoned the Eastern Region Consultative Assembly on same day (27 May, 1967). The Assembly mandated Colonel Ojukwu “to declare at the earliest practicable date, Eastern Nigeria a free, sovereign and independent state by the name and title of the Republic of Biafra” (Achebe, 2012, p. 91). On 30 May, 1967, the die was cast. Ojukwu, citing a good number of malevolent acts directed at the Igbo, proclaimed the independence of the Republic of Biafra from Nigeria. (Achebe, 2012, p. 92). The secession of the Eastern Region from Nigeria and the determination of Gowon to foil the attempt, which he regarded as unconstitutional, eventually led to a full-blown war on 6 July, 1967.

An X-Ray of the Gains and Losses of the Nigerian Civil War

Viewed from every angle, the Nigerian civil war appears like a paradox. On the one hand, the war restored the political map of Nigeria that had been redrawn by the seceding Eastern Region. At the same time, death, destruction of property and estranged relations among Nigerian nationalities, among other results of war, were very common. A historical documentation of the perceived gains and losses recorded in the aftermath of the war forms the focus of discussion of this section of the paper.

The Gains

Unity of Nigeria maintained

Arguably, a significant benefit of the outcome of the Nigerian civil war was that the unity of Nigeria was restored and its territorial integrity was sustained. During his official surrender speech on 12 January 1970, Biafra’s Chief of Army Staff, Major General Phillip Effiong declared openly that the “people of Biafra” consent to the “authority of the Federal Military Government,” and accept the “existing administrative and political structure of the federation of Nigeria”. By this declaration, Oko (1988, cited in Afinotan, & Ojajorotu, 2014: 214) submits that the Igbo people once again became “a governable part of the Nigerian federation”. Nigeria once again became united, even if by force. To Yakubu Gowon, the end of hostilities marked the end of the “futile attempt to disintegrate the country” and was no more than a “great moment of victory for national unity” (*New Nigerian Newspaper*, 13 January, 1970 cited in Momoh, 2000, pp. 152-3; and Tedheke, 2007, pp. 441-442). According to Decker (2016, p. 108), the Nigerian civil war was “one of the earliest conflicts that tested a newly bequeathed statehood and to which Nigeria raised to the challenge”. It was no doubt a test of the resilience of the Nigerian nation-state at infancy. It was a war of survival for the Nigerian state which the Gowon-led government fought to a logical conclusion. The secessionist Biafra was not allowed to break away from the country. Without mincing words, the war succeeded in preserving the territorial integrity and unity of Nigeria. But apart from enhancing the political dignity of the country, it equally promoted the

economic viability of the nation. Perhaps, if Biafra had succeeded, Nigeria's economic survival could have been greatly jeopardized as the country has relied almost exclusively on oil wealth for its survival since 1973. The current economic downturn being experienced in the country due largely to dwindling oil revenue is a good testimony to the economic hardships that Biafra's secession would have brought on Nigeria. Thanks to the courage and gallantry displayed by Gowon in the war years. Though it is true that the nation could have devised other means of economic survival without oil, it is equally true that such means could not have been developed in a short period of time.

Threat of secession reduced drastically, though not totally eliminated since 1970

Secession threats are not new in Nigerian politics. Indeed, Ojo (2004, pp. 75-89), reports that threats of secession have been a potent weapon in Nigerian political bargaining between 1950 and 1964. Ayoade (2010, n.p.) corroborates this fact adding that the Northern Region, considered "big, strong and reliable", had issued an "Eight Point Programme" threatening secession in 1953. Similarly, the West had also threatened secession in 1953 on the status of Lagos. Unfortunately, Col Odumegwu Ojukwu, Governor of the Eastern Region, felt pushed beyond his limits and led "Biafra" in real secession from Nigeria in 1966. In the ensuing conflict, the Nigerian government ably demonstrated its readiness and ability to match the Biafran forces' terror tactics.

As Ken Saro-Wiwa noted in 1989, the Nigerian civil war "has taught everyone several lessons, one of them being that secession of any part of Nigeria is an impossibility" (cited in Oriaku, 2002: 49). In 1990, Ibrahim Babangida, Nigeria's military leader, authoritatively declared that Nigeria no longer faces the threat of secession because "since 1970, the option of secession was engineered out of the Nigerian set of options" (Babangida, 1991, p. 163 cited in Agbese, 2002, p. 125). Johannes Harnischfeger (2012, n.p.) also shared a similar testimony about the elimination of the secession threat in Nigeria since the civil war. He said: "when I was living in Igboland in 1993 and from 1994 to 1996, there was not much talk about Biafra. Not one Igbo politician suggested that his people in the South-East of Nigeria should secede again".

Judging from the three observations cited above, it is evident that, up to the late 1990's, the threat of secession was no longer operative in the Nigerian political landscape. However, the story has changed drastically today. Apart from the recurrent agitations of the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), which since the early 2000's has been calling for the secession of the East and establishment of an independent state of Biafra, there has been recurrent unrest in most of the rest of Nigeria: the current quit notice given by the Arewa Youth Group to people of Igbo descent to leave Northern Nigeria on or before 1 October, 2017 is indeed a pointer to the fact that secession ambitions and calls for separation are still very much alive and kicking in Nigeria. The Northern youths making the threats are made up of Arewa Citizens Action for Change, Arewa Youth Consultative Forum, Arewa Youth Development Foundation, Arewa Students Forum and the Northern Emancipation Network. On the Igbo side, the group Persistence for Secession also asked Northerners in the South-East to leave the area, warning that as of 1 October, they will begin implementation of "visible actions" to prove they are no longer part of a federal union that includes the Igbo (Sahara Reporters, 2017, n.p.). Judging from the above, all is no longer well with the Nigerian polity. However, the Federal Government of Nigeria says the situation is still under control and that Nigeria will remain as one indivisible entity even if conflagrations occur (Crest News, Nigeria, 2017, n.p.).

Biafrans' goal of saving themselves from extinction as a people eventually came to pass

It is true that Lt. Col. Usman Katsina, the then Military Governor of Northern Region, reportedly stated that “the Army could “crush” the East in a few hours if the Supreme Commander gave the go ahead”. But thanks to the large hearts and maturity of Yakubu Gowon, the Igbo ethnic group is still very much around with us. In fact, as a way of re-enlisting the faith of the Igbos in a united Nigeria, Gowon instituted the popular 3Rs: the Reconciliation, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation programme for the Igbo created to ease their sufferings. The next step was a general amnesty granted to all the soldiers that fought on Biafra's side during the war. Whether the government was sincere or not with the implementation process is evidently a subject of debate. But suffice it to note that the Igbos were saved from extinction by Yakubu Gowon's generous administration, one that never considered Biafra's forces and people as enemies, but rather as wayward brothers and sisters that should be re-integrated.

The Losses

Loss of lives and property

The Nigerian civil war has been described as one of the bloodiest wars in sub-Saharan Africa (Akresh, et al., 2012, p. 273; Okafor, 2014, p. 8). Okocha (n.d.) described it as the first “black on black genocide in postcolonial Africa”, as most of the dead were from the eastern region of Nigeria. Suffice to state that, at the end of the war in 1970, the exact number of lives lost remains a subject of speculation and debate, with estimates ranging from a one to two million on both sides. These included countless number of innocent children, nursing mothers and pregnant women who were not killed by the bullets of a gun but by starvation and disease; to this number we must add the soldiers who died in combat (Uzokwe, 2003, n.p.). These are, evidently, people whose future and destiny were erased in a conflict that might have been avoidable. That the Nigerian nation-state has missed their inestimable mental and physical contributions to the socio-political, economic and technological growth and development of this large country, so rich in milk and honey, is no doubt an understatement. The trauma that their remembrance has brought to surviving families, relatives and friends is just as dreadful. It is not an overstatement to say that Nigerians are living to regret the war years, especially with respect to those countless individuals who could have deployed their potential talents to transform the destinies of the country for the good.

The Nigerian civil war also resulted in the loss of valuable property and the means of livelihood for a large part of the population. According to Decker (2016, p. 109), the total cost of the war was about three hundred million naira. Most of the survivors lost their means of economic survival and were forced to subsist as scavengers and paupers for the rest of their lives.

The cost of post war reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction

Following the end the civil war on 12 January, 1970, General Yakubu Gowon made his famous announcement of “no victor, no vanquished”. The government also granted a general amnesty to those who fought on the Baifran side. Furthermore, the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) launched the post-war programme of Reconciliation, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction, the 3Rs (Tedheke, 2007, p. 440). The rationale behind the programme was not implausible. The programme was an initiative intended to appease the hostilities between Nigeria's ethnic groups, restore infrastructure and homes destroyed in combat, relocate internally displaced people and tackle the socio-economic challenges of poverty, disease and malnutrition among the victims. (Thomas, 2010, cited in Afinotan, & Ojajorotu, 2014, p.

214; Tedheke, 2007, p. 446; and Falola & Genova, 2009, p. 97). In other words, the plan aimed to serve largely as a blueprint for reconstructing the infrastructure damaged by war and promoting economic and social development throughout the nation in the post-war period.

Afinotan, and Ojakorotu (2014, p. 214) have accused the Gowon administration of insincerity and lackluster implementation of the scheme, which in their opinion instigated, among Igbos, sentiments of wariness and a lack of trust in the government's ability to deliver on its promises. It is essential to note here, therefore, that the question of whether the Federal Government of Nigeria was sincere or not about implementing the programme has been the subject of an intense debate, one which lies beyond the scope of this study. Suffice to say that reconciliation without justice and compensation, which the granting of amnesty implied, could at best be regarded as a ruse. The mere memory of the horrors of the gun sounds, panic, fear and death of the war years may affect the rate of reconciliation between the warring parties for many years to come, if any such understanding eventually occurs.

But apart from the socio-psychological impact that the war had on inter-ethnic relations in Nigeria, the country also suffered a great setback in terms of socio-infrastructure and economic development. In the first instance, the fact that the government intended to embark on "reconstruction" at all was enough evidence of a culture of allowing for the waste of hard-earned resources. However, the most agonizing part of the post-war policy of 3Rs was that it was implemented with the fund earlier set aside for the Second National Development Plan (1970–1974). This implies that funds that were meant for further development of infrastructures were subsequently committed to rebuilding damaged structures and facilities destroyed by war. It is distressing to many observers that the 3.192 billion naira earmarked for the Second National Development Plan went down the drain of re-construction. The oil-price boom experienced in the world market in 1973, one that created much-needed revenues for the Nigerian economy, was thus wasted on rebuilding old, dilapidated edifices destroyed by war instead of embarking on new projects that could have propelled the country's development to a significant degree.

Furthermore, corruption and inept leadership prevented the fund's application to designated projects. Much was thus spent by the government to do little or no development for the country. It was indeed a case of one step forward, two steps backward in the development history of Nigeria. This conforms largely to the submission of Ojeleye (2016, p. 7) that "civil wars destroy the structures that are needed for the development of the society . . . Such wars divert much needed 'scarce' resources away from development projects".

National question remains unresolved

It is apt to note that the Nigerian civil war did not resolve the "national question". By the national question we refer to the claim by various nationalities that they were being denied their rights to equitable participation in governance and national life in general (Oriaku, 2002, p. 46). According to Fedoseyev (1997), as quoted in the 4 June, 2012 edition of the Leadership Newspaper, (Abuja), the national question "is first and foremost a question of solving vital problems of social development, abolishing national oppression and inequality, eliminating obstacles to the formation of nations and assuring freedom for the development of people, including achievement of factual equality". The national question in Nigeria may also be defined as the extent to which the citizens think Nigeria, instead of their ethnicities or localities. Evidently, before and after the civil war, the issue of nationality question and the attendant crisis of instability have gained resonance in Nigeria's national political discourse. Nigeria indeed provides a framework for examining the central paradox in post-colonial

nation-building projects in Africa, namely, the tension between majority rule and minority rights. It has also been used to refer to the totality of problems and challenges emanating from the discrepancy between the political structures of the Nigerian federation and the nature of inter-ethnic relations among Nigerian peoples (Akinseye–George, 2002, p. 452). This is well exemplified by the many inter-ethnic and religious conflicts, too many to mention, that occur in all the nooks and crannies of the country intermittently over the years. This perhaps prompted Albert (2002, p. 321) to report, regarding inter-ethnic relations in Nigeria, that then “many of the groups in the federation were in a state of relationship fatigue”. Osadolor (2002, p. 74) also puts it succinctly: “Nigeria appears to be far less united politically than ever before and the spectre of disintegration continues to haunt the country . . .”.

If that was true back then, what do we have to say about the exit notice given to the Easterners living in the North on 6 June, 2017, that they should leave at the latest by 1 October, 2017? Definitely, as the Arewa Youth Forum claimed in their riot act, the Hausa – Fulani are tired of living with the Igbos. Whether or not the government will be able to manage this brewing crisis successfully is presently the burning issue. It need be recalled that a similar development reared its ugly head during the April 1990 coup led by Gideon Okar against the government of Ibrahim Babangida. Then, Okar and his cohorts had declared their intention to excise some states in the northeastern part of Nigeria from the country. It is entirely possible that the secession plan would have worked if the coup had been successful. But the nation survived that onslaught of balkanisation as the coup failed. But suffice it to note that Nigeria is probably on the verge of total disintegration and collapse, whose preliminary glimpse was this call for separation. But even if the nation survives this brewing conflict between the Igbo and the Hausa – Fulani groups, it has nonetheless succeeded in exacerbating mutual distrust, suspicion, hatred and disunity among the many ethnic groups in the country. It is important to note that these grievances have been largely unaddressed by the country’s political leadership. The negative impact of these conflicts on the level of development of the country is considerable.

Politicisation of the armed forces

There is no doubting the fact the Nigerian Armed Forces transformed after the civil war. Ethnic cleavages became pronounced in the appointments, promotions and postings of military officers and enlisted men soon after the first military coup of January 15, 1966. Nwolise (2002, p. 164) noted that this politicisation of the Army could be traced to this coup, when the military entered what he referred to as the “unfamiliar terrain of politics and governance”. The military soon became “politicised” along ethnic and religious lines. (Nwolise, 2002, p. 164). This course of “command and discipline pollution” within the Nigerian military that began in 1966 has remained unchecked ever since. *Esprit de corps* became finally eroded and military personnel became more politicians and lobbyists rather than professional soldiers.

Proliferation of arms

Many are convinced that the illicit movement of Small and Light Weapons (SALW) has had a dramatic impact on peace and security in Nigeria, threatening not only the existence of the state, but also the livelihoods of millions of people across the country. The trafficking and wide availability of these weapons fuel communal conflicts, political instability and pose a threat, not only to security, but also to sustainable development. The spread of small arms is contributing to alarming levels of armed crime and militancy that have had grave

consequences for Nigeria's socio-political and economic stability (Aderinwale, 2005, p. 111; Yacubu, 2005, p. 55; Nte, 2011, cited in Okeke & Oji, 2014, p. 419).

Oyetimi (2016), citing Dr Moses Ikoh, traced the origin of proliferation of arms in Nigeria to the end of the civil war. He substantiated his claim by stressing that incidences of violent crime associated with arms increased substantially from 2,315 as at 1967 to 12,153 after the war. Since small arms proliferation results from a mix of large numbers of arms in circulation and a number of incentives for people and groups to resort to violence, Freedom Onuoha (cited in Mohammed, Idris & Alli, 2016) has recommended that Government at all levels – federal, state and local – need to partner with the private sector to undertake an aggressive job creation programme for Nigeria's numerous and idle youths. This should be complemented with mass enlightenment and orientation programmes as well as security consciousness among citizens as major keys to reducing the proliferation of arms in the country.

Ethnic nationalism and the exacerbation of mutual distrust in Nigeria's ethnic relations

Since the beginning of the fourth Republic in May 1999, one relatively permanent characterisation of the country's political landscape has been ethnic militancy (Gilbert, 2013). Decades of marginalisation and injustice allegedly foisted on the citizenry by the Nigerian state have been cited as precipitating a spectre of frustration and deprivation, which eventually triggered creation of militant groups as extra-constitutional method for negotiation, and redressing the political cum socio-economic dehumanising conditions of the people, with great commitment to self-determination (Afinotan, & Ojajorotu, 2014, p. 219). Prominent among such groups in the south are: The Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), one of many secessionist movements with the aim of securing the resurgence of the defunct state of Biafra from Nigeria (Murray, 2007); The Oodua Peoples' Congress (OPC), a militant Yoruba Nationalist Organization in Western Nigeria; the Oodua Republic Front (ORF) which is a secessionist movement based in the Western part too, and advocates the creation of the Oodua (or Oduduwa) Republic of the Yorubas; The Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), a campaign organization representing the Ogoni people in their struggle for ethnic and environmental rights, and the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), which has proven to be a militant people's movement dedicated to armed struggle against the exploitation and oppression of the people of Niger Delta and the ruin of its natural environment by foreign multinational corporations involved in the extraction of oil in the Niger Delta (Ezeji-Okoye, 2009, p. 55; Agwuele, 2002, p.354). In the North, the story remains the same, violent ethnic movements and militant Islamic bodies dot the area and these developments stem from the perception of marginalization and non-accommodation of the pure Islamic way of life by the Nigerian political system. Prominent among these organizations are the Arewa People's Congress (APC) which emerged to counter the OPC, the "hambada" and "hisbah" which enforce sharia compliance in northern states (Duruji, 2010, p. 354). It is sad to note that these ethno-based militia groups have been highly instrumental to the heightening of mutual distrust in Nigeria's inter-ethnic relations. It is essential to note that these ethnic militant groups have exacerbated the challenge of internal insecurity; and have continued to weaken the corporate existence of Nigeria as a united and powerful nation-state (Gilbert, 2013; Badmus, 2009).

Unending agitation for the creation of states

As mentioned earlier in this paper, the question of the creation of states began in Nigeria on 27 May, 1967, when the Yakubu Gowon regime created twelve states to replace the four regions in existence then. It was ostensibly done to nip the Eastern Region's bid for secession

in the bud. On 3 February, 1976, General Murtala Mohammed's government increased the number of states to nineteen. Osaghae (1991, p. 249) notes that this gave rise to a phenomenal increase in the demand for even more states as various ethnic groups as elites struggled to maximise their share of the national cake. General Ibrahim Babangida added two more states in September, 1987 to raise the number of states in the country to twenty-one. The number increased to thirty in August, 1991 when Babangida added nine new states. The last states creation exercise took place on 1 October, 1996. Then, late General Sani Abacha announced the creation of six more states to bring the number of states in the Nigerian Federation to thirty-six. Agitation for creation of more states has continued unabated. Suffice to say that no new states have yet been created in the past twenty-one years largely because civilian governments in Nigeria have no tradition of success at state's creation.

It is expedient to make some salient observations on states creation processes in Nigeria. In the first instance, since Gowon's masterful creation of states on the eve of the Nigerian civil war in 1967, there has been a continued obsession with the creation of states largely for self-determination and economic purposes by Nigeria's ethnic groups. No ethnic group is exempted from this craze. Secondly, besides being a vehicle for extending political and economic self-governance to distinct ethnic communities, states creation became an administrative strategy for the devolution of Federal generosity to an unstructured array of territorial communities and coalitions. This probably explains why the politics of state creation in the country has not taken into account the ability of these states to sustain their existence. Furthermore, state creation exercise has been largely employed as a legitimizing force for military regimes in the country, largely intended to galvanise support for particular regimes, whose strength was ebbing and to compensate close allies.

There is no gainsaying the fact that states are important variables in a federation, and thus a pre-requisite for its existence (Noser, 1975, p. 170). Nevertheless, the creation of states in Nigeria has so far not succeeded in satisfying all interest groups in the country. As a matter of fact, the paradox of the exercise is that each new state, assembled to satisfy the desires of a nationality, creates new "neglected" minorities, new tensions and fresh activism. Another issue suggested by Ezeji-Okoye (2009, p. 12) is that the political atmosphere and intra-personal relations are further poisoned by the language of propaganda employed to justify the need for new states. This normally centers on allegations of persecution of the nationality making the accusation. These allegations, according to him, usually breed antagonism. This marginalization phenomenon has always led to new minority formation and as such intensified the agitation for even more states (Ezeji-Okoye, 2009, p. 12). In all, state-creation exercises have not addressed the problems of inequality, the minority question or underdevelopment. Understandably, agitations are unending.

Disconnect from scientific development in Biafra by the Nigerian Government

Due to the lack of a convincing war arsenal, Ojukwu mobilised local scientists and charged them to use their scientific ingenuity to research and develop both conventional and unconventional weapons. Armed with this mandate, the scientists, who were drawn from universities, ministries, private companies, polytechnics, technical and even secondary schools, set out to work in what was termed initially the "Science Group". The Science Group was officially inaugurated in Enugu in June 1967, after the proclamation of the Republic of Biafra (Arene 1987, p. 29 cited by Mbachu, 2006, pp. 13–14). As the war loomed, the various "Science Groups" were merged together into what was later known as the "Research and Production (RAP) Directorate" in Enugu in June 1967, headed by the Late Major Emmanuel Ifeajuna (Tedheke, 2007, p. 274).

They manufactured a most dreaded homemade mine, christened “Ogbunigwe”, plus rockets, rifles, pistols and, above all, the Biafran “Red Devil” armoured tanks. The strategic role played by these physical scientists in the Biafran war effort cannot be downplayed. However, it is unfortunate that Nigeria missed the opportunity of “capturing” and utilising Biafran scientific wizardry. This is regrettable because Nigerian indigenous technology would likely have developed greatly if the scientific achievements of the Biafran scientists could have been well harnessed and nurtured (Tedheke, 2007, p. 278). This could probably have launched Nigeria into the world stage of technological and industrial development.

Conclusion

The uneasy political climate in Nigeria, beginning with the 15 January, 1966 coup, finally culminated in a three-year bloody war that took place from July, 1967 to January, 1970. The two parties to the war were the Federal Government of Nigeria, whose aim was to defend Nigeria’s national unity and territorial integrity, and the secessionist Eastern Region of Nigeria, christened ‘The Republic of Biafra’, a new polity that fought essentially to defend its right to self-determination. Though the territorial integrity and political map of the country remained unaltered at the end of the war, it did so at a terrific cost. About two million lives were lost while property worth millions of naira was destroyed.

The above summary explains how the historical narrative of the Nigerian civil war and its aftermath is full of extraordinary contradictions. Without necessarily repeating the gains and losses of the war, which are addressed in the body of the paper, it is apt to run a brief commentary on three salient contradictions involved in the war. In the first instance, Biafra fought essentially in search of security. It meant to secure the Igbos against annihilation and extermination. Ironically, instead of security, Biafra suffered widespread death and displacement. The mortality rate was so high that there were cries of genocide against the FGN. Infants, toddlers, teenagers, pregnant and nursing mothers were not spared in the craze of wanton killing. Many children became orphans just as most women and some men became widows and widowers. Importantly, a majority of the Biafran population was displaced. Life became difficult after the war as most of the survivors lost their sources of livelihood and their bread winners to the war. It is a tale of woes for Biafrans in the aftermath of the war. The level of insecurity that pervaded the Eastern region after the war was worse than could be imagined.

On the side of the FGN, the government declared war against Biafra to restore the unity of the country. The reality on ground after the war, however, is that fear, mutual distrust and suspicion and hatred have permeated inter-ethnic relations in Nigeria since the end of hostilities. As a matter of fact, after five decades since the war came to an end, national unity and integration are not yet in sight. At best, one may say that it is still on the agenda for the future.

Furthermore, instead of the optimistic outcomes that the FGN predicted as a result of the preservation of territorial integrity, what the Nigerian nation-state obtained was a surfeit of persistent religious, inter-communal and inter-ethnic conflicts. Similarly, threats of secession by some nationalities have become part of the nation’s political landscape. An accurate representation of the state of affairs is provided by Oriaku (2002, p. 49) when he states that “the war may have ended, but the nation is still ill at ease and has not ‘quite survived the peace’”.

We would like to finish by echoing the view of Bishop David Oyedepo, as cited in Ayuba & Okafor (2015, p. 79): “War is a sucker. It has the capacity for sucking the resources of nations... it erodes human dignity, destroys and devastates mankind”. On the contrary, peace is priceless and its blessings are unquantifiable. In this wise, the elders of Nigeria must convey the horror, pain and agony of the 1967-1970 war to the younger generation so as to avoid the errors of our past. Nigerian ethnic nationalities should embrace peace.

References

- Abubakar, D. (2002). The North and the Nigerian Civil War. In Osaghae, E.E., Onwudiwe, E., & Suberu, R.T. (Eds.), *The Nigerian civil war and its aftermath*. Ibadan: John Archers.
- Achebe, C. (2012). *There was a country*. London: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Adejumobi, S., & Aderemi, A. (2002). Oil and the political economy of the Nigerian civil war and its aftermath. In Osaghae, E.E, Onwudiwe, E. & Suberu, R.T. (Eds.), *The Nigerian civil war and its aftermath*. Ibadan: John Archers.
- Ademoyega, A. (1991). *Why we struck: The story of the first Nigerian coup*. Ibadan: Evans Brothers Nigeria Publishers Ltd.
- Aderinwale, A. (2005). Civil society and the fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. In Ayissi, A. and Sall, I. (Eds.), *Combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in West Africa: Handbook for the training of armed and security forces*. Geneva, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR).
- Afinotan, L.A., & Ojakorotu, V. (2014). Threat to Nigeria since 1960: A retrospection. *Canadian Social Science*, 10 (5). Retrieved August 27, 2017 from CS Canada Journals database.
- Agwuele, A.O. (2002). Military occupation, the national question and the rise of ethnic nationalism. In Falola, T. (Ed.), *Twentieth century Nigeria*. Durham, N. C.: Carolina Academic Press.
- Akinseye-George, Y. (2002). Self-determination in international law and the Biafran experiences. In Osaghae, E. E., Onwudiwe, E. & Suberu, R.. T. (Eds.), *The Nigerian civil war and its aftermath*. Ibadan: John Archers.
- Akresh, R., Bhalotra, S., Leone, M., & Osili, U. O. (2012). *War and stature: Growing up during the Nigerian civil war*. American Economic Review: papers & Proceedings. 102 (3), 273–277. <https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.102.3.273>
- Albert, I.O. (2002). The myth, reality and challenges of Nigeria's reconciliation with Ndigbo. In Osaghae, E. E., Onwudiwe, E. & Suberu, R.. T. (Eds.), *The Nigerian civil war and its aftermath*. Ibadan: John Archers.
- Alli, M.C. (2001). *The Federal Republic of Nigerian Army: The siege of a nation*. Lagos: Malthouse Press Ltd.
- Amuwo, K. (1995). General Babangida, civil society and the military in Nigeria: Anatomy of a personal rulership project. Bordeaux: Centre d'étude d'Afrique noire.
- Anthony, D. (2014). 'Ours is a war of survival': Biafra, Nigeria and arguments about genocide, 1966–70. *Journal of Genocide Research*, 16, 205–225. Retrieved August 27, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623528.2014.936701>
- Aremu, J.O. (2014). Ghana's role in the Nigerian civil war: Mediator or collaborator? *International Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies*, 1(3), 51–60. Retrieved August 27, 2017 from the IJHCS Journals database.
- Aremu, J.O. (2012). Understanding the role of ethnic militia groups in the Niger Delta conflict: 1999 – 2007. *ELA: Journal of African Studies*, 31 & 32. Retrieved August 27, 2017 from the ELA Online database.
- Arene, E. (1987). *The Biafran Scientists: The development of African indigenous technology*. Kuru: National Institute for Policy and Strategy Studies.
- Atofarati, A.A. (1992). The Nigerian civil war: Causes, strategies and lessons learnt. <http://www.dawodu.com.atofaratiI>. Retrieved August 27, 2017 from the GlobalSecurity.org online database.
- Ayoade, J.A.A. (2010). Nigeria: positive pessimism and negative optimism. *Valedictory Lecture*. Delivered on 17 September, 2010 at the University of Ibadan, Ibadan.

- Ayuba, C. & Okafor, G. (2015). The role of small arms and light weapons proliferation in African conflicts. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 9(3). n.p. Retrieved August 27, 2017 from the SSRN Journals database. <https://doi.org/10.5897/AJPSIR2014.0750>
- Badmus, I.A. (2009). Under reconstruction: Ethnicity, ethnic nationalism, and the future of the Nigerian State. *Law and Politics in Africa, Asia and Latin America*, 42(2). Retrieved August 27, 2017 from the JSTOR Online Journals database.
- Chuku, G. I. (2002). Biafra women under fire: Strategies in organising local and trans-border trade during the Nigerian civil war. In Osaghae, E. E., Onwudiwe, E. & Suberu, R. T. (Eds.), *The Nigerian civil war and its aftermath*. Ibadan: John Archers.
- Cockayne, J., Mikulaschek, C., and Perry, C. (2010). *The United Nations Security Council and Civil War: First Insights from a New Dataset*. New York: International Peace Institute, September.
- Cohen, E. A. (2015). Strategy Military. Online at www.britannica.com/topic/strategy.m Retrieved March 8, 2016 from the Britannica Online database.
- Crest News, Nigeria*. (2017). Re: Joint position paper by The Arewa Citizens Action for Change, Arewa Youth Consultative Forum, Arewa Youth Development Foundation, Arewa Students Forum and Northern Emancipation Network on the Igbo Persistence for secession. 9 June.
- Cronje, S. (1972). *The World and Nigeria: The Diplomatic History of Biafran War 1967–1970*. London: Sidgwick and Jackson.
- Davies, P.E. (1995). Use of propaganda in civil war: the Biafra experience. Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, The London School of Economics and Political Science, University of London.
- Decker, Tunde. (2016). Media and the diplomacy of desperation: An appraisal of Ekwensi's Biafra. Unpublished draft article.
- Doyle, M. W., and Sambanis, N. (2006). *Making war and building peace: United Nations Peace Operations*. Princeton: Princeton UP.
- Duruji, M. M. (2010). Ethnic militias and sub-nationalism in Nigeria: A comparative study of MASSOB and OPC. Unpublished Long Essay, Covenant University, Ota.
- Elaigwu, J. I. (2005). *Nigeria: yesterday and today for tomorrow*. Jos: Aha Publishing House.
- Ezeji-Okoye, K. (2009). Political, economic and cultural rationales for state creation in Nigeria. Unpublished Ph.D Thesis. Clark University, Atlanta, USA.
- Falola, T., & Genova, A. (2009). *Historical dictionary of Nigeria*. New York: Scarecrow Press, Inc.
- Falola, T., & Heaton, M. (2008). *A history of Nigeria*. New York: Cambridge UP. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511819711>
- Forsyth, F. (2001). *The Biafra story: the making of an African Legend*. London: Leo Copper.
- Gailey, H.A., Jr.. (1972). *History of Africa: From 1800 to Present*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Gersovitz, M., and Kriger, N. (2013). What is a civil war? A critical review of its definition and (Econometric) consequences. *The World Bank Research Observer*, 28(2). <https://doi.org/10.1093/wbro/lkt005>
- Gilbert, L. D. (2013). Ethnic militancy in Nigeria: A comparative re-appraisal of three major ethnic militias in southern Nigeria. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)* 17(6), 1–9. Retrieved 27 August 2017 from the IOSR Journals database.
- Harnischfeger, J. (2012). Nigeria civil war and Igbo nationalism. IAS/FRA Distinguished Personality Lecture Series, 26th March. Retrieved August 27, 2017 from the IFRA Journals database.

- Ihunna, O.I. (2002). The post-civil war Igbo integration question: Between rhetoric and realism. In Osaghae, E.E, Onwudiwe, E. & Suberu, R.T. (Eds.), *The Nigerian civil war and its aftermath*. Ibadan: John Archers.
- Ikime, O. (2002). The Nigerian civil war and the national question: A historical analysis. In Osaghae, E. E., Onwudiwe, E. & Suberu, R. T. (Eds.), *The Nigerian civil war and its aftermath*. Ibadan: John Archers.
- Inyang, E. E. (2013). A task that must be done: Issues on the federalists' visual propaganda in Nigerian civil war. Programme of African Studies, Northwestern University. Evanston IL USA. Working Paper Number 23. Available online @ www.africanstudies.northwestern.edu/publications-research/working-papers.html Retrieved August 27, 2017 from Northwestern University Working Papers database.
- Kalyvas, S.N. (2006). *The logic of violence in civil war*. New York: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511818462>
- Kieh, George K. (2002). Civil wars in Africa: Now and then. In Osaghae, E.E, Onwudiwe, E. & Suberu, R.T. (Eds.), *The Nigerian civil war and its aftermath*. Ibadan: John Archers.
- Leadership Newspaper*. (2012). (Abuja) 4 June. Retrieved August 27, 2017 from the Leadership.ng database.
- LIFE*. (1968, July 12). The 1968 exhibit: Starving children of Biafran war. Retrieved August 27, 2017 from the 1968exhibit.org database.
- Madiebo, A.A. (1980). *The Nigerian revolution and the Biafran war*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension.
- Mainasara, A. M. (1982). *The five majors: Why they struck*. Zaria: Hudahuda.
- Mohammed, L., Ibrahim, I. and Alli, H. (2016, November 4). Nigerian porous borders remain sources of arms trafficking –Sociologist. *Nigerian Tribune*. Retrieved August 27, 2017 from the NT General News Online database.
- Murray, S. (2007, May 30). Reopening Nigeria's civil war wounds. Retrieved August 27, 2017 from the BBC News website.
- New Nigerian Newspaper*. (1970, 13 January). Retrieved August 27, 2017 from the NNN Online database.
- Niven, S.R. (1970). *The war of Nigerian unity, 1967-70*. Ibadan: Evans Brothers Nigeria.
- Noser, I. (1975). *To build a Nigerian nation*. Deron Authur H. Stockwell Ltd.
- Nte, N.D. (2011). The changing patterns of small and light weapons (SALW) proliferation and the challenges of national security in Nigeria. *Global Journal of African Studies*, 1(1): 5–23. Retrieved August 27, 2017 from the GJAS Journal Online database.
- Nwankwo, A.A. (1974). *Nigeria: The challenges of Biafra, 2nd edition*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension.
- Nwolise, O.B.C. (2002). The effects of the civil war on the Nigerian military. In Osaghae, E.E, Onwudiwe, E. & Suberu, R.T. (Eds.), *The Nigerian civil war and its aftermath*. Ibadan: John Archers.
- Obasanjo, O. (1971). *My command: An account of the Nigerian civil war, 1967-70*. London: Heinemann.
- Ojeleye, O. (2016). *The politics of post-war demobilisation and reintegration in Nigeria*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Ojukwu, C.C. (2002). Between relegation and reintegration: The Igbo nation in post-civil war Nigeria. In Osaghae, E.E, Onwudiwe, E. & Suberu, R.T. (Eds.), *The Nigerian civil war and its aftermath*. Ibadan: John Archers.
- Ojukwu, O. (1969). *Biafra: selected speeches and random thoughts*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Okafor, N.W. (2014). Victimization during the Nigerian civil war: A focus on the Asaba Massacre. Unpublished M.Sc. Thesis, Tilburg University.

- Okeke, V.O.S., & Oji, R.O. (2014). The Nigerian state and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the northern part of Nigeria. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 4(1). <https://doi.org/10.5901/jesr.2014.v4n1p415>
- Oko, O. (1998). Partition or perish: Restoring social equilibrium in Nigeria through reconstruction. *Indiana International and Comparative Law Review*, 8(2). Retrieved 27 August 2017 from the IICLR Online database.
- Okocha, E. (2010). *Blood on the Niger: The first black-on-black genocide. The untold story of the Asaba massacre during the Nigeria-Biafra war*. New York: Gomsam Books.
- Olukotun, Ayo (2002). The Media and the Nigerian civil war: An overview. In Osaghae, E.E., Onwudiwe, E. and Suberu, R.T. (Eds.), *The Nigerian civil war and its aftermath*. Ibadan: John Archers.
- Oluleye, J.J. (1985). *Military leadership in Nigeria, 1966–1979*. Ibadan: University Press.
- Onu, G. (2002). The east and civil war. In Osaghae, E.E, Onwudiwe, E. & Suberu, R.T. (Eds.), *The Nigerian civil war and its aftermath*. Ibadan: John Archers.
- Onumonu, U.P. & Anutanwa, P.O. (2017). Rethinking the impact of Nigerian civil war: commerce in the post-civil war Nnewi and its challenges, 1970–2000. *Mgbokoigba Journal of African Studies*, 6(2). Retrieved August 27, 2017 from the MJAS Online Journals database.
- Onyeoziri, F. (2002). What caused the Nigerian civil war. In Osaghae, E.E, Onwudiwe, E. & Suberu, R.T. (Eds.), *The Nigerian civil war and its aftermath*. Ibadan: John Archers.
- Oriaku, R. (2002). Continuing the civil war by other means: Points of view in selected Nigerian civil war memoirs. In Osaghae, E.E, Onwudiwe, E. & Suberu, R.T. (Eds.), *The Nigerian civil war and its aftermath*. Ibadan: John Archers.
- Osadolor, O. B. (2002). The historiography of the Nigerian civil war, 1967–1970. In Osaghae, E.E, Onwudiwe, E. & Suberu, R.T. (Eds.), *The Nigerian civil war and its aftermath*. Ibadan: John Archers.
- Osaghae, E.E. (1991). The status of state governments in Nigeria's federalism: A Study of the changing phases. *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, 52(2) (April–June). Retrieved August 27, 2017 from the IJPS Online database.
- Oyetimi, K. (2016, November 4). Proliferation of arms: A growing national malady. *Nigerian Tribune*. Retrieved August 27, 2017 from the Tribuneonline Online database.
- Sahara Reporters. (2017, June 6). Northern youths declare war on Igbos in the north, ask them to 'leave' within three months.
- Tedheke, M.E.U. (2007). A political economy explanation of the Nigerian civil war. Unpublished PhD Thesis, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
- Umoru-Onuka, A.O. (2002). An evaluation of the Nigerian civil war: The case of Kogi Central. In Osaghae, E.E, Onwudiwe, E. & Suberu, R.T. (Eds.), *The Nigerian civil war and its aftermath*. Ibadan: John Archers.
- Uwechue, R. (2004). *Reflections on the Nigerian civil war*. London: Trafford Publishing.
- Uzokwe, A. O (2003). *Surviving in Biafra*. Lincoln, NE: iUniverse.
- Vanguard Newspaper. (2014, October 19). Gowon's commitment during civil war kept Nigeria one – Jonathan. Retrieved August 27, 2017 from the Vanguard Online database.
- Williams, I. (2002). The Nigerian civil war: A lesson in breakdown of democratic control of the military and military professionalism. In Osaghae, E.E, Onwudiwe, E. & Suberu, R.T. (Eds.), *The Nigerian civil war and its aftermath*. Ibadan: John Archers.
- Yacubu, J.G. (2005). Cooperation among armed forces and security forces in combating the proliferation of small arms. In Ayissi, A and Sall, I (Eds.), *Combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in West Africa: Handbook for the training of armed*

and security forces, Geneva, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR).

Corresponding author: Johnson Olaosebikan Aremu

Contact email: johnsonolaosebikan@gmail.com

