Theme Analysis of Flora Nwapa's *Never Again:* A Systemic Functional Approach

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Abstract

This paper deals with theme analysis of Flora Nwapa's *Never Again.* The theory that underpins this study is systemic functional linguistics, which is one of the approaches proposed by scholars such as M.A.K Halliday, S. Eggins, J. R. Martin, R. Fowler, J. D. Benson to mention but a very few, for the study of language and its function(s). In this system, the study of language involves three functional labels: experiential, interpersonal and textual meanings. This study aims at describing and analysing linguistic features which connote textual meaning in *Never Again* so as to have a deep understanding of the novel and provide a new interpretation of it. It also aims at uncovering the deep messages conveyed through the novel. Both quantitative and qualitative methods have been used in this study. Thus, two extracts have been selected from *Never Again* and systemic functional linguistic theories have been applied to each of them for the purpose of exploring how language is used to organise itself. The study of the internal organisation and communicative nature of the selected Texts has enabled the researchers to come up with valuable findings. Indeed, through Mood adjuncts that conflate interpersonal themes, participants in Text 1 have expressed particular attitudes and judgments about the limited power of women and the roles of women and children during war whereas those in Text 2 have expressed a high degree of certainty and inclination. This study enables the researchers to provide a deeper understanding of *Never Again* by contending that the deep messages conveyed through the novel are the Nigerian civil war and the roles of women and children in our societies especially during war time.

Keywords: Metafunctions, register variables, systemic functional linguistics, theme patterns.

1. Introduction

This article is an attempt to study one of Flora Nwapa's fictions entitled *Never Again*. The theory that underpins this work is systemic functional linguistics. In this system, the study of language involves three functional labels: experiential, interpersonal and textual meanings (Eggins 1994). The study of these different functional labels helps to have a deeper understanding of a text. This study only focuses on textual meaning which involves theme analysis. Theme mainly concerns the rhetorical structure of a text. This leads Halliday (1971) to observe that: 'It is through this function that language makes links with itself and with the situation; and discourse becomes possible, because the speaker or writer can produce a text and the listener or reader can recognize one'.

Thus, linguistic features which connote textual meaning have been described and analysed for the purpose of uncovering meaning about thematic structure of *Never Again* on the one hand and providing a new interpretation of it on the other hand. Both quantitative and qualitative methods have been used to carry out this work. Quantitative research is an objective approach in the sense that it only seeks precise measurements and analysis of target concepts to answer inquiry. This method is, in Creswell's (2003) terms, 'designed to test cause-consequence theories by conducting experiments and surveys and observing, comparing and measuring variables' (Creswell 2003). It aims to quantify data and generalize results from a sample of the population of interest. Sampling is a fact of selecting a sample of something, a sample being a part of a whole that is looked at to see what the rest is like (Hornby, 1989). So, basing on this method, two extracts have been selected from *Never Again* and linguistic theories have been applied to each of them. Qualitative research is collecting, analysing and interpreting data by observing what people do and say. It is a subjective approach as the researcher tends to become immersed in the subject matter. Osuala (2007) observes that 'this research method is of particular benefit to the practitioner because qualitative reports are not presented as statistical summations but rather in a more descriptive and narrative style' (Osuala, 2007: 175). Here, the statistical results derived from the quantitative research have been analysed, interpreted and more importantly, the reasons that underpin such statistics have been explained as well.

2. Theoretical Framework

As mentioned in the introduction above, the theory that underpins this research work is that of systemic functional linguistics. This theory views language as a social semiotic, a resource people use to accomplish their purposes by expressing meanings in contexts.

2.1 Mode and Textual Meaning

According to Martin and Rothey (1993) 'Mode is concerned with the role language plays in channelling communication, with the degree of feedback encouraged and the amount of abstraction facilitated'. In other words, Mode refers to what part of the language is playing, what is that the participants are expecting the language to do for them in that situation: the symbolic organization of the text, the status that it has, and its function in the context, including the channel and also the rhetorical mode, what is being achieved by the text in terms of such categories as persuasive, expository, didactic and the like. In short, mode refers to the channel through which communication is carried out. Halliday (1985a)

As far as textual meaning is concerned, it deals with the internal organisation and communicative nature of a text. It is the realisation of the Mode of discourse. It is the strand of meaning in which language is used to relate what is said (or written) to the rest of the text and to other linguistic events. This involves the use of language to organise the language itself. According to Halliday (1985a), the textual component of the grammar of English consists of the features associated with two groups of resources: the structural and cohesive. The structural is subdivided into two areas which are the thematic structure and information system. The cohesive is the non-structural resources for discourse which include Reference, Ellipsis, Conjunction, and Lexical cohesion. In this research work, emphasis has been put on Thematic Structure. The description of textual meaning involves Theme and Rheme which mainly concerns the rhetorical structure of a text.

2.2 Thematic structure

Thematic structure concerns the realisation of the textual meaning. It is that structure which gives the clause its character as a message. It involves Theme and Rheme. Theme 'is the element which serves as the point of departure of the message; it is that with which the clause is concerned' (Halliday, 1985a:38). In other words, a clause begins with the realisation of the Theme. This is followed by the realisation of Rheme which constitutes the remainder of the message that is 'the part in which the Theme is developed' (Halliday, 1985a:38). This means that a message consists of Theme followed by a Rheme. The theme may be a nominal group, an adverbial group or a prepositional phrase. It is important to mention here the different types of themes.

2.2.1 Types of themes

There are three different categories of Themes: **Topical, Interpersonal** and **Textual Themes**.

- **Topical Theme**: It concerns the element of the clause to which a transitivity function can be assigned and which occurs in first position in the clause. These transitivity functions are actor, behaver, senser, carrier, token, etc.
- **Interpersonal Theme:** it is a constituent which occurs at the beginning of the clause to which one can assign a mood label (not a transitivity label). The elements that can function as Theme include: the finite in interrogative structures, the modal adjuncts such as Mood, Polarity, Vocative and Comment.
- **Textual Theme:** an element that serves only for cohesion in a text without expressing interpersonal or experiential meanings. It is a Theme which is realised by a textual element (e.g: however, nevertheless, because, etc) such as a continuative adjunct (e.g: oh, now, well, so) or a conjunctive adjunct. These adjuncts perform an important cohesive work in relating the clause to its context and they also occur at the beginning of the clause.

2.2.2 Marked and unmarked Themes

2.2.2.1 Unmarked themes

An unmarked Theme is a Theme which conflates with the mood structure constituents that typically occurs in first position in clauses of that Mood classes. Actually, what is considered as Theme depends on the choice of Mood. Thus, unmarked Theme is when the constituent that is Theme is playing the following roles: Subject in declarative clause; Finite in an interrogative (yes/no questions); WH-element in a wh-interrogative; Predicator in an imperative.

2.2.2.2 Marked themes

A marked Theme is a Theme that is something other than the Subject in a declarative clause. The most common element of marked Theme is an adverbial group (e.g: today, suddenly, somewhat distracted, etc), or a prepositional phrase (e.g: at night, in the corner, without hope, etc) functioning as ADJUNCT in the clause. The study of these different functional labels helps to have a deeper understanding of a text. Indeed, language is used to make meanings with each other. Different types of meanings can be differentiated through language. Eggins (1994) explains that: 'Language is structured to make three kinds of meanings simultaneously. This semantic complexity which allows experiential interpersonal and textual meanings to be fused together in linguistic units is possible because language is a semiotic system, a conventionalised coding organised as sets of choices.' (Eggins, 1994)

It is essential to note that these three register variables enable us to tie linguistic analysis to the relevant

variables. By understanding the semiotic properties of a situation (the values for field, tenor and mode) language users can predict the meanings that are likely to be exchanged and the language likely to be used. Thus, Halliday (2002) states that while people are communicating they make predictions by using the values of field tenor and mode to understand register and that their assessment facilitates their own participation. It is now necessary to carry out the theme analysis of the selected texts from Never Again for the purpose of uncovering meaning about their rhetorical structure.

3. Theme Analysis of the Selected Texts from *Never Again*
3.1 Mode in Texts 1and 2

As mentioned in the theoretical framework, mode refers to what part of the language is playing, what is that the participants are expecting the language to do for them in that situation. In short, it refers to the channel through which communication is carried out. The mode of Texts 1 and 2 is displayed below:
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Text 1
- Extract from a novel
- Starts with a written narrative portraying the chairwoman
- Formal face to face speech
- From time to time a written narrative clarifies the chairwoman's speech and participants' regulated interventions
- Ends with a written narrative

Text 2
- Extract from a novel
- Starts with a written narrative describing Biafran soldiers
- Face to face conversations
- From time to time a written narrative describes participants' emotions and thoughts
- Ends with a written narrative describing how people rejoice the end of the war.

3.2 Textual, Interpersonal and Topical Themes in Text 1

The clause-by-clause theme analysis of Text 1 presented in the appendices includes clauses such as:

Table N°1: Textual, Interpersonal and Topical Themes in Text 1

	Theme			Rheme
	Textual	**Interpersonal**	**Topical**	
3a			She	was not quite forty years old
7-	But		she	was so powerful then
90-		CAN	you	imagine it?
103-		MY PEOPLE,	we	shall overcome.
211-	But	PLEASE	evacuate	the women and children first

It is essential to mention here that all three types of themes have been identified in Text 1. As the table N°1 above clearly indicates, textual themes come before interpersonal themes which are immediately followed by topical themes. It appears in the above table that the topical theme 'She' in clause 3a plays transitivity function (carrier,) and occurs in first position in the clause. In clauses (7), and (211) the topical themes are preceded by textual elements such as 'but' performing an important cohesive work in relating the clause to its context and they also occur at the beginning of the clause. In clauses (90), (103), (and (211) the topical themes are preceded by finite (CAN) vocative (MY PEOPLE), and adjunct mood (PLEASE) expressing interpersonal meaning. It is now necessary to describe the different types of themes in Text 2.

3.3 Textual, Interpersonal and Topical Themes in Text 2

The clause-by-clause theme analysis of Text 2 presented in the appendices includes clauses such as:

Table N° 2: Textual, Interpersonal and Topical Themes in Text 2.

	Theme			Rheme
	Textual	**Interpersonal**	**Topical**	
1-			A car	was approaching from Ugwuta at top speed.
11-	'Not yet,	MAMA,	we	have to have Ugwuta thoroughly combed first.'

| 123- | | THANK GOD | he | still had some humanity, |
| 142- | | THANKFULLY, | we | drove off. |

It appears in the above table that the topical themes 'A car' in clause (1) plays transitivity function (carrier,) and occurs at the first position in the clause. In clauses (11), (123) and (142), the topical themes are preceded by vocative (MAMA), adjunct moods (THANK GOD, THANKFULLY,) expressing interpersonal meaning. In clause (11) the textual element 'Not yet' occurs at the beginning of the clause and performs an important cohesive work in relating the clause to its context. It is now necessary to describe marked and unmarked themes in the selected Texts.

3.4 Marked *and unmarked themes in Text 1*

Unmarked themes are predominant in Text 1. In fact, there are 155 unmarked themes representing 65.67% and 81 marked themes representing 34.32% in Text 1. The following unmarked themes have been selected for illustration.
(1) **It** was one of the prominent women
(71) **We** are going to our home.
(78) **We** shall work on our land.
(215) **who** will cook for the soldiers?
In the above unmarked themes, elements in bold are functioning as subject in the declarative clauses (1), (39), (71), (78) and in the interrogative clause (215). These unmarked themes have been used by the narrator (1) to introduce the woman politician, by the woman politician (71), (78) to convince her addressees and by Ugwuta people (215) to ask for information.
The following marked themes have been selected for illustration:
(7) *But* **she** was so powerful then.
(9) *In short* **she** was highly respected, feared, and hated.
(197) '*But* **I** want to tell you something.
(203) *But* PLEASE **send** the women and children to safety.
(211) *But* PLEASE **evacuate** the women and children first.
These clauses are marked because the italicized elements which occur in the first position in the clauses are functioning as adjuncts. In clauses (7) and (9) the narrator has introduced the prominent woman by putting particular emphasis on her power through the use of marked themes. In clauses (197), (203) and (211) the Intruder particularly insists on his view point which mainly concerns the evacuation of women and children. Through unmarked themes, the author has depicted all issues that are normally and commonly accepted. But through marked themes, she puts particular emphasis on everything that is atypical.

3.5 Marked *and unmarked themes in Text 2*

In Text 2, 131 unmarked themes have been identified. It must be noted that this predominance of unmarked Themes suggests that the author has used language to depict normal as well as unusual events that happen in our societies. There are 60 marked themes representing 31.41% in Text 2. Marked themes identified in this text are either elements in bold or in capital or in italics. The following unmarked themes have been selected for illustration:
(1) **A car** was approaching from Ugwuta at top speed.
(4) **A gruffy looking Biafran Officer** jumped out as the car screeched to a halt.
(5) '**We** have done it,'
(16) '**You** should be happy.
(18) **It** cost blood,
(42) **Nobody** was allowed into Ugwuta until late in the afternoon.
In the preceding unmarked themes, elements in bold are functioning as subject in the declarative clauses. These unmarked themes have been used by the narrator (1), (4) and (42) to describe the atmosphere in which the refugees are, by the Biafran Officer (5), (16) (18) to inform Ugwuta people that the war has ended.
The following marked themes have been selected for illustration: (11) '*Not yet*, MAMA, **we** have to have Ugwuta thoroughly combed first.' (69) '*but* **we** jumped into the car' (85) '*then,* **without warning**, they began to shoot,' (86b) ' *and* to loot // (86c) *and* to rape // (86d) *and* to desecrate // (86e) *and more***,** to lie,' The preceding clauses are marked because the italicized elements which occur in the first position in the clauses are functioning as adjuncts. In clauses (85), (86b), (86c), (86d) and (86e) the narrator has put particular emphasis on the drawbacks of the war and the circumstances in which it has started. Marked theme has enabled the soldier to explain Ugwuta people that they have to wait until the town is completely freed. In clause (69) Ugwuta people describe how they have fled from their fatherland. It must be mentioned here that Text 2 shares almost the same features as Text 1. As a matter of fact, both Texts 1 and 2 contain roughly the same percentages of marked as

well as unmarked themes: 34.32% in Text 1 and 65.67% in Text 2. The Table below shows the statistics of the different themes in both Texts 1 and 2.

Table 3: Statistics of the different themes in both Texts 1 and 2

Texts / Themes	Text 1	Text 2
Textual	59 [25%]	42 [21.98%]
Interpersonal	21 [8.89%]	18 [9.42%]
Topical	236 [100%]	191 [100%]
Unmarked	155 [65.67%]	131 [68.58%]
Marked	81 [34.32%]	60 [31.41%]

The above table shows that topical themes are predominant in both Texts 1 and 2. This indicates that both Texts are topicalised. There are important proportions of textual themes in both Texts. This indicates that in both Texts, clauses, sentences as well as paragraphs are well structured to convey coherent and cohesive messages. The proportions of interpersonal themes are relatively important in both Texts. These relatively important proportions of interpersonal themes suggest the authoritarian tenor of both Texts. Indeed, this authoritarian tenor has been mainly expressed in Text 1 by the prominent woman politician over her fellow Ugwuta people as indicated in clause (89) 'CAN you imagine that, my fellow women here?' whereas in Text 2 it has been expressed by the soldiers over the civilians. In the following clauses, the interpersonal themes are the capitalized elements that have been selected for illustration: (110) 'YOU IDLE CIVILIAN, if you don't shut up' and (112) 'TRUE TO GOD, I'll finish you.'

4. Discussion of the Findings

Texts 1 and 2 display almost the same features as far as theme is concerned. The statistics showed in Table 3 confirm this. Indeed, there are roughly the same proportions of the different types of themes in both Texts. There are as many themes as Rhemes in both texts. No abandoned clause has been identified in Texts 1 and 2. This indicates that all the participants even the Intruder, have opportunities to express fully their ideas and have not been interrupted neither by another participants nor an event. Topical themes are predominant in both Texts 1 and 2. At least one element of each clause plays a transitivity function. Transitivity elements conflated in topical themes concern circumstances, actor, sayer, senser, behaver, carrier. This indicates that both Texts 1 and 2 are concerned with experiences shared by participants (meaning about reality). Interpersonal themes are not predominant in number. The statistics in Table 3 show that in Text 1, there are 08.89% of interpersonal themes. Though Mood adjuncts that conflate interpersonal themes are in low proportions, their presence indicates that participants express not only their opinions about specific matters but also their attitude and judgement about particular matters such as the prevailing collective interest (fatherland), the limited power of women of that time and the roles of women and children in our societies especially during war. The capitalized elements in the following sentences illustrate Mood adjuncts that conflate interpersonal themes: (126) 'PLEASE push him out', (203) 'But PLEASE send the women and children to safety', (211) 'But PLEASE, evacuate the women and children first' As said above Mood adjuncts enable the participants to express their attitude. As shown in sentence (126) the Mood adjunct PLEASE enables many Ugwuta people from the audience to express a high level of anxiety about the presence of the Intruder.

On the other hand, the Intruder has used Mood adjuncts to implore Ugwuta people to evacuate the women and children. The sentences (203) and (211) confirm this. It is important to note that the Intruder is quite right to insist on the evacuation of women and children because evacuating disable people, women and children during war time, is not an act of cowardice. But he can't be understood at that time as he has once deserted from the army. He is treated as a treacherous and his proposals have merely been rejected. This indicates that when someone is hated, however right he/ she is, people don't pay careful attention to him / her. It is a great mistake to reject or to accept a proposal of someone just on the basis of feelings (hatred, love, jealousy etc.). As an African proverb says 'a fool may chance to put something into a wise man's head'. It can be inferred from the above analysis that any proposal needs a critical analysis or critical thinking regardless of the quality, power, and social rank of the one who makes it.

In Text 2, interpersonal themes represent 09.42% of the total number of themes. Another element of interpersonal theme is vocative adjuncts which are in low proportion in Text 1 as well as in Text 2. Nevertheless, their presence indicates that some participants in Text 1 as well as in Text 2 have expressed degree of intimacy, solidarity and power. As far as textual themes are concerned, it must be noted that continuity adjuncts are almost non-existent in both Text 1 and 2. This indicates the particularity of the language depicted by the author. Indeed, Text 1 mainly deals with a discourse delivered during a political meeting. So it is not a free and open discussion but a formal and regulated one. Conjunctive adjuncts that conflate textual themes play important cohesive function in both Texts 1 and 2. Some conjunctive adjuncts link clauses together whereas other link sentences

together. Thus, textual themes enable participants in Texts 1 and 2 to make cohesive and coherent sentences. Considering all that has been discussed thus far, it can be noted that the novel *Never Again* mainly concentrates on the Nigerian civil war, the prevailing collective interest (fatherland), the limited power of women, and the roles of women and children in our societies especially during war time.

5. Conclusion

This paper has explored how language is used to organise itself. The study of the internal organisation and communicative nature of the selected Texts from Never Again has enabled the researcher to come up with valuable findings. Indeed, transitivity elements conflated in topical themes concern circumstances, actor, sayer, senser, behaver, and carrier. This indicates that both Texts 1 and 2 are concerned with experiences shared by participants (meaning about reality). Mood adjuncts that conflate interpersonal themes enable some participants in Text 1 to express particular attitudes and judgements about particular matters such as the prevailing collective interest (fatherland), the limited power of women of that time and the roles of women and children in our societies especially during war. In addition, it has been found out that our feelings (hatred, love, jealousy...) influence our language use. Sometimes, we wrongly reject or accept proposals of someone just on the basis of the feelings we have for him/ her. Linguistically, this is a great mistake because any proposal requires a critical analysis or critical thinking regardless of the quality, power or social rank of the one who makes it. In Text 2, Mood adjuncts that conflate interpersonal themes enable on the one hand, a Biafran soldier to express a high degree of certainty and on the other hand, civilians mainly Chudi and his family to express a high level of inclination for having been recognized by one of the soldiers who are about to loot their properties. The description and analysis of *Never Again* enable the researcher to find out that the novel concentrates on the Nigerian civil war, the prevailing collective interest (fatherland), the limited power of women and the roles of women and children in our societies especially during war time.

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Analysed appendices
Theme analysis of Texts 1 and 2
Keys
Theme is underlined. Topical Theme: **in bold**. Interpersonal Theme: in CAPITALS. Textual Theme: *in italics*.
Dependent clause as Theme: **whole clause in bold**
Text 1 (extracted from *NEVER AGAIN* pp (7-11)
1-**It** was one of the prominent women 2-**who** addressed the gathering of the men – mostly young men in their twenties and thirties. 3-**She** was not quite forty years old // *and* had four boys 4-**who** were below fifteen years of age. 5-**Chudi** did not like her at all 6-*because of* **a raw deal** he had with her before the war. 7-*But* **she** was so powerful then 8-*that* **people** were very careful not to offend her. 9-*In short* **she** was highly respected, feared, and hated. 10-**We** had no alternative // *but* to listen to her. 11-'MY FELLOW UGWUTA PEOPLE,' **she** started. 12-'**A lot of people** have been carrying false rumours. 13-**I** am sorry for them. 14-*If* **they** are caught, 15-*not only* **they** will be detained but their relations as well. 16-**I** am for Biafra. 17-**I** am for Ujukwu. 18-**I** follow him 19-*wherever* **he** leads. 20-**I** have made this very clear. 21-**You all** know me very well, 22-*though* **I** have never lived at home. 23-**You all** know 24-*that* **I** lost my husband in this war…' 25-'**Why** is she lying?' 26-**I** said under my breath. 27-'**Why** should she lie with that kind of thing? 28-**Everybody** here knows 29-*that* **her husband** died a natural death in Warri in 1966. 30-**It** was not a mysterious death either. 31-**He** died in hospital of diabetes.' 32-

Chudi glared at me warningly, // _and_ looked furtively about to see 33-_if_ **I** had been overheard. 34- '**You all** know 35-_that_ **I** have lost all my property in Warri.' 36-'**That**'s a lie again,' 37-**I** said // _and_ earned a painful nudge from Chudi. 38-**It** was annoying. 39-**The woman politician** did not lose anything in Warri. 40-**When** her husband died, 41-**she** brought her children home, and her property. 42-**What** she left behind was her landed property. 43-**I** heard her repeating the lie. 44-'**You all** know 45-_that_ **I** lost all my property in Warri. 46-**That** is beside the point. 47-**What** is property? 48-**I** don't mind that at all. 49-**That** is my sacrifice for Biafra, for the cause of Biafra. 50-**There** is no sacrifice too great for Biafra. 51-**I** am prepared to die for Biafra. 52-MY FELLOW UGWUTA MEN AND WOMEN. 53-**We** have fled from Enugu, Onitsha, and Port Harcourt. 54-**Where** are we going to flee to again? 55-**Where** are we running to? 56-**Why** are we running? 57-**We** are running from the vandals. 58-**Who** are the vandals? 59-**Who** are they? 60-**They** are nobody. 61-**We** must continue fighting against them 62-_until_ **we** vanquish them. 63-**God** is alive 64-_and_ **God** knows 65-_that_ **our cause** is just. 66-**They** killed us in Lagos, 67-**they** killed us in Zaria, in Kano, in Jos, in Kafanchan, in Ibadan, in Abeokuta. 68-**We** said to them, 69-**it** is enough. 70-**Leave** us alone in peace. 71-**We** are going to our home. 72-**We** will have nothing to do with you any more. 73-**You** say 74-**we** are land thirty. 75-ALL RIGHT. 76-**We** are leaving your land for you. 77-**We** are going back to our land. 78-**We** shall work on our land. 79-**We** shall keep alive. 80-**Live** in peace in your Nigeria. 81-**You** no longer want us in Nigeria. 82-**We** are going back home. 83-**Then** we called our home Biafra. 84-_**Biafra** Kwenu   Kwenu Kwenu!'_ 85-_and_ **the people** respond with a thunderous 'Hee'…86-'MY FELLOW UGWUTA PEOPLE, **the Nigerians** will not leave us alone. 87-**The Vandals** said 88-**we** have committed a crime by leaving them. 89-CAN **you** imagine that, my fellow women here? 90-CAN **you** imagine it? 91-_If_ **you** are fighting 92-_and_ **you** are beaten and battered. 93-**You** run home // _and_ lock your door, // barring the man beating you. 94-**Then** he turns round // _and_ says 95-**you** have committed a crime. 96-**A crime,** my people. 97-IS **cowardice** a crime? 98-**We** have agreed 99-_that_ **we** are cowards in Nigeria, not in Biafra. 100-**We** shall defend every inch of our fatherland. 101-**God** is in our side. 102-**We** shall overcome. 103-MY PEOPLE, **we** shall overcome. 104-**We** shall overcome 105-_only when_ **you and men** here stand fast // _and_ **defend** our land.' 106-'**Why** am I a woman? 107-GOD, **you** should have made me a man. 108-**I** would have said to the young men, to the youths 109-_whose_ **blood** I know is boiling now in their veins, 110-**follow** me. 111-**I**'ll lead you.112- **I**'ll fight the Vandals. 113-**They** will not be allowed to pollute our fatherland. 114-**They** will not be allowed to set their ugly feet on the soil of Ugwuta. 115-_Never in history,_ **my grandfathers and great grandfathers** never told me 116-_that_ **Ugwuta** had suffered from any aggressor. 117-**This** will not happen in my life time!' 118-'WOMAN, **sit** down, 119-**you** have spoken enough,' 120-**one ruffian** said. 121-**Everybody** turned round to see the intruder. 122-_And_ **he** mounted the chair 123-**he** was sitting on. 124-**Many people** hissed 125-_as_ **they** saw him. 126-'PLEASE **push** him out' 127-**many** said from the audience. 128-'DON'T **push** him out. 129-**Hear** what he is going to say,' 130-**others** said. 131-**There** was commotion. 132-**Somehow after a few minutes** the hall was quiet again. 133-**It** was not the woman 134-**who** was talking now. 135-**It** was the intruder. 136-**He** had come up to say something. 137-**He** was very serious and rough. 138-**He** had been militia in Port Harcourt. 139-**After the fall of Port Harcourt,** he returned home following the new policy the government had adopted in making everybody a soldier, // _and_ scrapping militia men. 140-**He** opted to return home rather than join the army. 141-**He** had told everybody of the gruesome experience he and other militia men had 142-_as_ **Port Harcourt** fell. 143-**His relatives** had begged him not to talk in the way he was talking, 144-_but_ **he** had refused. 145-_So_ **they** bundled him away to the farm. 146-_When_ **the people** seemed to have forgotten him, 147-**he** emerged again. 148-'**Look**, you ruffian, you good for nothing child,' 149-**said** one from the crowd, 150-_if_ **you** don't take him, 151-_if_ **you** are not careful, 152-**you** are going to be handed over to the army.' 153-'**You** can't hand him over to the army,' 154-**another** said. 155-**He** was the uncle of the intruder. 156-'**Allow** him to speak, 157-**allow** him to speak,' 158-**filled** the hall. 159-'**We** have a chairman in this gathering. 160-UGWUTA PEOPLE, **I** am ashamed of you. 161-**I, THE DAUGHTER OF NGENEGE**, stood up to talk, 162-_and_ **I** was hushed down. 163-**I** was hushed down. 164-_And_ **I** hear people saying, 165-**allow** him to speak, 166-**allow** him to speak. 167-**Allow** who to speak? **This ruffian, this intruder, this deserter**? 168-**We** should if we were loyal to our fatherland, Biafra, hand him over to the army 169-_because_ **he** is a deserter. 170-**He** is a good for nothing child. 171-**I** wouldn't like to have such a child. 172-GOD, PLEASE DON'T **give** me such a child…' 173-'_No, no, no_,' **the Chairman** said at last. 174-'**I** have given the intruder permission to speak. 175-**He** should be heard, 176-_even if_ **he** is a deserter and a ruffian, 177-**he** should be heard.' 178-'**I** don't mind what you call me in this gathering. 179-**I** don't care at all. 180-**Everybody** knows my father and my mother. 181-**We** are poor. 182-_But_ **we** are respectable. 183-**I** was in Port Harcourt. 184-**I** joined the Militia. 185-_And_ **when** it was time to fight, 186-**I** fought for Biafra. 187-**We** were cut off in the creeks. 188-**Many** who could not swim perished in the creeks of Port Harcourt. 189-_Because_ **I** am from Ugwuta, the lake city, 190-**I** was able to swim out, // _and_ **to find** my way home after hiding in the creeks for two weeks. 191-**It** is because I am from Ugwuta 192-_that_ **I** am living now. 193-OTHERWISE **I** would have been a dead man by now, // _and_ WOULD HAVE **forgotten** those friends of mine 194-**who were in the Militia with me**, are now forgotten. 195-_So_ **I** love Ugwuta. 196-**I**'ll fight with all my might to save Ugwuta from the Vandals. 197-'_But_ **I** want to tell you something. 198-PLEASE DON'T **say** I am a

sabo. 199-**I** am not. 200-**When** the time comes to send away the women and the children, 201-PLEASE DON'T **hesitate** to do so. 202-**The young men** can stay to defend Ugwuta. 203-*But* PLEASE **send** the women and children to safety. 204-DON'T **leave** them until the last moment; 205-*if* **you** do, 206-**many** will die. 207-**This** is the mistake 208-*that* WAS **made** in almost all the places that have fallen. 209-**This** is my home. 210-**I** don't want it to fall. 211-*But* PLEASE **evacuate** the women and children first. Please …' 212-'**Let** me answer him Chairman,' 213-**One of the men in the audience** said. 214-'**When** we evacuate the women and the children, 215-**who** will cook for the soldiers? 216-**Who** will fetch water for the women to cook for the soldiers? 217-MY PEOPLE, DIDN'T **I** say 218-*that* **this boy** is a *sabo*? 219-**We** should hand him over to the Army. 220-**I** am a man 221-*and* **I** am going to defend Ugwuta. 222-**People like this boy** should not be allowed to speak in a meeting like this. 223-**Youths of this town** should be ashamed of themselves. 224-**I** am ashamed of you, the Intruder 225-**I** have two boys in the Army, thank God. 226-**I** don't mind sacrificing them for Biafra.' 227-**It** was true he had two boys in the Army. 228-**One** was a Major, 229-**the other** was a Captain. 230-**They** had fought gloriously for the cause. 231-**They** were among the lucky ones 232-**who** had survived the war. 233-**I** say, 234-**survived** the war, 235-*because* **the rate of officer casualties** was almost criminal. 236-**Those boys** fought so bravely.

Text 2 (extracted from *NEVER AGAIN* pp (72-75)

1-**A car** was approaching from Ugwuta at top speed. 2-**The people** made way. 3-**The stick of the check-point** was lowered. 4-**A gruffy looking Biafran Officer** jumped out as the car screeched to a halt. 5-'**We** have done it,' 6-**he** said, 7-**raising** his fist in acknowledgement of the wave of cheers that greeted him.' 8-'THANK YOU, MY SON,' **cheered** the elderly women. 9-'**When** can we go back?' 10-**an aged woman** asked. 11-'*Not yet,* MAMA, **we** have to have Ugwuta thoroughly combed first.' 12-'**What** about our property, 13-IS it safe?' 14-'**Who** talks about property?' 15-**the officer** roared. 16-'**You** should be happy 17-*that* **you** have the land. 18-**It** cost blood, 19-**you** know. 20-**As for the property**, soldiers loot everywhere.' 21-'**Somebody** said, 22-'*If the* **Nigerians** loot, 23-*it*'s understandable. 24-*But* **why** should we loot? 25-**It** is unbiafran.' 26-'**That**'s all very well. 27-*But* **remember** too, the spirit of 'Biafra is: our land first. 28-**Give** us somewhere to stand 29-*and* **we**'ll move the world.' 30-**He** jerked open the car door went in // *and* banged the door shut. 31-**Leaning out** of the window, 32-**he** said, 33-'*When* **you** go back to Ugwuta, 34-**think not** of your property 35-*but* **of the blood** we spilled to set it free. 36-**Build** anew, 37-**that**'s what Biafra means. 38-DRIVER, **move**' 39-**More cars** streamed past. 40-**Some** were actually loaded with looted property. 41-**Jubilant soldiers** were shooting random burst from their guns amidst shouts of: 'Vandals done crape, Fish done chop them' 42-**Nobody** was allowed into Ugwuta until late in the afternoon. 43-**We** first drove to our house. 44-**There** were bullet wounds all over the walls. 45-**We** did not linger. 46-**There** were still soldiers, 47-**real soldiers** who were still in tattered battle dress on the street. 48-**They** had their guns // *and* looked formidable. 49-**We** picked up some cooking pots and pans. 50-**The barn** was intact. 51-**We** selected very large yams, 52-*as much as* **we** could take in the car. 53-**There** was a bucket 54-**we** had dropped 55-*when* **we** were fleeing. 56-**We** collected that as well. 57-**The goat and sheep** had disappeared; 58-**a loss** that made my mother-in-law weep. 59-**The goat** was pregnant. 60-**It** was a goat that usually had quadruplets. 61-**At my father's house,** my brother collected this radio record player and his wife's box 62-*which* **they** left behind in their hurry. 63-**There** were no bullet marks on the walls. 64-**The bags of rice, tins of palm oil and groundnut oil left at the door step** had all disappeared. 65-**We** were looking round to see 66-*whether* **they** could get one or two useful items 67-*when* **we** heard a gun shot. 68-**It** was a distant shot 69-*but* **we** jumped into the car // *and* drove off. 70-**Apart from some few soldiers on the street**, Ugwuta was desolate and empty. 71-**Only a few days before**, the place was swarming with people. 72-**Now** it was empty. 73-**It** was a battle ground. 74-**Where** were the Nigerian troops 75-**who** entered it barely three days ago? 76-**Where** was everybody? 77-**What** folly 78-**What** arrogance, 79-**what** stupidity led us to this desolation, to this madness, to this wickedness, to this war, to this death? 80-**When** this cruel war was over, 81-**there** will be no more war. 82-**It** will not happen again, never again. NEVER AGAIN, never again. 83-**Why**, we were all brothers, 84-**we** were all colleagues, all friends, all contemporaries, 85-*then,* **without warning**, they began to shoot, 86-**without warning**, they began to plunder // *and* to loot // *and* to rape // *and* to desecrate // *and more***, to lie, // to lie against one another. 87-**What** was secret was proclaimed on the house tops. 88-**What** was holy was desecrated and abused. NEVER AGAIN. 89-**There** was a check point before Mgbidi. 90-**It** was not there 91-*when* **we** passed barely thirty minutes earlier. 92-**A rough soldier** came along. '93-**Open** your boot. 94-*So* **we** won't eat. 95-**Bring** them out. 96-**All of them.**' 97-**He** meant the yams. 98-**The driver** hesitated. 99-'**Bring** them out quickly 100-**I** say.' 101-**Chudi and brother** jumped out of the car. 102-'DO **what** you are told,' 103-**my brother** said to the driver. 104-**The driver** began, painfully to bring out the yams from the boot. 105-**He** deliberately left three. 106-'**All of them,**' the soldier said. 107-'**Leave** those for us, 108-**we** too must eat,' 109-*that* was Chudi. 110-'YOU IDLE CIVILIAN, *if* **you** don't shut up, 111-**I**'ll finish you. 112-TRUE TO GOD**, I**'ll finish you.' 113-**All the yams** came out. 114-**Another soldier** came along, // *and* got hold of the radio. 115-'**I** gonna keep this, 116-*eh … YE MAN,* **I** gonna keep this.' 117-**My brother** looked at him: 118-'*Hee*, YOU, OF COURSE **it** is you. 119-**It** can't be anyone else.' 120-'*Hee*, **what**'s cracking?' 121-**the soldier** raised his head. 122-THANK GOD

there was a sign of recognition on the soldier's face. 123-THANK GOD **he** still had some humanity, 124-**he** was still human, 125-**all** had not gone with the wind. 126-'*so* **you** did this marvelous job. 127-**This** is my home, 128-**you** know.' 129-**That** was my brother again. 130-'**Where** is your uncle?' 131-**he** continued. 132-**The soldier** said nothing. 133-**He** simply turned to the driver **//** *and* said quietly, 134-'**Put** the yams back.' 135-**His comrade** turned: 136-'**What** say you, eh?' 137-'**I** said, 138-**put** the yams back. 139-DON'T **molest** them. 140-**Leave** them to go.' 141-**The yams** were put back into the boot. 142-THANKFULLY, **we** drove off. 143-'**That** was the boy 144-**I** taught barely two years ago. 145-**He** dropped out in class four. 146-THANK GOD **he** recognized me. 147-**We** would have gone away empty-handed. 148-**They** could have commandeered the car. 149-**He** was one of the worst pupils 150-**I** had ever taught. 151-**He** was a thief and a dirty liar. 152-**While at school,** there was no evil he did not excel in. 153-**Now** he is a soldier, not even an officer. 154-**His uncle** told me 155-**he** had joined the army, 156-**this** was before Enugu fell. 157-*And* **up till now** he is not an officer. 158-**He** had not distinguished himself even in battle. 159-**He** has always been a ne'er do well.' 160-'**At Mgbidi** we met many more Ugwuta people 161-**who** were not allowed to enter their homes. 162-**We** were let in 163-*because* **we** happened to know who was at the checkpoint at the time. 164-*So* **the people** thronged round us. 165-'*So* **it** is true?' 166-**one of the women** asked. 167-'**It** is perfectly true, 168-DON'T **you** see the boot of our car? 169-**It** is true, 170-**the gallant Biafran forces** have done it again. 171-**They** have wiped out the Vandals.' 172-'DID **you** get to the Lake?' 173-**One of the men** asked. 174-'*No,* **we** didn't get to the Lake. 175-**We** had no business there.' 176-'*So* **we** can go back to Ugwuta in a day or two?' 177-'OF COURSE,' **my brother** said. 178-**He** was becoming a chief information officer. 179-**The people** rejoiced, long life Biafra, long life Ojukwu. 180-DIDN'T **Ojukwu** assure them 181-*that* **nothing** would happen to Ugwuta, 182-*that* **he** was going to defend every inch of Ugwuta. 183-**He** had kept his word. 184-**They** dared the Vandals to come. 185-**They** dared Gowon to continue his war of aggression on the peace-loving people of Biafra. 186-**They** were now prepared to fight, to starve and to die for Biafra. 187-**Only a short while before**, some hen-pecked men from Ugwuta had gathered in Mgbidi to find out 188-*whether* **there** was any possibility of showing Ojukwu 189-*so that* **he** could end the war. 190-**Now** they were ready to die 191-*because* **their homeland** had been saved.