

**WAR AND THE NIGERIAN FICTION: A STUDY OF HELON HABILA'S
*MEASURING TIME, OIL ON WATER AND THE CHIBOK GIRLS***

BY

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DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this dissertation entitled “*War and Nigerian Fiction. A study of Helon Habila’s Measuring Time, Oil on Water and The Chibok Girls*” has been carried out by me in the Department of English and Literary Studies.. Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria the information derived from the literature has been duly acknowledged in the text and a list of references provided. No part of this dissertation was previously presented for another degree or diploma at this or any other Institution.

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Date

CERTIFICATION

This dissertation entitled “**War and Nigerian Fiction: A Study of Helon Habila’s *Measuring Time, Oil On Water and The Chibok Girls***” by Catherine Innih Godwin meets the regulations governing the award of Masters of Arts (M.A) in English Literature of the Ahmadu Bello University, and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

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This dissertation is dedicated to GOD ALMIGHTY in whose strength this journey was fruitful and to my beloved husband and lovely kids: Anosi, Etse, Abosi and Osizehme Oshanor Innih for their support and understanding.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines war and Nigerian Fiction with the aim of explicating the varied ramification of violence as depicted in Helon Habila's *Measuring Time*, *Oil on Water* and *The Chibok Girls*. War has been a composite source of inspiration for literary expression. It is a social compass which serves as a means of mirroring society. As an ancient subject of representation, it has been explored extensively from different angles. Although, war symbolise armed struggle, it is also a psychological displacement which allows the construction of traumatic identity. As a result, this dissertation, relying on the poetic of psychoanalysis, examines war as a psycho-social response of man to anything that threatens his ego. The dissertation is premised on the belief that war is an idea that indwells the psyche of man and finds spontaneous expression when the ego is "threatened". Hence, it demonstrates that literature has the ability to penetrate not only society but the psychology of the individuals that make up the society. The dissertation evokes realistic issues that have dominated the social circle. That is, issues of structural and psychological violence and its relevance to literary construction and imagination are best articulated within the context of the Nigerian state.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Conceptual Premise

This dissertation explores the relationship between war and literary creativity in contemporary Nigerian fiction with emphasis on character formation within a social context as depicted in Helon Habila's *Measuring Time* (2006), *Oil on Water* (2010) and *The Chibok Girls* (2016). The dissertation analyses war beyond the rhetorics of culture, politics, economic and environment. It looks at war from a social and psychological perspective focusing on variables that influence and shape man's cognitive processes within a social continuum. The dissertation thus defines war as anything that disrupts the order of things.

The three novels present characters whose behaviours and actions are psychologically influenced by social forces within society. Character formation and by implication human behaviour are most often occasioned by human interaction within a "life space" and/or a narrative space. Ideas, thoughts and actions are stimulus expressed or unleashed by an individual as a response to psychological and social variables within the society. The extent to which man responds to social and psychological variables defines his personality. As a result, man's personality is seen as a social construct, a social phenomenon which dictates and stimulates man's interaction and psychical response to perceived ideas within a social framework. Thus, using psychoanalytical criticism and building on Erik Erikson's concept of personality development (Psychosocial Development) as an investigative tool, this dissertation focuses on the centrality of the self as an indispensable variable in violence and war.

1.1.1 Development and Growth of Nigerian Fiction

Nigerian literature cannot be discussed without exploring the social forces that determine her history. Prior to the evolution of writing, Nigeria had a rich cultural heritage expressed in her orality. According to Gunner (2004:67), “the continent of Africa can be viewed as a site of enormous, long, and ongoing creativity... as a vector for the production of social life, religious beliefs and the constant construction and reconstruction of society, ideology and aesthetic”. This implies that societies in spite of varying complexities were able to regulate their context and activities using variables within the culture as markers for peaceful coexistence and expression. Nigerian literature is a product of her oral expression; it is a cultural marker for the Nigerian people.

Nigeria is located on the western coast of Africa, it lies between latitude 40 N and 140 N. The country is bounded in the north by the Sahara Desert and in the south by the Gulf of Guinea, an arm of the Atlantic Ocean. The entity called Nigeria emerged in 1914 when the British Protectorates of Northern and Southern Nigeria were amalgamated. The country became independent on October 1, 1960, and in 1963 adopted a republican constitution and became a member of the Commonwealth. The First Republic was replaced by the military, and they ruled for 13 years. The Second Republic lasted from 1979 to 1983, followed by another 15 years of military rule. Ojigbo (1985) cited in Onens (2015:16).

Nigeria has a diverse geography, with climates ranging from arid to humid equatorial. Nigeria is bordered to the north by Niger, to the North East by Chad and Cameroon, to the south by the Gulf of Guinea, and to the west by Benin. Nigeria is not only large in land mass but also is Africa's most populous country. However, Nigeria's most diverse feature is

its people. Hundreds of languages are spoken in the country, including Yoruba, Igbo, Fulani, Hausa, Edo, Ibibio, Tiv, and English. The country has abundant natural resources, notably large deposits of petroleum and natural gas. (Encyclopaedia Britannica (2012). Nigeria indeed had had a turbulent history. In May 1967, General Yakubu Gowon, the then head of state announced the creation of a new 12-state structure. The Eastern Region, populated mostly by the Igbos, would be divided into three states, two of them dominated by non-Igbo groups. The division would also sever the vast majority of Igbo from profitable coastal ports and rich oil fields discovered in the Niger Delta (which until then was a part of the Eastern Region). According to Ojukwu (1985) cited in Onens (2015, p16), the leaders of the Eastern Region, were pushed to the brink of secession by the anti-Igbo attacks and the influx of Igbo refugees, he interpreted this action as an official attempt to push the Igbo to the margins of Nigerian society and politics. On May 27, 1967, Lieutenant Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu acting on the order of the region's assembly declared secession of the Eastern region from the Nigerian

With the outbreak of the Civil war in July 1967, Nigerian forces moved South and captured the University town of Nsukka. Biafran troops crossed the River Niger, pushing deep into the West in an attempt to attack Lagos, the then capital. Gen. Gowon's forces repelled the invasion, imposed a naval blockade of the south-eastern coast, and mounted a counterattack into northern Biafra. A bitter war of attrition followed, prolonged by France's military support for Biafra. In January 1970, the better-equipped federal forces finally overcame the rebels, whereupon Gen. Gowon announced he would remain in power for six more years to ensure a peaceful transition to democracy. This promise; Gowon would later renege upon that later led to the subsequent military coup by General Murtala Ramat Mohammed and

toppled General Gowon and entrenched General Murtala in power. The war created a polarised society thus leading to a series of conflict and violence experienced in Nigeria today. It is this bifurcation and schemes in the country that writers appropriated in the writing.

However, Nigerian fiction developed as a response to perceived stereotypical representation and cultural imperialism encoded in the writings of Eurocentric scholars such as Edgar Wallace, Joseph Conrad, Joyce Cary, Graham Green amongst several others who represented prejudices and misconceptions in their works about Africa and Africans and who had dismissed the creative prowess of Nigerians (Africans), according to Obiechina cited in Odiwo (2009:15):

the English writers were exploiting the popular images of Africa and the interest generated to empire to weave elaborate and exotic romance set in Africa for the amusement of the masses for her English urban industrial population, cut off from their own popular culture and incapable of digesting serious literature...

Saddled with the responsibility of repudiating this “popular image of Africa” and projecting their culture and literary ability, Nigerian/African writers in the early 40s wrote to show the world that Nigeria has a rich cultural heritage., Though, confronted with barriers such as the choice of what language to use, they were determined to project to the world that Africa is not a continent of salvages but of creative and intellectual minds. Thus, novels such as Tutuola’s *Palm Wine Drinkard* (1952), Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* (1958) among others were written to demonstrate that the African past, as Achebe observes, “...with all its imperfection was not one long night of savagery from which the first European acting on God ‘s behalf delivered them”. To put this misconception about Africa to rest, Achebe cited in (Lindfors 1997:25), observes that African Literature should define the path to follow:

... as far as I am concerned the fundamental must first be disposed off. This theme put quite simply is that African people did not hear of culture for the first time from Europeans, that their societies were not mindless but frequently had a philosophy of great depth and value and beauty, that they had poetry and above all dignity.

The coming of Achebe and Tutuola onto the literary scene became the melting pot for the fertilisation of ideas in Nigerian literature. Writers collected stories from their oral tradition which they translated into texts for the consumption of the masses. Thus, in the early days of writing, most writers were basically concerned with projecting their culture, this explains why they wrote sad stories of cultural conflict. According to Lindfors (1979:25),

Anglophone West African Novelist wrote sad stories of culture conflict, they exposed how a well-knit society was displaced and divided after its exposure to Western institutions such as the church or school, or reveal how man is thrown into a psychological trauma because he embraced western ideas.

They affirm that the legacy of colonialism was cultural confusion and it was virtually impossible to find stable moral value in such society.

Faced with the nefarious attitude of the new Africa and the responsibility of highlighting the ugly trends in postcolonial African society, the new African writers captured in their writing postcolonial disillusionment and the greed of emerging African elites, hence, they appropriated the novel as a literary outlet for strong social and political satire. Instead of romanticising with the issues of colonialism, and the projection of a dignified African past, they shifted their attention to the debased activities of the new African elites. Wole Soyinka who switched from drama to fiction exclaimed that “the writer needs an urgent release from the fascination of the past if he is to fulfil his function” as the recorder of the mores and experiences of his society and as the voice of vision of his own time” (Lindfors 1997:26). The black writer’s burden according to Achebe is to “express our thought and feeling even against ourselves without the anxiety that what we say will be taken against our race...”

Achebe cited in Lindfors (1997:26). In other words, the political battle at home was more important than the cultural struggle abroad.

This conscious awakening continued into the 1970s with a renewed focus on emerging trends and tropes in the society. The centre of focus becomes the civil war with its phenomenal destruction and devaluating tendencies towards man and humanity in general, it portrays man's altruism, notably his willingness to sacrifice himself for others, in addition to human pettiness, simplicity, duplicity, greed, compassion and devotion to an ideal. Writers seem to be more concerned with comprehending the moral significance of actions taken during the civil war than with blaming the conflict on one side or another ((Lindfors 1997:26).

Nigerian fiction, therefore, explores all that defines Nigeria as a nation. It evokes diverse political, social, psychological and economic leitmotifs. A discussion on the Nigerian fiction is perhaps a confrontation of all that defines the existence of Nigeria as a people which are by implication the central component in Nigeria Literature. The most obvious being the political and cultural forms immanent in the society which gave birth to the trauma of existence and the drama that accompany it. Writers such as Festus Iyayi, Isidore Okpewho, Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, amongst others appropriated Western literary conventions in exposing and commenting on the political, economic and cultural factors at play in the society. It is within the purview of this argument that Helon Habila's literary landscape is examined.

Nigerian fiction as an expansive frontier embodies the socio-political, cultural, economic and psychological consciousness of Nigeria and Nigerians. In this regard, Nnolim (2010:1) argues:

It is now a commonplace knowledge that contemporary African literature cannot be properly understood and appreciated as an isolated expression but must rather be viewed as part of the totality of human experience. As a literature of a people, it cannot be fully understood by the simple separation of form and content, for literature is part of a social situation and must be approached primarily as a mode of collective belief and action.

This expresses the totality of our experience and evokes elements of our nationhood; it practices its spatial and temporal nature. The first duty and responsibility of an artist is to his nation. The artist must recreate the elements of his environment; it is a social, political and cultural issue that is centred on the assertion of unity rather than diversity and pluralism. The society must be able to identify and relate with issues addressed, all the divides and binaries of the society must be represented, especially the marginalised, by so doing, he assumed the voice and conscience of the society.

In this light, Nigerian Fiction is expressed as an imaginative space within which issues indigenous to Nigeria and Nigerians are explored. Nigeria Fiction embraces all genres of literary creativity such as drama, poetry, oral creativity (orature) and the novel. The novel has always been a window into dominant issues in the society. The novel derives its strength not only from its rendition of physical realities but also its exposition and designation of the human mind as the repository of experience and actions. The novels privileged its reader the opportunity to know the inner workings of the minds and how such workings motivate one's responses and relationship with others in society. It unravels the psychological state of its characters more accurately than any genre of literary expression. Based on this, therefore, the reader is predisposed to other potent variables that trigger man

level of socialisation in the society besides the economic, political, cultural and social variables which seem to be the defining variables for one's motifs and actions. It implies that there are other invisible forces that trigger an individual and define his disposition in the society.

Nigerian fiction in recent times has devoted a significant space to the exploration of a violent phenomenon in the society. War and violence have become central thematic and aesthetic issues and preoccupations in the criticism of Nigerian literature and by implication African literature. The exploration of war and violence in Nigerian fiction signifies the content and nature of the Nigerian state. Nigeria, in recent times, is mired with various forms of war ranging from social, political, domestic and ideological, thus, allowing for a vibrant discourse and criticism in determining the causes and ontology of mischief in the society. Discourses on the instances of war and their impact on society have significantly opened up the context of Nigerian war novels in general and its psychological implication on the society and its characters in particular. Thus, within this context, the psychoanalytical tool becomes viable for the explication of the causes and effects of war on the individual and society. Thus, there is a need to examine the Nigerian war fiction beyond the surface realities to include the interior workings of the mind especially as it relates to violence in the society.

In the context of the above therefore, this dissertation employs Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan's models of psychoanalysis of change and social representation as primary tools for reading the selected texts because Lacan's analysis of change, society and social representation holds that human behaviour is a function of an individual psychological

environment while Freud's theory of social representation talks about the knowledge of self, i.e. self-making (as well as life-making), interpreted within the context of the society.

1.1.2 War as the Source of Inspiration

As long as there have been wars, conflicts and violent relationships in the society, there have been writers trying to make meaning out of this, turning battlefield horrors into narratives and trying to make something useful out of her debris. From Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*, and Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, a novel that dramatizes the author's youthful experience during World War I, to Helon Habila's *The Chibok Girls* wars have inspired some of the best-known works in literary history. It is a "wellspring from which urgent, dramatic storytelling can emerge. According to Nnolim (2010:112-113):

The relationship between art and society cannot be ignored, for art itself is a social phenomenon...the artist, however unique his primary experience might be, is a social being; second, because his work, however deeply marked by his primary experience and however unique and unrepeatable its objectification or form might be, is always a bridge, a connecting link between the artist and other members of society; third, because a work of art affects other people - it contributes to the reaffirmation or devaluation of their ideals, goals, or values - and is a social force which, with its emotional or ideological weight, shakes or moves people. Nobody remains the same after having been deeply moved by a true work of art....

War narratives are representations of the ambiguities and transformations in the society.

The artist in view of the above is the hand of God in every society; he stands as the seer and heartbeat of the society. He functions as a mediator. This is why Booth (1961:30), explains that "The African writer...acts as both the consciousness and the conscience of the culturally dominant class to which he inevitably belongs". Emenyonu confirms this assertion when he says that:

All through history, creative writers and historians have been known to bring their imaginative visions and critical skills to bear on the important events in the history of their people. Historians and literary artists of each era base their discourse and postulations on particular wars but the implicit philosophical inquiries point to a range of universal dilemmas –Why are wars fought? Do wars achieve their declared initial objectives? Is war the ultimate solution to a human crisis at a point in time? Who benefits from war? Who are the toads of war? Who are the innocent victims of war? Is war inevitable in a human society? Nigerian war literature has enriched the existing body of historical writing from Africa, especially historical fiction. In this way, the writers have made literature to continue to function as the mirror of society. In the process of mirroring society and criticizing its pitfalls, war literature also serves as a compass for social re-direction (Emenyonu, 2008: pxi).

This accentuates the fact that art and the artist are the building blocks of every society. With the polarization of society and cultural issues, the creative artist must argue for social and cultural values. He must be that dissenting voice that defines the humanity of the society, his voice must project the inherent values of culture and life, enhancing personal and cultural identities.

One way for society to grasp the impact of its reality is to record these horrors as a reminder. This aligns with Achebe's submission in the preface to *Morning Yet on Creation Day*. He argues that:

I do not agree. I believe that in our situation the greater danger lies not in remembering but in forgetting. In pretending that slogans are the same as truth; and that Nigeria, always prone to self deception, stands in great need of reminders... I believe that if we are to survive as a nation, we need to gasp the meaning of our tragedy. One way to do it is to remind ourselves constantly of the things that happens and how we felt when they were happening (xiii).

Beyond remembering, Achebe believes that “forgetting” poses a greater threat to our common humanity, because to forget is to repeat the same mistakes over and over again. Today, war literature is no less vivid and troubling even if it is less grand in theme and less demure in detail. The last few years have seen the publication of several notable works such as Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) for instance which captures the displacement of

hope, manipulation of power, trauma and disillusionment and Festus Iyayi's *Violence* (1979) which renders powerful account of how poverty as a form of psychological violence can brutalise individuals, families and nations to Helon Habila's *The Chibok Girls* (2016) which captures and summarises man's inhumanity, bestiality and brutality to his fellow man in the period of contradiction of ideas. Potency of war as a powerful and fertile ground allows for emergence of creative inspiration. The artist navigates between reality and the fantasy of art; he deplores with all vitality the consciousness of the society, giving voice to their existence and reality. Hence, the creative writer ought to be committed to projecting the reality of the society and his art must be free from all biases, be it political, cultural or social. Achebe cited in Emenyonu (2008: pxii) avers that:

African creative writer who tries to avoid big social and political issues of contemporary Africa will end up being completely irrelevant – like that absurd man in the proverb who leaves his burning house to pursue a rat fleeing from the flames. In this light, the creative artist must show serious commitment to the cause of literature, this is because literature is meant to be consumed by the people.

In this light, therefore, Habila's writings are a testament to the impact of war on literary imagination. His works depict a society mired in a crisis that strives to extricate itself from the grip of it. With a graphic and pungent elucidation of events, he depicts the factuality in contemporary Nigerian society. Thus, placing contemporary Nigerian literature in a high ranking position within the corpus of contemporary African Literature.

Habila's position in contemporary African Literature is a secured haven. Though a diaspora writer, he expounds succinctly on issues confronting his ancestral home. He came into limelight benevolence with his first novel *Waiting for an Angel* (2006), ever since, he has been a force to reckon with in contemporary Nigerian literature. Compared to his forerunner

Achebe, Habila's stand-in African literature has been a revolutionary one. According to Achebe (2012:53):

What I can say is that it was clear to many of us that an indigenous African literary renaissance was overdue. A major objective was to challenge stereotypes, myths and the image of ourselves and our continent and to recast them through stories- prose, poetry, essays, and books for our children...

Achebe advocates a commitment to art and issues that confront society through a process of generational continuity. The impact of violent activities in contemporary Nigeria with wanton destruction of lives and properties, suicide bombings, assassinations and the palpable fear and suspicion that it generates among the citizens are weakening structures of the society causing untold pain and anomic condition. It affects every facet of life, threatening the social well-being of the Nigerian People. In this light, the critical responsibility of the artist, creative writer to society is re-emphasised. Furthermore, the dynamics and peculiarities of any society serve as potent elements for the fertilization of the creative writings. A writer who understands his calling must be sensitive to the dynamics of his time. Ngugi (1981) observes that, "A writer is a sensitive needle who writes with varying degree of accuracy the success and conflict of his society... Even at the cost of totally renouncing art; a writer must be committed to the social problem of the moment".

The Nigerian creative writer is one who harmonises, reflects and writes on the idiosyncrasies in the Nigerian society; he is the voice and conscience of his people. This is because he records with varying degree, views and opinions in the society. Achebe (1965:105), opines that "the writer cannot expect to be excused from the task of re-education and regeneration that must now be done. In fact, he should march right in front, for he is after all ...the sensitive point in his community". Ngugi also stresses this point when he says more than mere writing; the African artist must try to go beyond highlighting

the weakness in the society but seek out the new sources and causes. Naturally, then, one should expect a writer, to confront and showcase emerging issues in his society. The Nigerian writer holds an important position in analysing the dialectics in the society.

Thus, Habila, just like writers before him, evokes diverse political, social, psychological issues prevalent in contemporary Nigerian society. His literary works such as *Measuring Times* (2006), *Oil on Water* (2010), and *The Chibok Girls* (2016) demonstratively depict violence and its socio-psychological implication on a democratic structure, its simple but unique narrative technique provides a tacit, factual and true to the bone account of inhumane and genocidal reality which many Nigerians wouldn't want to identify with. This projection of the Nigeria reality illustrates Soyinka's assertion to the effect that "Books and all forms of writings have always been Objects of terror to those who seek to suppress the truth (*The Man Died*).

Significantly, Habila's work is a radical confrontation of established authorities in the society. His work exemplifies the radical representation of issues affecting contemporary Nigerian society. In his literary space, issues of insurgencies, militancy, political insincerity, economic and psychological exploitation and a dysfunctional social system were explored leaving the reader agape as to the unfavourable realities in his society.

It is within the purview of this argument that this study deploys a psychoanalytical model to explore multiple constructions of 'self' in Habila's *Measuring Times* (2006), *Oil on Water* (2010) and *The Chibok Girls* (2016). These novels highlight the role of social forces in the formation of deplorable emotional experiences within society. They also focus on how social forces interact to impact personality development and the formation of identity. The

texts explore the tempo in contemporary Nigeria mired with tension, violence and crisis. The narratives indicate that socio-psychological discourse could be tested by exploring relationships as depicted in the novels, human thoughts and actions were portrayed as a limit to which man internalise and externalise social variables, thus, it depicts society as a viable product for the fertilisation of ideas and literary thoughts. Violence, as captured in the imaginative works of Habila, is a social construct that is inspired by the need of an individual to respond to social and psychological exploitation, thus the need to interrogate the motif of individuals who promote violence and war.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

War is an ancient subject of representation. It dates back to thousands of years and has been explored extensively from different angles. However, most exploration of war literature have been largely socio-political. Academic scholars have explored the theme from different perspectives and theoretical approaches such as Realism, Historicism, and structuralism among several others. For instance, Ubiem (2015), explored Habila's work from a structuralist perspective bringing out binary elements in the society that shape individual attitudes and responses to societal norms and values. Consequently, Coffey (2016) analyses *Oil on Water* from the perspective of "Narrow Nationalism" arguing that women have the capacity to free themselves from an exploitative situation. Hence, the basis of his argument stems from the belief that women especially as represented in African fiction have not been given a dignified voice in literature, it argues therefore, the need to project their resilience and prowess.

However, in spite of these multifarious analyses and elucidation on the variables that influence man's interaction within the society, criticism on the works of Habila to the best of the researcher's knowledge, have ignored the psychological dimension particularly in relation to the centrality of the self and how it shapes individual and society. It is the self that facilitates man's relationship with his environment; this is because actions are triggered within the individual which if not well annexed, plunge man into violence. as a result of this therefore, this dissertation adopts a psychoanalytical approach in reading the selected works of Helon Habila in order to provide a new perspective on the theme of war in contemporary Nigerian literature as well as to foreground the argument that man's identity-perception of the self- is a social construct shaped by different elements in the society. Thus, the self is a vital component of war. As such, within this concern, this dissertation is anchored on the proposition that:

- i. Although war mostly signifies armed struggle, it is also a psychological displacement which allows a construction of traumatised identity.
- ii. The recurrence of war in society leads to poverty, physical and psychological displacement, marginalisation among others.
- iii. Beyond the ideological, war writings can be adequately approached and appreciated from the perspective of psychoanalysis.
- iv. Psychoanalysis may help to reveal why war seems to be an inevitable and ineradicable part of human history.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this dissertation is to examine war as a psycho-social response of man to any and everything that threatens his ego. In view of this, the study demonstrates that literature

has the ability to reflect not only society but the psychology of the individuals that make up the society. And that man's action can be examined within a social context. This is because man's disposition expresses his cognitive construction of ideas within the environment. In view of this, therefore, the following objectives of this study are to:

- i. examine the dynamic nature of war by exploring its socio-psychological effect on the society;
- ii. investigate how individuals formulate violent identities in response to socio-political factors;
- iii. demonstrate how the writer deploys his narratives in order to investigate social, political and psychological issues that trigger violence in the society; and
- iv. show that the poetics of psychoanalysis offers a unique insight to how the innate tendencies of violence in individual can affect society

1.4 Significance of the Study

This dissertation is based on the appraisal of Helon Habila's novels using the psychoanalytical approach. Psychoanalytical criticism is a system of thought that addresses the social and psychological phenomenon of a crisis in society. It places man at the centre of its narrative. It addresses questions such as the inevitability of violence in individuals and the social-psychological variables that influence/shape individual personality within a social context. The study reveals the sensitivity of Helon Habila to emerging trends in the society, Nigeria to be specific. The dissertation focuses on *Measuring Time* (2006), *Oil on Water* (2010) and *The Chibok Girls* (2016). Habila's novels evoke in the reader the real issues that have dominated the social circle. Issues of structural and psychological violence and its

relevance to literary construction and imagination which can best be articulated within the context of the Nigerian state.

Given the frequency and magnitude of violence in the society and the various interpretations and analysis offered as to its causes and effects which mostly dwells on external forces thereby ignoring the inner forces such as the id, the ego and the superego which studies have revealed to be a very potent and strong force that pulls man and define his relationship with others within a social network, this study argues that though external forces are major components that shape man attitudes and personalities.

The unconscious elements within the psyche are likely elements that could define one's outlook and social interaction within a social space. Man is a product of varied elements and it is these elements that sublime to forms his personality. According to Freud, man's behaviour is facilitated by unconscious elements such as thoughts, ideas, and wishes that abounds in a person's psyche, these unconscious elements he opines interferes with external elements to form man's identity. Thus, man's identity is a product of both the external and internal elements within the human environment.

1.5 Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The dissertation explores war and its impact on literary imagination using Helon Habila's *Measuring Time* (2006), *Oil on Water* (2010) and *The Chibok Girls* (2016). In doing this, the study demonstrates strongly, the effect of war and its complexities within the fabric of the society, its precipitant variables and implication on literature. The choice of these novels is premised on the fact that they depict the tropes and emerging trends in contemporary

Nigerian society among which are the issues of Boko Haram terrorism and the Niger Delta Insurgency. The novels reflect the neurotic impact of the self on both the individuals and the society. The analytical premise of the study is derived from Psychoanalysis. The author chosen for this dissertation is a Nigerian diaspora writer who has displayed great level of connectivity to the Nigerian state as evident in his writings. Thus his novels form the primary materials for investigation while relying on other secondary sources for in-depth reading.

1.6 Research Methodology

This dissertation is a qualitative research, relying on primary and secondary sources. As a literature-based study, the research methodology is largely a textual analysis of the selected texts. This entails a close reading of the texts as well as their analysis within chosen theoretical framework. Through this approach, the dissertation attempts to properly situate the texts as well as their contexts. Furthermore, secondary texts are used in order to anchor the discourse of war and Nigerian fiction on the postulations of Jerold Post and John Horgan's Socio-Psychological theory, from the perspectives of Freud and Jaque Lacan's Psychoanalytic thoughts in order to determine social group dynamics and the psychological profile of an individual terrorist actor and its effect on the socio-cultural structure of the society.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND THEORY

2.0 Introduction

This study reviews relevant existing literature on war and literary representation especially in contemporary war writings. War narrative transcends almost all genre of literary expression. However, there has been no specific mode of presenting war in literature in terms of form and structure, in spite of a seeming contradictory view; there appears to be a common trend across all genres in terms of themes and preoccupations. In this regard, examining the role war plays in the development of literature enlarges our understanding of war, its impact in defining our individual, social and collective consciousness.

2.1 Conceptual Review

This section reviews concepts associated to the study with the hope of establishing a research gap for the present study.

2.1.1 The Concept of War

War is an activity in which the contingent plays an essential part. The result at which it aims can be achieved only if the nature of the enemy is kept constantly in view. (Charles de Gaulle cited in Raph Uwechue 1971: pxxi)

From the days of the Greeks and the Romans, literary and historical accounts have been inspired by and often centred on war. According to Heraclitus, war is the “father of all, and king of all”. War played a central role in the whole of ancient Western works of literature to the extent that it is considered the single most important topic of the body of literature at that time. Similarly, in the large body of European literature constituted by medieval saga and epics, war is the central theme that dominates the literature of the period, literary piece

such as the Trojan War and the French Roman d'alexandre represent a volcanic phenomenon which threatened the existence of the society. More so, much of the oral traditions of the non-Western societies represent tribal and cultural struggles with their neighbours.

It may be argued that except for the theme of love which dominates a minute area of literary representation, the subject of war has a universal space. This is because; no literary rendering of human experience has exercised such an extensive influence on human behavior. As a result, any investigation of literature on the subject of war from the Medieval period till the present would require very lengthy treatment. This is because, the notion of war brings to mind plethora of meanings and definitions to the hearer or reader. This is due to the fact that, the concept itself is ambiguous and can vary when and how it is applied to define a conflict. Advancement in technology and changes in the global system have systematically changed the concept and meaning of war and has equally determined how warfare is waged. Every war has a peculiar dynamics particular to the local context of the war.

While these dynamics may condition an understanding of the concept, it is important to note that, in spite of its various nuances, every war is fought to achieve an objective. However, in this regard, the concept has thus been treated in many different modes and defines severally by different scholars to suit their position on the concept of war. For instance, the concept has been looked at from the legal, judicial, social, cultural, economic, technological and psychological perspectives, thus, giving the plethora of idea it generates in its treatment.

Indeed, the problem of warfare which includes genocide, and its most recent manifestation, terrorism, has been part of human society not just in the ancient period, but manifesting in modern time in different forms. Thus, the changing perspective of war brings into focus the need to understand how the individual is placed in the social and the social in the individual. Some critics argue that war is a necessary defence against psychotic anxiety as well as the idea that war provides an outlet for repressed impulses. That is, the individual's need to translate internal psychotic anxieties into real external dangers so as to control them. It suggests that culturally warfare and its most recent manifestation, international terrorism and the so-called "war on terrorism," may be a necessary object for internal aggression.

Fornari (xvii-xviii), suggests that "war could be seen as an attempt at therapy, carried out by a social institution which, precisely by institutionalizing war, increases to gigantic proportions what is initially an elementary defensive mechanism of the ego in the schizo-paranoid phase." In other word, the history of war might represent the externalization and articulation of shared unconscious fantasies. This idea would suggest that the culture of war, genocide, and international terrorism provides objects of psychic need. If this is so, with what can we replace them? If cultural formations and historical events have their sources in our psychic functioning, that is to say, in our unconscious fears and desires, and culture itself provides a framework for expressing, articulating, and coming to terms with these fears and desires, then in "The Ego and the Id,"

Freud formulated a seemingly insoluble dilemma in the very essence of the human psyche: the eternal conflict between the dual instincts of eros, the civilizing life instinct, and the indomitable death instinct (Thanatos). He also identifies some aspects of the death instinct with superego aggression, suggesting that the superego was the agent of the death instinct in

its cruel and aggressive need for punishment and that its operative feeling was frequently a punitive hatred, while other aspects of the superego were protective. As we know, Freud thought the source of the superego was the internalization of the castrating Oedipal father. He further theorizes that when defusion or separations of the dual instincts occur, aspects of aggression frequently dominate and that it was the purpose of the ego to find objects for eros and/or aggression either in fantasy or reality.

Ostensibly, the element of human nature has been an ubiquitous feature, and often a much-derided one, in theories of violence and war between human and society, such as states. It concentrates on human personality as the cause, root and ranch of war. Critics argue that contemporary war especially the war in Iran, Afghanistan and the bombing of the twin tower in 2001 is not purely economical but purely ideological. (Hanson 2013:x) thus asserts that “contemporary warfare is not over diamond fields or oil wells ... it all about honour, a sense of fear and a perceived self-interest”. This analysis shows that man’s nature and his unquenchable taste for violence is fundamentally ideological as well as a need to preserve his identity, the optimists portraying man’s character as peaceable and sociable. Furthermore, War has always been linked to the question of ideology and identity. Eagleton cited in Nasidi (2016:194), describes identity as a “social subjectivity”, in this sense; identity becomes a social construct assuming a generic sense of classification for individual sensitivity, and a boundary of interlocution regardless of one’s socio-economic strand. Similarly, Clinton cited in Nasidi (2016:194) argues that “identity is the fear of the other” a “form of refuge intended to stave “Off the Other” a shelter for “crisis” and “alienation”. Ideology comes in here because it is a domain of social subjectivity; as such literature and ideology are intertwined because they are both concerned with the social construct.

Ideology in tandem with the rule of society evokes the dominant thought of a specific portion of the population which is produced within determinate historical conditions but reproduced under different conditions in specific periods. Ideology is a set of specific effect which is determined within social paradigm or practices through the endless functioning and propagation of its ideals. Identity and ideology when entrenched become psychopathic, causing untold pain and an aerodynamic or a tempestuous environment. Looking at war holistically, it evokes a state of disagreement caused by the actual or perceived opposition of needs, values and interest between people. War is often the result of the ongoing state of hostility between two or more group of people, it could also be a growing state of disagreement within the psyche of an individual which finds expression in a moment least expected.

Given the rhetoric in contemporary society, war is basically not the expression of violence through the barrel of the gun. War is anything that disrupts the order of things. It could be psychological, economical, instrumental, political, ideological or socio-cultural. However, whichever form it manifest; war entrenches, causing dilapidating pain, anguish and terror in the psyche of the society. Either way, war creates tension, trauma and displacement in society. Within the framework of this narrative, therefore, war is referred to as a violent phenomenon.

Foremost, war is a conflict that occurs within the boundaries of a recognized state. The Oxford Advanced Learner dictionary defines war as a situation in which two or more countries or group of people fight against each other over a period of time. Onigu and Olawale (1999:4), offer a useful insight to the reason why war is fought, they opine that war

arises from the pursuit of divergent interest, goals and aspirations by individuals or groups, in this light, every war or conflict has its objective based in society. That the concept is validated across a variety of limited resources which are created and distributed within defined establishment and location. Also, referencing Sandole (1993:6), he asserts that war is a dynamic phenomenon which consists of five stages of initiation, escalation, controlled, abatement and resolution. This captures the view that war is an all-pervasive phenomenon of the universe.

Accordingly, battles are mere symptoms of the underlying belligerent nature of the universe; such that war can only arise as a result of the change (physical, social, political, economic, etc). Heraclitus decries that "war is the father of all things," this is because he considers change to be a fundamental definer in human affair. Similarly, Max echoes these sentiments when he emphasizes that "human societies are systems of interrelated parts and that human societies are always changing largely through internal contradictions and conflicts. (Scott et al 1965:22-23) Max emphasizes the factors of the economy which he elaborates to formulate two different classes- those who own the means of production and those who sell their labour and are exploited by the owners of these means of production. Thus, conflict is presented to be inherent in the relations between these classes. Interestingly, Webber entrenches these further when he says a conflict situation is created when a person or group attempt or succeed in carrying out its will by overcoming the resistance of other groups or persons and their interest in a situation of scarcity of resources (Scott et al 1965:143).

Consequently, Iyayi (1979), decried that, violence (war)" is committed when a man is denied the opportunity of being educated, of getting a job, of feeding himself and his family

properly, of getting medical attention cheaply, quickly and promptly... (p185). Similarly, Habila opines that war in the society is a response to negligence and unequal distribution of National Resources by “the ones at the top who keep the doors shut because they don’t want to share the spoil of office. Thus, actual violence or the threat of it helps keep the population in check, just as poverty does keep the people scared and hungry, encourage them to occasionally pour their anger on each other through religious sanctioned violence, and you can go on looting the treasury without interference” (chibok girls :). Hence, violence is an offshoot of failed leadership.

2.2 Authorial Review

This section also relates critical studies that have been done on war and Nigerian Fiction in order to situate the present study and identify its contribution to the body of knowledge.

2.2.1 Critical Reviews on Helon Habila’s Works

Criticisms of Habila’s writings have mainly focused on external factors such as cultural, social, political and historical that pushes a man to war. Thus, ignoring the place of the self as a component of violence, this lies at the heart of social cognition. Researchers such as, Vajime (2003:126), Ubiem (2015), Bulus (2015 and Coffey (2016) all identify different causes of chaos in the society in their analyses of Habila’s works, however, criticism of these works only dwell on the external factors at the expense of the centrality of psychological influence. Although, Coffey (2016), identifies the centrality of social influences on the development of the self in her analyses on *Oil on Water*, however, she anchors her argument from a feministic perspective. She argues that war narratives focus exclusively on the male experience and that the story of women and the pain they nurse

while waiting for their male counterparts are nearly absent, as a result, she rejects the stereotypical flirting attention given to female characters in war narratives. As such, she advocates that women are not as fragile and weak as often portrayed in war narrative but that they equally possess the capacity for psychological rebirth. To this end, she traces the development and healing of Boma from a naive village housewife waiting for her husband to reunite with her to a bold independent woman who defies the war in the creek to go look for her journalist brother who had gone looking for the kidnapped British Isabelle, thus, achieving a psychological rebirth while mingling with the dwellers in Irikefe Island

Thus, this study argues that causes of war transcend these boundaries of socio-cultural, historical, economic, and demography, war and its causes embraces variables such as social and psychological influences which lies at the heart of social interaction. Irene Vajime (2003:126), for instance, situates Habila's *Waiting for an Angel* within the Modernist tradition. Giving a modernist reading to the text, she says:

Habila captures the states of terror under which Nigerians are forced to live...It is remarkable that Nigeria could produce such fine writers in the same generation.... They seek a better life with useful opportunities (utopia) in a world of lost values, both religious and ethical. Modernists usually advocate a restructuring of society and argue for an alternative status quo. They question old beliefs and attempt to transcend inherited traditional practices...

This obviously acknowledges the transcendental and dynamic nature of society as a factor in modern day conflict. In a way, validating Abubakar cited in Odiwo's (2009:43) view that "African literature is basically a signification of the transformations of the continent by such epochal historical experiences as colonialism, neocolonialism and its integration into the subordination to the capitalist system and the intended schism that these entails". These schisms as Odiwo identifies are the interplay of the social, political, economic and cultural

developments that have defined the historical and social existence of the continent which invariably shapes the creative perspective of the literary artist. Such indices are what Vajime (2003) typifies in her analysis of the text. In her discourse, she elucidates that certain cultural and religious biases determine the level of relationship between man and the society, and concludes that an alternative mode of relationship be adopted that will provide the individual with a more flexible atmosphere where he could exhibit his rights and freedom.

In the same vein, Evaristo Bernasine (2014), in a review of *Oil on Water* significantly highlights societal variables such as poverty, environmental and human degradations, government insincerity, hunger, frustration and greed that could endanger militancy and violence in the society. To this, he argues that insincerity and lopsided representation of the populace in terms of governance could endanger the society, this is because the individual could entrench and channel his grievance unwholesomely, thus causing chaos to the system. Similarly, Hari Kunzru cited in Ubiem (2015:21), comments that “*Measuring Time...* overlaps this tradition of despair with a self-consciously mythic plot that brings the book to the borders of that definitively postcolonial style, magic realism”. Consequently, Giles Fodenin in an article titled “*The power of two*” cited in Ubiem (2015:21-22) sees Habila’s *Measuring Time*, as a folk narrative. He contends that *Measuring Time* depicts:

African tale-telling in which the novel becomes part of the oral narrative tapestry of a particular community, the book also integrates many themes of the modern African novel, from the journey undertaken by LaMamo as a version of the traditional initiatory excursion, to the equivalent quest of the hero, Mamo, for true wisdom. The story is essentially a tale of a fight to realize those things and places in the eyes of these two twins, while at the same time moving past those fears. *Measuring Time* is a story that demonstrates how fears of love, ambition, and the possibilities of individual potential must be overcome through experiences facing them firsthand. Even though a family such as the Lamangs can crumble and be torn

apart by selfish desire and the coinciding fears that plague its members, they, like their village, as written in LaMamo's biographical chronicles, must learn to take their losses in stride, without failing to notice the important things that are often overlooked by the characters and people around them.

This emphasizes mainly the impact of oral art in the expression of creativity and reflection of societal realities, inadvertently ignoring the place of psychological forces or variables that shape most works of art.

Consequently, Habila while responding to critics who took him up on his writings says he was greatly influenced by the nature of politics and the condition of the ordinary man whose plight he urgently needed to project to the world, thus he says that:

...from real life I guess I love politics a lot, so all my stories try to interpret or re-envision dominant political events especially those that affect the ordinary person. With *Oil on Water*, I was invited by a film company to write a film script but the more I research on the script the more intrigue I become with the subject matter. I realized I had to write a novel on it. I had to tell the story of the ordinary person in the Delta who bears the brunt of the injustices of the oil extraction industries...I feel that as a writer we have to be engaged with the culture and politics and we have to try to influence it even as it us. (<http://www.Africanbookclub.com>)

Each genre had its place in literature. Creativity springs from the consciousness of the artist, politics inescapably shapes his consciousness. However, the reader filters through the pages of his own experience thus beyond the narrative of politics, the readers' response is determined by the effect the text had on him, in this light, the writers' intent or style does not dictate the interpretation giving to his work by its reader. This is because the style automatically speaks to the readers' psyche. Hence, in his style, therefore, Ubiem (2015:3) asserts that:

Habila demonstrates a level of writing that shifts from the conventional approach of writing in Africa, as he negotiates between fantasy and realism in *Measuring Time*. His appropriation of Magic realism, allows his work to extend social experience in the novel to reach beyond the confines of realism and draw upon the energies of fable, folktale and myth while retaining a strong contemporary social relevance. This type of avant-garde is also seen in some of Ben Okri's works. These

interpretations focus on the metaphorical and philosophical orientation of his works for instance; as such there is no attempt to explore the psychological variables that shape man's unconscious attitudes and disposition.

Similarly, John (2016), opines that "Habila's style of writing makes it possible to identify with the Nigerian real world, the people and cultural events depicted in the narrative". To this effect, his method of writing brings to the fore the undeniable realities of the Nigerian state. Also, his mode of narrative couched within the journalistic exposition of events, brings to the readers, first hand and true to the bone account of events in and around the country.

However, given the different angles with which critics have approached his works, the self as a variable in violence is continuously overlooked; this is because the self is a social phenomenon that facilitates the individual's level of interaction. According to Vaughan and Hogg (2010:66) self is "the high point of individuality: something that uniquely describes an individual". The self-emerge as a result of one's interaction with the society; it is like a looking-glass which reflects a certain aspect of the individual's subconscious and societal attitudes. Though, it could be distorted, this is because it is likely to give a negative impression about a situation, thus, the possibility of a crisis. This explains why individual acts based on the reflection the mirror projects. People most times tend to reconstruct who they are without being aware of it (Vaughan & Hogg 2010, p66).

This consequently explains that violence is not merely an offshoot of socio-cultural and political indices but man's cognitive response and interpretation to stimulus. The twins (Mamo and Lamamo) in *Measuring Time*, for instance, adopts a negative disposition towards their father because of a perceived injustice-the knowledge they acquire about their father from their infant years, this knowledge facilitates their motivation and shapes their

attitudes towards themselves and others in the society. Also, Professor in *Oil on Water* took to the creek in order to unleash mayhem on oil facilities as well as kidnappings as a way of making the environment unfavourable for both the government and the multinationals. To this end, although, socio-cultural and political variables determine an individual's attitude, the self, that is, man's identity is a product of its cognitive internalization and interpretation of realities, directly affect behaviorial outcome.

In sublimating the Nigerian experience, Habila's novels extrapolate the self (human personality) as a psychological element that rests at the centre of all incoherent actions in the society. An unstable psychological impulse, for instance, determines man's actions and interaction with the society. According to Erikson, Personality is a complex phenomenon, which is developed at different stages of cognition, for each stage of cognition, the individual may experience a psychosocial crisis that may affect his personality. This is what plays out in *Measuring Time* (2006), where the relationship between the twins (Mamo and Lamamo) hinges on the conflicting knowledge they have about his relationship with their mother which they believe is responsible for the death of their mother, at each stage of their development, the twins were exposed to different sides of their father's personality, as a result, they developed hatred for their father and swore to make him pay for his crime towards them and their mother.

Consequently, in *The Chibok Girls* (2016), we see a situation whereby, the insurgents, in a bid to uphold the social laws of their group unleashes mayhem in the society, thereby causing a psychological and social wreck. Conformity, according to Aronson, (Wilson, and Akert 215) is changing one's behaviour due to the real or imagines the influence of another. Normative social influence according to Social Psychologist dictates how an individual

looks, behaves, how he sees other groups. Individual actions most times are based on a subjective interpretation of the world rather than objective reality. This understanding, (Hudson, 1999:41) avers, form the nexus from which the individual draws strength and thus, an important determinant of his behaviour.

Cognition is the process by which an individual intricately acquires knowledge about his personality and of the society; it is an important concept in socio-psychology because it influences the process of communication. This cognitive knowledge is vividly portrayed in the character of Mamo and Lamamo (the twins) and Abitar their cousin who consciously left their homes to join the military without the knowledge of their family, not minding the trauma such action will generate. Their action is driven by the common knowledge that they are not loved by their father and the only way they can make an impact in the world, command respect and punish their father who they feel is responsible for their mother's death is by leaving without prior arrangement. Thus the ideology they hold concerning themselves and their relationship with their father modulates their attitudes towards existence. This aligns with Althuser's (2003) view that:

...the existence of the ideas of his belief is material in that his ideas are his material actions inserted into his material practices governed by material rituals which are themselves defined by the material ideological apparatus from which we derive the ideas of that subject ... Ideas have disappeared as such (insofar as they are endowed with an ideal or spiritual existence), to the precise extent that it has emerged that their existence is inscribed in the actions of practices governed by rituals defined in the last instance by an ideological apparatus. It therefore appears that the subject acts insofar as he is acted by the following system (set out in the order of its real determination): ideology existing in a material ideological apparatus, describing material practices governed by a material ritual, which practices exist in the material actions of a subject acting in all consciousness according to his belief.

The personality traits of individual characters as clearly shown above are determined by the conscious and the unconscious impulses registered in the mind which manifest in

unguarded moments. According to Locke cited in Rummel (1975), “the mind is a blank slate upon which our experiences become written”. Locke is well known for his theory of ‘tabula rasa’ which explains the function of the mind in the formation of a personality trait. His view suggests that the basic thinking of the mind employs ideas which are directly derived from experience (simple and complex). Man’s action and inaction are modified by his level of subjectivity, perception and modulation of trends and ideas which also informs his attitude towards himself, others and society. The mind translates psychological impulses which could either inflate or deflate man to a level of bestiality.

Undoubtedly, war has become part of man’s reality. It is now a cliché for everyday conversation. Thousands die daily, the media is flooded with news and flashes of death, strikes and counter-strikes, kidnappings and ecological devastation; signifying and leading to socio-psychological trauma and imbalance in the society. In *Violence*, Iyayi demonstrates this claim when he asserts that war is “... committed when a man is denied the opportunity of being educated, of getting a job, of feeding himself and his family properly, of getting medical attention cheaply, quickly and promptly. We often do not realise that it is...” (185). More so, Habila in the selected works presents a society riddled with coup, insurgency, corruption, exploitation and marginalization. The experiences in the Niger Delta today, have portrayed violence as a street code for identity and agitation for rights and privileges; an environment known and rampant with human rights abuses, proliferation of firearms where petrol-dollars is the dominant language amongst the elites creates a fertile ground for violence and War. He presents characters driven to actions by the knowledge of their circumstances. Social identity and values are the basic features of violence; it is a code that

regulates social relationship within society. Thus the only way to be heard is to develop a violent reputation as shown in the selected texts.

Similarly, from the narrative of Rufus, the major character through whose eyes the entire story is refracted and his interaction with the indigenes, soldiers and militants, *Oil on Water* presents an intricate web of relationship and interaction between the dwellers and the island. Irikefe is depicted as an Island distinctively isolated from the rest of the society, it presents the paradoxes of life and existence, death and connectivity that herald the discovery of oil in Olobiri in 1956. According to Asagba cited in Simon E. D. et al (2014:384), the discovery of oil in the Niger Delta region; the oil pit of Nigeria which symbolized the economic prosperity for the future, wakens the drumbeat of war between the raging militants and the government forces. And in spite of contrite peace parleys, rehabilitation and settlement, the issue has remained unresolved. Ameya cited in Simon E.D. et al (2014:384), subscribes this view when he says that the exploration has turned Ogoni Land into a wasteland whose stream and creeks are totally and continually polluted. Hence, the discovery of Oil in the delta region was followed by an era of violence, war, displacement, environmental pollution trauma and psychological estrangement. The narrative offers a panoramic view of the decadence thus:

the village looked as if a deadly epidemic had swept through it. A square concrete platform dominated the village centre like some sacrificial altar. Abandoned oil drilling paraphernalia were strewn around the platform, some appear to be sprouting out of widening cracks in the concrete, alongside thick of grass. high up in the rusting rigging wasps flew in and out of their nest... we went from one squat brick structure to the next, compound to compound, but they were all empty, with wide-open windows askew on broken hinges, while overhead the roofs had holes through which strong sunlight fell. Behind one of the houses we found a chicken pen with about ten chickens inside, all dead and decomposing, the maggots trafficking beneath the feathers. We covered our nose and moved to the next village, but it wasn't much different; (P.7).

In view of the above, the absence of a consolidated development results to the abandonment and desertion captured in the narrative, hence, according to Chief Ibiram, one by one the people sold their lands and the oil rigs went up and the gas flares and their workers came in and set their camp in our midst (P.41).

Habila's work is a radical confrontation of established authorities in the society. He exemplifies the radical representation of issues affecting contemporary Nigerian society in his literary space; issues of insurgencies, militancy, political insincerity, economic and psychological exploitation and a dysfunctional social system are enormously explored thus, given credence to the argument which this study upholds. This study upholds that intrapersonal variables, such as personality and life experiences, contribute to man's consciousness and that group consciousness, in turn, motivates collective action, it also suggests that personality and life experiences can directly affect behavioural outcomes which invariably mediate violent actions in the society.

Although existing scholarships on Habila's work have inevitably outlined major barometers which include the development of the self, however, none have attempted to use three of Habila's works to interrogate war, its causes and effect on the social and psychological mechanism of the society. There is however much to admire in Habila's writing. He skillfully evokes an atmosphere of tension and fear. Habila's novels may not offer any political solutions to the problem faced by those living under a dictatorship, but it provides a powerful picture of critical periods in Nigerian history.

The uniqueness of Habila's style provides to the reader the reality of everyday experience and conversation. Habila uses simple and straight forward sentences to effectively bring

home his message to the readers. Form or style is traditionally defined as the manner in which the writer speaks to his readers. It is the means with which the creative artist communicates his ideas. Language is thus one of the most effective ways a writer communicate. The style of language adopts determines his audience thus, a creative writer carefully chooses his language because he has a burning message to pass across, as such, in choosing his language, he brings into cognisance the idiosyncracies of his audience. In this light, the language he deploys, tells of his style. Language is a medium of communication. a medium of exploring, reflecting and interrogating human condition

2.3 Theoretical Framework

Ever since Freud's time, Psychoanalysts and Social Theorists have used psychoanalytic ideas to look at the social and structural order and its impact on the individual. Psychoanalysis is a theory, a technique, a language, climate and an ethos (Guilner 1996:5) applied in order to understand human personality traits. Founded in the 1920s by Freud, (although people believe that Josef Breuer is the grandfather of Psychoanalysis), it developed on the basis to understand human cognitive process and behaviour within a social continuum. Freud Psychoanalytical thought focuses on the inner variables, that is, the subconscious elements that lies within the psyche of the individual which motivates and influences his actions, thoughts and behaviours. The psychoanalytical theory was brought into the criminology (violent) world to help explain criminal behaviour. Freud's approach is purely embedded in the predestined actor model of criminal behaviour (Burke 2001:78). Even though this theory does provide an interesting approach to understanding fundamental criminal behaviour, it has greatly come under critical scrutiny.

The psychoanalytical theory is often compared to a Biological theory which extrapolates the concept of biological forces and a basic barometer to man's personality trait, the Biologists holds that man is a genetically condition to commit a crime. They opine that criminals are born with certain DNAs which push them to crime and violent act. While, Psychoanalysts highlight the psychosexual conflict belief that man is like a blank slate, a tabula rasa and can only develop criminal act by what he internalises at the different stages of his development. Subsequently, the psychologist has questioned the explanatory adequacies of the libido theory and have modified the theoretical orientation of Psychoanalysis... this reorientation has been reflected in subsequent psychoanalytical studies of crime which not only reflect in recent psychoanalytical studies of war and crime but equally seek to account for the contextual diversity of antisocial behaviour and the important role played by man's social, political and ideological environment.

Freud opines that most human behaviours are caused by thoughts, ideas, and wishes that abounds in a person's psyche, these unconscious elements he opines interferes with external elements to form man's identity. Thus, man's identity is a product of both the external and internal elements within the human environment. Rummel (2010,) referencing Freud opines that man responds to signal translated to the mind through stimulus or communication with outer forces. According to him, the neurotic system holds the key to understanding one's personality and mentality. He asserts that when energy built up by the neurons reaches a tolerable level, it must be discharged, that pain is the eruption of too much energy. Thus, violence can be described as the built-up energy released by the neurotic systems which man's unconscious defence mechanism cannot repress, therefore, giving the ego a channel of manifesting its tendency of satisfying needs through reality. Lamamo's outburst and

rebuke towards his cousin Asabar can best be attributed to the build-up of too much energy which finds expression in a moment he is an expression of too much energy built up in the psyche, which finds expression at a moment he least expects. Asabar reports that Lamamo became so aggressive especially when they were turned down by the military on the basis of age, Habila reports thus:

Asabar returned exactly one month and two days after that raining day in the abattoir. It was late afternoon and Mamo was in his room engrossed in a book..." Asabar?" Mamo shouted, jumping out of bed, grapping his cousin's arm and shaking it vigorously. "Asabar!" "I came back" he said before Mamo could say anything more... "Where is Lamamo?" "I left him at the Chad border. He was going to join the rebel army in Chad" ...each day Lamamo was becoming more and more aggressive and unpredictable. Sometimes he would go off by himself and Asabar wouldn't see him again till late at night when he returned to the shelter... (pp. 60-61)

According to Freud, all psychic energy is generated by the libido. Freud suggests that man's mental state is influenced by two competing forces: cathexis and anticathexis. Which he describes as the id and the ego: The id he says is the most primitive part of the human personality that is entirely unconscious and serves as the source of all libidinal energy. While the ego is the component of human personality that is charged with dealing with reality and helps ensure that the demands of the id are satisfied in ways that are realistic, safe and socially acceptable. The superego, he opines, is the part of the personality that holds all of the internalised from our parents, family and society at large. Thus, Freud argues that, an individual passes through different stages of development such as the Oral stage, Anal stage, the Phallic stage, the Latent stage and the Genital stage. And, he opines, the successful completion of these stages, leads to a healthy personality as an adult. However, if a conflict remains unresolved at any particular point of developing an individual might remain stuck at that particular point of development.

Freud's construction of the human psyche consisting of: the 'id' which represents the instinctual aspects of human actions including aggression; the ego'-an agency which monitors and maintains reality orientation, and the 'super-ego'-the moralistic and critical side of human behaviour (Strachey,1985:21), could serve as a step towards constructing a general psychological theory of human nature. Drawing on Lacan's ideological insight of the *joissance*, which holds that all social order are stained by a self-generated libidinal excess makes them inconsistent and subject to change, the human factor is thus a potent signifier in violence. 'Freud's 'structural theory of human psychology assumes a generalized view of social behaviour and human psychology. Many of the confusions about psychoanalytic topography have arisen because the 'id ego- superego' is incorrectly perceived to be a physical structure. In Freudian analysis, these dynamic concepts are meant to represent forms of psychological regulation that, in his view, underlie human behaviour (Wiggins et al., 1971:471). Moreover, according to (Lasswell, 1935:63), the 'id ego- superego' are not meant to be completely separate entities,

The terms id, superego, and ego are roughly equivalent to impulse, conscience, and reason...The three main personality structures are not to be thought of as rigidly separated from one another; the superego and the ego are not categorically cut off from the impulses of the id... The id and superego aspects of reaction go on without conscious awareness on the part of the person...

Therefore, the 'id-ego-superego' model is best thought of as a psychological continuum, with the moralising superego acting as a counterbalance to the id impulses, and the ego holding the balance between these two extremes.

Freud's concept of the 'id' encapsulates man's sociobiological capability to dominate (Morgenthau, 1985:39) by brute force through the exercise of aggressive drives. Similarly, the 'id' describes the tendency for man to satisfy his selfish needs "without regard to the

realities of life or to morals of any kind” (Morgan et al, 1971:387). A world dominated by the behaviour described by the ‘id’ would replicate a chaotic state of nature. The ‘id’ is envisaged as the ‘chaotic’ (Badcock, 1994:93) dimension of man’s psychology i.e. it is devoid of regard for social consensus, seeking only to satisfy ambitions whatever the means. Thus, where there is an excess of this dimension, in an individual’s personality structure, ‘egoistic’ satisfaction would be sought at whatever cost to other members of his immediate environment. The realities of a world dominated by this aspect of the Freudian dialectic would be power-driven and dark, a condition which the contemporary experience of modern society.

As an aspect of human personality, the ego functions to maintain, through careful assessment and monitoring of the individual’s internal and external environment, it describes man’s will to dominate, even at the expense of others. The ‘ego’ is a kind of executive which acts as mediator or balancer between the ‘id’, perceptions from the outside world, and the ‘superego’. The ‘ego’ is placed in a dialectical position where the sociable, moralizing aspects of man are juxtaposed against the egocentric, i.e. Self-centred, aggressive and anti-social dimensions of man. In threatening situations, the ‘ego’ reacts with anxiety, which can lead to threats of aggression, while in more congenial circumstances the ‘ego’ militates against violence and a sociable law-abiding behaviour is followed. The ‘superego’ could be described as the internalised conscience: it is, in other words, the moralising element. Moreover; psychoanalytic theory subdivides the ‘superego’ conscience into two parts: the punitive and the ‘ego-ideal’ aspects (Schwartz, 1974:492). The punitive aspect of the ‘superego’ is believed to develop out of norms within society which prohibit, and provide for the punishment of, certain actions which run counter to

these social norms. According to Freud, (1985:190-191), Tthis aspect of the ‘superego’ develops as a result of punishment or the threat of internal coercion:

It is in keeping with the course of human development that external coercion gradually becomes internalized; for a special mental agency, man’s super-ego takes it over and includes it among its commandments... This is also true of what are known the *moral* demands of civilization, which likewise apply to everyone

In contrast, the ‘ego-ideal’ aspect of the ‘superego’ conscience represents norms, values, or external objects which command the individual’s respect and are approved of by one’s role models or peers: the identification, emotional attachment, and respect for these social institutions results in the socialisation of the individual into social groupings (Schwartz,1974:492; Freud, 1985:147, 161). Thus, beyond the libidinal expression, there seem to be the notion of culture and society as both a developmental and civilizing force. thus, society is observed as being the product of individual and group action.

According to Freud, the concept of legal guilt, whereby society threatens to punish individuals for infraction of its rules, i.e. an external group conscience, evolves into an internalized conscience by which an individual censors behaviour that contravenes the expectations of society. Freud (1985:190), summarises this process of socialisation as follows:

A strengthening of the super-ego is a most precious cultural asset in the psychological field. Those in whom it takes place are turned from being opponents of civilization into being its vehicles

Therefore, the evolution of the ‘superego’ facilitates social cohesion. For Freud actions by an individual or collective actor that contrast with this normative structure are met at least with censure, and often with violence, he opines that man and even collective man, i.e.

states, could be socialised into conformity with group norms. For example, in Freud's *Thoughts for the Times on War and Death* (1985:86), he discusses the prospects for nurturing of a collective national conscience thus:

It should not be objected that the state cannot refrain from wrong-doing, since that would place it at a disadvantage. It is no less disadvantageous, as a general rule, for the individual man to conform to the standards of morality and refrain from brutal and arbitrary conduct. Nor should it be a matter for surprise that this relaxation of all the moral ties between the collective individuals of mankind [sic states] should have had repercussions on the morality of individuals; for our conscience is not the inflexible judge that ethical teachers declare it.

Accordingly, individual personality, from Freud to Lacan is a social construct shaped by elements and ethos of society. According to Lacan cited in Toluhi (2015):15), "Our Language" stands in for objects: all languages are in a way 'metaphorical', in that they substitutes themselves for some direct, wordless possession of the object itself. Just as the child is unconsciously learning language, he is also unconsciously learning in the world of sexuality. The child's first discovery of sexual difference occurs at about the same time that he is discovery language itself. Thus, before a formal social contract is formed, human society is 'war-prone'.

Freud's social contract was developed as a result of '*L'union fait la force*'. In other words, the brute force of one main chief was rivalled by the union of many weaker members of a given society. The monopoly of violence of a single tribal leader, who held power illegitimately, was broken by a united front of his followers. As a result, the power that represents the authority of a community, once dominated by one person, was now placed in the hands of a united group who rallied their forces together to confront an unjust leader. In this way "right became the might of a community". However, this process only replaced the violence of an individual with the brute force of a community. As a result,' Freud assumes

that what was required to form a stable society was a ‘contractual’ arrangement between the leaders and the led. a situation which sought to bring a greater number of people together into larger collectivities. when society became more complex and more human beings lived in proximity “violence [was] overcome by the transference of power to a larger unity, which is held together by the emotional ties between its members”. According to Freud, the true source of strength of human society resides in the communal feelings that evolve between individuals comprising a united collectivity, because social coercion as the sole means of authority, as demonstrated in Freud’s early state of nature, encourages rebellion and instability.

Therefore, according to Freud, the social contract of ‘civilised society’ always involves the potential for conflict. For Freud, the union with others in a community, in the name of collective harmony, involves cultural restraints-norms serving to forge a socio-psychological unity between individuals and society. In addition, to the extent that the satisfaction of self-gratifying, anti-social wishes might bring happiness for the individual, and corresponding grief for society, the individual must accept some restriction of his individual desires: in other words, he must accept that behaviour which does not match social expectations must be censored by himself or society

Thus, the philosophical thought of psychoanalysis is embedded on the assumption to clinically and socially explore the thought process of the individual in order to bring to light hidden and repressed elements indwells in the character not limited to the character. Significantly, more explorative criticism is applying to narrative and poetic structure as well thus, according to Odiwo (2010:36 referencing Caliberg (1989:80):

Psychoanalysis turn literary work to an archeological state, with layer upon layer of significance, whose mysteries are to be unearthed and restored meaning is reconstructed as the material piece emerge from the text like fragments of ancient pottery. the skilful and experienced reconstruct or arranges. the piece with a recognisable order. some pieces will be missing, perhaps lost forever. here informed imagination and restored object, or the interpreted text, only remains an ideal.

On a wholesome perspective, behind the idea of libidinal expression, the dynamic concept of psychoanalysis has been based on the idea of culture as both a civilising and repressing force. Culture and society are inherently portrayed as products of individual and group actions both conscious and unconscious. Indeed, it is very much a social psychological theory of society. Society is both a product of individual action and the ordering of such action. Society is essentially an imposition on individual and ultimately selfish interest. Essentially, psychoanalytical concepts mirror a perennial argument within society, and this argument comes from the position that society constructs the individual subject, although, one of the problems of psychoanalysis is that it has been accused of being individualistic and therefore promoting the values of individualism over collectivism. Irrespective of such criticism, some of the greatest proponents of psychoanalytical thoughts have come from the position of social and psychological construction of individual personality trait.

However, it is simply incorrect to argue that psychoanalysis is socially naive or cares little for the wider society. Indeed, as already mentioned above, many psychoanalytical writers from Freud onwards have been deeply concerned about how their theories could throw light on social problems. What is problematic is how these theories go about constructing the social, and many do seem to start from the individual and extrapolate the society. Freud's paper on Group Psychology is a good example. The character of an individual is mostly a reflection of the contents of the unconscious part of the mind. Psychoanalysts submit that anti-social environment promotes and increases anti-social attitude and violent behaviour in

an individual; they expound the view that various functions of the society or the social would help man to articulate his thought and feelings and situates them appropriately in ways that address his “ego”. In view of these, it appears that society permeates how an individual reacts, processes and imagines things, In *Oil on Water* (2010), for instance, the dysfunctionality that constitutes the Niger Delta society states specifically accentuates their personalities and invariably influences their action against the social system in order to bring a change in their environment by way of responding violently to cues in their social world. The peoples “self-conception” hinges on the level or manner in which they were able to integrate the predicament of their society. The knowledge that the government or the multinational corporations are not ready to address desecration and pollutions in the environment influences the level of responses adopted by the representatives of the people who claim that they are fighting a collective cause. *Oil on Water* presents a society riddled with violence, a society where individual clamour for equality, good condition of life and favourable representation.

Similarly, the unconscious behaviour of Lamang in *Measuring Time* (2010), towards his children (Mamo and Lamamo) instigates the negative social attitude which they exhibit. The twin (Mamo and Lamamo’s) hatred towards their father is sharpened by the interpretation they gave to their father’s behaviour towards them. The twin spitefully hates their father and swore to kill him because of perceived psychological estrangement. In this light, Psychoanalysts argue the paramount importance of influences and motivations, thus, they argue that it is possible for an individual to modulate his personality as a result of his cognitive interpretations of different variables in the society. Their concern, therefore, is to establish a framework that systematically influences the construction of basic and

specific trait in an individual; they insist that the cognitive and constructive identity of man is distinctively sharpened by various aspects or variables of the society. As such, man's thoughts, actions and aspirations are subsumed within their social consciousness. Personal and collective consciousness is a result of social practices, such as religious institutions, politics and cultural norms in a society, which work together to create the social phenomenon expressed in a shared set of beliefs, values and ideas which individuals also internalize to make out a collective reality reflected in their responses and interactions with one another.

CHAPTER THREE
PERSONALITY FORMATION AND MANIFESTATIONS OF VIOLENCE IN
HABILA'S *MEASURING TIME*

3.0 Introduction

This chapter looks at personality formation in the light of social interaction within social continuum; it highlights various perceptions and indices that have been attributed to the individual's cognitive and psychological stance. Hence, this chapter examines the headings of Personality Formation and Manifestation of Violence. It conclude by stating that personality is a social construct, a social phenomenon constructed based on how man internalised and externalised variables within his environment. Thus, Personality formation is considered to be an intentional effort by an individual, persons or community to attain a specific or distinct identity.

The need for people to grow and develop spontaneously to their natural environment would naturally affect personality development; this, therefore, aligns with the view of scholars who believe that identity can be formed. An individual's tendency of violence can be triggered by variables within his environment. In *Measuring Time*, characters instinctively respond to various situational factors such as violence, displacement, exploitation, social/psychological injustice and corruption. Mamo, Lamamo, Zara, Uncle Iliya and Lamang all displayed one form of resistance due to the extent to which they internalise and interpret certain socio-cultural milieu. Hence, this section focuses on the sociological and psychical influences to characters' identity formation and personality development. It draws on the Carl Jung's schematic model of archetypes in order to investigate the inner struggle

and conflict that forms characters' personality; as well as to elucidate that the violent personality of the characters is rooted not only on the inner turmoil they experience but also on certain environmental variables.

3.1 War and Personality Formation in *Measuring Time*

Personality Formation refers to a deliberate social and psychological disposition possessed by an individual or individuals in order to attain some levels of recognition or perception in the society. Personality is psychological, but scholarship suggests that it is also influenced by biological processes and needs. Erikson and Mead (2010:65), see Personality Formation as a singular and continuous process of mental and emotional development. Erikson (1959:102), avers that personality connotes both a persistent sameness within oneself and a persistent sharing of some kind of essential characters. This places emphasis on an individual's unique social experience and social role. Mead (1934:186), writes that Personality Formation results from an individual's interaction with a unique set of experiences sharpened by his "importation of the social process" from society as a whole. Thus, personality development results from a constant negotiation between social norm, social context, social and psychological structure.

In *Measuring Time*, for instance, the paradigm provided by the environment informs the characters' personality. For instance, the fundamental characteristic of the society where citizens are informed of past events and happenings in society helps to sharpen one's cognition, motivation and reaction in a certain situation. More so, the nexus of collective selves which surround the individuals equally forms the nucleus by which the individual interprets reality. Hence, man perception is sharpened and influenced by realities within his

immediate environment. The twin (mamo and Lamamot), for instance, first heard about their fathers' attitude towards their mother even before they were born through a song hum by older women in the community. The content of the songs states how Lamang (the twin's father) abandoned their mother and went after other women even while she was at the point of death. The song is sung thus:

Mother is singing with longing

Daughter is singing with longing

Ah, King of women have mercy on us

African cultural practices recreate individual's personality and identity through an imaginative recreation of past events which Brogan (1995:151), describes as "Ghost Narrative" through retelling individual past deeds, the unconscious elements in the individual psyche regurgitate and hunts the individual and draw him effectively against his will. *Measuring Time* demonstrates the reality between reality and human psychology especially in the portrayal of characters and their unconscious as well as their conscious activities. Mamo and Lamamo (The Twins) vow to make life miserable for their father for his culpability in the death of their mother as a result of the information the song divulge. The song is a ballad that grew in detail and complexity with each rendition in the moonlit village square, called Lamang the "King of Women, Owner of ten women in every village from Ketu to the state capital" (P. 1) given this information, therefore, the "ego" of the twins are increasingly threatened, thus, the only way their psyche finds spontaneous expression is through violence. This perhaps offers insight into how their violent personality is formed,

In pre-colonial African communities for instance stories and folktales which include songs and dances are regarded as vehicles for moralising both young and old. The social conduct

of individuals was heavily reliant on African morals (Mbiti cited in Wycliffe 2016:52). The contents and context of these folktales deal with what is right and by extension good, and what is wrong and evil. As far as the society is concerned, African stories address the dynamism of human personality. Human conduct, for instance, is twofold. First, there is personal conduct which is particular to the life of an individual. Here, one acts according to his instincts and understanding of what appeals to him with regard to his own welfare.

Consequently, there is social conduct which interprets the conduct of an individual within a group, community or nation. In this regard, the individual is conscious of his actions and how it affects the society at large. Mbiti, in his discourse, echoes the fact that Africans promote social conduct to that of human conduct since it emphasises unity and co-existence. Values such as respect for elders, respect for the laws of the land, honesty, justice, love and self-control. These very morals sharpen one's dislike for vices such as theft, dishonesty, selfishness among others. Moral conduct is of great significance since it ensures harmony in society. To this end, various approaches such as folklore; taboos amongst other were employed by various communities to inculcate good character and a robust identity in their members.

Inevitably, however, what was meant to engendered moral values in their youths and grown-ups through positive and negative reinforcement both verbally and materially birthed a negative trait in the personality of the twins, the text states that:

They had decided along time ago to make life hard for their father he had broken their mother's hearts and though the twins had not yet been born then some women in the village still hum the song popular many years ago about how Lamang's philandering before and after he had married their mother. The song a ballad that grew in detail and complexity with each rendition in the moonlit village square,

called Lamang the “King of Women Owner of ten women in every village from Ketu to the state capital” (P. 1)

Thus, through folk practices, knowledge is exchanged and man’s identity is synchronized and developed, this explains why society becomes an important component for the understanding of individual’s complexities. Nyanje (1992), reports that man learns moral values through folklore, taboos and direct enforcement. As such, such values folklore referred to tales, proverbs and the likes, from which the moral values of the community were passed on to subsequent generations. Nyanje reports that elders would require youths to explain their own interpretation of pieces of folklore, a move that would provide an opportunity for active participation in the learning process, and also give feedback on whether the message in the pieces had been well decoded. Nyasani, (1988) in Kudadjie’s essay entitled ‘Social and Moral Responsibilities Within African Traditional Context’ singles out taboos, which he defines as the unwritten codes that are typically ethical imperatives, and notes how effectively they controlled people’s conduct. However, it is noted that most of the taboos have ever since been found to have less or no effect at all and therefore ignored to a great extent.

There is no doubt that culture largely determines the type of identity that will predominate an individual. According to Nasidi, personality (identity) is the subjective aspect of culture. Likewise, the development of personality in the process of cultural acquisition determines man’s cognitions, motivation, and generally how he relates to others in society. The aim of the cultural and moral training was neither to promote moral reasoning nor moral autonomy, but to make individuals conform to certain specified moral values. Oduor (1990), observes that the role of traditional practice is not different from that of the colonialists whose intention is perpetuated in the same spirit of conformity through religion.

He reports that a religious approach to character formation was adapted, with religious instructions being derived from biblical texts without relating them to the learner's situation. Therefore, values such as patience, punctuality and strict obedience to authority were emphasized by the colonialist with the implicit aim of facilitating smooth governance. In this regard, the focus was not on the individual's moral development but on how to condition them so that they could serve as instruments to some end. Hence, the intent of this ballad hummed by the women in the community was aimed at facilitating a robust moral disposition. The approach was, however, meant to restrict or repose norms and values that were questioned, thus the listeners are expected to display absolute character and stable dispositions in the society.

The twins deep-seated hatred for their father was fully realised when he lost his fame and power. Instead of sympathising with him, Mamo shows him all the letters his twin brother Lamamo had been writing:

One day they were seated on the living room and for reason Mamo felt a flush of anger, something from long ago, the kind of restless energy that had driven him and his brother to poison the old witch dog... he thought of his childhood, of the feeling of abandonment he and his brother always felt when after waiting for weeks for their father to return from one of his trip he would walk in only to pass them on the veranda with only a glance... tell me about my mother,... what is there to say... she was so young and frail, she died so young... Mamo wanted to press further... to harass him for answers... it could be the violence in Mamo's head... "I wrote to the police, I guess that's why Asabar was trapped and you were arrested" ... "you didn't" said Lamang his voice hardly audible. "What"? Mamo returned slowly to the centre of the room. "wait I will show you" Lamang said and struggle to his feet...He watched his father shuffled to his room and when he returned he had a piece of paper in his hand...the police man whom was given the letter he knows me... "and you have it all the while... why didn't you show me?... but Lamang had closed his eyes... Lamang opens his eyes briefly and said "we all have our secret pain, our personal anguish, it is life" ... after his father had finish speaking. Mamo stood up and went to his room and came back with Lamamo's letter which he quietly gave to his father. he watched the shocked on his fathers face as he opens the letter... "all this while..." Lamang whispers hoarsely... Lamang quietly retired for the night...how

like a wing-beat the sheet sounded descending over the body, the wing of death's angel (Pp. 182-185).

This accentuates the emergence of dispositional and emotional personality whose needs and desire to be loved constitute the construction of his personality and attitude, especially towards his father. Mamo's attitude and behaviour towards his father validate the notion that the pattern of individual's behaviour reflects his interpretation of certain relationships in the social world. It significantly reflects the interplay of the social and psychological underpinning of influences and motivations, where individuals formulate distinct identity in response to social and psychological factors in the society. The above quote cohesively offers insight into Mamo complex personality modulated by his desire to be loved and be recognised by his father. His response thus addresses his ambivalence and the split between values and judgement. Attitudes generally change over a period of time, however, Mamo's maintained a constant disposition of hatred towards his father even after finding out the truth about his father's past life.

According to Post, cited in Hudson (1999:20), a particularly striking people who are often drawn to violence are those who place heavy reliance on the "psychological mechanism of "externalisation" and "splitting". He opines that most violent individuals are people whose personal development is shaped by a particular type of psychological damage during childhood and whose desire is to remove the source of such narcissistic injury. He further states that individuals with a damaged self-concept who fail to integrate the good and bad parts of the self-care often in the crisis between the "me" and the not "me". What he refers to as "splitting mechanism". Mamo finds himself in a confused position after finding out the truth about the letter he wrote to the police, informing them of the nefarious act of his father and cousin –Asabar; In spite of knowing the truth about his actions, he didn't hesitate to

show his brother's numerous letters to their father, an incident that generally facilitated his (Lamang's) death. Thus, his disposition at this point could be likened to what Erikson calls negative Identity, Mamo consciously assumes a negative self in spite knowing the damage that the knowledge of the letter would cause their father Lamang. Thus, the text strikingly presents individuals who are psychologically impaired by their conception and interpretations of socio-cultural variables prevalent in his environment.

Similarly, the interplay and presence of various "selves" which Lacan refer to as 'archetype' assists in the development of the Twin personality as well as assists them in interpreting realities. The return of uncle Haruna; the war veteran played an important influence in the development of the twins' personality, Habila captures thus:

The following year the twins finally solve the pending riddle of how to get famous, and the new knowledge would forever change their lives. In an instant, the mist of childhood and innocence was blown away by the gales of time and experience. They solved the riddle with the return of their uncle Haruna from the Biafran war (p.37)

The return of uncle Haruna actually influenced their process of maturity. It gave them the bite and opens up the possibility of exploring other means to make their "father pay". Earlier before uncle Haruna returned, the twins had given up on their revenge mission. This is because all attempts at killing their father wasn't fruitful, however, the return of their uncle and the ovation he received at his death spurred them into exploring other lands probably to join the army and be celebrated one day just like their uncle Haruna, thus, leaving home and joining the military is another way to prove to their father that they can aspire beyond the limit created by the circumstances of their immediate environment or social configuration.

Similarly, the presence of their dead mother in the twin dream represents unknown characteristics in the process of their individuation. In this case, their mother's shadow self embodies many darker aspects of their personality. Freud for instance, explains the significance of the Oedipal Complex, that is, the unconscious attachment between a child and his parent. Freud opines that an individual's dependence on parent especially mother for food, shelter and love does not stop at the biological, but defines the child unconscious response to psychological and physical injuries that may likely affect the mother. Mamo constantly encounters with their dead mother in his dream invariably stimulating certain repressed impulse in his psyche, thus and the resolve to avenge their mother's death at all cost. Although, it is unclear what their mother wanted to say to him, it could be that she tried to stop them from being violent to their father or to nudge them on in their quest for vengeance. Obviously, the presence of this self implicitly triggers their resolve for vengeance.

The self according to Althusser (2003:x), is a representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to the real conditions of their existence. In other words, the "self" (man's personality) is a creation of illusion, it is an idea formulated in the mind which propels one into taking certain actions. The self is a set of ideology triggered by one interaction with society. According to Freud, cited in Rummel (2010), man's response to signal translates to the mind through stimulus or communication with outer forces. According to him, the neurotic system holds the key to understanding one's personality and mentality. He asserts that when energy built up by the neurons reaches a tolerable level, it must be discharged, that pain is the eruption of too much energy. Thus, violence can be described as the built-up energy released by the neurotic systems which man's unconscious defence mechanism

cannot repress, therefore, giving the ego a channel of manifesting its tendency of satisfying needs through reality. Lamamo's outburst and rebuke towards his cousin Asabar is an expression of too much energy built up in the psyche. Asabar reports that Lamamo became so aggressive especially when they were turned down by the military on the basis of age, Habila reports thus:

Asabar returned exactly one month and two days after that raining day in the abattoir. It was late afternoon and Mamo was in his room engrossed in a book..." Asabar?" Mamo shouted, jumping out of bed, grasping his cousin's arm and shaking it vigorously. "Asabar! "I came back" he said before Mamo could say anything more... "Where is Lamamo?" "I left him at the Chad border. He was going to join the rebel army in Chad" ... each day Lamamo was becoming more and more aggressive and unpredictable. Sometimes, he would go off by himself and Asabar wouldn't see him again till late at night when he returned to the shelter... (pp. 60-61)

The events that unfold in *Measuring Time* are a sublimation of the personality of the characters and their attempt to channel their grievances into socially acceptable activities, their inability to appropriate these grievances is what invariably triggers the violence they display. Several environmental factors such as the presence of others; affects their personality development.

Archetypes, according to Jung are highly developed elements of the collective unconscious which is populated by instinct. Thus, collective unconscious has an overarching influence on the identity of the individual who lived out its symbols and clothed them in meaning through their experiences, The twins (Mamo and Lamamo) instinctively construct a deficient and traumatic personality as a result of the cognitive construction of their social world as well as the nexus of collective consciousness present in their world. Their father, for instance, symbolised a narcissistic and psychological injury which they desire to eliminate. According to Crayton (1983:37-38), violence occurs in the midst of narcissistic injury. Thus, from childhood, the twins' personality had been psychologically shaped to

detest their father for his lack of affection towards their mother even at her last moment. Their complex and fragmented psychological disposition was facilitated as a result of this childhood psychological injury, which they fail to integrate over time. According to Bandura learning is a social process which does not require reinforcement to occur but instead requires a social model such as parents, siblings, friends and teachers to function, thus, their father becomes the traditional model through which their character is influenced and developed. Ravel (2009...x) avers that “every identity is, therefore, prisoner of identification that relates to what it is not (as a species of the negative, the inverted double of exteriority). Thus placed within a socio-psychological environment, they relate with the attitude of their father towards them and came up with a multifaceted psychological trait which is counter-intuitive.

3.1.1 Manifestation of Violence in *Measuring Time*

Violence and all forms of abuse – be it social, psychological or emotional – are often times seen as a means of gaining control over others such as family, friends and society. Arendt (1969:234), states that violence cannot be derived from power, that in order to understand violence, we must understand its cause and nature. Hence, violence can only be discussed when accompanied by a discussion of power”. This view indicates that violence is most often employed to address certain imbalances in the human environment or sectors. *Measuring Time*, for instance, depicts various forms of violence ranging from structural, social, psychological, physical to economical, and nature with which this violence is manifested and projects the imbalances in the society which the characters strive to gain control over or at least to overcome in order to have unity in the society.

The text, for instance, analyses its characters within the framework of a familial relationship. The family provides the single most important environmental influence on a child's potential development. It is within the family that the individual first learns how to relate with others, the sense of trust, love and hate is gained through the family's consistent responses and behaviours. Thus, the psychological disposition of the individual hinges on the beliefs he internalizes in the family. *Measuring Time* is tightly woven around the relationship between the twins (Mamo and Lamo) and their father Lamang whose communication with his children lacks every ingredient of a father to children fervour. The nature of the relationship depicted in Lamang's home is that which psychologically defrauds his children of their privileges.

Mamo and Lamamo are twin brothers who live with their domineering and nonchalant father in a small village of Ketu. Although, born into wealth and affluence, they lack the tenderness and affection of a loving father who does nothing but pursues his desires becoming the most prestigious and sought-after businessman in Ketu. The text states that Lamang: for his part never took much interest in his children, "he left them in the care of their aunt Marina who had been staying with him since the breakup of her marriage and the village widows who occasionally drop in to help with the housework and to generally advertise their availability to the once again eligible Lamang". (p16).

The severity of his nonchalant attitude towards his children inevitably had a damaging effect on their cognitive, social and emotional development. His actions thus builds the resilient witnessed in the lives of his children, Mamo for instance in one of their discussions enthusiastically told his father that Lamamo had travelled to Timbuktu to join the military, although the story turned out to be false, Mamo enjoyed seeing his father boxed in his own

frustration. The text relates that “Mamo could see how hard his father was trying not to bang on the table nor to lean on his toes as if ready to pounce “I don’t know how to get in touch with him”. He said dully” he was thoroughly enjoying the thrust and parry with his father and it was all he could do not to let the triumph show on his face” (p58). This action illuminates Johnson and Erikson’s view that children whose family are characterised by interpersonal violence including psychological aggression and verbal aggression may exhibit a range of serious disorder such as anxiety and anger. Similarly, Buka et al (2001:x) states that it is increasingly evident that Mamo uses a tool to gain control over his father, whom the narrative reveals hardly take note of his children and even when he does, merely looks at Mamo but brags about Lamamo whom he says took after him in strength and agility, therefore, inflicting more pain on his (Mamo) already wounded psychology., Lamang is thus portrayed as a character who though did not physically abuse his children, defrauds them emotionally. This aligns with Webber (1969:237) view that “violence is the rule of man over men”.

Habila’s exploration of the nature of the relationship in the Lamang’s family reflects a lacuna within the circles of the family. The following lines capture this lacuna thus:

We have everything, Mamo felt like answering, except your [Lamang’s] love... From very early Mamo had learned to keep his sick and awkward body in the background, learned to observe from the sidelines...to confess would be to forgo his position of superiority by sharing his knowledge with his father. He didn’t want to put his father’s mind at rest; what would be the point of that? For once he wanted to be the torturer, his father the tortured. After all, he was sure his father was not concerned about his son’s [Lamamo, the other twin] fate in faraway Timbuktu, only with what people would say about his son running away... (*P.* 58-59)

This reflects the instance of anger, violence and trauma built within the psychology of the individual. Mamo is presented as a character that embodies every traumatic pain. (Mamo)

and his twin brother (Lamamo) often withdraw to an isolated field away from the glare of their family where they engage in different pranks, reading the tale-telling. Sometimes they would imagine themselves up there surfing the clouds on their way to some faraway interesting place, famous without a car in the world (P.21). This suggests that in order to survive, the twins had to develop a psychological immunity that could initiate their adaptation and protection from any psychological disorderliness in their home. Hence, this psychological adaptation includes their constant withdrawal to the woods where they engage in plane spotting (P.21). Through the desire to desperately get an identity; they took to playing spot while waiting for the right time when they will solve the riddle of getting famous (P21).

Subsequently, this attitude of cocooning into their inner minds explains the plight the twins are in, it further projects their emotional conflict, fragmentation and melancholy. Withdrawal is thus a technique employed in order to repress the unpleasant experiences in their home given the lack of connectivity between them and their father. Unfortunately, they could not repress their feelings because their violent personality was expressed in the manner they killed the old woman's dog. out of the need and curiosity to connect with their dead mum which Mamo had constantly seen in his dream, poisoned Duna the Old witch's dog in order to get its rheum which they believe when they apply to their eyes will enable them to see the dead, unfortunately, the rheum turned out to be a disappointment, instead of seeing their mother, they saw a demented Duna and the old witch tapping at their window raging with anger and revenge, chasing them in their dream; although they saw their late mother in their dream but could not comprehend her words because the deluge drowned

the words she tried to say to them. This attitude reveals a sophisticated neurotic individual who shed their violent garbs on an innocent dog.

In essence, *Measuring Time* presents characters who show a dispositional response to a defective family system where parental love and the cordial relationship is lacking. Thus the family becomes the borderline for narcissistic development of a grandiose self which facilitates individuals who are arrogant, selfish and sociopathic. Sublimating the relationships within the family with that of the society, the text projects psychically disintegrated and estranged personality encumbered with new values of the world and selves. This explains why their entire childhood was driven by the slogan to **“CHEAT DEATH AND BE FAMOUS”**

The narrative equally juxtaposes the predicament of Zara with that of the twins. Zara is depicted as a character who maintains a strong belief that women should never be a shadow of men's success. In a bid to denounce what the system has prescribed for her, she struggles to liberate herself from the grip of despondency in order to achieve inner peace. Brutalized, debased and abandoned by her husband, Captain George, Zara resolve to leave the marriage as against the will of her mother and sister. The act of leaving her home and going against her family somewhat aligns with the view of Arendt (1969:238), who states that “violence is never possible without instrumentation”. Thus, in this instance, the instrument of oppression needs to be challenged in order to have sanity in the system. To this end, Zara developed an attitude contrary to that subscribed for a woman especially by her family who insists she endures a depressing, dispassionate and despicable treatment from her husband. Through this character, the text projects a relational disablement and trauma in the family capable of creating a personality disposed to violence. Zara's philandering and flirtatious attitude is a

way of asserting her freedom from oppression and psychological mistreatment. Thus, her decline to insanity is a response to such violation of family responsibility. It explored the individual extroversion continuum, which has been a hidden agenda behind incessant protests against psychological oppression in the society. Zara's experience with her first husband had a damaging effect on her psychological makeup, thus, such impulses repressed in her subconscious mind resurfaces and plunges her into being a recluse. Freud, for instance, states that when anger is internalised and driven deep into the unconscious, contaminated by unresolved pain, aggression, violence and anxiety becomes inevitable. This explains why Zara descend into insanity.

Acts of violence, if not properly curtailed could lead to severe psychological damage, Zara was psychologically destroyed in spite of getting sexual gratification from Mamo. According to Freud (1921), unsocialised and selfish libidinal impulses (the id) are repressed and kept in check by norms internalized from our society (the superego), but that, from time to time and in strange and peculiar ways, repressed impulses surface. In this case, the self-emerges and is shaped by social interaction, this explains Zara's state of insanity and the twins' attitude towards their father--- the twins for instance constantly place scorpions in their father's shoes in order to punish and make him suffer and pay for his offence against their mother. This act of violence illuminates the level of anger felt by the twins and the extent to which that anger has affected their behaviour. The twins attained a process of individuation when they realise how tenuous their position in the heart of their father was. Mamo, for instance, begins to view life differently when he discovers that the deadly sickness he is afflicted with always secludes him from others, to this light, the narrative states:

Immediately he discovers how different he was from his brother and from everyone else around and how tenuous his hold on life was Mamo began to see things in a new way. Life gained more urgency driven by a hot but sometimes purposeless rage, he began to learn the act of prioritising. To help himself focus he began keeping an imaginary diary the content of which only his own brother could fathom and in it, in bold letters he wrote his first priority HATE THY FATHER, MAKE HIM PAY... (P.20)

This indicates a correlative growth in his personality and recognition of his (Mamo) social and psychological position. Recognizing the position his sickness or physical appearances place him in the heart of other family members for instance; help sharpen his identity. In essence, Mamo began to weave his priorities coherently in order to add depth and clarity to his goal of hating his father, as such, he employed a number of strategies to define and keep track this goal.

According to Ibitokun (1998:7), “everybody needs a point of reference to maintain his psychological equilibrium and identity”, the twins find their own equilibrium and identity from hating their father and the need to avenge their mother’s death. Just like Prince Hamlet in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, they are entangled in a cultural situation where certain laws and norms are prescribed; unlike Hamlet whose penchant for revenge was checked by the code of morality--- defined by the society which informs his resistance and delays in his mission to revenge his father’s death in the hands of his uncle Claudius, the twins could not be checked by the norms of the society. This is because the societal ethos does not allow for rationality. Thus, their excesses and penchant for violence reached an optimum when they kill the old woman’s dog (Duna) in spite of the sound moral training they received from Aunty Marina. The following lines state thus:

This was the year they killed the dog their restlessness had led them up a mango grove behind their compound. School had closed early that day because a new mai was being installed...it was the loud barking that gave Mamo the idea they were

high up in the crooks of the topmost branches, their legs dangling in the air, their mouths yellow with mango. He stopped gnawing on a mango seed and said, “you know dogs can see spirits and ghost...” let get Duna” he suggested...the twins continued on a debate the best way to kill Duna. Halfway home Mamo hit on a solution. “Batteries!” “What batteries?” Lamamo asked puzzled. “We poisoned it...with the black stuff in radio batteries.” (P. 22)

The internal dynamic depicted in the killing of the dog illustrates an intolerable build up of anxiety within the individual which needed to be dealt with. The dog, therefore, becomes the object used in externalising their conflict as a way of masking the anger they have been harbouring.

In essence, violence, according to Anderson and Bushman: (2002...x), is a result of the interaction between the personality and the situation. Their tumultuous and dysregulated personality is due to how they impulsively internalise the attitude of their father who is mystified as the “king of women/Owner of ten women in every village from/Keti to the state capital” (P.13). In spite of living in a big and wealthy family house, they were dominated by the fear of not succeeding in ever gaining their father’s affection; the fear of failure and weakness pushes them to drop scorpions occasionally in their father’s shoes (p.20). Their deluded expectations and traumatic disposition create in them a sociopathic, arrogant and emotionless personality. According to Margolin (1977:273-274), most violent individual’s respond to gaps and frustration within the subculture, as such, if the idealised parental ego is not neutralised by reality testing it can produce a condition of helplessness and dissonance.

The situation in which these characters found themselves best explains their impulsiveness and delusion. Having an oppressive father who exploits them emotionally, the twins had no

other option but to be defiant, deranged as well as constructing a psychologically deficient personality which propels their violent disposition.

Literary works often mirror life and are usually condensate of all kinds of knowledge and experiences expressed through a verisimilitude reflection of all forms of character development. Human attitude, mannerism, experience and thought is largely influenced by irrational drives that are rooted in the unconscious. This is intune with psychoanalysts' argument that man's personality development does not consist of his unconscious drives alone but that certain physical variables such as the presence of the "other" influences personality. Thus, one's identity and self-concept underpin one's personality. Social interaction and social existence itself depends on people's perception of themselves. In his study of unconscious motivations and the individual persona,

Carl Jung identifies four distinct archetypes that influence and shape man's personalities and his interaction with others. These archetypes include the shadow self, the Anima self, the Animus self and the self. According to Jung, these selves when fully realised brings about a cohesive self. Thence, the actualisation of all the selves is what played out in Habila's *Measuring Time*. Through a psychological exploration of the key characters, the text portrays characters that are plunged into the conflict between the conscious and the unconscious, characters whose repressed materials materialise in the form of mental or emotional disturbances, leveraging these elements of the unconscious is achieved through bringing these materials into the conscious mind. Mamo the major character embodies all the characteristics of the various selves, thus, his attitudes and personality as well as his tendency to avenge his mother's death on his father shapes the direction of the text and

reveals major variables that inform man's dispositions and personality. The narrative voice expresses that:

The following year the twins finally solved the riddle of how to get famous and that new knowledge would forever change their lives. In an instant the mist of childhood and innocence was blown away by the gales of time and experience. They solve the riddle with the return of their uncle Haruna from the Biafran war..." (P. 37)

Psychoanalysts talk about the tendency of individuals to perform differently when in the presence of others. The return of uncle Haruna actually influenced their process of maturity. It gave them the bite and opens up the possibility of exploring other means to make their "father pay". Earlier before uncle Haruna returned, the twins had given up on the idea of killing their father, this is because all attempt at killing their father wasn't fruitful, however, the return of their uncle and the ovation he received at his death spurred them into exploring other lands probably to join the army and be celebrated one day just like their uncle Haruna. Thus leaving home and joining the military is another way to prove to their father that they can aspire beyond the limit created by the circumstances of their immediate environment or social configuration.

The knowledge of the father's past life and his presence around them clearly has overarching influence in the formation of their personality. It gives a picture of how one's personality influences and shapes others. Habila presents to the reader how individuals are influenced based on the information they receive either from their immediate or extended environment. Social psychologists generally believe that two processes of social influence are responsible for violence-informational influence and normative influence- which most often than not facilitate the individual view of reality thus the individual functions and interacts in diverse ways with the society Hence, mans relationship with society provide varied insights into mans social and psychological position. Having lost their mother in

childbirth, and unable to get the needed affection from their father the twins unite to torment him. Although, Habila notes that the twins lack the capacity to make their father pay, however, they were determined to instil pain on him no matter the cost. He comments thus:

Not that the twins had the means to make their father pay... their best whenever he was back from his endless business trips to the state capital and Lagos. They'd drop the occasional scorpion into his shoe... once or twice they had contemplated poison, but some unclear, unnamed terror had deterred them from that exigency. In any case, they preferred the death of a thousand cuts to the single bullet in the head. The first time they put a scorpion in his shoe, Lamang's foot had swollen to twice its size, forcing him to stay indoors a whole week... (P. 20)

This depicts the extent to which an individual can stretch his objective in order to achieve his desires. Poston in his discourse on Terrorist Psychology cited in Hudson (2010:28), opines that violent individuals "are driven to commit an act of violence as a consequence of psychological forces and that their special psycho-logic is constructed to rationalise acts they psychologically compelled to commit". The twins most often rationalise their wicked act towards their father not minding the consequences and trauma that could generate in the family. Thus, violence mostly stems from individuals who overtime construct a negative perception about their identity and position in the society.

The narrative, through the above excerpt, reveals the impact of the family in the growth and development of the individual personality. Thus, the text's concern with psychical fragmentation and exhibition of the self-predisposes the notion that self-construction is one of the factors that facilitate violence in the society; this assertion is in line with Locke's view cited in Rummel (1975) that the mind is a blank slate upon which our experiences become written. Locke is well known for his theory of 'tabula rasa' which explains the function of the mind in the formation of personality trait, his view suggests that the basic

thinking of the mind employs ideas which are directly derived from experience (simple and complex). Man's action and inaction are modified by his level of subjectivity, perception and modulation of trends and ideas which thus informs his attitude towards himself, others and society. The mind translates psychological products which could either inflate or deflate man to a level of bestiality. Thus defrauded emotionally by their father the twins resolve to make him pay for his negligence by developing a personality complex at odds with society.

Stylistically, the narrative transcends the thought of its characters in order to project societal influences. Habila cited in Ubiem (2015:78) submits:

I think I approached the writing of this book with an epic conception, that is a view of events and history that goes far beyond what is discussed or represented in the book, call it an echo if you want, that bounds from the book and goes on and on to give the reader a sense of the vastness and complexity and the limitless possibilities that is Africa. Mamo, the main character in the book, tries to express this to his students when he tells them to imagine other horizons beyond the one they can see outside their window, a million other horizons. And so I presented not just the war theatre in Liberia as a microcosm or metaphor for the continent, but I also presented the serene and deceptively eventless village of Keti. If we are to paint life truly – and to me the quest for truth is the sum of a writer's endeavours – then we mustn't fear to show the ugly as well as the beautiful. It uses appearance and stereotypes to lead you to the complexity below. A novel goes deeper than a newsflash on CNN; it doesn't just show you a war, but it also shows you why the war happened, and also the folly, the human cost, of seeking to resolve our differences through war. It brings up-close the lives of the ordinary soldiers, and their hopes and dreams, and how they might never live to fulfil these dreams – and in that we see how just like us they are. That is what a novel does, and that is why Aristotle says a narrative is ultimately more beneficial than either philosophy or history, because it contains both strands in itself...

Irrespective of the perspective which he approached the novel; it depicts the lives of the ordinary people, their dreams, aspirations and unfulfilled dreams. The novel interrogates and explores the psychology of the individual in a bid to formulate selves that would challenge statuesque ideas and attitudes within and around the society. Through the use of paradoxes, verisimilitudes, juxtapositions and other literary techniques such as dialogue,

letter writing technique, complex pattern and progression of plot, the text profoundly explores the psychical makeup of his character bringing out in detail, both socio-cultural and psychological matrix of individuals in the society, through the psychological exploration, the text establishes a link between consciousness and actions of its characters. The dilemma of such character is thus contextualised within the contradiction of their social reality and the choices which confronts them.

With a great reliance on the culture of war and violence, Habila in line with Emenyonu referencing Nwahunaya says war writings recreate a society whose rhetoric flourished the social and literary consciousness of the writer. Nwahunaya cited in Emenyono (2008: xi) observes that:

In its re-creation and interpretation of history, Nigerian war literature has enriched the existing body of historical writing from Africa, especially historical fiction. In this way, the writers have made literature continue to function as the mirror of society. In the process of mirroring society and criticizing its pitfalls, the war literature also serves as a compass for social re-direction. A didactic function emerges in the process, especially in the portrayal of death, devastation, avoidable mistakes and sufferings engendered by the war. The ultimate intention of course is to see whether these records of a sour historical moment will enable the modern African to see the futility of wars as a solution to national problems which could be solved without recourse to war, carnage and bloodshed. The suggested mistakes of the war initiators and administrators portrayed in these writings thus become invaluable guides to meaningful national growth and a stable and progressive society.

This suggests that war writing beyond projecting the psycho-dynamic and traumatic experience of the society has largely impacted literary creativity. War Literature has had a major impact on the development of society. It has shaped civilisations, changing political systems and exposed injustice. It gives us a detailed preview of human experiences, allowing us to connect on basic levels of desire and emotion.

The predominant leitmotif in *Measuring Time* is war. The novel explicates war as a cancerous tissue that eats deep into the fabric of society. The theme of War which is the central issue raised in the text reverberates throughout the narrative; to a large extent the narrative explores the inner turmoil of the character and skilfully integrate such inner conflict into the fabric of modern society. In discussing the war in literature Emenyonu is of the opinion that the literary artist must reflect society in its true nature and that their philosophical inquiries must point to a range of universal dilemmas – such as the reason why war is fought? Are the objectives behind the war realized? Is war the ultimate solution to a human crisis at a point in time? Who benefits from war? Who are the toads of war? Who are the innocent victims of war? Is war inevitable in a human society? Each writer according to him must approach each of these questions from a chosen perspective and proffers answers intrinsically embedded in character types, narrative structures and patterns of conflict resolution.

The increase of violence is anchored on the way in which followers respond to perceived injustice. In *Measuring Time*, through Lamamo's letter to Mamo; Habila elucidates this point thus:

...I am writing from a small village in the border of Mali in the Sahara Desert – a war has been going on here for a long time. It's between the Tuaregs and the government. The Tuareg feels that they are oppressed and they want to be free. Everywhere people want to be free. I think it right. We are fighting on the side of the Tuareg but I don't think we are going to win... (P.90)

Thus, the raging war in Africa is a response to frustration and various forms of political, economic and cultural injustices in society. The Tuaregs are large Berbar ethnic confederation who principally inhabits the Sahara Desert stretching from far southwestern Libya to southern Algeria, Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso. For long, they have controlled the

trans-Saharan trade routes and have been an important party to the conflicts in the Saharan region. It is the group that Lamamo ended with after he had fought alongside different war group. The primary aim of the war between the Tuaregs and the government was to change the statuesque. Thus the need to change the system birthed terrible warlords who turn the soul of his subject into birds and kept the birds on a baobab tree at the gate of his village. (P.90-91). Thus the conscientiousness of a distinct, oppressed minority needing expression is the product of the social and political consciousness of the writer. Booth (1981:15).

Measuring Time retains a level of objectivity, it is an expression of contemporary reality especially with regard to the way political leaders hinder access to information and social development; in essence, their greed and nepotism facilitate the level of violence that permeates modern society. The legacy bequeathed to their followers is nothing but shame, debasement, disgust and backwardness. Thus, Habila draws attention to the nefarious disposition of the elites and the intricate contradictions apparent in the society. The money, for instance, meant to provide potable drinking water for the people of Keti was embezzled and misappropriated by the Mais' in council leaving the community helpless with no other option but war.

In view of the foregoing, the novel uncovers the basis for communal violence and crisis, as a result, conflict is heightened and the society suffers the loss. Consequently, the riot in Keti that led to the death of Lamamo was a war against injustice. Lamamo told Mamo that "I felt as if I had lost my way coming up from the bus stop. This wasn't what I dreamt of coming back to. I told Bintou about the green hills and farms and valleys... (P.286). The loss of the greenness of the hills symbolized the loss of social and economic values. It also depicts how

the elites squander and destroy harmonious and collective stay of the people and the people's reactions towards the loss of the collective consciousness by their rulers.

The literariness of the text is in its aesthetic delineation of events from a narrative of an individual experience to an exploration of wider social ethos, the fusion between the individual's philosophy and societal ideology is convincingly striking, the misconception and biases that construct the individual's personality were 'brilliantly' elucidated. Projecting the Waziri's as perverted, the text seems to comment on the extent to which humans can go to achieve their desires, thus, exposing the various contradictions that promote angst and ambivalence in the society. The narrative enunciates the ethos and predicament of contemporary Nigerian society encumbered with greed, neglect of family values and societal norms. Habila's work sublimates the import of these values to the people's reactions towards their environmental realities. Through Lamamo, Habila says "I don't know but we must never let him win, people like that must be opposed no matter what..." (288). Thus, violence becomes a rationalised strategy to promote their cause of recognition and justice within society.

Knowledge of the 'self' according to psychoanalyst often forms the basis of relationships in society. "What I want", "who I am" and "where I ought to be" usually are indices to violence. Attempt to address these questions most often splits the individual into many selves. Presenting Lamamo as a split and fragmented individual whose sojourn to other parts of Africa where he joined various terrorist and insurgent groups is influenced by his desire to find essence for his life; his disablement and rootlessness enunciate the psychological import of war on the individual. Lamamo losses an eye in the course of

fighting many wars, this fractured self and disablement projects the devastating effect of war not just on the individual but on the society at large. The text states thus:

When I saw him crying in church I asked myself what all these fighting is for? I am a soldier for almost ten years now and I live by fighting, sometimes it doesn't make sense it just crazy...now I am alone, I have nowhere to go and really I don't feel like fighting anymore. I even began to plan how to return home... (pp. 130 &131)

Lamamo, though championed the cause which eventually brought a change of leadership in Keti, he, however, lost his life because the method adopted was unconventional.

Literary characters are types which embody the identity and spirit of an age. Literature revolves around the experiences of the society it mirrors. *Measuring Times*, for instance, depicts an age of violence, terrorism, insurgencies and corruption. Using various archetypes, Habila expounds that the development of a cohesive personality is a product of interactions with other personalities within the environment the individual operates. The presence of Lamang, Zara, Uncle Haruna, Uncle Iliya, The Mai and the Waziri- the symbols of the different archetypes identified by Jung- all coheres to give the twins a distinct personality.

Mamo for instance, confronted with the contradictions which result from working in the palace, plunges into the crisis of either to manipulate truth in favour of the Mai through which the Waziri intends to promote and satisfy his quest for power or to project the truth and reflects the reality of their society, however, through his trauma, Habila reveals the contraction prevalent in the society where greed and nepotism becomes the creed and tablet of the elites, deploying the dialogue between Mamo and the Waziri, Habila comments on

the pervasive attitude of those in authority who manipulate their subjects into doing their nefarious will. The exchange ensued thus:

Mamo: Tell me sir. Why is the book important to you?

Waziri: “No, no not to me. To the Mai, to the anniversary of all Keti”

Mamo: “Perhaps I am not the right person to write the book...

Waziri: “why do you say that?”

Mamo: “There are so many things I don’t understand for instance, why did you hire me to write the Mai’s biography and makes it seems like the Mai’s idea to hire me”

“At first” Mamo went on. “I was puzzled when I met him for interviews and he’d appear surprised to see me. But then later I said to myself, what if he didn’t hire me at all. What if the Waziri hired me and led me to believe that the Mai did?” but others things happen to open my eyes to what was really going on... (*Measuring Time* p:282)

The biography of the Mai was intended to celebrate the lives of the people especially as it relates to their existence as well as to celebrate the achievement of the palace, ironically, the Waziri intended to use it as a means to ascend the throne by subtlety revealing the weakness of the current Mai using Mamo as a Pun in his scheme to defraud the council and the community.

To a great extent, Habila’s exploration of the intricate pattern of the people’s existence reflects the interplay between survival and progress in a society undergoing both socio-cultural and political transformation. Habila’s prowess as a creative observer is evident in *Measuring Time* and this account for his ability to deeply penetrate the subconscious of his characters in order to reveal their inner thoughts. Mamo unable to grapple with the reality of his findings plunges into psychological ambivalence. Through this, Habila provides a view of man and his chequered relationship with society, *Measuring Time* explores the

plight of individuals in a complex and traumatic fit struggling to construct a prestigious and robust identity for themselves, it presents individual who are torn apart from their family, whose relationship with their family is constructed on the basis of hate and disgust. It presents individuals who are socially and psychologically uprooted and rumbled, they are neither here nor there but stuck between opposing personalities.

Measuring Time attains a level of objectivity in its apprehension of the way the peoples' vulnerability is being exploited, the Waziri, for instance, having being threatened grubby refuse to assist Auntie Marina to regain her freedom, the narrator explains that:

The Waziri shrug, "you leave me no choice, then i heard that all the arrested would be taken to the state capital for questioning. How long will an old woman last in that kind of situation? How old is your auntie? Sixty, sixty-five? But if you want i can get her out in a minute. Her life is in your hands. Think about it. (p.284)

Measuring Time is not only interesting as a signification of multiple volcanic selves but also a reflection of certain contradictions in the society that informs the development of these selves. The interplay between the selves and their relationships with each other open up discussion on multipliers and their effect on the individuals. Habila uses the character of the twins and Lamang their father as a symbol in analyzing the psychology of personality within the society. Constructing his analysis with the help of the dialectic method, Habila's presentation or character representation illustrates the use of several dialectics oppositions. One of such is the opposition between the individual and the family and the opposition between the individuals and the society. Using the dialectical approach, Habila points out that relationships in the home should not estrange other thus the feeling of estrangement may likely bring defect to the society.

The relationship between Lamang and his children was never cordial because he (Lamang) never had the opportunity to make his own choice of life partner such as interference, the narrative seems to suggest, affects the individual psychologically thereby destabilizing his emotional balance, although Lamang's state of instability wasn't revealed to the reader early in the text, however, before his demise, the text reveals to the readers his repressed emotions what Freud refers to as the "return of the Repressed". According to Steven (2003:88), literature deals and probes essentially into the nature of man in order to understand human situation and conduct, his development and progress within society. Literature essentially deals with man as he struggles against social and cultural entanglement. Man often feels entangled within a social space which he assumes stiffens his analytical potentials. Man is a social being who has the capacity to take informed decision about himself and for himself but when such rights are taken away from him, he revolts against such stifling system thus according to Fanon "violence can only be challenged by violence" In this case, such violence affects not just the individual but the entire community. Thus, just like uncle Ilya, man must question certain aspect of cultural and social life. The narrative illustrates this:

...the worst thing you can do he'd say to Mamo as they sat in the tiny office surrounded by books and files and wooden chairs "is to ever accept anything at face value. Don't agree with a man says because he has lived longer than you or because he claims that is our way, using history as evidence to back his claim some have accused me of promoting western ways and making young people forget their tradition and culture. They point out to me the evil of modernity- as if tradition itself is devoid of evil. You will come across such people my advice is, don't listen to them, get education, if you want to follow tradition follow because you understand it not because some old man told you it is our way. The youth must be encourage to ask why is it our way? If the elders can't answer then forget it, the rest of the world has science and commerce and prosperity. What do we have? Culture... (P.83)

The society x-rayed in *Measuring Time* is a society riddled with contradictions, a society where citizens, deprived of their benefits, alienated and dislocated and thus facing a crisis of identity. Through its characters, the text interrogates social, political, psychological and cultural variables that give birth to the crisis in the society. In Habila's worldview, attitudes are not just developed but are encouraged and influenced by certain variables within the society. The development and experiences of these characters lie in the depiction of societal values. Lamamo upon his return to Keti mobilised the entire village against the Mai and the Waziri who have taken for themselves the money meant to bring water to the community in contrast to Mamo's position who wishes that things should be resolved without violence.

Measuring Time analyses man enshrined within the intricacies of society. Through a social-psychological exploration of Lamang, the text poses an obvious question such as was Lamang in control of his life? Was he really responsible for what the twins turn out to be? The likely answer to both questions is no. the narrative presents Lamang as an individual circumvented and circumscribed within the psycho-social, the political and cultural fabric of the society. Lamang never had the freedom to marry a wife of his choice, Tabitha was impressed on him by forces within the society as a result, he was deluged and unable to extricate himself from the garb of social forces; finds fulfilment and agility in his psychosocial disposition; philandering with different women in order to satisfy his libido (ego). However, his silence and neglect influences and motivates his children's attitudes towards him. The dialogue between Lamang and Mamo, in the text reveals Lamang's subconscious mind, his pains, his repressed feelings and impulses thus he says "we all have our secret pain, our personal anguish, it is life" (185). Hence, the excruciating social and

cultural situation these characters find themselves in gives them no other option than to forge an identity that often negates standard practice.

Generally, an individual's personality development depends on several factors such as biological, social and psychological; components which often facilitate an individual's anarchical predisposition. Personality formation is less about accepting oneself, and more about overcoming oneself; Personality entails shaping the mind to respond to both internal and external forces. This implies that the individual places himself in a position to reason and make decisions based on the nature of life in his environment. Thus, Personality formation dwells on the inner shaping of the mind. Man's environment provides a basic code of behaviour that facilitates an individual's curiosity, interest and the desire to strike out on his own destiny. However, the modes of acquiring attitude need much attention if true character development is to be realized.

From the foregoing, therefore, one can attribute violence to be a phenomenon conceived in the mind of the individual which manifests in the physical and translate into the society thereby finding expression in literary creation. By negotiating the boundary of self-formation, *Measuring Time* is able to project the social and psychological variables that facilitate violence in the individual. The complex structure of the text unravels the contradictions in modern society where individuals ascribe to themselves certain values and concept which aid social construction and cognitions of tropes within the society. Self and identity are cognitive constructs that influence social interaction and perception and are themselves influenced by society. *Measuring Time* paints a picture of modern society in which social relations are legitimized by attributes that go with belonging to a social order. People's lives and identities were tightly mapped out according to their interaction with

others, such as family membership, social rank, in any respect, what we become is superfluous.

The text is a symbol of personality development, a symbol of an era of war, a process which defines a writer's interest in individual pursuit of personal goals and fulfilment within the context of the methodological problems of defining identity. The narrative, therefore, shows the definability of identity through resistance. Personality as a psychological construct is presented as a result of involvement in the creation of new rules, as a product of social influences. The text presents individuals who attempt to negotiate a distinct identity and personalities for themselves as a result of interaction, perceptions and interpretation of social variables and signifiers within the society. The presence and interaction with others facilitate the development of the character's personality. Habila, through literature, provides a constructive discourse into the social and psychological makeup of man and society; it is a signification of the multifaceted nature of man and his complex psychological interaction with others in the society. It gives insight to individual mental processes and developments within a social continuum. Within a broader spectrum, it provides themes and styles for fictional representation which express a universal significance. It is within this framework that the text examines the self in relation to violence. The self is expressed as a phenomenon influenced by certain variables within man's immediate and corporal environment. Common issues related to the self-are attrition, dissonance, attribution, psychological dislocation, loneliness, and alienation.

CHAPTER FOUR

VIOLENCE AND THE DYNAMICS OF GROUP MIND IN *OIL ON WATER*

4.0 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the emphasis was placed on the personal experiences of individuals and how it shapes their attitude and personality. Here, the focus shifts to a far more extensive focus on collective trauma and cohesive consciousness. Collective consciousness is an indisputable part of the Niger Delta's history and a major source of conflict in the region. The discovery of oil and its aftermath have significantly influenced the construction of cultural and communal values and the ideals of group consciousness. This enormous awakening fundamentally forms the basis of conflict in the regions. Thus, the focus of this chapter is to examine and understand the cohesive impact of group consciousness to the development of selves in the region. In this light, *Oil on Water* tackles the huge chasm between the people and their leaders; it explores the unending conflict between Federal forces and the dwellers in an oil-rich community of the Niger Delta.

The novel focuses on characters that see themselves as ‘Social Objects’ characters that promote the collective consciousness or shared value of a group. It looked at “group mind” as a narrative expressed within a social continuum. “Group mind” represents various contradictions and ideologies which certain groups relatively construct in order to interpret and define their position, cohesion, motivation and fraternity as an alternative response to communicative variables in the society. It holds a vital place in the construction of literary themes; this is because literature is representational of all class biases; hence, literature is viable because it does attempts to represent man in a paradigm of intricate contradictions.

4.1 War and the Dynamics of Group Mind

Society exists because individuals feel a sense of belonging and this sense of belonging is what fosters the communal or collective consciousness of the people. In Irikefe community, for instance, an organic solidarity emerged due to the mutual reliance individuals hold on the secularity of their land and religion. Although, individuals live and die, however, their connectivity is cemented in their religious beliefs. The narrator captures this connectedness when he records the following;

...I opened my book but as I bent my head to read I noticed a white shape in the distance, many white shapes, a procession coming out of the line of trees on the path that circled the hillock, leading to the sea. They were each holding a staff, and toward the middle two men were bearing what looked like a body covered in a white sheet on a stretcher. I thought I was about to witness some kind of burial, and I debated whether to dash back to the hut to get my camera. But I decided against it; I didn't want to miss anything. A low chanting reached me faintly where I sat. when they got to the edge of the water, they put down the stretcher and then the corpse threw aside the white sheet, miraculously sat up and started to crawl on all fours, its robe dragging in the wat sand, till its knees and arms where in the waves, and then it sat in the water. The others gave out a loud sigh and joined the sitting figure, forming a semicircle behind it, their backs to me, facing the huge dying sun, their arms outstretched, supplicatory, and their sighs suddenly turned into loud wails. They went on like this for a long time, swaying rhythmically, imitating the movement of the waves, and then one by one they came out of the water and headed back to the huts ...They believe in the healing power of the sea (118-119)

The linkage between the people, their religious practices and community explains the central elements that shape their consciousness or identity. In this light it provides a significant understanding on the outcome of their personality, Irikefe, a microcosm of the Niger Delta region, a 'public space', "distinct and independent of routine state system, a means of economic production/ Okaba (2008:22), became a center of transitional violence through which the warlords voluntarily represent themselves in ideological and political debacle. Irekefe Island, before the war, plays a multifaceted essence; not just of a religious

essence but social, ideological and political in view of this, the need to have control over the Island by different interest groups predisposes the land as a source of constant confrontation, this is because land is tied up to the peoples' cultural beliefs and practices. Thus, interaction with society is mediated through the informational structure of the mind. It is this informational structure and connectivity with the land that spurred up the violence to the level where man becomes 'beast of war'.

The discomfort caused by oil exploration and its destruction to the ecosystem is intrinsically captured in Okaba (2008:30). He submits that "wide-ranging and often environmental changes emanating from the oil/gas business and industrialization particularly, oil spill and gas flares have destroyed the natural resource base crucial to sustaining independent indigenous livelihood". Etekpe (2008:86), is of the opinion that violence in the region is due to the unfair trade practised and marginalisation of the people. Thus, environmental degradation and pollution have caused nothing but pain and untold hardship for the people who have to live out a miserable life from their polluted river. Irikefe Island exudes the rhetoric of the multifaceted violence in the Delta. It explores the paradoxes and fissures of identity within 'human' and 'the environment and the implication of the resistance to the larger ecology of the Niger Delta region.

The centrality of the violence in the Niger Delta as expressed in the narrative is the disruption of the cultural milieu of the people; their rivers and shrines which serves as a source of healing for their community by the soldiers who fight to maintain the hegemony of the island. The following lines captures this:

The major waved his hand toward the approaching shoreline, but his voice was drowned out by the noise from the helicopter that suddenly appeared above us, like a bird of ill omen. The Major looked up then he took out his radio and put it to his ear. When he finished speaking his face had satisfied grin – Be prepared for what you are about to see, Irikefe is now mostly ashes and rubble, bombed by gun helicopter over there. Not a hut is left standing...what about the people?- most of them will still be there, I suppose. But expect a lot of casualties; unavoidable of course, this is a war zone... (157)

The environment is depicted as a system of a normative construct, which allows the development of the psychological personalities of individuals in relation to their culture. Using the images of dead fish, decomposing chickens with maggots trafficking beneath the feathers, flourishing mosquito larvae, deserted households, and punctured zinc roof, the narrative depicts the extent to which the environment has been “disvirgined”. It depicts a society whose cultural and spiritual mixing is undermined; hence, the cultural and spiritual dislocation fosters a negative response from the inhabitants who fight to salvage their environment from extinction. According to Okaba (2008:30):

poor local service delivery, economic exploitation, social marginalisation, political exclusion, infrastructural neglect and environmental degradation have transformed the Niger Delta into a zone of frustrated expectations, dashed ambitions and unprecedented restiveness. A beleaguered mentality and psychology of deep seated distrust and animosity against the state and oil companies

Correspondingly, when an individual cannot make meaning out of the life, he becomes neurotic thus; in the process of violent struggle against the oppressor, they experience a psychological rebirth. Chief Kabiri for instance, did not speak a word in defence of himself; he willingly gave in to the soldiers who came to arrest him for fraternizing with the militant whom Zag avers comes from villages like this and how can one stop them from fraternizing with them (P.13). Hence, given the insensitivity of the soldiers, he overthrew his fear of death and suddenly realized more deeply than ever before the sense of selfhood and consciousness of freedom that the love of his land fosters. Thus, when Rufus asked “is he

guilty” Zag looked at him sternly and said, “guilty for what, Innocent of what” (P13). This expresses the view that violence is a signifier of multifaceted variables which lies beyond what it signifies.

The land is a major factor in the development of the mind, man finds essence, healing and aura while connected to his environment “we believe that the sun rising brings a renewal. All of creation is born anew” (P.85). Land, to the Niger Deltans, typifies fecundity, rebirth, healing and essence. It is a means of communication with their ancestors; Boma gets psychological and emotional healing when she joined the worshipers in Irkefe. Rufus reveals that his sister “looked well” (p.237). At the climax of the narrative, Rufus concludes, as he watches his sister Boma from a distance that “She’d be happy here, I was sure. This was a place of healing and soon she’d forget John, her scars would recede to the back of her mind and one day she’d look in the mirror and see they were gone” (p.239).

In this scene, cultural and spiritual mixing transcends physical realities. It enables a sense of rejuvenation, identity and meaning. Values and beliefs are based on the understanding of the world that integrates man’s spiritual and material essence. Hence, the worshippers’ placing themselves in the water underscores their connection to the environment. This view aligns with Wiwa’s (1995:12-13) assertion that “for the Ogoni, rivers and streams do not only provide water for life—for bathing, drinking, etc. They do not only provide fish for food, they are also sacred and are bound up intricately with the life of the community, of the entire Ogoni nation”. Wiwa’s gesture signifies the importance of land to the formation of the people’s identity; hence, the controversial self of the Niger Delta militant is moulded as a result of their pervasive social, cultural and spiritual experience.

Oil on Water portrays psycho pathological characters at war with the state. Characters haunted by sorrow, pain, poverty, and the need to deal with living in an environment with immense human right abuses. Characters that fester an identity and come to a self-realization due to incessant emotional, physical and psychological torture. Through the narrative voice, the text offers a panoramic view of brutality, physical and psychological torture and the resolute stance adopted by the inhabitants in response to such threat. The following lines express this view thus:

They are here, the soldiers are here! They came out of the sheds and houses and passages, wielding whips and guns, occasionally firing into the air to create more chaos. A man ran out of a hut and came face-to-face with a soldier; he raised his hands high in surrender as, in a single motion, the soldier reversed his rifle and swung the butt at the man's head. The man fell back into the doorway and the soldier moved on to another target. I was saved from a broken jaw or a cracked skull because I was on the ground trying to regain my wind. Karibi and his friends now joined by his son, stood motionless, shoulder to shoulder, watching the pandemonium unfolding toward them- like a wave that had started from far away in the sea and was now unstoppably headed at them on the shore, gaining strength and fury as it came. Over ten soldiers surrounded the smithy, facing the silent, defiant men. One of the soldiers, a sergeant, stepped into the shed and pointed his rifle at Karibi- you, come with us. His men rushed forward and grabbed Karibi, who didn't struggle or say a word. The other men watched, glaring at the soldiers but saying nothing. They pinned his hand behind him and dragged him away through the wide village street... (p12)

This accentuates the brutality of the soldiers and the progression with which the individual attains self-actualization. The character of chief Karibi expresses this when he remained unfettered even as he is being arrested by soldiers. "...I couldn't get rid of the image of Karibi, stoic and defiant in the face of the threat and unruffled while he was being arrested by the soldiers. Surely, only an innocent man would be so unruffled, so confident?" (P: 13). Hence, the accumulated effect of violence shapes the individual who becomes stoic and defiant even in the face of threat. The prevalence of complex circles of state oppression, a deteriorated living condition, human and environmental abuses as depicted in the text

increasingly fosters the individual's self-determination to fight in order to liberate himself and his environment from any form of psychological trauma.

Consequently, the novel elaborates on the danger of continued exploitation, brutality and marginalisation. Karibi's attitude may seem deranged; however, it is a conscious response to a system which undermines the dignity and values of human life. Chief Malabo, for instance, was arrested and killed in prison because he refuses to concede his land to the government and oil companies for oil exploration. Hence, to compensate for a feeling of hopelessness, the individual emphasizes his dignity by using violence as a mode of expression. This view is expressed in Salomon's discussion with Rufus: "the Oga has insulted me badly, he'd taken away my pride, my dignity, my manhood and all the time I was serving him honestly, diligently, I trusted him..." (P: 210). Salomon's involvement in the kidnapping of Isabel Flood is premised on the need to deal with his traumatic emotional experience. Koko, his erstwhile fiancé was taken away from him by his boss James Flood, consequently, the traumatic effect of his loss is further compounded by Koko's insult; hence his involvement is an acknowledgement and display of power, strength and dignity.

According to Gotang (1996:160), violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that actual somatic and mental realisation is below their potential realization. The text represents the quest for survival and self-actualization. The collective loss of their environment and brutality by government forces fostered these self-determined individuals, deviants and stoic even at the face of impending danger. Hence, the activities of the militant are sharpened by their realization of their deplorable situation which impedes their collective progress in spite of their cumulative natural resources. The text presents a scenario where the hegemony of the government and the activity of the Multinational

Corporations provide the individuals with a language with which to express their collective grievance. Thus, the narrative stresses how psychological exploitation produced self-determined individuals whose fights are targeted toward liberating themselves from the grip of traumatic bouts.

Irikefe Island offers a fictional retrospection of violence and environmental degradation by the indigenes that see themselves as freedom fighters and government military forces fighting for the liberation and protection of their collective inheritance. It Projects a period of intense war for hegemony between the Militant, Oil Corporations, and Military forces, the novel presents Irikefe as an Island on the verge of extinction, at least, before the fightings between the militants and the soldiers which triggered the disruption in the communal life of the people, Irikefe was projected as a harmonious community whose dwellers relate closely with one another, a community devoid of violence and death, and free from pollution- a people watching their children growing up before them happy. Zag, one of the journalist declare “I like the air here, it’s pure and who knows, I might even get some sought of religion” (Pp38&85). Ironically, Zag died of dengue fever; a disease caused by environmental pollution. Zags’s death ironically symbolizes the disorderliness and disablement in the environment, which thus forces the people to look for an alternative environment where they can at least get some measure of serenity.

Man’s struggle for identity and recognition and the disorderliness of things are the contradictions raised in *Oil on Water*. It depicts a situation in which a community is thrown into crisis as a result of addressing their unbearable conditions. Man’s thought is shaped by how he transcends the relationships in his immediate environment. Man is unequivocally attached to his environment. Thus, any separation and interruption with the serenity he

enjoys with his land spell doom not for the individual alone but for the entire community. This is the import of the priest's statement to Zag when he and Rufus dug up the grave at the middle of the night in search of the kidnapped Isabel's dead body which the assistance priest – Naman- alleged had died and been buried in a grave shown to them "our chief priest died this morning, and we cannot bury her because your activity last night has disrupted the balance of things. A purification ceremony has to be carried out "(165). This word shows man's indelible attachment with his environment.

4.2 War and the Dialectics of Corruption

When aggressive elements are present in an environment, there is a likelihood of intense and incessant resistance. Corruption is one very active and aggressive element that individual's resist vehemently. This segment looks at the complex nature of corruption, its causes, and its effect on human and social development. Corruption is a theme that has attracts immense social relevance for the literary artist. Ebeogu (2006:113) avers that "the creative artist construct his rather near world with materials extracted from the rather disordered world of his society". This draws credence to the fact that issues expressed in literature are issues prevalent in the society. Thus, a writer looks at every aspect of society and comes up with a greater meaning of the story (p4). Ikelegba (2006:107), also asserts that the key driving force of these conflicts is the presence, roles and intervention that the Multinational Oil Corporations (MNOCs) have in the community. The Niger Delta crisis is essentially among others, a crisis of governance, and a crisis of state and corporate governance. In this light, Okaba 2005 cited in Okaba (2008:27) agrees that:

infrastructural delay is experienced in all sectors in Nigeria: education, wealth, energy, water, sports, transport, housing...in the midst of the general deterioration of living condition, is the prevalence of a complex circle of state oppression, repression, and militarization within and around the oil industry as oil spills and other forms of human and environmental abuses result in further accentuation of mass poverty and general insecurity in the Niger Delta region. It suffices to state that the revolutionary struggles in the Niger Delta region against state led economic exploitation, social exclusion and political marginalisation of the Niger Delta span over five centuries spreading from the era of pre-colonialism, through regionalism to Post-colonialism.

The narrative of the struggle is nothing but a narrative of a long determine struggle against exploitation, corruption and psychological marginalization.

Given the abundant resources present in the Delta and the deplorable infrastructural and human development, the consequences for rising social and political conflict were especially high. The dialectic of corruption influences the burgeoning of nationalistic struggles especially following the killing of Ken Saro Wiwa and eight others by the Abacha led Federal Government in November 1995. The killing of Wiwa and other human right nationalists marked a watershed for the burgeoning of the crisis in the society. “The rise of MEND and its affiliates member groups such as the Martyrs Brigade and the Coalition for Military Action in the Niger Delta (COMA)- marks something of a watershed that escalates the long arc of deepening violence and protest across oilfields especially since the late 1990s” (Watts, 2008:40) *Oil on Water*, through the narrative voice aptly captures the struggles that characterize the society especially from the youth who often bear the brunt of the phenomenon. Rufus relates the story of youth restiveness especially as they protest in front of the oil company asking for better living condition thus:

...he turned on the TV again, the screen was filled by a blown-up photo of a smiling Isabel, and behind her was a crowded street, a bridge, and far in the distance the iconic Big Ben clock tower. Next there was a shot of picketing youths holding placards in front of an oil-company building in Port Harcourt. The segment was followed by a long rote-like voice-over about poverty in Nigeria, and how it was the main source of revenue, and how because the country was so corrupt, only a few had access to that wealth...(p96).

The issue of corruption and poverty as expressed in the above excerpt defines the phenomenon that forces the inhabitants to define an outlook inimical to social development. Rufus's father and John's father, Emmanuel for instance, started a black market business in which they buy gasoline at a low price from "little children" and resell it to drivers passing through Junction late at night (p:69). In this way, they claim for themselves a tiny fraction of the oil profits to which so many Niger Delta communities are entitled but never receive. This illustrates the challenging and entrenching presence of corruption, exploitation and psychological marginalization prevalent in society. They indulge in this scheme because there were no other options left for them to make a living for themselves and their families. They see it as desirable or sustainable. Despite knowing the consequences of engaging in such illegal dealings, they follow it irrespective of its consequences, although, they ride on the greed and exploitation of the police. They are keenly aware that eventually, the police will want more bribes than they can afford, at which point Rufus's father acknowledges, "“They'll arrest us, or take over the whole business themselves” (p69).

A consequence of corruption is the imminent health hazard which the people are being exposed. The narrative draws attention to the difficulties the inhabitants face in an attempt to access basic health and social facilities. Almost everybody in the society is adversely affected by increasing flares that burn and lit up the community at night. The ensuing air pollution leads to health risks such as cancer, asthma, bronchitis, a blood disorder,

dehydration, reproductive disorder and organic damage to land and homes from the scattered oil droplets; and constant light in some communities, severely disrupting residents' sleep cycles (Oluduro and Durojaye 779). Habila captures this instance when the doctor told Rufus that:

I have been here five years and I tell you this place is a dead place a place for dying...well I did my duty as their doctor. I told them of the dangers that accompany that quenchless flare, but they wouldn't listen. And then a year later when the livestock began to die and the plants began to wither on their stalks, I took samples of the drinking water and in my lab I measure the level of toxins in it: it was rising steadily. In one year it has grown to almost twice the safe level...when I confronted the oil companies they offered me money and a job...I thought they'd do something with my results but they didn't. so when people started dying, I took blood samples and recorded the toxins in them, and this time I sent it to the government. They thanked me and dumped the results in some filing cabinet. More people died and I sent my results to NGOs and the international organizations, which published them in international journals and urged the government to do something about the flares, but nothing happened. More people fell sick, a lot died... (Pp143&145)

It also draws attention to the ignorance of the people who rejoice and do business oblivious of the health challenge. The narrative reveals "the villagers feasted for weeks, they got their orange fire planted firmly over the water at the edge of the village. Night and day, it burns and now the village had no need for candle or lamps, all they had to do at night was to open their doors, and just like that everything was illuminated (Pp.91-91). This equally depicts the culpability of the indigenes who apparently ignore the warnings from the community doctors (Dagogo Mark) as regards the dangers that accompany the constant oil flares and its adverse effect, consequent upon which he says "I have seen these happen many times in this area.

A man comes down with a mild headache becomes feverish and then developed rashes and suddenly a vital organ shuts down... those whom the disease doesn't kill the violence does" (p: 146). The damaging effect of the gas flaring symbolically reflects not just visible

environmental and degrading health disability but an extreme structural disability. This disability is represented in the predicament of Boma, Rufus's sister whose face was partially burning as a result of the fire that engulfs the oil drums which her father stores in their dwelling place. Her disability is emblematic of the social, political and psychological disability of a society whose political and social representation rides on the wings of exclusion, injustice and oppression. It is a marker of a social and moral defect. Rufus notes that:

She was seated on my wicker armchair, facing the TV, but in such a way that her profile showed the undamaged side of her face, and even when she looked up at my entrance she managed to keep the burned, badly healed side of her face hidden. She did it unconsciously, the scar always dictated how she stood, how she sat. It made me sad when she did that, especially with me... (p88)

The consequences of corruption are visible scars that impede the dignity and prowess of a one's prided giant. Okaba (2008:32) asserts that the prevailing attitude of selfish stakeholders and almost parallel economic development and social goals propel mutual distrust and disrespect for one another. He further states that the emergent rancour between the state, transnational oil companies and the host communities have brought negative repercussion to all the parties. *Oil on Water* captures this negative repercussion in the predicament of Boma and the trauma of her mother who constantly cries whenever she sees her one-time beautiful daughter, now a psychological wretch who finds it difficult relating with friends without shielding the disfigured part of her face. Hence corruption and social injustice, as well as greed, are capable of affecting social construction.

This state of social oppression is further delineated in the character of the major who according to Doctor Dagogo is 'mercurial'. The identity of the major was created by a morally deficit based social system. He is depicted as a schizophrenic who relates

abnormally especially with the people. According to him, he decides who is guilty and who is not, who is a militant and who is not, it is better to line them all up and kill than allowing them to go to jail and afterwards given amnesty (Pp. 53&149). This reified attitude is a consequence of the brutal and unjust treatment meted out on him; his daughter was brutally defiled by the son of a wealthy politician and his occult friends who kidnapped her, took her to the graveyard, gang-raped her as a requirement for joining the cult and subsequently abandoned her at the grave oblivious of the fact that she might give up their names to the police. The girl, however, gave up their names, and on hearing the news, the minister flew his son out of the country for a year, on returning, the major traced the boy to where he was hanging out with his friends, kidnapped him, took him to a graveyard and shot him on his groin after breaking his four limbs, however, he was careful not to kill him (Pp.56-7). Ironically, instead of addressing the psychological issue that facilitates his action, he was unjustly court marshalled by the state and sent to the violent riddled region of the Delta where he transfers his angst on the community.

These abstractions and arbitrary dismissal created in the major a psychasthenic mental disability. He often finds delight in dripping petrol on presumed militants. Social injustice and corruption create negative symptoms and responses from individuals who are subject of such injustice.

A predominant or visible effect of corruption and social injustice are clusters of symptoms and irrationality. His nature describes the physical nature of the environment which he represents where the individuals need to endure the attitudes of their leaders. Cognitive theories opine that human brain operates according to societal complexities, that the brain conforms to role expectations and resist overt or covert means of control or manipulation

and communication (Mc, 1999 cited in Michael 2006...x), hence, human relationships create vocabularies that interpret man's identity.

Militancy, kidnapping, environmental degradation, poverty, lack of social amenities as well as the insensitivity of both the government and Multinational Corporations in the Niger Delta region are the major cause of violence and youth restiveness in the region. The burgeoning of the crisis is traceable to the killing of Ken Saro-Wiwa and five others by the Abacha's regime on the 10th of November, 1995 for speaking out against injustice and pollution in their land by oil companies operating in the region. This action by the government facilitated the birth of certain militant groups such as the MEND. Shortly before he was hanged, Saro-wiwa, before the Justice Awa led tribunal said that the injustices against the Ogoni and other ethnic minorities in the Niger Delta would be met with more radical measures, if the oil companies and the government continued to suppress peaceful means of agitation that non-violent groups had adopted.

This prediction only took few years to materialize as various militant groups sprang up in the Delta, bombing oil installations, participating in oil bunkering, and kidnapping oil workers. However, before Saro Wiwa and his fellow activists emerged in the scene, Isaac Boro in 1966 had declared the Niger Delta republic for fear that the Ijaw will not have a fair deal in the Military dispensation, (Darah:10). Thus, this crisis started as a campaign against marginalisation; however, it has pummeled to a full-blown violence with constant kidnapping and blowing up of government-owned oil facilities. Youths in the region turned militants because they want to draw attention to the degraded environment. Militant groups such as the Black Belt of Justice, the Free Delta Army, the AK-47 Freedom Fighter, Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), one of the deadliest militant

groups responsible for several militant activities since 2005 and the Avengers have overtime emerged drawing attention to the predicament of the region.

Oil on Water vividly contextualizes these crises in the activities of the militants represented by the self-styled Professor (Ani Wilson), a backstreet and party thug who broke away from his political godfather and took to the creek as a freedom fighter. Although the Professor acknowledges that there are criminal elements who dub themselves as a freedom fighter, his group only fights for the wellbeing of the people, thus he says:

I am aware that out there, they are criminals elements looting and killing under the guise of freedom fighting but we are different, those kind of rebels, they are our enemies. That's why I am letting you go, so you can write the truth. And be careful, whatever you write, be careful. I am watching you. I have people everywhere... write only the truth, tell them about the flares you see at night, the oil on water and the soldiers forcing us to escalate the violence everyday tell them how we are hounded daily in our own land where do they want us to go, tell me, where. Tell them we are going nowhere. This land belongs to us. This is the truth, remember that. You can go? (P.221)

The Professor obviously alludes to the reason why they fight. He reveals the brutality from soldiers, the displacement and the indiscriminate oil on water, where the novel obviously got its title. The Professor did not, however, deny the fact that there are criminal elements amongst the self-styled freedom fighters whose unsavoury activities pose a threat to their genuine fight for recognition; he sees them as enemies of the community (P.221).

Therefore, we could see that exploitation is best measured in terms of the manner in which the value of human worth is regarded and the manner in which human personality is influenced. The corruption of the Nigerian state in league with the oil multinationals has significantly hindered the development of the Niger Delta region. Since the late 1990s, violent activities including the kidnapping of oil workers and the bombing of oil installations in the Delta have been carried out by different groups of which the most

notable is the MEND. Many people from oil producing communities see little future for themselves, so having seen their villages change before their own eyes, they decided to leave “we have lived in four different places for now, always we have had to move, we are looking for a place where we can leave in peace” (p: 42). Apparently, migrating to bigger cities like Port Harcourt where competition for limited jobs would escalate in such cities, in spite of these, more people will eventually have to leave their homes in the Niger Delta as rising sea levels cover more and more land (Okonta and Douglas 111).

While communities suffer from collapsing infrastructure, oil revenues go into the pockets of industry executives and corrupt politicians. Tragically, pervasive corruption is a major factor that prevents funds from reaching the infrastructure projects that oil producing communities are promised (Peel A Swamp 167). Rather than supporting the people whose historical homelands produce the oil, in fact, this money has instead gone to costly international efforts like the 1990s ECOMOG wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone, as well as urban domestic projects such as the development of Lagos and more recently, Abuja (Darah 114). Thus, within the context of Social Psychological discourse, *Oil On Water* places man at the continuum of society in order to understand not only the inner turmoil that influences man’s action but to examine other external factors that propel man's actions and personality. The text renders a microscopic analysis of social phenomenon in relation to Habila’s handling of the multifarious violence prevalent in the region and how this violence shapes the personality.

Literature prefigures revolutionary changes. It reflects the prevalent social realities in the society in which it operates. Since literature projects an age, it raises several issues that permeate society. Hence, ONW integrates social-political and environmental debacle that

permeate the Niger Delta and the agitation for self-actualization. The novel delineates the dialectics and complexities of a length determined struggle for self-actualization. It depicts a society entangled in the web of crisis gradually dragging towards extinction, a society whose social mode of communication is violence. Violence to the Niger Deltans symbolized freedom from emancipation, exploitation, environmental degradation amongst several others. According to Fanon “The fight for national culture means in the first place to fight for the liberation of the nation. Self-determination and actualization is a cause deeply rooted in the imagination of the community. The war for self-actualization is a fight for cultural and environmental liberation; it is a war against environmental degradation, denunciation of marginalization, exploitation of communal potentials which have become the central focus of literary works emanating from that region.

There has been a continuum of writing which envelopes themes such as marginalisation, exploitation, brutality, militancy, ecological degradation, poverty and the likes. Within this continuum are creative writers such as Tanure Ojaide, J. P. Clark Odia Ofeimun, Ken Saro Wiwa, Kaine Agary, Ogaga Ifowo and Uche Peter Umez who through their creative writings have offered a rich and significant insight into the crisis in the rich-devastating oil community and the militants, agitations to control their own resources. Hence, Habila has given his voice to the cause together with this army of writers to comment on the dilapidating social, economic and political variables that define the Niger Delta Niger Delta region and the nature of the crisis in the region. Thus *Oil on Water* evocatively draws attention to such repugnant social debacles entrenching behold societal malaise.

As the crisis in the Delta region significantly intensifies, writers are increasingly concerned with representing issues that plague the Nigerian society. Written from the first person

narrative point of view, the text presents social, political and environmental conditions plaguing the Nigerian state. Although, the progression laced with a series of flashbacks captures the often complex relationships between the states and its citizenry. In Rufus' telling, the narrative juxtaposes the nature of life lived in Port Harcourt City to that lived in the Delta, Port Harcourt is depicted as a mirage where everybody wants to go (p180) in order to get a better life and Irikefe community as a parody that stiffens life and stunts development, Irikefe stands at the middle of two contrasting world of affluence and poverty; the environmentally and psychologically devastated Delta and the rich robust and beautiful Port Harcourt city where big men sit and pull the shots economically and politically. In the Delta, Rufus and Zag meet a villager (Tamuno) who tells them to take his son Michael to Port Harcourt and a better future (198). *Oil on Water* attempts to portray what it meant to be living in abundance but access to such abundance becomes a mirage. The text offers a panoramic view of the multifaceted Niger Delta crisis, where oil-producing communities face a variety of, social, political, economic, psychological and environmental problems. A society riddled with diseases, inadequate health care to facilitate good health, it reflects the realities of living in this region as Rufus narrates:

I fell asleep with the movie still playing, thinking there was something sad about a people who were born and lived and died on water, on rusty ships and boats, and fantastic balloons. Their day and night filled with hope that someday finding dry earth, their wars and their industries and relationships and culture all driven by the myth of dry land (p:90).

The above quotation vividly highlight the dialectics of a failed government. Hence, a writer must capture the despair and uncertainty that confronts a people in his writing. Habila expresses this commitment in *Oil on Water*. His work is a pungent revelation of the people's reality. Using the first person narrative, Habila reveals the vulnerability of his characters as they struggle to wriggle out a livelihood. Chief Ibiram and his wandering

family members have to keep moving from one community to another in search of a peaceful environment where they can live peacefully away from their war-torn Irikefe. Chief Ibiram, for instance, alludes to the fact that they cannot be happy when they are “mere wanderers without a home” (p40).

A focus on social injustice, disability influenced by corruption encourages a mere generous representation in literature. Representation plays a major role in how literature is understood. Through it, the lives of men and the events in their societies are depicted. Henry James holds that “the only reason for the existence of the novel is that it does attempt to represent life” (cited in Francis Sparshott 1967, Pp.3-4). This implies that literature must capture reality. The plot is deliberately used as a representation of a situation which the reader can easily connect with. It encompasses the manner in which a particular issue or subject matter is addressed. What writers attempt to portray are various happenings that are prevalent in a society, often, one within which they exist. To this effect, the representation must be objective enough to depict reality. In Althusser’s (1977:12) view, “the writer intends to make the reader feel the openings, silences, lapses in which really and truly in ideology are not so apparent” in literature.

Oil on Water represents a “spectacular” and devastated Delta community with massive oil spills; the positions of government and multinationals have not only constructed the attitude of militants but have also sustained their psychological estrangement and disenchantment with the society. People died in their numbers, due to the fact that they could not access the required medical attention. The community doctor is ill-equipped to handle such medical challenges. Gas flares destroy their crops and water, hence the indices that define their self-concept. The individual feels psychologically estranged and disenchanted with a society

that is supposed to look after them. According to Smith cited in Okaba (2008:21), “till there be property, there can’t be government” this expresses the fact that until the state plays an essential role, violence will not be abated.

The story revolves around two journalists, Rufus and Zag, through whose eyes Habila refracted the whole drama in the region. Zag and Rufus’ sojourn into the devastated land of the Niger Delta in pursuit of the kidnapped Isabel Flood, wife of a British oil engineer, as they navigate the murky waters of the region, they witness nightmarish and dehumanised experiences of marginalisation, displacement, military brutality, corporate exploitation and a devastating environment with “suspended stench of dead matter...dead birds draped over tree branches, their outstretched wings black and slick with oil, dead fishes bobbed white belly between the roots” (p8). Rufus expresses this view when he says that “maybe fate wants to show her firsthand the carcasses of fish and crabs and water birds that floated on the deserted beaches of these tiny towns and villages and islands every morning, killed by the oil her husband was helping to produce” (p182). Thus, the central ideal in *Oil on Water* is the kidnap of Mrs. Isabel Flood the expatriate wife of a British Petroleum Engineer who had come to Nigeria to salvage her turbulent marriage, unfortunately, ended up being abducted by her ‘trusted driver Salomon and his friends.

On the whole, *Oil on Water* addresses tumultuous collective mental and psychological dispositions which pervade the entire region. It delineates complex and group consciousness which rides on a collective psychological bonding as they are faced daily with the fear of losing their land to the activities of multinational corporations and their government allies. In the process of sublimating these fears, the narrative provides a view of how certain variables within and around the society influence man’s relationship and interaction with

his society, the contradictions and biases that propel the emergence of a constructive individual whose goal is to make the 'environment unfavouring for government and the oil companies to the extent that they will be forced to pull out' (P: 220). The Professor's insistent that Rufus should only write the truth depicts the constant cry of the oil-bearing community for respite and relief from their brutal and deplorable living condition "tell them about the flares you see at night, and the oil on the water" (P. 221). Literature is about man and his interaction with society. The novel explores the dynamics of man's consciousness to the existence of their reality. It projects a society where the overriding effect of oil spillage takes its toll on the community, a society where communal wells are filled with decomposing human carcasses, where land which is the only source of livelihood is degraded, a society where a man is tried and found guilty without proper investigative procedure, where children are snatched away from their mother never to be united, husband taken away from their wives, kids sent to prison, husbands flogged by soldiers in front of their kids, a society where corruption sustains the most powerful and the masses are thrown into squalor and abject poverty. In the face of such economic strangulation and inequality, there emerged complex selves, the militants and insurgents- whose actions are guided by the principle of resource control, self-actualization.

CHAPTER FIVE

WAR AND SOCIETY IN HELON HABILA'S *THE CHIBOK GIRLS*

5.0 Introduction

The previous chapter analyzed narrative strategies in the construction of cohesive personalities in a cohabited community driven by the need to draw attention to their predicament and that of their environment. This chapter discusses the complex nature of war and terrorism in Nigeria as a social and historical construct. It also attempts to explain the evolution over the years of these extremist networks and how these are organized and the variables that drive their organisational and operational methodology. An effort has been made to explore the role of the state and external influences in the growth of these organizations and their possible employment by the former in the conduct of its security policy. Unlike the previous texts whose narratives and experiences determines the movement of the story, the narrative in *The Chibok Girls* did not follow such conventional narrative style, in the text, the characters act out their experiences by giving first information about their ordeals. The text is more of a historical document, documenting the experience of a society.

5.1 “Chibok” The Dawn of an Era

The terrorist attack on the “sleeping” Chibok community in April 14, 2014, marks the dawning of a new historical period in Nigeria. Although, there have been series of terrorist attacks in various part of Nigeria, however, the attack on the Chibok community led to a fundamental change in the history of Nigeria. It draws attention to the secular and peculiar nature of the Nigerian state, stating a symbolic destruction and dimension of war and

violence in the society. With the event, Nigeria now faces a threat more insidious and devastating than any other ‘traditional’ threat to states. According to Fukuyama (2002:28) terrorists have the power to: “wreak immense damage on the modern world.” The journalist narrator elucidates this point when he narrates that “as they passed through Askira-Uba, the last local government area before Chibok, signs of the ongoing battle between Boko Haram and the military became more evident. Burned tanks and military trucks stood at the roadside rusting” (P14).

The *Chibok Girls* (2016) narrates the experience of the civilians in Chibok during the Boko Haram uprising. The novel is structured in three parts with each part metaphorically depicting the level of transformation and reconstruction of the peoples’ identity and the historical perspective of the society. In its representation of pervasive violence and terrorism, and the accumulation of death and destruction expresses a loss of a previous life, home and country. The text progressed thus:

That was their third coming. They came around 3:47pm. I remembered the exact time because we had just finished praying in the mosque at the time. My father, the chief Imam was alive, my father went home and I remained behind, the noise of their shooting was everywhere and I thought to myself, these people are here and when they take over a town they don’t just leave immediately, they stay for months and even years (P:41)

These lines express the extensiveness of war and violence in the collective consciousness of a people and the transformation of a social and democratic order marked by process of deconstruction and reconstruction. Through the dramatic change in the order of the society, war assumes ritualistic dimensions in the sense of an identity transformation which passes from the society to the individual. Psychoanalysts, revere the overwhelming influence of a group behavior over the thoughts and characteristics of another group. Nigeria, being a corpus entity with diverse religious beliefs and a shared space of cohabitation, including

shared language(s), education, culture and social values, shaped by her interior socio-political dynamics has been thrown into chaos by individuals' wasps in their effort to institutionalise their own version of religion and beliefs on the society. It is a story of bloodbath, sorrow, death and displacement. In the text, traumatic occurrences which include death, pain, tension frustration and hopelessness runs through the pages of the novels thus relating the radical inhibition or breakdown of the social system as well as placing a traumatic marker on the characters.

Yana Galang for instance, relates that each time she hears the sounds of gunshots, her stomach would turn and that she would have to go into the bush to defecate (P.29). This captures an essential aspect of violence where individuals are constantly under tension, as well as the fact that within the prism of war or violence, individual is thrown into a prison of contradictory paradoxes. It is these paradoxes that the characters in *The Chibok Girls* reflect. Through their narratives, the text brings into perspective the characters social and cultural context within which their traumatic experiences symbolised by a loss of their identity is dramatic. The *Chibok Girls* uses the narrative of characters' past to investigate the construction and performances of their identity within a larger prism of life. The narrative tells the story of individuals caught in the war between two worlds; that of the state and of terrorist who view themselves as 'Islamic Jihadists'.

While the historical events mark the structural framework of the novel, the story is composed of a simple narrative web presenting the dialogues between the journalist and the victims of the terrorist attack. This central web of characters' stories is overlaid by a backdrop of psychological and social unrest. Ruth told the narrator the story of a depressed

father who had come to her home and told that he simply could not continue to live knowing his daughter was a Boko Haram prisoner in the forest and that soon after that his heart gave out and he died. Also, another father had disappeared and couldn't be found for days but was later discovered wandering in the hills shouting his daughter's name. Similarly, Nana Galangin her narrative for instance, explains that she often experience discomfort in her stomach whenever she hears the sound of a gun, invariably, this expresses the radical transformation both on the psychical and physical structure of the society. Caruth (1995:10) observes that trauma is a temporal delay that carries the individual beyond the shock of the first moment. In this light, Individual trauma communicates a deeper dimension of social life; this is because there is a constant and distinct interaction between the individual and the social system.

Pickering and Keightley (2009:2), aver that trauma is the difficulty of reconciling with a shocking and painful event or an enduring series of such events in an individual's experience thus, the constant rumbling in her stomach whenever she hears the sound of guns reveals the conflict which characters face internally and externally. At the beginning of the novel, the disposition and narrative of Galang when she was asked to recount the events of the girls kidnap, gives a clear picture of her traumatic state. The journalist narrator observes that as she spoke, it struck him that she had repeated this story many times before – to the media, NGO, Nigerian security agents and many more, and that he wonders, if the word carried the same weight and pain each time she repeated them. It seemed cruel he said, to be asking her to relive that day (p. 30). Thus, the journalist was able to relate through her pain, and traumatic disposition and transformation in the identity and personality of the individual. However, her readiness to always recount the story of the

kidnapping can be attributed to what psychologist calls “the talking cure” which temporarily relieve the victims from depression.

According to Freud and Breuer cited in Toluhi (2015:39), the “Talking Cure” is a process which involves recalling, recollecting and reliving traumatic memories in the presence of an attentive listener. Thus, recounting this narrative over and over frees her (Galang) from her traumatic thought such as the thought of her sick daughter in the conclave of the terrorist; Rifkatu; Galang’s daughter had earlier come home due to ill health, however, because of the National examination, she had to go back to the hostel in order to study with her mates in preparation for the examination, it was the night she went back to school that they were kidnapped. This incidence triggered an emotional bout which she manifested by running the distance between her home and the college not minding the distance, she says:

I started screaming, and I felt as if my life would come out. I called to their father who was sleeping inside the house. i started running toward the school, screaming and running. I felt as if my world has ended. They found me on the way and took me on a bike to the school that was it. The girls were gone...two weeks after, i couldn’t eat or sleep. I’d put food in my mouth and then throw it out again I would go to the toilet but nothing would come out. I would walk up and down, thinking. Two weeks, I couldn’t sleep. But...only God knows what will happen. Our trust is in God. (P32)

On a national level, this transformation through deconstruction and reconstruction opens up a space for the erection of new meaning through rewriting and symbolic reconfiguration. The writer for instance has the right to give meanings to the violence in the society in order to create history. This restrictive vision often elicits the creation of alternative representations that attempt to open up a space for recuperating that which is omitted in the process of narrativisation. Often, what is left out is the dynamics of the individual involvement. His perceptions and conformity, as well as the implicated transformation the individual undergo as they loss their previous lives.

Cupious images are used in the text to illustrate the people's collective loss and vulnerability as they succumb to violent degradation and death. The imam who appears to be both a secular and religious figure died on the way while fleeing from the insurgents and his inability to receive proper burial rites connotes how violence have push the city to infernal depth. Thus the society is treated as a collective whole condemn to self destruction. The open battlefield implies a wider disintegration of a collective social order and the collapse of the government. In the text, the characters voice their concern about the inability of the government and the school to stop the kidnapping from happening, one of the characters allege that months before the kidnapped, the insurgents had written to the town that they are coming and in spite warnings that the school should not be open for the examination, the school authority flaunted the warnings, as such demonstrating the understanding that the government is completely lost in handling the crisis

Habila's personal narrative of his growing up years in the North Eastern part of Nigeria largely shape the narrative and equally reveals the dialectics of a failed social system. Habila questions both the Ideologies of the terrorist and the role of the government for not meeting up to the needs of the people. The Boko Haram Uprising appears as an aggressive force that implicates the government in its spread as well as a force that pushes characters through psychological hardship which ultimately transforms them instinctively. Indicatively, the characters' psychological conditions informed the readers of a world operating with a dissenting template of social and moral degeneration. A world whose past system of meaning have been eroded without being replaced by equivalent frameworks, a world where ideas and beliefs lack compelling social force. Overwhelmed with too much

meaninglessness, the fathers of the kidnapped school girls struggle to understand such contemporary framework of moral degeneration.

5.2 War, Power and the Conflict of Ideology

Power plays an important role in the sustenance of peace in the society. The ability of the government of the day to achieve a harmonious and a unified society depends on how they are able to bring everyone together, in order to harness their differences. However, when there exist a huge gap between the people and their representatives, society experiences nothing but chaos. It is this chaos that *The Chibok Girls* elucidates. The narrator presents a violence riddled Chibok community where individuals are hunted by sorrow and pain and the need to constantly deal with the incessant diffusion of violence in their community. The journalist narrator relating Kyari's story writes:

That was their third coming. They came around 3:47pm I remember the exact time because we had just finish praying in the mosque, at the time my father the chief imam was alive. my father went home and I remained behind. the noise of their shooting was everywhere. and I thought to myself, these people are here, and when they take over a town they don't just leave immediately. They stay for months, even years. (P.41)

To a great extent, the journalist narrator's expression on the traumatic state of the victims proves it difficult to isolate the government from any culpability. The journalist narrator for instance, refers to Chibok as "a sleeping dusty town where nothing ever seems to happen" (P.24). A town where poverty, underdevelopment, marginalisation aids the spread of violence and violent acts in the society. Hence, it is obvious that there is a missing link between the people and the system. The narrator articulates the fact that underdevelopment and poor educational system; which allows children of school age to be used by both the elites and their religious teachers as foot soldiers are significant variables that encode the

society, thus, enmeshing it in various levels of war. Stern for instance enumerated that it is “grievances that give rise to holy war”. According to her, these are among others a government’s inability to provide basic services, a culture of violence, a growing number of unemployed young men, and humiliation. For terrorist groups, weak or failed states serve as a context within which they can move relatively freely and where they can deliver services that cannot be provided by the government, such as judicial structures, schooling, or social support. In addition, in corrupt, violent and failing states, such groups can show an alternative to the dominant political culture by leading an exemplary life that is marked by austerity, community service and rejection of corruption.

In the chapter titled Gombe, chapter four precisely, he says “we had passed sleeping mud villages, all identical, with dust covered children chasing plastic balls in the square and a few goats and chicken wandering about. In all the villages, the school building...had been all burned down. This was a sure sign of Boko Haram” (P51). Similarly, in Chibok, “they went into town and burned down a few shops, including the house of the local council chairman, and another man living in Maiduguri. In some shops, they took foodstuff. In the school they took foodstuff from the store and burned down some houses and hostels...” (Pp.26-27). Also, the journalist narrator reveals that since the kidnapping, the “market has been dominated by Soldiers patrolling or loitering on foot and in trucks; a pickup filled with vigilantes bearing their trademark;. Dane guns, was parked in front of a store. There was individual vigilantes’ standing in storefronts” (P.23). Ironically, the market which is a symbol of a community’s economic hub has been turned to a barrack for soldiers and vigilantes and arsenal for weapons, thus, elucidating on the unbearable and nefarious life the people are been subjected to. This is because major economic activities in the

community will be partially grounded for the reason that individual's movement in and out of the market will be restricted thus there will be economic downturn.

More so, in Yadi, the journalist narrator reveals that the insurgents had invaded a Federal Government College and murdered fifty nine boys in cold blood, rounded up the girls and lectured them on the "evils of Western Education" (P.22). Thus, their notion on the dangers of western education explains the dialectics of their religious and ideological belief. The Boko Haram insurgents believe that Western Education is capable of corrupting the mind, as such, a true worshiper of Allah is not permitted to acquire any other education except that prescribed by Allah which thus, follows strict Islamic teachings. Hence, Western Education is proscribed by the group, in this light, any one acquiring or seeking to acquire Western Education is culpable and commiserate punishment will be taken against such individual(s).

It is important to note that the belief and ideological view of the group on the danger of western education, provides the background for its strict Islamic revolution also known as 'Islamic Jihad'; a term which expresses the desire to war against unbelievers with the intention to winning them over to Islam or subduing or eliminating them (Al-Asi 2005 cited in Shitu 2016:82). The narrative thus, depicts the predicament of a society cut within the labyrinth of religious 'misconception'. Shitu (2016:82), states that there had been great misconception regarding the term Jihad, on the one hand, he says, the West due to their persistent and negative outlook of Islam have misconstrued the concept of Jihad, as a result Islam has become a victim of distorted images. Citing Reeves 2002 he says:

Over the course of not less than thirteen centuries a a stubbornly biased and inconsistent negative outlook had persisted, permeating deep levels of European consciousness. in the works of an overwhelming majority of European writers Mohammed was portrayed as a man of deep moral faults churchmen, historians, orientalist, biographers, philosophers, dramatists,, poets and politicians alike had sought to attribute to Islam and especially to Mohammed fanatical and despicable, even demonic characteristics. (Shitu 2016:81-82)

In the same vain, he asserts that some Muslims equally misconceive the doctrine of jihad which accounts for their demonic and violent attitude towards non-followers of Islam. Thus, he avers that they (Muslims) indulge in practices and utterance that projects Islam as a violent faith.

The ‘Journalist Narrator’ for instance contrast contemporary practice of Islam to that he was familiar with as a child growing up in the North when he says that “the version of Islam he grew up with was a tolerant Islam” (P.44). Symbolizing the fact that as Shitu opines, misunderstanding and misconception in tandem with globalization are reasons why individual war against themselves and the state. In his word, he says the term “jihad” which means struggle or strive has been misinterpreted by both Muslim and non-Muslim. It has been erroneously equated as warfare, violence and holy war against non-Muslim; the term terrorism is now a global phenomenon without a definite definition” (Shitu 2016:81). He thus, concludes by saying that the term ‘religion’, a force of globalization which ought to be a source of peace and unity among people, has been turned to a tool of conflict, bloodbath and terrorism, due to distortion and misuse of religious doctrines.

It is in the light of the above that the Boko Haram group; a term which literarily means “Western Education is sinful” is examined. Boko Haram is a group of radical Islamist youth who worshipped at the Al-Haji Muhammadu Ndimi Mosque in Maiduguri, capital of Borno

state, in the 1990's (Walker 2012 cited in Awortu 2015:214). Its leader, Mohammed Yusuf, began as a preacher and leader in the youth wing of Shababul Islam of Ahl-Sunnah, a Salafi group. His literal interpretation of the Quran led him to advocate that aspects of western education he considered in contradiction to that holy book, such as evolution, the big bang theory of the universe development and elements of chemistry and geography should be forbidden, in Hausa (NIPPS, 2012 as cited by CGAR, 2014 cited in Awortu 2015:214). While critical of the government, Yusuf was involved in official efforts to introduce and implement Sharia in several northern states in the 2000s. The failure to achieve this fully helps to explain Muslim youths' anger with government deception and insincerity and the call for an authentic Islamist revolution (CGAR, 2014).

Although, the activities of the insurgents are mostly concentrated in the North-Eastern region of the country, its impact is also being felt in other parts of the country. In October 2011 for instance, the United Nations (UN) building in Abuja was attacked leaving scores of people dead and many injured. It is against this that the writer decried the ineptitude of the Nigerian government in tackling the rising scourge of violence in the society. The narrator says that:

Despite widespread condemnation, the U.S. State Department did not bother to place the Boko Haram on its list of Foreign Terrorist Organisation. there were a number of reasons for this, one of which was the Nigerian government's refusal to cooperate with international organization in the fight against Boko Haram. the U.S would not designate the group "FTO" for another two years. following a spate of bombings in the late 2013 that demonstrated the group's increased ability to wreak havoc. the target now included hospitals, churches, mosques, and markets. Boko Haram would often announce publicly beforehand the time of the attack and the target. they believe victory or loss came from God. (P.21)

Critically, this quote reveals the fragility of the government of the day in tackling the menace. The night before the kidnapping in Chibok, Reverend Philip told the narrator that

they had received countless calls that the insurgents will be coming to attack Chibok (P.26) in spite of this information, no security measure was put in place to avert the kidnapping. Even while the parents of the kidnapped girls and other community members launched a pursuit after the kidnapper, it was revealed that there was no military presence, hours after the kidnapping in Chibok (p.27). The school principal was even fingered in aiding the kidnapping process because information reveals that the examination body had directed all regional schools in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa state to send their students to states headquarters and other big cities, where there were better security measures in place. More so, that the vice principal had insisted that no girl should step outside the school even though the school was not in regular session (P.40). Nigeria has not known peace for about four years now.

In part, current insurgencies in the country to a large extent stems from an ideological orientation with large international affiliation. Ideology plays a very large role in promoting, recruitment and training of new members. This is likely because of terrorists' constant exposure and contacts with international terrorist groups. First, existing radical Islamist organizations have historically often been off shoots of other radical organizations that were sometimes more violent in the past. Second, such organizations that today may espouse an agenda de-fined by educational or political concerns often prove to be the entry point for young people who go on to join terrorist groups. Their ideological training in these organizations is what first points them towards this path.

Ideology accoding to *Webster Dictionalry* is “a manner of thinking and character of an individual, group or culture where a mere philosophical thought described it as a principle aimed at establishing or maintaining a certain social system”. In most parst of Nigeria

especially the Boko Haram scourge in the North-east geopolitical zone of Nigeria which initially started as sectarian religious group has overtime metamorphosed into a full blown war of ideology with diverse international linkages and affiliations thus, making it delusive and difficult for security agencies to contrail. Agomuo (2011:48) confirms that “what started around 2006 in the far flung North East geopolitical zone of the country as a child’s play, has become a national disgrace and of international concern”. Unequivocally, its emergence has consumed thousands, thus, assuming a reign of trauma of a global magnitude in the society. Thus, its inhuman activities and defining method of operations have unsettled the Nigerian nation to the extent that ample time, economic and political resources have been expended in the bid to curtailing if not eliminating the scourge which has constituted a major source of underdevelopment to Nigeria.

The journalist narrator for instance captures this phenomenon clearly when he descriptively renders an overview of the Northeastern Zone Prior to and after the intrusion of the Boko Haram insurgents. In the chapter titled Gombe, chapter four precisely, he says

we had passed sleeping mud villages, all identical, with dust covered children chasing plastic balls in the square and a few goats and chicken wandering about. In all the villages the school building...had been all burned down. This was a sure sign of Boko Haram (P51).

Similarly, in Chibok, “they went into town and burned down a few shops, including the house of the local council chairman, and another man living in Maiduguri. In some shops, they took foodstuff. In the school they took foodstuff from the store and burned down some houses and hostels... (Pp.26-27). Also, the journalist narrator reveals that since the kidnapping, the market has been dominated by Soldiers patrolling or loitering on foot and in trucks; a pickup filled with vigilantes bearing their trademark. Dane guns, was parked in

front of a store. There was individual vigilantes' standing in storefronts" (P.23). Ironically, the market which is a symbol of a community economic hub has been turned to a barrack for soldiers and vigilantes and arsenal for weapons, thus elucidating on the unbearable and nefarious life the people are been subjected to. This is because major economic activities in the community will be partially grounded for the reason that individual's movement in and out of the market will be restricted thus there will be economic downturn.

It is pertinent to state unequivocally that the Boko Haram sect took advantage of this quagmire in the Nigerian state and the failure of government at all levels to provide basic welfare schemes to criticize western education and drum up support for their misconstrued puritanical teachings. They exploited the lacuna created by the high unemployment level, non-availability of basic infrastructure and the general high poverty level to their benefit through the deliberate strategy of providing some welfare packages to the citizenry. Consequently, they used food, money and employment to attract youths to their fold and created the impression that their puritanical viewpoint is of great spiritual significance and importance to the people. Eventually, they succeeded in garnering support from the youths whom they recruited as suicide bombers and fighters under the leadership of Shekau who took over after the death of Yussuf in police custody in 2009. And it was this second phase of violent attacks by Boko Haram that have increased developmental challenges in Nigeria.

Conflict and war are sources of tension that drives almost all works of literature. Metaphorically, war and conflict ostensibly projects societal ills. Ultimately, one discovers meaning in literature when he/she relates with the issues and could interpret such issues to suit his experience. Literature is important to us because it speaks to us, it is universal and its affects us irrespective of its didactic nature. It is the means by which society can be

assessed in all ramifications. In documenting or relating societal life, the author may choose different paradigms or frameworks with which to project his message. Such framework could be historical, sociological, autobiographical or satirical. Whichever style he chooses, the end product is to pass across a vital and burning message to the reader. Hence, his writing must address the social, religious, historical and cultural life of the society, this is because the artist himself is a member of society adorned with various social and specific qualities. Hence, his style must be flexible enough for the reader to identify and interpret what is being said.

According to Walleck and Warren (1982:94), “literature is a social institution which uses language to communicate”. Similarly, Jaji (2014:75). states that “literature in general and the novel in particular have become an integral part of societal contention and often overtly political controversies”. Thus, literature is an expression of society; its contestation, progress and development. *The Chibok Girls*, a novel that depicts tension, war and terror, have appropriately utilized the methodology of historical and satirical narrative to project the people’s discontentment with the government as well as to project the various contestations and controversy bedeviling Nigeria.

The narrative traces the history and evolution of violence in Nigeria to the activities of Mohammed Marwa popularly known as Maitasine; a controversial, radical and self acclaim prophet who denounced part of the Koran and criticized the Prophet Mohammed in most of his teachings. he was most popular with the lower class as a result, he successfully amassed large followers among the poor and unemployed immigrant from Niger, Chad and Cameroon and the *almajirai* (P.45). Religion becomes a weapon of propaganda to him, a

tool for subjugation and conformity in his hands which he uses, thus, Hoko Haram like Marwa was opposed to all aspect of modernization and to all Western influence (P.45).

The war of terror with its defining and refining processes has ostensibly given meaning to literary expression. Nationally and internationally, literary observers, for instance, have directed their focus on the defining effect of terrorism in Nigeria. Abochoi (2014:382) states that terrorism (Boko Haram) “has played contemporary public debate, which is why the topic is of interest even at this time”. The Boko Haram crisis has become a single all-embracing interpretative and psychological illusion which the society is attempting to understand. The artist as a social crusader is thus saddled with the responsibility of annexing these experiences; the writer belongs to the social group, the intelligentsia and educated elites whose role and vision is viewed as promoter of social and moral values that are crucial to the survival of the society and the championing of freedom, dignity and justice for the majority of the people. (Maduakor1986, cited in Steven 2014:10). Hence, in *The Chibok Girls*, Habila gives prominence to human values and the survival of the society. Presenting a record of Nigeria in crisis, he assumes the role of a social crusader whose intention is to draw society to the point in which “the rain begins to fall on her”. Thus, the need to address salient issues that will likely ensure the survival of the country.

The Chibok Girls presents a scenario of secular and mental disorder. It records the crushed hope of Nigerians. Maier (2000: xxvii) asserts that “Nigeria has proved to be by far the most confounding, and at the same time engaging place I have ever visited. It simply overwhelms the senses’. Ostensibly, contemporary issues in Nigeria have overwhelmed all forms of logic, it has become a “historical nightmare from which one is trying to wake up” (Williams 2006:1). Society provides meaning and source materials for which such meaning

is best expressed and understood. Terrorism in recent times have redefined the identity of the society, thus, terrorism has become an element or component of Nigerian history. In the context of literature and the process of the development of Nigerian state, terrorism and its defining motifs have turned out to be the crucial aspect of various thematic concerns. Habila's *The Chibok Girls* explores varied dimension of Boko Haram terrorism ranging from political, social, and moral dehumanization, devaluation of human life amongst others. To this effect, the writer seems to be creating or preserving the history of society for future generation. By doing this, he relies on historical fact or could be called a copycat of history who rigorously and imaginatively transforms history into an imaginative art.

A writer, seriously speaking, transposes the social, ideological and political consciousness of his/her society into an art. Nnolim (2010:1) avers that:

It is now commonplace knowledge that contemporary African literature cannot be properly understood and appreciated as an isolated expression but must rather be viewed as part of the totality of human experience. As a literature of a people, it cannot be fully understood by the simple separation of form and content, for literature is part of a social situation and must be approached primarily as a mode of collective belief and action...

It is this light that *The Chibok Girls* explores and articulate the dynamic and conflictual nature of societal consciousness. It penetrates the arteries of the society and projects the indices currently seen to be the heart of contemporary literary scholarship. Terrorism (War) in recent times has laid the foundation for the articulation and expression of the marginalized segment of the society. It has allowed a significant shift in the scope of contemporary literary conception.

Ostensibly, contemporary narratives found meaning through the rash and impulsive drive of individuals to violently strike and attack his fellow man. Through action and senseless war

of ideology, aided by the declining effect of social and political relationship, society has become a dream which individuals constantly yearn to be awoken from. The 'Journalist Narrator' states that "thinking was clearly not allowed' (P.15). This means that man has become nothing but an inanimate object without the capacity to express or experience or better state an abstract element whose soul can only be felt and not touched. In spite of his encounter with the soldiers at the entrance to Chibok, the 'Journalist Narrator' obviously seems to understand their inner conflict and relate it to neglect, disappointment with the entire system and insensitive of the elites to the plight of the people. He captures the nature of life exhibited especially from those meant to maintain sanity on the highway and concludes that they (soldiers) were just sent to the battle front" to fight a ruthless enemy who relished capturing soldiers alive and slaughtering them like rams for propaganda videos" (P.18). He asserts that, "checkpoints or roadblocks as they are also commonly called are regular features of road travel in Nigeria, more so, that the checkpoint are part of the narrative surrounding the kidnapping, this is because the government has turned it to a means of propaganda which he (the narrator) sees as a viable method on the war against terrorism (P.18). These situations, he concludes are reasons why crime continues unabated in the society., Nigerians, he alludes have resigned to the way things have turned out on the highways just the way they are resigned to the lack of reliable electricity or running water.

The narrative also places a check on education. Education is one component that sharpens the consciousness of the people. It was the level of education the locals received from the colonial masters that spur them into demanding for independence from the West. However, these same elites who benefitted from a viable and well equipped educational system neglect to give same to their subjects. The 'Journalist Narrator reveals that, in America,

some of the girls who were taken to America for rehabilitation could not match up with their mates in spite of the fact that they were about graduating from secondary school. Thus, schooling becomes a big challenge (P.79).

The importance of society for literary expression is to facilitate components for portraying social, political, religious and cultural elements. Bello-Kano (2012:1 cited in Jaji 2014:77) strongly asserts that literature is a search by a writer for new modes of expression, new aspects of human life to represent the feeling and identity, in order to narrate and emplot human and other forms of significance. A writer can only express what is prevalent in his society. For Habila, violence and the insensitivity of the ruler provides themes for expression. The narrator reveals that the road blocks which are meant for enforcing traffic laws and ensuring travelers safety, are in reality, nothing but extortion point” (P.15). Similarly, he captures the irrationality prevalent in the society when he expresses a cry from one of the soldiers thus: “four months we have been here without salary, our friends are killed by Boko Haram and I am sick, four months no pay and you tell me you think” (P.15).

Contemporary Nigeria writing is a direct result of the tension and controversies prevalent in the society. It is a literature that discusses how people may adopt a polarized stance and embrace violent action from the society. It is a literature which projects the peoples attempts to give to an implacable sense of direction as well as forging a stance against opposing forces of darkness. The more implacable and polarized the situation, the more and absolute the sense of representation for the artist. The narrative analysis concerns polarized political and religious ideologies, but it is relevant to contemporary society which is polarized with ideologies. The search for direction through adopting implacable polarized positions and

embracing violent action is evident in contemporary global terrorism and the War on Terror.

Initial narrative surrounding the kidnapping was that the attack was politically influenced as well a premeditated attack on Christianity. But subsequent research on the terrorists reveals that the Boko Haram's principal goal is to create a strict Islamic state in the north that it believes would address the ills of society, including corruption and bad governance. The sect core beliefs are strict adherence to the Quran and the Hadith (sayings of prophet Muhammed), and their interpretation as sanctioned by Ibn Taymiyyah. Its social discourses and narratives project the fact that its main objective is to destabilize Nigeria and take her back to the pre-colonial period when the Sharia law was practiced (CGAR, 2014 cited in Awortu 2015:214). Hence, literary observers maintain that terrorism (Boko Haram) seeks to achieve political goals by instilling fear and anxiety among the target population, that the target is not the victim but to draw media and international attention to its operation (Hudson 2010:). Hogan maintains that the immediate and central goal of terrorism is to instil fear and anxiety, while its political goals are long term. He avers that:

Terror as a clinical term refers to a psychological state of constant dread or fearfulness, associated with an abnormally high level of psych-physiological arousal. This is central to what terrorists aim to achieve, since after all, while they have some ultimate set of political objectives, it is an immediate goal of most terrorist groups to cause terror (Horgan,2005 :14).

To this end, the phenomenon of terror is not the result of disturbed human activity or a random thoughtless attack but a rational and calculated method intended to promote their political and ideological interest. Crenshaw explains that an organization chooses terrorism among several operational alternatives in order to promote their mutual values and preferences. Hence, the Boko Haram in order to draw government's attention to their

activities and grievances; especially after the death of their leader Yusuf in the hands of the Nigerian Army, chose the path of terror and kidnapping. Terrorism is deliberately chosen as the preferred method of political activity because it is perceived to be the most effective of the operating alternatives – the benefits exceed the costs. In this context, Social and political narratives are sensational components of a writer's world. Themes arise from what is meaningless to us, but also influence what is meaningful. War and its defining impact connect us to humanity and informs us of what society is becoming. War as a subject matter has remained fundamental to artistic work. Emenyonu (2008: xi) quoting Nwahunanya says War Literatures are social compass which serves as ways of mirroring and criticizing society. By this he, opines that the writers have made literature to continue to function and re-directing society. Hence, the intention of course is to see whether these records of a sour historical moment will enable the modern African see the futility of wars as a solution to national problems which could be solved without recourse to war, carnage and bloodshed. Similarly, Palmer (1972:129) is of the view that:

The decolonization of African literature is already in process. Novelists are becoming less preoccupied with cultural and sociological matters, and more concerned about exposing the corruption and incompetence which are so widespread in African political and government circles.

The subject of war has inevitably shifted the attention of the literary artist from a more romantic focus on the elites and the antics of power play to the segment of the society grappling under the pain of violence. Although, the entire segment of society bears the brunt of these volcanic relationship, however, the downtrodden and the marginalized suffers the most. Hence, the dynamism between literature and society paves way for possible reconciliation in the work of art. Gikandi (2007:101), opines that “The artist has always functioned in African society as the record of the mores and experiences of his society and

as the voice of vision in his own time. Thus the artist is nothing but an observer, a teacher, a collector, preserver of the people collective consciousness.

Contemporary sensitivity is invariably sharpened by the understanding of the self and human emotions. Literature reflects changing human subjectivity and changes in the society. The progress and development of writing is propelled by novel narratives around man, his emotions and his environment. Importantly, contemporary Nigerian writers explore individual psychology through their fictional writing. The first duty and responsibility of an artist is to his nation, the artist must create an identity and must identify with his environment. Biases and sentiments must not be linked to the artist who is seen as the lens through which society views itself. According to Jaji, S.A in an article titled” *Prose and Identity in Northern Nigeria: The Antecedents, Contexts and Implication for Literature in Northern Nigeria*” identity is a psycho-social, political and cultural issue that is centred on the assertion of unity rather than diversity and pluralism. The society must be able to identify and relate with the voice of the artist. As a social critic, his art must address all specifics, political, social, economic, cultural or religious issues, all the divides and binaries of the society must be represented, especially the marginalised, by so doing, he is said to be the voice and conscience of the society.

In this light, it is obvious that the politics of insurgency and terrorism and its overall impact on human lives draw the angst of the literary artists who in a radical way reflects the events within society. There is in fact no such thing as art for art’s sake. Art is for a definite purpose, and literature cannot be divorced from the social milieu. Literature (*art*) deals with life, (Olaniyan, T. & Quayson, A., 2007:467). This therefore explains the dialectical relationship between literature and the society.

Representing the various aspects of the political and social features of Nigeria enhances an understanding of the Nigerian system. Consequently, the heterogeneous problems in Nigeria as reflected define the literature of the age. Thus, Nigerian fiction can be described as an emerging form, such that accommodates literary leitmotifs and formation of various discourses. In this regard, the issues of war and society detail the polarity in the society and in Nigerian fictional narratives. *The Chibok Girls* demonstrates how a writer riding on historical variables can reflect the contradictions predominant in the society. The text depicts the dialectic of human existence. Trauma and displacement occasioned by the incidences of war. It is therefore imperative that the goal of a writer should be to imaginatively demonstrate a great level of social and political commitment through narratives.

The foregoing sufficiently summarises the ideological and imaginative motivations of most writers in Nigeria, *The Chibok Girls* demonstrates the writer's desire for a better society. Bringing the thought of the characters to the reader and allowing the characters to tell their stories, elucidates his yearnings for a more humanistic view and value for human life by all. The narrative explores themes and issues that are socially, morally and politically depressing, issues that influence man into taking up arms against society. Such as irregular payment of workers' salaries, deplorable condition of life, poor education and social-political system, insecurity and a porous border system which allows immigrant indiscriminate entrance into the country. Sartre (1980:65-71), cited in Ubiem 2015: says:

The art of prose is bound up with the only regime in which prose has meaning... when one is threatened, the other is too. And it is not enough to defend them with the pen. A day comes when the pen is forced to stop, and the writer must then take up arms. Thus, however you might have come to it, whatever the opinions you might have professed, **literature throws you into battle. Writing is a certain way of wanting freedom**; once you have begun, you are engaged, willy-nilly... As a matter of fact, the writer knows that he speaks for freedoms which are swallowed up, masked, and unavailable; and his own freedom is not so pure; he has to clean it. One must win an inner victory over his passions, his race, his class, and his nation and must conquer other men along with him.... Thus, all works of the mind contain within themselves the image of the reader for whom they are intended.

Irrevocably, in its attempt to speak to the system, *The Chibok Girls* renders a power insight into an oppressive and demonic society driven by ideologies. Thus, in a way, also, propelling the reader to speak and rise up against terror and its defining and crippling impact, its predominant concern is a free society where everyone is free to express his/her rights.

On the whole, Habila's *The Chibok Girls* is a novel that closely narrates contemporary and psychological problems. The narrative is more of a historic document, a preserve of historical facts. Literature is quintessentially about crisis; in this case, it is a crisis created by ideology, thus, this crisis is blossomed or inflamed by the fragility of the government and the inability of the terrorist to reconcile normative imperatives and contradictory religious values. *The Chibok Girls* just like Karl Mier's *This House Has Fallen* is a response and an account of a society brought to its knees by violence. Through the interface with the victim, the narrator captures the rhythm of this violence.

The author uses the interview method to achieve and project a more realistic view of the situation in the country. Subsequently, the eye witness account gives a clear insight into the palpable situation of the society. It is a novel that apparently dwells on insurgency and Terrorism in Nigeria It is also representation of social, political, religious and psychological

situation with its social inequalities and how this inequality affects the personalities of individuals and their reactions towards certain situations. In reporting the situation, the 'journalist' narrator projects a community lacking government presence as well as scrupulous teachers and politicians who take advantage of the almajirai using them as their private foot soldiers for their selfish end. The text purposefully relates the traumatic condition of the characters and transposed it within the framework of the society. Social psychologists view society and come up with the conclusion that individuals are what they are because of what the society is and have become. Thus, essentially delineating and representing these characters' 'personality traits within the ambit of the society, the text addresses the complex psychological and traumatic effects of war on individuals as well as humanity collectively.

In the analyzed novels, war evades definition and appears difficult to grasp, and various methodologies are used to depict its elusiveness. The expression of self in *Measuring Time* shows how the narration depicts violence as a social construct. Metaphors are frequently used to portray war as an uncontrollable, escalating and all-encompassing violence that implicates everyone. The scale and extent of its damage are incommensurable. *The Chibok Girls* elaborates numerous metonymic and metaphorical abstractions to express the amplifying political tension and military violence which reaches its extreme in *The Chibok Girls* where a series of allusions, images and ideological references depict war as an apocalypse. War is hence understood in relation to how it is subjectively perceived and in its effect on people and the place they identify as home.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.0 Summary

Conflict and war are sources of tension that drives almost all works of literature. Metaphorically, war and conflict ostensibly project societal ills. Ultimately, one discovers meaning in literature when he/she relates to the issues and could interpret such issues to suit his experience. Literature is important to us because it speaks to us, it is universal and it affects us irrespective of its didactic nature. It is the means by which society can be assessed in all ramifications. In documenting or relating societal life, the author may choose different paradigms or frameworks with which to project his message. Such a framework could be historical, sociological, autobiographical or satirical. Whichever style he chooses, the end product is to pass across a vital and burning message to the reader. Hence, his writing must address the social, religious, historical and cultural life of the society; this is because the artist himself is a member of society adorned with various social and specific qualities. Hence his style must be flexible enough for the reader to identify and interpret what is being said.

War is anything that disrupts the order of things, a situation of violence be it psychological, instrumental, cultural and ideological conflict within a social continuum. Contemporary Nigeria writing is a direct result of the tension and controversies prevalent in society. It is a literature that discusses how people may adopt a polarized stance and embrace violent action from society. Literature attempts to understand the war from a human perspective by looking at how it impacts people. The meaning of the war is narratively constructed through

imagined stories showing what human endured during the violent transformation of a society. The novels studied in this dissertation elaborate attempt to explain the political and military events shaping the war. By using varying degrees of frequencies such as dates, places, historical figures, references to political and military events, the reader is able to situate the story in the context of its historical perspective. The events of terrorism in Chibok on April 14, 2014, mark a structural, historical, psychological and political framework of the story, providing a narrative backdrop of chaotic political and social unrest.

In the analyzed novels, war evades definition and appears difficult to grasp. Various methodologies are used to depict its elusiveness. The expression of self in *Measuring Time* shows how the narration depicts violence as a social construct. Metaphors are frequently used to portray war as an uncontrollable, escalating and all-encompassing violence that implicates everyone. The scale and extent of its damage are incommensurable. *The Chibok Girls* elaborates numerous metonymic and metaphorical abstractions to express the amplifying political tension and military violence which reaches its extreme in *The Chibok Girls* where a series of allusions, images and ideological references depict war as an apocalypse. War is hence understood in relation to how it is subjectively perceived and in its effect on people and the place they identify as home. The novels' portrayals of war as an obscure and ubiquitous force invading and transforming individuals' private lives.. War invades the private space of characters by becoming ever more present in conversations as a noise or a topic of discussion. In *Measuring Time* this is portrayed by the daily conversation of the characters.

The importance of society for literary expression is to facilitate components for portraying social, political, religious and cultural elements. Literature is a search by a writer for a new mode of expression. A new aspect of human life, its experience shape, feeling and identity in order to narrate and ‘employ’ human and other forms of significance. A writer can only express what is prevalent in his society. For Habila, violence and the insensitivity of the ruler provides themes for expression. Ostensibly, contemporary narratives found meaning through individual’s rash and impulsive drive to violently strike and attack his fellow man.

Through action and senseless war of ideology, aided by the declining effect of social and political relationship, society has become a dream where individuals constantly yearn to be awakened from. It penetrates the arteries of the society and projects the indices currently seen to be the heart of contemporary literary scholarship. The war in recent times has laid the foundation for the articulation and expression of the marginalized segment of the society. It has allowed a significant shift in the scope of contemporary literary conception. This dissertation, therefore, examined Helon Habila’s *Measuring Times* (2006), *Oil on Water* (2010) and *The Chibok Girls* (2016) from a psychoanalytical perspective, with a special focus on character formation and personality development within a social continuum.

This study is premised on the belief that war is an idea that indwells the psyche of man which finds spontaneous expression when the ego is “threatened”. Hence, it demonstrates that literature has the ability to penetrate not only society but the psychology of the individuals that make up the society. It foregrounds the argument that man’s personality, behaviours and actions are psychologically influenced by social forces within the society.

Hence, man's personality is the creation of his time and environment; this is because man's disposition expresses his cognitive construction of ideas within the environment. Character formation and behaviour are most often attributed to the manner in which an individual's response to realities around him as well as the manner in which they, in turn, interact with these realities. Thus, using social psychological criticism as an investigative tool, this study focused and draws inference on all variables within the social world that defines man's personality and violent responses to communicative variables.

Furthermore, the analysis illustrates the exclusive relationship between war and society, war and literary creativity in contemporary Nigerian fiction. The study also reveals that conflict and war are sources of tension that drives almost all works of literature. Metaphorically, war and conflict ostensibly project societal ills. Ultimately, one discovers meaning in literature when he/she relates to the issues and could interpret such issues to suit his experience. Literature is important to us because it speaks to us, it is universal and it affects us irrespective of its didactic nature. It is the means by which society can be assessed in all ramifications. *Oil on Water* for instance vividly contextualises issues of militancy, kidnapping, environmental degradation, poverty, lack of social amenities as well as the insensitivity of both the government and Multinational Corporations in the Niger Delta region as the major causes of violence and youth restiveness in the region. It traces the burgeoning of this crisis to the discovery of oil in the region and the nefarious activities of the Multinational corporations who jettison their responsibilities to the host communities and the inability of the government to address the issue of oil spillage on their waters which is the source of their livelihood.

Hence, the perceived injustice and pollution in their land by oil companies operating in the region sparks up the violence and facilitated the birth of certain militant groups that took to the creeks in order to unleash mayhem on oil facilities. Thus, a crisis which started as a campaign against marginalisation, plummet to a full-blown violence with constant kidnapping and blowing up of government-owned oil facilities by youth in the region in a bid to draw attention to the degraded environment.

Measuring Time traces the development of conflictual selves to a breakdown of love, unity and affection in the family. It analyses its characters within the framework of a familial relationship. It depicts the family as the bedrock for moral development and as the single most important environmental influence on a child's potential development. It is within the family that the individual first learns how to relate with others, the sense of trust, love and hate is gained through the family's consistent responses and behaviours, thus the psychological disposition of the individual hinges on the beliefs he internalized in the family. The narrative is tightly woven around the relationship between the twins (Mamo and Lamo) and their father Lamang whose communication with his children lacks the ingredient of love and affection. The nature of the relationship depicted in Lamang's home is that which psychologically defrauds his children of their privileges. Mamo and Lamamo are twin brothers who live with their domineering and nonchalant father in a small village of Keti. Although, born into wealth and affluent, they lack the tenderness and affection of a loving father who does nothing but pursues the desires becoming the most prestigious and sought-after businessman in Keti.

The Chibok Girls is a narrative of an individual caught in the prism of war. The narrative tells the story of individuals caught in the war between two worlds; that of the state and of a terrorist who view themselves as 'Islamic Jihadists'. It is a story of a community struggling to reconcile the uncontrollable, irreconcilable and unpleasant paradoxes of life generated by such historical phenomenon. It depicts a community plagued by war and insurgency where the dynamic structure of the society is threatened. It mirrors characters struggling to regain their balance amidst a traumatic experience of war against the state a war orchestrated by people(s) wasps in their effort to institutionalise their own version of religion and beliefs on the society. It is a story of bloodbath, sorrow, death and displacement. In the text, traumatic occurrences which include death, pain, tension frustration and hopelessness runs through the pages of the novels thus relating the radical inhibition or breakdown of the social system as well as placing a marker of trauma on the characters.

The narratives sublimate the personality of the characters within their social continuum which propels the unconscious development of their identities. In the three texts, the environment is depicted as a system of the normative construct, which allows for the development of the psychological personalities of individuals in relation to their culture. Violence is thus a signifier of multifaceted variables which lies beyond what it signifies.

6.1 Conclusion

Literature is a social institution which uses language to communicate. Literature in general and the novel, in particular, evokes the contentions and political controversies in the society. It tackles issues of structural and psychological violence as well as revealing the huge chasm between the people and their leaders. The three novels focus on characters

whose identities and personalities are shaped due to issue prevalent in thler societies. Literature is an integral part of human society; thus contemporary trends are the basis for enlarging its frontiers. African writers have been responding to emerging issues in the society such as migration and globalisation on their people and continent. Terrorism, Ecological and environmental matters, the activities of multinational companies, the ecology of the Niger Delta, the Psychological war in Chibok after the kidnap of senior secondary school girls in 2014 and the trans-border terrorism, (issues that form the core of Helon Habila's narratives). Thus, -psychoanalytical lens becomes viable for the reading of these variables that determine man's propensity to violence. Therefore, the role of Literature in appropriating tropes and reflecting the society is paramount to the interest of this research. This study, using the -psychoanalytical criticism investigates 'war' its impact on the individual and society and the manner in which it has influenced literary imagination in relation to the issues of global terrorism, militancy and insurgency in Nigeria. The research relies heavily on Helon Habila's *Measuring Times* (2006), *Oil on Water* (2010) and *The Chibok Girls* (2016), as primary texts for investigation, also drawing immense insight from other critical works on the subject of investigation.

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