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COVID 19 AND THE METAPHORS OF CRISIS IN SELECTED TEXTS BY ADICHIE AND ACHEBE: A JUNGIAN PSYCHO-ANALYTICAL READING

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This article aims at exploring Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's and Chinua Achebe's discourses on melancholy and grief in times of Covid 19 and Biafra crises in *Notes on Grief* (2021), and *There Was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra* (2012), as artists' experience with crisis. The study especially examines language from a Jungian perspective, to bring out the aesthetics of grief or pain as expressive modes of memory and the ideological concern for reviving self and deconstructing otherness. Taking a Jungian psycho-analytical stand, the study focuses on the self's perception of the other in the context of social crisis. It means to show that crisis is a powerful tool for intellectual regeneration of the artist and an experimental opportunity for society to assess itself, redefine values, reset boundaries and regenerate itself through the teachings drawn from the imposition of the new realities generated by that very crisis. The study finds that Adichie and Achebe's discourses highlight the necessity to reconceptualise grief and crisis not only as problematic occurrences that create emotive choc and despair, but also as recreational events that contribute to the mental and affective growing of both the artist and his/her society.

Keywords: crisis, artist, discourse, grief, Biafra, Covid 19.

Covid 19 et les métaphores de la crise dans des textes choisis d'Adichie et Achebe : une lecture psychanalytique jungienne

Résumé:

Cet article vise à explorer les discours de Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie et Chinua Achebe sur la mélancolie et le deuil en période de crises du covid 19 et du Biafra dans *Notes on Grief* (2021) et *There Was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra* (2012) en tant qu'expérience d'artistes face à la crise. L'étude interroge plus particulièrement le langage dans une perspective jungienne, pour faire émerger l'esthétique du deuil ou de la douleur comme modes d'expression de la mémoire affective et culturelle douloureuse et le souci idéologique de se revivifier et de déconstruire l'altérité. Prenant une position psychanalytique jungienne, l'étude porte sur la perception de soi de l'autre en contexte de crise sociale. Cela signifie montrer que la crise est un puissant outil de régénération intellectuelle de l'artiste et une opportunité expérimentale pour la société de s'évaluer, de redéfinir les valeurs, de réinitialiser les frontières et de se régénérer à travers les enseignements tirés de l'imposition des nouvelles réalités générées par cette même crise. L'étude révèle que les discours d'Adichie et d'Achebe soulignent la nécessité de reconceptualiser le deuil et la crise non seulement comme des événements problématiques qui créent un choc émotif et du désespoir, mais plutôt comme des événements récréatifs qui contribuent à la croissance mentale et affective de l'artiste et de sa société.

Mots clés : crise, artiste, discours, deuil, Biafra, covid 19.

Introduction

Aspects of the function of crisis in a writer's creative experience have been discussed by scholars without focussing on the recreative aspect of crisis. Okey Ndibe asserts that "A writer enjoys a paradoxical relationship to the notion of conflict" (Ndibe 2009: 27) without specifying how a writer can forge imaginative meaning out of crisis. Tanure Ojaide opines that conflict is an expression of difference involving competition for a writer (Ojaide 2012: 86). Ernest N. Emenyonu believes that the creative writer draws inspiration and themes from war situations, and yet has other challenges to confront. His imaginative work must still meet certain known aesthetic and critical standards (Emenyonu 2008: xii). It is Ogaga Okuyaye (2008) who seems to approach the problem from a pragmatic stand in his article "On the Versification of Pain: Nigerian Civil War Poetry" where he concentrates on the anesthetization of crisis without going further to articulate the positive effects of crisis on the artist himself. This stammering of criticism in the approach to the effects of crisis on the creative writer gives me room to analyse, in the present study, the double dimensions of the crisis of affective memory in Achebe's *There Was a Country* and Adichie's *Notes on Grief*. My focus in this paper is therefore to analyse the double effects of crisis in the psychology of Achebe and Adichie as creative writers who use pain for both expressing emotional shock and for growth in experience and creative vision.

My approach is a textual analysis based on Gustave Carl Yung's psychoanalytic approach to affective memory. Gustave Carl Jung has theorised affective memory to mean that part of the mind that captures events and facts that mark off the individual personality and prompts him/her to either react to such events or internalize them in his consciousness and sub-consciousness. Jungian affective memory in the present context purveys the sum total of intellectual and mental memories that have prompted Achebe and Adichie to write aspects of their conscious and unconscious mind. Affective memory refers to the mind's records of facts, events, ideas and issues that mark one's life and which are part of his/her mind patrimony in preservation. It alludes to the aspect of one's mental lore that charts with the endeared issues and events of the author's life. Achebe in *There Was A Country* recaptures the socio-political events that informed the Nigerian Biafra crisis in 1966. The mix-narrative method in which Achebe puts together nonfiction and fiction is a way for him to express the events that marked him during the crisis and which affected and shaped his critical mind of his nation, Nigeria. The foreign geopolitics in connection with Nigeria, the behaviour of the political leaders of the time, the turmoil and havoc inflicted on his countrymen the Igbos, and the experiences of writers under the trial of suffering related to war, and the general difficulties of the struggle for survival in war period function as assets catalysts that marked his writing experience, provoking in him the revulsion of inhumanity and reshaping his mind as a historical witness. Crisis functions as the barometer that emulates the writer's critical mind, provoking new instincts in artistic reflections and opening vistas for new outlooks on future creative perspectives. That the Biafra experience negatively affected Nigerian citizens' lives is an undeniable fact. But beyond the pogroms, the socio-political crisis functions as an incentive, spurring the creative stamina and reorienting the vision. Crisis supplies material for writing, creates new themes and brings the writer and the critic to a new dimension of productivity. Writing is seen here not only as an expressive mode of pain and emotional shock, but also as a healing method, writing as catharsis, writing as reconciling asset. Adichie makes the point that psychological pain caused by the loss of her daddy has given her the urge to write to express it and by the same token to heal. Writing becomes thus a remedy to psychological torture.

1. Parallel Paradigms between Covid 19 Crisis and Biafra Crisis

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is often called the literary grand-daughter of Achebe in that she reached her international fame thanks to Achebe's blessing (Ernest Emenyonu 2017: 52). Both writers

essentially focus on Nigerian historical realities in their novels and critical essays. That strong connection brings them together when it comes to analyse their reflections on grief and memory. Both equally narrate on the Biafran crisis, Achebe in *There Was A Country: A Personal Narrative on Biafra* (2012) and Adichie in *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006). Biafra was the subject of setting of fiction and non-fiction after the war. Yet what is aimed at here is the way both writers perceive pain in times of crisis. While Achebe focuses on Biafra, Adichie recently reflected on the loss of her father during the Covid-19 pandemic. I bring out here a number of parallel paradigms that are common between Nigerian/Biafra crisis and Covid crisis as perceived by them. A comparative analysis of both crisis reveals similarities worth pointing out. Both crises affect humans and their environment. The way in which Covid 19 pandemic broke out and the way the governments around the world fought it back, bring to memory the image of war. As Thomas M. Malafarina has observed,

World War III has begun. But for the first time, mankind is not at war with his fellow man. Countries are too busy battling an unseen enemy, a bug, a germ a virus known as COVID-19. How this war will end remains to be seen. How many lives will be lost, and when those who survive do so, how will the world prepare for the next pandemic? And rest assured, there will, beyond any doubt, be a next pandemic (2020: 29).

Covid 19 pointedly afflicted humans when it was least expected just as the Biafra war took people unawares. The devastating social consequences of Covid 19 are very much akin to those of the Biafra crisis. Interestingly, Achebe's opinions towards the Biafra war are similar to Adichie's towards the corona virus. For both writers:

- They cause stress and affect the psyche of the victims
- They are costly in terms of monetary expenditures
- Both crises demand concerted and synergetic actions to fight against and solve them.
- Just as it is believed that Biafra war was a conspiracy against the Igbo community, it is also believed that Covid 19 is a conspiracy of Western nations to control the rest of the world.

In terms of differences, the Biafran crisis was a regional crisis while the Covid-19 crisis was a world crisis. While Covid-19 is a health concern, the Biafra war was a security concern. The means of fighting in the case of Biafra are firearms whereas Covid-19 is fought with medicines and vaccines. Nonetheless, both events have direct implications on human society.

Both Achebe and Adichie narrate two versions of grief related to affectional crisis. Achebe narrates the painful memories of Biafra crisis which affected negatively his fellow Igbos (killings, injuries, forceful displacements, starvation, mental injuries, and the impunity of crime perpetrators). Such painful memories pricked into his consciousness and projected an introvert and extravert articulation of the creative experience as a healing process. This narrative form is in consonance with Carl Jung who proposes two mechanisms – introversion and extraversion – both of which are at work in all humans. It is only the relative predominance of the one over the other that determines whether a writer is more extraverted or introverted. Achebe uses the introvert telling to articulate feelings and pains that marked him negatively during the Biafra war and which prove difficult to forget: “This was a very special kind of inspiration. Some of us decided to tackle the big subjects of the day—imperialism, slavery, independence, gender, racism, etc. And some did not. One could write about roses or the air or about love for all I cared; that was fine too. As for me, however, I chose the former” (TWAC: 50). This statement brings to the fore how Achebe reconstructs Biafran crisis through realist analysis. More specifically, Achebe brings the affective memory to bear on the narratives and create a kind of catharsis that will heal emotionally broken people. Language here thus has the power to wound and the power to heal and Achebe narrates the Biafra story to tell his version of the event to the effect of creating space for a kind of constructive dialogue that will definitely heal broken spirits. The capacity of language to heal tension resides in the restitution of truth. Healing may occur after emotional shock and Achebe believes that beyond the political cleavages that divided Nigerians in the past, national unity and socio-political resilience are possible through the meditative force of historical narrative. *There Was A*

Country rates the Biafran war to be a historical flaw from which constructive lessons can be learnt to avoid future conflicts. For instance, Achebe advocates the three Rs: Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation” as fundamental (*TWAC*: 235). Simply put, Achebe perceives literature as a means of producing educative discourse on the values that look in the past for references, analyses the present for actions that will guide decisions in the future. Events affect memory but should also serve to build new ideas, to think out ways of behaving that construct peace and harmony.

“It was important to us that a body of work be developed of the highest possible quality that would oppose the negative discourse in some of the novels we encountered” (*TWAC*: 50).

Affective memory derives from cognitive psychology and is used here to refer to the idea that people are comfortable when their attitudes are consistent with the information they have about the world and that part of attitudes is affective in nature and this affective component can change along with the cognitive component when new information is encountered. Attitudes can be changed by first changing either the affective or cognitive component with the other following (David Matsumoto 2009: 20).

In line with the Jungian approach, Achebe narrates the Biafran history with individuation of the pain he felt as a writer with regard to the effects of the political crisis (civil war). First the crisis disturbed social peace and impaired literary productivity. Secondly, Achebe has it that the crisis mostly affected his compatriots the Igbo who paid with their lives the cessation project of Biafra. This led to what Jung calls individuation of the narration, that is, a deep inner coming together of ideas that symbolize the union of consciousness with the unconscious (Ann Casement 2001: 146). Crisis becomes for Achebe a subject of reflection and expression of his pain as a member of the suffering group but at the same time it becomes a source of inspiration, a motivational tool for literary production. Achebe believes that the artist is the conscience of his community and should survive the crisis to be able to tell the story for historical records and for future generations. Narrative in that case is a way of provoking thinking and initiating discussions on how best to conduct life during and after the pandemic.

While Adichie finds in her father’s death the opportunity to reflect on the covid 19 impacts, Achebe finds in the Biafra war an occasion to meditate on the nature and philosophy of life, an opportunity to critically address and assess the function of crisis in a nation. Crises undermine society to some extent. Achebe asserts that the Biafra crisis occasioned “the pogrom that claimed over thirty thousand lives” (Achebe 2012: 85). Yet it gives an opportunity to the people involved to discover themselves, to gauge their strengths and weaknesses and to be able to learn values, develop new ways of approaching problems. The perception of life in times of crisis differs from the usual image one has of it through daily routines. Achebe finds in crisis such affective stamina that projects the writer and his or her community in a realm of tactical creation, a technical ability to reinvent ways of positioning anew in a posturing of problem solving. If crisis of the Biafra type exists and affects negatively human memory, Achebe thinks that crisis can also enable the community to grow, to learn from experience.

Achebe refers to the displacement of the Igbo people (running for their life) as “a nightmare” (Achebe 2012: 85), an apt metaphor for the undesirable conditions of the crisis that put people in uncomfortable conditions. But one needs to state that before physical displacement took place mental displacement occurred first. It is the mental process of escaping the uncomfortable, the pain. Creating for oneself mental displacement as a way of escaping the undesirable environment is what Jung calls “active imagination and transcendent escape”. The light in which Achebe’s assessment of the affective memory crisis needs to be seen gives one the privilege to ascertain that humanity nurtures healthy memories and anti-humane actions hurts such memory. It should also be established that there is a relationship between the immediate human wellbeing and the news that inform and fill our minds. Good news uplifts the human mind while bad ones sadden it. The psychological impacts of Biafra as Achebe views them appear to have crystalized hopes of immediate reconstructions, frustrated minds

and discouraged inter-ethnic cordial relations. It follows that to heal from such memories beside the social remedy of reconciliation and forgiveness, literature can serve as a tool to confront with pragmatism mistakes of the past and create through dialogue the mental stamina necessary to transcend ethnic resentment and build social cohesion.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie conceptualizes crisis as a personal experience of the emotional discomfort she goes through during the passing away of her father. Crisis, though individual, enables the author to articulate grief as a demotivating and demoralizing element she goes through. Adichie expresses grief as an emotional journey that leads her to a new dimension of social apprehension: “The laughter becomes tears and becomes sadness and becomes rage” (Adichie 2021: 9). The loss of her father gives her an occasion to discover herself, to see her weaknesses as a human being. It enables her to reassess life and see it differently: “Grief is forcing new skins on me, scraping scales from my eyes. I regret my past certainties: surely you should mourn, talk through it, face it, go through it” (6). Here, grief appears as a catalyst that brings Adichie to a new self-discovery. It is in the first place deconstructive, in the sense that the author negates aspects of human existence and reconstructs life in a new creative vision: “Grief is not gauzy; it is substantial, oppressive, a thing opaque. The weight is heaviest in mornings, post-sleep: a leaden heart, a stubborn reality that refuses to budge” (Adichie 2021: 24). Here Adichie temporarily loses assurance in herself, in her ego as a successful person. Hitherto Adichie’s effective memory was resting on what Achebe calls “solid personal achievements”. As a professional writer, she has known success worldwide and scored an impressive number of awards. Her affective memory was then shaped by a sense of stability, assurance in material possession. Yet the loss of her father seems to have awakened in her another awareness that life achievements are not eternal, that values are temporal no matter their standing. Adichie conceptualizes a new dimension of life as ephemeral. This brings her to a new sense of life and the attainment of humility.

On the other hand, grief has recreated Adichie in the sense that she emerges from it with a new vision of society and life in general. Critical moments as the crisis she goes through has brought her to understand the ambivalent nature of life. One would say that hitherto, Adichie’s perception of life was lopsided, and the advent of bereavement brought her to reconsider it as offering both positive and negative moments. While the positive gives occasions of celebrating success, the negative ones enable one to reconsider life and society. Adichie puts it this way: “Until now, grief belonged to other people. Does love bring, even if unconsciously, the delusional arrogance of expecting never to be touched by grief? We stumble, we veer from an extreme forced cheer to passive aggressiveness... (Adichie 2021: 51)”. What she means here is that beyond the emotional shock of losing a loved one, grief has offered her a new understanding of human nature, and reshaped her creative vision as a writer. Adichie takes a new posture to rejig and rekindle her vision in a humane decimal of active reconstruction of social life. When she asserts “it does not matter whether I wanted to be changed, because I am changed. A new voice is pushing itself out of my writing, full of the closeness I feel to death, the awareness of my own mortality, so finely, so acute. A new urgency” (Adichie 2021: 66), she is referring to that reshaping of her creative vision that she says will bring her closer to humanity, to human frailty.

Fragility often recurs in Adichie’s narratives. In *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2003), Adichie has depicted how melancholy makes characters like Olanna and Igwu who have to experience war trauma in the context of Biafra crisis. Pauline Dodgson-Katiyo (2017: 123) finds out that given her family’s painful memories, Adichie feared that she would be taking a risk in writing about

war in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, a risk that her novel would only perpetuate the western association of Africa with war, a stereotypical and generalizing view that ignores the dynamism of the African past. Her dilemma was complicated further by her own worldview, which she admits is largely a dark one and which has led her to sometimes wonder whether being African means that she must always indulge in fragile negotiations in order to fully explore her artistic vision. Furthermore, Igwu's history, just by virtue of being written, presents a strong narrative of survival. Another necessary narrative of trauma associated with mourning and melancholia that circulates around Olanna's memory compensates for the romanticization of Okeoma, a symbol of Christopher Okigbo who was killed during that Biafra war and which Adichie refers to as the monumental loss. During and after the war, Olanna shows signs of melancholia when her strength fails her. Her vision of life, like Adichie's is largely a dark one and her grief and the depression that is referred to as "dark swoops" deprive her of the happiness she desires and that Ugwu thinks she deserves. Before and after the war, Olanna shows signs of melancholia. Carl Jung, following the works of Sigmund Freud, distinguishes between mourning and melancholia two conditions he attributes to the crisis of affective memory. He describes mourning as a normal state that will end after a period of time of grief and melancholia as pathological, an illness with no clearly defined end. Both mourning and melancholia are centrally concerned with the loss of a loved person or a loved object or an ideal such as liberty. Nevertheless, Olanna's experiences suggest that she suffers from some of the symptoms of depression that Jung describes as melancholia.

According to Sigmund Freud, the occasions that give rise to melancholia 'extend for the most part beyond the clear case of a loss by death, and includes all those situations of being slighted, neglected or disappointed which can import opposed feelings of love and hate into the relationship or reinforce an already existing ambivalence (2001: 259). On two occasions before the war, Olanna believes she has lost Odenigbo. The first is when the mother calls her a witch and Olanna angrily leaves his house because, he will not defend her; the second is when she learns that Odenigbo slept with and impregnated Amala, a young woman his mother has brought from the village for that purpose. After the first incident, Olanna feels psychologically charged. During the war, Olanna continues having ambivalent feelings towards Odenigbo as he changes from being the confident person she would like to emulate to someone who has lost his ability to take control of situations. Odenigbo's loss of control is particularly evident in his depression following the news of his mother's death and his behaviour after they received the erroneous news that Egwu has been killed. As Odenigbo becomes depressed, he neglects his work and starts to drink heavily. On seeing that, Olanna feels an anger towards him, which is exacerbated by her own sense of inadequacy. Freud commenting on the poor self-image of the person suffering from melancholia, suggests that there is a stage when the clinician perceives that the patient's self-accusations 'fits someone else', someone whom the patient loves or has loved or should love and that these self-reproaches are reproaches against a love object which have been shifted away from it on to the patient's own ego (2001: 248).

2. Covid 19 Perspective and Narrative Relevance Expressive of the Crisis

Parallelism needs to be established between the corona virus pandemic as it goes on in Adichie's *Notes on Grief* and the Biafra warfare as portrayed in Achebe's *There Was a Country*. What is depicted by Adichie is the spectre of the pandemic. In the first instance, humans went into war against a virus. The same mood of warfare often observed during real war could be observed during the peak of the pandemic. There was a general psychosis created by the fear of death, the fear of an unknown future and the fear of evil. At the political level the fear was further emphasised by the speculations that Covid was a biological warfare between China the epicentre of the pandemic and the United States. Such a fact has a further implication because,

ideological warfare among world powers like United States and China would leave poorer countries in Africa in difficulties. Many of the utilities in terms of food, clothing, communication devices like mobile phones, transportation means like motorbikes, cars, and building materials are imported from China. If ever the Covid 19 pandemic restructured the terms of economic exchanges, African developing countries could run short of the aforementioned utilities.

Another parameter of the Covid-19 was the social one. The virus brought about an acute imperative demand of lockdown generating massive unemployment.

Reading Adichie and Achebe's analysis of crisis leads one to assert that the Covid-19 pandemic left some legacies in Africa. Covid-19 united peoples in this forcible communality of fear and manic preparedness. Every day, every minute, people were nourished with the daily propaganda of coronavirus prevention, courtesy of the health technicians. Much sensitization was done in terms of recommendations about the imperative of washing hands regularly, maintaining social distance, not touching ones' face and staying home. The talk exchanges on medias and social networks only underscored that unity, further eliminating the divide between the haves and have-nots and those (most of us) who fall in between.

Yet the crisis was sobering in that it held up a mirror to our true selves as humans, showing what people were made of and who the real unsung heroes of our society are (and they're not the immortal or untouchable). It is the everyday people we took for granted before the pandemic: the healthcare workers, grocery store employees, pharmacy employees, mail carriers, subway conductors, who became even more close and important as they helped in meeting the basic needs of people. These are the people, the essential workers, who were on the frontlines, putting their lives at risk. They are the ones whom we depended on for our society to be operational when it seemed like so many of us were in suspension. Perhaps one of the greatest legacies of Covid-19 is that these essential workers may be viewed in a new light in the aftermath while celebrity might be trivialized. If the latter is possible in this celebrity-obsessed culture, let's take a moment and pretend it is. One may reflect on all the news stories of doctors and nurses working themselves to exhaustion in hospitals that did not have enough ventilators or even beds for infected patients; regular citizens launching campaigns to find more masks and personal protective equipment to donate to hospitals that were in dire need of them; young people offering to shop for and deliver groceries to the elderly or medically fragile; or restaurants forced to shut down during the lockdown providing free meals to healthcare workers who were so insanely busy with attending to the massive, unending overflow of incoming Covid-19 patients they had no time to eat.

In majority of African countries, the economic activities are run in the informal sector including petty trading, where community markets are the headquarters. Such commercial activities are carried out on a daily basis since revenue is predicted on the daily based immediate sales. With the advent of the lockdown there was a necessity to close even if temporarily these markets, and thereby occasioning starvation in most families. Even in eventual cases of lockdown, the government volunteered to help, food distribution in households would pose serious problems as most houses do not have addresses or references to be easily located, and most houses are enclaved by natural barriers like mountains and rivers unreachable by car or boat.

Coming to the job issues, during the pandemic most developed countries resorted to telework whereby employees would remain at home and work via the internet. Such an alternative has been problematic in Africa due to the fact that most countries do not have advanced network

facilities to sustain teleservice. In addition, the adoption of telework would render most services irrelevant, reduce manpower and put many employees into a jobless condition.

The lack of health facilities to take in charge the Covid-19-infected sick was another decimal that was problematized. African countries do have few health centres and the few that exist do not have big admission facilities and enough space to accommodate Covid-infected people. As a matter of fact, the imbalance between health facilities and the number of infected cases would create more deaths than recoveries in the populations. This very state of affairs brought the health authorities to encourage people to remain at home when they are infected with Covid as they will not find adequate care at the hospital. This created further fears and health concerns among the population about the absence of facilities and the cataclysmic consequences therein to expect.

The next major concern became now the lack of vaccine. While the pandemic made thousands of victims in shorter time, the advent of anti-covid vaccine delayed and this created a moral trauma and worries among the populations. At the beginning the major problem was how to find the vaccine. News from the media asserted that when the vaccine would be available, only rich countries that were able to finance medical research in laboratories on vaccine mission would have access to the vaccines. But in actual facts, at the advent of the vaccines, controversies rose as to the inefficiency of the very vaccines themselves. As a results, though in shorter time the vaccines became available and accessible to poorer countries too, the administration of these vaccines became controversial as many media outlined campaigned against the vaccine. It was spread that the vaccines were the very causes of more severe forms of viruses and those who were vaccinated were likely able to further spread the disease.

The pandemic sheltered realities at political, social, economic, cultural and educational levels. Politically speaking, some important decisions had to be taken to enable the control of the pandemic. Such decisions are for instance the decision to finance research laboratories, and the decision to limit international travelling among the population. At the social level the crisis caused discomfort as ethno-religious conflicts deepened and family members were dispersed across the country. It poisoned social relations, created a climate of mistrust and a forceful moving of the population from their homeland to refugee countries. Many people were wounded and some killed. At the economic level the Biafran crisis provoked inflation, joblessness and a decrease of living standards. Starvation, poor sanitation, inadequate medication and unschooling are some of the corollaries of the crisis on Nigerians as Achebe and Adichie describe them in *There Was A Country* and *Half of a Yellow Sun* respectively. They establish a link between the social atmosphere and the psychological conditions of the people in time of crisis. When society is well, humans enjoy peace of mind. When society is troubled, people's peace is disturbed. At a cultural level, let us note the disturbances of cultural activities in times of crisis. Culture goes hand in hand with art and literature; all of which are sustained by the creative mind. The creative mind is important in the development of cultural activities in that aspects of cultural performances are designed and carried out with the support of the mind. As a matter of fact, the best cultural activities are performed with the mind in a state of emotional balance. In that logic, Adichie makes the point that the artist can also use crisis as an impetus and stamina to create and entertain art work. Crisis thus plays a double function for the artist: firstly, it builds self-defence in the creative posture and secondly it boosts the creative mind of the artist as it constitutes for him/her the raw material for building stories and developing plots.

Adichie's experience with emotional crisis informs her desire to reconstruct in the unconsciousness the lost past. The authoress uses memory as a constructive tool, a remedy to reimagine and reinvent the unreal, the irrecoverable from the nostalgic lives. It verges on what Cathy Caruth calls the ongoing experience of having survived "death". For Caruth, within

trauma stories, there is a kind of double telling, the oscillation between a crisis of death and the correlative crisis of life. Both Achebe and Adichie pass through melancholy (Caruth 2017: 98). Melancholy is the feeling of sadness, depression and discomfort which characterizes people in situations of affective and emotional crisis. Adichie's psychological condition is caused by her father's death. What obtains from the analyses of the authors' critical points is that they sustain the philosophy of remembering or memory as a fundamental ingredient in the building and maintenance of internal peace. Achebe and Adichie establish that emotional healing after shock should thrive on the victory of the memory over the painful narrative. In other words, the acceptance of the mind and the heart of what occurred in bad and good and the will to forgive and forget constitute the real remedies for the mind.

In Achebe's *There Was A Country* remembering bears a particular significance. To remember is to bring to one's memory past events. Such events like the 1966 coup and the subsequent repression that caused the massacre of numerous Igbo affected Achebe's life rather negatively. Psychological trauma and mental pain culminated into emotional crisis. Propaganda of false accusations, fake news, the loss of beloved ones like Christopher Okigbo, Achebe's good friend, left him in emotional depression. Remembering plays a double function: when the things about which one remembers are good ones they boost the person who remembers' moral stamina. When they are bad they downgrade and inflict moral pain. But the most important function of memory in Achebe and Adichie's discourses is the historical construction of the postcolonial subject or personality. Remembering is thus a catalyst for human moral construction and a reference for wise decisions. Achebe has it that at times good and salutary decisions are taken with reference to past actions or the results of past actions. A perilous past action is a good reference for the avoidance of future similar mistakes while wise ones are reference and encouragement for similar actions. Collective memory is a guidance for collective social actions. The better the collective memory is in terms of the rules that guarantee peaceful social conduct, the better community members are likely to promote values conducive to the development of that society. The Subject matter in *There Was a Country* is the 1966 Nigerian civil war and the different forces that crystallised the events. At a deeper level Achebe does a reminiscence of the implications of these forces in the construction of national memory. Most memories went in sympathy for the victims of that sorrowful event. In clear one should be able to see beyond cultural boundaries the interests of the colonial powers that shaped the destiny of the young independent nation of Nigeria. The fictional narratives of the events have a double function: to revive that painful events for the construction of a stronger democracy based on the avoidance of past mistakes and secondly to train the human mind to take progressive steps towards concrete actions aiming at the discordance with violence. Be it in the first situation or the second, Achebe purviews the writer's role not as a simple chronicler of the social mores but also as an informed societal architect of values that chart human life. To be exact, memory does to the mind what medicine does to the body. True therapy, it helps the mind to recover from injuries, revitalises the spirit and balances the body with the soul. To remember is to survive one's time. It is to live beyond boundaries of human frailty. It is also to outstand the ups and downs of individual and/or collective storyline building therein the essential foundations of humanity. To remember is reset life anew to be able to accommodate tension, reduce pressure and relive between pain and pleasure. Nevertheless, Achebe sees in the memory beyond real fact, a symbol of creative consciousness. That consciousness comes when the mind sets on to fetch the transformative power of the subject of remembrance. As the brain plays a key role in the construction of memory, it is in solicitude of the substantial potency of the mind that it can provoke mental rebirth. The rebirth comes when a new energy is given to the brain to pay back upcoming credentials. Adichie holds the same philosophy regarding

memory when she asserts in a seminal article “we remember differently” (Adichie 2014: 45). The only remedy to painful memories is the passing of time. Time heals the wounds of memory. It softens the emotional shocks that are not easily forgotten. Time has the virtue of accommodating the mind with the reality of painful events. In the context of Biafran war and Covid-19, Achebe and Adichie point out that reality by establishing the relation between memory and human brain. Good memories seem to last for a little time and painful ones seem to stay longer.

Results and conclusion

The objective of this paper has been to discuss the loss of affective memory in times of crisis. As two key ideas have emerged from the analysis: Achebe and Adichie both use crisis to tell how their creative experiences have been tested by the catalyst of moral and effective discomfort. Crisis shock the affective memory and inform the reality of temporality and frailty of human existence. Secondly the discomfort born from such crisis have resulted into personal discovery and the rebirth of new visions that chart with the imperatives of humanity and prospective resilience. As creative writers, Achebe and Adichie reconceptualise art that functions to reflect the artist’s conscious and unconscious beings.

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