

**GENDERED REPRESENTATIONS OF WOMEN IN WAR LITERATURE: A STUDY OF
AKACHI EZEIGBO'S *ROSES AND BULLETS* AND FESTUS IYAYI'S *HEROES***

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ABSTRACT

*This paper explores the ways in which women's lives are altered in times of war as presented in fictional literature and it examines the depictions of women of the Nigerian Civil War. The aim is to identify how situations of conflict affect the unwritten 'rules' of gender roles and behavior in a typical patriarchal African society, drawing from the work of Carl Jung, who posited the idea of archetypes as fragments of the collective unconscious which represents the collective expectations of society. Primary data is sourced from the selected texts; Akachi Ezeigbo's *Roses and Bullets* and Festus Iyayi's *Heroes* while library and internet sources provided reference information. Findings reveal that despite the disruptive effects of war on social structures and norms, the restrictions of gender prescriptions are still upheld more ardently, by women against fellow women. The research is expected to contribute to existing studies on gender as an instrument of socialization and conditioning in conflict situations.*

Keywords: Women, War, Patriarchy, Gender, Social Conditioning

INTRODUCTION

In a largely patriarchal society such as Nigeria, the wartime picture of 'man does' 'woman is' perhaps only an extension of what obtains in times of peace. A close examination of the portrayals of women in literature and myth reveals that the entire female experience is one to which very little freedom is accrued. One would find that the women we meet in stories are limited to just two broad categories, the chaste, submissive woman who is the personification of every good thing. She is the lovely virgin, the good girl who helps the old woman and gets rewarded, the one who suffers tribulations silently until a rich man comes along to 'free' her; she is the kind gentle loving mother of myth, long-suffering and accommodating to all. The other category is just the opposite, usually independent and sexually liberated, she is the witch, the prostitute, the evil femme fatale who leads men to their doom, the proud, educated woman who becomes someone's girlfriend, but never wife, the one who is never able to have a child.

According to Jungian theory, these recurring archetypes are fragments of the collective unconscious and represent to a large extent the collective expectations of society, and so we find that in society, the woman who sticks to the patriarchal order and accepts her role is cast as the good woman, the "eternal feminine", she lives and works and dies unknown but accepted by all, and the woman who tries to resist becomes an outcast of sorts, and in the stories, comes to a terrible end, like the proud girl of myth who rejects all her suitors and elopes with a handsome stranger only to find out that he is in fact a skull with borrowed body parts. This point is even more pertinent considering the fact that stories are a tool for inculcating group values and societal expectations.

Kate Millet in her work 'Sexual Politics' says about the patriarchy that "It is sustained by a system of socialization, which originates in the family and is reinforced by literature, education and religion; it also depends on economic exploitation, state power and eventually, force (especially sexual violence and rape) (qtd. In Humm 27). There is perhaps no question that in all societies, war times are different from peace times. In the past, wars were fought mostly by men, in designated warfronts, leaving the women to 'man' the home front. With the advance of modern warfare, and the extension of the war front to include the homefront, it would seem that the wars are now being brought to the women from the outset. In the bid to

conquer and subdue, ordinary men become murderers and rapists, and the women take on different roles. In the bid to survive, people take on their more primal nature, rules are suspended. As the popular saying goes, All is fair in love and war. However, these archetypes go deeper than laws and rules and conventions. In most cases, we find that it is in fact the women who are custodians of this order, and so it would seem that even in the absence of men, while the men are off fighting, these archetypes are still upheld.

This paper seeks to explore the ways in which the female characters in the novels, as representatives of real women in the Nigerian Civil War, navigate these communally established archetypes, given their new roles in situations of conflict.

Nigerian War Literature

The Civil War is arguably the most important theme in Nigerian Literature. Craig McLuckie suggests that the fluctuation between the labels, “Nigerian Civil War literature” and “Biafran war literature” shows the unresolved nature of this period in Nigeria’s history. According to McLuckie, it is a time which continues to interest and thus induce new artistic explorations of the nation’s communal base. Indeed to read Nigeria’s war fiction is to see the country’s uncertainty and unease over the position and unity of a militarily won ‘imagined community’ (p.510). Chidi Amuta puts forward that to be conversant with Nigerian literature in the period between 1970 and the present is to be accustomed to one prominent and recurring area of public concern; The Nigerian Civil War(1967-1970). This prominence is so noticeable that it can safely be said that in the continuously growing corpus of Nigerian national literature, works directly or indirectly drawing from the war experience, constitute the largest number of literary works on any sole phase of Nigerian history to date (p85). The reason for this can be seen in Lucien Goldmann’s position that times of crisis and deep social transformation are usually advantageous to the creation of numerous great artistic and literary works because of the large number of problems and experiences that they cause for men and of the great widening of emotional and intellectual horizons which they provoke. It is not surprising that Jane Bryce questions the relative lack of titles on this subject by female writers, thus suggesting a further questioning of the ‘imagined community’ in light of men’s and women’s experiences in the war. If the reason for the impressive body of literature as Amuta posits ‘can be attributed to the fact that social experience is the primary source of literature, does the lack of war literature by female authors suggest that this ‘social experience’ was not shared in the same way by men and women (29). Truly, as Chidi Amuta(2014) points out, the place of the body of literary artifacts that have been inspired by the war in the historical process of the Nigerian nation raises many fundamental questions for the critic with historical mindfulness. Considering the place of Nigerian war literature in the African political and literary experience, one would agree with Chinyere Nwahunanya’s view that “in its re-enactment and interpretation of history, Nigerian war literature has enhanced the already existing body of historical literature in Africa, especially that of historical fiction. It is in this way that the writers have made and continue to make literature to function as the mirror of society. In this process of reflecting society and of condemning its pitfalls, the war literature also functions as a compass for social direction.”

The Genderisation of War

In the preface to *The Women and War Reader*, Jennifer E. Turpin, states that wars affect women in many different ways than men. Women play several roles during wartime: they are “gendered” as mothers, as soldiers, as ammunition makers, as sex-workers. She goes on to say that “...Feminist scholarship is gradually letting go of its earlier dichotomies of women as peace-makers and of men as war-mongers, while still identifying that something is different—we do detect some patterns in men’s and women’s reactions to war, and more often men are the architects of wars, while women are its resisters. If we reject essentialism, how can we account for this difference?” In ‘Many Faces; Women Confronting War’, Jennifer Turpin attempts to examine the impact which war has on women arising from culturally profiled behaviour and how these predict their responses and reactions. She describes and explains the different ways women suffer in war; as direct casualties, as war refugees, as victims of sexual violence, (rape, prostitution), as victims of increased domestic violence, as victims of loss of family, loss of work, community and social structure and as victims of environmental destruction. She also examines some of the ways in which women respond to war: primarily by contributing to the war effort in different ways; as military production workers, ammunition makers, as soldiers, as nurses, by sending, supporting and reproducing men, and sometimes as soldiers. She identifies that another way in which women respond to war is by resisting. Most often this resistance is passive as women are the silent sufferers of war. She asserts that neither men nor women have been conclusively confirmed to be intrinsically violent or nonviolent; instead every human has the capability to be both. The fact that countries create a lot of propoganda to drill men and women on how to act properly in

wartimes suggests that masculinity and femininity are acquired and not innate traits. A group of some internationally distinguished scientists stated in the Serville Statement on Violence that most humans are not integrally violent and hence, many social and political factors are more likely to contribute to war and the gendered nature of it.

Turpin questions some of the reasons for women's varied responses to war, such as, "why do some women become nurses and some become prostitutes". "What factors affect these experiences"? According to her, "a lot of the research on women and war suggests that war amplifies already existing gender inequality and women's subservience. Sexual violence against women, for example, is almost routine in most societies, and yet is magnified during wartime. We need to study the ways in which women's lives are militarized in times of "peace" in order to understand how their lives can be altered by war". Cynthia Enloe (1993) has shown that the gender roles are important in the perpetration of wars: militaries need men and women to act in certain gender stereotyped ways. Women are expected to behave in a maternal way, they are expected to need men to defend them and their wartime experience is typically sexualized. Men are expected to believe that to prove their masculinity, they have to fight and mostly be in support of going to war. Men are expected to have particularly "masculine" attributes, behaviours and attitudes, which for some reason always entails a great affinity for violence. In the paper, "Fighting on all Fronts: Gendered Spaces, Ethnic Boundaries and the Nigerian Civil War", Obioma Nnaemeka (1997) explores the multiplicity of women's battles in wartime.

...the idea of the multiplicity and the simultaneity of women's battles in wars... is reverberated by Igbo women writers in their works on the Nigerian Civil War... these war stories by Igbo women also depict women "as beings laced through and through with sexual and maternal imagery, also including the remains of a perpetual and often intimate collaboration and struggle with men.

Maintaining that women were "fighting on all fronts", these works interrogate concepts of social identities and roles at wartime by investigating the prominent gender dichotomy and related myths in the grand narrative of war: male combatants/female non-combatants, female life-givers/male life-takers, female peace-makers/male war-mongers, female Beautiful Soul/ male Just Warrior- dichotomies that do not effectively capture the actualities of women and men in real conflicts. In Emechata's 'Destination Biafra' for example, we witness the ironic gesture of pacific Debbie putting on full military gear as she goes on her anti-militarist mission. For women,--from the gun-carrying insurgents to the civilian victims of and warriors against hunger, indiscriminate air-raids, rape and many forms of sexual exploitation- the war front was everywhere." The Nigerian Civil War was indeed a very important event in the Nigerian experience, causing a lot of debate in the intellectual world, and producing many literary works. Now more than ever, war has entered into the political discourse once more with Biafran agitators gaining more steam in the South-East, Niger Delta militants in the South-South and the Boko Haram terrorist group in the North. One would think that a peaceful solution is out of the question, is something utterly unheard of in the male-dominated ruling class of Nigeria. It wouldn't be out of place to suggest that wars are caused by the egos of men. There is a lot of historical evidence to support this claim. One need only consider such names as Adolf Hitler, Stalin, the Rwandan genocide and in Nigeria, only think of Gowon and the agreements of the Aburi accord. Perhaps a review of the patriarchy and its contribution to war and violence is not out of place. Barely fifty years after the war, it seems our elders have forgotten and a new generation of young people have emerged that are largely ignorant of the war and its consequences on Nigeria as a whole. This is the reason we have the stories to remind us. According to the late Chinua Achebe,

It is only the story...that saves our progeny from blundering like blind beggars into the spikes of the cactus fence. The story is our escort; without it, we are blind

As Ann Marie Adams (287-300) rightly said, "The Nigerian Civil War has been analyzed from many different historical perspectives. African as well as Western scholars have attempted to access the effects of this terrible conflict. From Odumegwu Ojukwu, the Biafran opposition Chieftain, putting out his plea to the world in Biafra to a number of liberal scholars like Auberon Waugh and Suzanne Cronjé bringing to limelight the secret and not so secret roles of Britain in the conflict, the war has been written and rewritten from several ideological perspectives. Yet it is also clear that this is not the singular prerogative of political scientists, historians or military warfare experts; many writers have artistically reenacted the war, often including the smallest details of the various battles. In spite of the many critical perspectives on the war and all the literature it inspired, the role of women, or women authors, has not been discussed often enough in this critical discourse. As Abioseh M. Porter (313) notes, it is ironic

that most of the notable attempts to discuss works on the Nigeria-Biafra civil war have either completely ignored or undervalued the literary efforts of female authors.

Similarly, there has been an abundance of work on gender and gender relations but the specific nature of gender relations during wartimes is an area that has been relatively unexplored. Whether or not they welcome it, women have always been involved in wars, actively in many different roles, or passively as victims of violence, hunger and displacement- yet, in the representations of wars they have remained to a large extent 'invisible'. It was only when women themselves began voicing their war experience and started to question the war myths of the gender separation into active men fighting the war to passive non-fighting women at home that they become more visible. Although one could argue that everyone is a victim of war, this paper seeks to explore the particular ways in which the female characters are depicted by both female and male authors.

As Chidi Amuta points out,

the historically mindful Nigerian author who chooses to adopt, as the subject of his work, the significant social issues which the war gathered up is confronted with a dilemma. The dilemma is focused on the bigger issue of the connection between history as empirically verifiable data and 'facts' on one hand, and the literary work as a wholly created entity with its own internal dynamics, on the other.

It is necessary to bear in mind Georg Lukacs' warning that although "the pattern of the development of art is a part of the general social development, this does not remove the fact that a work of art becomes such by having a measure of self-containment". (25-60) Given this situation, a literary critic becomes faced with a similar dilemma; Should a literary piece be seen purely as a work of art and critiqued based solely on its aesthetic value or can literature be taken as an authority on social realities? It is perhaps in civil war fiction, more than anywhere else, that the dilemma in question shows up. However, it is important to note that much of the war literature by Nigerian authors are to a large extent based on historical events and eye witness accounts and experience of the Nigerian Civil War. What is obtainable, therefore, is a kind of created social reality which as well as being artistically true is also historically true. Such that even Isidore Okpewho's *The Last Duty* which at first glance may be taken as a purely fictional work, much like Salman Rushdie's *Midnight Children*, is in fact a finely fictionalized allegory that closely follows in the tradition of Civil War Literature. For the purpose of this study though, since this work deals with characters and not with events, it is safe to say that the characters depicted by the different authors, though fictional, are uniform enough to be taken as what was truly obtainable during the actual civil war.

ARCHETYPAL ANALYSIS

According to Jung, archetypes are reflections of timeless, universal patterns in the human psyche. Particularly important to this study is Jung's assertion that the collective unconscious mirrors culture and society. Scholars like Simone de Beauvoir have explored how woman is regarded as 'other', and defined based on and only in relation to her male counterpart. What follows is that the entire female experience is one to which very little freedom is accrued. Since creativity is defined as male, it follows that the dominant literary images of femininity are male fantasies too. Women are denied the right to create their own images of femaleness, and instead must seek to conform to the patriarchal standards imposed on them.

The Eternal Feminine

Gilbert and Gubar clearly demonstrate how in the nineteenth century English literature, the "eternal feminine" was assumed to be a vision of angelic beauty and sweetness... , the ideal woman is seen as a passive, docile and above all selfless creature. This image of the eternal feminine as self-less is one that can be assumed to be universal and is evident in quite some literature of Ezeigbo's *Roses and Bullets* and Festus Iyayi's *Heroes*. The eternal feminine finds expression in two archetypal figures; the virgin and the mother. During war, the eternal feminine suffers. as the virgin, she is most often a rape victim, becoming the fallen woman, or if she is too brave, becomes a matyr. As mother figure she suffers as her husband and sons are sent off to war, her small children suffer and die.

The Virgin

Following with the archetype of the eternal feminine, the virgin is the typification of ideal womanhood. The maiden represents purity and innocence. The maiden is expected to be chaste and sexually unaware. She represents eternal childhood, that is of course until she gets married.

In *Roses and Bullets*, The maiden archetype is typified by Ozioma, Eloka's sister. When she is introduced to the reader in page 83, she is described with words like 'muted', 'defeated'. She is relatively a minor character and remains relatively quiet throughout the going of the novel. She appears to be naïve as she is seen to be unaware of the rift between her parents after her parents infidelity is discovered. Apparently, she is expected to be eternally child-like and 'innocent'. Some other minor characters in Adimora-Ezeigbo's novel who embodied the qualities of this archetype are Njide, "who liked to get involved in anything that gave her an opportunity to serve" and Eunice, of whom Ginika was "amazed that she was not frightened; that she put her life deliberately at risk"

Similarly, in Festus Iyayi's *Heroes*, the character Ndudi can be seen as a typification of this archetype: She is beautiful but she is modest(36) She is also strong in the way a woman is expected to be strong. Though she engaged in sexual intercourse with Osime before marriage, she was quick to recognize it as a mistake and recapitulate. She says as much to Osime (20). She is described as a 'well-brought' up girl and seen as an object to be wooed and won. Because the war front was no place for a girl decently brought up, the maiden invariably becomes the martyr. She is either raped like Ndudi or dies in service like Njide. Here, it is the 'blameless' maiden who becomes the martyr whose victimhood will teach us about the inhumanity of war.

The Mother

As Jean Bethke Elshtain puts it, wartime's 'Beautiful Soul' is not an ordinary wife or secretary or nurse: she instead becomes a civic being: she is thus needed by others; she is made to respond simultaneously to what Jane Addams called 'the family claim' and 'the social claim', for she is told, without her unselfish devotion to family and country, all would be lost. The Mother archetype is a life-giver and the source of nurturing, devotion, patience and unconditional love. The ability to forgive and provide for her children and put them before herself is the essence of a good mother. The character who best embodies the attributes of the mother archetype in *Roses and Bullets* is Ginika's aunty, Aunty Chito. From the beginning, She is described with such glowing words and made to be the typification of motherliness. The light from the open window revealed an oval face and a finely chiseled nose as that of a bespoke agbogho mmuo mask. The woman was well-rounded and shapely even after four pregnancies.(Page 4). She is shown to be nurturing and kind, and above all, selfless. She is shown to perform simple acts of selflessness, of putting others before herself. She performs even bigger acts of selflessness as the play goes on. For instance, when Ginika decides to go to the warfront to look for her husband, she willingly follows her, notwithstanding the difficulties and her own personal problems (291). True to the nature of the eternal feminine who can do no wrong, even her aunt who supported her did not see recognize her as victim, and believes that her rape was somehow her fault.

You acted unwisely and wrongly, no doubt, but some husbands would forgive you and put the ugly experience behind them. Do you think Eloka is one of such men? (page292)

Even then, it is she who takes in Ginika, sheltering her and feeding her – even at her own expense – when her entire family abandons her. During war, the eternal feminine suffers. As the virgin, she is most often a rape victim, becoming the fallen woman, or if she is too brave, becomes a martyr. As mother figure she suffers as her husband and sons are sent off to war and her small children suffer and die. This is expressed in a mother's reaction to Udoh playing the shell-shocked soldier, Artillery Joe.

A woman said pityingly, "See how young the boy is and they sent him to fight in the war-front. Now he is mad. He is only a child. Oh mothers, we have seen something in this war(P 234)

Another variation of the eternal feminine is the guardian, The guardian achieves almost 'angel' status so usually remains asexual. A character who embodies this archetype in *Roses and Bullets* is the teacher Miss Taylor. She is known for her words of advice and guidance and is the symbol of hope and her absence is deeply felt (117). As the symbol of hope, it is notable that it is she who facilitates Ginika's freedom from captivity and her appearance marks the end of Ginika's trials and the beginning of a new life for her.

The Female Villain

But behind the angel lurks the monster: the obverse of the male idealization of women is the male fear of femininity. The monster woman is the woman who refuses to be selfless, acts on her own initiative, who has a story to tell – in short, a woman who rejects the submissive role patriarchy has reserved for her. Gilbert and Gubar.

The female villain is the antithesis of the eternal feminine. She is either demonized as the ugly wicked step-mother or the beautiful siren, the femme fatale.

The Wicked Step-mother

The step-mother is the antithesis of the mother archetype. As such, she is everything the good mother is not. Adimora Ezeigbo so ardently portrays this archetype in the character of Auntie Lizzy, the stepmother of the protagonist, Ginika. From the moment she was introduced in the story, she is described with such negative words as to conjure the image of a very foul human. (22). From the outset therefore, the reader is drawn into a dislike for Auntie Lizzy and the subsequent pages further give more reasons why the dislike should be justified. True to type, Auntie Lizzy is portrayed as difficult, vain, lazy, materialistic and hard to please. She is depicted as lazy and selfish and many instances abound in the novel where we see Auntie Lizzy behaving true to type: a wicked stepmother. Her garishness and outspoken nature, which are her strengths, are used against her to confirm her archetypal status. The few instances afforded her to show that she is not deliberately insensitive to her step children are subsumed under the general label that she is insensitive – when Ginika started her menstruation at the age of thirteen, her father’s initial sympathy gave way to stern warnings when he saw her talking with a boy. But it is her stepmother’s reaction that Ginika took to heart, and not her father’s unfriendly posture (119 -110). Auntie Lizzy’s position is further heightened by her inability to bear children, and even though the reader is not told that she grieved over this, for her practical nature and outspokenness hide many things, the author showed how pained she was when she was accused of being barren. It was during her quarrel with Mrs. Ndefo, the wife of Ubaka’s friend, who, with her family, had been staying with them because of the war. In the war of words that ensued, one of Mrs. Ndefo’s children, Amaka, retorted:

Please, don’t speak to my mom like that. Is it because you don’t have children of your own that you abuse us?

Her kindness and sense of family are hardly remembered. She would welcome Nwakire back home for the holidays from his journeys (page75) or when he came home after he became an officer for the Biafran Army (page 256), prepare family meals (page 107), and in spite of her not liking Philomena, Ginika’s friend, still allowed her to spend the weekend with them in the house (pp. 105 -107), to mention a few. When Ginika gets pregnant for the man who raped her and is ostracized for disgracing the family, her fall is blamed on her step-mother for not being a ‘good’ mother (p. 327). A variation of the wicked stepmother is the selfish mother, who is portrayed as vain and materialistic. An example of this is Eloka’s mother who allegedly ‘spent a fortune’ on clothes(42). She is also covetous and grasping. (p. 81)

Femme Fatale

This stereotype represents the seductress and enchantress who manipulate men for sex, status or money.

What do you think of the war?” Osime asked.

‘The war?’ and the man laughed. ‘The war is like a woman, deadly.’

(P.99)

In *Roses and Bullets*, this archetype is typified in the character of Janet, as can be seen in the following dialogue (226). This archetype is most aptly represented by the character, Salome in Festus Iyayi’s *Heroes*. Even her name is reminiscent of the biblical Salome who seduces and tricks her father into killing a man against his will. For Salome, men are tools to be used and exploited for whatever purpose they can serve. Through her manipulation of the men, Salome is able to gain access to power and wealth. She marries Brigadier Otunshi for his position and financial benefits, but loves Osime and in keeping with the traditional depiction of this archetype, she is described as being very beautiful. (p. 146)

Her beauty becomes her asset and source of power as well as a trap for the men who get attracted by her beauty, and she is well aware of her power over men, as she discloses in a conversation with Osime. (p.45) She uses all her ‘feminine’ wiles to entrap men including an uncanny ability to draw up tears at will. She does this in a conversation with Osime in order to avoid the topic of her marriage and to make him feel sorry for her and absolve her of guilt for leaving him. She tries to explain why she left him for the general and it becomes obvious the tears are orchestrated because when he says ‘let’s forget about it’ and changes the topic, ‘her voice was suddenly bright’ She is seen to be very manipulative and cunning especially when she advises Osime on how to avoid detection from her husband (158). She is the object of affection for men and holds a tight grip on their emotions. (p. 151) She is seen to be selfish and only concerned about herself and she has been known to act violently, a behavior uncharacteristic of the eternal feminine. (p.176). It is important to note that Osime is confused about her motivation for continuing their relationship which leads him to question what pleasure women derive from sexual and romantic relationships.

Why should Salome want a relationship when the Brigadier was here by her side?... What would she get from it? What did women get from these relationships?

This passage is very instructive as Salome makes him question the pre-existing assumption that men are the conquerors in love and women are the conquered. In battling with his feelings for her, he realizes that women too are capable of sexual desire and of seeking sexual pleasure and using men to achieve this and it is this realization that leads him to engage in a conversation with some of his colleagues at a party in which he suggests that women are as capable of dissatisfaction in relationships as men are, an idea which for some reason is not a very popular one. It is interesting that he draws this conclusion, because he doesn't seem to accept Salome's dissatisfaction with both him and her husband as a sign of her pushing for progress and freedom. Rather he sees her as a manipulative woman from whose grip he must be freed (p.159). It is in their last encounter that he achieves his final 'triumph' and is freed from his lust. The femme fatale has been known to get rid of man for whom she has no more use. The apparent lack of emotional involvement with her victims can result in the symbolic killing or getting rid of her lover when he has served his purpose or failed to do so. This would explain the advice of his. At first glance, it would appear that the femme fatale is master of her own fate and is not subject to the patriarchy and the rules of gender. However, it is important to note that the femme fatale is demonized and treated as other by both male and female. She is feared by males who seek to conquer and own her and despised by her fellow women who are jealous of her 'power' over men.

The Rebel Woman

In story after story, women rebels are drawn out in wisps, or in high-flown grandeur. That is to say, they are barely there, non-threatening, and often easily defeated, or else they are princesses or warriors prepared and deployed to end brutal. Arguably the most popular folktale in all of Africa, with variations in most African cultures, including African American lore, is the story of the beautiful girl who was so proud of her beauty that she refused all her suitors and ended up marrying a stranger, who turned out to be a skull – and in some variations the devil – dressed as a well looking young man. The central motif in all variations of this story is the punishment for non-conformity. Wherever the story is told we can tell that the girl is being punished for wanting more than what is available, for being enticed by novelty. This motif of punishment for non-conformity is one that can be seen in a number of stories, in orality and in written literature, giving rise to the archetype of the rebel woman in African literature. In this sense, the 'rebel' woman neither falls into the category of the eternal feminine, nor can she be seen as a villain. She is both a rebel and a victim of her own rebellion. The fallen woman's story is a cautionary tale to young women to stick to the precepts of society and to their prescribed roles as accorded them by the patriarchy. She is the tragic heroine of literature, in which we are made to believe that all that befalls the heroine is a consequence of her own actions. Ezeigbo's female protagonist in *Roses and Bullets*, Ginika fits well into this archetype. She is by all indications an 'eternal feminine' type, however her petty acts of rebellion lead to her downfall. She is beautiful and 'unspoiled' as noted by Eloka's father and therefore a good choice for a wife.

His father smiled, "you chose well, my son. She is beautiful and young, I can see she has not been spoilt. When I see the way girls run after soldiers, especially officers, I cry in my heart... (page 169)

This is good because Eloka did not just want a "win-the-war wife". This is ironic because when Ginika gets pregnant after she is raped, this is the exact same phrase his father uses to describe her. Ginika apparently made a good wife while she had the chance. She was hard-working and cheerful about it, both qualities of the eternal feminine. However, it is her little acts of rebellion which lead to her downfall, for instance when she disagrees with her father, and decides to marry Eloka against her father's wishes. This is only the beginning of her troubles. In Eloka's absence, she becomes frustrated with her mother-in-law and decides to go for a dance without her permission. On getting there, she is drugged and raped by a faceless soldier and becomes pregnant by him. This leads to her being ostracized by her husband, her in-laws and her own family. It is disheartening but also expected that no one believes her story, not even her husband (352-353). The final straw was in her encounter with Sergeant Sule at the army camp while selling akara to make some money for the family. Even though she was warned against going there by her aunt, she waved aside the warning, out of the best intentions, but of course that does not matter in this cautionary tale of the rebel girl (page 338). Even something as innocent and resourceful as selling akara could not keep her safe. Her fall had to be complete, her humiliation absolute. Even when she refuses the advances of sergeant Sule, by lying that she was forbidden from being with an uncircumcised man, nothing good could come out of it. He believes the lie, only to die in the process of getting circumcised. Her punishment is completed when she is captured and gang-raped by three soldiers as revenge for the sergeant's death, eventually causing the murder of her husband and the suicide of her brother. Perhaps it would not be too far-fetched to suggest that her biggest crime in the novel was being more sexually aware than is allowed the eternal feminine maiden. It is

important to note that it is she who initiates her first sexual contact with Eloka outside of marriage (160). And when her female friend Philo makes sexual advances at her, she does not resist. She even seems to enjoy it. This signifies her first taste of the forbidden and abominable and with this her venture into rebel territory. She is not however bereft of the moral high ground and self-righteousness of the eternal feminine. For instance, when she asks her brother Nwakire why he hadn't yet found a wife (345). What is interesting to note here is that Ginika still doesn't recognize and realize her status in the eyes of society because she agrees with him and makes her story so tragic is that she fails to accept her role as maiden and she also does not embrace the role of the femme fatale

Conclusion

In war situations, women's positions become precarious. The absence of their menfolk as the socially ordained 'protectors' exposes women to grave forms of harassment and abuse. But it also introduces a new order in which women become managers of the social system who not only contain the upheaval of the war but also sustain the social order. It has been found from the analysis of the given data that it is in fact the women who are upholders of this code.

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