

## **I. Ethics-Terror Dynamics in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, *Anil Ghost* and *The Curse of Caste***

This research intends to probe how the zone of ethics and humanity remains hazy when riot, communal fury, ethnic cleaning, terrorism, and racism flourish rampantly. This idea is examined in the light of Adichie's *Half of Yellow Sun*, Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost* and Collins's *The Curse of Caste*. While working with the team of human right investigation, Anil is shocked with the huge proportion of civilians killed by government of Sri Lanka. The involvement of even the government in war crimes and crimes against humanity shock Anil incredibly. She begins to act and investigate out of sympathy and love towards the members of bereaved family. The only force that guides and governs her profession in the midst of war and political crisis is love and ethical sense of responsibility to the victims of civil war and state-sponsored terrorism.

In Julia C. Collins's *The Curse of Caste; or the Slave Bride*, Lina goes through the long period of suffering. Her effort to preserve her lover for Richard is repeatedly hindered by setbacks and obstacles created by racist practices and cruel sense of neglect on the part of Richard's relatives. Kept in a distance from her husband, Richard, Lina had to endure lots of alienating and discriminatory practices. There is hardly anyone to look after her at the time of giving birth to her daughter, Claire. Claire struggles with the pain of having been deprived of knowing who her father is. Claire also finds herself tormented by the unsolved mystery of her parentage.

Trace is devoid of empathy. He treats black female as other that needs to be conquered. In the nineteenth century America dominated by racism, the question of ethics is on exile. Humanity is endangered. Only the dehumanization of blacks is practiced widely. Claire wants to know who her parents are. But nobody tells her who

her parents are. She is just told that her mother died at the time of giving birth to Claire. The anonymity of her parentage and failure of her attempt to identify them put her in condition of psychic restlessness, anxiety attack and the nightmare.

In her struggle to gain decent foothold, she is assisted humanly by her friend. Else she had to face alienation and disdain. Her struggle to become a governess is weakened by the repeated experiences of psychic jolt and lacerations. Colonel Tracy's audacity to shoot her son, Richard, for his desire to marry a slave, Lina, shows how harsh and harrowing the impact of racism is. Affected by all such gender barriers and racial arrogance, Claire and Lina are traumatized irreparably.

In Julian C. Collins's *The Curse of Caste; or the Slave Bride*, Claire's effort to develop creativity, dignity, career and good social standing faces unexpected difficulties. Her struggle to build up independent mindset and nonconformist outlook come to a halt her various attempt to know her mysterious and tragic parentage remains unfulfilled. Listening to her mother's tragic end and her father's compulsion to ignore her mother inflict laceration in her mind.

Lina and Claire, two prominent black female characters in Julian C. Collins's *The Curse of Caste; Or the Slave Trade* are harmed by various racist practices like discrimination, fear of excommunication within black community and harsh patriarchal ideology. The fact Lina and Claire are female beings makes them more vulnerable. Seeing their vulnerable position, various men with ill-intention can take advantage. Lina and Clarie are adversely affected by the various practices like dehumanization, alienation, subjugation and sexual assault. The lack of moderation and self-restraint lead to the disintegration of an individual's role in society.

In *Half of Yellow Sun*, the tribal war, and communal riot take a huge toll on the lives of Hausa and Igbo people. At the time of massacre, the prospect of ethics and

humanity is almost invisible. The bleak prospect of ethical concern is the sheer outcome of pervasive bloodshed and universal terror resulting from communal hatred and fury. Prior to there is no strong mechanism to soften the escalating violence through the technique of negotiation. The matter of understanding, mutual sense of cooperation and ethics of tolerance disappear leaving behind only the looming threat of bloodshed and massacre. The questions of ethics and morality are seen in the characters of Ugwu, Baby, Odenigbo, Richard, Olanna and Kenaine in *Half of the Yellow Sun*. All these characters have an internal and external conflict. After the independence from colonial authority, the trials of Nigeria are often marked by bloody civil wars, military rule, dictatorship, ethnic conflict and genocide. These disasters are prolonged by continuing social inequalities.

Insight into history of Nigeria is critical to an understanding of the social issues facing Africans now. It directly effects on the people as seen in their violence disrespect and misbehavior. War and crisis have seriously hampered its peaceful existence. Conflict is primarily of two main kinds. They are internal and external conflict. Internal conflict is a struggle, which portrays through the characters. External conflict motivates the struggle between the character and outside the forces of the circumstances. It can also be struggle of a community.

At the heart of *Half of the Yellow Sun* lies the class, cultural (Hausa-Igbo), military, ethnic and war conflict. It establishes a connection between the two communities, two groups and two cultures. Each of this culture has a discrepancy with each other. Solidarity and allegiance as well as urgent need to act responsibly and ethically to the other is projected as the means of maintaining peace and order, hope and satisfaction.

Michael Ondaatje's *Anil Ghost* is polemical evidence to the possibility that a government can commit war crimes and crimes against humanity. War and terrorism may take different forms in different nations or different historical era. But the underlying essence is the same. They kill people. They transform a kind society into bipolar schism. Alienated from Sri Lankan culture, Tissera ties herself to the mortal danger in which her investigations place her fellow archaeologist, Sarath Diyasena. Seventy thousand citizens are quietly spirited away and murdered. Silence replaces words as a reaction to repression.

Anil is a fearless woman. She wants to find justice for the victims. She wants to hold responsible of those who are behind the murder of that sailor's bone she is methodically examining. She does not want to listen to Sarath who advises her to be careful. She cautions her that the big brother is watching her every move. Anil does not know who to trust anymore. She even begins to suspect Sarath who might be working for the government.

Sarath's brother, Dr. Gamini Diyasena, lives like a beggar, snatching sleep at the hospital. He is seen taking drugs to continue performing round-the-clock surgery on civil war victims. When Anil discovers scientific evidence implicating the government in war crimes, Sarath tells her to abandon her notes and equipment and to leave the country. The terrorism which has thrived in Sri Lanka since the early 1980's forms a backdrop for this novel. Ondaatje hardly mentions the historical factions involved in its ongoing guerrilla war. Anil's life has been privileged. She grows up in a well-to-do Sri Lankan family and studied first in London and then in the United States.

Anil participates eagerly in the strange community of forensic investigators. Now she has been called by a human rights organization to use her considerable

analytical skills in her native country. She knows its language, food, clothing, and customs. She even has a few acquaintances left in the capital city. However, she is also aware that the country's political turmoil means that no one can be taken at face value. No secret is entirely safe. For that reason she cannot feel quite sure that Sarath, the archaeologist with whom she must work, can be trusted when she realizes that the skeleton they have.

As Sarath and Anil travel around the country, they discover numerous grave sites on government ground. They approach their assignment in a strictly scientific manner. They focus on a single skeleton they discover. They allow their findings on this specimen to represent a multitude of bodies. As scientists, they set out on their task methodically, without becoming emotionally involved. The skeleton, which they name "Sailor," evolves into one of the characters as the dead man's background is revealed. He is an innocent bystander, a simple villager and laborer. He was killed in the ever-present violence. Then he is turned into a piece of evidence. After all of Anil's and Sarath's work, their plans fail when they attempt to present Sailor to the government officials. Sarath becomes a victim himself, and Anil flees the island.

Gamini and other doctors do not work for profit. They all know it is about the sense of self-worth that has overcome them. They are not working for any cause or political agenda. They have found a place a long way from governments and media and financial ambition. They have originally come to the northeast for a three-month shift and in spite of the lack of equipment, the lack of water. They had stayed for two years or three, in some cases longer.

*The Curse of Caste; or the Slave Bride* is a widely known work of Julia C. Collins. Collins produces most of her known works in the nineteenth century. Her early writings are mainly concerned with sufferings and agony of Blacks who are

trapped in various inner and outer malaises and maladies. She raises genre of Black writings to the peak of sophistication and artistry. She captures the ethos and shifting trend of the American society which is exposed to countless ills and hazards like racism and deprivation. Regarding to Collins's *The Curse of Caste; or The Slave Bride*, William L. Andrews makes the following remarks:

The *Curse of Caste*, on the other hand, is the first published story authored by a black American woman to set itself free of the obligation of autobiography, as far as we can tell, so as to imagine an expanded set of opportunities and a more fulfilling social reality for mid-nineteenth-century American women of color than is depicted in any previous narrative by black American woman. (13)

Black peoples' resistance to racism takes many forms in *The Curse of Caste*. Luna maintains her dignity by seeing things realistically and keeping to herself. But the situation does not favor her. So she lags behind.

Johanna Schmersal concentrates on the valorous and puzzling disposition of Lina and Claire. She takes Claire as the most complex character. Schmersal discloses the following view regarding Claire:

Collins' published essays, which provide intriguing glimpses into the mind of this gifted but overlooked writer, are included in what will prove to be the definitive edition of a major new discovery in African American literature. Its publication contributes immensely to our understanding of black American literature, religion, women's history, community life, and race relations during the era of United States emancipation. (4)

Claire notes that naming is a sensitive issue because it provides a sense of identity in a hostile world. This world aims to stereotype blacks and erase their individuality and identity. Claire notes the danger associated with calling a black person anything that could be loosely interpreted as insulting.

Lois Brown is of the opinion that in the mind of the narrator, obsession, and guilt are represented as the ruling motive. These feelings are intense, over-mastering passion. Such chronic sense of fear is gratified at the expense of every just and generous principle, and every feminine feeling. Brown makes the additional commentary in the following excerpt:

Collins's work enriches scholarly evaluations of African American texts that explore family politics, racial intolerance, female subjectivity, thwarted masculinity, and the racialized cult of true womanhood. Collins also provides a sophisticated high domestic rendering of the folk. Her treatment of the nursemaid Juno, who deftly navigates racial stereotypes and effectively deploys folk wisdom, foreshadows the later work of African American writers. (4)

The most powerful use of onomatopoeia is at the end. The fact that Claire winced definitely makes the reader realize the determination and pain the Negroes went through just to make something of them. Slightly, linguistic structure is praiseworthy.

Mark Osteen examines *The Curse of Caste* in the light sensuous images which exist abundantly in the novel. Evocation of puzzling impact makes each character particularly distinct. Osteen makes the following pronouncement regarding to this aspect of the novel:

Julia C. Collins tells of the little sensory details that make her life working and living in the store an adventure for a young girl. She

recalls the smells, and unfamiliarity of the place, and the constant stream of people who made the place seem exciting and almost magical. However, the theme of romance vs. reality soon becomes plain. For even as the cotton pickers come in each morning, each afternoon they come back bitter and wonder as to how to make enough money. (19)

Collins notes the difference between the wonderful mornings and the hard reality of the afternoons. She knows that things carry more meaning than their face values. Without penetrating into the surface, she tends to delve deep into the profundity of confusion.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* has been diversely criticized and interpreted by the various critics from the very outset of its publication. Many critics have focused on ethnic and inter racial conflict during Nigerian Civil War period. In this regard, E. Frances White views the novel from the nationalist point of view. She focuses on the futility of Nigeria's ethnic nationalism. She also blurs the boundary of master and servant, Odenigbo and Ugwu respectively. She further argues that Odenigbo and Ugwu are a fascinating pairing, and writes:

As Nigeria descends into bloody civil war, naïve Ugwu's experience helps him find his voice. Many of the war's most harrowing experiences are shown through Ugwu's eyes. In contrast to his servant, Odenigbo becomes muter, as his idealism is dashed along with Biafra's hopes. At the beginning of the book he is a man sure of his opinions and place in the world. By the war's end, his narrow ethnic nationalism seems empty. With no defenses against slights to his manhood, he sinks into alcoholism. (10)



The concept of ethnic nationalism which Odenigbo raises turns out to be mere futility. His revolutionary attitude at the last fades with alcoholism and amnesia. Ugwu, on the other hand, though presented as a slave within the ethnic hierarchy, at last turns to be the hero of novel as he challenges the harrowing condition caused by civil war.

About the novel and novelist, Chinua Achebe says that Adichie is fearless in giving voice to the forbidden things that take place in society. Achebe postulates the following view with respect to the novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun*:

All the characters throughout the novel are haunted psychically and wounded physically and culturally. People from different ethnicities constructed their own respective communities. Adichie's characters also face the conflict between tradition and modernity. Odenigbo takes himself as educated and revolutionary but his mother convinced him that Olanna is a witch. Thus, *Half of a Yellow Sun* is basically about the horror and trauma caused by Nigerian Civil War. (44)

The horrendous effects of the civil are resulted out of ethnic tussle and transitional phase to modernity. Avoiding the tradition and blind-faith creates disorder in the subject matter. The novel, at the same, time portrays the heart-rending picture of Nigeria integrating Kwashiorkor, the silent killer of children and the class-conflict in the post-colonial era. Variety of themes like patriarchy, legacy of colonialism and ethnic tussle are inherent in the novel.

Another critic Donna Seaman focuses on the psychological horror out of the war showing the psychic and ethical pressure because of the racial violence. She also portrays the neo-colonial mission; hungry to exploit oil and influence. She, in this concern, writes:

*Half of a Yellow Sun* is Biafra's emblem of hope, but the horrors and misery Adichie's characters endure transform the promising image of rising sun into that of a sun setting grimly over a blood-soaked and starving land. Adichie has masterminded a commending, sensitive epic about a vicious civil war predicted by prejudices and stroked by outside powers hungry for oil and influence. (39)

Seaman sees the psychological pressure that Adichie employs to depict the rising of hope. The *Half of a Yellow Sun* represents the rising sun which is turned into the setting to the destruction. Thus, the main focus of Seaman is on the doomed breakaway of Igbo state and fate of Biafra. She sees the colonial motif in the very vicious civil war in some extent.

Obi Maduakor notices the strangulating and suffocating impact of dogmatic practice in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*. Maduakor is frank in giving rise to his view regarding to Adichie's anxiety concerning dogmatic thinking. Madaukor's brief response is cited below:

It is curious and fascinating that Adichie displays a lot of coercive and repressive impact of religious dogmatism in her work as she uses Auntie Ifeoma's friendly gregariousness, her infectious personality, mundane worldliness, urbane interactive speeches and character to challenge Papa's strangulating and suffocating behavior. In Ifeoma's grilling challenge and contest of meaning dissemination and production of truth, reason invariably tends to defeat dogma.(67)

Religious faith is one thing. Making this faith as the medium to dominate others is the most callous and atrocious practice that ruins the prospect and possibility of freedom. Eugene is an example of how religious faith degenerates into fatal dogma. When

dogma is imposed on innocent people, it ruins the possibility of creativity and life force. Eugene's dogmatic arrogance paves the way for the degradation of family harmony and responsibility.

*Anil Ghost* is one of the most controversial novels of Michael Ondaatje. The portrayal of terrorism in the novel is problematical. The problematical nature of terrorism is represented in the novel. The hidden aspect of state terrorism or state-sponsored terrorism is presented in the novel. Margaret Scanlan is a regular critic of Ondaatje. She gives expression to her judgment about the novel in the following citation:

*Anil's Ghost* is surely a novel of terrorism. It abandons most of the conventions of the genre. It reproduces no political rhetoric, adjudicates no political claims, and projects no political solutions. Its terrorists remain shadowy, nameless figures, encountered briefly; no police, no secret agents, no journalist heroes emerge to lock wits with them, hunt them down, or play the part of secret sharer. Ondaatje might risk aestheticizing terror, repeating the modernist gesture of turning away from atrocity to timeless form. (30)

Impact of terrorism is explored at length in *Anil's Ghost* by Ondaatje. He looks more into the unethical and unlawful activities of Sri Lankan government during the time of escalating violence. In the critical juncture, the government of Sri Lanka wallows in the state-sponsored terrorism. The state of exception is clearly seen in the entire volumes of violence the government of Sri Lanka committed. By so doing, Ondaatje tries to foster the prospect of humanity.

David Farrier is another prominent critic of Ondaatje. He examines *Anil's Ghost* in the light of its somatic focus. The surreal, trancelike and paranormal

situation that is described in the novel is of utmost importance to the assertion of the author's claim. Farrier makes the following remarks in regard to the novel's somatic content:

Anil Ghost's somatic focus means that Anil learns about the local, which she has striven to hold at one remove, through a renewed understanding of bodies, her own and those she examines. The mnemonic allows her to contract the focus of her energies, to concentrate on the arrangement and description of the body; yet as she is drawn into Sri Lanka once again, her compulsive, reductive behavior is arrested by the insistent tropes of intimate contact. (86)

Exposure to violence, bloodshed and shooting at the high time of political crisis makes Anil feel the trancelike aura and atmosphere in his surroundings. Anil begins to appreciate the sacred quality of intimacy. He reaches into the sacred. The sacred also reaches into her. Sri Lanka's current dilemma is at least in part a result of forgetting the past, of creating identities that owe their origins to Eurocentric or nationalist fictions. It steadfastly refuses to perceive truths that lie behind the immediate and subjective.

Although all these critics have examined *Half of Yellow Sun*, *Anil's Ghost* and *The Curse of Caste* from different perspectives, none of them has concentrated upon how self has to act in a nonreciprocal and responsible way to the other for the sake of its own smooth existence. None of these critics and reviewers dwells upon how the zone of ethics, humanity, empathy and philanthropy get eclipsed during the time of the escalation of violence, crisis, genocide, racism and crime against humanity. In *Half of Yellow Sun*, the idea of humanity and ethics no longer operate when butchering and slaughtering of tribes erupt inadvertently. At the time of political

crisis, even the Sri Lankan government does not hesitate to kill its innocent citizens without any fault of their own. Racism and slavery do not allow Tracy to show pity and sympathy to Lina and Claire. It is ethical and humanitarian method of acting for the others without having any concern for one's own self that Anil, Juno, and Claire achieves transcendence.

The researcher makes use of Emmanuel Levinas's theory of ethics and the notion of self in relation to the other. Ethical responsibility is validated. Levinas says that "That responsibility of the 'I' is brought about by the other man. Social status does not do justice to his uniqueness. Between the concept and the infinite, between totality and transcendence, Levinas's philosophy traces a singular path" (54). As this idea makes clear ethical responsibility involves giving space to the other and understanding its role and value in forming the motion of one's own self. What status a person enjoys matters less and what counts significantly is how he relates to the other(s). The self can only experience transcendence by considering the others with whom he partakes of the totality of being. Ethical significance of a past concerns everyone. Significance in the ethics of a pure past is undeniably sovereign. "Original significance of an immemorial past is based on responsibility for the other man. The responsibility for the other is not reducible to a thought going back to an idea given in the past" (Levinas: *A Survey* 134). The natural essence of a sovereign I is put in question before the face of the other. Anthony Beavers presents the following view about Levinas:

In the ethical vigilance the sovereignty of 'I' recognizes itself as hateful. The responsibility for the other signified- as an order- in the face of the neighbor is not in Levinas a simple modality of the transcendental apperception. The face of the other concerns Levinas

without the responsibility-for-the-other. Indeed, it is not a question of receiving an order by first perceiving it and then obeying it in a decision, an act of the will. The subjection to obedience precedes the hearing of the order. (56)

The movement toward the ultimate totality, an absolute world or being, admits of differences, even in its formalism. The totality of individuals belonging to the same genus differs from the totality of men belonging to a nation, which in turn is different from the totality of episodes making up a story. The presences of persons freeze up into institutions or structures.

The presence of persons “in the full force of their irreplaceable identity is automatically in the full force of their inevitable responsibility. One must refuse to be caught up in the tangle of abstractions. The presence of persons, proximity between persons is a milestone in the direction towards redemption” (72). This living from is a matter of consumption. It is a matter of taking what is other and making it become a part of an individual. Levinas writes “Nourishment, as a means of invigoration, is the transmutation of the other into the same, which is the essence of enjoyment; an energy that is other, recognized as other, recognized as sustaining the very act that is directed upon it becomes” (66). The self is subjected to the other who comes from on high to intrude upon my solitude and interrupt my egoist enjoyment.

The self should allow the other to pass through it because the meaning of the self depends on the presence of the other. Self and the other are existentially related to and depend upon each other. It is this interaction and interdependence between the self and the other that Levinas wants to foreground. He elaborates on how the social subjectivity of the self is formed by its responsibility for and relation to the other. In

order to realise its one meaning and value the self has to make certain kinds of sacrifices for the sake of the others.

According to Hans Jonas, “Consideration for the other means being-considerate-for-the-other. Substitution then is recognizing me in the place of the other, not with the force of a conceptual recognition, but in the sense of finding myself in the place of the other as a hostage for the other” (87). Substitution is the conversion of my being as subjection by the other into subjection for the other. There is no common measure between the idea of the infinite and the infinite of which it is the idea. The thought of the infinite does not take possession of the infinite of which it is the idea. The infinite is close to the idea of transcendence.

This thesis is divided in three chapters. In the first chapter, the researcher introduces the topic, elaborates the hypothesis, and quotes different critics’ views regarding to the novel. In the same chapter, the researcher shows the departure also. In the second chapter the researcher makes a thorough analysis of texts, *Half of Yellow Sun*, *Anil’s Ghost* and *The Curse of Caste* by adopting Levinas’s theory of ethics and self-versus the other. The last chapter contains the conclusive ending of the research.

## II. Grey Ethical Zone in *Anil Ghost*, *Half of Yellow Sun* and *The Curse of Caste*

This thesis examines Adichie's *Half of Yellow Sun*, Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost* and Collins's *The Curse of Caste* by mobilizing the theoretical notion that ethics, empathy, humanity and other philanthropic ideals fall apart sharply during the escalation of war, terror, crime against humanity, racism and communal violence. Ondaatje's controversial novel, *Anil's Ghost* depicts how ethical sense of responsibility, and humanitarian concerns evaporated in a huge proportion when the civil war of Sri Lanka in 1980s reached its crescendo. When the political crisis deepens, there is no genuine ground to expect that the government would play crucial role in safeguarding the lives of its citizens. Contrary to this expectation, the government itself is involved in the war crimes, clandestine murder and other vicious practices.

Anil is increasingly aware of how crimes are committed by holders of authority and power. Even the responsible figures are involved in the underhand dealings and conspiratorial activities. The following extract illustrates this point:

Anil had read documents and news reports, full of tragedy, and she had now lived abroad long enough to interpret Sri Lanka with a long-distance gaze. But here it was a more complicated world morally. The streets, the citizens remained citizens. They shopped, changed jobs, laughed. Yet the darkest Greek tragedies were innocent compared with what was happening here. Heads on stakes. Skeletons dug out of a cocoa pit in Matale. At university Anil had translated lines for Archilochus-in the hospitality of war we left them their dead to remember us by. (7)



Cases of murder, war crimes, random shooting and death of civilians are some of the events that take place repeatedly at the time of emergency. To check insurgents and separatists, the government of Sri Lanka has adopted lots of strategies and techniques. In the name of maintaining peace, order, harmony and system, the government of Sri Lanka commits plenty of violent acts. In the name of holding the suspects in detention, the responsible government officials kill them. Without conducting the proper investigation, even the alleged persons are shot dead. Their dead bodies are randomly buried without informing the relatives of the murdered persons.

The researcher makes use of Emmanuel Levinas's notion of self's ethical responsibility to the other. By the same token, Agamben's notion of the ethics of testimony is also used. Levinas is critical of the notion of totality. He says that totality is repressive and alienating. Self does not survive in isolation. It needs the proximity with the other. Self has an inherent responsibility towards the other. Levinas goes one step ahead and says that if self fulfils its responsibility to the other in a nonreciprocal way, a new notion of ethics would emerge. The following extract highlights Levinas's view on how historical totality subjugates and alienates those who are vital in their own category:

This beyond the totality and objective experience is, however, not to be described in a purely negative fashion. It is reflected within the totality and history, within experience. The eschatological, as the beyond of history, draws beings out of the jurisdiction of history and the future; it arouses them in and calls them forth to their full responsibility.

Submitting history as a whole to judgment, exterior to the very wars that mark its end, it restores to each instant its full signification in that very instant: all the causes are ready to be heard. It is not the last

judgment that is decisive, but the judgment of all the instants in time,  
when the living is judged. (78)

Viewing history as a whole is disastrous for the progress in the domain of compassion and humanity. The abstract notion of moral conscience is too one side. It intentionally excludes the other vital part. The objective notion of judgment implies that beings have an identity before eternity. The idea of beyond totality should not be understood negatively. It doesn't mean a single unified temporal unit but different moments and instants as we move through history. History of selves will be submitted and subjected to scrutiny. Each instant should be judged in its own light. When we judge the living we should hold them accountable for each and every instant that they passed through while moving through history.

The Geneva Convention insists that civilians should not be targeted and killed during military occupation, civil war, and underground insurgency. Certain degree of ethical norms and humanitarian ideals must be maintained even at the time of the foreign occupation, military aggressive and political unrest. But these assumptions are flatly called into questions by those realities regarding war crimes, brutality, civilian casualty and violation of human rights. The following extract exemplifies how ethical zone is not lucid, transparent and promising at the time of civil war and political unrest:

The first body they brought in was very recently dead, the man killed since she had flown in. When she realized it must have happened during her early-evening walk in the Pettah market, she had to stop her hands from trembling. The two students looked at each other. She never usually translated the time of a death into personal time but she was still working out what hour it was in London, in San Diego. Five

and a half hours. Thirteen and a half hours. Is this your first corpse, then? One of them asked. (9)

There is recent death of a dead body. This body is perhaps exposed and not buried. Even the relatives of the dead persons are afraid of asking for their rights to the burial of their relatives. Death occurs recurrently and evens the government talks about stopping it but murders and massacres continue to occur. The government talks about acting in a responsible way in the direction of safeguarding the lives of its citizens. But this rhetoric is not compatible with what happens and what is happening in real life situation.

Anil detects the trace of politics in the increasing numbers of death toll, civilian casualty. In the name of maintaining national integrity, sovereignty and unity, the government claims to have acted in a cool and conscious way. The harsh and horrible reality of mounting murders and war crimes betray the reality. Anil immediately notices the presence of political trace and ideological color in the entire cases of war crimes. The government of Sri Lanka expresses its commitment to the ethical, humanitarian and legal duty towards its citizens. But the harsh reality is drastically different from the claim and counter-claims. Anil argues:

It was the freshness of the body. It was still someone. Usually the victims of a political killing were found much later. She dipped each of the fingers in a beaker of blue solution so she could check for cuts and abrasions. About twenty years old. Dead twelve hours. Do you agree?

Yes. Yes. They seemed nervous, even afraid. (10)

As a representative of human rights investigations by United Nations, Anil comes to work in Sri Lanka. What shocks Anil a lot are the fresh dead bodies which she finds even in places where dead bodies are not supposed to be kept. By the time Anil lands

in Sri Lanka, civil war has reached its peak. Like Anil, there are various other agents and personnel monitoring the conditions of civilians and innocent people in Sri Lanka. From the side of insurgents and separatists also various war crimes are committed. They contribute to the emergence of grey ethical zone.

When self and the other exist in a nonreciprocal relation, the totality can be uplifting. Levinas asserts that “To contain more than one's capacity does not mean to embrace or to encompass the totality of being in thought or, at least, to be able to account for it after the fact by the inward play of constitutive thought” (153). To contain more than one's capacity is to invite one's own doom. Philosophers have sought to express with the concept of act. This descent into the real would maintain only as a play of lights. The act of thought would precede the thought. In this way, thinking or becoming conscious of an act would be uplifting only in one condition. The notion of act involves violence essentially. Self should stand in nonreciprocal state of fulfilling its responsibility to the other. Only then, “the transcendence of thought remains closed in itself despite all its adventures” (54). The transcendence achieved this way diversifies the static position of human beings.

Sensibility is hailed by Levinas the way to penetrate the veil of confusions and prejudices. Sensation is at the basis of sensible experience and intuition. It is not reducible to the clarity or the idea derived out of it. It would involve an opaque element resistant to the luminousness of the intelligible. Levinas makes the following commentary:

It is vulnerability, enjoyment and suffering, whose status is not reducible to the fact of being put before a spectator subject. The intentionality is involved in disclosure. The symbolization of a totality facilitates the openness of being aimed at by intentionality. The

dominant meaning of sensibility should indeed enable us to account for its secondary signification as a sensation. We have already said that the fact that sensibility can become sensible intuition and enter into the adventure of cognition is not a contingency. The dominant signification of sensibility is already caught sight of in vulnerability.

(73)

As claimed by Levinas, sensibility has meaning only as a taking care of the other's need. But giving has meaning only as a tearing from oneself despite oneself. To be torn from oneself has meaning only as a being torn from the complacency in oneself. Only a subject that eats can be for-the-other. Signification, the-one-for-the-other, has meaning only among beings of flesh and blood. Sensibility can be vulnerability. It is exposedness to the other or a saying only because it is an enjoyment.

Usually, ethics, sympathy and empathy are not obeyed at the time of war, civil war, political unrest, foreign occupation and ethnic cleansing. It is argued that the necessity knows no law. Even president Katugala makes claim that he is acting in a rational and responsible way. But the ground reality of murder contradicts his claim. His affirmation of ethics does not match with the ground reality. Ethics and ground reality do not matter at the time of war and conflict. The following extract exemplifies the point:

President Katugala claimed no knowledge no knowledge of organized campaigns of murder on the island. But under pressure, and to placate trading partners in the west, the government eventually made the gesture of an offer to pair local officials with outside consultants, and Anil Teresa was chosen as the Geneva organization's forensic specialist, to be teamed with an archaeologist in Colombo. It was to be

a seven-week project. Nobody at the Center for Human Rights was very hopeful about it. (12)

If war crimes, murder and civilian casualty are committed by separatists and insurgents, it would have been a matter of different consideration. But bodies of government authority and responsible employees of government are involved in the escalation of violence and intensification of terror. If the responsible center of authority, power and duty does not obey ethical transparency, dignity of citizens and minimum humanitarian concern, there would not be good chance of hope and security for citizens.

Only the murdered bodies are found. Who murders and how the dead person is murdered remains mysterious. Nobody thinks about the hidden evidences of murder. The government officials involved in the Katugala administration talk about peace, negotiation, and ceasefire but in reality fresh realities are found in an increasing proportion. Even the agents and parts of Human Rights Investigation are amazed and stupefied by the growing bulk of dead bodies:

The bodies turn up weekly now. The height of the terror was eighty-eight and eighty-nine, but of course it was going on long before that. Every side was killing and hiding the evidence. Every side. This is an unofficial war; no one wants to alienate the foreign powers. So its secret gangs and squads. Not like Central America. The government was not the only one doing the killing. You had and still have three camps of enemies-one in the north, two in the south-using weapons, propaganda, fear, sophisticated posters, censorship. (13)

Outwardly the government claims to have worked seriously and sincerely. But inwardly, it has employed several squads and gangs. Directly, the government cannot

impose crack downs on the separatists, guerillas and insurgents in a straightforward way. It indirectly employs thugs, gangs and squads of informal armies and trains them to act aggressively while dealing with the suspects and alleged persons. Separatists, insurgents and nonconformists are treated as terrorists and then while dealing with them, the government acts in complicity with gangs and squads. Due to this sort of double dealing on the part of Sri Lankan government, ethical zone, normative values and humanitarian concerns are overshadowed and neglected.

The passivity of the for-the-other is the tearing away of the mouthful of bread from the mouth that tastes in full enjoyment. It is an attack made immediately on the plenitude of the complacency in oneself. The immediacy of the sensible is the immediacy of enjoyment. It is the gift painfully torn up. It is not a gift of the heart, but of the bread from one's mouth. "It is the openness, not only of one's pocketbook, but of the doors of one's home, a sharing of your bread with the famished, and a welcoming of the wretched into your house. The immediacy of the sensibility is the for-the-other of one's own materiality" (*Exteriority* 152). The immediacy of the sensibility is the immediacy or the proximity of the other. The proximity of the other is the immediate opening up for the other of the immediacy of enjoyment, the immediacy of taste, materialization of matter, altered by the immediacy of contact.

In the proximity of contact arises every committed freedom. It is termed finite by contrast with the freedom of choice of which consciousness is the essential modality. Yet the effort is made to reduce all commitment to freedom. Astonished to find it implicated in the world of objects. The theme of its free contemplation searches in its memory for the forgotten moment "in which unbeknownst to itself it allied itself with objects or consented to apperceive itself in union with them. Such a moment, when awakened by memory, would become, after the event, the instant of an alliance

made in full freedom” (*Survey on Levinas’s Philosophy* 76). This reduction refuses the irreducible anarchy of responsibility for another. Levinas delivers the following remarks in this regard:

Maternity, vulnerability, responsibility, proximity, contact – sensibility can slip toward touching, palpation, openness upon consciousness of pure knowing taking images from the intact being, informing itself about the palpable peculiarity of things. This responsibility towards the other comes before the taking of any decision. Responsibility is an a posteriori responsibility for the life of the planet. Victims appear before us: someone is begging someone is injured beside the road; a street kid is cleaning our car. (217)

The victim is the other whose accusing presence people can no longer shake off when it comes to our obligation to do something for that person. These conscious decisions or act are a posteriori. They come after the experience in which an accusing presence obligates people. Corporeal lives of its life, in no way deny reason. Not everything is rational. Lévin as is right-at least from the point of view of an Ethics of Liberation which is liberation of victims and not of the satisfied.

Detritus piles, sacred grave and various dug-outs are investigated by the members of human rights investigation. They dig out any grave and pit which contain suspicious things. Some pits are forbidden by government employees. They say that these pits and reservoirs contain precious fossils and historically important objects. If the case is so, why do they forbid. Agents and employees of forensic department and human right investigation have no trust in what the government employees say. They have got rights to dig out any place that can contain doubtful and suspicious objects. Even it becomes difficult to trust the words of those whom people are supposed to



trust, ethical norms and ideals of humanity cannot remain intact and unaffected. The zone of ethics, empathy, humanity and humility can hardly flourish and provide bright hope for troubled citizens if violence persists for a long span of time. The following extract reveals this fact:

We think it was a sacred grave for monks, near Bandarawela. Were any skeleton found? And some fossilized wood pots of the same period. Everything fits into the same time pattern. She pulled her gloves on and lifted on old bone to test the weight. The dating seems right. The skeletons were wrapped in leaves, then cloth, he told her. Then stones were placed on top of them, which slid down later through the rib cage into the chest area. Now she picked a fragment of bone from the detritus pile and rubbed it. (16)

In alliance with squads and informally hired and trained gangs, the government not only commits war crimes, kills insurgents and targets insurgents but also hides dead bodies strategically. In a planned and strategic way, dead bodies are buried in those places where common people are forbidden to enter. The burial of dead bodies in the place commonly forbidden for people evinces government's collusion with conspiracy, counter-terrorism, counter-insurgency and state racism.

According to Levinas, being open to the other, being engaged to in an ethics that accepts the deconstructive force of the foreigner to oneself leads not to self-destruction but to self-constitution in an ethical sense. For Levinas, this openness to the other is self-confirming, just as the wise person puts himself last, yet is thereby affirmed and preserved. The following extract clarifies the view of Levinas:

Each of us has a desire for subjectivity, a primordial desire designated by Levinas simply as Desire, which expresses itself every time we utter

“I”. Given that subjectivity can only be confirmed by the separation of the “I” from the “not I” as mentioned above, the desire for subjectivity can only be fulfilled when the “I” maintains the separation between it and the other, and it can do so by maintaining the radical alterity of the other, maintaining the other’s otherness. The trouble is that the “I” exists in the world as a being and has the tendency to totalize others.

(Nuyen 138)

This breaking away from egoist and solitary enjoyment is what makes my commerce with the other ethical. The relationship of language implies transcendence, radical separation, the revelation of the other to me. The other possesses a radical alterity, an absolute otherness that can confirm subjectivity.

It is the duty of the government to protect the lives of its citizens across culture and history. Only the Buddhist citizens get protect and state loyalty and the non-Sinhalese are likely to be targeted. State racism is clearly manifested. When the state cannot play its role in a neutral manner, the established spheres of ethics and humanitarian norms can hardly be maintained.

In the course of surveying and monitoring the regions that are worst affected by ethnic cleansing, insurgency and civil war, Anil happens to come across an old woman. This lady rushes to Anil the moment she sees Anil in her house. She weeps pathetically in a heart-rending way. It appears that there is nobody to listen to her woe and agony that resulted in her life after her son, her daughter in law and other grandchildren are killed summarily.

Anil does not directly lay the blame on anybody. But her tragic gesture and miserable mode of weeping prove that she is an innocent victim targeted by a superior force. Whatever be the cause of casualty, the shocking thing is that nobody comes

placate her pain, encourage her and then give her promise of peace and compensation. Anil asks a question to herself- what would be the value of sympathy, ethical notion of sharing others' woe and then express humanitarian concern?

The plight and predicament of this lady itself is an index to how sterile and rigid the zone of ethics is. The following extract illustrates how zone of ethics faces its entropy:

When Anil leaned back the old woman was weeping. She put her hands out and ran them over Anil's hair. Anil held her arms. Here was a lost language between them. She kissed Lalitha on both cheeks, having to bend down to her because she was small and frail. When Anil let go, the old woman seemed stranded and the young woman- who was she? – stepped forward and led her to a chair, then left. Anil sat next to Lalitha and held her hand in silence, feeling an ache in her.

There was a large framed photograph on the table beside them. (19)

It is obvious that nobody had the respect and regard for the bereaved family. Even the humanitarian concern is not expressed to the lady whose dearest members die untimely death. They have no option other than looking at the photos of the departed souls. A sort of horror is visible clearly. Due to the growing untrustworthy nature of state and state mechanism, even the bereaved members fear to dislodge their complaints to the administrative authority.

Ethics signifies the appetite that inspires ingenuity and design, foresight and strategy, points to a value beyond the production and outside the parameters enforced by economics. In addition, it means a sensitivity to the other that transcends the very self-concern upon which it thrives. In hunger, Levinas avers "the subject is strangely sensitive to the hunger of the other man. In the compassion of deprivation it has the

possibility of quitting the edifying concept of “I”. In this so called technological age the hunger of others still has the ability to awaken the subject from its self-sufficiency.

Technology can provide the means through which our assistance to the other is brought forth or the medium through which the cries of those in need command our service but it cannot instruct the spirit towards its end. The other towards whom “I” turn in responsibility exceeds the horizons of being. Levinas argues that we are never sufficiently amazed by the voiceless language of hunger. Ethics is care, compassion and emotional inter-identification and interconnectedness with other ethics- a realm beyond essences outside of knowledge sense of obligation to other.

The virtues of relationality, empathy and co-operation could make possibly a social order, which escapes the domination, exploitation and violence endemic to both capitalist bureaucratic state societies. A self in relation is the ingredient of ethics that helps society maintain peace and harmony. Levinas wants to feel about ourselves that beyond knowledge and history we are ethical hostages for the other whom we do not know. Levinasian self cruelly abandoned in a world of objectifying knowledge and self-interested war- answers the trance of the Divine in the other’s face and sees the obligation to answer- to put the self in the other’s place and seek the other’s good.

Levinas seeks to overcome the fundamental rationalist, egocentric presumptions of western philosophical ethics. His project centers on a basic assertion about human relationship, which can be summarized thus:

Other philosophies of human existence have tended to describe our ethical obligations as consequences of historically conceptually or developmentally prior structures of social life, rational thought or experiences. These philosophies generate the need for ethics out of the

contradiction of a life without ethics or out of the dialectical development of self-consciousness; or out of the ontological assumptions about the nature of humanity, nature, reason or God. (66)

Ethics is secondary to knowledge of things including knowledge of or concerns about oneself. It is this sense of knowledge of things that Levinas tries to capture under various rubrics as totality, essence and being. Levinas believes that the attempt to generate ethics out of self-knowledge or interest is simply a form of war. For him, knowledge is necessarily aimed at or inevitably leads to objectification, alienation and domination. Therefore, knowledge cannot be the basis of ethical life—that is, of a kind of transcending concern for other people, a concern untouched by our own needs, desires or attempts to control.

Rogue practice and self-centrism flourish in the time of emergency. Hospitals are supposed to be a place from where sick people get service. Certain degrees of altruism and selfless sense of service are associated with these institutions of services. But due to the prolonged period of emergency, the existing norms and standards are violated. Expired medicines are sold; workers and employees in hospitals are hardly active.

Moral disciplines and professional ethics are flatly neglected. Anil is familiar with this sort of mushrooming rogue practice. She says “even worse was the voice of the senior medical officer, Dr. Perera, yelling to doctors and assistants, calling them devils for not keeping the building clean. It was so continuous, this yelling, that it seemed to go unheard by most who work there.

Humanitarian aid, investigation of crimes, forensic work and various other welfare orientated works are likely to fail at the time of political crisis. The following

extract contains Anil's observation of various instances of the violation of human rights and subsequent cases of neglect:

Forensic work during a political crisis was notorious, she knew, for its three-dimensional chess moves and back-room deals and muted statements for the good of the nation. In the Congo, one human rights group had gone too far and their collection of data had disappeared overnight, their paperwork burned. As if a city from the past had been reburied. The investigative team, which included Anil in a lowly role as program assistant, had nothing left to do but get on a plane and go home. (25)

Professional ethics and various other norms usually bind society together. Such norms hover on the verge of disintegration when political crisis crops up. At the extension and escalation of violence, hardly any rosy prospect of liberation, security, and dignity of mankind can be seen. The citizens of Sri Lanka face similar situations at the time of crisis. From the government they get only the sweet words and harsh action. At the time of dire crisis, they sometimes expect positive treatment from the foreign agents and human right personnel. But in the surreal atmosphere, it is really tough speak with ethical sense of certainty.

A boy going for a bath disappears suddenly. A man talking to his friend does not come back to his home in the evening. But the civil right movement office claims to have reliable documents and information about each citizens. Anil is receptive to this situation. "Inside the civil right movements offices at the Nades an Center were the fragments of collected information revealing the last sighting of a son, a younger brother, a father. In the letters of anguish from family members were the details of

hour, location and apparel, the activity, going for a bath, talking to a friend”(38).

Right to information if is grossly violated.

With the help of information and knowledge, people develop perception and think on acting in according to the prevailing norms and ethical ideals of society. In the absence of ideals, ethics, humanity and humility, it is pretty difficult to expect positive things. The domain of ethics is blurring and hazy. In the hazy domain of ethics, whim, impulse, revenge and violence can crop.

The real, the factual, the authentic and the reliable are on exile when political crisis receives momentum. There is seldom ethical motive, humanistic impulse to serve and realistic commitment to what one had witnessed. One is not in a position to express what one had witnessed. As a result, only the hazy and surreal atmosphere is created. The following extract discusses about this sort of situation:

In the shadows of war and politics there came to be surreal turns of cause and effect. When an ID card was found in a short pocket, the police called an immediate halt to the unburial, and the following day the president of the citizens’ committee who had brought the police to the location was arrested. A human right lawyer was shot and the body removed by army personnel. (39)

Not only innocent civilians but human right lawyers are also shot dead randomly. It is not clear and certain who killed the human right lawyer. Is he killed by insurgents, separatist, government squads and underground gangs? It is tough and virtually impossible to give answer to this question. Keeping other things aside, it appears that everyone had the right to know who killed the lawyer. This right to information is suspended.

The government insists and then affirms that an independent committee is formed to investigate the unprecedented murder of a human right lawyer. The finding that comes from this investigation committee is bogus and trumpery. There is no genuine trace of truth in government's claim and counter-claim.

When disinterestedness on the part of government becomes a strategy, injustice, atrocity and inhumanity flourish rampantly. Access to truth and information is denied. The question of ethics would be alien to human mind. The entire spectrum of ethics and humanity becomes hazy and grey. The following extract exemplifies the point:

Anil had been sent reports collected by the various human rights groups before leaving the United States. Early investigations had led to no arrests and protests from organizations had never reached even the mid-level of police or government. Requests for help by parents in their search for teenagers were impotent. Still, everything was grabbed and collected as evidence; everything that could be held on to in the windstorm of news was copied and sent abroad to strangers in Geneva.

(38)

Civilians are frightened to ask for justice. They are fear to ask for security. Any attempt to inquire about their missing children and relative would be serious impudence. What would be the condition of basic human concern if it would be intimidating to ask for security and justice? It is confounding to ponder on the pros and cons of recently developed phenomena.

Levinas finds an unbridgeable gap between knowledge and ethics. He says "if we begin with knowledge in the guise of science or philosophy, technique or ontology, rational reflection or psychoanalysis we will never respect the other person



as irreducibly other” (87). Knowledge to others necessarily reduces the other to something “we possess, something we have acquired and something, ultimately we will use. If the foundation of our relation to others is knowledge, the other will be reduced to the same. Otherness will not be allowed to coexist with the agent of sameness” (185). What Levinas poses as an alternative is the irreducibility or underivability of concern for the other. The concern stems from the terrain of history in the sense of political conflict, is too implicated in the wars of self-interest to be a site for ethics.

Levinas is most effective in characterizing what the grounds of our concern for the other are not. They are neither a consequence of our knowledge of things or of the ultimately knowable character of things themselves; nor are they how the things appear to us or exist in their truth. The sense of the other’s vulnerability and need together with the other’s call to justice presents the trace of the infinite. Levinas’s additional concept on ethical responsibility is mentioned below:

Responsibility to the other’s call leaves us infinitely connected with the other, with the ways our very existence on earth takes up her space, with our unlimited responsibility which constitutes or makes possible rather than follows from ego-bound interest, communications or subjective freedom. Only by responding can we give up our attitude of domination; but knowledge of the world always involves a comportment of domination and Levinas therefore rejects the aggressive imperial gaze of detached reason which has been the hallmark of western thought. (157)

People do witness the other in the face to face relation. The naked vulnerability of the other person constitutes for Levinas the basis of an ethics outside the limitations of totalizing thought.

When moral virtues, ethical concern, humanitarian duty begin to disintegrate at the time of political riot and unrest and emergency, living conditions take on the aura of nightmare. Only the surreal setting, unnatural sense of surprise over disaster and widening gap between the responsible and irresponsible persons arise. Anil says “There had been continual emergency from 1983 onwards, racial attacks and political killings. The terrorism of the separatist guerilla groups, who were fighting for a homeland in the north. The insurrection of the insurgents in the south, against the government” (39). Violence is generated not only by the side of government but also from the side of separatist and underground insurgents.

Insurgents and separatists are guided by zeal and wild spirit for transformation. So it is not reasonable to expect love for peace and order from those guerillas. Anil is steadily aware of the harsh and harrowing conditions generated by counterterrorism. She says “the counterterrorism of the special forces against both of them. The disposal of bodies by fire. The disposal of bodies in rivers or the sea. The hiding and then reburial of corpse” (39). Various gimmicks and collusions are noticeably present in the search and investigation.

When the embodiments of ethical and religious norms are destroyed and then killed, how can people’s trust in the power of morality and justice hold true. In Sri Lanka, the government represents the voice of Buddhist Sinhalese. Other Hindu Tamil and non-Buddhist people are disgruntled and dissatisfied with the special favors Sinhalese get from the government. Racial hatred, communal riot and religious

fury are the outcome of state racism, state's biased role and its monolithic nationalism.

State's rigid attitude to change that come over time is also another factor for the growing religious intolerance. A Buddhist Monk is killed. The monk represents certain order. It is virtually tough to find out who killed the monk. The assassination of monk is the most heinous act. How can ethical trust and moral value remain intact if the representatives of these saving graces are the target of organized or military campaign? At the death of the monk, the zone of ethics and morality is eclipsed and invaded. In the wake of emergency and political crisis, the zone of ethics remains not only hazy but invaded aggressively. The following extract presents this situation:

There was a monk, Sarah said. He and his brother were the best teachers in my life- and it was because they taught me when I was an adult. We were all shaken by his murder. He was shot in his room while sleeping. I have had friends die who was my age, but I miss that old man more. I suppose it was expecting him to teach me how to be old. Anyway, once a year, on the anniversary of his death, my wife and I would cook the food he was especially fond of and drive south to the village he had lived in. (43)

Religion is said to be the provider of saving graces in human lives. Those who act as representative of religion tries to integrate human will to the single locus of moral didacticism. In the same process, religion contributes to the maintenance of social order, integrity. In addition, it contributes to the creation of social harmony. Due to the contributions of religious institutions and ethical centers, human beings find peaceful and inspiring atmosphere. When monk himself is killed, what could be the

provider of saving grace and moral inspiration? When terror is wreaked on those ascetic and secluded monks, the zone of ethics would be dim and bleak.

Even in prehistoric sites that are archeologically important, fresh skeletons are found. Various dead bodies are buried there. The team of investigation in which Anil and Sarath are involved has the right to dig out any place which they doubt. When recently killed bodies and skeletons are found in prehistoric sites, will it be not be transparently clear that government has also collusions in the war crimes. Anil record that “the region felt timeless. They found charred corpses of wild breadfruit that still grew in the region, even now, twenty thousand years later. Three almost complete skeletons had been found. But a few days later, while excavating in the far reaches of a cave, Anil discovered a fourth skeleton” (48). Bones were still held together by dried ligaments, partially burned. Anil surmises that there is something that is not prehistoric.

In the face to face encounter between separatists and the government armies, many innocent civilians are killed. They fall victim to the violence wreaked by both the government and the separatists as insurgents. Many unidentified bodies are identified. At the time of the escalation of encounter, neither side thinks about if civilians are going to be targeted or not.

Every side wants to win the war. To increase the numbers of rebels, the separatists and insurgents can use children. They do not think that children should not be used in war. Children have right to education and peaceful life till they reach adulthood. This sort of thinking does not work at the time of the intensification of war. Sarath talks to Anil and says:

There are so many bodies in the ground now, that is what you said murdered anonymous. I mean, people do not even know if they are two

hundred years old or two weeks old, they have all been through fire. Some people let their ghosts die, some do not. Sarath, we can do something. You are six hours away from Colombo and you are whispering think about that. I do not want to go to the temple now.

(49)

Even if the innocent civilians die in the intense encounter between government armies and underground rebels, it becomes the duty of the government to hand over the dead bodies of innocent people to their relatives so that they could do the proper burial. The government is so immersed in its one sided policy of winning the battle against the rebels that it does not give priority to this ethically decent task. As a result, many unidentified and anonymous bodies are scattered in many sites that are forbidden.

In *Remnants of Auschwitz*, Agamben sets aside his discourse on the messianic aspects of the notion of self. He examines the figure of the *Muselmann* in the camp. The term *Muselmann* was used at Auschwitz to denote a passive prisoner who “had given up, had no consciousness or conscience, was despised and not object of sympathy, and was a mere staggering corpse, a bundle of physicality of no consequence” (21). More importantly, he had “no agency, no dignity, and was not a survivor who could testify as he was devoid of his humanity. This state of being the Muslim is the limit case, the exception, the Orientalised and objectified other. Survivors and witnesses speak for the inhuman *Muselmann* and resent it” (31). Following Foucault, Agamben argues that “racism is the process by which bio-power intervenes and marks breaks within the biological continuum of humanity and reintroduces the principle of war into the system of making live”(32). It is only the *Muselmann* as the inhuman who is truly human. At the same time, it is the human being who can survive being a human being.

Testimony is relation between “the say able and unsay able but archive is a system of relations between the said and unsaid” (34). This is analogous to the radical binaries that Agamben establishes in which the “gap between the said and unsaid or rather between voice and language, and between the unwritten and the preface are articulated as key to understanding what we normally understand as philosophy of language or the politics of expression”(39). It is no surprise that Agamben takes the most extreme manifestation of the condition of the camps as a “starting point for an elaboration of an ethics without reference to the law, a term that is taken to encompass normative discourse in its entirety” (41). In *Remnants of Auschwitz*, Agamben develops an account of an ethics of testimony as an ethos of bearing witness to that for which one cannot bear witness. Taking up the problem of skepticism in relation to the Nazi concentration camps of World War II, Agamben casts *Remnants* as an attempt to “listen to a lacuna in survivor testimony, in which “the factual condition of the camps cannot be made to coincide with that which is said about them” (42). However, Agamben is not concerned with the epistemological issues that this non-coincidence of fact and truth raises.

The key figure in his account of an ethics of testimony is that of the *Muselmann*. *Muselmann* had reached such a state of physical decrepitude and existential disregard that “one hesitates to call them living: one hesitates to call their death” (44). But rather than seeing the *Muselmann* as the limit-figure between life and death, Agamben argues that the *Muselmann* is more correctly understood as the “limit-figure of the human and inhuman. As the threshold between the human and the inhuman, however, the *Muselmann* does not simply mark the limit beyond which the human is no longer human” (47). Agamben argues that such a stance would merely repeat the experiment of Auschwitz, in which the “*Muselmann* is put outside the

limits of human and the moral status that attends that categorization. Instead then, the *Muselmann* indicates a more fundamental distinction between the human and the inhuman” (49). In this condition, it is impossible to definitively separate one from the other. It is also difficult to call into question the moral distinctions that rest on this designation.

At the peak of encounter and political crisis, any search for clarity, transparency and visibility is doomed to fail. Only ambiguity, misinformation, gossip and rumor circulate at a rapid pace. In this condition, what is genuinely acceptable and valid does not matter. This condition is best described in the following extract:

Information could always be clarified and acted upon. But here, on this island, she realized she was moving with only one arm of language among uncertain laws and a fear that was everywhere. There was less to hold on to with that one arm. Truth bounced between gossip and vengeance. Rumor slipped into every car and barbershop. Sarath’s daily path as a professional archaeologist in this world, she guessed, involved commissions and the favors of ministers, involved waiting politely for hours in their office lobbies. (51)

Uncertainty and confusion triumph over transparency and clarity. When uncertainty, fear, and silence prevail over concern with humanity, ethics, and truth, only anarchy and maelstrom can arise. Sri Lanka as described in novel verges on the anarchy and disorder. Only the gossip becomes important. Other concerns are not important at all.

Only the gossip and gossip mongers demonstrate their influence. Hope for order, harmony, access to truth and humanitarian concern does not carry appeal and attraction.

Public sorrows, collective conscience and rights to peace and security are stamped down. The question of sovereignty and national integrity comes when these demands are raised. In the state of the suspension of all the legal and constitutional provisions, it is pretty difficult to raise genuine voice. Anil perceives this sort of realization the more she is acquainted with the reality. She says “in a fearful nation, public sorrow was stamped down by the climate of uncertainty. If a father protested a son’s death, it was feared another family member would be killed” (52). In this condition, how can dos and don’ts are obeyed. Nobody bothers to understand others’ sufferings. Everyone is confined in his or her own fear and grief.

In the course of investigation, a sailor’s body is found. It is not the dead body of the past. it is recently killed body. The intensive investigation of the dead body of a sailor yields the finding that government is involved in the murder of innocent civilians like the sailor. The following extract highlights this condition:

The three other skeletons had no skull. But sailor had a skull. Sarath put the half-smoked beedi on the metal sink and leaned forward. With a scalpel he cut apart the ligaments that attached the skull to the neck vertebrae, and separated it. He brought the skull to his desk. The burning had not reached the head, so the frontal, orbital and odd places were smooth, the knit marks on the skull tight. Sarath wrapped it in plastic and placed it in a large shopping bag that said Kundanmalls.

(71)

Government’s complicity and collusions are obvious in the murders of sailors. Sailors are hardly related to the burgeoning political crisis. But they are made the target of counterterrorism of state. No site is left unaffected by the violence generated by the state. Archeological sites, sea and public places and even the private halls are haunted



by the agony of terror. How can human feelings, concerns, emotions and responsiveness to the sufferings of the other flourish in this situation? This question has made Anil to think on the issue of ethics and humanity seriously.

The key question that arises for Agamben then is “whether there is in fact “humanity to the human” over and above biologically belonging to the species, and it is in reflection upon this question that Agamben develops his own account of ethics”(51). In this, he rejects recourse to standard moral concepts such as dignity and respect, claiming that “Auschwitz marks the end and the ruin of every ethics of dignity and conformity to a norm. The term ‘*Muselmann*’ is the guard on the threshold of a new ethics, an ethics of a form of life that begins where dignity ends” (69). In order to elaborate on or at least provide "signposts" for this new ethical terrain, Agamben returns to the definition of the human as the being who has the following characteristics and access:

Language, as well as his earlier analyses of deixis is supposed to bring out a double movement in the human being's appropriation of language. In an analysis of pronouns such as “I” that allow a speaker to put language to use, he argues that the subjectification effected in this appropriation is conditioned by a simultaneous and inevitable de-subjectification. Because pronouns are nothing other than grammatical shifters or indicators of enunciation, such that they refer to nothing other than the taking place of language itself, the appropriation of language in the identification of oneself as a speaking subject requires that the psychosomatic individual simultaneously erase or de-subjectify itself. (54)

It is not strictly the “I” that speaks, and nor is it the living individual. Agamben argues that it is precisely this non-coincidence of the speaking being and living being. The impossibility of speech is revealed in it that provides the condition of possibility of testimony. Testimony, he claims, is possible only “if there is no articulation between the living being and language, if the “I” stands suspended in this disjunction” (130). The question that arises here then is what Agamben means by testimony. It is clear that he does not use the term in the standard sense of giving an account of an event that one has witnessed.

Anil proposes a case of a girl named Lakma who falls victims to disinterestedness on the part of those who must think about dealing with such bereaved members. Lakma’s parents were killed. Anil does not find out who killed Lakma’s parents and how they are killed. Only the psychotic condition and mental devastation of Lakma are hinted. In the name of relocating and rehabilitating the victims of civil war, many organization and caring centers are established. But none of them are guided by positive treatment.

Mechanically, victims are driven to take care of the bereaved members who are mentally devastated. Anil says “a few years before, the girl Lakma had seen her parents killed. A week after their murder, the twelve –year-old child was taken to a government ward run by nuns, north of Colombo, that looked after children whose parents had been killed in war”(99). But in those organizations there is no trace of humanitarian concern. The following extract presents how much mentally devastated she is how no display of humanity is felt at that time:

The shock of the murder of the girl’s parents, however, had touched everything within her, driving both her verbal and her motor ability into infancy. This was combined with an adult sullenness of spirit. She

wanted nothing more to invade her. She lay hidden there for over a month, silent, non-reaching, physically forced from her room to do exercises in sunlight. The nightmares continued for Lakma, who was unable to deal with the possible danger around her. (99)

The squads and gangs recruited by government do not think what would be the condition of a girl whose parents are killed. Nobody looks into the ethical and humanistic side of violence. For those who are obsessed with national sovereignty and national integrity of Sri Lanka do not imagine about the ethical price of violence. The miserable plight of the girl shows that understanding the ethical effect or moral price of a disaster is key to thinking in the direction of putting an end to civil war.

Arms dealers are also accountable for providing terrorists, separatists and insurgent's access to international weaponry. With these weapons, they intensify violence. Due to their access to international weaponry, they not only counter government assault but mobilize their strength and political influence.

At the critical time of civil war the hundreds of thousands of victims are in hope of finding out medicine, food, clothes, beds in the area of relocation, clean drinking water. But some rogue arms dealers tend to smuggle arms from international arm corridor and provide these weapons to separatists and insurgents. The following extract describes this scenario of arm-smuggling:

The victims of international violence had started appearing in March 1984. They were nearly all male, in their twenties, damaged by mines, grenades, mortar shells. During the first two years of the war more than three hundred casualties were brought in as a result of explosions. Then the weapons improved and the war in the north-central province got worse. The guerrillas had international weaponry smuggled into the

country by arms dealers, and they also had homemade bombs. There were grenade injuries. (114)

Anarchy, doom, destruction and devastation have become catch phrases to speak about Sri Lanka. At the critical juncture in which Sri Lanka is passing through, lots of selfish and rouge dealers come to the scene. They do not think about how miserable and tragic the situation is. They do not lag behind in pursuing their rogue and villainous practice. Ethics and empathy, humility and humanity are almost absent in them. It is difficult to trace if they are devoid of ethical concern or are they destitute of ethics due to the prolongation of war, and proxy war.

Agamben argues that what is at stake in testimony is bearing witness to what is unsayable. Fruitful is the attempt to bearing witness to the impossibility of speech and making it appear within speech. In this way, he suggests, the human is “able to endure the inhuman. More generally then, testimony is no longer understood as a practice of speaking, but as an ethos, understood as the only proper “dwelling place” of the subject”(55). The additional twist that Agamben adds here to avoid a notion of returning to authenticity in testimony is to highlight the point that while testimony is the proper dwelling place.

Responsibility must be thought without reference to the law. Agamben is leaning toward a conception of ethical responsibility akin to Emmanuel Levinas' conception of infinite responsibility toward the absolute other. Agamben sees Levinas simply radicalizing the juridical relation of sponsorship in unexpiatable guilt. In distinction from this, Agamben argues that ethics is the sphere that recognizes neither guilt nor responsibility.

Due to the explosion, civilian casualty takes place in a large proportion. Those who are badly and irreparably harmed by shrapnel, shard of explosion and bullets are

taken to the hospital. In this condition, there are some doctors who, instead of talking to the victims in a humanitarian way, discriminate the victims. They put tags on the chest of every victim.

The inhuman and immoral activities like labeling and categorizing the victims are committed by doctors and administrative heads of the hospital. It is rare to see the exercise of ethical interest and humanitarian concern. The following extract clarifies this sort of reality:

Whenever a bomb went off in a public place, Gamini stood at the entrance of the hospital, the funeral of the triage, and categorized the incoming victims, quickly assessing the state of each person –sending them to Intensive Care or to the operating theatre. This time there were women too, because it had been a street bomb. All survivors in the outer circle of the explosion came in within the hour. The doctors did not use names. Tags were put on the right wrist or on a right foot if there was no arm. Red for Neuro, green for Orthopaedic, yellow for Surgery. (121)

The discriminatory practice shows that there is no sympathy and ethical responsibility towards the victims. No trace of humanity is revealed at the time in which it is strongly demanded. That is why there is real problem. In this situation, categorization of sick and injured patients is not required. Though it is done with a view to facilitate the process of quick treatment, it cannot be called for by people with awakening and alertness of ethics.

Thus it can be said that throughout this novel, the ethical zone is hazy and grey. At the time in which violence, bloodshed, murder and massacre occur rampantly, the issue of ethics and humanity no longer comes. When the civil war in

Sri Lanka reached its height, it was virtually impossible to exercise ethical care and concern. The zone of ethics remains grey and hazy.

### **Analysis of Half of the Yellow Sun by Adichie**

*Half of a Yellow Sun* explores the harrowing experiences of the war. It examines the themes of war, human brutality and bestiality, betrayal of love, trust, friendship, country, and child soldiering from the perspective of ethics. It projects the Nigeria-Biafra war through the lives of the characters. Her fictionalized tale of events preceding the war evokes powerful memories of Nigeria's past. It haunts the present. Delta is indicative of anything.

Nigeria has still not learnt from her past mistakes on how to accommodate and make her disparate ethnic nationalities coexist. It is only the story that can continue beyond the war and the warrior. It is the story that outlives the sound of war-drums and the exploits of brave fighters. Adichie explores the horror of war that civilian populations often experience. She does achieve this purpose by correlating the story of a woman caressing a calabash containing her daughter's head with similar instances in other wars. The following extract illuminates how ethical concern evaporates when brutality takes an extreme form:

The woman with the calabash nudged her, and then motioned to some other people close by. *Bianu*, come, she said. Come and take a look. She opened the calabash. Take a look, she said again. Olanna looked into the bowl. She saw the little girl's head with the ashy-grey skin and plaited hair and rolled-back eyes and open mouth. She stared at it for a while before she looked away. Somebody screamed. The woman closed the calabash. Do you know, she said, it took me so long to plait this hair? She had such thick hair. (149)

Ethics and humanity matter a lot at the time of dire crisis. But people engrossed in violence and power politics hardly pay regard to it. Ethical sense of responsibility and humanitarian concern withers at the prospect of universal inhumanity of all wars.

Richard's witnessing of the mindless butchery of Nnaemeka and other Igbo people at Kano airport further amplifies the bestiality of man in situations of wars.

In the wake of this bestiality, the prospect of humanity is almost dim and dreadful. This butchery envisions the complete absence of humanity and ethics. It is heart-rending and heart-breaking thing. The following extract is reflective of this reality:

Nnaemeka turned to go back to his desk. Richard picked up his briefcase. The side entrance burst open and three men ran in holding up long rifles. They were wearing green army uniforms, and Richard wondered why soldiers would make such a spectacle of themselves, dashing in like that, until he saw how red and wildly glassy their eyes were. The first soldier waved his gun around, '*Ina nyamiri!*' Where are the Igbo people? Who is Igbo here? (74)

Richard wills him to say the words. He tells him to try these words anyway. He wills something. He wills anything to happen in the stifling silence. At that moment, the rifle goes off and Nnaemeka's chest blew open. It goes on splattering red mass. Richard drops the note in his hand.

Responsibility for the victim is prior to dialogue. It is a persecuting obsession in which an identity individuates itself as unique without recourse to any system of references. There lies the impossibility of evading the assignment from the other-without experiencing blame. The representation of self grasps the assignment. The absolution of the one who feels obligated and responds is neither an evasion nor an

abstraction. Zygmunt Bauman makes the following remarks with regard to the puzzling nature of responsibility:

Subject becomes a hostage. Obsessed with responsibilities and accused of what others do and suffer the uniqueness of the self is the very fact of bearing the suffering and fault of another persecution turns into expiation. The point of departure for the hostage is a subjectivity that is sensibility expressed through pain. Pain is nudity more naked than all destitution, sacrificed rather than sacrificing itself, and bound to the adversity of pain. This existence, with sacrifice imposed on it, is without conditions. (214)

Subjectivity is vulnerable, exposed to affection. It is a sensibility more passive than any passivity. It is extreme patience. The hostage is exposed, exposed to expressing, to saying, and to giving. It is by virtue of its eidos possible only in sacrifice that is the approach of him for whom one is responsible. Communication with the other can be transcendent only as a dangerous life, a fine risk to be run.

The soldiers run out to the tarmac. They pull out Igbo people who had already boarded. Then, they line them up and shot them. Thereafter, they leave them lying there, “their bright clothes splash of color on the dusty black stretch” (153). All the main characters, Odenigbo, Ugwu, Olanna, Kainene, and Richard, develop as the story progresses. Ugwu develops from the clumsy little village boy. He is unsure of himself. He sleeps with pieces of chicken in his pocket. Despite his clumsy background, he is able to distinguish himself in battle situations.

Even in the day to day life which civilian lives, it is far more difficult to see the trace of ethical exercise and philanthropic initiative. The issues of causes and effects are surveyed within the ambits of their impacts on the day-to-day existence of



the characters. Adichie humanizes “killing and eviscerating of pregnant women, rape of young girls, and other atrocious acts” (63). The friendship that existed between Abdulmalik, a Hausa, and the Mbaezi, an Igbo, is clearly manifested. He calls out Olanna to come and greet his friend Abdulmalik. Olanna had met the Hausa man once before. He sells leather slippers close to Uncle Mbaezi’s stall in the market. The following extract exemplifies the point:

Well done, Abdulmalik said. He opened his bag and brought out a pair of slippers and held them out to her, his narrow face creased in a smile. She took the slippers with both hands. Thank you, Abdulmalik. Thank you. Abdulmalik pointed at the ripe gourd like pods on the kuka tree and said, you come my house. My wife cooks very sweet kuka soup. Oh, I will come, next time; Olanna said he sat with Uncle Mbaezi on the veranda, with a bucket of sugar cane in front of them. They gnawed off the hard, green peels and chewed the juicy, white pulp, speaking Hausa and laughing. (40)

The brutality and bestiality shown by Abdulmalik in massacring the Mbaezi family is clearly transparent. Massacre and murder result from the escalation of communal riot, separatist movement and latent fury of the dominant tribe. In the moment of confusions and fear, no ethical norm holds sway over all these hatred and horror.

The value of this relationship that exists between him and the family could only be rationalized within the context of war. The following extract displays how ethical concern and philanthropic ideals are kept at bay by the onrush of violence and communal riot:

Uncle Mbaezi lay face down in an ungainly twist, legs splayed. Something creamy white oozed through the large gash on the back of

his head. Aunty Ifeka lay on the veranda. The cuts on her body were smaller, dotting her arms like parted red lips. We finished the whole family. It was Allah's will! The man was familiar. It was Abdulmalik.

(148)

Love and betrayal, dreams and nightmare coexist side by side. As a result, it would be pretty challenging for those who want to restore the lost track of ethics and humanity. How can the deviant and sidetracked youths be brought back to the forgotten and shattered track of ethics and ideals when dread, massacre, communal fury and tribal war occur? The standing space for the legitimate demands of the marginalized tribe is not only the sole cause of the horror and war. The eroding faith in brotherhood, humanity and ethical sense of responsibility is the sole and whole concern of the people.

In the moment of the extreme escalation of communal fury and tribal war between Igbo and non-Igbo, the constitution is suspended. The regional government and elected assemblies are hereby dissolved. The aim of the revolutionary Council is to establish a nation free from corruption and internal strife through Ugwu's informal expressions. His people would say that Master had spit this child out. His stomach tightened. Memories of those days of Amala leave a jolt to those who witness the horror. The superficiality of filial connections typifies the times. Similarly, Olanna finds it difficult to get along with her parents, particularly her mother. Her parents are willing and even eager to mortgage her on the altar of their avarice for government contracts. The value of the relation, friendship and mutual sense of cooperation is obvious in the following extract:

So will you be spreading your legs for that elephant in exchange for Daddy's contract? Olanna wondered, too, how her parents had

promised Chief Okonji an affair with her in exchange for the contract. Adichie seems to posit the triumph and indomitable spirit of filial bonding that helps Olanna and Kainene surmount the external stresses imposed on their relationship by their various liaisons and conducts with the men in their lives and in each other's lives. (76)

It is probably the message of the place of hope in the life of any individual that works as the saving grace. Survival becomes the ultimate goal for each individual in the face of adversity.

In a fine risk to be run, the word 'fine' has not been thought about. It is as antithetical to certainty, and indeed to consciousness. It is only in this way that the absolutely exterior other is near to the point of obsession. Here there is "proximity and not truth about proximity, not certainty about the presence of the other, but responsibility for him without deliberation, and without the compulsion of truths in which commitments arise, without certainty"( Bauman 55). Consciousness is not only naivety and opinion. The ethical language people have resorted to does not arise out of a special moral experience. It is independent of the description hitherto elaborated. The ethical situation of responsibility is not comprehensible on the basis of ethics and responsibility for the others.

The responsibility for another is an unlimited responsibility which the strict book-keeping of the free and non-free does not measure. It requires subjectivity as an irreplaceable hostage. This subjectivity denudes the ego in a passivity of persecution, repression and expulsion outside of essence. Simon Critchley rejoins the following remarks:

In this self, outside of essence, one is in a deathlike passivity. But in responsibility for the other for life and death, the adjectives

unconditional, undeclinable, absolute take on meaning. They serve to qualify freedom, but wear away the substrate. In the accusative form, which is a modification of no nominative? This finite freedom is not primary. It is not initial case. But it lies in an infinite responsibility where the other is not other because he strikes up against and limits my freedom. (144)

Finite freedom is not simply an infinite freedom operating in a limited field.

Responsibility in fact is not a simple attribute of subjectivity. Subjectivity is not for itself. The proximity of the other is presented as the fact that the other is not simply close to self in space. It is a structure that resembles the intentional relation which in knowledge attaches people to the object. Proximity does not revert to this intentionality. In particular, it does not revert to the fact that the other is known to the obtainer of experience. The tie with the other is knotted only as responsibility. The incarnation of human subjectivity guarantees its spirituality. These are extreme formulas which must not be detached from their context. In the concrete, many other considerations intervene and require justice even for me.

The eruption of immoral and anti-human activities keeps at bay the expansion of the clean and pure zone of ethics. Adichie through Chief Okonji explores the immorality that has become the routine of those in positions of authority and governance in Nigeria. The following extract brings into light this point:

Chief Okonji moved closer. 'I can't keep you out of my mind,' he said, and a mist of alcohol settled on her face....'I just can't keep you out of my mind,' Chief Okonji said again. 'Look, you don't have to work at the ministry, I can appoint you to a board, any board you want, and I will furnish a flat for you wherever you want.' He pulled her to him,

and for a while Olanna did nothing, her body limp against his. She was used to this, being grabbed by men who walked around in a cloud of cologne-drenched. (33)

Adichie's narrative style is fluid and simple. Through such characters as Odenigbo, Olanna, Kainene, Ugwu, Richard and others, she explores the vicissitudinous nature of war on the lives of the ordinary citizens. From the early days when Odenigbo, Olanna and their friends engaged in the academic exercise of the dialectics of the North/South dichotomy over bowls of pepper-soup and beer, through the "the first shot" that heralded the actual war, to the debilitating effects of the war, one sees the disintegrating lives of the various characters as they attempt to hold their humanity together.

Through even such a mundane thing as food, Adichie traces the regression of the characters. From the abundance which thrilled Ugwu when he first came to live with Odenigbo and found that he actually "ate meat everyday"(3), and made him put pieces of chicken "into his shorts' pockets before going to the bedroom"(8), to the point when "soaking some dried cassava in water"(343) became luxury. As the idealism and optimism of the dream of a great new nation began to fade away, and was replaced by disillusionment and despair Adichie begins to explore the strings that hold tattered dreams. Not love, patriotism, or any of the dialectics of the early days,

Ugwu is seen worrying about Baby being woken up from her siesta by the noise. He is thinking about two days ago, when Olanna left for Kano to fetch Auntie Arize. Baby came into the kitchen implying that Olanna left baby behind when she travelled to Kano. Adichie also writes that:

Olanna's Dark Swoops began the day she came back from Kano. Baby discovered her. Baby had walked to the front door to look out, asking

Ugwu when Mummy Ola would come back, and then cried out at the crumpled form on the stairs. Odenigbo carried her in, bathed her, and held baby back from hugging her too tightly. (156)

There was no indication that the two women and Baby flew back to Kano from Lagos, and no explanation on how Baby came not to be with Olanna for in Chapter 10, after Ugwu is seen worrying about not waking baby from her siesta. He hoped the loud noise would not wake Baby up from her Siesta. But Baby would wake up soon and he would have to make her dinner. He brought out a bag of potatoes from the storeroom and sat staring at it, thinking about two days ago, when Olanna left for Kano to fetch Aunty Arize, a few pages later. Thereafter she is helped by Mohammed to board a train bound for Enugu. He writes about the world that remained silent while Biafrans died.

The laws set certain consequences out of the way. But justice only has meaning if it retains the spirit of disinterestedness. The spirit of disinterestedness animates the idea of responsibility for the other man. Rosalyn Diprose adds additional remarks in the following remarks:

Constituting itself in the very movement wherein being responsible for the other devolves on it, subjectivity goes to the point of substitution for the other. It assumes the condition of hostage. The humanity in historical and objective being, the very breakthrough of the subjective, of the human psychism in its original vigilance or sobering up, is being which undoes its condition of being: disinterestedness. (77)

The non-appropriating integration of the Body and consciousness enables people to overcome dualistic constraints. The conscious state claims that an identity and possession are oriented to the world. It connotes a relation between the body and

consciousness. They are both cautious about the way they handle each other. Consciousness will have to respect exclusively physical instances. The body as subject to the demands of the will acts not only out of obedience, but also out of respect for human prowess.

Kainene is devoid of sentiments and is even more willful. It was she who “used to say their mother’s breasts did not dry up at all, that their mother had given them to a nursing aunt only to save her own breasts from drooping” (40). Like her twin sister, Kainene, she makes her choices and stands by them. In Olanna’s time of crises, help comes from unexpected quarters. Her presumed uneducated Auntie Ifeka, helps her to stand on her feet and fight instead of running to Kano as an escape route:

You will go back to Nsukka. I am not asking you to go back to his house. I said you will go back to Nsukka. Do you not have your own flat and your own job? You must never behave as if your life belongs to a man. Do you hear me? Your life belongs to you and you alone.

The striking aspects of the exposition and resolution of the crises between Odenigbo, Olanna and Amala, on the one hand, and Olanna, Richard, Kainene, and Madu on the other hand, are many. (230)

With Olanna and Odenigbo, as with Kainene and Richard, Adichie presents couples whose values and lives testify to the dynamic African spirit. Significantly, motherhood as well as childlessness is made quite inconsequential. The vexed issue of bride-price and the quest for acceptance by the larger family as recipe for a successful marriage are all jettisoned.

Olanna, the apparent victim of Odenigbo’s unfaithfulness rightly detects the actual victim in Amala, “who did not have a voice” and who “was so helpless” (258). Human lapses are condoned in a humane stance, and this in the final analysis, proves

redemptive for the offender as well as for the offended. Masters and houseboys relate as human beings and not as masters and slaves. The woman of the house does not need to be accepted by her mother-in-law or to prove her usefulness as a child-bearer before she can confidently take charge of her house. For minds trapped in primordial African values, the novelist could be considered iconoclastic but in reality, she is delightfully progressive.

An act of socio-political engagement to remember the violence of the conflict from ethical angle is obvious. Regarding to the degeneration of lucid zone of ethics into the terror and nightmare, the following extract is sufficient for the sake of justification:

The war takes a human scale. It is presented through a limited, fragile human perspective. Kainene and Olanna represent many of the period's social contradictions: one a tough businesswoman, the other a free spirit. The houseboy Ugwu moves directly from the village. The characters come from all classes. Kainene and Olanna represent many of the period's social contradictions: one a tough businesswoman, the other a free spirit. (175)

Olanna's ability to make everyone fall in love with her and Richard's impotence has their own positions in the narrative world of the novel. Olanna, "beautiful and educated, knows sometimes too much and, while visiting her relatives in Kano, she is ashamed to feel crossed by their poverty, tries not to mind the cockroach eggs and the smoke" (219). Richard is white and British and struggles with "the general perception of his strangeness and his desire to belong to Biafran society. He takes pleasure in describing Olanna's wealthy mother who hid her diamonds inside her bra and who



will be one of the first to flee when the war started” (211). Children all around her succumb to kwashiorkor.

The disease of protein deficiency that blots their bellies makes the skin pale and the hair reddish. Amidst all this chaos, people still love and marry. They struggle to adjust to the change of pace. Furthermore they maintain the appearance of some sort of normality. Ethnic differences are signaled with a clue to the looming threat of tribal war, and bloodshed of huge proportion. These differences assume lethal significance after the ostensibly Igbo-led 1966 military coup.

The coup becomes a pretext for anti-Igbo pogroms after the counter-coup six months later. As Olanna and others become caught up in the violence, what looms is “the horror in the details of vaguely familiar clothes on headless bodies, or corpse’s odd skin tone - a flat, sallow grey, like a poorly wiped blackboard” (218). As Biafran secession “brings a refugee crisis, a retaliatory Nigerian blockade and all-out war, and the world refuses to recognize the fledgling state, the focus is on the characters' grief, resilience and fragmenting relationships” (117). Tending her adopted daughter, Olanna endures the descent into “one-room squalor, food-aid queues and air raids without self-pity.

There is anger at the bleakness of bombing hungry people, and the deadly kwashiorkor, malnutrition that afflicts children, dubbed Harold Wilson syndrome for the former colonial power's complicity”(124). While Ugwu's forced conscription involves him in an atrocity “whose legacy is lasting shame, the issue of forgiveness between the twin sisters subtly echoes that of warring political groups” (129).

Odenigbo is the revolutionary freedom fighter with endless certainty and self-belief. He succumbs to drink and despair while the seemingly compliant Olanna draws on profound strengths. The master-servant relationship is upended. The

houseboy returns with fondness and irony. He picks up the Master's way of addressing him as my good man. In the midst of growing phobia hides the ray of ethical initiative and assertion of humanity:

Igbo-phobia is rising. Attacks against members of the tribe by their northern neighbors are on the rise. The recent turn of events is prompted by a political crisis emanating from the takeover of the country by military rulers led by Major Nzeogwu. He is an Igbo who did it ostensibly to clean the country's politics of corrupt civilian leaders. The deposed leaders incite their people against the Igbo and within no time, hatred against them turns into open violence. In fact, Olanna barely escapes death and travels in a train full of Igbo escapees.

(187)

Olanna is the most typical example of character that does not get even a single grain of ethical sympathy. The harrowing situation of war is responsible for this sort of problem of ethical deprivation and desperation. Olanna herself goes to visit the family of her Uncle Mbaeza. Contrary to her expectation, she finds the entire family wiped out by their neighbors. The massacres have ignited a mass exodus of Igbo from the north towards their home province of Enugu.

The human experience of having and being one's body cannot be governed by universal imperatives. The dignity of human corporeality already surpasses the robotics of human physiology. It is the body that tames the consciousness from its tendency to alienate itself. Through the body's direct access to matter, consciousness becomes directed to its real transcendental direction. Thus, a mutual respect between materiality and transcendence within the human subject is realized. Richard Cohen elaborates Levinas's notion of ethics which is the ethics of ethics:

Ethics begins with vital existence. Even if Ethics formally begins with the encounter of the other, it is nevertheless indebted to an earlier relation which could be facile and organic yet is very significant to existence. This is most evident with the subject being equipped with a sensibility that is radically brewed to transcend. This also explains why the defense of life is the most fundamental Levinasian contention.

When radicalized however, this defense can be defeated still by the Self who is willing to die for the other. (219)

Subjective sensibility sanctifies human sentiency which is an attribute that makes the human being at par with the brutes. The other manifests itself by the absolute resistance of its defenseless eyes. The other person manifests himself by the absolute resistance of his defenseless eyes. The infinite in the face brings into question individual freedom. The nakedness of the face is destituteness. To recognize the other is to recognize a hunger.

It is in Enugu where the Igbo secessionist General Ojukwu has declared “the Republic of Biafra, with its flag emblazoned with *Half of a Yellow Sun*. The crisis sharply divides opinion among Odenigbo’s companions, with some like Okemah taking explicit positions and joining the side of Biafran secessionists” (219). The secessionists put up a fight against General Yakubu Gowon’s federalist forces. The federalists are however too strong for them. They are capable of using all manner of arsenal against them. They use aerial bombardment which helps them to evict the Igbo from some of their strongholds such as Nsukka.

Odenigbo and his Igbo lecturer friends are forced out of the university. They are pushed into Enugu, where he joins the war effort as a junior officer in the War Manpower Directorate. It is a time for struggle as every means of punishment. The

hunger and starvation is employed by the federalist government to compel the secessionists into submission. In the midst of mounting casualty, there is almost no chance even for the sporadic display of empathy and pity. The following extract presents the case:

Casualties are heavy on the side of the secessionists. They are forced into submission. One such heavy casualty is the death of the respected poet Okemah. Despite the federalist announcement that there were no victors and losers, the secessionists are compelled into a federalist union. Crimes are committed against them. It is exemplified by a soldier's unnecessary cruelty against Odenigbo as he drives his family back to Nsukka. (201)

There are irreplaceable losses. Among them the disappearance of Kainene is prime example of loss. She never returns from her journey to get supplies towards the end of the war. Ugwu is a lad whose schooling is disrupted by the fighting. He is conscripted into the Biafran army.

Olanna and her sister are affected fatally by communal conflict, ethical hatred and differences amidst the viewpoint of people. Olanna abandons her privileged background because she is inspired by the revolutionary zeal and passion. Due to this choice, she has to pay a lot of price. She loses her sister in the conflict. Many agonizing moments happened in her life. Question of falling in love with her charismatic lover is one thing. But the damage that war does to her family is the most horrible and harrowing loss a human being faces in real life.

Cultural bias and smoldering communal fury prevent ethics and humanity to flourish even in the normal life situation. During the war, the prospect of the expansion of ethics and morality remains a far-fetched dream. Olanna Ozobia teaches

about the flag which symbolizes the rising sun or *Half of a Yellow Sun*, i.e. rising of the Republic of Biafra: “Red was the blood of siblings massacred in the North, black was for mourning them, green was for prosperity Biafran would have, and finally, the *Half of a Yellow Sun* stood for the glorious future” (281). From this kind of symbolic representation of author and the naming of the title proves that the author herself is advocating for the cultural bias. The flag serves the traumatized setting of constructing independent community. Being the mouthpiece of author, Olanna taught her children to create religious gap for forthcoming generation:

She taught them to raise their hands in flying salute like His Excellency and she asked them to copy her drawing of the two leaders: His Excellency was burly, sketched with double lines, while Gowon’s effete body was outlined in single lines. Nkiruka, her brightest student, shaded contours into the faces and, with a few strokes of her pencil, gave Gowon a Snarl and His Excellency a grin. She was smiling the smile of a precious child who knew she had said the right thing. (281)

Olanna boosts up the religious hatred among the children. It is clear that the children are eager for the revenge attack. This kind of cultural antagonism serves the Western representation proving African as ancient tribal hatred and prone to violence.

One reason behind Olanna’s attraction towards Odenigbo is his revolutionary manner. She notices him for the first time in a queue while buying a ticket outside the university theatre. In the theatre he is shouting at the ticket seller against the hierarchy made by him between white and the native: ““you ignoramus! You see a white person and he looks better than your own people? You must apologize to everybody in this queue! Right now!” (29). It is the burden of colonialism that the inferiority complex is still working on the side of native people.

Another or the main reason behind Olanna's attraction towards him was the ethnic one. She is in serious relationship with Mohammed, a Hausa man. So she overshadows him following her own ethnic man, Odenigbo. It is clearer in the dialogue of Olanna's cousin, Arize, who is also in love with a Hausa man: "If only Mohammed was an Igbo man, I would eat my hair if you did not marry him. I have never seen a more handsome man. Papa would kill me first of all if he knew I was even looking at a Hausa man like that" (42). From this, it is clear that the major characters are directly obsessed with the ethnic bias in practice.

In the same manner, Richard Churchill, a white character, though he was in relation with a white lady Susan, later chooses Kainene, an Igbo lady as his wife. He is a writer and was interested "in the land of Igbo-Ukwu art, the land of the magnificent roped pot" (56). Kainene, on the other hand, was in relation with Major Madu, an Igbo soldier but she continues the hierarchy between white and native calling him "a modern-day explorer of the Dark Continent," which is paradoxical in itself to which we can claim as the traces of colonialism (62). In this concern, while drinking with Kainene, Richard and Major Madu, Major Udodi comments:

Our women who follow white men are a certain type, a poor family and the kind of bodies that white men like. He stopped and continued, in a mocking mimicry of an English accent, fantastically desirable bottoms. He laughed. The white men will poke and poke and poke the women in the dark but they never marry them. How can! They will never even take them out to a good place in public. But the women will continue to disgrace themselves and struggle for the men so they will get chicken-feed money and nonsense tea in a fancy tin. It's a new.

(81)

Udodi sees the impact of slavery which is changed into the new form. He also is mocking whites naming them fantastically desirable bottoms. He also opines the fact of poor black girl who struggles to get little survival from the side of white people. He also is inflicting ironical remarks on the educated people who are still following whites for their individual interests, forgetting the history of suffering.

Odenigbo is the intellectuals of Igbo. He advocates for such kind of coup. Odenigbo is feeling pride on Major Nzeogwu, the main planner of coup. He says “If we had more men like Major Nzeogwu in this country, we would not be where we are today. He actually has a Vision!” (125). Ethnic hatred among the Hausa and Igbo can be seen at its peak. When Olanna visited aunt Ifeka, she was laughing at the assassination of Sardauna:

Our people say that the chorus sounds like *mme-mme-mme*, the bleating of goat. Aunty Ifeka chuckled. They say the Sardauna sounded like that when he was begging them not to kill him. When the soldiers fired a mortar into his house, he crouched behind his wives and bleated, *Mme-mme-mme*, please don't kill me, *mme-mme-mme*. The Sardauna was an evil man. He hated us. He hated everybody who did not remove their shoes and bow to him. Is he not the one who did not allow our children to go to school? (130)

The people are fed-up with tyranny. Aunt Ifekas' utterances of hatred are born out of the hatred given by Sardauna. The barbaric and pathetic condition of the haunter and the haunted is clearly shown by the above lines. It is clear from the dialogue of aunt Ifeka. No doubt, it is the result of the denial of ethical co-existence.

When the cultural or ethnic brawl between Hausa and Igbo changed into the Civil War, Northern officers under the leadership of Major General Yakubu Gowon

followed the strategy of Starvation to finish-off the opponent. Mrs Maokelu opines, “Gowon sent them to bomb Awgu Market in the middle of the afternoon while women were buying and selling. He has refused to let the Red Cross bring us food, refused kpam-kpam, so that we will starve to death. Those heathens have bombed our school” (279). At this time, it is obvious that Gowon’s mission is targeted to eliminate the existence of Igbos. Olanna is the eye-witness of those attacks. She describes the pathetic condition of a mother. She says “A women had thrown herself down near the body of a child and was rolling around in the dirt, crying. ‘Gowon, what have I done to you?’”(280).

To recognize the other is to give. But it is to give to the master, to the lord, to him whom one approaches. The objective is not simply the object of an impassive contemplation. Or rather impassive contemplation is defined by gift, by the abolition of inalienable property. The presence of the other is equivalent to this calling into question of the joyous possession of the world. The question of the source of the moral ought is no small question. For Levinas, ethics is, first and foremost, born on the concrete level of person to person contact. He does not find the moral ‘ought’ to inscribe within the laws of the cosmos. Instead, each individual case of moral conflict produces the moral ought itself. Anthony F. Beavers casts more light on Levians’s notion of totalization. His view is cited below:

Totalization is a denial of the other's difference, the denial of the otherness of the other. That is, it is the inscription of the other in the same. If ethics presupposes the real other person, then such totalization will, in itself, be unethical. If reducing the other to my sphere of ideas cuts off contact with the other, then we are presupposing that contact with the other has already been established. And if contact with the



other cannot be established through ideas, then we must look elsewhere. (98)

Levinas looks not to reason, but to sensibility. He does so to find the real other person. Sensibility, for Levinas, goes back to a point before thought originates. Sensibility is passive, not active as thought is. It is characterized primarily by enjoyment. Life as it is lived is lived as the satisfaction of being filled with sensations. It is the satisfaction of feeding on the environment. Levinas finds on the level of sensibility a subjectivity that is more primordial than rational subjectivity. It is not limited by the sphere of one's own ideas, but by the egoist self that goes out to enjoy the world.

In the dialogue of Mrs. Muokelu to Olanna it is clear that failure is fated to come due to stupidity and short-sightedness. The following extract shows this condition:

This was done by a common civilian with his hunting gun! You know, it is as if the Nigerians are so stupid that whatever works for them becomes stupid too. They are too stupid to fly the planes that Russia and Britain gave them, so they brought in white people, and even those white people can't hit any target. (278)

The savage butchering of Olanna's relatives at Sabon Gari performs the actual role of a hindrance to the cultivation of ethics and humanity. Olanna is with Mohammed who is a Hausa lover.

When the Northerner Muslim Hausa rioters begin the anti-Igbo mission, she is helped by Mohammed. Olanna faces with the assassination of her Uncle, Mbaezi's family. Certain aspect of truth in this regard is expressed in the following citation:

She stopped when she saw the bodies. Uncle Mbaezi lay face down in an ungainly twist, leg splayed. Something creamy-white oozed through the large gash on the back of his head. Aunty Ifeka lay on the Verandah. The cuts on her naked body were smaller, dotting her arms and legs like slightly parted red lips. We finished the whole family. It was Allah's will! One of the men called out in Hausa. The man was familiar. It was Abdulmalik. He nudged a body on the ground with his foot and Olanna noticed. (148)

During the conflicts, ethnic symbol also turn into a sign to distinguish a friend or enemy. People let only those people live who are recognized with the same ethnicity. Abdulmalik, a Hausa man, though he was familiar with Uncle Mbaezi' family, was proud to perform such butchering. From his dialogue it is clear that he was doing all with Allah's will or God's will. Warfronts used rape as an instrument to torture women. From the above description, Aunty Ifeka also faced the same torture before murder.

Olanna witnesses the murder of Igbos in the street of Kano, including some of her family. Richard sees the murder of Igbos in the airport while waiting for a plane. Ugwu is conscripted into the army where he observes and perpetrates the violence of wartime. As a result, each of these characters shows symptoms of dissociation and withdrawal including the inability to locate the words to recount their experience. Olanna finds that "she wanted to ask him to stop being ridiculous, but her lips were heavy. Speaking was a labor. When her parents and Kainene visited, she did not say much; it was Odenigbo who told them what she had seen" (157). Olanna exhibits classic characteristics of the both inner and outer in her struggle and inability to discuss the past.

The most shocking image of the novel is that of severed head in a calabash.

This event has been recounted thrice in the novel; the first account comes in the initial fragment from Ugwu's book:

For the prologue, he recounts the story of the woman with the calabash. She sat on the floor of a train squashed between crying people, shouting people, praying people. She was silent, caressing the covered calabash on her lap in a gentle rhythm until they crossed the Niger, and then she lifted the lid and asked Olanna and others close by to look inside. She describes the carved designs on the women's calabash, slanting lines crisscrossing each other, and she describes the child's head inside scruffy braids falling across the dark-brown face, eyes completely white, eerily open, a mouth in a small surprised. (82)

The very fragment shows the silencing of women's heart-rending experience. The severed head shows the horrible outcome due to the civil war in Nigeria. Because of such harrowing and horrible experience Olanna becomes paralyzed, which symbolically marks the fragmented flow of the narrative structure of the novel itself indicating the fragmentation out of such eerie atmosphere in Nigerian civil war.

The repeated return of the image of the woman carrying a young girl's severed head inside the bowl marks one distinct site on Ugwu. The image functions as a symbol of the narrative of Nigeria. Ugwu wants to show the real picture of the country out of Civil War like Frederick Douglas did in his book *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* depicting the pathetic picture. The bowl and the girl's severed head within it is picked up in another image that of the roped pot and its relationship to Olanna's sister Kainene.

The image of this pot is first introduced by Richard, who comes to Africa because of the fabulous Igbo pot, an image to him of the culture and history of these people. In tracing this pot, Richard acquires instead his Nigerian lover Kainene, who is for him a manifestation of the beautiful roped pot that drew him to Africa. At the end of novel, as Richard searches for Kainene, who is missing due to the war, he “showed them Kainene’s picture. Sometimes, in rush, he pulled out the picture of the roped pot instead” (407). Kainene, is to Richard, an embodiment of native Nigeria and to the reader a figure of what remains lost, silenced and severed because of three years’ horrible war.

Just before the war ends, Kainene crosses military lines in search of black-market food to bring to refugee camp, but she never returns. Despite all the efforts to notice her, no trace or evidence of her is found. Kainene is the symbol of the entire missing category in the war. As the novel closes, Olanna is committed to finding her sister. She is even ready to go to *dibia*, a blind-faith which she previously rejected all the time and utters: “I do believe in it. I believe in everything that will bring my sister home” (433). Kainene’s absence haunts the closing of the text.

Kainene presents her attitude of coexistence. She wants to blur the border between different ethnic groups. When a pregnant woman spat Dr. Inyana, a minority tribe doctor, and says: “Saboteur! It is you non-Igbo who are showing enemy the way! It is you people that showed them the way to my hometown?”(320). Kainene performs her rage to the pregnant woman slapping two hard smacks in quick succession on her cheek.

Thus, it can be concluded that the zone of ethics does not sparkle throughout the narrative of the novel. It remains grey despite the intense expectation of people for transformation. The silence of the outside world is indicted for the crimes against

Biafra which it did not condemn. *Half of the Yellow Sun* revives a story of conflict and crime against humanity that the Nigerian government would rather forget.

### **Analysis of The Curse of Caste; Or The Slave Bride**

Julian C. Collins's novel, *The Cure of the Caste* is an annals of how ethics, morality and humanity disintegrate sporadically and how the oppressed slaves are forced to languish in misery in a society where institutionalized racism and slavery mushroom rampantly. Claire is grief-stricken because she does not know who her parents are. She is brilliant at study. She gets support and inspiration but inner sense of agony at the anonymity of her parents troubles her. This incurable pain weakens her gradually. Most of the time she is seen absorbed in the deep lost. The following extract shows how much grief-stricken she is:

Claire was so absorbed in grief that she noted not the opening of the door, nor the bright sunbeam that entered with the person of a lovely young girl, until a gentle hand rested caressingly on the drooping head, and a sweet voice murmured, in slightly surprised accents. Dear, Claire in tears, can it be possible that you have a grief unshared by me? But tell me darling, what is it that disturbs you so? Said Ella summers, pausing. But failing to elicit a reply, said this time, with pained expression of countenance and quivering lip. (4)

The following extract is expressive of various things related to the life of Claire.

When she asks for her mother, she is silenced. Her inquisitive queries are not responded properly by her relatives and caretaker. She is at pains to remain unknown about her parents and their upbringing. George Manville who happens to be related to the life of Claire is not soft and sympathetic to Claire. From his dark motive, Claire feels helpless. In the atmosphere where Claire is supposed to work, study and interact

with her friends, there is hardly any relative of her who inspire her, loves her and treats her affectionately.

Ella Summers is the intimated friend of Claire. She easily plumbs the depth of Claire's misery. She requests Claire to share her suffering. Though Richard Tracy, Isabelle Trace, George Manville are not sympathetic and empathetic to her, it is Ella who really understands Claire's troubled and ambiguous past. There is good friendship between them. In response to the solicitous and affectionate manners of Ella, Claire responds "Forgive me, Ella dear; if by my silence I have wounded your gentle heart, for believe me, you are the dearest friend I have on earth, and there is none to whom I would reveal my inmost heart, as I have to you. But I cannot help feeling the bitter isolation of my life" (4). In the situation in which she is restless due to the lack of affection and care, Claire feels profoundly uplifted due to the love and care of Ella.

Only loneliness, alienation and the absence of love haunt Claire. She is never deviated from her normal life and struggles. She is determined to be a governess as her study is increasingly fruitful. Though her study is good and there is the likelihood of being a governess in the house of a rich white man, she is pretty upset and imbalanced when she begins to ponder on the tragic end of her mother and the anonymity of her father. Moreover she is so exposed to the loneliness and estrangement that she could not be moved by the request and plea of her close friend. The following extract describes how unmoved and unexcited Claire is by even the sweet words of her best friend:

Claire smiled faintly, while Ella resumed. I have just received a long letter from Mamma, in which she desires me to bring my friend Claire home with me, to make a long visit; and you will go, of course, she

added, coaxingly, and we will have a splendid time; for brother Charles is coming home to spend vacation, and cousins Harry and Fanny Leeburn are coming to spend the summer months with us, down by the lake. Such rides, such picnics, and sails by moonlight on the silvery lake, as will astound the simple natives of Ashton. (4)

Claire is deeply immersed in suffering. Her suffering cannot be easily healed. It is not mitigated easily. Because her sufferings are associated with the question of bleak identity, it cannot be solved just by the harmonization and gleeful life style. Ella says that her brother is coming to her house, and it would be time of celebration. So her mother is also interested to invite Claire. Ella should remind Claire that if she joins in the celebration, it would be more funny and delightful. Ella furnishes certain impetus to the inwardly exhausted and painfully anonymous life.

Unlike the sphere of ideas, sensibility reaches further out into the domain of the extra-mental. Having established subjectivity on the level of sensibility provides Levinas with a place where the other can be met. Furthermore, establishing subjectivity on the level of sensibility leads Levinas to a point where he can establish that the human subject is, first and foremost, passive. Sensations come to me from the outside only to be swallowed. The ethical moment is the moment in which the moral "ought" shows itself. The egoist self comes across something that it wants to enjoy. "That which the self wants to enjoy but cannot is the other person. The reason that it cannot enjoy the other person is not rooted in some deficiency of sensibility, but in the other person who pushes back" (Rosalyn 119). The other resists consumption. The presence of the other is not known. For Levinas, the other has some power over me. Indeed, the other is a transcendence that comes from beyond the categories. Anthony Beavers expounds on this issue as follow:

Because of the other-worldliness of the epiphany of the other in the face-to-face, the face speaks thus-I am not yours to be enjoyed. I am absolutely other, or to put the claim in Levinas' terms, thou shall not kill. The essential element of radical passivity arises from contact with the other person. Vulnerability arises from such a surprise, a being caught off guard by the epiphany of the other person. According to John Llewelyn, "hospitality allows the man and boy to be humane in an inhumane world, it enables them to be just in an unjust world, and it engenders the culture that has been lost, a culture which the boy has never known"(28). Hospitality supplies the ontological ground on which subjectivity enacts itself. Whether or not to be hospitable is an ethical dilemma fundamental to the human condition. The knowledge of the importance of hospitality to the fire of civilization is initially dismissed by all the survivors and victim. It is only the individual who accepts the moral boundary between right and wrong can truly be identified as just and the god-like child.

Though late, Claire is moved by the sympathetic and affectionate manners of Ella. Having listened to the words of Ella, Claire is "deeply moved by her friend's disinterested kindness, and replied, in a voice tremulous with emotion, dear Ella, I hope you will not deem me ungrateful if I decline your much tempting invitation, as it pains me to refuse that which afford me so much real pleasure"(4). Ella is the only one friend who truly cares her, protects her from harms and hazards. Except Ella, others are bent upon leaving Claire in the lurch.

About her past life what Claire knows a lot is Juno. Juno is the woman who brings her up. That is what Claire knows. Juno does not give all the necessary details and information about her life. Claire, indeed, "knew nothing of her past life. She never knew a mother's care. Juno, an old colored nurse, had taken care of her as long as she could remember. No friends had ever visited them, with the exception of a tall,



dark man, who came at long intervals, and always had long talks with Juno”(8). Ignorance about her past inflicts in Claire intense pain which cannot be solved so easily.

Collins builds sympathetic identification with the mother and daughter. These educated, genteel ladies fit the character type in antebellum literature. They are young, innocent, beautiful, light-skinned, raised as a white person. They are unaware of her true racial identity. Juno Hays, a wise African American nurse, is a central figure who holds secrets and is loyal to Lina and Claire. Probably a former slave, Juno has a happy marriage to a successful man. Juno says that she sees no difference between people based on race, because black blood is as good as white blood. Juno gives Claire her mother’s ring. This ring holds an inscription that helps prove Claire’s identity.

Richard’s name is frequently mentioned by Juno and George Manville. When Juno and a stranger whom Claire does not know, talk, the name of Richard always comes. Juno is curious to know who the man is and why Juno and the stranger always take his name. Claire wonders at the frequent mentioning of the name of Richard. The following extract is illustrative of this point:

At the last mentioned visit of the stranger, Claire remembered to have heard him frequently repeat the name of Richard. Who was Richard she wondered? And she instinctively felt that he was, in some way or other, connected with her past life. On entering the room after the stranger had gone, she observed a handkerchief lying on the floor. She picked it up to examine it, and found in one corner the name of George Manville. Claire said nothing to Juno, but resolved to retain the handkerchief, asking herself many times. (9)

Richard's name makes her to ponder her parentage. She tries to understand that her history is really attached to the life of the name that is uttered repeatedly. One day she finds the handkerchief where the name George Manville is written. Thereafter she comes to know that the stranger who always comes to the house and talks to Juno is George Manville.

Claire goes on to examine who Richard and Granville are and why Granville pays for her schooling. In the course of conducting an intensive search, she comes to know that Claire's mother is Lina who is a black woman of unparalleled beauty. One day Richard, son of a white man, loves her. Richard is bent upon marrying Lina but his father does not allow him to marry Lina. In a moment of fury and aggression, Richard's father shoots Richard.

For a long time, Richard is kept in hospital. Lina had to go to a different place where she gets the good treatment and care of a black lady named Juno. Lina was pregnant at that time and while delivering Claire, Lina died. Only Claire survived but Lina died a tragic death. The realization of this bitter reality produces much more torture to her. After this moment of painful realization, Claire's misery and pain increase. She hankers after care and protection, love and affection. But she cannot find all these things so easily. The following extract presents a descriptive glimpse of Lina:

Lina possessed a voice of sweet and thrilling power, and Richard never wearied of hearing her sing those old ballads, which she sang with such deep pathos and exquisite feeling. She soon learned to watch for his coming, and blushed beautifully when he bent to whisper some impassioned strains, or allowed his dark eloquent eyes to rest earnestly

on her down-cast face. They sought not to analyze their feelings; they were happy, and that was enough. (19)

Claire is fully aware of what kind of harsh reality was hidden in the life of her father and mother. Her father, Richard, loved Lina immensely. Due to the racial arrogance on the part of Richard's father, the marriage between Lina and Richard never materialized. It is one of the tragic incidents. Richard's father kept Richard away from Lina. Lina was sent to stay in the house of Juno. While laboring for Claire, Lina died a tragic death. Claire laments for the lack of any person who could have sympathized her mother at the time of her intense suffering.

Richard's father had expected lots of things from Richard. He wished that Richard could choose a white girl for marriage. His father expected his son to be a diehard supporter of slavery. But when he comes to know how his son has become an ardent supporter of anti-slavery movement due to the influence of north, his fury knows no bound. Richard shows sympathy not to Lina whom he loves. He shows love and sympathy to all the slaves who are trapped in the bondage of slavery and servitude. The following extract reflects the liberal attitude of Richard and his ethical concern for all the slaves oppressed in slavery:

Richard was warmly greeted by his parents, and the Negroes were jubilant over Massa's return. Mrs. Tracy felt profound of the great, tall, noble-looking youth, who stooped to kiss her still blooming cheek. And well might she feel proud, for never was a nobler, better son given to gladden a mother's heart. Col. Tracy took especial pride in introducing this son to all his acquaintance, but was horrified and dismayed to hear Richard give expression to many anti-slavery principles, which he had imbibed while at the north. (21)

Richard espoused anti-slavery movement. He stands in favor of the freedom of slaves. His liberal nature of his son alienates him from his father. His father does not like to see slaves struggling for freedom. In addition, when he comes to know that his son is head over heel in love with a black girl named Lina, he is so infuriated that he instantly shoots his son and makes him injured.

Colonel Tracy is of the opinion that the more his son turns away from the community of the advocates of anti-slavery movement, the nobler he would be. Col. Tracy takes especial pride in introducing his son to all his acquaintances but was horrified and dismayed to hear Richard give expression to many anti-slavery principles, which he had imbibed while at the North. He tried to reason with him about the absurdity of entertaining such notions as social equality between races” (21). But this liberal nature of women is called into question by his father’s arrogant nature.

After six months of living happily in Connecticut, Richard returns to his “family home in New Orleans, Louisiana, to try to mend relations with his father. Contrary to his expectation, Colonel Tracy disinherits Richard and shoots him in a violent rage. While recovering, Richard dictates a letter to Lina to explain his absence. But Manville burns the letter” (56). When Lina crosses the color line to marry Richard Tracy, the son of a slave owner, Richard acts on his antislavery and antiracist beliefs by challenging the social order that has privileged him and his family.

Collins suggests that social change can begin on an individual level. She depicts a fulfilling marriage in the United States between a woman of color and a white man. African American women should have the right to marry whomever they choose, regardless of prejudice or laws. They can be effective, responsible wives and mothers. When Richard asserts his decision to marry Lina, his father disinherits him.

He goes to the extent of being disinherited by his father. His father's act of disinheriting his son brings lots of problems in the life of Richard. But Richard does not feel insecure and affected by this decision of his father. He seems happier at his marriage with Lina.

Any calamity and bad consequence that arise from his marriage with Lina does not spoil his happiness. The following extract presents this situation:

Sad as was that too probable result, yet he did not regret the choice he had made. The half year of married life had only seemed to render Lina dearer than ever. No, he did not regret the sacrifice he had made for her sake. His father would disinherit him without doubt. But he still possessed quite a fortune in his own right, left him by a will of his great aunt, John Tracy's sister. But a father's curse is an awful thing, and that thought embittered many hours of his daily life. Yet he breathed not his fears in his young wife's ears. (27)

Richard is clam and tranquil even after his awareness about his disinheritance by his father. He is capable of rising above petty responses and reactive propensity. In this regard, this can be concluded that the marital bond between him and Lina is indestructible. He is committed to the ideals which he had assimilated when he lived in the North for a long time.

Having seen the obstinate nature of his son, Colonel Tracy shoots Richard. But Richard is seriously harmed only but not dead. He is hospitalized instantly. While he was passing a long time in hospital for recovery, Lina is forced to flee the cottage where she used to live with Richard. She is sent to live temporarily in the house of another black woman named Juno. Following the hospitalization of Richard, Lina labors hard for the delivery of Claire. Resultantly, she dies after giving birth to Claire.

The following extract shows how Juno describes Lina's death as deep sleep which marks the beginning of her freedom from the oppression of slavery:

When the cloudless morning dawned, a fair form was wrapped in the calm repose of death. Sweet Lina slept the dreamless sleep, that sleep that knows no waking here on earth. One of earth's weary ones- surely in heaven there is rest for such as thee. In the large easy chair, nestled amid its crimson depths, a beautiful babe was sleeping, a tender waif. Sweet Lina slept the dreamless sleep, the sleep that knows no waking here on earth. One of earth's weary ones-surely in heaven there is rest for such as thee. (35)

Lina dies a tragic death. She does not have her husband beside her at the time of her eternal sleep. Except Juno, there is hardly anybody to show sympathy to her. Richard does not bear grudge to Lina. But he does not have time to come to meet her due to his injury. Apart from this, her racial background tends to maximize her intense sufferings.

Lina dies without knowing many things about Richard's affection and feeling for her. She is faithful to the end. She is unaware that her husband truly loves her but is unable to return to her. When Manville learns that Lina has died giving birth to Claire, he gives "charge of the infant to the African American nurse Juno Hays. Juno never tells Claire the secret of her birth. Manville lies to Richard, claiming that both his wife and daughter are dead. Manville provides funds for Claire to be educated. He helps her so that she could develop her vocal talent" (65). At the beginning of the novel, which is not narrated chronologically, Claire is completing her studies at a women's school and preparing to become a governess. She takes "a position at the

home of Colonel Tracy. She does not know is her grandfather. The servants murmur, however, and likenesses between the two are perceived” (76).

George Manville may have predatory intentions toward Claire. Antagonistic forces include class-and race-based prejudice and the slavery system in antebellum America. The hero Richard Tracy is outspoken in favor of social equality and in opposition to slavery. Richard meditates on the injustice and crime of the curse of caste. The author implies that distinctions based on race, money, and appearances should be erased.

Isabelle Tracy resents Claire. She competes with her for the attention of a visiting French nobleman, Count Clayburn Sayvord. Richard returns from France to the United States. Upon his approval, he learns that “his daughter is still alive. Count Sayvord learns the truth about Claire’s parentage and racial background. But he remains determined to marry her” (75). While Claire’s father, grandfather, and the man she wants to marry know of her racial heritage, Claire herself does not yet know.

There is terrible dearth of ethical sense of responsibility to the enslaved and oppressed being. No grain of humanity is exercised towards helpless women like Lina who are forced to die due to the exclusion and disinterestedness of the white slave holders. Her fateful ending and Richard’s incapacity prove how humanity and ethics erode in the society where slavery and racism have taken institutionalized forms.

### III. Plea for Ethics and Humanity

The core finding of this research is that ethical sphere and the sphere of humanity and empathy can hardly be transparent and lucid at the time of war, communal riot and ethnic cleaning and racial hatred. At the time when ethical zone is increasingly grey, self must not forget its ethical responsibility to the other. The fulfillment of self's responsibility to the other is one of the medium to patch up the difference, discriminations and various levels of misunderstanding. In *Half of Yellow Sun*, *Anil Ghost* and *The Curse of Caste* by Adichie, Ondaatje and Collins respectively, self exists and flourishes only in its conscious commitment to the other. The dualism that exists between the self and the other evaporates when the self is moved by its ethical sense of responsibility to the other.

Anil has nothing to do with the victims. Having seen the plights of war victims she could not help acting out of empathy and humanity. Anil enters into such a deep bond which can hardly be shattered by any other kind of antagonistic forces. Juno acts out of sympathetically when she finds Lina in a neglected and vulnerable condition. At the time of giving birth to Claire, even her husband is not able to come close to her as he was almost shot dead by Colonel Tracy. It is humanity and empathy that can produce healing effect in those who are lacerated irreparably in war, crisis and socio-political unrest.

The sole and whole concern of *Anil's Ghost* is to deal with the forgotten or hidden side of the civil war in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka is a country where organized murder campaigns from the side of both terrorist and government take place rampantly. Anil is a forensic anthropologist is sent by an international human rights organization to investigate these deaths in Sri Lanka. She sets out with a local forensic doctor to discover the identity of a skeleton unearthed in a government archaeological



site. The move and humanistic gesture shown by Anil and her colleague make their entire campaign challenging and formidable as well. They are rather questioned in an unethical and unlawful way. Anil finally is compelled to quit Sri Lanka prior to ending her mission.

The representation of history of Biafran war gives the sense of existence of war not only in the past but also present. Adichie demonstrates the whole image of historical Nigeria. Adichie also attempts to continue the tradition of the third generation writers in Nigeria. The war conflict evaporates the remnant of ethics that lurks at the core of human heart. Adichie's writing acknowledges and responds to the conflict in this novel. The historical background brings the new lesson to awareness of real history.

The fallout of war and communal riot on the zone of ethics is the primary concern of Adichie in *Half of the Yellow Sun*. Death, riot, cruelty, bloodshed, confiscation are the integral ingredient of war that is described in this novel. In this situation, the glimmer of ethics and humanity is totally clouded by the hopelessness and terror. There is a disappearance of Kainene. The soldiers have died in the war.

Horror, terror and disillusionment dampen the prospect of humanity and empathy. There is hardly anyone and any space to discuss about how the victims can be treated kindly and humanely when bloodshed in ethnic cleansing occurs. When the Biafran war erupts, the Igbo lose thousands of lives. Their property and bank accounts are confiscated or destroyed. The Ozobias lose their family home in the predominantly Yoruba capital city of Lagos. During the war, the Igbo is beaten back to interior. Her bank account in Lagos is gone. Since she had lost her savings, then she could not possibly lose her sister. Olanna has lost her saving bank account.

Claire's movement from one sphere of experience to another is a process of

growth and development. This development is embodied in a sequence of events. These events simultaneously characterize different aspects of slavery. It also addresses critical periods of interior growth in her life. Each event adds new dimensions to private and public contexts of her individual story. Claire acts independently. She acts on principle in the later part of her life. She does not avoid the moment to redefine herself in the process.

With Juno's humanitarian aid and assistance, Claire succeeds in fighting against all obstacles posed by racism and slavery. Freedom is the most precious thing all the black captives give utmost value. Juno and Claire inwardly assume that only in the state of freedom, an individual freely gets a chance to think who they are and what they are supposed to achieve in their lives. Lives of black slaves are devoid of dignity, security and self-esteem. The question of identity of the black captives does not arise in a full-fledged way.

What renders the zone of ethics grey is racism that is portrayed in *The Curse of Caste*. Racism, when takes root in the psyche of people, generates vicious social evils like slavery. If slavery takes an institutionalized form, humanity gets shattered and finally dehumanization takes place at a high scale. In this situation, it would be really tough to deal with this evil. That is why, search for root and identity is a must to come out of the hell of racism and slavery.

*The Curse of the Caste* works as a watershed in the history of how slavery and racism shatter the ethical and humanistic concern. Claire has turned into an example of self-determination, proud racial identity, and a popular mythical forefather to the collective black memory. She achieves this level of confidence and assertion due to the benevolent activities of Juno and George Manville. When Lina struggles for life

against death, it is Juno who acts benevolently to her. Manville is also not greedy in giving help to Lina.

Thus, it is fair to say that various issues like war, communal riot dehumanization, slave trade and oppression render the lucid zone of ethics grey. In this moment it becomes necessary to extend and express empathetic and humanistic sense of regard and respect to the victims and the vulnerable.

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