

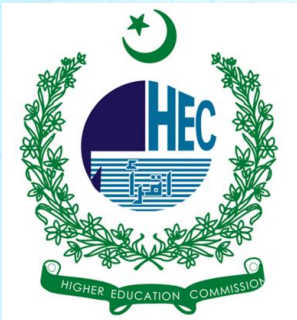
Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

<https://llrjournal.com/index.php/11>

**Trauma and the Postcolonial Global South: A Study of
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Half of a Yellow Sun**



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Abstract

This article examines how Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* represents collective trauma in the postcolonial Global South through a focused framework that joins Frantz Fanon's concept of colonial psychic violence with Stef Craps's critique of Eurocentric trauma theory. The study responds to the tendency in trauma studies to privilege individualized and event-centered models of injury that do not adequately explain forms of suffering produced by colonial history, civil war, social dislocation, hunger, silence, and fractured nationhood. Using qualitative textual analysis, the article reads the novel as a layered account of historically rooted trauma rather than as a narrative of isolated psychological shock. An analytical dataset of eighteen coded scene-units was used to organize the reading around narrative phase, trauma trigger, representation mode, embodiment, displacement, memory, and postcolonial issue. The results show that the novel distributes trauma across the entire narrative arc, though the war phase carries the heaviest burden of coded injury. Trauma appears as both collective and intimate, and it is repeatedly mediated through displacement, attritional deprivation, compromised masculinity, gendered harm, broken domesticity, and unresolved mourning. The coding pattern indicates that the novel stores injury in fragmented memory more often than in explicit declaration, while bodily suffering is frequently rendered through depletion and interruption rather than spectacle alone. The article argues that Adichie's narrative challenges narrow Western assumptions about trauma by showing that postcolonial suffering is cumulative, historically sedimented, spatially mobile, and socially transmitted. It also argues that narration itself becomes a limited but meaningful practice of survival, archive, and ethical witness in the aftermath of violence.

Keywords: Trauma, Postcolonial Literature, Global South, *Half Of a Yellow Sun*, Frantz Fanon, Stef Craps, Biafra, Memory

Introduction

Trauma has become one of the most productive concepts in contemporary literary studies, yet much of its influential formulation emerged from Euro-American archives of catastrophe and from interpretive habits that privilege exceptional shock, belated

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

symptom, and individual psychic injury (Fanon, 1963; Abba, 2021; Lecznar, 2016; Luckhurst, 2008; Adichie, 2006; Hillman, 2019). Such work opened an important field, though its dominant assumptions often travel unevenly when they are applied to postcolonial texts whose injuries do not begin with a single overwhelming event and do not end at the boundary of the individual subject (Visser, 2011; Rothberg, 2009; Andermahr, 2012). In many postcolonial locations, violence is lived as history rather than interruption. It moves through institutions, language, borders, class mobility, domestic life, food systems, militarization, and inherited silence. The literary record of such worlds demands an approach that can read trauma as social atmosphere, historical residue, and collective condition rather than only as a private wound.

African literary criticism has repeatedly shown that the aftermath of colonial rule cannot be separated from the forms of violence that emerge within postcolonial nation-states (Whitehead, 2004; Adebayo, 2021; Craps, 2013; Ouma, 2011; Kurtz, 2022). Colonialism leaves behind more than political rearrangement. It structures categories of belonging, hierarchies of value, and modes of psychic damage that survive into the postcolony (Yusin, 2018). Fanon's work remains decisive because it clarifies how colonial domination enters consciousness, produces estrangement, and normalizes violence as a structuring grammar of social life (Caruth, 1996). Craps, writing from within trauma studies, calls attention to another difficulty: if trauma theory remains attached to Eurocentric paradigms, then the sufferings of colonized and formerly colonized peoples risk being misread, reduced, or excluded from conceptual centrality (Akpome, 2013). Taken together, these positions make possible a reading of postcolonial fiction in which trauma is historically embedded, materially distributed, and politically saturated.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* is especially suited to this inquiry because it returns to the Nigerian-Biafran war through a narrative form that is intimate in scale and national in implication (Whitehead, 2004; Akpome, 2013; Ouma, 2011; Adichie, 2006; Kurtz, 2022; Lecznar, 2016). The novel does not isolate trauma within one character or one episode. It moves across households, roads, classrooms, refugee spaces, military life, intimate relationships, and sites of memory. It is attentive to the pressure of hunger, the fragility of domestic continuity, the burden of witnessing, and the moral corrosion that war imposes on the living. Critics have

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

approached the novel through memory, polyvocal narration, postmemory, gendered violence, authorship, and the politics of Biafran remembrance (Craps, 2013; Caruth, 1996; Andermahr, 2012; Fanon, 1963; Adebayo, 2021; Visser, 2011). This scholarship has illuminated the text's formal richness and its historical significance, yet there remains room for a tightly focused reading that places collective trauma at the center while keeping close contact with the novel's postcolonial conditions of possibility.

The present article argues that *Half of a Yellow Sun* represents trauma as a historically rooted and collectively experienced condition shaped by colonial afterlives, civil war, displacement, bodily depletion, compromised subjectivity, and the unstable work of recollection. The article does not treat trauma as a broad label for suffering in general. It studies how the novel organizes injury through scene, character, temporal movement, and silence, and how those patterns become legible when Fanon and Craps are brought into a shared analytical frame. Fanon clarifies the colonial production of damaged subjectivity and the continuities between political violence and psychic disorientation (Abba, 2021). Craps clarifies why the novel's representation of mass suffering, inherited silence, and cumulative injury matters for a decolonized trauma studies (Rothberg, 2009).

The article has one central objective: to analyze how *Half of a Yellow Sun* represents collective trauma in the postcolonial Global South through Fanon's account of colonial psychic violence and Craps's critique of Eurocentric trauma theory. To pursue that objective, the study draws upon a qualitative coding dataset developed from close reading of the novel and organized around narrative phase, character focalization, trauma trigger, representation mode, embodiment, memory, displacement, and postcolonial issue. The analytical strategy allows the discussion to remain textual while also making visible broad interpretive patterns that sustain the article's claims. What emerges is a picture of trauma that exceeds spectacular violence. The novel presents injury as something prepared before the war, intensified during it, and carried beyond it in forms of incompleteness that narration can register but cannot entirely heal.

Literature Review

Fanon, Colonial Violence, and Psychic Damage

Fanon offers one of the strongest intellectual foundations for reading trauma in postcolonial contexts because he shows how colonial rule works simultaneously on

institutions, bodies, and consciousness (Hillman, 2019). In *The Wretched of the Earth*, colonialism appears as a violent ordering of space, value, and humanity. The colonized subject is not merely excluded from power. The subject is formed within a system that imposes inferiority, fear, estrangement, and internal division (Luckhurst, 2008). This insight matters greatly for literary trauma studies because it means that psychic harm can be historically manufactured long before any spectacular outbreak of war. Colonialism produces conditions in which belonging is unstable, violence is normalized, and the social field becomes charged with antagonism.

When a postcolonial civil war erupts, Fanon's thought helps explain why the resulting damage is not new in an absolute sense. It is an intensification and redistribution of older structures (Yusin, 2018). Trauma in such a framework is not outside politics. It is a symptom of how politics has entered the body and the sensorium. Fanon also matters for readings of ethical corruption. Colonial violence does not only produce innocent victims and external perpetrators. It can deform agency, remake desire, and draw subjects into morally compromised participation within violent systems (Adebayo, 2021). Such a perspective is especially relevant to narratives that portray coercive militarization, intimate betrayal, or participation in sexual violence. It allows criticism to recognize injury without collapsing moral complexity.

Half of a Yellow Sun, Memory, and Biafran Afterlives

Scholarship on *Half of a Yellow Sun* has shown that the novel is deeply concerned with memory, polyvocality, and the contested afterlife of Biafra (Rothberg, 2009; Ouma, 2011; Hillman, 2019; Andermahr, 2012; Akpome, 2013; Kurtz, 2022). Ouma argues that the text builds a composite consciousness of war through multiple focalizations, allowing readers to perceive the conflict through layered social positions rather than a single commanding perspective (Caruth, 1996). Akpome likewise reads the novel's focalization and polyvocality as crucial to its handling of history, since the text resists the closure that a singular national voice would impose (Yusin, 2018). This narrative plurality is central to trauma representation because it distributes suffering across characters and spaces while revealing how no one voice can exhaust the event.

Memory-centered readings have also been significant. Adebayo interprets the novel as

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Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

a work of postmemory, stressing its relation to inherited loss, institutional silence, and the recovery of suppressed Biafran remembrance (Fanon, 1963). Lecznar emphasizes the politics of Biafran afterlives and the text's negotiation of identity and authorship in relation to war memory (Luckhurst, 2008). Abba argues that the novel participates in symbolic memorialization and a broader project of postwar reconciliation, even while it remains aware of unresolved fracture (Abba, 2021). These arguments help situate Adichie's work in a field where fiction does not simply reflect history; it becomes one of the spaces in which history is argued over, reassembled, and emotionally transmitted.

Another important cluster of criticism concerns the body and intimate violence. Hillman shows that Adichie's fiction places destructive and damaged bodies at the center of ethical reading, refusing easy judgment and sentimental closure (Visser, 2011). That line of thought is particularly useful for understanding scenes in which bodily injury, rape, shame, and compromised agency produce readerly unease rather than moral simplification. The body in Adichie's novel is never a neutral container of experience. It is the site where hunger, fear, desire, assault, care, and memory converge.

This article builds on that scholarship while narrowing its focus. Rather than treating memory, narration, violence, and nation as parallel concerns, it studies how they converge within a single analytical problem: the representation of collective trauma in a postcolonial social world. Fanon provides the account of colonial psychic violence that explains the historical depth of the novel's injuries (Adichie, 2006). Craps provides the methodological challenge to Eurocentric trauma theory that makes those injuries legible on their own terms (Craps, 2013). The combination is productive because it anchors literary interpretation in both political history and disciplinary critique. Through that framework, *Half of a Yellow Sun* emerges not simply as a war novel or a memory novel, but as a sustained meditation on how colonial afterlives shape the social forms of trauma in the Global South.

Materials and Method

This study adopted a qualitative textual analysis design in the field of English Literature. The primary text was Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*, and the article was developed from the revised outline supplied for the study together

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

with a structured coding dataset prepared for the present analysis. The objective of the method was not to convert the novel into a quantitative object in a reductive sense. The coding matrix was used as an organizational device that made recurring patterns visible across the narrative while preserving the interpretive depth of close reading. In this way, the article remains a literary study, yet it benefits from a clear analytical structure for the Results section.

The working dataset comprised eighteen coded scene-units drawn from major narrative moments across the pre-war, transition, war, late-war, aftermath, and meta-narrative phases of the novel. Each unit recorded the narrative focus, focal character, setting context, trauma trigger, trauma scale, trauma type, manifestation, representation mode, memory or silence pattern, body suffering indicator, displacement or loss level, community fracture, Fanon lens, Craps lens, postcolonial issue, and an interpretive note. Since the novel is polyvocal and historically dense, the unit of analysis was defined as an analytically meaningful scene-cluster rather than as an isolated sentence or chapter. That decision allowed the coding to capture both immediate narrative events and the broader social or affective pattern they produced.

The analytical procedure involved three linked stages. In the opening stage, the outline and dataset were read together in order to identify the central argumentative direction of the article. In the next stage, the coding columns were reviewed and recoded into higher-order categories that could support interpretation at a broader level. This produced derived groups such as precarity and anticipation, collective rupture, attritional survival, violent subject formation, damaged intimacy, temporal exhaustion, and postwar incompleteness. It also produced grouped indicators for embodiment, memory or silence, displacement, and theoretical alignment. In the final stage, the grouped findings were interpreted through close reading and linked back to the article's objective. Tables and figures were then created from the coding matrix so that the Results section would reflect visible analytical patterns rather than impressionistic summary alone.

The study was guided by two theoretical commitments. Fanon provided the postcolonial foundation for understanding colonial psychic violence, dehumanization, damaged agency, and the continuity between political structures and inner fracture. Craps provided the trauma-studies foundation for reading the novel against narrow,

Eurocentric, event-centered assumptions. These commitments shaped the coding process from the start. A scene was treated as traumatic not only when it displayed spectacular bodily harm, but also when it staged cumulative deprivation, inherited silence, social dislocation, ethical corrosion, or fractured belonging. This made it possible to analyze trauma as a historically distributed condition rather than a single emotional category.

The method is appropriate for the present study because the article seeks interpretive depth and theoretical coherence rather than statistical generalization. The dataset does not claim to exhaust every possible reading of the novel. Its function is to provide a transparent analytical scaffold that supports the close reading of trauma, memory, violence, and postcolonial nationhood. The Results section therefore combines frequency-based patterning with extended literary interpretation. The numerical summaries indicate where pressure gathers in the narrative. The interpretive discussion explains what those concentrations mean within the novel's wider representation of collective trauma in the postcolonial Global South.

Results

4.1 Distribution of Trauma across the Narrative Arc

Table 1 and Figure 1 establish the broad architecture of the coding pattern. The most immediate finding is that trauma is not confined to the spectacular center of war, even though the war phase carries the heaviest burden. Of the eighteen coded units, ten fall in the war phase, representing 55.6% of the dataset. Pre-war scenes account for three units or 16.7%, while the transition to war, late war, aftermath, and meta-narrative return account for the remaining share. This distribution supports a reading in which the novel concentrates visible injury during the conflict itself, yet it also prepares and extends trauma beyond that zone. The pre-war units are analytically crucial because they show that national fracture, class transition, and ideological tension are already active before open violence becomes unavoidable. The aftermath and meta-narrative units are equally important because they show that survival does not restore narrative wholeness. Trauma persists in memory, silence, and the labor of writing.

The pattern presented in Table 1 also clarifies the novel's temporal logic. The narrative does not proceed from peace to war in a simple binary movement. Instead, it traces a slow conversion of unease into rupture. The pre-war world contains aspiration,

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

sociability, love, and intellectual energy, though these forms of vitality are suspended over unresolved structural divisions. The transition unit then marks the collapse of national trust as ethnic violence becomes public knowledge and private life can no longer protect itself from historical catastrophe. Once the novel moves fully into war, trauma becomes spatially mobile. It travels through roads, temporary shelters, relief centers, domestic interiors, military structures, and half-ruined routines. By late war, the dominant pressure is no longer only immediate danger. It is exhaustion, suspended time, and the attrition of the future. The final units show that aftermath is not closure. It is an altered mode of incompleteness in which narration tries to hold together what violence has dispersed.

Table 1: *Distribution of coded units across the narrative arc*

| Narrative phase | Coded units | Share (%) | Dominant trauma movement |
|----------------------------|--------------------|------------------|---|
| Pre-war | 3 | 16.7 | Latent anxiety, unstable nationhood, class transition |
| Transition to war | 1 | 5.6 | Shock of massacre and collapse of national trust |
| War | 10 | 55.6 | Displacement, witnessing, hunger, militarization, silence |
| Late war | 2 | 11.1 | Temporal exhaustion and unresolved search |
| Aftermath | 1 | 5.6 | Survival with unresolved recollection |
| Aftermath / meta-narrative | 1 | 5.6 | Writing, archive, and partial narrative recovery |

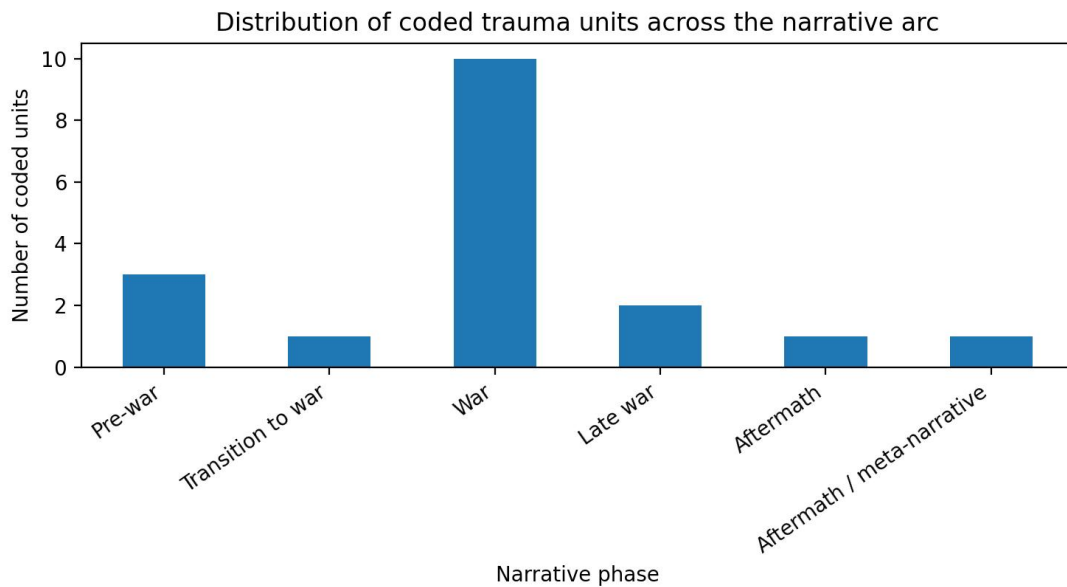


Figure 1: *Distribution of coded trauma units across the narrative arc*

Figure 1 helps make that movement legible at a glance. The visual concentration of coded units in the war phase might seem predictable for a civil-war novel, yet the interpretive value lies in what surrounds that concentration. The pre-war and postwar edges of the graph prevent an event-centered reading. They suggest that trauma in this novel has thresholds, sedimentations, and residues. The war is the densest zone of injury, not the sole site of injury. This matters because it supports the article's main claim that trauma in the postcolonial Global South is cumulative and historically prepared. The narrative opens in an already damaged social field. The later catastrophe intensifies rather than invents that damage.

The coding pattern also indicates that the novel distributes trauma at two scales at once. Seven coded units are predominantly collective in scale, while eleven or 61.1% combine personal and collective registers. That ratio matters because it shows that the novel refuses the separation of intimate pain from public history. Family movement is tied to territorial insecurity. Domestic conflict is intensified by war pressure. Silence is both private shame and social symptom. Bodily depletion is at once material and political. Even scenes centered on one character retain a wider resonance because the narrative repeatedly places individual distress inside communal breakdown. The formal result is a layered representation in which subjects never suffer as isolated psychological containers. They suffer inside damaged infrastructures of belonging.

A closer look at the phase distribution reveals another important feature. The novel allocates only one coded unit to the immediate transition from pre-war tension to open rupture. This compression is not a weakness in the dataset. It reflects the way one threshold event can reorganize the meaning of everything around it. Before this point, political debate and class aspiration still move within recognizable routines. After it, the same routines become precarious, haunted, and subject to displacement. In interpretive terms, the transition unit functions as a hinge between latent anxiety and normalized emergency. It is the point at which knowledge of mass violence enters the social imagination and makes ordinary continuity impossible.

The late-war and aftermath units also deserve more attention than their smaller numerical share might initially invite. Late war comprises only two units, yet those units record a qualitative shift from active struggle to damaged temporality. The novel begins to register waiting, incompleteness, and the erosion of future-thinking. The aftermath unit records survival, though survival appears inseparable from unresolved recollection. The meta-narrative unit then turns toward writing and archival voice. This final movement is vital because it suggests that the novel understands narration not as cure but as a fragile response to silence. The results therefore point toward a three-part temporal structure: trauma is prepared historically, intensified materially, and carried forward narratively.

Taken together, Table 1 and Figure 1 show that the narrative arc of *Half of a Yellow Sun* is built around graduated exposure rather than isolated shock. The novel prepares its own theory of trauma through sequence. It begins by locating fracture in nationhood and social texture, exposes bodies and communities to escalating violence and deprivation, and closes on a form of survival that remains marked by absence. The results therefore support the study objective in a direct way. Collective trauma in the novel is not simply what happens during war. It is what colonial and postcolonial history make possible, what war radicalizes, and what memory continues to carry after the battlefield has shifted elsewhere.

4.2 Pre-war Instability and the Making of Psychic Precarity

The pre-war portion of the dataset contains only three coded units, yet these scenes are foundational for the article's argument because they show how trauma begins as condition before it becomes crisis. Table 2 identifies this early zone through the

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

cluster labeled precarity and anticipation, which accounts for three coded units or 16.7% of the dataset. At this stage the novel is not dominated by explicit injury. Its emphasis falls on latent anxiety, ideological rigidity, class transition, and unresolved political division. Such scenes matter because they reveal that the social world is already carrying pressure. The characters inhabit institutions and relationships shaped by uneven modernity, stratified mobility, and arguments over nationhood that have not been resolved by independence.

In practical narrative terms, pre-war life appears active and even hopeful. There is domestic warmth, intellectual conversation, romantic possibility, and movement between village and urban spaces. Yet the coding dataset shows that each of these forms of ordinary life is shadowed by instability. One unit captures Olanna in a milieu where political unease remains partly unspoken. Another focuses on Odenigbo, whose debates about ethnicity and nationhood reveal the fragile basis of postcolonial belonging. A third follows Ugwu's transition from village life to the university household, where class mobility introduces possibility and estrangement at once. None of these scenes depicts war directly. Their traumatic significance lies in the way they position the subject within structures that are already fractured.

Table 2: *Frequency of derived trauma clusters*

| Derived cluster | trauma | Coded units | Share (%) | Analytical emphasis |
|----------------------------|---------|-------------|-----------|---|
| Precarity and anticipation | and | 3 | 16.7 | Colonial fracture prepares subjects for crisis |
| Collective rupture | | 3 | 16.7 | War breaks everyday continuity and civic belonging |
| Violent formation | subject | 3 | 16.7 | Masculine coercion and compromised agency |
| Attritional survival | | 2 | 11.1 | War is lived as shortage, labor, and slow depletion |
| Damaged intimacy | | 2 | 11.1 | Private relations absorb public |

| Derived cluster | trauma | Coded units | Share (%) | Analytical emphasis |
|------------------------|--------|-------------|-----------|---|
| | | | | violence |
| Temporal exhaustion | 2 | 11.1 | | Time narrows into fatigue and suspense |
| Postwar incompleteness | 2 | 11.1 | | Survival does not close the wound |
| Damaged intellect | 1 | 5.6 | | Ideas collapse under material catastrophe |

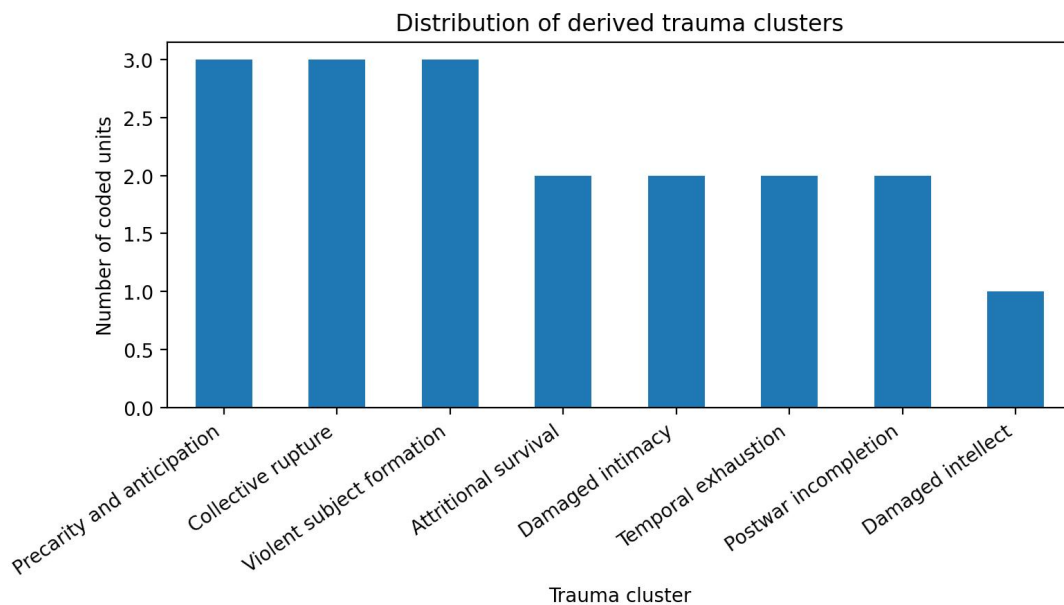


Figure 2: Distribution of derived trauma clusters

This early pattern is especially clear in the relationship between social aspiration and unequal access to modernity. Ugwu’s movement into Odenigbo’s household can be read as educational opening, though it is also a scene of dislocation. He enters a world of books, urban etiquette, and political discussion that promises transformation while reminding him of difference. The coding matrix therefore treats the scene as dislocation rather than simple progress. The pre-war novel does not imagine social mobility as a clean narrative of uplift. It shows that movement across classed and cultural spaces can produce adjustment strain and an altered sense of self. This is one

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Print ISSN: 3006-5887

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reason the article treats trauma as broader than explicit violence. The novel records psychic pressure in the very process by which subjects try to enter the promises of the postcolonial nation.

Pre-war ideological discussion also carries traumatic weight. Odenigbo's circle of intellectual debate appears vibrant, though the arguments expose a nation whose cohesion is fragile and whose political speech remains saturated by colonial legacies. In the coding matrix, this scene produces political trauma rather than neutral discourse because the debate reveals how belonging has become ethnicized and defensive. Speech itself becomes an index of fracture. The conversation does not resolve anxiety. It circulates it. This pattern suggests that the novel understands discourse as an early register of trauma. Before bodies are displaced, language begins to harden around division. Before communities scatter, confidence in the shared nation weakens.

The pre-war scenes are also notable for what they do not yet show. Bodily suffering remains absent or indirect in all three units. Figure 4 confirms that the pre-war phase contains no severe bodily violence and no embodied deprivation in the direct wartime sense. This absence should not be misread as narrative innocence. It is more accurate to say that trauma is latent and atmospheric at this stage. The body has not yet become the primary site of visible damage, though consciousness is already being shaped by unease, by partial knowledge, and by a fragile social order. The novel therefore gives readers a social atmosphere of pressure before it offers scenes of corporeal catastrophe. That sequence strengthens the article's claim that trauma is prepared historically and affectively before it is fully embodied.

Memory also behaves in a distinctive way during this phase. One pre-war unit is coded as fragmented memory and two are coded as silence or suppression. This pattern indicates that the novel stages uncertainty before it stages recollection. Political anxieties remain partially unspoken, colonial legacies are discussed without being settled, and village memory persists as a background point of belonging. The social field contains knowledge that has not yet cohered into narrative understanding. Such partiality becomes important later because the transition to war does not introduce memory from nowhere. It activates a field already structured by incomplete articulation.

Table 6 helps integrate these observations by labeling the pre-war stage as one of social texture rather than stable normality. The primary spaces of this stage are home, campus, salon, and remembered village. These locations matter because they gather intimacy, class aspiration, and intellectual life into one frame. The result is a world that looks inhabitable yet carries the marks of structural division. Pre-war scenes therefore perform a double function in the novel. They establish what will be lost, and they show that what will be lost was never fully secure in the first place.

The supportive value of these findings is clear. The objective of the study is to analyze collective trauma in the postcolonial Global South, and the pre-war units show that collective trauma does not wait passively for the outbreak of war. It begins in the unstable making of the postcolonial nation, in the management of ethnicized politics, and in unequal access to the institutions of modern life. By coding these scenes as traumatic in a preparatory sense, the dataset preserves the novel's insistence that history enters the subject before direct violence appears on the page. The pre-war section of the novel is therefore not merely introductory. It is diagnostic.

4.3 Transition to Open Violence and the Collapse of National Containment

The coding matrix assigns one scene-unit to the transition from latent instability to overt collective trauma, yet this single unit carries exceptional interpretive weight. It marks the point at which political uncertainty becomes undeniable public catastrophe. In the dataset, the scene is coded as war trauma triggered by mass killing and targeted ethnic violence. Its manifestations are shock, fear, and moral rupture. Bodily suffering is registered through implied mutilation and death, while memory is coded as fragmented because traumatic knowledge circulates in pieces rather than in orderly explanation. This concentration of variables makes the transition unit the novel's hinge of historical exposure.

The narrative significance of this threshold lies in what it destroys. Before this point, the nation remains unstable but imaginable. People still move through professional, domestic, and romantic routines. Political tensions exist, though they have not yet rendered coexistence impossible. The transition scene breaks that containment. News of massacre does not merely add danger to a recognizable world. It changes the meaning of the world itself. National trust collapses, and ordinary categories of neighbor, citizen, and shared future become unreliable. The coding

matrix therefore treats the transition as a scene of collective rupture rather than a mere escalation of political conflict.

Figure 2 helps position this scene inside the wider trauma structure. The cluster labeled collective rupture accounts for 16.7% of the dataset, and the transition unit is the opening node of that cluster. It is followed by displacement trauma and witness trauma in the war phase. This sequence matters because it shows that rupture is not only an event. It is a generator of subsequent forms. The knowledge of mass violence initiates forced movement, condenses horror into unforgettable images, and establishes fear as the grammar of daily life. The hinge scene is therefore analytically dense even though it is numerically singular.

The bodily logic of this transition is also important. Figure 4 shows that severe bodily violence first enters the narrative pattern at this stage. Until now the body has been more atmospheric than explicit. With the revelation of massacre, the body becomes the medium through which political collapse is perceived. Yet the novel does not immediately flood the page with exhaustive detail. The coding dataset registers “implied mutilation and death” rather than prolonged anatomical description. This is significant because the novel links trauma to partial sight and fragmentary knowledge. Horror exceeds full narration at the moment it becomes historically undeniable. The reader does not receive a stable explanatory frame. What arrives is sensory and moral disorientation.

This threshold also reorders space. The social geography of the novel changes from rooted domesticity and academic routine to insecure mobility. The coded interpretive note for the transition unit emphasizes the movement from latent instability to overt collective trauma. Once public violence becomes known, roads, shelters, households, and urban centers are re-signified as vulnerable terrain. Safety is no longer a property of place. It becomes temporary, contingent, and unevenly distributed. The transition therefore prepares the dominant spatial pattern of the war phase, where displacement and territorial insecurity become normal conditions.

Memory and silence behave differently after this threshold as well. In the pre-war world, silence often signifies incomplete political articulation. Here it becomes the fractured circulation of traumatic knowledge. People know enough to be transformed, yet not enough to narrate events into coherence. This is a crucial

distinction. The novel does not present trauma as something clearly possessed and then later remembered. It presents trauma as disorganizing knowledge at the moment of its arrival. The dataset captures this by coding the transition scene under fragmented memory rather than under stable recollection or direct testimony.

The collapse of national containment has an ethical dimension too. The scene exposes the failure of institutions to preserve civic belonging. When ethnic persecution becomes visible, the nation is revealed as internally divided and capable of turning on its own citizens. Table 1 identifies this phase as the point of shock and collapsed trust. That phrasing is analytically precise because the transition is not only about violence from outside. It is about the exposure of national fragility from within. This internal collapse is one reason the novel's trauma cannot be reduced to battlefield experience. The wound is political before it is territorial. It concerns the failure of the imagined community to protect those who had been asked to believe in it.

In relation to the article's objective, the transition unit offers powerful support. It demonstrates that collective trauma in the novel is historically mediated, socially contagious, and structurally revealing. A single threshold event reorganizes memory, space, trust, and embodiment. Yet the meaning of that event depends on the tensions already seeded in the pre-war world. The results therefore confirm that the novel constructs trauma neither as random shock nor as purely psychological aftermath. It emerges where fragile nationhood meets targeted violence, and it immediately becomes a collective condition that radiates through every later domain of the narrative.

4.4 War-time Displacement, Hunger, and Attritional Survival

Once the narrative settles into the war phase, trauma becomes materially repetitive and spatially mobile. Table 1 shows that the war phase contains ten coded units or 55.6% of the full dataset. This is the densest analytical zone of the novel, and its internal variety is striking. Table 2 identifies the dominant clusters within this phase as collective rupture, attritional survival, violent subject formation, and damaged intimacy. Figure 2 also shows that no single war-time cluster monopolizes the representation of injury. The novel does not reduce war to battle. It distributes it across movement, hunger, witness, care, shame, domestic pressure, and the slow wearing down of bodies and communities.

Displacement is one of the most decisive patterns. Table 4 indicates that high displacement or loss appears in 77.8% of all coded units, making it the strongest single indicator in the dataset. This result is consistent with the novel's spatial logic. War in *Half of a Yellow Sun* is lived through interrupted shelter, forced travel, remembered homes, provisional refuge, and unstable territorial belonging. The family's movements, the scattering of communities, and the repeated search for temporary safety transform geography into an instrument of trauma. Home ceases to function as a stable anchor. It becomes something carried in memory, imagined in loss, or measured by the impossibility of return.

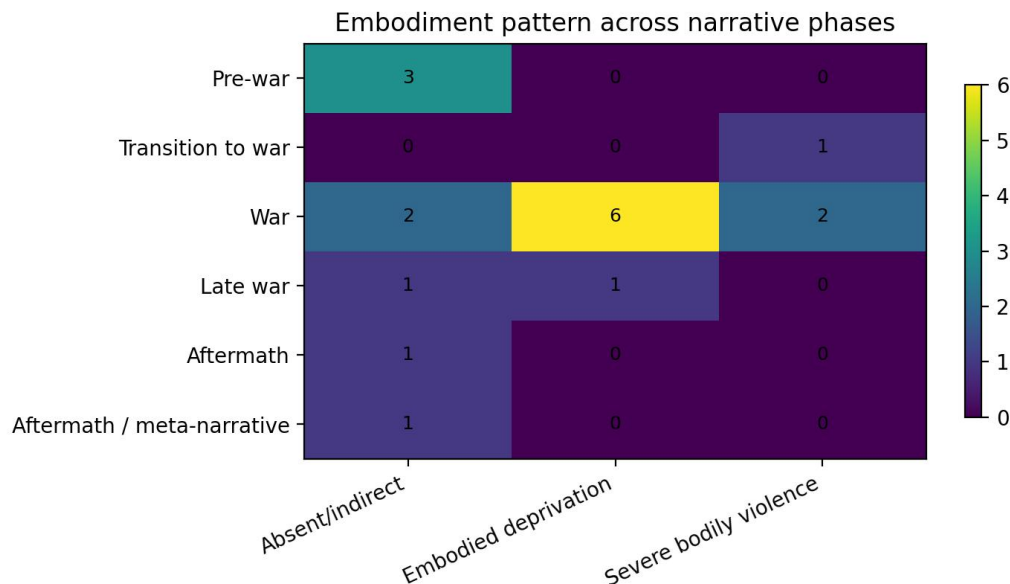


Figure 4. Embodiment pattern across narrative phases

The war-time displacement units do not treat movement as mere logistical necessity. They register movement as a psychic event. A home remembered rather than inhabited produces a new relation to time and identity. Characters begin to live in transit between what has been lost and what cannot yet be secured. The code attached to Olanna's family network, for example, links displacement trauma to territorial insecurity and to the transformation of domestic belonging into remembered space. This scene is significant because it shows that trauma in the novel is inseparable from the erosion of ordinary emplacement. To lose place is to lose routine, privacy, continuity, and the embodied confidence that one can remain where one is.

Food scarcity intensifies this spatial injury by collapsing daily life into survival

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

management. The dataset codes hunger and material shortage under slow violence rather than isolated deprivation. This distinction matters. The novel depicts scarcity as repeated pressure, not as a dramatic interruption that then disappears. Meals are reduced, bodily strength declines, anxiety narrows the horizon of action, and institutions fail to compensate. Figure 4 reflects this shift toward embodiment. During the war phase, embodied deprivation becomes more frequent, while severe bodily violence remains concentrated but not dominant. This indicates that the body is damaged not only by visible attack, but by long exposure to shortage, overwork, fatigue, and the normalization of insufficiency.

The concept of attritional survival is useful here because it captures the novel's refusal to privilege spectacular violence at the expense of ordinary suffering. The household collective unit coded under humanitarian collapse demonstrates that trauma can be produced by repetition of scarcity details, by reduced choice, and by the shrinking of life into endurance. The social meaning of this pattern is profound. War does not simply injure through combat. It reorganizes the entire material basis of daily existence. Subjects are forced to live in prolonged states of diminishment. Their trauma is therefore cumulative. It accrues through days, through routines, through small humiliations and bodily adjustments that never fully stop.

Kainene's relief work offers a significant variation within this pattern. Her scenes are coded under caretaker trauma, care resilience, and damaged community. This coding does not romanticize care. It recognizes care as an ethically necessary response that takes place inside breakdown. Kainene's labor shows that war produces not only victims and perpetrators but also caregivers whose endurance carries its own burden. She is exposed constantly to the suffering of others, and that exposure generates a quieter kind of trauma, one grounded in responsibility, overwork, and the impossibility of fully repairing the field in which she acts. The novel therefore broadens trauma beyond direct wounding. It includes the wear that comes from keeping others alive amid systemic collapse.

Figure 5 deepens this reading by showing that the war phase has the highest concentration of fragmented memory and transmitted or ordinary trauma. Memory in these units is not an ordered archive. It is a series of recurring images, partial recollections, and normalized silences. Hunger becomes so repetitive that institutions

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Online ISSN: 3006-5895

underdescribe it. Care work becomes so necessary that it risks appearing ordinary even while it remains deeply traumatic. The child-centered unit in the dataset is especially important because it shows that trauma moves into the next generation through exposure rather than through full narrative understanding. Children do not need complete explanation in order to absorb fear, instability, and injury.

Another revealing result is the relation between bodily violence and bodily depletion. Only three coded units across the entire dataset register severe bodily violence, while seven register embodied deprivation. This imbalance suggests that the novel's most sustained account of the body is not always anatomical horror. It is depletion. Bodies become thin, tired, exposed, hungry, overworked, and psychically burdened. Severe violence remains crucial, especially in witness scenes, yet the narrative insists that long-lasting injury often enters through attrition. Such a pattern strongly supports the article's conceptual frame because it challenges event-centered trauma models and foregrounds a distinctly postcolonial understanding of cumulative damage.

The broader community also changes under these pressures. Competition intensifies, social trust weakens, and collective life oscillates between fragile repair and spreading breakdown. Relief networks and domestic improvisations create temporary forms of solidarity, yet they do not restore the social world that has been lost. War-time survival in the novel is therefore relational but damaged. People need each other more than before, though the terms of that need are structured by insecurity and scarcity. This ambivalence is central to the representation of collective trauma. Community is neither wholly destroyed nor securely preserved. It becomes a field of strain in which care and breakdown coexist.

The war-time results thus support the study objective in a particularly strong way. Collective trauma in *Half of a Yellow Sun* is rendered through movement, shortage, labor, and the instability of place. The novel refuses to confine injury to battle scenes and instead shows how war saturates ordinary life. Displacement becomes the dominant spatial logic, embodied deprivation becomes a major bodily pattern, and fragmented memory becomes a principal mode of aftermath even while the war is still ongoing. Trauma is therefore represented not as a sealed event behind the characters, but as an active condition through which they must continue to live.

4.5 Militarized Masculinity, Sexual Violence, and Corroded Agency

A major strength of the coding dataset is that it reveals how the novel links collective trauma to the remaking of subjectivity under conditions of coercive war. Table 2 shows that violent subject formation accounts for three coded units or 16.7% of the dataset, while damaged intimacy accounts for two more or 11.1%. These categories become especially visible when the focus shifts toward Ugwu, the military environment, gendered harm, and the collapse of ethical certainty. Figure 3 supports this observation. Ugwu-centered and Ugwu-adjacent units form one of the largest character groupings in the dataset, indicating that the novel repeatedly uses his trajectory to examine how war penetrates the self.

Ugwu’s arc is one of the clearest examples of trauma as transformation rather than mere victimization. In the earlier part of the novel, he is associated with apprenticeship, curiosity, and mobility across social worlds. During the war phase, he is drawn into militarization, and the coding matrix marks this shift as combat trauma produced by forced militarization. The interpretive emphasis is not simply that he witnesses violence. It is that violence reconstitutes him from within. Fear, moral disorientation, and damaged selfhood replace the earlier mode of observational growth. The subject who once entered the household as a learner becomes one who must negotiate coercive masculine expectations, survival pressure, and the moral contamination of war.

Table 3: *Character-centered distribution of trauma codes*

| Character group | Coded units | Share (%) | Dominant interpretive role |
|------------------------|--------------------|------------------|---|
| Collective/civilian | 5 | 27.8 | Crowd-level evidence of national fracture and civilian stress |
| Ugwu | 4 | 22.2 | Embodied passage from apprenticeship to damaged witnesshood |
| Odenigbo/intellectual | 3 | 16.7 | Discourse, ideology, and the collapse of intellectual certainty |

| Character group | Coded units | Share (%) | Dominant interpretive role |
|--------------------------|-------------|-----------|---|
| Olanna | 2 | 11.1 | Witnessing, domestic disturbance, and emotional rupture |
| Kainene | 2 | 11.1 | Ethical labor, care, and unresolved disappearance |
| Olanna/family | 1 | 5.6 | Family mobility, home, and territorial insecurity |
| Ugwu/perpetrator witness | 1 | 5.6 | Morally compromised subjectivity under coercive war |

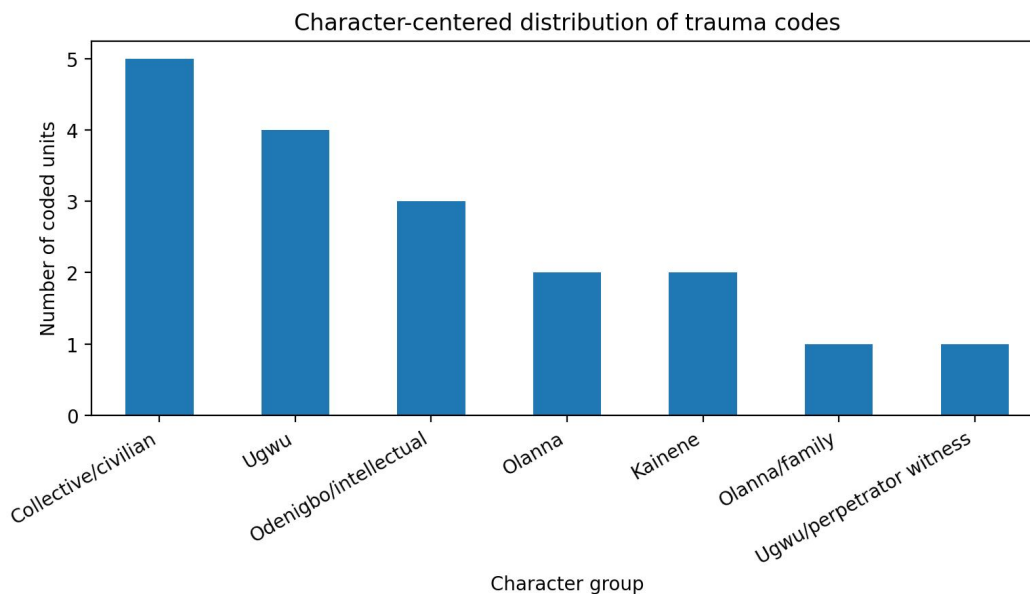


Figure 3. Character-centered distribution of trauma codes

This transformation becomes even sharper in the unit coded as perpetrator trauma. Here the dataset records sexual violence, shame, guilt, and psychic fragmentation. The community fracture variable for this scene indicates that war destroys ethical norms and intimate safety, while memory is coded through silence emerging from guilt rather than ignorance. This coding decision is vital because it keeps the scene from being read as an aberrant moral footnote. It is central to the article’s claim that postcolonial trauma includes damaged and compromised subjects, not only passive

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Online ISSN: 3006-5895

sufferers. War in the novel does not preserve moral purity. It forces individuals into systems that deform agency and redistribute violence downward and inward.

The representation of sexual violence is especially important because it ties militarized masculinity to the degradation of the social body. The harm in such scenes is bodily, psychic, and communal at once. It violates the victim, deforms the perpetrator, and reveals a world in which power has become radically detached from ethical life. In the dataset, severe bodily violence appears less often than embodied deprivation, yet when severe violence enters, it condenses the full horror of the war's moral economy. Sexual harm is one of the points at which the novel most forcefully rejects any romantic narrative of masculine heroism. The war subject is not ennobled. He is often split, ashamed, and unable to return to a stable sense of self.

Damaged intimacy extends this argument into domestic space. One war-time unit focused on Olanna and Odenigbo is coded as domestic trauma, with past betrayals combining with wartime pressure. This coding choice reflects the novel's refusal to separate private life from public violence. The household is not a protected counterspace to history. It absorbs the war's uncertainty, exhaustion, resentment, and emotional strain. Intimacy becomes unstable because the larger social field is unstable. Love survives, yet it survives under pressure that leaves marks on trust, speech, and mutual recognition. The novel therefore suggests that collective trauma enters the most private zones of the social world and changes their emotional texture.

The unit focused on silenced trauma broadens this picture by showing that not all injury is narratively public. Some harms remain unspoken, and silence itself becomes a form of evidence. This is different from simple secrecy. In the context of war, silence may indicate shame, compromised agency, fear of judgment, or the inadequacy of language to hold what has happened. Table 4 shows that silence or suppression accounts for 33.3% of the full dataset. A significant portion of the novel's traumatic force therefore resides not in what is fully narrated, but in what the narrative lets remain strained, broken, or deferred. This pattern is especially important for scenes of gendered harm and compromised masculinity, where direct speech may be ethically or psychically unavailable.

Figure 3 also reveals a broader character distribution that reinforces the same point. Collective and civilian codes are the largest group, though Ugwu occupies the next

most substantial share. This suggests that the novel places the making of damaged masculinity inside a wider landscape of public suffering. Ugwu's story is not an isolated coming-of-age tragedy. It is one thread in a much larger social account of how war corrodes ethical relations and redistributes violence across bodies and households. The individual arc matters because it makes that corrosion intimate and narratively traceable.

Another important result is that the scenes of militarization and sexual harm do not displace the earlier patterns of displacement and attritional survival. They coexist with them. The novel does not suggest that moral corrosion replaces material deprivation. Instead, war produces several layers of trauma simultaneously. Subjects are hungry and ashamed, displaced and implicated, exhausted and unable to speak. This layering is what gives the representation its complexity. The dataset captures that complexity by coding many units as hybrid personal and collective rather than as purely one or the other. In numerical terms, 61.1% of all coded units combine intimate and collective scales. In interpretive terms, this means that the novel keeps returning to the point where the historical wound enters the self without losing its public character.

The results of this subsection strongly support the article's objective. Through militarized masculinity, sexual violence, domestic strain, and silence, *Half of a Yellow Sun* shows that collective trauma is not only a matter of public catastrophe. It is also a process through which persons are remade, intimacy is damaged, and ethical life is destabilized. The novel's representation is supportive of the study's framework because it reveals trauma as politically manufactured and psychically invasive. War acts on the subject from outside, yet it also grows inward through shame, coercion, and memory that cannot be easily spoken.

4.6 Witnessing, Memory, and the Narrative Work of Silence

The coding results make it clear that memory is one of the central technologies through which the novel represents trauma. Table 4 shows that fragmented memory appears in ten coded units or 55.6% of the dataset, while silence or suppression appears in six more or 33.3%. Figure 5 demonstrates that these two patterns dominate the narrative arc from the transition to war through the aftermath. This is one of the most important findings of the study because it shows that the novel stores trauma less

often in declarative explanation than in recurring images, partial recall, underdescribed suffering, and the pressure of what cannot be directly said.

The witness scene centered on Olanna is the clearest example. It condenses mass horror into a single unforgettable encounter whose force lies in sensory shock and emotional paralysis. In the coding matrix, this scene is classified as witness trauma, with the representation mode described as a graphic focalized image and the memory variable recorded as an image that returns repeatedly and resists easy narration. This is analytically significant because it clarifies how the novel handles atrocity. It does not transform horror into a neat historical lesson at the moment of its occurrence. It leaves the witness marked by an image that exceeds immediate processing. Memory becomes intrusive and fragmentary.

Table 4: *Embodiment, memory, displacement, and scale indicators*

| Indicator | Coded units | Share (%) | Interpretive implication |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|---|
| Absent or indirect bodily stress | 8 | 44.4 | Atmosphere and interruption outweigh spectacle |
| Embodied deprivation | 7 | 38.9 | Hunger, overwork, and movement deplete the body |
| Severe bodily violence | 3 | 16.7 | Extreme scenes condense sensory horror |
| Fragmented memory | 10 | 55.6 | Injury persists as recurring image |
| Silence or suppression | 6 | 33.3 | Silence itself functions as trauma |
| Transmitted or ordinary trauma | 2 | 11.1 | Care and childhood transmit distress |
| High displacement or loss | 14 | 77.8 | Place loss defines wartime space |
| Moderate displacement or loss | 2 | 11.1 | Displacement deepens with escalation |
| Low displacement or loss | 2 | 11.1 | Stable belonging is brief |

| Indicator | Coded units | Share (%) | Interpretive implication |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|---|
| Hybrid personal and collective scale | 11 | 61.1 | Intimate pain remains historically social |
| Predominantly collective scale | 7 | 38.9 | Community-level breakdown remains visible |

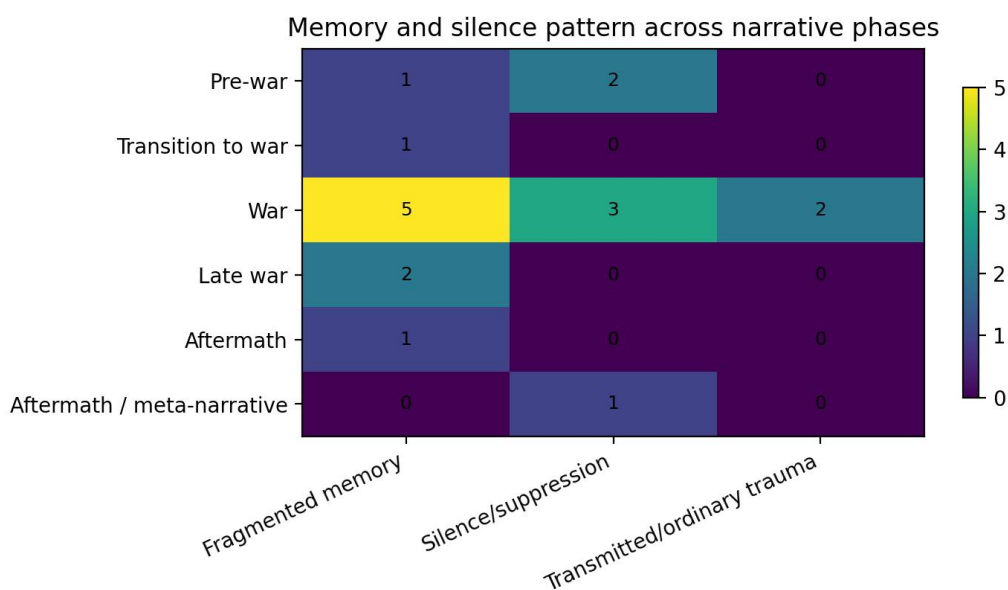


Figure 5. Memory and silence pattern across narrative phases

This pattern matters beyond one scene. Across the war phase, the novel repeatedly privileges partial transmission over full articulation. News circulates in fragments. Suffering becomes normalized and therefore underdescribed by institutions. Guilt complicates what can be spoken. Children absorb damage without possessing a full explanatory narrative. These various forms of partiality show that trauma in the novel is inseparable from problems of mediation. The question is not only what happened. The question is how subjects hold, carry, repeat, or fail to say what happened. Figure 5 captures this by showing the concentration of fragmented memory within the war and late-war phases, even before the narrative reaches formal aftermath.

Silence in the novel should therefore be read as active rather than empty. The coding dataset does not treat silence as a lack of content. It treats silence as a modality of

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Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

trauma. Political anxieties are initially unspoken, then wartime harms become partly unsayable, and later guilt and unresolved loss deepen that muteness. In some cases silence protects the subject from overwhelming recollection. In others it marks compromised agency or the impossibility of adequate witness. The results suggest that silence in the novel performs at least three functions: it indexes what exceeds ordinary speech, it reveals the social management of traumatic knowledge, and it transmits injury by leaving later subjects to inherit gaps as much as stories.

The child-centered and care-centered units are revealing in this regard. When trauma is coded as inherited or ordinary, the emphasis shifts from dramatic recollection to tacit absorption. Children live within damaged atmospheres and learn fear before they can narrate it. Caregivers encounter suffering so routinely that distress risks appearing unspectacular even while it remains profound. This pattern broadens the article's interpretation of memory. Memory in the novel is not restricted to conscious retrospection. It includes embodied habit, household atmosphere, tacit knowledge, and the normalization of distress. Such forms are particularly important for a postcolonial trauma framework because they show how violence travels through social life without requiring a single privileged eyewitness account.

Late-war and postwar units intensify the role of memory by weakening the future. One coded scene identifies chronic trauma through temporal collapse, where the future becomes difficult to imagine or narrate. Another records ambiguous loss through the unresolved disappearance associated with Kainene. In both cases memory is inseparable from suspension. The subject cannot move cleanly from event to recollection because closure has not arrived. Absence remains active. Waiting itself becomes a damaged temporal form. These findings indicate that memory in the novel is not an archive of completed events. It is a lived negotiation with incompleteness.

The final meta-narrative unit offers an important counterweight. It is coded as narrative recovery, with the postcolonial issue framed as memory, archive, and voice. This does not mean that the novel endorses full healing. The interpretive note attached to the unit stresses that writing contests silence without fully curing it. That distinction is crucial. The narrative turn toward writing suggests that testimony and archive matter because they resist erasure, institutional amnesia, and the disappearance of the dead from collective consciousness. Yet the results also indicate that narration remains

partial. It can gather fragments, shape witness, and reclaim voice, though it cannot restore the lost world or erase the ethical fractures the war has produced.

Table 6 captures this movement well by identifying postwar and meta-narrative return as the stage in which survival is joined to recollection and writing. This integrative trajectory shows that the novel places memory at the end not as closure but as work. The work is difficult because it must face both external silence and internal fracture. The results of the dataset strongly support such an interpretation. With 88.9% of coded units falling under fragmented memory, silence, or transmitted trauma when these categories are taken together, the novel's representational center of gravity clearly lies in the unstable mediation of injury rather than in the direct statement of it.

This subsection therefore reinforces the study objective in a decisive way. Half of a Yellow Sun represents collective trauma through a memory system that is broken, recursive, embodied, and incomplete. Witnessing matters, though witness rarely yields total clarity. Silence matters, though silence is charged with history rather than emptiness. Writing matters, though writing remains a limited form of repair. The results show that the novel's traumatic power lies not only in what it depicts, but in the conditions under which depiction becomes difficult, partial, and ethically fraught.

4.7 Late-War Exhaustion, Ambiguous Loss, and Postwar Incompletion

The shift from active wartime struggle to late-war exhaustion is one of the most understated yet analytically rich movements in the dataset. Table 2 records temporal exhaustion as one of the major trauma clusters, accounting for two coded units or 11.1% of the dataset, while postwar incompletion accounts for two more or 11.1%. These figures are smaller than the war-phase totals, yet their interpretive density is high because they show the novel changing its dominant mode of injury. The emphasis moves away from immediate shock and toward suspended time, uncertainty, and unresolved absence.

The late-war unit coded as chronic trauma is especially revealing. Its manifestation is temporal collapse, and its memory variable states that the future becomes hard to imagine or narrate. This is not a minor shift in tone. It indicates that the war damages temporal structure itself. Subjects are no longer only responding to danger. They are living in a world where futurity has thinned out. Plans, ambitions,

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

and ordinary expectations become difficult to sustain. Survival is still necessary, yet survival no longer carries a persuasive image of what comes next. The result is a form of injury that is quieter than spectacle and no less severe in its effect on consciousness.

Table 6: *Integrative trajectory of trauma across the narrative*

| Analytical stage | Dominant pattern | coded | Primary logic | spatial | Interpretive claim |
|-----------------------------------|---|---------|---|-----------------|--|
| Pre-war social texture | Latent anxiety and uneven modernity | and | Home, salon, memory | campus, village | The novel prepares trauma historically before overt catastrophe |
| Transition to open rupture | Mass violence and collapse of trust | and | Transit, roads, and public panic | | The shock point converts tension into collective national fracture |
| War-time dispersal | Displacement, and care labor | hunger, | Shelter, camp, relief route, hostile terrain | | Trauma becomes mobile, repetitive, and materially grounded |
| War-time ethical corrosion | Militarization, rape, and broken intimacy | | Camp, household, battlefield, improvised refuge | | War remakes subjectivity and moral agency from within |
| Late-war suspension | Chronic waiting and ambiguous loss | and | Search routes and emptied horizons | | Time itself becomes damaged and future-making weakens |
| Postwar and meta-narrative return | Survival, recollection, and writing | | Postwar domestic space and archival imagination | | Narration becomes a partial practice of reclaiming voice |

Kainene's disappearance intensifies this temporal damage through the logic of ambiguous loss. The dataset codes this scene under unfinished mourning, with memory described as absence that cannot be fully narrated or closed. This is crucial for the article's wider argument because it shows that trauma in the novel does not culminate in the completion of grief. The lost person is not securely located among the dead, nor returned among the living. Mourning remains suspended because

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Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

certainty is withheld. The subject cannot conclude. Time extends without resolution. Ambiguous loss therefore becomes a major postwar structure in the novel, one that keeps absence active in the present.

Figure 1, when read together with Table 6, helps illuminate the significance of these late units. Their smaller number does not mean that the narrative is moving away from trauma. It means that trauma has changed form. The interpretive model in Table 6 names this stage as late-war suspension and describes its claim as damage to future-making. That phrasing is important because it avoids reducing trauma to the replay of past scenes. Trauma in the novel also concerns the inability to orient toward what has not yet happened. When the future becomes difficult to imagine, the social world loses one of the conditions that make recovery possible.

The aftermath unit continues this movement through a mixed picture of survival and unresolved recollection. The relevant coded scene gathers Olanna, Ugwu, and Odenigbo in a postwar condition where living continues but certainty does not return. The trauma type is aftermath trauma, and the postcolonial issue is postwar incompleteness. This coding stresses that the end of formal conflict does not coincide with restored wholeness. Bodies may be alive, domestic routines may partially resume, and speech may become possible again, yet none of these shifts neutralizes the losses, silences, or moral damage produced by war. Survival remains burdened by what cannot be repaired.

This is one of the points at which the dataset's hybrid scale becomes especially meaningful. Many postwar units remain both personal and collective rather than drifting into isolated private grief. The novel's survivors do not suffer in sealed inwardness. They live within a damaged national memory, within institutional silence, and within households reshaped by absence. Kainene's disappearance is intimate, though it also points toward a broader politics of the unaccounted for, the unmourned, and the unresolved. Similarly, Ugwu's turn toward narrative voice is personal, though it emerges from a social need to contest silence and preserve memory beyond the self. The bodily pattern also changes here. Figure 4 shows that the late-war and aftermath stages are not dominated by severe bodily violence. The body remains marked, though the dominant mode is less visible wounding than lingering depletion and altered relation to time. This is important because it confirms that the novel does not

make bodily trauma legible only through direct attack. The body remains traumatically present in fatigue, in the difficulty of carrying on, in the physical traces of shortage, and in the persistence of absence as lived sensation. Postwar embodiment is therefore quieter but still damaged.

Memory in these late units also becomes more difficult in a specific way. During the central war phase, fragmented memory is tied to sensory shock and ongoing instability. In late war and aftermath, fragmentation is bound to incompleteness. The problem is no longer only that traumatic knowledge arrived in pieces. It is that events have not closed sufficiently to become narratable in full. The future cannot stabilize the past because the past is still open, still unresolved, still shaping the present. This is why the meta-narrative movement toward writing becomes so important. Writing does not follow closure. It arises because closure is absent.

The results of this subsection therefore support the study's objective by showing that collective trauma in the novel includes damaged temporality, unfinished mourning, and postwar incompleteness. A narrow trauma model might privilege the most visible scenes of violence and assume that the main work of interpretation ends once the fighting subsides. The dataset points in another direction. It shows that the late and postwar novel is essential to understanding how the text represents the social afterlife of violence. Trauma persists because time itself has been altered, because absence remains active, and because narration must work in the presence of what has not been resolved.

4.8 Theoretical Synthesis of the Coding Pattern

The final analytical task of the Results section is to show how the coding matrix supports the combined Fanon-Craps framework specified in the study design. Table 5 and Figure 6 provide the clearest evidence. On the Fanon side, 61.1% of coded units fall under the derived group "colonial structuring of subjectivity." A further 16.7% fall under "violence and dehumanization," while the remaining Fanon-oriented units are divided between survival and damaged repair, and psychic rupture with corrupted agency. On the Craps side, 72.2% of coded units support the derived group "decentering Eurocentric trauma models," with smaller shares emphasizing collective historical violence, witnessing and limits of testimony, and cumulative ordinary trauma. These distributions are not incidental. They show that the novel most

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Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

consistently represents trauma as historically manufactured and conceptually resistant to narrow clinical or event-based paradigms.

The Fanon-oriented pattern suggests that the novel places colonial aftermath at the center of traumatic life even when colonial rule is not the immediate event on the page. The coding matrix repeatedly links injury to fragile nationhood, ethnicized politics, uneven modernity, state failure, militarized masculinity, and the corruption of social bonds. In other words, the war is represented as unfolding within a field already shaped by prior historical ordering. Figure 6 makes this visible by showing the dominance of colonial structuring of subjectivity over other Fanon-derived categories. The point is not that every scene speaks the same theoretical language. The point is that the novel repeatedly returns to the damaged social field produced by colonial history and carried into postcolonial crisis.

Table 5: *Theoretical alignment of coded units*

| Theoretical axis | Coded units | Share (%) | Interpretive use |
|--|-------------|-----------|--|
| Fanon: Colonial structuring of subjectivity | 11 | 61.1 | Shows how colonial ordering preconditions later crisis |
| Fanon: Violence and dehumanization | 3 | 16.7 | Tracks sensory horror, persecution, and civic collapse |
| Fanon: Survival and damaged repair | 2 | 11.1 | Reads repair as fragile work inside damaged social worlds |
| Fanon: Psychic rupture and corrupted agency | 2 | 11.1 | Explains guilt, coercion, and ethical corrosion |
| Craps: Decentering Eurocentric trauma models | 13 | 72.2 | Rejects narrow event-based and clinic-centered trauma models |
| Craps: Collective historical violence | 2 | 11.1 | Anchors the novel in public, mass, and historical violence |
| Craps: Witnessing and limits of testimony | 2 | 11.1 | Explains silence, compromised speech, and incomplete |

| Theoretical axis | Coded units | Share (%) | Interpretive use |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|---|
| | | | narration |
| Craps: Cumulative and ordinary trauma | 1 | 5.6 | Recognizes attritional and ordinary forms of injury |

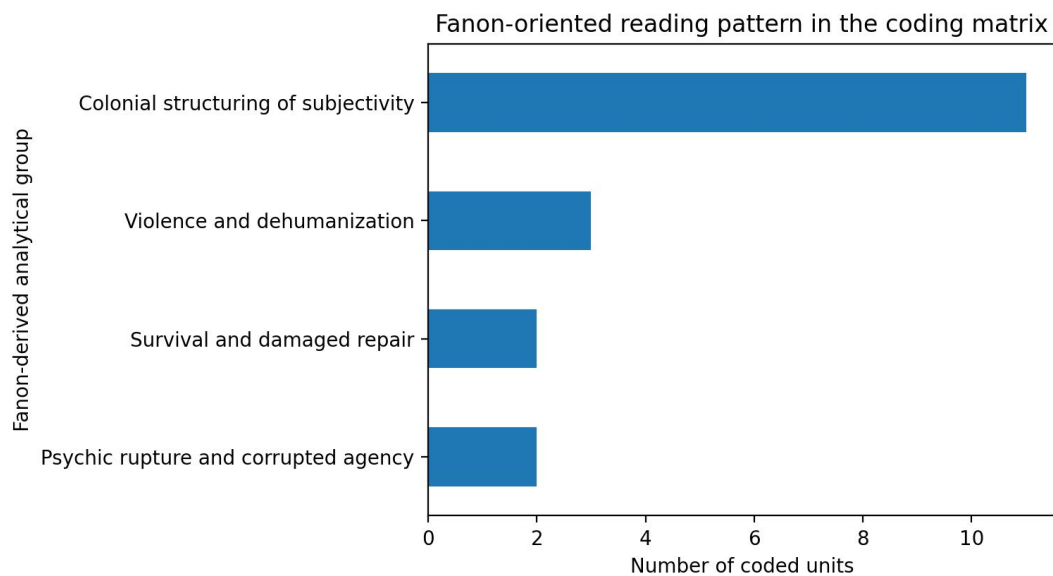


Figure 6. Fanon-oriented reading pattern in the coding matrix

This result is especially important for scenes that might otherwise appear merely situational. Ugwu’s class transition, Odenigbo’s ideological rigidity, Olanna’s witnessing, the family’s movement through insecure spaces, and Kainene’s relief labor all become more intelligible when read as positions inside a damaged postcolonial social order. The dataset therefore supports a reading in which trauma is not simply attached to a sequence of wartime events. It is attached to the historical production of vulnerability, hierarchy, and divided belonging. The novel’s most powerful scenes of war matter because they reveal what the postcolonial nation has inherited and failed to resolve.

The Craps-oriented pattern is equally revealing. The largest share of units challenge Eurocentric trauma assumptions by presenting trauma as socially prepared, publicly distributed, historically embedded, and cumulative. Table 5 identifies this orientation as the rejection of event-based and clinic-centered models. The

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Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

implications are visible across the dataset. Pre-war unease counts because trauma can begin before overt catastrophe. Hunger counts because trauma can be ordinary and attritional. Care work counts because responsibility itself can become a site of injury. Silence counts because speech is not the only medium through which trauma becomes legible. Ambiguous loss counts because aftermath may remain unresolved rather than neatly narrativized.

The dataset's small but significant categories under collective historical violence and witnessing also matter. They show that the novel does not abandon the event. Mass violence, direct horror, and the burden of seeing remain crucial parts of its traumatic structure. What changes is the frame in which those elements are placed. The event is made legible through history and through the social conditions that surround it. This is one reason the study's combined framework is analytically productive. Fanon explains why the social field is already damaged. Craps explains why trauma theory must learn from such representations rather than force them into narrower inherited models.

Table 6 offers the integrative form of this theoretical synthesis. It organizes the narrative into six stages and shows a continuous movement from pre-war social texture to postwar narrative return. Each stage joins a dominant coded pattern to a spatial logic and a larger interpretive claim. The resulting model is helpful because it demonstrates that the novel's traumatic structure is coherent without being simplistic. The early stage establishes historically prepared vulnerability. The middle stages distribute injury across movement, shortage, witness, militarization, and broken intimacy. The late stages reveal temporal damage, unfinished mourning, and the partial recovery of voice through writing. This staged model strongly supports the article's thesis that collective trauma in the postcolonial Global South is cumulative, relational, spatially mobile, and narratively unfinished.

The results also show why a single-axis reading would be insufficient. If the analysis focused only on witness trauma, it would miss attritional survival. If it focused only on bodily harm, it would miss silence and temporality. If it focused only on individual psychology, it would miss fractured nationhood and institutional failure. The coding matrix therefore validates the article's decision to use multiple variables within one coherent theoretical framework. Trauma in the novel is multi-sited, yet it is

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

not conceptually diffuse. Its many forms converge around one major pattern: the historical production and social circulation of injury in a postcolonial world.

The significance of this synthesis extends beyond the individual novel. By showing how a literary text can represent collective trauma through atmosphere, displacement, depletion, compromised agency, silence, and incomplete narration, the results point toward a broader method for reading postcolonial fiction. The dataset does not claim universality, though it does suggest that literary trauma in the Global South may often require attention to thresholds, social texture, historical layering, and postwar incompleteness rather than to exceptional shock alone. In that sense, the results are supportive not only of the objective of this article but also of a wider critical argument about how postcolonial literature asks trauma studies to expand its own conceptual habits.

Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that *Half of a Yellow Sun* represents trauma as a historically embedded and socially distributed condition rather than as an isolated psychic event. This aligns closely with Fanon's understanding of colonial violence as a force that enters the structure of subjectivity and leaves behind durable forms of disorientation, dehumanization, and estrangement (Whitehead, 2004). The dominance of the Fanon-derived coding group "colonial structuring of subjectivity" suggests that the novel's war cannot be separated from inherited political and psychic arrangements. The pre-war atmosphere of unease, the ethnicization of belonging, the fragility of institutional trust, and the uneven access to modernity all indicate that the social field is already damaged before open conflict becomes visible. The war radicalizes those fractures, though it does not invent them. This supports the broader critical argument that postcolonial violence is often recursive, drawing energy from unresolved colonial ordering rather than emerging as a wholly discrete rupture (Leczna, 2016; Andermahr, 2012; Craps, 2013).

The study also supports Craps's challenge to Eurocentric trauma models (Leczna, 2016). The coding matrix repeatedly shows that trauma in the novel is cumulative, ordinary, and collective. Hunger, displacement, care labor, damaged domesticity, and transmitted fear occupy major positions in the results, even though these experiences do not always conform to classic event-centered formulations

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Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

(Adebayo, 2021; Yusin, 2018). Such a pattern resonates with postcolonial trauma theory's insistence that historically marginalized violences must not be forced into conceptual frames that privilege one archive of suffering over others (Adichie, 2006; Fanon, 1963; Akpome, 2013). The novel's traumatic world is not reducible to the language of singular shock. It includes prolonged deprivation, institutional underdescription, inherited silence, and the wearing down of the future. The results therefore strengthen the claim that postcolonial literary texts do not merely illustrate trauma theory. They compel its revision.

The prominence of fragmented memory and silence in the dataset is also significant in light of existing scholarship. Ouma's reading of the novel's composite consciousness is supported by the present findings because the text's multiple focalizations distribute traumatic knowledge across differently situated subjects rather than consolidating it into one total account (Whitehead, 2004). Akpome's emphasis on polyvocality is reinforced in a similar way (Hillman, 2019). The coding results show that no single character exhausts the meaning of war, and this formal plurality is central to the novel's traumatic structure. The damage is social, so the narrative voice must be plural enough to register dispersed experience. At the same time, the results add something more specific to that line of criticism. Polyvocality in this novel is not only a formal or historiographic strategy. It is also a trauma strategy. It allows the text to represent how injury is unevenly felt yet collectively produced.

The study's results also converge with memory-based criticism of the novel. Adebayo's account of *Half of a Yellow Sun* as a work of postmemory is not identical to the position taken here, since this article emphasizes direct wartime experience within the text itself (Abba, 2021). Yet the results strongly support the view that inherited silence, suppressed remembrance, and the recovery of Biafran memory are central to the novel's project (Luckhurst, 2008). The final movement toward writing and archive, together with the dataset's high incidence of fragmented memory and silence, suggests that the novel treats narration as an act of resistance to institutionalized forgetting. In this regard, the findings are also compatible with arguments that Adichie's novel functions as a site of memorialization and postwar ethical address (Kurtz, 2022; Rothberg, 2009). The novel does not restore a lost national unity, though it does refuse the ease of erasure.

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

The body-centered findings speak directly to scholarship on violence and ethical unease in Adichie's fiction. Hillman argues that Adichie's representation of violent bodies resists tidy judgment and narrative closure (Caruth, 1996). The current results support that claim, especially in relation to militarized masculinity, sexual violence, and compromised agency. Ugwu's transformation from learner to morally burdened participant in coercive violence is one of the clearest places where the novel challenges reductive moral binaries. Trauma is not limited to innocent passivity. It may also involve guilt, shame, and the corruption of agency within violent structures. This is where Fanon's insights remain especially powerful, since he helps explain how a violent social order can deform the subject who moves within it (Ouma, 2011). The novel's refusal to offer pure innocence or simple redemption intensifies rather than weakens its traumatic realism.

Another important contribution of the findings lies in the distinction between severe bodily violence and embodied deprivation. The dataset shows that spectacular harm exists, yet the more sustained bodily pattern is depletion through hunger, overwork, movement, and persistent insecurity. This is analytically important because it widens the concept of embodiment in literary trauma studies. Whitehead and Luckhurst have both shown that trauma fiction often works through formal disturbance and indirect return (Visser, 2011; Ouma, 2011). The present findings suggest that postcolonial trauma fiction may also work through bodily attrition, where the wounded body is not always the immediately mutilated body but the body gradually reorganized by scarcity, fear, and exhaustion. Such a distinction helps explain why the novel's representation feels historically thick. It captures not only what violence does in an instant but what it does over time.

The findings on ambiguous loss and postwar incompleteness extend this argument into temporality. Trauma in the novel persists because the end of battle is not the end of injury. Kainene's disappearance and the broader atmosphere of unresolved recollection show that the postwar world remains structurally open. This speaks to a recurrent problem in trauma studies: the pressure to narrate crisis toward recovery. The novel resists that pressure. It allows survival, though survival remains marked by absence and unfinished mourning. In this sense, the results support the view that trauma in postcolonial literature often involves damaged futurity as much as

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

damaged memory (Lecznar, 2016; Akpome, 2013; Rothberg, 2009). When the future itself becomes hard to imagine, trauma cannot be treated as a completed past event.

The article also contributes methodologically. Literary studies sometimes hesitate to use coding frameworks because of a fear that formal categorization will flatten textual nuance. The present analysis suggests a more balanced possibility. The coding matrix did not replace close reading. It organized it. By making visible the distribution of trauma across phases, bodies, spaces, and memory patterns, the dataset clarified the broad architecture of the novel's representation while leaving room for interpretive detail. This approach is especially useful for long, polyvocal novels in which traumatic pressure is dispersed rather than concentrated in a single climactic scene. The method allowed the article to show that the novel's traumatic structure is both internally varied and conceptually coherent.

There are limitations that should be acknowledged. The dataset was intentionally focused and interpretive rather than exhaustive. Eighteen scene-units are sufficient for pattern recognition within this article, though a larger coding frame might reveal further micro-variations in voice, gender, spatiality, or symbolic objects. The study also prioritized Fanon and Craps in order to maintain conceptual clarity. Other frameworks, such as postmemory, feminist trauma theory, or affect theory, might illuminate additional features of the novel (Whitehead, 2004). Even so, the present findings demonstrate that a focused postcolonial trauma frame can account for a wide range of the text's formal and ethical concerns without collapsing them into abstraction.

On balance, the results show that *Half of a Yellow Sun* is best understood as a literary account of collective trauma whose power lies in the conjunction of history, embodiment, silence, and fractured belonging. The novel depicts the Biafran war not as an isolated national episode but as a crisis grown from colonial afterlives and carried forward through incomplete memory and damaged social life. This is what makes the novel so valuable to postcolonial trauma studies. It forces criticism to read violence in relation to nationhood, class, gender, space, and historical inheritance all at once. It also reminds literary scholarship that narration can bear witness without claiming cure, and can preserve collective memory without pretending to resolve the wounds it records.

Conclusion

This article set out to analyze how *Half of a Yellow Sun* represents collective trauma in the postcolonial Global South through Fanon's concept of colonial psychic violence and Craps's critique of Eurocentric trauma theory. The study found that trauma in the novel is historically prepared, materially intensified, and narratively prolonged. The pre-war world already contains fragile nationhood, uneven modernity, and unresolved political tension. The war phase concentrates displacement, hunger, witnessing, militarization, and broken intimacy. The late and postwar phases show temporal damage, ambiguous loss, and the incomplete recovery of voice through writing.

The coding results demonstrate that the novel does not restrict trauma to spectacular scenes of bodily catastrophe. It gives a major place to attritional deprivation, mobility under pressure, damaged domesticity, inherited fear, silence, and fragmented memory. In this sense, the representation of trauma is both collective and intimate. It is collective because the social field itself is fractured. It is intimate because history enters households, bodies, relationships, and conscience. The strongest pattern in the dataset is the hybrid personal-collective scale of suffering, which confirms that the novel refuses any strict separation between private pain and public violence.

The study also shows that *Half of a Yellow Sun* expands the terms of trauma reading. The novel insists that postcolonial suffering cannot be fully understood through narrow event-based models. Trauma appears as cumulative, spatially mobile, socially transmitted, and unresolved long after the formal end of war. Writing emerges as a partial act of witness and memory rather than as final healing. The novel's achievement lies in its ability to preserve this incompleteness while still giving form to what would otherwise remain buried in silence.

Overall, *Half of a Yellow Sun* stands as a powerful literary account of how the afterlife of colonialism and the crisis of postcolonial nationhood shape the experience of collective trauma. By reading the novel through a focused Fanon-Craps framework, this article has shown that Adichie's text offers not only a representation of war but also a critical theory of trauma from the Global South.

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Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

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