CHAPTER THREE

GIRLS OF WAR: WOMEN IN
BUCHI EMECHETA'S DESTINATION BIAFRA AND
CYPRIAN EKWENSI'S SURVIVE THE PEACE

When you have finished
And done up my stitches
Wake me near the altar
And this poem will be finished.

- From Limits by
  Christopher Okigbo,
  Biafran poet killed
  in action in July, 1967
  at Nsukka front.
War, according to Aristotle, was made to usher in peace, but not without certain accompanying evils. Because human character is not so easily changeable as the laws, Aristotle felt that suppression of long established habits often resulted in the overthrow of innovative governments. Further, extremes of poverty and wealth were conditions that generally followed a war. So the Greek philosopher reasoned out in *Politics*, that a ruler should prevent such extreme conditions from taking shape if he wanted to avoid revolution.

In his book *Beyond Good and Evil* Friedrich Nietzsche argued that different functions in the humanity required different qualities; "evil" virtues of the strong are as necessary in a society as the "good" virtues of the weak. Severity, violence, danger and war are as valuable as kindliness and peace. For great individuals (supermen) appeared, said Nietzsche, only during times of violence and danger, marked by a "merciless" necessity.

Down the ages philosophers have expressed varying opinions on the causes and necessity of war. However, as a recurrent phenomenon in the history of humanity, war has been one of the most powerful instruments for bringing about
significant changes in man-woman relationship and role models assigned to the sexes by the society. These changes, many of them often being short term, are induced due to obvious transformations that take place in economic and political realities during and after the war. Because war, like famine and other forms of natural interventions, creates artificial sub-structure(s) within a society effecting alterations not only in the patterns of living but also in the thought process of its constituent members. These artificial structures eventually come to stay, shooting off new outlook and approaches towards life, and elements to construct new sets of values and ethics.

This was evident in the west during and after the two world wars. Before these wars, sexual division of labour in the western societies assigned men and women primary responsibility of economic support, and material/psychological maintenance of the family, respectively. In The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State Frederick Engels outlines the beginning of such stratifications in the primitive communistic societies, where women looked after the household and child-rearing while men were engaged in procurement of food. But this division of labour notwithstanding, both the sexes were given equal status in the
society as whatever was produced by their labour belonged to the community as a whole.

As practices like domestication of animals and breeding of herds came into vogue, surplus wealth was generated creating new social relationship. The surplus wealth was controlled by men, which women shared but never owned. This tilted the balance of power more and more towards the former as mankind made progress toward modernity.

In modern societies, women, economically dependent upon the family unit, saw their opportunities to influence decision-making being heavily curtailed in private and, consequently, in public domains. In addition, there came to exist a strong discrimination against them in public sectors in the form of a dual labour system that classified jobs as "male" and "female".

But quite a lot of this distinction had to be wiped off in the face of the two major global wars as they necessitated induction of women in the wartime activities, destroying the hitherto accepted idea that war was an exclusively male bastion. Many women joined their patriotic duties beside their male colleagues not only at the frontline but also far
behind the battlefield. Their duties included among other things, heavy manual work like driving buses, shovelling coal, digging graves, fighting fires etc.

With the founding of the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (FANY), in 1907 and establishment of the Voluntary Aids Detachments (VADS) in 1910, British women were employed as technical reserves in the Territorial Force Medical Service with a view to providing medical treatment and home defence in case of an invasion.

Similarly, during the World War II a series of crucial events radically influenced the lives of American women. As Susan M. Hartman points out:

Two elements were new to women’s military service in the 1940s; they were utilized in nearly every activity short of combat, and they achieved permanent, regular status in the military establishment. The process by which women were integrated into the armed forces revealed the power of war to refashion sex roles, but also demonstrated the tenacity of conventional beliefs, as military leaders and public officials sought to meet exigencies with the least disruption of the pre-war sexual order.¹

The American women assisted in war efforts in diverse capacities under equally different organisations. As Hartman chronicles, Women’s Air Force Service Pilots (WASP) had
one thousand recruits, another 140,000 served with the Women's Army Corps (WAC), while 100,000 were with the Navy's WAVES, 23,000 with the Marine Corps Women's Reserve (MCWR) and a significant 13,000 with the Coast Guards (SPARS). Equally big numbers of women joined other paramilitary organisation like Army Nurse Corps and Navy Nurse Corps.

Thus the entry of women in warfront and related military activities struck a decisive blow to the Victorian myth of woman being weak, frail, sheltered and private -- a view strengthened by a male-centered history of the human race. Women in Britain and America were faced with never before opportunities to join as skilled workers in heavy industries and other highly paid jobs in bureaucracy, education, etc. What came as a very significant development was that, encouraged by these new found opportunities women started claiming their political rights with renewed enthusiasm. Consequently, a new brand of leadership in brave, ambitious, courageous, outgoing and responsible women came to be accepted.

It was in 1918, during the World War I, that a pathbreaking achievement for women's liberation movement came in the shape of the British government's granting of suffrage
to women over 30, which finally came to include unmarried women as well who had attained the age of 21. This was a great boost to women’s libbers who now looked forward to intensifying further their struggle for equality. On the other hand, female antipathy to world-wide destruction and large scale rampage was brought to the fore as a result of their exposure to war, giving rise to a new women’s leadership in peace movements and life-saving activities. This added a new dimension to the feminist politics that was progressively getting more articulated.

However, women had to pay some price for these achievements. Their involvement in the war was bitterly criticised by male policy makers as well as colleagues, often on a false pretext. The media also played a very dubious role at times. David Bouchier shows how the press churned out a popular and saleable image of the "new woman":

The popular press image of womanhood in that febrile decade was that of the ‘flapper’, sexually provocative and emotionally hard. Wearing short hair, short skirts and flat-breasted tubular look, smoking cigarettes, driving cars and flying planes, the flapper embodied a new and more exciting life possibility for women. In Britain the terrible decimation of men in the first World War added an extra dimension to independence. There now appeared a big surplus of female who remained unmarried or married to men so damaged that they could not play the traditional masculine role.
These women learned by necessity to be more androgynous, and less traditionally feminine.2

The argument that women were neither physically nor mentally strong to face the reality at the warfront still held good. Loud noise was also being made about the moral consequences of allowing women to stay in the close proximity of men in the military.

The industrialised world was cast into a depression in 1929 following the World War I. The resultant economic crisis caused hindrance for women in grabbing their new found opportunities. The changes that would have been effected in the contemporary culture due to women getting into their new roles were slowed down. The Great Depression decade was quickly followed by another global war. Hartman makes the following observation on the combined effect of the Great Depression and the Second World War.

The extent to which World War II altered women's lives and social norms can be fully understood only with reference to the Depression decade. During that crisis, women as workers suffered unemployment and intensified discrimination, while most government relief and recovery programs were designed for men.... As family members, women found their domestic work expanded as they sought to compensate for reduced family income. The Depression forced postponement of marriage and contributed to declining birth rate. Finally, women were put on the defensive as a general
consensus hardened around the position that married women should not work outside the home. 3

Thus the Depression was, as Bouchier calls it, an "ambush by history" on new gains made during the war years by women in their crusade for equality. But the situation affected the working class and the middle class women differently. Among many working class families in Britain and more so among the Black families in America, the wife became the sole supporter of her family while the husband, now thrown out of job, helped in domestic chores. Low paid domestic and sweatshop works was more easily available to women as men often would not like to do them for earning livelihood. Ironically, this made many working class women achieve a sort of authority amidst stiff resistance from their menfolk.

However, the middle class women did not experience any such radical role reversal even though there was a concerted effort made to drive them completely out of the job market. Bouchier writes:

The previous slow growth in the employment of women in professional and managerial capacities were reversed, and under the British Anomalies Regulations of 1931, married women were cut off from unemployment benefit, forcing them back to total dependence. The media, quick to go with the tide and almost entirely controlled by men, cynically revived the idea that the truly feminine
women did not work, and that the working wife was selfish and perverse. 4

The post-war scenario was thus not very promising for women as men and women who had fought shoulder to shoulder during the war had to compete for jobs and survival in a rapidly shrinking economy. After having achieved a considerable prominence in the public domain establishing relationship with the country’s bureaucracy, economy and defence women were again pushed back to the private sphere.

Even within the services women were discriminated against during the wartime through prejudiced opinion and policies. Nurses in the Army Nurses Corps (ANC) and the Navy Nurse Corps (NNC) were never given the full military rank or pay and allowances equal to those of the male military personnel, despite the fact that the women had seen duty in every theatre behind the front lines with the invading army shelling them in North Africa, Italy or France. They had had to dig their own fox-holes, live under rugged field conditions and treat wounded men under enemy fire.

It is interesting here to note that Black nurses faced impediments to their full utilisation in war service even though the supply of nurses were scarce. The military
treatment of Black nurses paralleled its policy of segregation and discrimination against all Blacks in the services. The vast majority of nursing schools refused to admit Blacks, and the American Nurses Association tolerated white only units in fifteen states. A few Black units were sent overseas, but for the most part Black nurses made their contribution to victory by caring for Black soldiers and prisoners of war.\(^5\)

However, various women's groups saw in the induction of women in the armed forces a means to assert women's full participation in all the responsibilities of citizenship (as opposed to the idea of women being second-class citizens for their inability to perform certain duties that are expected of a full citizen). Despite the precedence of World War I when more than ten thousand women had served in the navy and marine groups in addition to thousand others in the clerical and communication services in the military in France, the U.S. authorities were not readily willing to allow women to joint combat duties. It was not before the spring of 1941, when Edith Nourse Rogers, Republic Congresswoman from Massachusetts gave a political exposure to women's demands to serve the armed forces by planning to introduce a legislation towards creation of a woman's corps. But the U.S. army
was opposed to any such idea. However, amid stiff resistance, Rogers introduced a bill for establishment of Women's Army Auxilliary Corps (WAAC) in May, 1941. During the deliberations on the bill Rogers vociferously pointed out how women serving in the first World War were provided with inadequate care and had failed to achieve veteran's compensation.

The opposition to the bill was not very strong as a growing military need aided by pressure from women's organisations gradually came to weigh in favour of the bill. As Morris Janowitz and Roger W. Little observe:

By World War II, the nature of war and of the military establishment had changed so as to foster the use of women's services. The global scope of American involvement, the increasing complexity of modern war, and the development of military technology had reduced the proportion of military personnel directly engaged in battle.... In World War II only 34.1 per cent of army personnel was engaged in purely military occupations. Thus, the increasingly "civilian" nature of many military duties, more than 10 per cent of which were administrative and clerical, made possible the employment of women in the defence establishment.6

In March 1942 the Women's Army Auxilliary Corps (WAAC) bill was passed. But as more and more legal as well as practical difficulties were experienced in administering an
auxilliary corps, the United States War Department gave full army status to WAAC, thus converting it to Women's Army Corps (WAC). (The members of WAC were generally called Wacs.)\(^7\)

Ironically, in the women's armed corps few women were given combat training while the majority was used for civilian duties. Apart from unsympathetic response from male colleagues, the women recruits often got entangled in controversy. A vicious rumour-mongering was done about the Wacs, projecting their 'immorality'. Stories spread like wild fire that the WAC women were frequently drunk, that they were sexually promiscuous and the army provided them with contraceptives, and that many of them were pregnant. The army authorities punished many WAC women for "heterosexual misconduct" because the women were having close friendship with some of their male colleagues. Similarly, often Wacs were taken to task by the authorities for "homosexual tendencies" which actually was nothing more than their strong friendly bonds with some female colleagues. Therefore, in an environment that was conducive to the development of female camaraderie, public suspicion and government policies set limits on women recruits' relationship with their fellow volunteers.\(^8\)
But within the WAC, Black WACs were discriminated, as Jesse J. Johnson wrote in *Black Women in the Armed Forces: 1942-1974*:

Military officials also bowed to racial attitudes and practices dominant in civilian society. Black women were admitted to the WAAC from the very beginning and they represented almost 10 per cent of the first group of women selected for officer's training. Yet enlisted women were segregated in barracks, mess halls and recreational facilities and were sent to the field in all black units. 9

In fact, Black women's groups and civil right groups had to mount pressure on the government to end WAC's unequal treatment—and the Navy's total exclusion of Black women.

But discrimination against Black women was more method-ical in Women's Airforce Service Pilots (WASP), a civilian organisation by status which was formed in mid-1943 with Jacqueline Cochran as its director. The WASP received 25,000 applications for 2,000 posts it had advertised. So it was easy for Cochran to avoid possible future "complica-tions" by not recruiting a single Black woman. In fact, she persuaded an experienced Black woman to withdraw her applica-tion "quietly" and dissuade other Black applicants. So till June 1944, when the U.S. House defeated the WASP mili-

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tarization bill throwing all WASPs out of job, the organisation had successfully remained all white.\textsuperscript{10}

However, involvement of women in military activities generated a "romantic" and "glamourous" image of service women in the media which often blacked out on the dull routine and dangerous realities of military service life. The typical "gal" image created by the media was a far cry from the real life of the uniformed women. As Hartmann points out, despite the WAC leaders' effort to specify that the WACs be referred to as "women" or "soldiers" and not as "girls" and, all efforts made by white women to restrain the use of "cheese-cake" publicity,

Newsreels frequently referred to women as "girls" or "gals" and stressed the most dramatic as well as more frivolous aspects of servicewomen's experience, such as their underwear and their patronage of beauty shops.\textsuperscript{11}

Besides the army life, the World Wars also added two more new dimensions to gender stereotypes in the west: involvement of women in a spate of consumerism, and sexual liberalisation.

The World War II brought an end to the Depression in America. This became evident in the spread of a veneer of
affluence among the middle and the working-class people. Big coloured magazines from the U.S. showed pictures of the ideal family with detached house, car, washing machine, boats and television. This became a model for British imagination which was hardly touched by wartime austerity. This image of affluence also set sail for the first wave of American consumerism, almost a decade ahead of the British phenomenon. The American utopia projected the tough and glamorous American woman who lived confidently in the midst of all this plenty. In Britain, the Festival of Britain in 1951, and the coronation of Elizabeth II in 1953 were two symbols of post-war optimism. With the new welfare state to take care of health and family securities, and new machines to take away the drudgery of housework British women appeared to head for a golden age of equality. The working wives with their financial independence and chances to get out of their houses to meet people were expected to be more emancipated than their sisters of yore.

Ironically enough, in this scramble for better living standards and security, the meaning of "affluence" and "freedom" was misunderstood. Overwhelmingly in America, and to a lesser degree in Britain the home and its appurtenances became the showplace for family achievements.
This had always been the arena where women could legitimately express their creativity and establish their identities. Now millions of women working as producers generated extra income which was ploughed back into the homefront in their alternate role as consumers. Further, women automatically spent more energy to concentrate on their individual homes which was detrimental to their resolve to come out of their excessive family concerns and put up a united front against their discrimination.

In a related second development, sex became one of the almost essential item of consumption in the brave, new post-war world. Since 1920s, the Victorian and Edwardian rigidities were gradually disregarded. The social changes following the World War I with shortage of men, revealing fashion styles, declining influence of religion, and the availability of effective female-controlled contraceptives like diaphragm along with the new social freedom of women had contributed to a changing morality. As fear of social disgrace, of hell fire and of pregnancy - so far controlling the female sexuality - gradually lost their power, more and more information on sexual matters were available to women making them confident about their sexual choices.
An earlier maturity brought about by better health care and greater physical mobility provided women with opportunities for sexual adventures. In this, women were further aided by new legislations facilitating contraception advice even to unmarried girls, and availability of far safer clinical alternatives such as male vasectomy and female sterilization. Though many old guard feminists felt that this liberation of sexuality would only enhance the romantic, sensual image of woman at the end, the development offered women an elemental and hitherto unexperienced power over their own bodies.

So wars caused women under Western culture to move out of their closets into the open and gave them opportunities to breathe air of freedom, bringing to them a new lease of life. They also helped in western women’s efforts to redefine femininity and assert their desired identities. In Africa, however, the case was quite different, as pre-colonial African women’s involvement in war was necessitated by absolutely different set of considerations. This is not to include their participation in the freedom struggle of their respective countries. As has been discussed in the introductory chapter, a majority of pre-colonial African
societies were matriarchal and thus, often the traditional kingdoms were ruled by women. So women were not only to take part in wars but led them with the brilliance of modern day defence strategists. This is not to say that African women had a natural affinity to engage themselves in battle. Rather it was due to their holding high political and military offices that necessitated their participation in wars which were often fought with alien invaders.

Christine Qunta has recorded in her book a gallery of such women who were remembered during their time much beyond their respective boundaries for valour and grace.13

To start with, one most well known figure among them was Cleopatra, who ruled in Egypt during C.69-30 B.C. A concerted effort has been made by many European historians to paint her as a white woman, who shared the throne with her brother, Ptolemy XIII, in 51 B.C. when Egypt was already a Roman protectorate.

Queen Hatshepsut ruled Egypt for 22 years during the 18th dynasty (15 century B.C.). Chancellor Williams described her in his book, The Destruction of Black Civilization, as the greatest woman Pharaoh of black Egypt; she was a "queen absolute, ruling alone as a king (to emphasize the
point, she often dressed in royal male attire, including the false beard and wig)."\textsuperscript{14}

During her rule the first sea expeditions to the coastal lands of present day Somalia were organized. She also had built a great navy for commercial and military purposes, along side undertaking projects for overall development of her subjects. Her funerary temple, Deir-el-Bahri remains a foremost tourist attraction to this day.

Another great military strategist was Queen Cadence (3 century B.C.-2 century A.D.), the Empress of Ethiopia, whose courage and tactical ability made her a legend in history. She ruled during Augustus Caesar's reign in Rome. It is said that Cadence led her troops to defend the border of Ethiopia, but Augustus was so impressed by her courage that he did not want to fight her apprehending defeat at the hands of a woman.

There were other women rulers who fought great inter-tribal wars. Mma Ntatise, the Queen Mother of the Tlokwas, a southern African tribe, was one such personality. When the Tlokwas were attacked unaware and rendered homeless by the Nguni ethnic group from present day Natal area, Mma
Ntatise organised her subjects to fight back. She not only beat back the enemy, but conquered many lands in the westward direction of her kingdom. For her ruthlessness with enemies, she was one of the most feared and revered leaders of her time.

Another great warrior was Nigerian Queen Aminatu (C. 16th century). Prior to the division of northern Nigeria's Hausa empire into seven states the region was ruled by a dynasty of 17 queens. Queen Aminatu's name is synonymous with emergence of a strong Hausa empire during the 16th century. The approximate time of her coronation is said to be around 1536, after which she continued till 1573. She had an army of about 20,000 men under her personal command. Trade and commerce had attained its peak under Aminatu's patronage. A statue of the queen on horseback and sword in hand stands in the ground of the National Theatre in Lagos, the Nigerian Capital, as a tribute to this powerful woman in Nigerian history.

By the end of the 17th century, African women alongside their menfolk were engaged in a different kind of war as western colonial powers arrived on the shores of the continent. These battles had no less far-reaching consequences
for them than those of the two World Wars had for the Anglo-
American women. In fact, much loss of equality and freedom
that was enjoyed by Black women coincided with consolidation
of imperialist forces on African soil. However, history is
replete with instances of courageous resistance offered by
Black women against white colonial armies often at the cost
of their lives.

Nehanda Nyakasikana is one such name whom modern Zim-
babwe still remembers with deep reverence as Mbuya, meaning
grandmother. The country was once a part of Mwene Mutapa,
the historical empire vast and prosperous, and known for its
mining and export of precious stones and metals, as well as
its unique stone architecture. This attracted many invading
armies including that of the Britishers'. Nehanda, born
about 1862, was one of the country's two most influential
religious leaders. As her remarkable organising capability
and leadership qualities saw her move up along the religious
hierarchy of MaShona nation, she had to face British invaders.
The settlers, equipped with permission from Queen
Victoria of England and financed, and armed by the British
South Africa company that had amassed millions from export
of minerals and exploitation of Black mine workers, confisc-
cated the natives' land and cattle. Since women were held
in high esteem in ancient Zimbabwe, as was also the case with any other part of Africa, the Britishers captured and sexually abused them to demoralise the people. It was Queen Nehanda who responded first to the cry of help from the Zimbabweans.

In a historic example of African women's resistance to white colonizers, Nehanda not only launched a skillful military operation but also took care to involve various groups into it as a fine example of her political maturity. She appointed the Shona chief priest, Mkwati, as the head of the military operations. The priest, as he was revered by both Shona people and Ndebele-speaking Zimbabweans, could forge a strong unity among the two races. So the first "Chimurenga" or freedom struggle was launched under the Queen's leadership in 1886. The rest of the region joined the following year.

In an unmatched military planning combined with foresight, Queen Nehanda established her military headquarters at Musaka, in Mazowe district inside an impregnable mountain fortress. The place had a network of caves, stored grains, cattle fodder, and plenty of water. But it was inaccessible except for a narrow and extremely dangerous passage guarded
by well armed and trustworthy personnel. From here Nehanda directed her military offensive with the help of her two brothers, Chidamba and Chirese. Apart from commandeering and co-ordinating the operations, she also had an effective intelligence network to gather information about the enemy — mainly the white soldiers and settlers, their farms and trading posts, policemen and African collaborators. In her war tactics she had employed certain indigenous methods, like fire signals, gunpowder made from local materials, missiles made from length of telegraph wire, nails and glass balls from soda-water bottles.

From June to August, 1887 the fighting continued at a fierce pace. Finally, the Britishers made peace with the Ndebele-speaking people. The hostilities ceased in the south and south-west regions. It was Nehanda alone who became the sole target. Her forces suffered heavy damages and their guns and other ammunitions could not be replaced while the British forces' supply of fresh arms remained uninterrupted. Finally, Nehanda was captured in December, 1887 and was hanged on April 27, 1889. Before her death a Catholic priest tried to convert her to Christianity but Queen Nehanda had refused to embrace the religion of her enemy. 15
In West Africa, Queen Mother Yaa Asantewa of the Asante kingdom was a woman personifying courage and resilience whose memory still lives in praise songs of the Asante people, who have one of the longest standing historical and cultural traditions in this part of Africa.

It was not before 1874 that the Britishers could finally score victory over the Asante territory and marched into its capital, Kumasi. In 1896, the Asatehne (King), Prempeh I, was finally exiled as he refused to pay tribute to the Britishers. Following the ascension of the next king, Nana Kuma who was a minor and a relative of Prempeh I, his mother Yaa Asantewa became the chief counsel. She rebelled against one Sir Frederick Hodgson, the British governor of the Asante empire which was a protectorate of Gold Coast. The governor, as the appointed ruler of the empire, expressed his desire in a meeting to sit on the golden stool of the Asante. The stool, however, was not a throne but a shrine for the Asante people as it was the religious symbol of the race. Christine Qunta describes the gravity of the situation arising out of the ignorant governor's sacrilegious demand very subtly:
It was a sacrilege on the scale of someone proposing to Muslims the preparation of shrine for a barbecue in the Khabaa in Mecca, or a strip show in St. Peter’s Basilica in the Vatican to Catholics.\textsuperscript{16}

Under Yaa Asantewa’s leadership the Asantes laid siege to the capital Kumasi, and in the big fight that ensued they took a heavy toll of British army. Still the latter mobilised over a thousand troops and fresh arms from all their colonies across Africa. But it took them three full months to break the siege. Then the initial contingent of 350 soldiers to arrest the Queen was vanquished, forcing another 1000 heavily armed troops to accomplish the task. Yaa Asantewa was exiled to Seychelles. The Britishers were so afraid of the Queen’s organising capability to launch a revolt that they did not allow King Prempeh I to return to his kingdom till she was alive.

Coming to East Africa, Kenyan women offered stiff resistance to the aggression made by colonial powers. Ngugi remembers them, thus, in his book, \textit{Barrel of A Pen}:

The sort of past we look back to for inspiration in our struggles affects the vision of the future we want to build. What heroes or heroines do we identify with? Waiyaki or Kinyanjui? Koitalel or Mumia? Me Katilili or Wangu Makeri? Kimathi or Kenyatta? People’s leaders or colonial chiefs? Patriots or loyalists?\textsuperscript{17}
Women leaders like Me Katiilili are still remembered for their exemplary sacrifice in their struggle for independence.

Nigeria's recent history has seen Igbo women from Calabar and Owerri provinces rising against draconian colonial law in one of the womankind's most successful and significant offensive against patriarchal institutions that tried to curtail their freedom. Spontaneous but very much well organised, the women's uprising came to be recorded as a symbol of African women's power to guard their own as well as the community's wellbeing.

The British, however, have recorded the event that took place during November, 1929 as "Aba Riots". Judith Van Allen's observation, however, captures this linguistic irony poignantly:

In politics, the control of language means control of history. The dominant group and the subordinate group almost always give different names to their conflicts, and where the dominant group always writes the history, its choice of terminology will be perpetuated. 18

The Aba women's uprising assumes great significance from the point of view of a feminist interpretation of
history. But equally important it is to note the deliberate distortion of African history with an obvious colonial interest. The British commission of enquiry set up to look into the event reported that Igbo women were rioting to express a general dissatisfaction against the administrative system that introduced new taxes. Interestingly, the commission's opinion as to why women and not men participated in the demonstrations was, (i) because the women were reacting to a rumour that they would be taxed at a time when profit from the palm products trade was declining; (ii) and that they thought themselves to be immune from danger as they took it for granted that the British soldiers would not fire at them.

So the "Ogu Umunwanyi" (women's war) was another British picture of riot or "uncontrolled, irrational action involving violence and damage to persons and properties"! Terming the well-organised, all women resistance as "Aba riots", the British administration took the advantage of justifying its repressive measures as those necessary for restoring law and order. But at a much deeper level, the nomenclature stood for an inherent patriarchal order that characterizes the social psyche under western paradigm.
Because the incident became just another outpouring of Igbos, which the British could trivialize by relating it to the "general excitability of this least disciplined of African tribes". In the process, the significance of a movement skilfully organised, launched and executed exclusively by women's groups from eastern provinces of Nigeria never came to be recorded as a symbol of achievement and power of Black women. As Judith Van Allen aptly comments, "Aba riot" made the women "invisible".

In contrast, the term "women's war" as Igbo women called it retained both significance and presence of women in the series of events. The word "war" in this context related to the pidgin English expression "making war" - an institutionalised form of punishment employed by Igbo women that was also known as "sitting on a man". To "sit" or "make war" on a man involved gathering at his compound at a pre-decided time, dancing and singing scurrilous songs, detailing the women's grievances against him (often accompanied by insulting innuendo that questioned his manhood), banging on his hut with pestles that women used for pounding yam, and in extreme cases tearing up of his hut (which meant pulling off of the roof). This might be done to a man who particularly mistreated his wife, or one who violated the
women's market rules, or who persistently let his cattle eat the women's crops.19

The traditional Igbo political institution had "Ogbo" and "Mikiri" which were exclusive female bastions even though Igbo society was patrilineal. Through these bodies women articulated and protected their interests. Ogu Umunyanani was burnign example of how women were marginalised and pushed to the brink as a result of severe ruptures caused by colonial administration's intervention in the traditional fabric of Igbo, or for that matter, any indigenous African society.

Under British rule Igboland was divided into Native Court Areas existence of which violated traditional autonomy enjoyed by Igbo villages. Because each NCA had a number of unrelated villages under its jurisdiction. The Native Courts were supervised by white District Officers, whose number was far smaller than that of the courts. As this caused absence of white officers from particular courts during proceedings, a representative from each village under those NCA was arbitrarily chosen to form the Igbo membership of those courts, termed the Native Authority in administrative parlance. Each representative was called a Warrant
This system was considered a violation of traditional Igbo ethics as (i) it made one man represent a whole village; (ii) the whole village was supposed to obey one man, the Warrant Chief; (iii) and finally, there was no representation of women in the whole system. Villagers often unwillingly obeyed the Warrant Chiefs as they were very powerful being backed by colonial administration. In many cases ambitious and opportunist young men who posed as friends of colonial administration were appointed as Warrant Chiefs. Even if a Chief was not corrupt, he was not liked by the villagers as he was seen as a British agent.

Many Chiefs took undue advantage of their new found power. But they were particularly hated by women as the latter suffered at their hands. Often Warrant Chiefs married women against their will by terrorizing the girl and her folk with troublesome consequences. They also usurped women's agricultural produce and domestic animals. Further fuel was added to the fire as callous colonial administration, on repeated recommendations by observers sent by British administrative headquarters to change this faulty system, abolished the role of white officers as supervisors.
in 1918, to make the courts more "native". This move gave more power to corrupt Warrant Chiefs.

Following the direct tax system introduced by the British in 1925, tax on adult males were set according to the prices of the palm products. In Bende division of Owerri province, male members, while being counted, were told that they wouldn't be taxed, only to be done otherwise later. So when in 1929 women were also being counted as part of a drive to correct the census data by counting households, fear was generated among them that they were going to be taxed later as had happened in the case of Bende people. In Oliko Native Court area that had earlier seen the authority's backtracking on their assurance that the male adults wouldn't be taxed, women leader Ikoninia, Nwanne-die and Nwugo called a general meeting at Orie market and there the women decided that if they were approached for counting, they would oppose it by raising alarm, but only after making sure that they were going to be taxed.

On November 23, 1929 an agent of Okolo Warrant Chief, Okugo, went to the compound of a woman, Nwanyerua, to count her goats and sheep. There followed an altercation and the woman reported this to her comrades, convincing them that
they were going to be taxed. As women messengers carried the news, thousands of women poured in Okolo from all over Owerri to "sit on" Warrant Chief Okugo. They demanded his cap of office and marched to the district office to obtain a written assurance that they would not be taxed. The mass protest meetings continued for several days resulting in Okugo's two years' imprisonment.

News of this victory spread through Igbo women's "Ogbo-Mikiri" network and encouraged many village women to organise and get rid of their warrant Chiefs. The movement spread over about 6,000 square miles of Igboland and involved around two million people and sixteen Native Courts most of which were broken up or burnt while women chanted, danced and sang ridicule to the Chiefs demanding their caps of office. The Colonial administration put an end to this massive revolt by using large contingents of police and the army who fired upon the women, leaving more than 50 of them dead and a much higher number injured.20

Two very significant points come to the fore upon a close analysis of Aba women's war. Firstly, unlike many other African tribes Igbos were patrilineal. But in sharp contrast to western patriarchal institutions, the indigenous
African societies before coming under the Arabo-Berber or Christian influence provided independent and exclusive space to both the sexes. Even the most powerful man would not violate or trespass woman's socio-political space within the community. The existing customs and traditions stood guard against any such attempt. The rules were mutually agreed upon and not decided by superiority of muscle power of one sex over the other.

The other significance of Aba Women's War was the demonstration of organisational prowess of African woman. A picture of hers that emerge under such circumstances doesn't quite fit into the oppressed/emancipated paradigm of western womanhood. Because women of Owerri and Calabar engaged in the war were all housewives and had to shoulder their usual quota of responsibilities of cooking, child rearing, farming and minding their households. But when the need arose, they promptly took the decision to safeguard their interest and independence and executed their plans successfully undeterred even by the possibility of losing their lives. Apart from their strong resolve to win back their political right which was being denied by the colonial administration, the women's forceful assertion of self in the Aba war stemmed
from their confidence and faith in their own social customs and traditions. Unlike women in the west who were trying to gain something which they never had, these African women were up in arms to reclaim what they had enjoyed for ages.

Importantly, the Aba war also highlighted the fact that the women were not only fighting the colonists but against their own men too whom they considered as their enemy. The corrupt Warrant Chiefs who were all Igbo men were regarded as immediate enemies. The "Ogu Umunwanyi" therefore attained symbolic significance of African women's battle not only against their outside adversary, but also against the foe within.

From the above discussion, it appears that involvement of African women in war in the distant past was due to very different reasons as compared to the mass involvement of women in the west in the two World Wars. In the case of the former, women planned, led, and won or lost wars while in that of the latter, women were "allowed" to join them. And when in the post-war west women were beginning to utilise their new found opportunities to enter into all male domains of political, military and private sector jobs, women in many parts of Africa were fighting crucial struggles against
colonial governments as Nationalist movements hotted up in many African colonies. After the World War II, while women in Britain and America were constantly being drawn into the vortex of an overwhelming consumer culture where they identified their freedom and fulfilment with detached houses, big cars, washing machines and female contraceptives, in Africa their Black sisters were being arrested and tortured by white rulers for playing vital roles in the freedom struggle of their respective countries. And till recently, when during the '70s feminists in the west were yet to conclude a debate on whether to burn their "bras"; African women, like Swapo activist Rauna Nambinga, were putting up a brave front inside infamous colonial prisons, like the one at Oshakati, where political prisoners were usually hung by ropes from the roof and beaten up till their skulls got fractured, administered electric shocks, and women were given compulsory punishment of getting raped several times.

Women in Africa did not really have to wait for two World Wars to take place in order to be able to claim and assert their rights. Ama Ata Aidoo, renowned Ghanaian litterateur, thus makes an apt observation:

To try to remind ourselves and our brothers and lovers and husbands and colleagues that we also
exist should not be taken as something foreign, as something bad. African women struggling both on behalf of themselves and on behalf of the wider community is very much a part of our heritage. It is not new and I refuse to be told I am learning feminism from abroad, from Lapland. Africa has produced a much more concrete tradition of strong women fighters than most other societies.21

But the status of women in the traditional African societies suffered a setback under the influence of Islam and then, Christianity. As far as Nigeria is concerned, during the 18th century, Islam was already a dominant force in the Hausa states. Prior to this, during the 14th century the Fulanis coming from Senegal-Gambia region were highly influenced by Islam. They entered the Hausa territories as Fulani 'jihadists' led by Usman dan Fodio, a Fulani clergyman and replaced the Hausa states by 1810. The Fulani empire base in Sokoto became the headquarters of the Caliphate as the ruler of Sokoto came to be known as the Caliph.22 Under Islam, women were pushed behind men and thus lost much of their earlier freedom. Islam even today has a lasting influence on the women of northern Nigeria.

Christianity in West Africa started with the colony of Sierra Leone providing the 'first field of modern missionary enterprise'. In 1799, the Church Missionary Society was founded there. During the 1840s, many Christian ex-slaves
began to migrate to Lagos and its hinterland, the Yoruba country and especially to Abeokuta.  

The influence of the spread of Christianity through missionary activities affected traditional African life in its social and economic sphere. New social ethics were propagated among the converts and this also affected in some way or the other the status of women members of the society. As discussed in the Introduction, Christian ethics preached patriarchal values and showed women as being inferior to men. By the time Nigeria attained independence, these values were so deeply entrenched in the social ethos that women readily accepted their status as second-class citizens. However, in the case of western women, the global wars offered them some opportunities to occupy traditionally held male territories and consequently put forth their claims for equality.

But in contrast, the Biafran war in Nigeria saw women mostly as victims of war-time cruelty and destruction. The civil war, a watershed in the history of independent Nigeria, was not just another tribal war, as John de St. Jorre who reported the war for London Observer and often crossed the battle-line to get first hand information,
writes:

...it would be very wrong to assume that the Nigerian war was a primitive, medieval joust. Modern weapons, modern communications and modern international power politics made this irrefutably a mid-twentieth century conflict. And it was no more brutal, mindless and less meaningful than most other modern wars. Indeed, in some respects, despite the terrible loss of life through starvation, it was fought and concluded on more humane lines than several recent European conflicts of which the Spanish civil war, with its 100,000 cold-blooded political killings, is the most shocking example.  

The Biafran war was rather a war for nationhood and self-determination. Probably, it was a blood-stained step towards nation-building, as Takena N. Tamuno, research professor of history at the Institute of African Studies, Ibadan, puts it:

Nigeria's first coup has not yet become its last, coup d'états and counter-coups have followed in close succession in Nigeria's chequered history (...) In this respect and more, Nigeria's coup d'état of January, 1966 marked a giant step along the painful path of nation-building which continues to emphasize the need for dedicated leadership and responsible citizenship.  

All this political interpretations apart, the civil war of 1966 in Nigeria was fought within a society that had moved far apart from its traditional roots. The indigenous
religions had given way to Islam and Christianity. The role models for all human success, including educational, professional and personal "achievements" were essentially western. It was not only the neo-colonial rulers but almost every educated and professionally successful man in independent Nigeria was a copy-book version of, or at least, tried to become like the colonial elite. The gentry and the Black elite in the south-east and the south-west were indoctrinated in Christian values, whereas in the north Islam reigned supreme. So in a countrywide scale, women were subjected to oppression that characterized a strong patriarchy. In a sharp contrast to women exercising their political rights through Ogbo-Mikiri in a patrilineal Igbo society, modern post-independence Nigeria saw women as victims of the worst forms of oppression and discrimination within and outside their homes. It was but natural that under such a social milieu where traditional ethics and values were not even allowed a backseat, women would be the easiest prey during war. The Biafran war was an explosive proof thereof.

However, in a society rapidly converting itself into a complex structure of strong patriarchal institutions that ranged from politics to pornography, women were still able to retain certain traditional roles, like that of market
trading. Unlike in the west where women saw new found opportunities outside their homes during and after wars, the Biafran war helped Black women in an aggressive reassertion of themselves in certain areas which were their exclusive domain under traditional system of governance. For example, the "attack trade" that flourished on either side of the battle line between Biafran and Federal soldiers was not a new opportunity to Nigerian women to sell their wares. But what the war did was to provide the women traders a "risk" that could mean anything from losing one's life to flourish on war time profits. However, many such attack traders, with the unduly heavy profit made during the war, later quickly rose up the social ladder through utilisation of this money in various kinds of entrepreneurship.

The other obvious change concerning women due to the war was that of a marked increase in promiscuity. of course, this cannot be assigned exclusively to the Biafran war, as a similar situation would prevail anywhere else in the world. But in an otherwise polygamous society, women in obvious sexual liaison with a number of men was certainly not the order of the day. Due to long absence of their husbands from home, or their death at the warfront or by
guerillas or the "liberating" army, some women would seek sexual adventures. But mostly they were forced into it either to save their lives or to keep the house-fire burning. But quite a few others saw this as an opportunity to score over their domineering husbands who were either at the front or at home. And this category of women became quite influential being known to the army authorities and through their intimacy with the officers. Often they would be seen supervising and controlling relief and rehabilitation operations.

Broadly speaking, all this made the Nigerian women who survived the Biafran war see new possibilities in them. The war years were a kind of rediscovery of self for them. The changing situations during and after the Biafran war came often as challenges to Nigerian women that was successfully met. If not anything else, the war certainly disturbed the pace of the ongoing march of patriarchy that had already engulfed the country since the western imperialist forces landed on the Nigerian shore. This chapter analyses two novels, viz., Buchi Emecheta's *Destination Biafra* and Cyprian Ekwensi's *Survive the Peace* that portray this factor very poignantly through descriptions of troubles and trepidations of women during the Biafran war. As the war forms the
backdrop of both the novels, it becomes necessary here to provide a brief sketch of the civil war.

The major tribes in Nigeria, formed as a state in 1914 by the British colonial government, were distributed along three geographical divisions: the Hausa-Fulani in the north, the Yoruba in the south-west, and the Ibo (Igbo) in the south-east. There were other minor tribes like Busana, Kanuri, Kamberawa, Gwari, Tiv, etc., toward the north, and Ejik, Ibibio, Ijaw, Itsekiri around the east and mid-west. While the northern region was largely under Islamic influence, the west and the eastern parts were dominantly Christian. Therefore, often the country would be assumed as a north-south divide, between the two dominant religions. But the fact was that each tribe always wanted to maintain its identity, and quite naturally so, as each tribe was characterised by certain prominent cultural distinctions. Arbitrary administrative divisions during colonial rule gave rise to a great deal of tension among the tribes. But as long as the Nigerians were fighting a common enemy, the European colonists, they glided fast towards a nationalist ethos, their intermittent inter-tribal skirmishes notwithstanding.
After Nigeria became an independent country in 1960, under the leadership of federal prime minister, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the country moved towards a new era. Very soon rampant corruption in politics, business and trade, and the bureaucracy came to the fore as pressure groups with neo-colonial moorings were competing one another to fill their purses even at the cost of the national interest and integrity. This soon assumed a situation of national crisis to which Balewa’s leadership could not provide any concrete solution. Meanwhile the problem of tribalism again surfaced in the national politics. This was aided by each regional prime minister - Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto and powerful premier of the northern region, Chief Samuel Akintola, premier of the western region, and Michael Okpara, premier of the eastern part - started behaving as if each region was an independent state.

In a turbulent time like this, a group of young army officers later to be named as "January Boys", tried to take over the national leadership in a coup on January 15, 1966, just two days after Nigeria was playing host to the first ever Commonwealth conference to be held outside London. In the action, code named "Operation Damisa", the federal prime
minister Balewa, the Sardauna, and Akintola, apart from some other important political personalities, were assassinated.

But before the January Boys could move hardly any further, Major-General John Aguiyi-Ironsì, the strongman of the federal army snatched control from them. However, in the north the coup was successfully carried out in the capital town of Kaduna by an Ibo Major, Chukwuma Nzeogwu, who later declared martial law in the region refusing to give in to Ironsi. Meanwhile, the country's president and popular leader, Nnamdi Azikiwe (Zik), who was convalescing in Britain at that time declared over the national radio that the government was handing over power to Ironsi. Major Nzeogwu also surrendered to Ironsi on January 17. Ironsi was an Ibo. Another Ibo officer who was also a part of the January Boys, Lt. Col. Emeka Ojukwu, was handed over charge of the eastern region as Ironsi made him the governor.

The military takeover was greeted with wild outbursts in the southern regions. Walter Schwarz described the situation as:

It had been a dream of a coup.... In a single night the Sardauna of Sokoto, symbol of Hausa-Fulani domination and of feudalistic reaction, Chief Akintola, high priest of election rigging, and Chief Okotie-Eboh, byword for luxury and
ministerial corruption, had been killed. Scores of ministers, corporation chairmen and parliamentarians—all people who had occupied free houses, used up over-generous allowances and driven subsidised cars—were swept out of office. 26

Soon political parties pledged their loyalties to the new regime. The former ruling party at the federal parliament, the Northern People's Congress, declared that it regarded the transfer of power as the only solution to many problems then facing the country. But reaction in the Muslim dominated north was different, as St. Jorre recalls:

In the North it was difficult.... The loss of the region's two most important religious leaders and virtually all its senior army officers at one fell swoop had not yet really sunk in. Nor had the fact that Federal power, exercised continuously by the Northern leadership since independence five years earlier, had been torn from its grasp. 27

It was not surprising that soon speculation gained ground that the Ibos were trying to take control of the whole nation. The fact that the eastern Ibo leaders, including the premier, were not killed in the coup, and all the officers carrying out Operation Damasia were Ibos and finally, the country's military ruler was also an Ibo ripened those speculations into belief. The ridicule heaped on the Hausas by the northern Ibos after the former's religious leader was killed by an Ibo officer was too much to be ignored.
Clashes followed claiming a heavy toll of Ibos in the region during May that year where Ibos were mercilessly massacred, their women gang-raped and children killed and burnt along with the houses.

There were three immediate causes of the May riots. The initial spark seems to have been an offensive article which appeared in the popular monthly magazine Drum showing the dead Sardauna begging an Ibo journalist for forgiveness from his grave. Then the steep rise in food prices following a bad harvest and the normal upward trend encouraged by times of political insecurity also inflamed the situation. Thirdly, the 'unity decree' appeared to confirm the Northern elite's worst fear that the South, and more particularly the Ibos - by this time Ironsi's government was seen as an 'Ibo regime' - intended to establish control over their administration.

The third point referred to by St. Jorre was actually a declaration of two decrees by Ironsi turning Nigeria into a republic to be ruled by a 'national' and not a 'federal' government. Thus, regions were abolished to be replaced with a group of provinces. Political and tribal organisations were dissolved, with a ban on political activities for two-and-a-half years.

All these developments culminated in another coup by the northerners in the army on July 28, 1966, a little before midnight. Ironsi was killed and through a series of
dramatic development Yakubu Gowon, the lone supporter of Ironsi during the first coup in January in Lagos, came to take up the deceased chief's Chair. But Nigeria's fate hung in the mid-air as more and more Ibos in the army and civilian quarters were being massacred by northern soldiers. And often it appeared as if the authority did not wish to intervene. The federal army was on the verge of disintegration. Meanwhile Emeka Ojukwu refused to recognize Gowon as the supreme commander of the army. And as more news of Ibo massacre coincided with a never-ending inflow into eastern parts of Ibo refugees from north, west and mid-west, Gowon declared his plans to create new states; as many as fourteen, and no confederation, as a central political leadership was not possible at that moment. This prompted Ojukwu to ask the non-easterners to leave as he could not guarantee safety for them.

A conference in Aburi, Ghana, between the two leaders, organised and held in the presence of other African leaders to avoid division and civil war in the country, did not prove any good. Coming back from the conference Gowon was in no mood to implement the spirit of the meeting. He said that he did not go to Aburi to write a separate constitution
for Nigeria. As a man from the Angas tribe from the north, and a devout Christian, Gowon could successfully win confidence among the Hausas and the Yorubas. But what he could not much realise was that the Aburi conference decisions pointed towards a loose form of confederation in Nigeria. Meanwhile a steady flow of material from the proceedings at Aburi was being published from the eastern region headquarters, Enugu, and finally twelve gramophone records appeared containing the entire proceedings. The mood of the Ibos were finally moving towards an idea of secession. The last buffer was removed when Gowon officially declared the division of Nigeria into twelve states on May 27, 1967. This was followed by the declaration of the Republic of Biafra on May 30, three days after Gowon's decree was announced.

War broke out on July 6, 1967, when Gowon made an attempt to arrest Ojukwu in Enugu in a police action. Civil war raged through many parts of the country leaving its trail of destruction and death. But towards the second half of 1967, major towns and strategic military bases started falling to the federal troops. The capture of strategic Bonny oil terminal and Calabar towards the end of the same year, and port Harcourt in August next year finally completed the encirclement of the Biafran enclave and made the previ-
ously imposed economic blockade more effective. Even the Biafran incursion into the mid-west proved a tragedy for the easterners as their declaration of a "Republic of Biafra" there did not last 24 hours as it fell to the federal troops.

In the international arena, looking at the future prospects of good business in oil and other commercially profitable products from eastern Nigeria several countries like France, Rhodesia, Portugal, South Africa supported Biafra while support from within the African continent came from only Tanzania and Zambia. As France supplied arms to Biafra through "Operation Mabel", the federal government hired foreign mercenaries as it received strong support from the Organisation of African Unity, the Arab countries and the erstwhile Soviet Union. The American connection came through the country's mounting pressure on Britain to solve the crisis as essentially being a part of "British responsibility". However, the British press was more inclined towards highlighting the plight of the Biafrans, that came to the advantage of Ojukwu's "roving ambassadors" to rally support and relief materials for the people of the eastern region.
With the Soviet supplied 12 mm field-guns the federal troops made rapid advance and captured Uli airport, the sole lifeline of Biafra and the last bastion of its ravaged army. Ojukwu, on advice, left the country for Ivory Coast on the night of January 9, 1970. Thus it was left to Lt.-Col. Philip Effiong, to whom Ojukwu had handed over power of office (!), to surrender to the federal army, bringing to an end the 30 month-long bloodbath.

Destination Biafra is an historical novel recording the above turbulent times of Nigerian nation. The turning points in the novel are mirror images of decisive moments in Nigerian history of those crucial two-and-a-half years when Nigerians paid a bloody price to define their nationhood. Emcheta's own note to the reader sets the tone of her narrative:

Destination Biafra is an historical fiction. The Biafran war which took place from mid 1967 to January 1970 is the main background, and I have peopled the foreground with figure and ideas drawn from history, experience and imagination. But more importantly, for a discerning reader the novel is more than a product of the writer's creative compulsions, Emcheta clarifies:
For me this book, like my novel Second Class Citizen, is one that simply had to be written. I was not in Nigeria during this war, but was one of the students demonstrating in the Trafalgar Square in London at that time. The novel had to be written probably because, among other reasons, Emecheta was thousands of miles away from her own land when it plunged into the hell-fire of civil war, enforcing annihilation of tens of thousands of her brethren, merciless gang-rape of even pregnant women, shattering of homes, ruination of family and personal lives, burning alive of children and destruction of properties. The novel had to be written probably also because of the fact that this war did not have any colonial power on one side of the battle line, but Nigerians on either side. It was a pain that the writer experienced for not being able to do or see anything first hand about a violent change that her people were very much part of, and so picked up the pen to write about it. And finally, the novel had to be written probably because Emecheta discovered that for every Nigerian woman who experienced the two-and-a-half years' strife first-hand, the wounds inflicted on her were much deeper than any bullet could possibly reach, her pain much more intense than a sharpner from a shattering shell could generate. So in
Destination Biafra the woman’s voice cuts through loud noise of gun-fire and touches a reader with its painful stimulations to look at life differently.

The thread of Emecheta’s narrative that binds a series of major events is woven essentially with fibres of politics, that finally give shape to the "history" in her historical novel. The ruling elite and the aristocracy controlling a neo-colonial administration and trade and industry; their children being groomed far away from a state of underdevelopment, in Oxford or Standhurst so that all possible entries are kept open for them in the country’s two top rungs of power - the army and the bureaucracy; the unholy nexus between national politics, religion and tribal sentiments to control the minds of the herd; the poor, deprived and under-nourished majority in the country who become the sacrificial lambs in ego-centric political processes; and last but not the least, women; all play their roles for the evolution of "history" in Destination Biafra.

Judging from historical perspectives, Emecheta’s dramatis personae in her novel run almost parallel to those of the real Biafran war, except for Debbie Ogedemgbe because when all other characters in the book stop after drawing a
full circle of their contributions to the 'historicity' of the novel, Debbie steps aside to leave the circumference to go beyond history. Her experience is a class experience (apart from being historical), a class called 'woman', which culminates in an urge to construct a new nation with a new order. And throughout the narrative she proves herself capable of harbouring such an ambition.

Combining her knowledge of history with superb imagination, the author creates a gallery of political personalities in Destination Biafra who resemble the real life kingpins of the Nigerian tragedy during 1967-70. Dr. Ozimba, the 'Ibo leader who is also the country's president escapes death in the coup led by Brigadier Onyemere, as he flies to London on health grounds. Later he becomes the chief political advisor to the Biafran leader, Chijioke Abosi. But towards the end of the novel when Biafra runs into bad weather, he shifts his loyalty to the federal side. His real life counterpart, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, was the country's first president and a popular Ibo leader who escaped assassination in the coup led by the January Boys as he was in London due to ill-health. He had initially supported Biafra, but later changed sides during the war. His popular nickname "Zik" comes much close to "Zimm" of Emecheta's
The character of Samuel Ogedemgbé, the 'money man' of Nigeria and the country's finance minister, also resembles in his deeds the immensely unpopular and corrupt Okotie-Eboh, the finance minister in Tafawa Balewa's federal ministry. The way Samuel meets his death is also quite similar to the account of Okotie-Eboh's assassination as recorded in Nigerian federal police report. 31

Like Chaucer's Prologue, in Emecheta's novel the reader comes to see a cross-section of the Nigerian society of the late '60s. She lays bare the corruption and hypocrisy of the ruling elite in the persons of Samuel Ogedemgbé, the Tetekus, the Abosi family, Chief Odumosu and Durosaro. Her characters are not mere imaginative exaggerations to drive home the appalling extent of self-seeking realpolitik in an independent, democratic Nigeria. Rather the novelist's creative response to the existing ground realities of that time brings the reader closest to the truth.

In Destination Biafra the independent Nigerian state is an extension of the colonial state. According to Festus Iyayi, the political economy of Nigerian state under
colonial rule underlined the primary role of the state as "to establish, maintain, protect and expand" the conditions of capitalist accumulation in general. As soon as the capitalist exploitation started, steps were taken to convert Africans into wage slaves to obtain labour for the plantations and mines owned by the colonists, and also to get cash for the colonial cultivation of wage crops. The Master and Servant Ordinance of 1917, the Minerals Ordinance and Labour Ordinance of 1923, and the Forced Labour Ordinance of 1933 were actually legislations enacted by the colonial state for either forcing or encouraging the peasant population to transform itself into wage labourers. This was done as the colonial rulers felt that the realisation of colonial interest was dependent upon one crucial factor - an uninterrupted supply of indigenous wage labourers. But an increase in trade unionism in the wake of the Great Depression and rising resistance to colonial rule, the major problem became that of guaranteeing and preserving the interests of the capitalist status of the colony in the event of political independence. It was realised that unless imperialism can establish political dominance of a class or alliance of classes which can gain ideological support among sections of the population and intervene via
the state in the combination of modes of production to promote the capitalist interests, reproduction of social relations necessary for the enlarged reproduction of the capitalist mode cannot be guaranteed.

Accordingly, the colonial attention shifted from creation of a class of alienable Nigerian wage labourers to the creation of an indigenous political class that would remain loyal to imperialism. Thus, towards the end of the colonial period (1945 onwards) the colonial state made some decisive attempts in this direction. Many members of this new class were creations of the very dynamics of capitalist penetration; such as the petty bourgeoisie and the state functionaries and politicians (many of whom were sent or encouraged to send themselves to the 'mother country' for capitalist education and trading).32

The political class in independent Nigeria, unlike the public service class, was at a very young stage. In all parts of the country, the former comprised of mainly three categories: the educated elite, the business elite and the traditional rulers. The slightly broader base of the western education, especially among the Ibos of the eastern region, provided more recruits in the political class. On
the other hand, in the north where traditional rulers were reigning supreme for a long time, the seniors of these families gradually entered into national politics. But in parts of northern region a general distrust for the European system of education lingered on and powerful rulers from these areas would not prefer to send their own children to the white man's school. But children of commoners were encouraged to attend these institutions. This explained why more commoners were able to grab political power later on.

The pre-independence implementation of the federal constitution in Nigeria in 1954 changed the nature of the philosophy on which political power was to be organised in the federation. From equality of representation between the north and the south, the constitution called for representation on the population basis. As the constitution thus guaranteed more regional power, the states became veritable centres of powers-wielding and distribution of state largesse. The new Nigerian elite had therefore long realised that capturing state power was a golden road to prosperity of self as well as of he clan. As new ministries, new parastatals or new universities were created due to demands of development needs, it was not only those at whose will these new structures were created would benefit
from them but their clients and proteges as well, who would handle these new parastatals. 33

A reflection of this reality takes shape in the novel through the likes of Dr. Otimba, Chief Odumosu, the Ogedembes or the Abosis, and in the north, the Sardauna, Alhaji Manlik i or Mallam Nguru Kano. The disappointment of Chief Odumosu on being appointed the leader of the opposition in the federal parliament is quite understandable, as he would soon be stripped of the power and control he had earlier enjoyed as the chief of the regional party in the west. He makes an assessment what he has lost to Durosaro, his deputy in the party who would soon assume the chief ministership of the western region:

The Yoruba West was a very wealthy and easy-going region for any political leader. He would lord it over all those political chiefs, and of course the important contracts would have to go through the regional premier. Odumosu must have been made to give up all that. 34

Emecheta's dig at the bureaucrats in an independent Nigeria, whose love for show of pomp seems to have surpassed their colonial masters, comes when she describes the feverish celebrations of Nigerian independence:
For the newly appointed senior servicemen it became the thing to own an Independence car. These cars had originally been ordered from America to take the visiting dignitaries about the country during celebrations, but the Nigerian senior civil servants would not be left behind. There were families who had little to eat yet must be seen in one of these vehicles that looked more like winged aeroplanes (...).35

As *Destination Biafra* also depicts the important socio-political phenomenon of tribalism, at various points in her novel Emecheta brings her readers close to situations that are convincing revelations of Nigeria's problem of ethnic relations that is always present below the surface. Of course, the whole process of destruction during the Biafran war was based on disturbing lines of ethnic demarcations, but the author draws them with subtle touches of intense human emotion. For example, the dramatic assassination of Brigadier Onyemere, the military ruler, in the second coup of the novel shows how a superior sense of integrity prevails over petty tribal considerations even at the cost of death. Onyemere, an Ibo, comes to rest in Col. Oladapo's house as soon he reaches Ibadan after completing his tour of the north. Oladapo, a Yoruba officer and a trusted lieutenant of Onyemere, does not leave his superior's company when the assassins come to kill the Brigadier. He is given a chance to change side as he is not an Ibo. But he refuses:
The Brigadier is my guest and while he is in my house I am responsible for his safety. What has he done to warrant this treatment? 36

Finally, he is mercilessly dragged along with the Brigadier to be killed later. This event of an honest officer rising to the occasion even at the cost of his life is not a mere figment of author’s imagination as similar incident marked the assassination of Ironsi by Maj. Danjuma and his boys on July 28, 1966 a little before midnight.

Finally, Major Danjuma... took some of his men upstairs, confronted and questioned the Supreme Commander, saluted him and ordered his arrest. The three captives (the Western governor Fajuyi, who with great gallantry refused to leave his guest and commander, and Ironsi’s A.D.C.) were now stripped and their hands tied behind backs with wire. 37

The chapter thus ends with the author’s sad but philosophical observation on how Onyemere’s effort at eliminating tribal politics to help Nigeria emerge as a stronger nation fails:

One of the early attempts to make friendship cut across tribes thus ended that evening. It was a noble act of a Yoruba man to stand by his Ibo colleague. 38
With a stroke of irony, the tribal solidarity vanishes in the face of a threat to human survival, as one finds in Chapter seventeen of the novel. If the war is being fought on the lines of tribal identities, it also generates strong intra-tribal hatred. The Ibos of the mid-western towns like Ore and Ibuza get more and more alienated as they fall to the federal forces. When Biafran leader Abosi sends four soldiers on a mission to arrange new recruits from these areas for the Biafran army, they are met with the most unexpected fate. When they identify themselves:

We are Biafrans, Ibos like you. His Excellency Abosi sent us to you. Look at our uniforms (...). One woman stepped boldly forward and said, "Biafra, Biafra, what is Biafra? You killed our man from this part, Nwokolo; the Nigerian soldiers came and killed what your soldiers left. We are Ibuza people, but we now live in the bush, thanks to your Abosi and your Biafra (...) And when we needed you, where were you? Where was your Abosi when our girls were being raped in the market places and our grandmothers shot? (...) You call us fools because we fought your wars for you, and you are well protected in your place claiming the glory?"

Then another woman reveals the truth:

Yes, we became tired of being in the middle. Your Biafran soldiers killed our men and raped our girls, because you accused us of harbouring enemy soldiers, then Nigerian soldiers would accuse us of the same thing even though we were innocent.
There was nobody to protect us, so we formed our own militia.40

Later in the same chapter, three of the four soldiers are beaten to death and the fourth one manages to escape after their attempt to speak to Ibuza militia hiding in the bushes fails miserably.

Like Tyressius in T.S. Eliot's The Waste Land, Emecheta's heroine Debbie Ogedemgbe sees all this. Daughter of a millionaire father who is also the country's finance minister, she grows up in the novel against a turbulent socio-political backdrop. Emecheta makes Debbie evolve in a manner where her share of pride and pain coincides with that of her motherland. So if she is an historical character, she is very political too. But above all, in her suffering and achievements, Debbie represents the aspirations of modern African women. Emecheta puts her liberated, Oxford educated protagonist in a crucible and tries her resilience with varying degrees of heat - her journey through personal humiliation, ravaged womanhood, ruins of humanity, unforeseen political strife - to make her victorious at the end through the completeness of her convictions.

As she lands up in Nigeria just before the country
celebrates its independence from colonial rule, she is seen having her share of fun with Alan Grey, her lover from Oxford days and the son of the former governor of Nigeria, Sir Fergus. Grey is now an army captain training Nigerian army officers in Abeokuta barracks. It is her conscious choice to have her share of sensual pleasure before she joins her parents in Lagos for the vacation. In a small hotel at Ikeja, in the outskirts of Lagos, Debbie is seen relaxing after a tiring examination schedule at Oxford. Emecheta takes her "only" look at Debbie's physique through Alan's admiring eyes:

...He looked at her now, still asleep and breathing gently. He stared at her forehead, proud even in sleep, the smoothness of her arm that lay outside the sheet and the richness of the shapely lips which looked as though they would burst into a smile at any moment.41

The description points towards an intense lovemaking which preceded her sleep. However, her sensual appeal proves to be a contradiction to Alan's silent deliberations:

(...) he was not going to do his tying down with a girl like Debbie, for all her Oxford knowhow. She was slim and pretty, but arrogant. She was intelligent, nice to be with but independent. She was too English for his liking.42
Alan finds Debbie a replica of those queer women in his own country who called themselves "feminists", always wanting to live independently. He could marry only that girl who would willingly accept his complete emotional and physical control over her. Debbie certainly did not fit in. To a white man like him, women are for use and not to be treated as equals. His intense faith in this philosophy comes out clear in Chapter nineteen, when he is happy to know that Debbie has finally agreed to talk to Abosi to persuade the Biafran leader into surrendering. He is sure Debbie can (and should) use her feminine charm to rope Abosi in:

He came nearer to her, his lean body towering over her, his grey eyes boring deeply into her brown ones, his teeth gritted with tension. Then he hissed, "So are you going to do it or not?"

"I'll do it."

"Good. Do your woman bit tonight," he said. "Abosi used to fancy you, I used to see the desire in his eyes when he talked to you at Government House in Lagos... well, use that part of you to make him do what you say." 43

However, it is not only a white man that thinks of an African woman only as a means to be used in enforcing his plans. Debbie's Nigerian employers in the army also look at her as a "tool" to fulfil their objectives. In Chapter six the coup leaders are seen discussing plans on the eve of
their takeover bid. Abosi, Debbie's one time admirer in Oxford and now a much married man, finds a solution in her to the problem of their future requirement of arms that mainly flow from the white countries:

"You know that girl Debbie Ogedemgbe? Well, she came to me weeks ago wanting to join our army, but I hesitated. Now I don't see why she should not join us, especially with her education and her connections with the white officers in our national army. We need arms, a lot of arms. Through her English boyfriend she should see that we have more than adequate supply."

Her first mission to Enugu, the Biafran headquarters, is also planned with a similar philosophy - to use her femininity as a tool. Only Saka Momoh, the Federal Supreme Commander, does not tell her in so many words. As he briefs her in his barrack about her mission as an ambassador of peace to Abosi, Momoh says:

"At any rate we think you would be the right person to reach him (...) of course you were both at Oxford, although you are a woman (...) Not that that should be a handicap. It might help: you can use your feminine charms to break that icy reserve of his."

But what Alan, and much later in the novel her male colleagues in uniform, find as arrogance in Debbie does not stem from her father's millions in Nigerian or Swiss banks,
as Alan would tend to believe. It is a part of her character which goads her to shape her life by her own decision. At Abosi's wedding attended by the cream of Nigerian society, she feels like an outsider. As she watches her father swelling with pride knowing the exclusive attention his daughter received in that distinguished gathering, Debbie revolts inside her:

If her parents thought they would advertise her like a fatted cow, they had another thing coming. She would never agree to a marriage like theirs, in which two persons were never equal. Her father always called the tune. She did not hate him; (...) It was just that she did not wish to live a version of their life - to marry a wealthy Nigerian, ride the most expensive cars in the world, be attended by servants (...) her own ideas of independence in marriage had no place in that set-up. She wanted to do something more than child breeding and rearing and being a good passive wife to a man whose ego she must have boosted all her days, while making sure to submerge every impulse that made her a full woman (...) Surely every person should have the right to live as he or she wished, however different that life might seem to another? She felt more and more like an outsider, and told herself that she must make a move to fashion her life for herself. Yes, she would join the army. (...) It would be much difficult for a woman, she knew, and the daughter of a minister at that, but she was going to fight. She was going to help the Nigerian army - not as a cook or a nurse, but as a true officer.

So the momentous decision is taken and her fight begins - a fight that later proves to be one for her survival as well.
Debbie looks forward to joining the army thinking it to be the only right place for her. Ironically, her enrolment leads to a series of shattering personal experience, including her own rape. Emecheta makes her heroine enter a 'masculine' political context like war through this conscious decision of hers. As Katherine Frank observes, Debbie Ogedemgbe, by joining a male dominated profession like the army and consequently the war, emerges as the apotheosis of the 'African New Woman':

Not only is this 'masculine' political context a dramatic innovation in women-authored fiction, but Emecheta's heroine, Debbie Ogedemgbe is perhaps the apotheosis of the African New Woman. Certainly she is the most liberated and militant. (...) Along with her closest friend, Babs Teteku, she is determined, despite her parents' objection, to join the army, an overwhelmingly male-dominated profession of course. And to emphasize the radicalism of Debbie's carrier choice, Emecheta dwells - perhaps rather heavy-handedly - on the fact that Debbie carries and sometimes brandishes that most obvious of all phallic symbols, a gun.47

But it is the same army that brings to her all personal agonies. The glamour and valour of young army officers in uniform, always full of self-confidence, which had originally attracted her to this profession now turns into a nightmare as the army boys come to kill her father on the night
of the coup. This is Debbie's first taste of army brutality. After having done with her father, the boys turn to her and her mother without the slightest respect for womanhood:

Stella Ogedemgbe, dressed only in her underskirts, was forced to sit on the floor. Her hands were tied to the bed-post and Debbie was treated likewise. The soldiers were in a hurry so did not force her to strip, but they toyed with her breasts and made rude remarks. 48

But Debbie remains undeterred in her decision to join the army, even after her father is killed in the coup. And finally, she does so, along with her friend Babs Teteku. Here again Emecheta's heroine emerges as a political character. Debbie's assessment of the contemporary Nigerian socio-political situation characterized by corrupt political leaders and businessmen exploiting the masses and taking the whole nation for a ride is at the base of her conviction that it is only a disciplined body like the army that can turn the tide. And so she wants to be there. In reality, many Nigerian intellectuals and political observers thought as much. As S.O. Wey observes:

When a fuller history of this country, indeed of Africa, comes to be written, it will be recorded that military intervention in politics was a necessity but that an opportunity was lost. 49
In a similar note, Kyari Tijjani, a Nigerian social scientist, writes:

The First Republic in Nigeria which lasted between 1960 and 1966, according to the military men who brought it down, collapsed under its weight of own contradictions. Far from the freedom and prosperity Independence had promised to bring, the politicians of the First Republic (...) had established a regime that was outstanding for its ineptness, corruption and decadence.50

Debbie has full knowledge of the kind of corruption her father, Samuel Ogedemgbe, indulges in. She knows that it is through unfair means that he has amassed millions, which ironically buys her an Oxford degree. Her maturity as a political person is evident in her love-hate relationship with her father, and a dislike for her mother's voluntary submission to her father, though she loves both her parents.

In Chapter seven, she is seen packing her belongings as the family's luxury mansion in western part of Lagos is to be handed over to the military governor, Saka Momoh. As she holds the old cotton rug her father was so fond of, Emecheta shows Debbie's rare moment of filial sentiment:

Tears came as she folded an old cotton rug which her late father had insisted on carrying with him wherever he went, saying that it was the best in the world. It used to be placed in the bathroom just before he bathed, then hung out to dry in the sun during the day and returned to the cool bed-
room in the evening. No amount of protestation from his wife, no cynical remarks from the rest of the family could make him buy another rug.51

Beneath her hard exterior, Emecheta's heroine also harbours private emotions that are generally attributed to weak, ordinary persons, and not an 'independent' woman that Debbie is recognised as among her male colleagues as well as by Alan. By showing this duality in her, Emecheta registers her protest against judging women through patriarchal stereotypes: women either being 'feminine, soft-spoken, weak and insecure about themselves' or 'masculine, harsh and devoid of any human sentiment'. In other words, Debbie's self-confidence and her political maturity and determination are what makes her unacceptable as a 'woman' to the men in the novel.

As the narrative makes its progress, Emecheta's protagonist emerges more and more politically matured, at times attaining almost a prophetic vision. It starts from home as Samuel Ogedemgbe, the corrupt politician and the federal finance minister, is despised by her daughter as a corrupt, self-seeking politician. In Chapter seven and seven, her long discussions with Alan Grey show Debbie's analytical bent of mind where she can comprehend critical situations
in national politics. In Chapter eight, she almost has a premonition about the failure of the Aburi conference and an ensuing division of her country into two parts, which comes to be true later. Her intuitive observation of Alan's refusal to disclose what happened at Aburi is also evidence of her political thinking:

Wait a minute - I think I am beginning to get the picture. You know, I have always wondered how a tiny place like Britain came to rule so many people. Now I can guess: divide and rule. Is that why you are here? What part are you playing, Alan?52

In fact, Alan's presence all over the novel is a symbolic pointer towards the involvement of imperialist interest in Nigerian politics. What the British captain does is to motivate the political forces so that Britain can retain enough hold to appropriate the same gains as it did during colonial rule of Nigeria. Lest Nigeria should turn the communist way, Alan cautions Saka Momoh during Aburi conference, and arranges mercenaries for the federal government. His collecting antique art and craft is also a symbolic interpretation of how the western world tried to create a popular image of African life and civilizations by exhibiting traditional artefacts from Africa in museums in London and Paris and other western cultural centres. In Chapter
seven when Alan tries to convince Debbie about his sentiment to preserve African artistic work, she retorts back:

Oh, come off it! Who do you think you are deceiving? Those old relics you claim to be saving are going to adorn your museums and art galleries.53

In the same chapter Debbi, while conveying to Alan her apprehensions about the forthcoming Aburi conference, also confides in him that in case of a division of the country into Nigeria and Biafra, her loyalties will be with the latter. In the next chapter, when the actual division takes place after Abosi declares secession, she gives her reason why she thought it was inevitable. It is not to take sides with Abosi, her former admirer at Oxford, or to pledge loyalty to a separate Iboland for her being an Itsekiri, a tribe culturally much closer to Ibos than to Yorubas, but her clarity of thought to see political developments in their proper perspective that Debbie tells her mother:

I don't think Abosi's move is as stupid as it looks. You know what Momoh did - he divided the country into twelve. Not only that, he made sure that through the way it was divided the richest oilwells in the East fall into the hands of non-Ibo-speaking people. In other words, he declared war against Abosi and his people.54
In one of her daring political actions, Debbie foils an attempt by Abosi to smuggle arms out of Britain for Biafra in a Red Cross plane. Ironically, she herself had volunteered to act as a 'roving ambassador' of Biafra in Britain to build public opinion and generate international pressure in favour of the Biafran cause. But her instantaneous decision to stop the shipment of arms to Biafra is influenced by her shattering war experience whereby she had realised the meaninglessness of the civil war which had ultimately got down to the level of ego-boosting exercise between the two warlords - Abosi and Momoh. She halts the arms supply as she can foresee how they would be used to eliminate innocent men, women and children who became the sacrificial lambs in a massacre sponsored by two mad men's unputdownable greed for control of state power. In her action Debbie thus stands apart from the gallery of politicians present in Emecheta's novel as their politics is not for the greater good of Nigeria but their own purse. In her support of Biafran cause, however, Debbie Ogedemgbe has not lost her compassion for humanity!

If Debbie evolves as a fuller political being towards the end of the novel, her attainment of a completeness of experiencing life as a woman also coincides with the
process. But this attainment comes, ironically, through her conscious choice of embracing a "difficult" army life, her traumatic war experience including her personal humiliation, and finally, her being unacceptable to the established patriarchal order for she chooses to be different from the lot.

Her problem of non-acceptability starts from home. Her parents never approve of her decision to join the army. However, when she finally enlists herself, her ever domineering father is no more alive to stop her from doing so.

The politics of gender becomes evident under different situations in Emecheta's novel. Even with her full uniform and rank, Debbie remains unacceptable in her professional career as a capable army officer.

Debbie and Abosi hardly have any difference between them as far as their education and social status are concerned. Both have rich, influential and politically powerful parents, their degrees from Oxford and the privilege of being members of the elite group. But it is due to the gender difference that Abosi does not encounter any objection from his parents as he decides to join the
army, while Samuel and Stella Ogedemgbe are far from approving a similar wish in their daughter's mind. In Chapter five, when Debbie asks Chijioke Abosi how he could quarrel with his father and managed to get what he wanted,

Abosi put on an expression which might have been a smile; one could not be sure since the lower part of his face was fully covered by a beard.

"I'm a man."55

To the men in the Nigerian army, Debbie's best talent is her body, and her courage, intelligence, education and an honest resolve to serve her country have no bearing on her difficulty in being accepted. Her family property, her English boyfriend and her beauty and higher education immediately put her in a definite social bracket in a world defined by patriarchal parameters under which instead of joining the army, she is expected to marry a wealthy man, breed a number of children for him and remain loyal to him.

In Chapter nine, Emecheta perhaps makes the matter a little clearer and simultaneously makes a dig at the 'male' idea of what kind of a woman could possibly join the army. Congratulating her friend's spirit of challenge which made her accept army life, Barbara Teteku informs her the results of the recruitment drive for women in the army:
From the whole of the Western Region I have only five girls who are willing and suitable to join the militia. The other women who came up were those well known locally as women of easy virtue.56

This throws light on what kind of women would have been attracted by an offer to join the army. Probably that is also the only kind the male population in the army would not find difficult to accommodate.

Debbie's having an Englishman as boyfriend also makes her unacceptable to some. Salihu Lawal, the Hausa captain, does not hide his indignation at this:

"I don't understand why you black girls think that when you are well educated your black men are no longer good for you. To the Bature, you are just a whore, to be used and discarded, just as they are doing to our country. May Allah forgive you." 57

Through Lawal's prayer for her forgiveness, Emecheta reveals the naked face of patriarchal tradition. Debbie dons a man's uniform, has the same qualification and status that any man would be proud of, enjoys the privilege of being in a man's job. As if all this is not enough, she has chosen to have an English boyfriend. Patriarchy does not have any place for her achievements - and Lawal's prayer is
a proof that it is sinful for a woman to have achieved so much.

Chapter nine, one of the crucial chapters in the novel, finds Debbie's encounter with destiny in a series of ghastly events. It seems Emecheta deliberately maintains a violent candour here to register her message clear and deep in the minds of her readers. Debbie, on being appointed peace ambassador by the federal government, sets out towards Enugu carrying Saka Momoh's message to Abosi. On the Benin-Asaba road, she along with her mother and her driver, and a couple she picks up on the way towards eastern capital, is way-laid by Nigerian militia.

Her federal army uniform fails to stop her worst personal humiliation and ghastly death of the couple and her driver, Ignatius. Only because she is a woman in a 'man's' uniform, her credentials are not accepted. Even her gun does not help her to prove her authority. She just remains a "chick in uniform" (p.132) to suffer the ultimate humiliation of a woman. A man in her place would most probably have been able to assert his authority and prove his official authenticity as a federal armyman. What appears from Emecheta's narration is the shocking realisation that Deb-
bie's humiliation is most cruel and merciless as she is a woman. Her 'man's' uniform makes her captors more aggressive, inciting more animal passion. So she has to watch her mother undressing in front of her eyes and then surrendering to the soldiers, to be able to beg for her daughter's safety. Ignatius is killed as he protests.

Debbie was following all these happenings with her eyes. They had torn off her clothes and stuffed her undergarments into her mouth. In her distress she could not fail to admire her mother's courage. The pregnant woman now began to wail as she was dragged from the main road to the side bush, pushed mercilessly with the butt of a gun; the woman was falling and getting up again, and calling to her husband Dede to help her. Debbie wondered what had happened to the child. She heard the tired, strangled voice of the woman calling out in Ibo, begging for mercy as they took her to a different part of the bush, and then Stella Ogedemgbé's voice cut in:

"Leave the woman alone! She is pregnant - don't you people fear God?"

Debbie heard the slap on her mother's face and it burned into all the nerve fibres of her body. She kicked out at one of the men holding her and heard him cry in pain. Her punishment was that the man fell on her.

She could make out the figure of the leader referred to as Bale on top of her, then she knew it was somebody else, then another person... she felt herself bleeding, though her head was still clear. Pain shot all over her body like arrows. She felt her legs being pulled this way and that, and at times she could hear her mother's protesting cries. But eventually, amid all the degrada-
tion that was being inflicted on her, Debbie lost consciousness.58

Debbie pays the price for being a woman at the first place, and then, for being a 'woman in a man's dress'. She reminds the author of Joan of Arc, who was also charged of making a similar choice to protect her nation's integrity:

It is sufficiently notorious and well known that for some time past a woman calling herself Jeane the Pucelle, leaving off the dress and the clothing of the feminine sex, a thing contrary to divine law and abominable before God, and forbidden by all laws, wore clothing and armour such as is worn by men (...).59

Andrea Dworkin comments on Joan of Arc and her victimization:

Under patriarchy, men have freedom because they are men. To want freedom is to want not only what men have but also what men are. This is male identification as militance, not feminine submission; it is deviant, complex. One wants what men have - especially physical freedom (freedom of movement, freedom from physical domination); and to have what men have one must be what men are. Joan's unself-conscious and unrepentant assumption of a male role (both martial and heroic) was the crime against male supremacy that cost her life.60

So Emecheta's heroine also pays her price for choosing a man's job instead of a life of subjugation and breeding. She pays her price in the costliest term - in a forced
surrender of her womanhood.

Debbie's non-acceptability due to her decision of not conforming to the tenets of patriarchal institutions in the society occurs several times in the novel, whether in a joking remark, (Abosi tells her, "I am a man") or serious observations. In Chapter nine, the Ibo couple she picks up on the way to Asaba, find her queer. When the woman runs into hiding seeing Debbie in army uniform, the husband chides her:

Are you not ashamed of yourself? Why, she is only a woman holding a gun.61

The woman also appears not believing Debbie's army connection:

The woman came closer, and though she was obviously weak she was none the less amused at Debbie. "You mean you dress like a soldier on purpose to guard your car and your belongings? But you have a man with you - why didn't you let him wear the army uniform and carry the gun?"62

In Chapter twelve, Debbie takes her most courageous political decision to go on her own to meet Abosi and persuade him to a peace agreement with Saka Momoh, living the comfort and luxury and security of her big house at Sapele. The gory rape and sub-human treatment she had suffered in
her previous mission - the official one - have not been able to overpower her political zeal to work for a united, prosperous Nigeria. On her second mission she often has to hide her true identity to be able to take a transport to Aba, and when she accosts the bus service agent, he again reminds her that she still remains unacceptable. Because the agent, listening to her idea of going to Benin at this time of trouble and high risks takes her as one of those fallen women:

I know your type of women. You are running away from your husband, looking for army men. Now they own all the money in the country, you women are leaving your husbands and going after the soldiers. What will happen to you lot when the war is over? (...) I would rather die than have anything to do with a woman who has been touched by those soldiers. 63

Towards the end of the same chapter, Debbie is not only touched but raped for the second time by none else than Salihu Lawal, the huge, over six-feet tall Hausa Captain who once admonished her on having an English boyfriend. Because the whitemen treated Nigeria and her girls as whores. Now he was there to explain an innocent woman captive that when a Nigerian man did it, it was not 'whoring'.

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"You are all saboteurs, selling our country to the foreign powers. People like you!" As he became more worked up and enraged he started to stammer. "Go in, go in there. I am going to show you that you are nothing but a woman, an ordinary woman." 64

Through Bebbie's ordeal, Emecheta makes a powerful presentation of how women, already commoditised under patriarchy, become the easiest prey during war. Debbie's mother tries to console her in Chapter 9 when Debbie regains consciousness after her gang rape by Nigerian soldiers.

We are women, daughter, this is our lot. 65

After the incident, they are given lift in a car which is taking an Ibo businesswoman towards Benin. At a check-post on the way, her mother narrates their tale of woe to the soldiers. They reply comes in a shocking nonchalance:

"Give her hot water to wash herself. Hundreds of women have been raped - so what? It's war. (...) 66

When another soldier wants Debbie to describe the whole incident in detail so that he could report it, she just denies to do so. feebly nodding her head. This invites very unkindly remark from the soldier to which the businesswoman reacts:
"What do you mean?" (...) "Don't you realize that she will never find a husband now that she has been raped by soldiers?"

"I did not rape her, so why attack me? She should go and wash herself and be a nun."67

comes the soldier's reply.

Through the traumatic experience of Debbie - of her own rape and those of the other Ibo women refugees - Emecheta highlights one of the major aspect of feminist politics. That is, to identify the inherent hatred for women in the male psyche - a "gift" of dominant patriarchy. Nigerian men (African men, rather) appear to be the agent of the same patriarchal force that seek to ravage the dignity of woman in order to establish masculine superiority. Explaining rape of women during war by soldiers, Gloria Watking observes:

Sexism fosters, condones and supports male violence against women, as well as encouraging violence between males. In patriarchal society, men are encouraged to channel their frustration in the direction of those without power - women and children. And white men and black men alike abuse women.68

During war, the soldiers acquire an added sense of power by carrying guns and other weapons with them, and their trauma and frustration at their defeat or overwhelming
sense of power after victory finds outlet in their women captives. What Emecheta has been able to show in the agony of her heroine is that even an official protection in the shape of an army uniform does not make any difference. There is hardly a difference between how Regina, the beautiful girlfriend of Ugoji, the bank clerk, is treated by Hausa rioters, and how Debbie is tortured by Nigerian soldiers. Only Debbie survives all assaults on her while Regina is brutally raped and then cut into pieces.

At the beginning of the novel, Emecheta's protagonist is a bit more western, with her individual aspirations and sense of independence. But her war experience becomes a sort of purging for her to realise the strength and courage of African women. In Chapters fourteen, sixteen and seventeen, she undertakes a journey to meet Abosi as a self-appointed ambassador of peace. Though the journey ends with a firm 'no' from Abosi to her proposals of stopping the meaningless war, it also assumes a symbolic passage to her becoming a 'complete' woman as during this journey she has her tryst with real African life and African womanhood, from which she draws strength and courage. Her conviction in her political vision of working for a united, prosperous Nigeria.
devoid of tribal politics, her confidence in her mission and herself and, her courage get an overwhelming boost during this symbolic journey as she comes closer and closer to know more about traditional Africa and her women. But to Emechet-
ta’s Oxford educated protagonist, the journey does not prove to be walking on a bed of roses, rather the progress is made through several brushes with death, nerve-snap~ing tests of human endurance, fear of death, rape and disease.

The lessons along her journey come to her through many women as well as situations. Whether it is her own mother who undergoes a surprising transformation, or Uzoma Madako, the Ibo housewife, or the old widow in Agbor who gives them shelter against marauding Nigerian militia - all appear before her as symbols of African women’s indomitable spirit to struggle for survival against all odds, and at the same time not losing their compassion for the distressed and their sense of cooperation to let others live. Debbie’s experience in the creeks opens her mind to the gift of community life that African women of yore enjoyed, where they were not only free and independent but in the face of a crisis, they came together to fight against it and bring about a solution. The young mother, Dorothy’s offer to suckle baby Biafra whose parents are killed by federal
soldiers is an example before Debbie of the selfless participation of African women towards survival of the community. The way all the children are taken care of by the fleeing band of women refugees only proves it several times. Debbie's lessons come to her not only at a psychic level but through tangible, physical experience as well. By peeling off dried layer of creek mud from her face, she is reminded of the face pack she used to apply in London. As she feels her smoothened skin below the layer of mud, this she thinks about the artificiality of her 'imported' culture and education.

The transformation of Stella Ogedemgbe is a jolt to Debbie, as she finds her mother becoming a source of strength for her since she was raped by Nigerian soldiers. She realises that it is her mother's will to survive that stops Stella from making a passive surrender to her fate as she did to her husband when he was alive. As Debbie takes her much needed rest in their house at Sapele, she is grateful to have her mother around:

Her mother had nursed, talked, prayed, then bullied, telling her daughter to put it all behind her, that she could still lead a perfect normal life - this from a woman who for years had pretended to be so frail and dependent that tying her
own headscarf was a big task. \textsuperscript{69}

Stella in the later part of the novel is seen to have engaged herself in 'attack trade', something which required a high degree of courage during the civil war years.

The passive Ibo housewife, waiting quietly for her husband's command at the Benin bus stop at the beginning of the journey is another woman who transforms herself into a tower of strength for not only Debbie, but the whole group of refugees. Her slapping of Dorothy, the young mother lamenting that she is left alone to look after her children, comes as a crucial lesson to Debbie on African women's participation in preservation of their community and its wellbeing:

"Shame on you, woman, Shaaaaame!" she fumed. "What type of Ibo woman are you? Which bush community did you come from? What unlucky woman raised you as a daughter? Since when have men helped us look after children? Have you not old people in your cluster of homesteads, to do their job of bringing up the young ones?:\textsuperscript{70}

This part of the novel also shows Debbie's tryst with motherhood, as she voluntarily takes charge of baby Biafra during her journey to Benin. In the creek standing half submerged in the mud, she struggles to save the baby's life.
but in vain. The child, weak from lack of shelter and proper care, falls ill and dies of diarrhoea.

Many critics have attributed Debbie’s voluntary acceptance of baby Biafra’s charge as the last step towards her evolution as an African woman, as this brings the ‘motherhood’ image in Emecheta’s heroine. Of course, with the baby slung from her back, Debbie acquires the looks of a typical African mother carrying her baby during a journey. But Emecheta craftily draws subtle lines of distinction in depicting her protagonist’s motherhood. Her acceptance of this ‘temporary’ role of a mother is voluntary and not forced upon her as a matter of social expectation to ‘breed’ children, as any other woman would have done normally.

Secondly, the birth, short life and then a sad death of baby Biafra has a psycho-somatic connection with Debbie Ogedemgbe’s experience of Biafra. The baby is born in a turbulent situation when there is no basic amenities available. The secession of the eastern region under Abosi also takes place amid unforeseen chaos and tragic death of innocent people. Then the short life of the child involves Debbie absolutely. So does the short existence of Biafra, which finds Debbie as an army officer, as a messenger of the
federal government and later, a self-appointed peace
ambassador, then as a roving ambassador of Biafra in
Britain, and above all, a victim of the very process that
gives birth to the Biafran cause. Finally, the child's
untimely death is also very symbolic of what happens to
Abosi's Biafra at the end. The child succumbing to the
dreaded disease is also related to the great Biafran dream
later succumbing to the holocaust of a dreaded civil war
accompanied by lack of food and other life-saving materials.
The death of baby Biafra again comes as a premonition of the
annihilation of the Biafran dream.

The war finally ends as Chijioke Abosi and his family
flee the country at the end of the novel. As Debbie makes
out a French and a South African plane waiting at the tarmac
to take them away, Emecheta again gives an example of
her heroine's political foresight. Because Debbie decides
that she must stop this coward Abosi from running away, so
that thousands more Ibos will not perish at the hands of
Salihu Lawal and Nigerian army leaders like him who would
soon start a victory bloodbath as they get the news of
Abosi's flight.

A hot uncontrollable anger enveloped her, making
her sweat and shiver at the same time. To be
betrayed by the very symbol of Biafra! She remembered the pitiful baby Biafra who stretched and died on her back; she remembered the image of the young mother who was raped and then pounded to a pulp by those inhuman soldiers; she recalled the death of Ngbechi and his little brother Ogo... 71

She hurls the mines at Abosi but misses him, as his plane starts moving to take off.

She apparently fails in her last mission. But through her series of failures in the novel she is purged and comes to see the light at the end of the tunnel. She remains unshaken in her resolve to stay back in Nigeria as a renewed wave of love for her own people sweeps down her veins. She decides to bring up the orphaned Nwoba boys, a symbolic gesture of her determination to preserve and work for the future generation of her country, that has been damaged by the war. This again points to her desire to participate in the process of nation-building in a war ravaged Nigeria, and work for its unity and prosperity.

So when Alan offers to take her to England in the last plane about to leave the runway, away from the chaos and hardship of a country torn apart by war to a life of plenty and comfort in his own country, Debbie throws her instantaneous refusal on his face.
"I see now that Abosi and his likes are still colonised. They need to be decolonized. I am not like him, a black white man, I am a woman and a woman of Africa. I am a daughter of Nigeria and if she is in shame, I shall stay and mourn with her in shame. No, I am not yet ready to become the wife of an exploiter of my nation. (...)"

Goodbye, Alan. I didn’t mind your being my male concubine, but Africa wil never stoop to be your wife; (...) never again to be your slave. (...)"72

As another bomb explodes, Alan’s plane leaves Nigerian soil to take him to his home, after the successful completion of his mission of destruction. And as the last gunshot of the civil war is yet to be heard, Debbie Ogedemgbe looks forward to her new mission of ‘creation’ out of the ruins that Alan leaves behind.

The women in Cyprian Ekwensi’s Survive the Peace are a class apart from Emecheta’s Debbie Ogedemgbe. The novel begins where Destination Biafra appears to end. The civil war backdrop remaining the same, Ekwensi’s novel starts at a point when the war is coming to a close, with Biafran soldiers deserting their regiments or surrendering to the federal troops who are occupying and gaining control of Biafran-held areas. Ekwensi, the brilliant storyteller that he is, portrays the aftermath of the civil war when chaos and despair have become the order of the day.
The protagonist, James Odugo, is a senior news reporter working with Radio Biafra during the war. The devastating effect of the civil war that crippled civilian life completely is experienced through Odugo's suffering and in his relationship with the women in this novel. The human predicament in the war-ravaged land is realised not only on a physical plane but as an integral part of inner experience of the characters in the novel.

Amidst scarcity of food and other essential commodities, breaking down of families and all forms of human communication, and that ever present spine-chilling apprehension of an imminent annihilation, everybody is waiting for the war to be over. But even after the war stops, peace remains elusive as ever. The fast degenerating life in the post-war society has its share of failing relationships. If the war outside has stopped, the war within has just begun afresh. The novelist aptly quotes Thomas Paine: war involves in its progress such a train of unforeseen and unsuspected circumstances that no human wisdom can calculate the end.

The general mood of despair is evident when Odugo and
Vic are fleeing from Umunevo to Obodonta along with a never-ending stream of refugees pouring in from various parts of Biafra.

Fleeing from one place to the other was nothing new. What was new was the loss of faith, the sudden realization of the futility of the human suffering, the deaths and the privations, and above all, the question mark over tomorrow. 73

The illusion here, that explains the gap between the appearance and the reality, is man-made. This illusion also relates to the question of human survival. As one finds at the beginning of the novel, James Odugo is creating this illusion as he is seen working in the news 'manufacturing' room of Radio Biafra's Umunevo centre:

When the reporter had broken into the newsroom, they had bombarded him with questions. 'Man, how was it, how many... killed?' 'Twenty.' 'Make it forty-nine, that is a better figure.' 'Wounded - ?' 'About forty-five - ' 'Say hundred ... stands better on the air.' - three houses completely buried by bombs - ' 'A whole row of houses would be more graphic. (...)'. 74

As John de St. Jorre describes:

The first shots had hardly been fired when it became apparent that there were two wars going on in Nigeria: the one on the ground and the
communicate war. (....) The scripts of Radio Nigeria and the Voice of Biafra were virtually interchangeable. Federal claims of Biafran casualties, if true, would have meant the total destruction of the Biafran army, while Biafra's assertions conjured up a dramatic, but equally unfounded image of Nigeria tottering on the point of collapse. 75

But as a reporter, Odugo was a constant link between the framed illusion and the realities on the ground. He suffered under the pressure of coping with the demand of maintaining this link. So he would drown himself in palm wine every evening to 'deaden' his conscience and to 'rest' his nerves.

Juliet Okonkwo sums up the central theme of Survive the Peace as follows:

In the dangerous and confused state of chaos that prevailed between crumbling of an old order and a setting up of a new one (....) Odugo tries to locate and bring together the various members of his family who had been separated by the war. The author thus creates for himself, the opportunity to present with great vividness, the state of insecurity due to very many abandoned guns which fell into ruthless hands; the rampage of soldiers from both sides of the fight, molestations of innocent civilians, especially young women; the danger of the roads; broken homes; permissive sex; the destruction of war, countless refugees, and relief operations. Through a series of flashbacks, certain movements during the war itself are recreated. 76
Amidst all this, James Odugo stands as a witness to the forces interacting between illusion and the reality, he himself being one. His personal relationship with men and women around him is also affected by the interplay of these forces. Peter Nazareth observes:

Like other Ekwensi protagonists, James Odugo is a witness to society, social forces and social disintegration. But unlike (...) Jagua Nana, Odugo is almost dwarfed by events: they are too large for him to be able to shape, manipulate or fully resist.77

The external chaos and insecurity also characterize the protagonist's internal conflicts, especially in relation to his interaction with the four major women characters in the novel, namely, Vic Ezenta, Gladys Nuibe, Benne and Juliette. All these four turn out to be survivors at the end of the novel. They survive because they are obsessed with the kind of life they happen to lead during the war and continue to live like that even after the war. Their survival instincts often draw them towards a permissive sexuality which, as Ekwensi's narration suggests, characterized the lives of many Nigerian women during the two-and-a-half-year long war. Often this permissive sex happens to be the reason behind breaking down of families as well as individual relationship. But the novelist has shown the readers the other side
of the story too - that war also unites and creates new relationship as under extreme pressure of the fear of elimination and agony human soul stretches up to establish new friendship. In those moments of fear new bonds of human understanding are created.

Khalid Kishainy writes commenting on the relationship between women, war and sex:

Wars invariably deprive young wives and lovers of their menfolk, resulting in financial, emotional and sexual frustrations. At no time is the natural balance between the sexes more seriously disturbed than during wars when thousands of men are thrown into one sector of the country and hundreds of towns and villages are left to women and children only. Loaded with booty, provisions and a flat salary, the warrior finds in the starving displaced women an easy target. To the enemy, she is just another prize of war to be ravished and subdued, to her compatriots she must give all and humour the men who are dying for her king and country. The permanent threat of death and the cheapened price of life diminish the sanctity of the human values and at the same time engender a burning desire to ensure the survival of human life by a crude response to the sex instinct.78

But after the war is over and life starts limping back to normalcy, men and women get back, or at least, desire to do so, to the pre-war state of their relationship that has gone through a trying time and would often succumb to its demands. And this is when conflict arises and various
ramifications of such conflicts is what Ekwensi highlights in James Odugo's relationship with the women in *Survive the Peace*.

Odugo came to meet Vic when she was looking for work at the Umunevo Center of Voice of Biafra Radio, where Odugo worked as the senior reporter. In their first encounter, Odugo was immensely attracted towards her.

Unemployment among girls was no news in war time neither was free sex. But to Odugo, Vic was a rare type of girl. Tall and big bosomed, her face high cheek-boned and passive, she carried herself with that pride and dignity that brought out his best behaviour.79

From then on Vic and Odugo stayed together in a new kind of friendship which probably can be explained by war time necessities. Because they needed each other for survival. Odugo, separated from his wife and kids by this war, needed a companion. Vic proved to be more than that.

Their war time alliance takes care of their biological needs, and to certain extent, their emotional requirement, considering the air of insecurity and uncertainty that always hung so heavily in that shanty town of Umunevo during the war. Vic knows that after the war Odugo will go back to
his wife and children. However, she cannot stand the thought of it. In Book one, Chapter two, when Vic and Odugo plan to leave Umunevo as pounding federal shells seem to draw smaller and smaller circles around them, and the Biafran army deserters throng the market place, Odugo decides to move towards Ifitenu because it could be one of those 'safer' places, apart from the fact that he might find his wife there. But at the mention of Ifitenu on Odugo's lips, Vic puts her foot down and makes it clear to him that she never wished to encounter his wife:

"Put me down! I am not going there to challenge your wife!"

In a subtle one-liner, Ekwensi highlights the conflicts within war time alliances.

As the novel proceeds to give more on Odugo-Vic relationship, the novelist provides some flashbacks. Anna, Vic's younger sister, dies in an air raid. The incident is preceded by a frantic search by Odugo and Vic to find her out, which takes them to a lot of places. And finally, to their utter shock and dismay when they discover Anna's corpse in the morgue, in those moments of despair and agony Odugo and Vic come closer. Odugo's attraction for the girl
also makes him full of emotional support for her. Her mother, Martha Ezenta later crosses over to the federal territory and her father, a businessman, is already separated from them due to the war. Vic too wants to find out her parents.

Chaos reigns supreme as every civic system breaks down at the end of the war which leaves human beings with least accountability. Ekwensi highlights the risk involved in moving on roads due to attacks by either frustrated groups of Biafran militia who took it on innocent civilians by looting or killing them just for fun, or the victorious federal army personnel whose orders, to be obeyed at any cost, were not always of the official kind. The lurking danger on the roads, as depicted in an incident in Chapter three of Book one, forces Odugo and Vic to accept Pa Ukoha's offer to stay in his house till the situation improves. And it is during this stay that both get estranged.

On being asked by Pa Ukoha, Odugo tells him that Vic is yet to become his wife, but as a war time friend, she 'performs all the duties of a wife'. But in Chapter nine of Book one, Vic finally gives Odugo a bit of her mind, and the protagonist seems to rediscover her:
He looked at her and his whole body trembled uncontrollably with desire. He put aside his book and lay beside her. Thank God for the comfort of Vic. He needed her as much as she needed him. (...) But for Juliette, but for his marriage, he would have let himself go entirely, and made Vic her own. But he knew the liaison was in its last stage.

As this thought comes to Odugo, he engages in a fierce lovemaking, at the end of which Vic appears to him in a new light. She knows now that shortly Odugo will leave her for ever to join his wife. In the lamp light that softly touches her beautiful physique, she tells Odugo:

Me, I mean to get everything I have missed in last thirty months. (...) The things a girl misses... good company, good clothes, fashion, hairdos, shopping, dancing, travel... (...).
Somewhere where a girl can be a girl. Not in this village of pond water and wood fires.

It is then Odugo comes to know about the intimacy that has been growing between air force officer Abdul Gana and Vic. She has been visiting him regularly and receiving her share of costly gifts. At this point in the novel Ekwensi captures in Odugo's self-contradictory thoughts the climaxing conflict in a man-woman relationship against the background of war. Odugo, while planning to start a new life as soon as he locates his wife and kids, is not being able to
accept Vic's relationship with other men.

The rage of passion that overcomes him at this new found knowledge of Vic's shifting loyalty makes Odugo 'throw' her on the bed and 'mount' her. This is symbolic of the age-old patriarchal practice of making women submit through forced sex. Odugo, however, does not realise that he has been caught in his own philosophy - "the defeated must try and survive". Vic's defeat is on two planes: her family life has been shattered by the war which, if it does not kill her, makes her accept its verdict by taking the life of her dear sister and breaking down her family; and secondly, she suffers her defeat in her relationship with Odugo. As long as the war was on, none of the two bothered about the future as the question of survival was of only concern then. While fighting the fears of the war together, they were sharing a relationship that was defined by war time needs. After the war is over and Odugo decides to go back to his wife, it is probably then Vic realises the futility of their liaison and wasted emotion. For her, and not for Odugo, the end of their relationship is certainly her defeat. So she wants to survive this defeat as she has survived the war.
On the other hand, Odugo realises to his utter disappointment that the girl whose company he enjoyed in last thirty months is no longer 'his' as she once was in Umunevo. With his mind set on starting life afresh with his wife Juliette, Odugo expects Vic's total submission and full loyalty as long as he is sharing the same bed with her.

Vic Ezenta not only survives the war but through her sense of insecurity and agonies of 'defeat' she allows herself to be 'liberated' from her war time bondage. Looking forward to a life of her own, she soon leaves Odugo and Obodonta, and goes to Lagos with Abdul Gana.

The second most interesting woman character in the novel is Benne, the captain's wife. To a great extent, she resemble Ekwensi's most famous character Jagua Nana in her insatiable lust for male company. In the novel she is made to appear such that she only understands her sexual needs and never takes care of her own children and never appears to remember her husband who is fighting at the Biafran front. Ekwensi makes her elationship with her husband appear strange:

It was known that he loved Benne. It was also known that he regretted marrying her but could do
nothing about it; at least, not yet. Pa Ukoha and Ada tried as much as they could to keep Benne in control but they could not tell what made her so restless. She was always slipping the net and they were too old to keep up with her. Her need for the warmth of male company was insatiable. The sight of any kind of military uniform got her on heat like a bitch in rut. 82 (emphasis added)

However, she is treated no better than a bitch by anybody who matters in the novel! The foodstuff she gets in return for her by liaising with soldiers in the federal barracks is shared by everybody, including Pa and Ma Ukoha, despite the old couple giving their intense sermons to 'civilize' Benne. Her lack of love and concern for a 'husband' who is supposed to have 'regretted marrying her but could not do anything about it' is one of Benne's biggest crime. Her apathy towards children begot from this 'husband' of hers is seen as unnatural for a woman, and a mother at that. Ekwensi never comes clear on why the captain regretted marrying Benne even though he 'loved' her. And if he regretted his marriage, one does not come to know anything from the novel why he 'could not do anything about it'. When the war saw almost every man and woman entering into all possible sorts of relationship, Benne is expected to keep her fidelity in tact for a husband who regrets marrying her!
As the narrative moves ahead, the arrival of soldiers in Obodonta adds to the insecurity of womenfolk there. In Chapter four, Book one, a girl bathing in the stream flowing by the village is caught and raped by soldiers. Like in *Jagua Nana*, here Ekwensi talks of how in traditional African life men and women respected each other's privacy while even bathing naked in the same stream. It was not unusual for women to stand completely naked while bathing in full view of male bathers. But that peace has been destroyed by this war, as in the same chapter 'pretty young girls, breasts swinging, hips swaying', run for safety as Pa Ukoha declares that soldiers are looking for women. 'It is the price of defeat', as the old man says.

But Ekwensi tells us that certain women benefit from the soldiers and Benne is one among them. Her benefit of course ensures, besides her share of sensuality, a steady supply of food materials to the Ukoha household that were luxury during war time scarcity. At the end of Chapter nine, Book one Ada Ukoha reprimands Benne:

*You call yourself wife, but you are a harlot... This is how you let your children die of kwashiorkhor!... When your child died, were you not sleeping outside?*
But Benne's philosophy of life is simple and still untouched by the war, as she reveals to Odugo. She cannot turn away from enjoying life because her man is away. When Odugo asks her about captain, she tells him:

'So your husband is a womanizer?'
'Do I care? He is not the only one who knows a fine thing.'

This is the only time the novelist tries to hint at the captain's promiscuous nature through Odugo's unconcerned questioning. Later, in the novel he is found running a rehabilitation centre that provides cure to victims of war by introducing them to the bliss of spirituality. The abundance of women followers in his centre proves his increasing popularity among women in a war-torn society. Though this is not to suggest anything about the captain's promiscuous nature (Ekwensi never comes clear about the captain in his novel), one could always assume that he knew the art of influencing women. As the war draws to an end, the captain returns to Obodonta as a changed man. The devastations of war have influenced a change in his way of looking at life. He appears to have become more spiritual, rising above his worldly cares. However, he is enraged at
Benne's infidelity and hurts her with a skull - a war memorial he had brought from the warfront - 'that changes the vision of his life'.

The skull is a symbol of 'death' or 'annihilation' by war. And through its contact with Benne's body, a symbolic representation of the 'death' or end of her relationship with captain has been hinted at. Like what happens to Odugo in his frustration of losing Vic, the captain's violent action is also an expression of his frustration at not being able to accommodate Benne in his life, though he 'loved' her. In the later part of the novel Ekwensi tells us how the captain had come to Benne asking her to join him in his service of the new sect. But Benne had refused to go with him. It was quite natural, as their ways were so different. One was seeking solace in the world of spirituality after experiencing the meaningless of human endeavour that could be put to an end with a single shot of bullet. The other was subjected to a situation where all means that defined happiness in her own terms were taken away from her by the same war. Now that the war was over she wanted to get back what she had lost during the war, as Vic had said. The captain and Benne, both wanted to 'live', but in their own different ways.
Odugo does not prove to be any better man for Benne. As his relationship with Vic witnesses a diminishing trend, Odugo is drawn more and more to Benne just to fulfill his physical needs, and starts sleeping with her. Benne wants to conquer Odugo, as she tries her best to pull him out from Vic’s powerful spell. But apart from fulfilling Odugo’s and her own physical needs, their relationship fails to achieve anything significant. However, looking at her plight Odugo develops a compassion for the woman:

He was not in love with Benne. She meant little or nothing to him. Yet he felt some sympathy for her, because she was the underdog of the family. Everybody took it out on her. And he knew that Benne had sensed his feelings and was taking advantage of them.86

Finally, when Odugo is preparing to leave Pa Ukoha’s house and move to Ifitenu to look for his wife, Benne, full of tears, angrily reminds him that all men throw her away after satisfying themselves.

Captain left me here, no money, no food, no plan. It will go on and 10: for my own survival. I don’t want anyone to control me.87

Ekwensi, probably in his attempt to ‘redeem’ Benne, brings her to Gladys at the end of the novel. Benne pays
her a visit at the Odugo household after she comes to know about the tragic death of the protagonist. Even in her preoccupation with pursuit of pleasure and her strong sense of individual independence, as the novel makes one believe, she shows that streak of humanity in her which brings her to stand by the side of another woman in distress.

The other woman with a love for personal 'independence' is Juliette, Odugo's wife who also deserts him finally to live with an army officer. In the novel Odugo has his recurring moments of doubt about Juliette's fidelity. As his wife, he would hear rumours about her wartime liaisons, and try to ignore them:

Odugo decided to thrust aside all doubts about Juliette, since he himself was no celibate. He dismissed the stories that came to his ears, calling them the inevitable price one had to pay in wartime, man's ultimate disgrace.

But when finally he is able to reach Ifitenu and confronts his wife, the reality has changed for him. He discovers that his wife is busy organising relief operations in war-affected territories, moving in army vehicles and planes and hobnobbing with army officials. She is very much engrossed in her work, as it is a new kind of independence which she
is enjoying to the fullest. Odugo appears to be far away from her mind. Further, her open liaison with high-ranking army officials has made her an important person in the area (so very different from Benne's soliciting army men). And to beat it all, she is carrying a child fathered by someone else. Then in flashbacks Ekwensi tells us how Juliette's nature of maintaining her individuality at any cost had often been damaging to their pre-war conjugal relations:

Not once in their eight years had she travelled to Ogene to know who her in-laws were. Her idea of being Odugo's wife began and ended with living in Lagos and travelling to Anukwu. Odugo could either go with her or remain in Lagos, or go to his own home. She had been a top socialite in Lagos and had always been more interested in public life than domesticity. During war, Juliette got involved in attack trade which involved bribing one's way across the fighting fronts in either direction. 89

So it does not come as a surprise that Juliette had found her lover in the army.

But Ekwensi again puts Odugo under a spell of self-contradictory thoughts as he appeared to have been when Vic left him in Obodonta. He himself has had more than one torrid affair during the war, but cannot take his wife's sexual adventures in a similar spirit. Probably, Juliette is just not another 'girl' for him, he happens to be her hus-
band. In a flashback the reader comes to know that Odugo was cautioned by his parents before marrying a girl like Juliette. But then Odugo also loved fast life and had his share of fun with other girls in Lagos. The glamour of a government job and that too in the media world gave him a different kind of confidence in himself. His wife being a socialite and her love for public life did not bother him much as he also kept busy. But today he faces her without a job in his pocket and an uncertain future before him when he cannot be blamed much for expecting a little moral support in terms of love and attention. But then, he always knew his wife, or didn't he? Odugo does his stock-taking:

This is where the real defeat begins, when your own woman turns against you and votes for the other side. But I must first try and gather my senses. What is Juliette up to? Why has she switched over to men on the winning side? Is the new man on the winning side? - he may not be. (...)

Now what are you going to do Odugo? Take her back - with the child? Not possible. Forgive her, trade your disloyalties, one to the other? Ignore her? 90

Here in the novel Ekwensi makes an insight into the male ego during war time. One of Odugo's major problem with Juliette is her working for the federal soldiers, when he has supported the Biafran cause and is still suffering for
it. In addition to the stigma of defeat attached to anyone who was in favour of Biafra, he finds his wife's federal connections difficult to digest. It is perceived as a challenge to his intellectual being. Further, in terms of his personal relationship, Juliette, like Vic, is no longer 'under' his 'control'. So for Odugo, it is a double defeat. The thin layer of pride the society allowed him to enjoy as the 'husband' of a well known socialite and public figure is no more there for him. So when he watches Juliette flying away in a federal army helicopter to supervise relief operations, it is not her infidelity that is torturing him but the spirit of independence in her that has blasted his male ego.

This hypocrisy of patriarchal thought is evident when he tries to count his cards:

I have the three children. I have Ogene, and I have Gladys and my own unborn child. Next, I am going to Lagos. I may get my old job back, and everything that goes with it. (...) My marriage to Juliette was a proper marriage, not just a boy-and-girl affair.91

The only option open to the protagonist is to exercise the control of patriarchal 'custom' on Juliette. So one finds that Odugo is trying to rescue his sinking marriage by taking resort to customs which restrains a woman from liai-
sons not approved by the social norms. While meeting Juliette in the Red Cross waiting room she tries to remind her about her unethical manner of getting pregnant outside marriage. She retorts back:

'And you - have you been a saint?'
'Did I say I was? But while I may marry three or four wives, you cannot have more than one husband at a time.' (...
'You want me to cling to you when I have a chance to survive and you are not there to cling to?' (...
'I am not going to kill myself for you. I want to live free - independent. Not begging for every penny I need.'

She tells Odugo that he can keep their two sons, while she will have Ifoma, the daughter, as "She will still answer your name," -- she explains to Odugo. He is surprised at her total disregard of Ibo traditional law that declares carrying one man's child to another as abomination. But Juliette makes herself clear for once and for all:

'I do not wish to be under any new man, can't you understand? (...) Not under, not by the side, not controlled by any man. I want to be my own boss, and see what God has in store for me.'

Gladys Nuibe is placed at somewhat an opposite plane as compared to Juliette. She comes back to Odugo after the war. And in spite of her involvement in attack trade during
the war she does not have that strong sense of individuality and independence in her. During the war women involved in attack trade had to take a lot of risk to be able to operate across the border. Often they had to bribe in cash or kind, which included their bodies, to the army officers or militiamen who would let them cross the border with their wares. Apart from the danger of losing their lives to a stray bullet or a whimsical officer of the militia, they also ran the risk of encounters with robbers and armed refugees and army deserters who were equally desperate and thus, dangerous. Those who survived the war with this trade, not only made a big financial gain which was absolutely theirs without any share for their menfolk in it, but in the whole process they also gained immense confidence to look at life with a new vision, full of courage to take new risks. Many of them started their own enterprises after the war while many others worked as contractors. Further, educated women from the urban areas were involved in relief and rehabilitation work launched by the federal army. This brought them close to those who controlled power and thus generated confidence in them to reshape their lives the way they wanted. Many got government jobs or entered into politics. Juliette's war experience is one such example in this novel.
But Gladys is almost an antithesis to this, despite her long association with attack trading. She not only comes back to Odugo but desperately needs his support to lead her life through the post-war turmoils. During his relationship with Vic, Odugo would often remember Gladys. Their encounter was a 'head-over-heels infatuation that resulted in a night of furious lovemaking'. Odugo compares Gladys with Vic when the latter meets him for the first time at Umunevo radio station:

...both were striking personalities. Both had gentle smiles. Gladys was fairer, with a gazelle neck, and slightly taller. Vic had such elegant hands, and she spent hours manicuring her fingers. The appearance of Vic at the radio station signalled the return of romance. His frustrated infatuation for Gladys had found a new outlet. 94

But now Gladys' return was to provide Odugo an emotional substratum on which he could start his life again. She goes to Obodonta looking for him but by then Odugo had already left for Ifitenu. They meet just before Odugo is to leave for Enugu where his wife is working with the relief distribution centre. It is interesting here to note that Odugo and Gladys meet before he finally comes to know that Juliette was carrying somebody else's child. So in Chapter four, Book two, when Gladys tells Odugo that her plan is to
'follow' him if she is 'allowed', Odugo gets some of his lost 'glory' back. When Vic deserted him suddenly for another man in federal air force, Odugo had realised:

Now the truth was coming out. If you are a defeated man, without a job, without power, how do you retain the loyalty of your women?95

But Gladys Nuibe's absolute surrender brings back his confidence by reviving his ego. When Odugo plans to visit his parents at Ogene to leave his children there before he proceeds to Enugu for Juliette, Gladys accompanies him. It is during their stay in Ogene that she tells Odugo that she is carrying his baby:

'Oh! ...So this is why you were searching for me everywhere?'
'Yes - to let you know.'
'It is a strange world. People are dying, people are being born.'
'I want to know what you advise.'
'Like what?'
'Keep it - or remove it?'

Odugo thought hard. If this had happened before the war, I would be outraged. (...) But the war came and changed things (...). The women are no longer content with motherhood only and the kitchen. They want to express themselves in other ways. Again, how sure I am about Juliette? (...)
'Gladys, what I could advise is this.' (...)
'Can you carry it through?'
'If you wish.'
'I wish.'96
Odugo's decision is influenced by his 'love' for Gladys, as she is the only woman completely surrendering to his control, when everyone including Vic proves otherwise, and he is not yet 'sure' of his own wife's loyalty. He reflects:

No nation can survive on death. It is the new generation that must make for continuity. Let the baby come. This is the time when our women are running away from us because they believe we will not survive. Now Gladys is coming forward to me with a child in her arms. Bless her!97

Gladys Nuibe proves to be a wonder drug for Odugo's chauvinist male ego. Probably that is why Ekwensi 'rewards' her with motherhood at the end, though her lover does not survive to see it. Gladys understands Odugo's concerns and is grateful for his 'permission' to have her baby. She is excited about the baby being a love baby - 'the sweetest kind of all.'

With the help of old friend Abraham Fumori Odugo finds financial support and an invitation to join his old job. But he does not want to stay in Lagos and instead plans to live in Enugu with Gladys. After Juliette finally tells him about her decision to leave him, all hurdles (or obligations) are clear for Odugo to give his full attention to a girl who has so willingly surrendered to him.

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As Gladys and Odugo plan the arrival of their new baby, they decide that with the help of Abraham Fumori's wife, Gladys will soon start her own business. Odugo tells her that he will pay a visit to Obodonta to collect his land documents. With the money from the land sell, he will start his own consultancy business. Their dream of a comfortable and happy life in immediate future fills the couple with energy and confidence. So confident is Odugo that he decides to undertake a journey to Obodonta by road even when the particular area had been officially declared as being infested with highway robbers. It is just on the outskirts of Obodonta, minutes away from their resources for a happy future life that Odugo's dreams are nipped in the bud as he is killed by two highway robbers. He does survive the war, but cannot survive the peace. The novel ends with a picture of Gladys' secluded motherhood in Ogene where she nurses a baby girl - her love child.

At the backdrop of both Destination Biafra and Survive the Peace there exists a war that has come to create new meanings in life alongside its trail of destruction of life and property. The war makes and breaks families through its secret liaisons, adventures, and assertion of power of life.
as well of brute force. The war also makes men and women live under a canopy of insecurity and fear, but at the same time proves to be a liberating force. Living with uncertainty and a constant apprehension of annihilation makes human beings suffer a different kind of boredom, whether it is a man in uniform doing his routine job or a civilian, always alert to be able to hear the bombing siren or the rat-tat of the carbine. And amid all this, they all look forward eagerly to a life of peace and prosperity. As hopes perish under the thud of a cannon-shell, the war also generates new hopes by creating new relationship.

In Emecheta's *Destination Biafra* the war is experienced through the eyes of a woman, Debbie Ogedemgbé, who is also the protagonist in the novel. As critics like Katherine Frank have observed, war as a masculine political context, has been skilfully used by Emecheta as a backdrop to address the question of 'power' in gender relation within a preserve that is taken for granted to be male.

In *Destination Biafra* Emecheta moves (...) to the historical and political reality of the Biafran war in Nigeria. It is a daring departure from the domestic preserve of most novels written by African women. *Destination Biafra*, in fact, is probably the only war novel within recent memory written by a woman (...).98
Emecheta by asserting that relationship between sexes is both historical as well as political, takes women out from the domestic periphery to the battlefield to create Debbie, one of the most brilliant characters in African women's writing and African fiction as a whole. Thus the war is interpreted in Emecheta's novel through the experience of a woman.

But in Ekwensi's *Survive the Peace* war time turmoil of the humanity and experience of suffering as well as dreams of life unfold before the readers through personal experience of James Odugo, a man, and also through his relationships with four women in the novel. The women, unlike Debbie Ogedemgbe, do not exist independently. Their existence is bound to Odugo's experience. Their survival in the narrative depends on their interaction with Odugo. Vic, Benni, and Juliette are there as long as they have something to do with him or vice versa. The moment their interaction with Ekwensi's male protagonist comes to an end, they cease to be. The last of them is Gladys Nuibe, who, after her one-night stint with Odugo at Umunevo, again makes a re-entry when the war is over and so is the attack trade. But the most important consideration behind her resurfacing
(which she herself admits to the protagonist as the reason for her frantic search for him) is to let Odugo know that she is carrying his baby, and also to seek his consent on whether to 'carry it' or 'remove it'. The moment Odugo meets his death, the novel ends, just after making a passing reference to Gladys and her baby. So in Ekwensi's novel the war experience in general as well as the individual perception of the four women of the war takes shape through the experience of a man.

Ekwensi, however, gives direct or indirect hints as to how patriarchal institutions and patriarchal emotions operate in a crisis situation like that of the war, and impede assertion of self in women. The reflections of this come up in Odugo's frustration, agonies and disappointments - for Vic's intimacy with Abdul Gana, Juliette's liaison with federal army officers, her carrying another man's child while not wanting any more to be a wife to him, her utter disregard for Ibo social laws, and so on. Ironically enough, it is through another strong patriarchal institution - the army - that the women are able to utilise their new found freedom and sense of independence and individuality. Vic is liberated from her bond with Odugo by air force officer Abdul Gana and she moves forward to a new place and
a new life with a hope of getting back what she 'missed' in 'last thirty months'. Benne, who believed that it was not her husband only who knew 'the fine things'. Those who gave it to her were soldiers of the federal army. Juliette's attack trade was possible only with connivance of the army people on either side of the border. Later in Enugu it is this army again that makes her important and well known by involving her in relief operations in which she is seen flying in army helicopters and moving with high-ranking army officers.

So one set of patriarchal values help these women to realise their newly granted advantages and utilise their full potential for personal benefit while they break away from another set of male domination - such as family, husband or a relationship. But all this comes for a price of willingness to satisfy male lust. (The army help is not voluntary, and women often have to compete with each other for this 'favour'.) So Ekwensi's women somehow don't leave the perimeter of patriarchy, and its shadow haunts them like a ghost. In fact Gladys, who once goes out of it comes back to live within it again. Economic independence becomes the chief liberating force for Ekwensi's women in Survive the
Peace, besides sex.

War generates, at times for a temporary period, a new economy, which often gives women a chance to come out of their economic subordination by men. The attack traders like Gladys and Juliette are products of this new economic order. With a new confidence gained from this economy, women start asserting themselves which is interpreted under patriarchy as disobedience, and often as infidelity by men. In normal peace time, economic independence is not encouraged under patriarchy. The war economy further worsens the situation for women. Pepe Roberts observes:

> Women who struggle to maintain some economic independence from men may be accused of making their husbands impotent, or of prostitution or of neglecting their children (...).99

So true in the case of Benne or Juliette in Survive the Peace!. These women pose themselves as 'problem' to men because of their ability to earn money in a difficult situation like war which generally leaves men crippled or without job. The men suffer from constant fear of losing their control on the women, as is evident in Christine Obbo's comment:
...it seems that women's attempt to cope with the new situations they find themselves in are regarded as a 'problem' by men, and a betrayal of traditions which are often confused with women's role.100

With her refusal to be anybody's wife anymore, Juliette echoes what Flora Nwapa's heroine, Amaka, says when Father McLaid wants to marry her in One is Enough:

I don't want to be a wife... a mistress, yes, with a lover, yes of course, but not a wife. There is something in that word that does not suit me. As a wife, I am never free. I am a shadow of myself. As a wife, I am almost impotent. I am in prison, unable to advance in body or soul. (....) I don't want to go back to my 'wifely' days. No, I am through with husbands.101

Emecheta has, however, given Debbie Ogedemgbé an independent existence. In the narration, her presence does not occur in relation to that of some man, as happens in the case of Gladys or Vic. Every course of action that she is a part of is by her own choice, and not because of a man's permission. Her motherhood, though temporary, is of different kind because it is voluntary, and not forced upon her as a social expectation. Ekwensi's Benne seems to have no existence without her men. Vic and Gladys leave one man to embrace another. Juliette is somewhat decided about her staying alive without depending on men for emotional or fi-
nancial support. But all of Debbie's decisions are her exclusive choice and all her actions are guided by her own will, even in her relationship with a man, Alan Grey.

In her most personal and intense relationship, that with Alan, her English boyfriend, Debbie remains the mistress of her existence. Many critics attribute Debbie's sexual submission to Alan as the rape of African (Nigerian) nationhood by imperialism. It is difficult to agree with this view, for Debbie's sexual liaisons with the English captain cannot be interpreted as her submission as nowhere in Destination Biafra Emecheta gives such an impression. The two suggested scenes of lovemaking (in Chapters four and eight) do not imply any use of force on her, rather in Chapter eight, the author writes, 'Somehow, Debbie allowed Alan to make love to her, there on the bare sand.' (p.114) Her dislikes for Alan and her doubts about his role in the war are made very clear to him in her conversations. Politically they don't see eye to eye. And finally and most significantly, at the end of the novel, when Alan offers to take Debbie away from a war-ravaged Nigeria to the warm comforts of England, she promptly refuses. Even an assurance from the Englishman that he will marry her does not have any effect on her. She calls him her male 'concubine'
and declares her resolve to stay in her own country and
mourn its shame. Her political will is again evident when
she identifies Abosi and his likes to be still colonized and
realizes the need to decolonize the country's leaders. She
decided to stay back to participate in nation building.

Debbie Ogedemgbhe is out and out of a political character, as has been shown earlier in this chapter. No woman in
Ekwensi's novel, however, shows any such political prowess, and therefore cannot be said to be a political character.
Debbie's effort at recording her experience during the war
is to bring to light, among other things, the courage and
resilience of her women companions she encounters during the
war. As a woman she tries to glorify those women who de-
served it. Ekwensi's women do not appear to be bothered
about doing something for the benefit of their own race, except for their personal gains. Further, Debbie's post-war
engagement plans are much nobler and concrete than the
Ekwensian women's 'getting back what I missed for thirty
months - fashion, travel, good food, shopping' or 'to see
what God has in store for me.'

Debbie Ogedemgbhe is a fighter and she lives in her
actions. Wanja in Ngugi wa Thiongo's Petals of Blood looks
like Debbie’s cousin when she says:

"...if you are born with this hole, instead of it being a source of pride, you are doomed to either marrying someone else or being a whore. You eat or you are eaten. How true I have found it. I decided to act... (...)."

This decision to ‘act’ taken by Debbie and other women in Destination Biafra makes it one of the most forthright feminist novels.
Notes and References


15. Ibid., pp.55-58.

16. Ibid., p.60.


19. Ibid., p.61.

20. Ibid., p.60.


23. Ibid., pp.32-33.


27. St. Jorre, op. cit., p.43.

28. Ibid., p.59.


30. Ibid., p.vii.


33. Ibid., p.113.

34. *Destination Biafra*, op. cit., p.33.

35. Ibid., p.32.

36. Ibid., p.78.

37. St. Jorre, op. cit., p.68.


40. Ibid., pp.230-231.

41. Ibid., p.35.

42. Ibid., p.36.

43. Ibid., p.255.

44. Ibid., pp.68-69.

45. Ibid., p.128.

46. Ibid., p.45.

48. Destination Biafra, op. cit., p.64.


51. Destination Biafra, op. cit., p.91.

52. Ibid., p.113.

53. Ibid., p.92.

54. Ibid., pp.120-121.

55. Ibid., p.58.

56. Ibid., p.128.

57. Ibid., p.125.

58. Ibid., pp.133-134.


62. Ibid., pp.129-130.

63. Ibid., p.162.

64. Ibid., p.175.
65. Ibid., p.134.
66. Ibid., p.135.
67. Ibid., p.136.
70. Ibid., pp.212-213.
71. Ibid., p.257.
72. Ibid., pp.258-259.
74. Ibid., pp.3-4.
75. St. Jorre, op. cit., p.147.
80. Ibid., p.15.
81. Ibid., p.62.
82. Ibid., p.63.
83. Ibid., p.31.
84. Ibid., pp.65-66.
85. Ibid., p.65.
86. Ibid., p.67.
87. Ibid., p.92.
88. Ibid., p.37.
89. Ibid., p.126.
90. Ibid., p.123.
91. Ibid., p.123.
92. Ibid., pp.139-140.
93. Ibid., p.141.
94. Ibid., p.39.
95. Ibid., p.79.
96. Ibid., pp.110-111.
97. Ibid., p.111.
98. Katherine Frank, op. cit., p.25.