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**Between the “Self” and the “Other”:**

**In/Security in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun***

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**Abstract**

Shaping one’s identity and maintaining ontological security can be quite problematic when one’s space is marred by insecurity, anarchy and unrest. In postcolonial literary works, security and insecurity tend to be prevalent through depicting the colonized’s struggle to cope with the aftermath and adapt to the decolonization period. In particular, *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), written by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, discusses the calamities Nigerians had to face in order to reconstruct their individual as well as collective identities. Adichie portrays a repressed history of Nigerian civil war that resulted in the unsanctioned genocidal murders of the Igbo minority. This is not only due to the extreme tribalism or regionalism at the time, but also due to residual schemings of British imperial policy in Nigeria. Adichie coalesces between actual historical events and fictional characters that are fallible and complex. The novel also showcases the ontological security that several characters aim to achieve through overcoming trauma, existential conundrum and ideological dissensions in Nigeria. This paper aims to elucidate how the conception of security and insecurity is demonstrated in Adichie’s novel, notably during the civil war in Nigeria. As such, the paper seeks to provide a thematic study of Adichie’s novel, through stressing the identity struggle of individuals and the issue of tribalism/regionalism, which is reinforced by the colonial strategy of “divide and rule”. This paper is an attempt to delineate how security and insecurity are interrelated, not only within a particular space but also through one’s perception of “self” and “other”.

**Keywords**

Security, insecurity, war, trauma, identity, tribalism, Biafra, Nigeria.