

## Haunts and Specters in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s Biafran (Re)visitations

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### ABSTRACT

*Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie writes about the Nigeria-Biafra war and its effect on the Igbo in more than one novel in her oeuvre, which is written entirely in English as a cosmopolitan Nigerian diasporic author currently residing in the United States of America. In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Adichie memorializes the intellectual and artistic culture of Nsukka before and during the Nigeria-Biafra war. This article postulates that the seed for this bestselling novel is also evident in the play *For Love of Biafra*, penned by Adichie in her teens. This English-language play focuses directly on the effects of the Nigeria-Biafra war upon the personal life of the protagonist, Adaobi. I examine the manner in which the play demonstrates the function of memory upon second-generation descendants of the Nigeria-Biafra War survivors by examining the impact of postmemory through the lens of Derridean hauntology which I have expanded as a postcolonial feminine hauntology, examining the manner in which the specters of Biafra are conjured in Adichie’s Biafran texts. I connect this to the ways in which Adichie’s narration of the Nigeria-Biafra war evolves in *Half of a Yellow Sun* to problematize the question of who may witness, bear testimony and author narrative. The article’s findings tie the act of narration to empowerment, identification, the experience of trauma to unearth the myriad ways in which the specter of the Nigeria-Biafra war is recreated in fictions by second-generation diasporic and cosmopolitan authors such as Adichie.*

*Keywords: Post-memory; postcolonial literature; Nigeria-Biafra war; Biafran haunting; postcolonial feminine hauntology*

### INTRODUCTION

Haunting and conjuring are related concepts that are integral to the act of writing back to events of collective cultural trauma. The diasporic Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s novels and the one play of her oeuvre are haunted with the ghosts of the Nigeria-Biafra War. A multiply bestselling author and popular speaker who has appeared in a wide range of formats from TED talks, to CNN to a cameo on a Beyonce song, Adichie is an author whose widespread success has become a cultural phenomenon. She has stirred both acclaim and controversy with her views on feminism both through her essay “We Should All Be Feminists” (2014) and through various interviews. Like many of the middle-class in postcolonial Nigeria, Adichie counts English as one of her main languages. Her memories of an intellectual English-speaking intelligentsia in Biafra suffuse her most famous work to date, *Half of a Yellow Sun*. However, there are seeds of what I term a Biafran haunting in Adichie’s first work, *For Love of Biafra*. *For Love of Biafra* is a play that represents a second-generation testimony of the events that occurred during the Nigeria-Biafra War. Subsequently, I investigate *For Love of Biafra* as a dramaturgical testimony of Adichie’s Biafran memories. The Biafran haunting is a method via which I have chosen to reframe Marianne Hirsch’s theories of transgenerational haunting. I connect transgenerational haunting to the impact of the Nigeria-Biafra War upon second generation survivors. To augment this investigation, I deploy Jacques Derrida’s discussions on spectrality and hauntology in *Specters of Marx* as a theoretical apparatus aimed at understanding both the act of conjuring and the specters of the war and its attendant traumas in *For Love of Biafra*. *For Love of Biafra* remains a crucial document for understanding the dimensions of haunting in relation to

Biafra. Following from this, I utilise a feminist treatment of Derridean hauntology offered by Nancy J. Holland (2001) who expertly unpacks the Derridean specter through three ruptures that position the Derridean specter against the daughter, rather than the son (p. 65). Expanding upon Holland's ruptures, I construct a postcolonial feminine treatment of Derridean hauntology against Marianne Hirsch's writings on the interlaced subjects of post-memory and transgenerational haunting in my analysis of Adichie's texts, which I read as intergenerational acts of conjuring a traumatic past in order to confront its specters. My approach to post-memory abuts the work of Paul Ricoeur in relation to narrative and time – as I am interested in the memory-processing and archiving work that happens within literary texts. Following from the central theoretical concern of my study, this article analyses the haunted textualities of the play, reading it against the specters that are also present within Adichie's novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, interrogating the specters of past events which appear within her texts. The works studied in this article are specifically set before, during and after the Nigerian-Biafra war (6 July 1967 – 15 January 1970).

*For Love of Biafra* contains a prototype of the relationships found within *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Both narratives situated in the Biafra heartland of Nsukka connect to second-person inherited accounts from Adichie's own family. John C. Hawley writes that Adichie was born in Nsukka in 1977, and that her father was the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Nigeria at Nsukka (p. 18). Her family members experienced the atrocities before, during, and after the formation of the state of Biafra and those memories are conjured in Adichie's works. Both the novel and the play memorialize and revisit the events before, during and after the war, through the perspective of a second-generation survivor of the war and horrors that raged across Igboland. Egodi Uchendu notes that Igboland encompasses a "southeast geopolitical zone, comprising Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo States" (2010, p. 63). This zone is "predominantly Christian" (p. 65). The division of Nsukka which is the setting for more than one of Adichie's works is "situated in the extreme north of Igboland, was created in the 1920s" and is the "closest part of Igboland to northern Nigeria, where Islam has been the dominant religion since the jihad of 1804" (Uchendu p. 65). This geographical demarcation of Igboland's borders and its proximity to the Hausa state is important in order to understand where the Hausa Muslims are located in relation to the Igbo Christians in Nsukka.

Adichie, in tackling the Nigeria-Biafra War structured her narrative based on the memories of other writers as well as that of her parents and relatives (p. 435). Memory shapes Adichie's intimate awareness of events, and her fictive representations of Biafra underscore the fact that no information is conveyed whole and linear to the reader or even the inheritor or a memory. In a Q&A on her official website, Adichie avers that she knew she would always write a novel about Biafra, adding that at the age of 16, she had written "an awfully melodramatic play called *For Love of Biafra*", of which she is not particularly proud. While not many authors are proud of their juvenilia, I strongly believe that the play has great value as a document of transgenerational haunting and witnessing.

Hawley writes that the Igbo effort to create an independent nation, Biafra, separate from the nation-construct of Nigeria engineered by the British became one of the contributing factors leading to the Nigeria-Biafra War (p. 16). Hawley avers that only "time and art" can better facilitate the healing process from the traumas of war (p. 16). In focusing on the characters and their moral choices in both the studied play and the novel, Adichie brings verisimilitude to the act of conjuring up an inherited past. However, Adichie's narrative focus and point of view does not dilute the horrors of the war for the reader. Rather, her personalized narratives, the juxtaposition of nostalgia of the past with post-Biafran horror adds both to the pathos and the painful awareness that what is fractured will remain fractured.

In writing back to her ghosts, Adichie enters the discussion as a conjuror, an invoker of a past in which her protagonists make difficult choices, flawed choices which are important in furthering both a personal destiny and that of the collective. I read the characters in both the play and the novel as being specters of a past trauma that Adichie has inherited, and which she projects onto the page in order to engage with the past. As such, a careful juxtaposition of the characters that inhabit *For Love of Biafra* and *Half of a Yellow Sun* reveal the ways in which the spectrality of Adichie's texts in relation to the Biafran haunting evolved. In order to understand the ways in which Adichie's maturing voice reconstructs the events surrounding the Nigeria-Biafra War, it is important to look at her earliest published work, *For Love of Biafra*. Although Adichie speaks of the play dismissively, (most authors are their worst critics), *For Love of Biafra* is an important historical testimony from a second-generation survivor, and it is a text saturated with transgenerational haunting. In *For Love of Biafra*, the glimmerings of what Adichie would flesh out in *Half of a Yellow Sun* may be discerned -- the intellectual culture of Nsukka before the war. At its heart, *For Love of Biafra* questions (and subsequently problematizes) the ways in which a woman may stand up for her people in the wake of terrible oppression and genocide.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### BIAFRA, POSTMEMORY AND TRANSGENERATIONAL HAUNTING

In a 2014 article in *The New Yorker*, Adichie (2014) comments that history haunts her. More specifically, Adichie is haunted by the history of the Nigeria-Biafra War even though she was “born seven years after it ended, and did not experience any material deprivations,” possessing, “a bicycle, dolls, books” (par. 1). This war existed in the margins of her consciousness, but also directly affected the consciousness of family members who lived through the harrowing ordeal (par.1). The haunting of history in turn haunts the text(s) of Adichie's *oeuvre* as an act of third-party witnessing and a collective trauma that she inherits. The Nigeria-Biafra war, Adichie writes, is still “wrapped in a formal silence”, one that ensures that there are no “major memorials” and that this event of genocide and mass trauma is not taught in schools (par.3). Oral testimony renders an event far more powerful than any formal retellings, and this is observable in the relatively raw manifestation of Adichie's Biafran haunting in the play. In talking about the censorship faced by the movie adaptation of *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Adichie says:

Many of Nigeria's present problems are, arguably, consequences of an ahistorical culture. As a child, I sometimes found rusted bullets in our garden, reminders of how recent the war had been. My parents are still unable to talk in detail about certain war experiences. The past is present, and we are better off acknowledging it and, hopefully, learning from it. (par. 6)

There were already tensions in a multi-ethnic Nigeria prior to the Nigeria-Biafra War, tensions which Adichie highlights in *For Love of Biafra*. Matthew Leczmar writes that in 1966, a military coup occurred, resulting in the overthrowing of the government led by Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (p. 113). This paved the way towards sectarian strife and the persecution of the Igbo people (Leczmar, p. 113). Nigeria was already a political hotbed of tension between the Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba and other groups within it owing to the divide and conquer modus operandi perpetuated by British Empire on more than one colonized state. Naturally, the situation rapidly escalated. Huge numbers of Igbo were

massacred and the ferment of emotions and Igbo nationalism led to the Igbo declaration of secession from the Nigerian Government:

On May 30, 1967, Lieutenant Colonel Odumegwu-Ojukwu (1933–2011), the governor of the largely Igbo eastern region, proclaimed the state's secession from the Federal Republic of Nigeria under the banner of "the Republic of Biafra" (Odumegwu-Ojukwu).  
(Lecznar, p. 113)

The impact of the Nigeria-Biafra War is conjured in more than one literary work by a transnational Nigerian author. Chris Abani's *A Song for Night* for instance, is a haunting, Gothic perspective of the child Igbo soldiers conscripted during the war, these soldiers also are represented in Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Many of young Igbo men and boys were pressganged into service, and died defending Biafra. However, there are older texts that evoke Biafra, such as Chukwuemeka Ike's *Sunset at Dawn*, Flora Nwapa's *Never Again*, and Buchi Emecheta's *Destination Biafra*. Adichie (2006) credits Ike and Nwapa's books specifically in the afterword of *Half of a Yellow Sun*, saying that they were "indispensable in creating the mood of middle-class Biafra" (p. 435).

Adichie's Biafran hauntings comprise multilayered testimonies from photographed memories (p. 436), to literary texts, to the testimonies of her own family members. These collective memories represent what Marianne Hirsch (2012) defines as a "transgenerational haunting" which is connected to postmemory (p. 22). Hirsch (2012) writes that postmemory is "a powerful and very particular form of memory precisely because its connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection but through an imaginative investment and creative" (p. 22). Hirsch notes that this does not mean that "memory itself is unmediated, but that it is more directly connected to the past" (p. 22). Hirsch further avers that postmemory "characterizes the experience of those who grow up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose own belated stories are evacuated by the stories of the previous generation shaped by traumatic events that can be neither understood nor recreated" (p. 22). Hirsch's statement is particularly relevant to Adichie's Biafran writings primarily because she writes about Biafra through inherited memories. These include the memory of her relatives and from the various portrayals of Biafra and the Nigeria-Biafra War in both literary accounts and in oral testimonies. The process of understanding and negotiating this aporia between generations takes time. Time also contributes to a kind of temporal spatiality – the distance between the survivors and their descendants in the apprehending of an event.

Postmemory as defined by Hirsch bears a strong relationship with Paul Ricoeur's (1984) observations in *Time and Narrative, Volume 3* concerning the intersections of history and memory. Ricoeur (1984) introspects that an "ancestor's memory partly intersects with his descendant's memories" (p. 114). He further holds that the intersection between those memories is "produced in a common present that itself can present every possible degree, from the intimacy of a we-relationship to the anonymity of a newspaper clipping" (p. 114). The "ancestral narrative" therefore acts as "a relay station for memory directed to the historical past" (p. 114). I connect Ricoeur's construction of "ancestral memory" to inherited testimonies. Based on this passage it is apparent that Ricoeur reads individual memory as a microcosm of ancestral memory. It is also apparent that *Time and Narrative* precedes Hirsch's postmemory in anticipating this connection. One may connect the act of memory retention for instance, with the act of archiving multiple sources and testimonies from the literary artifact to newspaper accounts. Degrees of fiction exist in each, in the same way human memories are loose nebulae of impressions, sensations, recollections, and of dreams and nightmares. This phenomenon is amplified when a nexus of mass trauma occurs, such as the genocidal horrors of the

Nigeria-Biafra War and is reproduced in fiction. As such, literary documents such as *For Love of Biafra* become part and parcel of the layers of archives which constitute “ancestral memory”.

What do these acts of memory retention and collection mean for individual identity? Perhaps one may connect identity with the memory of experience. For instance, Obi Nwakanma writes that the “the work of contemporary Igbo novelists delineate a “difference between “collective identity” and “autonomous subjectivity”—the dimensions of what Partha Charterjee describes as the inner and outer realms of cultural experience” (p. 10). The tensions between collective identity and individual imperatives is very much evident for instance, in *For Love of Biafra*, resolving when Adaobi gives up her individual desires out of a loyalty to a state that has been dissolved by the war. Nwakanma writes that Adichie used the medium of the novel to reflect the fatalities of postcolonial power politics” in relation to the Nigeria-Biafra war, particularly its” implication for the Igbo in their relationship with the postcolonial state” (p. 11). Nwakanma adds that the ‘mode of the novel is useful’ particularly because of ‘its unique capacity to carry the burden of the modern national epic’ (p. 11). However, it is also important to consider the dramaturgical implications of *For Love of Biafra* – it reflects in a considerably rawer format the postcolonial power politics that come into play particularly in relation to racial affiliations. Nwakanma reiterates that third generation writers who are diasporic and who write in-between the boundaries of place and time “experience inevitable alienation, and through their writings, they claim a space” (p. 10). The space claimed by Adichie’s narratives are a kind of embodied memory, reflecting the melancholy encoded by the awareness of one’s self. In so doing, the narratives both reconstruct and deconstruct identity.

A separation between public and personal experience is often impossible during the aftermath of a mass-experienced tragedy. History, Hirsch asserts, is encapsulated within acts of recall, acts of memory, and acts of testimony. History may exist in public documents or in a play penned by a highly intelligent teenaged playwright steeped in oral testimonies and visual reminders of a traumatic past she inherited. By re-writing this history, Adichie conjures it and in a sense, bears witness to it during the retelling.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### TESTIMONY, SPECTRALITY, HAUNTOLOGY

In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida (1993) writes that to bear witness is to “bear witness to what we are insofar as we inherit, and that – here is the circle, here is the chance, or the finitude – we inherit the very thing that allows us to bear witness to it” (p. 68). Although this may read as opaque, Derrida underscores the heart of hauntology: both the apprehending of the specter of inheritance (haunt) and one’s base ontology as the haunted. He connects the act of being haunted to the act of witnessing. Witnessing therefore becomes a primal component of individual ontology. I read this as a powerful counterpoint to Hirsch’s writings on transgenerational haunting primarily because a transgenerational haunting connects to transgenerational witnessing. Derrida (1993) observes that the specter relates to “the frequency of a certain visibility” (p. 125). This visibility is that of “the invisible”, a visibility that is not in fact “seen” (p. 125). This is why Derrida maintains that the specter remains “beyond the phenomenon or beyond being” (p. 125). One way in which authors who are inheritors of these specters of collective memory bring these phenomena through life is through the act of reading. Julian Wolfreys observes that the act of reading equates

with bearing “witness to the existence of something other, which is neither ‘read into’ the text nor of the text itself in any simple fashion” (p. xiii). Wolfreys therefore addresses the incommensurability of the text in reproducing actual events. Textuality adds a different layer to the haunting caused by historical events. Wolfreys writes that we cannot actually resolve “the problem of haunting” because “the figures of the text remain and return as held in suspension, so they also suspend our ability to read them” (pp. xiii-xiv). Wolfreys enunciates that these ghosts which haunt texts evoke actual events, but they also defy and in many ways abrogate any ability to read them – they result from the conjuring of events that have happened before our time. In such a manner, spectrality “has a life of its own”, or a kind of “afterlife” (Wolfreys, p. 21). This is an afterlife “which is other than the sense of propriety inscribed in the conventionality of ‘own-ness’” (p. 21). Wolfreys reiterates that spectrality brings to light “aesthetic and phenomenal judgement” as well as interpretation, which are captured and traced by “phantom effects” even as they haunt “the material, the ideological, the political, the biographical, the formal, the historical, if not the very idea of history itself” (pp. 21-22). Katy Shaw (2018) comments that the first rule of hauntology, “does not focus on the specter at all” but primarily “underscores the responsibility of the haunted subject to welcome, and speak to, the specter” (p. 9). Shaw in reciting Derrida avers that living with ghosts imbues upon the haunted subject “a sense of obligation” (p.9). This obligation however is predicated upon androcentric terms and must also be seen from a wider, more global perspective.

It is important to situate hauntology not just from a postcolonial anti-imperialistic context but from the context of postcolonial feminism which is forever caught between competing imperatives. For instance, Gayatri Spivak (1994) writes that the relationship between “women and silence can be plotted by women itself”, speaking of the epistemic violence of imperialism which confines a woman both in relation to race and class within a phallogocentric tradition (p. 82). A way in which a postcolonial feminist may address this epistemic violence is by negotiating silences and ruptures through the study of hauntings, or hauntology. As such, I read Derridean hauntology as being pertinent to the postcolonial condition, particularly in relation to memory and trauma. Spectrality, as defined by Derrida is linked to the impact of Marx on society. This impact is symbolized by the visored specter of Hamlet's father. As such, Derrida's ghost or specter is markedly patriarchal and this aspect of hauntology requires careful interrogation before it is deployed in this analysis of *For Love of Biafra*. Holland (2001) is acutely aware of the reality that we are never free of the masculine when we consider the Derridean specter. She reads *Specters of Marx* off the death of her own father and positions three ruptures against Derridean hauntology. In so doing, she avers that Derrida's discussion on the specter and death moves from “father to son” and that this is fraught for the figure of the daughter, herself Othered by the perceptions of the specter (p. 65). Where, in this androcentric discourse is there room for women? Concomitantly, Holland asks, “what becomes of the daughter?” in Derridean hauntology, and what are “the duties and debts” that they engender (p.65). Holland's question of Derrida hinges on whether daughters are always “Other” in his version of spectrality. Holland talks about what the daughter inherits from the specter in relation to learning how to live. She also introspects:

[W]hat if the ghostly apparition that looks at us sees not we ourselves, we daughters as we are, but only its own ghost, the spectral image of what it wants to see, desires to see, must see when it looks at a female form? (p. 67)

The projection of the specter is a reverse conjuration, a way in which the ghost looks at the feminine and projects patriarchal imperatives upon the feminine subject. And so the daughter tries to shape herself into what Holland calls the father's "vision of the

eternal, idealized Woman he would have loved" (p. 67). This is what makes the specter a deeply polarizing figure for the haunted feminine subject, particularly since Derridean hauntology is sometimes imbricated with Derrida's notion of hospitality. Irinia Aristarkhova (2012) discusses Derridean hospitality in relation to femininity and motherhood, averring that in Derridean hospitality, the feminine is still Othered and is not part of the ontology of a primarily masculine hospitality (p. 169). Aristarkhova's excellent dispute on the terms of hospitality in relation to both Levinas and Derrida is relevant in my interrogations of hauntology and the act of welcoming the specter of collective history.

I propose a model of reading hauntology that I term "postcolonial feminine hauntology". My position is that Derridean hauntology is particularly fraught for the postcolonial feminine because of the way in which it intersects with the struggle for personal autonomy and agency. Spivak (1994) notes that the "double displacement" experienced by the postcolonial "subaltern" woman is also connected to a "masculine radicalism" which may have the impact of further silencing the subaltern woman (pp.90-91). From the perspective of a postcolonial feminine hauntology, opening oneself towards the presences of ghosts sometimes means eliding one's present autonomy, therefore in speaking to ghosts, the postcolonial feminine must transform herself from a receptacle of spectral imperatives. This fraught relationship may be clearly seen in relation to Adichie's conjuring of a Biafran past, because the destinies of her female protagonists are caught up within patriarchal imperatives – in *For Love of Biafra*, much rests upon Adaobi's need to be the good Igbo daughter. It is a need that Adichie in her later works thoroughly debunks, but the disappearing twin sister in *Half of a Yellow Sun* is also an achingly strong metaphor for the struggle of femininity against the weight of shared history. Therefore, I read this aspect of hauntology as being an integral part of the postcolonial feminine. Subsequently, I compare hauntology to the ways in which the female protagonists become subsumed within masculine constructions of identity in both of the studied texts.

However, it is also important to consider the connection between hauntology and memory. Memory defines the location of an event; this defines the linked to the manner in which the self relates itself to the outside world. Ricoeur explores the importance of memory within narrative in *Memory, History, Forgetting*. He writes that "to put it bluntly, we have nothing better than memory to signify that something has taken place, has occurred, as happened *before* we declare that we remember it" (p. 21). Hirsch (2012), on the other hand, writes that the term describes the relationship the "generation after" has with "the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before – to experiences, they "remember" only by means of the stories, images and behaviours among which they grew up" (p. 5). This relationship has a direct impact on the works of writers, artists, and poets who seek to conjure the recollection of these events.

The condition of post-memory is inherently spectral, containing the ghosts of others that is imbued upon the consciousness of preceding generations. Wolfreys suggests "spectrality has then a life of its own", adding that its afterlife is "both its own and not its own" because it is "other than the sense of propriety inscribed in the conventionality of 'own-ness'" (p. 21). Wolfrey builds on the Derridean hauntology in his argument. What is implicit here is, as Wolfrey argues, a "phenomenal judgement and interpretation" which are "traced by phantom effects, even as they haunt the material, the ideological, the political, the biographical...the very idea of history itself" (p. 21). This phenomenal judgement of the spectral is evident whenever a second generation author or creator reinterprets the past because self-selection is already at work in the process of creation.

Perhaps a form of ambivalence is evident in this re-creation of collective and

cultural identities. This ambivalence connects to the inherent conflicts and ambiguities of the postcolonial experience. For instance, Nwakanma observes that, “the ambivalent nature of the new postcolonial societies is evident” in the “traveling identities” of Nigerians in particular (p. 2). He notes that “the idea of the “Nigerian citizen” is quite often modulated by its embodying of competing or multiple identities of the “nation”” (p. 2). The complex and ambivalent nature of national identity is evident in Adichie’s construction of both Biafra and Nigeria within her novels. Memory is synonymous with identity and textuality for Adichie’s narrators; nowhere is this clearer than in *Half of a Yellow Sun* in which writing a testimony towards the impact of the atrocities that occurred during the Nigeria-Biafra War becomes as important as the events themselves. By speaking to the ghosts of Biafra, Adichie conjures the past through feminist lenses. As such, my postcolonial feminine hauntological reading of the texts addresses and engages with the postcolonial feminine subject who weaves in-between the imperatives of specters and of competing cultural allegiances.

## DISCUSSION

### RECONSTRUCTING BIAFRA ON THE STAGE

In *For Love of Biafra*, Adichie reconstructs the events leading up to the struggle for Igbo independence in the Biafra-Nigeria War, based on the memory of her relatives. *For Love of Biafra* underscores the intrinsic difference between the Igbo and Hausa mode of belief and contains strong statements about the position of *chi* within Igbo ontology. Uchendu (2010) writes that the Nigeria-Biafra wars conflicts resulted in more Muslim converts later in the Nsukka Division (pp. 63-64), but during the period in which Adichie situates her Biafran texts, the tensions between Islam and Christianity are very palpable and *For Love of Biafra* tackles this in a more direct and frank way than in *Half of a Yellow Sun*.

The clash between Igbo and Catholic beliefs with that of the Hausa Muslims is seen from a feminist perspective in the play. The dialectical difference between Igbo and Hausa is further complicated when one of the main Igbo characters, Adaobi wishes to marry Mohammed, a Hausa man. When Mohamed asks Papa Nduka for permission to marry her, he is refused. One of Papa Nduka’s many reasons to refuse this Igbo-Hausa union is the integrity of the Igbo *chi*. He says to her that “[o]ur tradition teaches that every human being has a personal *Chi* and it is not the will of your *Chi* that you marry this man” (p. 17). The above excerpt seems to indicate that Papa Nduka reads *Chi* as having an imperative claim over the woman’s biology. *Chi* determines who she should marry and determines her fate. Chinua Achebe notes that there are two different meanings to the word *chi*, firstly as a “god, guardian angel, soul, spirit double,” and secondly to identify “the transitional periods between day and night” which has a peculiarly temporal nature (p. 67). Achebe’s definition clearly outlines the importance of the concept of *Chi* in Igbo spirituality. Papa Nduka invokes a cultural and spiritual belief in order to ensure his daughter would adhere to the dictates of custom and culture. These beliefs eventually lead to a personal destiny that Adaobi herself invokes in the final act of the play and serves as a connection between Igbo belief and culture, with the important process of rehabilitation and healing after an event of mass trauma has ended.

MAMA NDUKA: I think you are angry because the war came between you and Mohammed, because you feel that he has to pay for all the atrocities his people committed.

ADAABI: Perhaps, I don't know. I will marry Nduoma Nwosu, Mama, I have made up my mind. He is rich, he will take care of us, you will not have to struggle so hard. Nduka will graduate soon but how many Ibos with good degrees get jobs these days? We can never live like we did when Papa was alive but Nduoma will make things easier for us.

Adaobi's decisions are not solely connected to her anger towards the Hausa. Her anger does not seem to be as strong an imperative as economic necessity. In her choice lies the true tragedy of the text, an inversion of the "star-crossed lovers" motif. She could have made the choice of going to Britain with Mohammed, but she instead decides to marry an Igbo man to ensure her family's economic and social security. It is a choice that even her mother protests, saying that her "whole life will be a sad song" (p. 110). I read a postcolonial feminine hauntology in these passages from *For Love of Biafra* primarily because Adichie is recreating a culture that is now lost in collective memory. She is also connecting the memory of Biafra to a peculiarly feminine perspective. The dialogue evokes older plays written in English by older Nigerian playwrights such as Zulu Sofola and Tess Onwueme. The fact that this play is an homage to a Biafra that is lost is underscored with Adaobi's empathetic final words in the play.

ADAABI: Yes, I love him. But I love Biafra more, always I will love Biafra more.  
*There are tears in Adaobi's eyes as she gets up and leaves.* (p. 110)

Adaobi's pronouncement is powerful and marks a choice made by a woman as young as the playwright who brought her to life. The power politics are evident in the depiction of interracial tensions between the Igbo and the Hausa prior to, during, and after the tragedies of the war. Adaobi's relationship with Mohammed is not the only way in which the play is one of the early canvases upon which Adichie recreates the specters of her personal Biafran haunting. The play is a cogent form of testimony. Biafra had not yet come into existence in first Act of the play when Adaobi was in love with Mohammed. Its specter is connected to the specter of Adaobi's father, a direct imperative to be loyal to its memory, to welcome it, to allow it to possess her in order to create a different Adaobi and as such, Adaobi is a fitting analogue to the daughter present in all three of Holland's ruptures (p. 67). The workings of time, linked to experience created an embedded narrative of Biafra – a temporary, idealized nation that was destined to leave a deep mark on the Igbo people, a haunting so entrenched that it ghosts along multiple narratives in various forms of media. Adaobi makes an important life decision based not just on the actual atrocities visited upon the Igbo by the Hausa, nor just on the pressing economic imperatives, but also because of her wish to keep alive the memories of Biafra.

Although the text of *For Love of Biafra* is young and relatively raw, there is much of value in the play particularly because it contains the perspective that matured and evolved into the magnum opus of *Half of a Yellow Sun*. The emotions that are juxtaposed with the news-like reporting of events leading up to and during the Nigeria-Biafra War and during said war further underscore the hauntological elements of the text. Much of this is anchored in Act 5 Scene III, which includes a transcript of General Effiong's radio speech:

Throughout history, injured people have had to resort to arms in their self-defence where peaceful negotiations fail. We are no exception. We took up arms because of the sense of insecurity generated in our people by the events of 1966. We have fought in defense of that cause [...] I am convinced now that a stop must be put to the bloodshed which is going on as a result of the war. I am also convinced that the suffering of our people must be brought to an immediate end. (p. 88)

Juxtaposing this historical speech with Adaobi's family's reaction to the speech heightens the drama and pathos of the scene. In so doing, Adichie revisits the events of Biafra, and through careful curation in her playtext, adds dimensions to the news reports:

*They listen in silence till the end. Adaobi starts to cry.*  
NEIGHBOUR: So it is over, so this war is over.  
MAMA NDUKA: And we lost.

(p. 89)

Adaobi's transformation is caused by the physical effects of the war. She cries at the pronouncement of the end of the war because she has lost so much – her pre-war identity, the people that she loves, and the love that she is about to reject because she is paying due diligence to the ghost of her father, a marker of Derridean spectrality – and the repercussions of heeding the requests of ghosts. Her rejection of Mohammed cannot bring back her cousin, her father, or the life they had before Biafra existed.

The discourse in *For Love of Biafra* highlights the fact that for Adaobi, her difficult choices exist because she is a woman, and feels the need to secure the continuity of the Igbo people by marrying an Igbo man whom she perceives as being able to look after her family, a choice that even her mother disputes (p.110). Adichie's specters therefore, are specters that belong to a peculiarly postcolonial feminine hauntology: a struggle between accepting the ghost of the father or speaking up against the manifold ghosts of patriarchy as may be seen in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. This reality experienced by the postcolonial woman, is one into which Spivak (1994) avers she disappears, caught between "tradition and modernization" and the aporia between the subject and the object (p. 102). The struggle may be seen the choices Adaobi see-saws between, and her final elision into the narrative of the Biafran haunting, which foregrounds the disappearance of Kainene in *Half of a Yellow Sun* (p. 433).

#### CONJURING GHOSTS: THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE BIAFRA NARRATIVE

Memory and time in *Half of a Yellow Sun* is rendered complex by the embedding of the past with the present, which creates hauntological resonances. These resonances are problematized from a feminist perspective because the women in the story are subsumed within different narratives of Biafra. The story of the Nigerian-Biafran War and the cultural, political and academic role Nsukka played in events are told via the eyes of the village-boy, Ugwu and the narrative introduces the twins Olanna and Kainene through his eyes. He is the implied and hidden narrator of the text that is embedded within *The World Was Silent When We Died* (p. 258). Hawley notes that Adichie seems to be making "an unspoken allusion to the conclusion of *Things Fall Apart*" (p. 433) with this novel-within-a-novel. *Half of a Yellow Sun* is a masterpiece of conjuring and is suffused with the ghosts of Nsukka and the hope implicit in the initial formation of the state of Biafra.

The novel revolves around the lives of Igbo characters deeply impacted by the Nigeria-Biafra War: the academic Odenigbo, his partner Olanna and her twin Kainene, Odenigbo's houseboy Ugwu who grows into a soldier. The narrative of the novel seems to infer that Richard, Kainene's partner, is the author of the Biafran narrative but this implication is debunked by the revelation that Ugwu is the actual author of *The World Was Silent While We Died*. There is also the representative of the tragic and romantic poet hero of the Biafra resistance, Christopher Okigbo, embodied in the character of Okeoma. Various members of the Nsukka intelligentsia are conjured and reproduced within a novel that takes us from an Igbo golden age of art, culture, music and intellectualism to its dissolution caused by civil war and genocide. Odenigbo's elite circle of friends is introduced through the eyes of Olanna, his lover and this is an important aspect of

postcolonial feminine hauntology. In so doing, Adichie conjures the past and makes poignant the present of loss by portraying the relationships from the aspects of love, betrayal, and of choice. The specter that returns to haunt the witness of the unfolding events are these bright lights of the Biafra intelligentsia and literati. Okeoma is an example of the spectral in this novel as he is an invocation of Okigbo. He is described as having a “tangled mop of uncombed hair” (p. 49) and calls Olanna as a “water mermaid”, a signposting of Okigbo’s poem *Watermaid* in *Labyrinths* (p.49). Through Olanna’s eyes Okeoma is brought to life, one of the most poignant of the Biafran ghosts conjured by Adichie’s text. And because the past is primarily conjured through the eyes of Olanna as well as Ugwu, the memories become inscribed with their perspectives.

Olanna liked Dr. Patel, but it was Okeoma whose visits she most looked forward to. His untidy hair and rumpled clothes and dramatic poetry put her at ease. And she noticed, early on, that it was Okeoma’s opinions that Odenigbo most respected, saying “The voice of our generation!” as though he truly believed it. (p. 51)

By signposting everything the Igbos had in their vision of Biafra, Adichie masterfully makes real the specters of loss particularly when she grounds it in the loss of characters with whom the narration invests time and emotional energy, such as Okeoma, and Kainene. The twins in *Half of a Yellow Sun* are powerful significations of the spectrality of loss particularly because the narrative shows them struggling against multiple imperatives particularly in relation to the men in their lives and their own struggles for autonomy. A postcolonial feminine hauntology then is one that grapples with loyalties and decisions whether or not to invite in the Derridean ghost. It is a hauntology caught up in Spivakian struggles between the subject and the object, the Derridean specter and the imperatives to listen to it and to be hospitable to it. By casting the feminine as twins, Adichie juxtaposes two very different characters (p. 60). Olanna is seen as the more feminine, soft and desirable twin, while Kainene is the strong, stubborn activist. When Richard first sees Kainene she is juxtaposed as a tomboy against Olanna’s femininity and this makes him desire her more (p. 60). When Kainene disappears during the war, her loss is central to the tragedy of the book, as the unnamed author of *The World Was Silent While We Died* writes from the perspective of Olanna more than once – also a foreshadowing of all that Olanna has to endure, the trauma of losing her twin. The trope of the missing twin is also very suggestive of the struggle of the feminine to be voiced within the narrative of war and of trauma. The specter of Kainene’s loss is therefore foregrounded in the novel with events spiraling towards the moment of her disappearance.

Hauntology is also evoked in the excerpts from *The World Was Silent When We Died*, with a stark metonymy of layered signs leading to abject horror:

From the prologue, he recounts the story of the woman with the calabash. She sat on the floor of a train squashed between crying people, shouting people, praying people. She was silent, caressing the covered calabash on her lap in a gentle rhythm until they crossed the Niger, and then she lifted the lid and asked Olanna and others close by to look inside. (p. 82)

What the narrated Olanna sees within the calabash is a gristly sight. She describes to the narrator “bloodstains on the woman’s wrapper blended into the fabric to form a rusty mauve” (p. 82). The bloodstains are a foreshadowing anchored in the slanting criss-crossed lines on the calabash, the patterns leading to the uncovering of the calabash to reveal the head of a decapitated child (p. 82). Heather Hewett (2015) observes that the book fragments “open up a heteroglossic space within the novel”, one which allows the novel to voice an alternative narrative” concerning Nigeria (p. 177). I however read these layered textures signposting both culture and horror as evoking Ricoeur’s commentary on

the way memory is a network of signs. This network of signs renders horrific the small, everyday tragedies suffered within the macrocosm of the world of the Nigeria-Biafra War. For instance, the revisiting of the decapitated head within the urn (p. 82) is a textually violent answer to the question of who gets to author the text and is a stark manifestation of the Biafran haunting. Hewett (2015) avers that the "horror of the calabash resides in its transformation from an ordinary domestic object into a repository of death" (p.177). I connect Adichie's transformation of the everyday into abject representations as a way in which she asserts the primal necessity of attributing authorship. This representation of abjection may be seen in the gristly use of the calabash (p.82). The assignation of authorship moves from witnessing (Olanna) to purported and declared author (Richard) to the person attributed as the author at the end of the text – Ugwu. In the character of Ugwu who grows from houseboy to soldier to author in this novel, Adichie provides an answer to the question indirectly and directly raised in both of the texts studied in this article. Ugwu begins the novel as a semi-literate houseboy who ends up playing a far more crucial role not just in the events in the story but in the formation of the narrative itself. The end of *Half of a Yellow Sun* contains the final revelation in the novel – that the multiple points-of-view, and versions of the book were authored by Ugwu. The author of *The World Was Silent When We Died* is thus an Igbo man who grew up during the course of this novel, and who both suffered and inflicted atrocities during the Nigeria-Biafra War:

"Ugwu writes his dedication last: For Master, my good man"

(p. 433)

Olanna's firsthand account on the other hand is subsumed within the narrative *The World Was Silent When We Died*. There is a delicate irony here considering the true author of this embedded novel is Adichie herself who has positioned her two female characters as the feminist voices within this narrative, and this is suggestive of what the author seeks to impart. Whether the implied author of the embedded text is either Richard or Ugwu, the masculine pen transcribes, filters and represents the feminine through a patriarchal filter (p.82). It is particularly significant that Olanna's testimony is the one to which the reader returns; it signposts the feminine aspects of the hauntology – this gristly specter that confronts the reader is the most visceral embodiment of the loss experienced during the Nigeria-Biafra War is seen firsthand through a woman who also becomes a mother, and who experiences loss. This may be juxtaposed with *For Love of Biafra* in which a daughter experiences loss and this loss subsumes her within a patriarchal narrative – the decision to uphold a sanctioned way of life in order to honor her father (p. 105). Hospitality to the Derridean specter then, has definite consequences from a feminine perspective. As Aristakhorva (2012) asserts, Derrida constructs an idealized femininity to inhabit the receptacle of hospitality but in so doing still positions her as other (p.169). Hauntology, already fraught for the haunted is more fraught for the feminine host of specters who will have to fight against various imperatives that seek to set her identity in stone. They may survive marked, like Olanna, or they may disappear into the auspices of history like Kainene, her voice swallowed by the specters of war until she herself becomes a ghost or an Igbo *ogbanje*, destined to be reunited with her twin only in rebirth (p. 433).

## CONCLUSION

Adichie is part of a second generation who have inherited the transgenerational Biafran haunting of relatives and other loved ones who lived through the Nigeria-Biafra War. Her act of creation therefore gives life to scenarios that have been discussed, re-imagined and re-created both in drama, and in novelised form. Her drama has important historical significance as the act of a second-generation survivor seeking to understand a tragedy that devastated her family and her culture. In *For Love of Biafra*, memory enables Adaobi's identification and subsequent enforcement of identification with the idea of Biafra as part of her identity as an Igbo. This is particularly relevant when one considers the fact that this play was written in Adichie's youth and is a relatively undiluted and unpolished narration of the horrific events of the Nigeria-Biafra War.

In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Adichie places the pen and the agency for conjuring in Ugwu's hands. In so doing, she makes a statement for the construction of identity. We view Olanna through his eyes, and her partner Odenigbo is Ugwu's master and mentor. Ugwu's narrative arc could be read as a bildungsroman because he grows as a character through the novel, from a under-educated Igbo village man to someone trained by an upper-class Igbo academic. The problematizing of authorship and the ownership of a cultural narrative is at the heart of *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Adichie's historical revisionings of the events of Biafra in her works provide multiple perspectives for the observer and brings us close to the poignant quandary of the second generation inheritor of these testimonies and narratives: who gets to speak, narrate and witness these events?

In this article I have chosen to frame Adichie's Biafran hauntings within an expansion of Derridean hauntology through a postcolonial feminist lens in order to examine the ways in which the voice of Adichie's female protagonists become subsumed within the dominant and masculine discourse implicated within a Biafran haunting. This is part and parcel of the struggle experienced by the postcolonial woman across history and across borders. Concomitantly, I have proposed a new model of reading hauntology which I have termed a "postcolonial feminine hauntology" and which I have deployed in an analysis of the texts. Finally, Adichie's play should be examined anew not just for the historical nature of the text but the manner in which these reports and transcripts are juxtaposed with the personal lives of the characters on the stage. She adds further dimension to the lives of people who experienced the war from the Biafran perspective in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, but the seeds of that acclaimed novel are contained within this play.

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