

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

University of 8 Mai 1945/Guelma
Faculty of Letters & Languages
Department of Letters and English Language

جامعة 8 ماي 1945/قالمة
كلية الآداب واللغات
قسم الآداب واللغة الإنجليزية



Option: Literature

Postcolonial Trauma: Case Study of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006)

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Language and Culture

Board of Examiners

Chairwoman: Dr. BENDJEMIL Khawla (MCB) Université de 8 Mai 1945/Guelma

Examiner: Mrs. MAHTALI Ahlem (MAA) Université de 8 Mai 1945/Guelma

Supervisor: Dr. BOUALLEGUE Nadjiba (MCB) Université de 8 Mai 1945/Guelma

Submitted by:

BAZINE Wafa

HAMICI Wala

Supervised by:

Dr. BOUALLEGUE Nadjiba

June 2023

Dedication 1

I would like to start by thanking Allah the most gracious and the merciful for giving me the strength, patience, and passion to accomplish this humble dissertation. To my ultimate source of power, to the souls of my grandparents, Hamici Mohammed and Khaled Lkhamssa, thank you for the unconditional love, thank you for believing in me, this dissertation is dedicated to you, rest forever in heaven.

I dedicate this dissertation with full gratitude to my wonderful grandmother Madi Malika, to our long talks together. To my grandfather Madi Abdullah, the most humble and joyful man I ever knew.

To my treasure, my parents Hamici Farik and Madi Nihed. I reached my dreams only because of your patience, encouragement, love, and constant support.

To my precious younger siblings, to a piece of me, Aya, Taouba, Sajida, Loujain, Jana, and Lokman who accompanied me throughout my journey.

To my aunties, Naima, Nadra, Nassima, and Nada. Thank you for the unlimited support.

To the one who always encouraged my dreams and urge for success, to the one who never gave up on me and helped me to evolve, to Aouata Mohammed Amin.

To my favorite people, Wafa, Asma, Lina, Nouha, Rayene, Amina, and Nesrine. Thank you for the priceless memories that I will never forget, thank you for being more than friends to me, I will always appreciate your presence in my life.

Finally, special thanks go to myself. I would like to thank me for believing in my capacities, for never giving up on my dreams and putting the efforts to make them true. For all the restless nights and days, we shall make a glory today.

Wala

Dedication 2

First and foremost, I would thank Allah for giving me the strength and the resilience to finish this humble work.

I dedicate this dissertation to the source of my power and the reason that kept me going, my beloved parents Bazine Layachi and Benkirat Houria who have always dreamed to see me graduate. I hope I have given you a sense of pride.

To my sweetest niece, Hind, whom I love spoiling, thank you for your drawings and scribbles that are all over my papers.

To the best gang, Wala, Asma, Amina, Lina, and Nouha, thank you for your unconditional love, the priceless memories, and for your free therapy.

To my precious ones, Oumayma, Manel, Aymen, Youssra, Rima Ghouzlani, and Amani Dib, for being there for me and offering me the support I needed. Thank you for your realness.

Last but not least, I want to thank me for believing in me, for doing much of hard work, and for never quitting.

Wafa

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our sincere gratitude and reverence to anyone who has helped and accompanied us throughout our academic path.

We would like to start by thanking our brilliant supervisor **Dr. BOUALLEGUE Nadjiba** for her guidance and advice, as well as for tolerating our small and innocent questions. We appreciate how you made us love literature even more. Thank you for your priceless advice, your patience, and your efforts. Most of all, thank you for believing in our creativity.

We would also take the opportunity to thank our teachers: Mrs. BISKRI Yamina, Mr. ZEMMOURI Layachi, Dr. MLILI Amina, Mrs. BOURSACE Houda, Dr. DEKHAKHENA Abd El Karim, ATY Mourad, and Mr. ALIZOUI Mahfoud who were more than happy to offer us the help we needed and to provide us with advice and guidance.

Our special thanks go to the committee members, Mrs. MAHTALI Ahlem, and Dr. BENDJEMIL Khawla for taking the time and effort to review our humble dissertation and offer insightful feedback.

Abstract

This study examines the representation of postcolonial trauma in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006). Trauma has long been viewed from a Eurocentric perspective, purposely ignoring the struggles of formerly colonized people. Myriad studies tackle the trauma theory as a Western concern, where formerly colonized people are not viewed as psychologically wounded or traumatized. Thus, many postcolonial writers choose to address trauma in their works to get recognition of their people's traumatic experiences. The dissertation demonstrates that Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* is a testimony of the postcolonial trauma which is provoked by the cruel events of the Biafran civil war. Drawing on trauma theories such as those of Cathy Caruth and Sigmund Freud, the study probes deep into trauma to understand the difference between individual and collective trauma and the effects of trauma on postcolonial people's psyche. Furthermore, the study employs ideas of leading postcolonial theorists such as Frantz Fanon to demonstrate that postcolonial trauma is one of the legacies of colonialism. By discussing the novel's thematic concerns as silence and racism and its narrative techniques such as self-reflexivity and polyvocality, the dissertation shows that postcolonial writers' thematic and narrative choices create a unique voice that portrays trauma from a postcolonial perspective.

Keywords: Postcolonial trauma, trauma theory, colonial legacies, silence, racism, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, self-reflexivity, polyvocality.

Table of Content

Dedication 1	I
Dedication 2	II
Acknowledgements	III
Abstract	IV
Table of Content	V
Introduction	1
Chapter I: Historical and Theoretical Background	5
I.1. Historical and Political Context of the Nigerian Civil War	5
I.2. The Representation of the Biafran War in Anglophone Nigerian Fiction	7
I.3. An Overview of Trauma Theory.....	10
I.4. Postcolonial Trauma.....	15
Chapter II: Thematic Concerns in <i>Half of a Yellow Sun</i>	22
II.1. An Overview of the Novel <i>Half of a Yellow Sun</i>	22
II.2. Trauma and Silence	25
II.3. Racism in <i>Half of a Yellow Sun</i>	30
Chapter III: Narrative Techniques in <i>Half of a Yellow Sun</i>	39
III.1. Self-Reflexivity	39
III.2. Polyvocality	46
Conclusion	51

Work Cited..... 54

الملخص

Résumé

Introduction:

Postcolonial literature has always given the silenced and the oppressed a voice to speak about the dreadful experiences they have undergone during colonization. It exposes the bloody practices of the colonizer who later claimed that these subjects are not affected neither mentally nor psychologically by these practices. Western literature depicts the colonized subjects in a way that shows them as the villains who deserve to be colonized. Thus, Western writings reveal how Western people were the only ones who are traumatized by the cruelties of wars, excluding postcolonial people from the scope of trauma.

Westerners tell the story of colonized people from their own lenses. They possess the power to not only narrate a single story of people, but they can also make it the truest story. This manipulation of history overlooks and obscures the postcolonial people's trauma. As a result, postcolonial writers seek to refute the falsified ideas presented about them in their narratives. They try by all means to rewrite their stories and history to restore the voices of the silenced.

Trauma is profoundly explored in many postcolonial works to show the enduring impact of civil wars and their horrendous incidents. In so doing, postcolonial writers document the legacies of colonialism such as civil wars and how they affect former colonized people. One powerful example of such writings can be found in African literature. African writers such as Chinua Achebe, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, and Buchi Emecheta sought to make the struggles of African people visible and universally recognized; these authors skillfully portray the psychological and the emotional suffering caused by the savagery of war and colonization. Through their narratives, they address the distorted image of their people by providing another story to the reader.

Because trauma has long been viewed from a Eurocentric perspective, purposely ignoring the struggles of former colonized people, this thesis is conducted to explore the manifestation of trauma in the postcolonial novel. It investigates the specificities of the trauma of the postcolonial subject in the Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) to reveal how postcolonial writers represent trauma in their narratives. It aims to illuminate the ignored sufferings of Biafrans in the civil war to get their voices and stories heard. The novel under study is selected because it is a vital example of postcolonial trauma fiction as it illustrates the bloody and horrific events of the civil war, and shows how these events led to individual as well as collective traumas of Nigerian people. It is also crafted in a way that allows us to learn about the different narrative techniques used by a postcolonial writer in portraying trauma. The choice of the theme is induced by personal preference and passion to psychoanalysis and African literature.

Adichie is an important voice in postcolonial literature. She is a Nigerian writer whose books are of an authentic representation of the African life and a vivid embodiment of the struggles that Africans encounter. In her novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*, she chronicles Nigerian people's tragedies during the civil war. She patriotically portrays how this civil war, that is mostly a colonial legacy, has torn the country and its people apart. Adichie pictures the profound impact of this civil war on Nigerians' psyche and identity. It is worth mentioning that Adichie did not experience the civil war, yet she inherited her trauma from the stories she heard about the savagery of this war. This implies the long-lasting effects of the collective trauma of the Biafran war on the coming generations.

This dissertation relies heavily on trauma theory, mainly Sigmund Freud and Cathy Caruth's to explore how trauma is manifested in the novel under study. Because the study aims at revealing how postcolonial writers interpret trauma in the postcolonial context, it also utilizes ideas from prominent postcolonial theorists such as Frantz Fanon. Postcolonial theory

is employed to show that postcolonial trauma is a colonial legacy and reveal how some traumatic experiences, such as racism, had a huge mark on postcolonial people's psyche. Through the use of postcolonial theory, this study also demonstrates how through employing specific narrative techniques, Adichie successfully defies the twisted stories told by westerners about her people and promote the idea that African history should be written by Africans.

This thesis is divided into three main chapters. The first chapter is a theoretical one that consists of four main sections. The first section includes a historical and a political background of the Biafran civil war, including leading factors to Biafra war and its effects on the Nigerian country. The second section deals with the representation of the Biafran war in Anglophone Nigerian fiction where it shows how other postcolonial African writers depict the Nigerian civil war in their works. The third section, however, tackles trauma theory relying on Cathy Caruth and Sigmund Freud's studies mainly to understand individual and collective trauma. Finally, the last section is about postcolonial trauma which explores the trauma of non-western postcolonial subjects.

The second chapter firstly provides readers with an overview about the novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*. The second and the third sections are analytical; they deal with thematic concerns in the novel such as silence and racism in relation to trauma. Eventually, the third chapter is comprised of two sections mostly concerned with narrative techniques the author used in *Half of a Yellow Sun* and the main reasons behind using them. The first section deals with self-reflexivity and how it is used by Adichie to show that history is not the only source of information and it carries many possible truths. The second section focuses on the use of polyvocality as a way of narration to show that not all black people experience trauma in the same, identical way.

To conclude, this research brings attention to the specificities of postcolonial trauma within Adichie's novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*. African writers genuinely reflect African reality; articulating the sufferings and the struggles of people. Thus, by using narrative techniques such as self-reflexivity and polyvocality as well as addressing themes like silence and racism, Adichie succeeds in portraying the sufferings and horrible incidents experienced by her people. Her novel harbors the pain and the anguish of Nigerians.

Chapter I: Historical and Theoretical Background

This chapter deals with the historical events of the Biafran war and provides a theoretical background of trauma and postcolonial trauma theories. It is sectioned into four parts. The first section deals with the historical and political context of the Nigerian civil war as well as the main figures and events of the war. The following section tackles the representation of the Biafran civil war in Anglophone Nigerian fiction, and briefly explores the theme of trauma in these works. The third section gives an insight of the trauma theory according to Sigmund Freud and Cathy Caruth. Finally, the last section explores the postcolonial trauma which criticizes the Eurocentric view of the trauma theory.

I.1. Historical and Political Context of the Nigerian Civil War

The Nigerian civil war or the Biafran war is one of the bloodiest wars the continent of Africa witnessed. The violent civil war that ended in Nigeria precisely 53 years ago resulted in the deaths of around a three million people leaving a scar on the country's history that whilst many people prefer to consider it as an episode that has to be forgotten, it was nearly impossible to forget for others. Postcolonial Nigeria was divided ethnically into three main regions: Hausa Fulani in the North, Yoruba in the West, and Igbo in the East (African Biographics, 00:01:46-00:01:50). What can be noticed the most is that the predominant conflict was of ethnic aspect between Hausa Fulani and the Igbos.

Furthermore, events led to the Biafran war started first by a coup d'état in January 1966 initiated by military men demanding an end to corruption and political injustice, and claiming the unity of Nigeria; yet, these demands were not accomplished because the northerners saw that the coup was led by Igbo people. Igbos' involvement was confirmed after the series of assassinations of Hausa and Yoruba politicians that followed the coup. In their article, "January 15 1966 Coup D'Etat Reconsidered", Paul and Ngozika Obi-Ani

affirmed that: “The January 15, 1966 coup d’etat in Nigeria came on the heels of political wrangling, corruption, incompetence on the part of the ruling elite, accusations and counter-accusations of electoral fraud, and the near descent of the country into anarchy” (16).

In July of the same year, a counter-coup took place against the regime of Igbo general Thomas Ironsi and resulted in the installation of general Yakubu Gowon instead. On Thursday, 29 September 1966 the Igbo genocide began, the massacres highly served as another leading event to the war. The successful counter-coup was followed by an anti-Igbo pogrom; Igbo people were slaughtered and brutally killed by Hausa people in the region. This forced the Igbos to flee to the southeast. Due to the Igbo genocide, around 8000 to 30.000 Igbos have been massacred and two million fled towards southeast Nigeria where their ethnic group is the dominant (African Biographics, 00:03:55-00:04:30). This latter event triggered a strong hostility between the ethnic groups, especially between Fulani and Igbo people. Igbos were forced to leave their villages, houses, and their lives to find a better place because they realized that the Nigerian government would not allow them to evolve or even to exist.

Because the situation became challenging, colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu resolved to establish The Republic of Biafra on 30 May 1967. Biafra comprised several states of Nigeria and it represented the nationalism of Igbo people who cannot co-exist with the northern dominated federal government. The Nigerian federal government, obviously, was not content with general Ojukwu’s decision. As a result, to spare his Igbo people the oppression and humiliation they were subjected to, general Yakubu in the North refused to recognize Biafra’s secession. War broke out mainly as a reaction to the hostility between the two groups. Biafra started recruiting every male in the region, grown or children, preparing for the war against the north (African Biographics, 00:04:45-00:05:40).

Surprisingly, despite unequal powers, Biafran army was successful because they were mainly driven by enthusiasm and passion for nationalism. They conquered many regions in Nigeria; however, the army was ultimately crippled by the federal military government which was supplied by very developed weapons. On the other hand, Biafran army received little help, support, and recognition. Christopher Ejike Agosurviving, a soldier who once took part in the Biafran army, said: "The Nigerians who were pursuing us were trained soldiers... We were drafted into the war, given two days' training" (qtd. in Nwaubani). The Biafran lack of supplies, weapons, and food caused by the sea blockade in 1969, led to huge casualties. The sea blockade ended up causing starvation which resulted in over 5000 deaths per day in Biafra (African Biographics, 00:06:53-00:07:22). Eventually, diseases caused by the war led Biafra to surrender, the war came to an end on January 1970 because Biafra shrank and lost huge numbers of its population.

Post war era unfortunately was not really peaceful, Philips O. Okolo's book *The Nigeria Civil War* (2010) shows that Igbo people felt that they had been deliberately displaced from government positions, because their pre-war posts were now occupied by other Nigerians of Hausa and Yoruba origins which somehow led to a feeling of injustice that hunted Igbo people (62). Doubtless, the Biafran war is one of the darkest episodes in Nigerian history. Igbo children were raised listening to the atrocities of Biafra war, the adults wanted them to remember. Consequently, the horrors of Biafran war were and still evoked in literature. At the heart of this clash, Nigerian writers saw the need to give the world a clear picture of what happened in their country using their pens to illuminate the sufferings of Nigerian people, and help getting their voices heard.

I.2. The Representation of the Biafran War in Anglophone Nigerian Fiction

Like any war in human history, the vicious events of the Nigerian civil war left a huge impact on Africans in general and Nigerians in particular, both physically and

psychologically. People's daily lives at that period were centered around violence, death, loss, rape, and even starvation for nearly three years. Families were torn apart, women were widowed and raped, men were forced to leave their families and people were constantly killed for no obvious reason. Nigerian writers, hence, felt the need to integrate these bloody incidents in the literary world through their writings in order to reflect their sufferings and frustration to the outer world and to highlight the tragic and traumatizing events that the Nigerian people went through. Likewise, Lovina Ihunanya Madu states in her study "Perspectives of War in Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*":

The events of the Civil War period in Nigeria were traumatic experiences that threatened the very existence of people as individuals, and of a people as a corporate entity. Therefore, the urge to take a retrospective glance at those events has just been too strong to be resisted by our writers . . . It is, therefore, no surprise that the war became so dominant as a theme in post-war Nigerian writing and remained so for a long time. (144)

In fact, numerous African literary works, both fiction and non-fiction, have addressed the Biafran War, bringing to light the horrifying life of Nigerians during and after that period. *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is one of the most successful literary pieces that managed to picture the traumatizing experiences of post-colonial Nigeria. The novel offers an extensive overview of Nigeria's bloody civil war, which lasted from 1967 to 1970. It is a war trauma fiction novel that provides an in-depth description of the tragic events of the war, and shows how violence is an inherent aspect of the war. It is certain that war is the central idea in Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*, but it also tackles the issues of racism, rape, politics, and madness. Adichie succeeds in traveling the reader back to Nigeria's civil war through her vivid characters and dreadful events, it sheds light on how this war mainly impacted the characters' psyche as stated by Madu, "The analysis of the novel has

shown and proven that the characters suffered from one form of psychic depression or the other as a result of the war throughout the novel. In the novel, Ugwu, Olanna, Kainene and Richard were traumatized in one way or the other” (154).

Chinua Achebe is also one of the writers who highly participated in writing about the Nigerian civil war and integrating it in his works such as “Civil Peace” (1971) which is a short story that tackles life after the Biafran war and how it affected people, as well as his non-fiction memoir entitled *There Was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra* (2012). Achebe writes in his short story “Civil Peace”: “It went deep to his heart. He had come out of the war with five inestimable blessings— his head, his wife Maria’s head and the heads of three out of their four children. As a bonus he also had his old bicycle— a miracle too but naturally not to be compared to the safety of five human heads” (29). This quote suggests that, for Jonathan, the protagonist, losing one of his children is considered a miracle when compared to other peoples’ loss which denotes that war drew many families apart by getting some killed, and leaving the ones who survived with enduring sorrow, trauma, and melancholy. The fact that Jonathan feels lucky to have lost only his youngest son out of his six family members shows how horrific the cost of the war was. Additionally, the novel shows Jonathan’s amazement by not finding his house in ruins, even though his house suffered considerable damage during the war, he is overjoyed to see it standing when the war ended:

This newest miracle was his little house in Ogui Oversight. Indeed nothing puzzles God! Only two houses away a huge concrete edifice some wealthy contractor had put up just before the war was a mountain of rubble. And here was Jonathan’s little zinc house of no regrets built with mud blocks quite intact! Of course the doors and windows were missing and five sheets off the roof. But what was that?” (Achebe 30)

Nigerian war fiction also includes Buchi Emecheta's realistic fiction novel *Destination Biafra* (1982). Lynn Hancock affirms in her study "Drowning out the Silence: Nigerian Civil War Literature and the Politics of Gender-Based Violence" that this novel is considered to be Emecheta's personal account of the Biafra War where she raises the issue of rape and sexual assault that women went through during the war (2). Hancock writes about the rape of Debbie in *Destination Biafra*: "Debbie pursues sexual empowerment by joining the Nigerian army, but is ultimately stripped of her militarized/ masculinized identity when she is brutally raped by a group of soldiers" (5). In addition, silence is usually utilized by African women at that time to treat their rape trauma "Even for a member of the social elite then, silent suffering is preferable to the stigma against victims of rape" (Hancock 5). Women's experience during the war was horrific and traumatic because of losing their families and being displaced on one hand, and for being objectified and raped on the other hand.

To conclude, literature is of a great utility to the Nigerians to get their voices heard and their pain recognized. Nigerian writers succeeded in painting a vivid picture of what the Nigerian people went through by shedding the light on the horrific events they had to witness, brutality they had to bear, and bringing up concerns like the violent murder of innocent people, double consciousness, corruption, racism, and starvation. They successfully portray the psychological wounds of the Nigerian people and convey it to the world. They also reflect their misery that many prefer to hide or to forget. Most importantly, literature helps to reveal how the events that Nigerians experienced throughout the few years of war greatly led to their trauma.

I.3. Trauma Theory

Trauma, according to Merriam Webster Dictionary, is the Greek word for "wound" that stands for: "A disordered psychic or behavioral state resulting from severe mental or emotional stress or physical injury". Hence, trauma is a mental wound that occurs after a

dreadful experience, be it physical or psychic. Additionally, the dictionary of the American Psychological Association (APA) defines trauma as: “Any disturbing experience that results in significant fear, helplessness, dissociation, confusion, or other disruptive feelings intense enough to have a long-lasting negative effect on a person’s attitudes, behavior, and other aspects of functioning”. Trauma occurs when the incident that the person experienced is adverse and horrific enough to cause a negative effect on the person’s psyche including anxiety and the feeling of fear and despair; this effect is usually long-lasting and difficult to heal. The APA dictionary also suggests that some traumatic events also include: “those caused by human behavior (e.g., rape, war, industrial accidents) as well as by nature (e.g., earthquakes)”.

Before the revolutionary theory of Sigmund Freud, who is considered as the father of psychoanalysis, trauma was conceived only as a physical injury, yet, Freud’s theory greatly helped in broadening the concept of trauma to include the psychological wounds as well. In the article “Freud’s Three Theories of Neurosis: Towards a Contemporary Theory of Trauma and Defense”, Jon Sletvold explains that, “What Breuer and Freud are suggesting is nothing short of a revolutionary new conception of trauma. The medical concept of (physical) trauma is extended to include *the affect of fright—the psychological trauma* . . . What was new was the idea that events in life can not only cause unhappiness but also illness” (462). Thus, by the coming of the Freudian theory to the psychoanalytical sphere, the effect of traumatizing events on mental health gained more attention.

Freud with the collaboration of Josef Breuer also emphasized the concept of defense mechanisms. They suggest that these mechanisms of defense occur as a response to harmful experiences i.e., psychological trauma, “From referring to the body’s defence-reaction to physical trauma, they let it now embrace an automatically elicited process of defence in response to emotional, psychic trauma” (Sletvold 462). An example of the defense of

mechanism is “repression” through which the undesirable memories and thoughts are repressed and sent back to the unconscious mind. The idea of repression was firstly introduced by Sigmund Freud. It happens when a person unconsciously forces a certain experience or incident out of consciousness because of the unpleasant nature of that incident, thus, loses awareness of it (GoodTherapy). In other words, the conscious mind tries to get rid of the unpleasant memory by burying it in the unconscious. This repression would allow the person to be unaware of what has happened during the traumatic experience. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud offers more clarification to the notion of trauma:

Now dreams occurring in traumatic neuroses have the characteristic of repeatedly bringing the patient back into the situation of his accident, a situation from which he wakes up in another fright. This astonishes people far too little. They think the fact that the traumatic experience is constantly forcing itself upon the patient even in his sleep is a proof of the strength of that experience. (13)

Therefore, traumatic experiences and repressed memories tend to be repetitive and constantly appear in the form of nightmares and flashbacks to the traumatized person which forcibly bring him back to the incident. In addition to that, according to Freud, the repressed event can also manifest in the form of accidental tongue slips. He argues that the slips are a reflection of the contents found in the unconscious mind, and these slips take place when a person unconsciously says something that differs from what he intended to say (GoodTherapy).

Trauma has manifestations and also has characteristics. Beatriz Pérez Zapata presents the characteristics of trauma in her book, titled, *Zadie Smith and Postcolonial Trauma: Decolonising Trauma, Decolonising Selves*. Zapata’s characteristics also serve as symptoms of trauma. She explains: “Trauma has been characterised by belatedness, the impossibility of knowing fully what happened at the moment of the traumatic event, unconscious repetitions, anxiety, repression, fragmented memory, the splitting of the self and development of multiple

personalities, dissociation, a fraught relationship with communities, and shame” (2). Zapata tries to reveal that trauma is unbearable to the extent that an individual cannot express it in words, it is expressionless but rather lived and sensed.

Cathy Caruth is one of the prominent figures who revolutionized Freudian theory and introduced the literary trauma theory. In her book, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (1996), Caruth defines trauma as “an overwhelming experience of sudden and catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena” (11). Caruth believes that trauma is a shocking experience that is psychologically frightening and this experience manifests as repetitive and unpredictable disturbing symptoms. In other words, the traumatized person will constantly relive the traumatizing event each time through dreams.

Additionally, in their article “An Analysis of Personal and Collective Trauma in Khaled Hosseini’s Novel *Sea Prayer*”, Laila Shoukat, et al. state that Caruth argues that personal trauma is repetitious, timeless, and unspeakable. They explain that, “She states that trauma is repetitious because it reoccurs in the mind of a person through flashbacks. On the other hand, she claims that it is timeless. It is timeless in the sense that it makes a person stuck in his past . . . her third point is regarding conscious and language that trauma is unspeakable. She is of the view that due to trauma destabilizes both language and consciousness” (123). Thus, trauma is an experience that is unspeakable; it typically leaves the person stuck in the moment of the incident unable to go beyond it and constantly brings him/her back through hallucinations, flashbacks and nightmares.

Furthermore, trauma can also be shared by the members of the same community who collectively experience a horrendous incident, such as slavery, genocides, famine, war, or civil war...etc. This collective trauma is defined in the article “Collective Trauma and the

Social Construction of Meaning”, by Gilad Hirschberger as: “the psychological reactions to a traumatic event that affect an entire society; it does not merely reflect an historical fact, the recollection of a terrible event that happened to a group of people. It suggests that the tragedy is represented in the collective memory of the group” (1). Hirschberger adds that: “Collective memory of trauma is different from individual memory because collective memory persists beyond the lives of the direct survivors of the events, and is remembered by group members that may be far removed from the traumatic events in time and space” (1). In other words, collective trauma is not solely dedicated to individuals who were present during the traumatizing incidents, but it extends even to the following generations that did not witness these events.

On the intersection between collective trauma and history, Caruth states: “History, like trauma, is never simply one’s own, that history is precisely the way we are implicated in each other’s traumas” (24). Simply, collective trauma like history is never chosen. It is present as a part of someone’s life which, indeed, passes through generations, it makes the members of the same community involved in one another’s trauma.

In recent years, several critics argue that trauma theory is of a Eurocentric vision. Their major complaint is that trauma theory focuses on the tragedies of Western white men only, totally ignoring the sorrows of marginalized people who deserve more attention. In this context, Zapata argues that, “What is being criticised is, therefore, the Anglo/Eurocentric vision of trauma which, in spite of its attempts to reach and include others, has left many subjects out of its focus of study or simply imposed inappropriate methods to analyse and heal them” (3). Therefore, Western trauma theory fails to address those who do not fit into the Western category. This deliberate ignorance of the minority groups calls for the need for postcolonial trauma theory.

I.4. Postcolonial Trauma

Colonialism was a long and difficult experience postcolonial people had to endure. After the colonial era, African writers mainly sought recognition of themselves as human beings who deserve to be free, the approval of their writings, and a recognition of their traumatized people, as an outcome of a prolonged colonial ignorance. Hence, this ignorance was enacted by western ideology. According to Lebdaï Benaouda, in his book *Post-independence African Literature*, is based on the idea that “the only history was white, meaning western” (41).

African people in general were and still viewed by the West as inferior, uncivilized race as referred to by Edward Said in his book *Orientalism*, “weaker than the West” (204). He also suggests: “Orientals, as opposed to westerners, were rarely seen or looked at; they were seen through, analysed and not as citizens, or even people, but as problems to be solved or confined or -as the colonial powers openly coveted their territory- taken over” (207). Zapata uses Judith Butler’s ideas to explain the danger of misrecognition, “the normative forces that enable us to recognise who counts as “being” and how those who do not fit into this category are not seen as susceptible to being traumatised because their existence is not fully recognised” (3-4). The trauma of non-Westerners is not recognized because of the fact that they are not perceived as “beings”, thus, whoever does not belong to that category is not considered traumatized.

It is interesting to note that the relation of trauma theory with postcolonial studies and narratives gave rise to a new inconvenient issue regarding trauma theory. Prompting a need for reevaluating trauma theory's narrow categorization. According to Michael Rothberg in his book *Decolonizing Trauma Studies: A Response*, trauma theory classifies the West as “traumatized” and “psychologically hurt” (213); yet, it is the psyche of the colonized that is

injured and traumatized, by which it does not fall under that Eurocentric categorization. Stef Craps is one of the critics that has a strong view point regarding the revaluation matter.

In his work “Beyond Eurocentrism: Trauma Theory in the Global Age”, Craps remarkably revises the Western theory of trauma, mostly Cathy Caruth’s definition. He argues that trauma theory needs an urgent redefinition because it ignores non-western traumatizing incidents and highly marginalizes postcolonial population through its exclusion from the scope of trauma. Craps also criticizes the Eurocentric complex definition of trauma for its irresolvable and illogical fragmented, aesthetic categorization on how and whom should bear witness to traumatic experience. Craps proposes:

The founding texts of the field (including Caruth’s own work) largely fail to live up to this promise of cross-cultural ethical engagement. They fail on at least three counts: they marginalize or ignore traumatic experiences of non-Western or minority cultures; they tend to take for granted the universal validity of definitions of trauma and recovery that have developed out of the history of Western modernity; and they often favour or even prescribe a modernist aesthetic of fragmentation and aporia as uniquely suited to the task of bearing witness to trauma. (46)

Furthermore, former colonized people struggle to express their trauma whether individually or collectively, regardless of their cultural background, simply because the Eurocentric theory of trauma, as Susannah Radstone argues, ignores postcolonial individuals who are considered as “the other” in the western world (qtd. in Zapata 3). Mainly, postcolonial traumas have indeed long been defined by the insidiousness brought about by continuous long oppression (Zapata 6). In addition to that, Laura S. Brown notes that: “The range of human experience becomes the range of what is normal and usual in the lives of men of the dominant class; white, young, able-bodied, educated, middle-class, Christian men. Trauma is thus that which disrupts these particular lives, but no other” (qtd. in Zapata 3).

Accordingly, western trauma theory neglects the traumatizing histories of the oppressed people who, seemingly, share the same traumatizing incidents. In his work entitled “Chris Abani’s *Song for Night* and the Battlefield Trauma of Child Soldiers”, Mamadou Abdou Babou Ngom demonstrates that the texts that lay the spadework of trauma studies, including Cathy Caruth’s, “are almost exclusively concerned with traumatic experiences of white Westerners and solely employ critical methodologies emanating from a EuroAmerican context” (254). Thus, Mamadou highly pinpoints at the Western founding texts in trauma studies, including Cathy Caruth’s own works, and reveals the neglect of postcolonial subjects’ trauma. That is to say, Caruth’s trauma studies are unsuitable for non-westerners, they address only those who fall under the category of white westerners overpassing the traumatic histories of other minorities.

Similarly, Zapata decides to go many steps further through her book and show how the Western theory of trauma is directly related to someone’s cultural background. She tends to explain that in postcolonial trauma one should consider the blurring of the cultural and the individual (6). In other words, despite differences of culture and history, trauma theory should be developed to address the overlooked as well; those who do not belong to the western culture or race.

Postcolonial subjects, like Africans, try to express their traumatic incidents through their writings. Thus, African authors would call for the necessary criticism and study to explore post-colonial contexts as sites of trauma and questioning its applicability to such contexts (Zapata 46). Postcolonial trauma is a criticism of the Eurocentric view of trauma towards former colonized countries around the world. It pinpoints at the psychological and the physical oppression of postcolonial people who have a mental wound that is rooted in their memory. Postcolonial trauma emphasizes a collective wound in the exhausted post-war

psyche and offers visibility to those who are silenced in order to grant them a voice through literature.

The main motive of postcolonial trauma theory is to find a solution to the dilemma of ignored and marginalized postcolonial people. In his article “The Theory of Postcolonial Trauma and its Impact on the Religious Studies”, Yan Okhtavianus Kalampong uses Stef Craps’ idea to explain postcolonial trauma studies, “Postcolonial trauma studies criticize the exportation of Western theoretical and diagnostic models to non-Western contexts to open up the possibility of any modifications to reach broader applicability” (212). Thus, Craps believes that postcolonial trauma studies investigate the possibility of extending trauma theory’s definition to address non-westerners as well. In other words, considering the possibility of developing a trauma theory concept that could be used globally (46). According to Kalampong, postcolonial trauma tends to develop a field that investigates the trauma of colonialism that still dwells in postcolonial people's lives (208). Postcolonial trauma studies are nothing less important than other revolutionary studies. These studies attempt at the objective of unveiling literary figures, themes, and narratives which are highly present in postcolonial works. By all means, these figures should be analyzed as signs of trauma in relation to postcolonial context.

Besides the neo-colonial dominance and indirect colonial legacies such as racism, civil wars, and corruption, lots of tragic issues followed independence in former colonized countries. Rape must be considered as one of the catastrophic events postcolonial females had to experience. Although many countries got their independence decades ago, postcolonial women still endure different types of abuse including the sexual one. The act of rape is one of the most horrific issues that postcolonial women had to deal with in a society where such topics are covered up and hidden under the cloak of a taboo.

Hence, the majority of postcolonial authors try, through their characters, to depict the life of trauma survivors and emphasize the traumatic experiences that raped women witness. The choice of this theme challenges the readers' understanding of postcolonial trauma. Rape is highly present in novels by postcolonial writers as the founding traumatic event. The Haitian-American writer Edwidge Danticat's *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1994) is a good example of rape trauma in which the narrator depicts her childhood traumatic story. A raped Haitian girl named Martine Caco moves to the United States to escape her trauma and forget her past. She faces painful memories of her own and those of her daughter Sophie, who is the product of rape. Martine has to relive her traumatic experience everyday now when Sophie moves to her place, she is a reminder to her mother of the tragic traumatic memories. The mother spends her time trying to escape the shadow of her rapist although she never saw his actual face. Thus, she evokes throughout the novel her unbearable psychological pain.

In addition to rape, African postcolonial subjects had to experience a different type of horror. A type that has been related mainly to Africans for centuries, which is slavery. Slavery is the worst shock black Africans faced; the fact that they were not considered or treated as humans played a great role in shaping their trauma. Furthermore, postcolonial authors usually address the issue of slavery in their writings to depict the horrors black people have endured, and how the memory of these experiences affect their present lives. An instance of slave trauma novels in the postcolonial African context would be Buchi Emecheta's *The Slave Girl* (1977).

In her novel, Emecheta raises the topic of slave trauma, and how former slaves are haunted by the tragic memories of slavery. In the article "Handcuffs of Slavery: A Study on Slavery in the Novel of Buchi Emecheta the Slave Girl", Jency Prathesha and Margaret Priscilla affirms that,

In the novel *The Slave Girl* Emecheta clearly describes about the dehumanization and sexual harassment that are also connected with slavery. The Novelist depicts the disgust of the suppression through Chiago, the eldest slave when she recalls with fear memories with Pa Palagada...She had learned to stop protesting, to be quite about it all. (359)

The slave girls had no one to turn to for aid, so they were forced to remain silent about the sexual harassment by their masters (Emecheta 12). Hence, the characters in the novel are always brought back by their past memories which usually disturb their present. Moreover, throughout the novel, Ogbanje Ojebeta, the protagonist, is apparently affected by her traumas as a slave because she is not able to release herself as she shifts the forms of oppression by changing masters only.

Doubtless, the use of modernist and postmodern narrative techniques such as intertextuality by postcolonial authors can only be understood to represent their physical and psychic disturbance i.e., their trauma. Intertextuality according to Allen Graham in his book entitled *Intertextuality* (2005) refers to the fact that, “No text, much as it might like to appear so, is original and unique-in-itself; rather it is a tissue of inevitable . . . references to and quotations from other texts. Intertextuality involves a recognition that meaning . . . lies between texts in networks which are ultimately only partially recoverable” (1-2). This means that a literary work lacks independent meaning and that a sequence of texts is required to reveal the overall meaning of a text. Furthermore, Graham emphasizes the between-ness of the text: the fact that meaning exists between texts rather than inside it, as a kind of a secret to be discovered (2).

Similarly, Julia Kristeva stresses that “In literary language there is always more than a singular meaning, that the text is always addressed to an Other and always emerges from a previous text, a previous utterance, a previous Other” (qtd. in Graham 3). African writers do

also employ the technique of intertextuality in their writings, such as Wole Soyinka and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o. In their work entitled "Intertextuality in Selected Novels of Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o", Addisu Hailu Abebe and Melakneh Mengistu suggest that the use of intertextuality here, and by Ngugi mainly, is also an act of resistance against oppression (70).

Ngugi shows resistance through the application of intertextuality in his novels, he writes against the post-colonial and neocolonial oppression to reveal postcolonial African people's trauma. Ngugi highly uses intertexts from his own previous works to create a series of works that carry meaning of resistance against the western rule, it is embodied in his characters mainly. He is able through his novel *Weep Not, Child* "to prepare Africans for further struggle primarily by boosting their confidence and self-esteem. He deconstructed the colonialist discourse that has reigned for many years which Africans have taken for granted" (Abebe and Mengistu 71). Ngugi brings to the forefront the trauma of the oppressed and marginalized postcolonial African people. Other African authors joined the literary scene to be able to write back, to defend, to bring back what has been taken from postcolonial subjects, and to seek their recognition. Ode Ogede claims that "despite being latecomers to writing practice, African writers have been able to elevate their creativity through intertextual connections with fellow African writers and beyond" (qtd. in Abebe and Mengistu).

In short, People who suffer mentally from the cruel events they witness during war time are usually referred to as traumatized since their pain transcends war era. However, some people are ignored and denied this label because they are not categorized as traumatized people from the European standpoint, despite the hardship they experienced. Thus, Postcolonial trauma theory seeks to criticize this categorization and tends to unveil through literature the sorrows of the colonized subjects.

Chapter II: Thematic Concerns in *Half of a Yellow Sun*

The second chapter is analytical. It seeks to examine the trauma of postcolonial subjects in the novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. This chapter is divided into three sections. The initial one gives a general overview of the novel including its setting, plot summary, and its main characters. The following section investigates the theme of silence in relation to trauma to show how they coexist in a postcolonial setting. It also shows how postcolonial individuals in the novel have no choice but silence to cope with their trauma as they will not be heard either way. The last section probes deep into the theme of racism and how it psychologically devastates and affects African individuals' identity construction. This discrimination eventually transformed into a traumatic experience.

II.1. An Overview of the Novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*

Nigeria in the civil war endured massive cruelty that shattered the country to the ground. This war was of a huge impact on Nigerians' psyche due to their numerous losses and the horrors they have witnessed. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is one of the important writers who pictured the civil war through literature. This Nigerian woman who was born in Enugu, Nigeria in 1977, always succeeds in letting the readers feel and live the physical and psychological pain of her characters, she always captures the sufferings of her people by reflecting their real lives in her works. Her famous novels *Purple Hibiscus* (2003), *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), and *Americanah* (2013) got her many awards such as the Orange Prize, Women's Prize for Fiction, the Commonwealth Writers' Prize and many more (Chimamanda.com).

Adichie's novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* succeeds in providing a vivid image of the atrocities of this war and its effect on both the country and its people as well as giving a detailed description of the violent and traumatizing incidents of the war. The novel is set in Nigeria in the 1960's; covering the events before, during, and after the Biafran war shows

how the war impacted the lives as well as the personalities of Igbo people in Nigeria.

Additionally, the title of the novel is inspired by the Biafran flag, which features a half yellow sun above red, black, and green stripes (LitCharts.com). Moreover, in the novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Adichie explains the symbolism of the Biafran flag: “Red was the blood of the siblings massacred in the North, black was for mourning them, green was for the prosperity Biafra would have, and, finally, the half of a yellow sun stood for the glorious future” (281).

In her depiction of the Nigerian Civil War, Adichie examines life in postcolonial Nigeria. She demonstrates the brutal effects of the war, notably on Igbo tribe members, and how Nigeria is left in a total mess. Adichie presents her novel through the voice of three main characters: Ugwu, the houseboy of an Igbo lecturer in Nsukka university named Odenigbo; Olanna, the partner of Odenigbo who belongs to an Igbo wealthy family that runs a business in the country, and Richard, a white English man who lives in Biafra more than in England and tries to write a book while he is staying there.

The novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* opens with Ugwu, an Igbo village boy who goes to Nsukka to work as a houseboy for Odenigbo. Odenigbo the revolutionary lecturer is in love with Olanna who moves to live with him in Nsukka and meets his friends who gather frequently in his house to talk about politics. The story skips ahead few years when the government is overthrown. Hausa people now blame Igbos for the coup which results in another coup and the violence against Igbo people in the north turns to a genocide. Olanna then experiences one of the traumatic incidents that affect her life. She sees her relatives in Kano brutally killed while she stands among their desecrated corpses, she runs back to Nsukka and she meets a woman holding her daughter’s braided head in a calabash. Meanwhile, Richard witnesses the brutal killing of Igbos on the airport and colonel Odumegwu Ojukwo announces that the southeast will secede Nigeria. The republic of Biafra is established and all the characters are overjoyed.

Through mixing fiction and reality, Adichie writes her country's history. She depicts all what happened before, during, and after the war through her characters. A book with an unknown author called 'The World Was Silent When We Died' occasionally interrupts the story, it explores the larger political forces leading to the war. As war wages between the Nigerian government and the republic of Biafra, Odenigbo, Olanna, Ugwu, and baby move to Abba then to Umuahia. After Nsukka is taken over, their lives get miserable, Biafra's food and money run out and the enemy air raids are getting worse. Through her characters, Adichie tries to show the horrors and violence Igbo people witnessed during the civil war. The author then returns to the early sixties when Olanna travels to London and Odenigbo cheats on her with Amala. Upon learning about the affair Olanna avenges her dignity by sleeping with Richard.

The author shifts forth to the late sixties, she shows how rabidly war has torn Biafra apart. Nigeria blocks all supplies to Biafra causing the death of many people from starvation as well as Kwashiorkor that takes the lives of most children. Igbo people become helpless when other countries do not recognize Biafra's independence. As a result, Richard starts writing articles about Biafran resistance to gain the world's attention. Ugwu is conscripted to army and takes part in a gang rape of a bar girl, later, he returns back to his village to know that his sister was raped by soldiers. Finally, Biafra surrenders to Nigeria marking the end of the civil war. It is revealed at the end of the book that Ugwu is the author of 'The World Was Silent When We Died' and Kainene has mysteriously disappeared.

Adichie highlights the effects of war on the civilian life and the trauma behind it. This is revealed through the interrelationship between her characters: an upper-class woman, middle class professor, a poor houseboy, and an English man. This diversity of characters shows how war affects different classes of society in Nigeria. In his article "Themes and Techniques in African Novel: A Review of Ngozi Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow*

Sun”, Victor Chukwudi states that: “Adichie’s characters are symbolic. Adichie uses them to represent or reveal much about the class and economic conflicts found in Nigeria . . . the relationships on a personal level between the legacies of colonialism, and racial divisions in post-colonial Nigeria” (351). Thus, Adichie succeeds in portraying the trauma of civil war on her characters; she brings to the forefront the legacies of colonialism and how they rabidly divided postcolonial Nigeria which highly affected civilian life.

II.2. Trauma and Silence

Trauma as a mental illness is hard to be put into words; a condition that makes traumatized people cope silently with their trauma. Craps affirms that silence is not only a trauma symptom, but also a coping mechanism and a conscious choice (55). Hence, some traumatized individuals tend to face their dreadful memories by avoiding to voice them and remaining silent. In this context, Heriyati Nungki, et al. in “Speaking through Silence: Trauma in Literary Work” note that, “Speaking through silence seems to contradict one another; however, in a traumatic history speaking seems to be impossible. Trauma cannot be put into words. It is beyond comprehension, has not been resolved, and it always be pushed back into the unconscious” (166). They add that “Narrating trauma is not a simple and easy task since it is beyond the ability of language to describe it” (168).

Thus, silence as a means of handling trauma can be a conscious choice where the traumatized individual prefers to remain silent. Moreover, silence in the text is complex as it is manifested as an unspeakable experience that is beyond words as well as a tool of resistance (Nungki et al. 168). The concept of silence is integrated into literary texts to show the unspeakable nature of the traumatic event as well as the characters’ resistance to the traumatic memories.

In the postcolonial context, silence is an inevitable trauma symptom. The former colonized people find themselves forced to suffer in silence since their sorrows will not be

recognized. A vital example is the silent suffering of black women who face oppression even from those of their own race since they are seen as objects without feelings. In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, silence appears to be tightly tied to trauma that results from sexual abuse. Adichie highlights the idea that many Nigerian females are victims of rape and sexual exploitation since many of her female characters endure the trauma of rape. In this context, Amandeep states in his article “Redressing the Trauma: Gender, Slavery and Survival in African Literature” that, “‘Silence’ is the most potent weapon wielded to keep off blues. Festering emotional wounds of sexual exploitation . . . render a black woman suffer in silence” (76). Black women struggle in silence as a result of unhealed psychological scars caused by horrific experiences such as sexual abuse.

Anulika, Ugwu’s sister, is described throughout the novel as an energetic and talkative character. During the war, she endures a brutal rape, “They forced themselves on her. Five of them”. The narrator adds: “They nearly beat her to death. One of her eyes has refused to open well since” (421). This incident affects Anulika physically as well as psychologically; it robs her of her energetic spirit, and drags her into silence. Adichie describes Anulika’s discomfort when she meets with her brother, Ugwu: “She didn’t answer any of his other questions in the way that he had expected, there were no energetic gestures, no sharp wit in her answers. . . . She looked relieved when Chioke called her, and she got up quickly and left” (420-1). Thus, her rape experience turns her into a silent person who avoids engaging in any conversation, even with her own brother.

Another instance of the silence that generates from sexual exploitation is the case of the young girls in Orlu camp. The girls are abused sexually by the priest Father Marcel, in exchange for food. He raped a girl in order to give her food that was supposed to be distributed for free, and Kainene learns later that he raped many other young girls for the same matter, “Apparently I’ve been blind; she’s not the only one,” Kainene said”. She states

that he abuses most of the girls before giving them the crayfish that Kainene hardly gets (398). The raped girls refuse to report the crime of the rape and choose to suffer in silence. This is apparent when the young girl is mistaken for having kwashiorkor: “A young girl named Urenwa’s belly began to grow and Kainene was not sure if it was Kwashiorkor or pregnancy” (390). The young girl does not recount the terrible anguish she is enduring until her pregnancy reveals it. Hence, Adichie successfully casts light on the oppression the Nigerian women face during the war and their silent struggle to survive. She shows how they are subjugated and sexually used in exchange for basic life needs such as food and shelter.

Black females face their discrimination and suffering with total silence since their voices would not be heard. Amandeep argues that, “Many black women suffer in silence and endure scars of sexual abuse and harassment from childhood. Sexual assault and rape are common means of subjugating a black woman and her spirit . . . It is a painful journey for a black woman from childhood till the end” (76). Indeed, black females endure traumatic experiences of rape and sexual abuse from an early age which leaves a huge effect on their mental health. They usually face their trauma with total silence; thus, they tend not to recount the horrific experiences they have encountered even if they had the ability to speak.

Being a black-skinned woman in a patriarchal society, as Nigeria, was and is still a big struggle for them since they endure oppressive practices imposed by such societies. They are coerced to obey the orders without questioning or arguing. They also have no control over their lives and bodies, so they must comply in complete silence. Amala, the village girl, appears to be silent throughout the novel. She only takes orders and agrees silently. In the work *Sex, Rape, and Narrative in Adichie’s Half of a Yellow Sun*, Julie H. Noringriis states that: “She [Amala] is disempowered by the society she lives in and robbed of both her own right to choose and her own voice to share her side of the story” (11).

Furthermore, Amala's silence is mostly apparent when she is ordered by Odenigbo's mother, her mistress, to go to Odenigbo's room so they engage in a sexual act, she obeys without arguing. The narrator remarks, "Whether or not Mama had told her to go to his room, she had not said no to Odenigbo because she had not even considered that she could say no" (250). Amala thinks of herself as a person who does not deserve a voice; she chooses silence since her speaking would not change a thing. Mama, Odenigbo's mother, coercing Amala into a sexual encounter without giving any regard to Amala's opinion demonstrates how Amala is perceived as an object that Mama uses to satisfy her personal purposes. Olanna comments on Amala's silence saying: "How much did one know of the true feelings of those who did not have a voice?" (250).

In addition, silence is experienced by many characters as a trauma symptom, as a result of witnessing the violent incidents of the war. In this context, Craps states that, "Silence is repeatedly put forward as a valid way of surviving the suffering inflicted by the war" (55). Olanna is the victim of witnessing tragic and violent acts in Kano. She witnesses Igbo people being brutally massacred, houses being shattered, and headless crushed bodies scattered in the streets. She also sees the bodies of her beloved relatives horribly slaughtered: "She stopped when she saw the bodies. Uncle Mbaezi lay facedown in an ungainly twist, legs splayed. Something creamy-white oozed through the large gash on the back of his head. Auntie Ifeka lay on the veranda. The cuts on her naked body were smaller, dotting her arms and legs like slightly parted red lips" (147).

In addition to that, on her way to escape to Nsukka, Olanna witnesses a terrifying scene of a woman carrying her daughter's head in a calabash: "Olanna looked into the bowl. She saw the little girl's head with the ashy-gray skin and the plaited hair and rolled-back eyes and open mouth. She stared at it for a while before she looked away" (149). Olanna is psychologically affected by the traumatic events she encounters in Kano which causes her to

lose both her ability to walk and speak. Later, she starts having “Dark Swoops” that are described as: “A thick blanket descended from above and pressed itself over her face, firmly, while she struggled to breathe” (156). Adichie describes Olanna’s struggle to speak: “Her lips were heavy. Speaking was a labor”.

It appears that Olanna is unable to narrate her traumatic experience to her family when they visit her, “When her parents and Kainene visited, she [Olanna] did not say much” (157). Olanna refuses to speak or narrate the disturbing events she has witnessed in Kano. However, in her study “‘Dark Swoops’: Trauma and Madness in *Half of a Yellow Sun*”, Seretha D. Williams opposes this view and claims that Olanna was silenced rather than silent. She states that “Odenigbo and Kainene initially silence Olanna; they do not want her to tell the details of her horrific experience in Kano” (150). She adds that Olanna tries to speak, yet Odenigbo’s refusal to listen to her narrative silences her (151). Although we agree that Olanna is asked not to speak about the horrors of Kano as an attempt to protect her from the pain of memories, we view her silence from a different perspective. Olanna’s inability to speak is psychological as it is accompanied with her paralysis and Dark Swoops. Olanna struggles to speak, the narrator notes that “Olanna had not even tried to talk about it”. She is even unable to talk to her Odenigbo; she remains silent when he “Spoke too softly to her . . . He even sang when he bathed her in the tub” (156-7). This muteness denotes that Olanna herself did not have the ability to speak even if she wants to, “She wanted to ask him to stop being ridiculous, but her lips were heavy” (157).

Kainene as well drowns in silence as she is a victim of witnessing horrible events of the civil war. While she is laying under the orange trees hiding, she sees Ikejide her steward, losing his head during an air raid, “Ikejide’s head was gone. The body was running, arched slightly forwards, arms flying around, but there was no head”. After this traumatizing event, Kainene withdraws into silence. The narrator comments “Kainene said little when they

arrived in Orlu” and she adds that “In the following days, she was mostly silent, withdrawn” (317). Thus, the air raid that Kainene encounters and her steward’s tragic death traumatize her. She tries to cope with her trauma by being silent.

Another silence discussed in the novel is the world’s silence. This silence is never a symptom of trauma but rather causes trauma. The choice of the title of Ugwu’s book ‘The World Was Silent When We died’ epitomizes the world’s ignorance and silence about the events happening in Nigeria. This silence is traumatizing to Biafran people as the world chose to be silent because they are black. Adichie portrays this reality in the discussion between Richard and the redhead, a journalist coming from America. Richard tells the journalist that America knows about the killings, the redhead agrees, “Of course my government knows people are dying”. The journalist justifies the government’s silence by saying that “People are dying everywhere” (374). The world is aware of the slaughters and genocides happening in Biafra, foreign countries know about the children dying of Kwashiorkor and houses falling into ruins, yet they choose to remain silent since no white people are being killed. This has an immense effect on Igbos who undergo the traumatizing events of the civil war in total silence and bear the psychological effects of the Western world’s racism.

II.3. Racism in *Half of a Yellow Sun*

Most of the conflicts in Nigerian politics and between the characters in Adichie’s novel are of racial and cultural aspect. The British empire’s racist and oppressive colonialism is to blame. Racism is the belief that people who are different are inferior to others, this could be based on their race, ethnicity, culture, or skin color. It is a belief that a specific ethnic or racial group is inferior to another, thus, this belief is used to justify unequal treatment. It is according to Australian Human Rights Commission that: “Racism includes all the laws, policies, ideologies and barriers that prevent people from experiencing justice, dignity, and

equity because of their racial identity. It can come in the form of harassment, abuse or humiliation, violence or intimidating behaviour”.

Postcolonial subjects in general, and Africans in particular, had to experience all sorts of racism for decades. Racism is a practice that has been related to African people because of their race and the skin color they did not choose. Seemingly, in his paper “A Postcolonial Reading of Racial and Cultural Traumas in E. M. Foster’s *a Passage to India*”, Rashed A. Daghamin states that it is according to Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton that: “By “racism” we mean the predication of decisions and policies on considerations of race for the purpose of *subordinating* a racial group and maintaining control over that group. That has been the practice . . . toward the black man” (qtd. in Daghamin 62). In other words, racism is the practice of basing specific policies and actions on a group’s racial background in order to subjugate that group.

The fact that racism has a deep impact on the black man’s psychology, it also impacts subsequent attitudes and perceptions of the larger society towards that black man. In the article “Race, Racism, and Postcoloniality”, Pooja Rangan and Rey Chow declare that: “racism results in the psychic injury that the colonized black subject is forced to endure at the hands of his white oppressors, in such a manner that the experience of loss or ‘alienation’ becomes the defining character of black identity” (4). In other words, racism causes a psychological harm that the colonized black subject was compelled to bear under his white oppressors, so that the condition of loss or alienation become the defining feature of black identity. As opponent to colonial racism, Albert Memmi also thinks that racism is unacceptable as a process of selecting a victim based on biological differences; Memmi refuses to accept that racism has rational basis, indicating that its primary tendency is its irrationalism (qtd. in Rangan and Chow 5). He states that:

Racist reasoning has no secure foundation, is incoherent in its development, and is unjustified in its conclusions . . . racism is not simply of the order of reason . . . racism, or the impulse to single out a scapegoat or victim on the basis of biological differences that are deemed unacceptable (qtd. in Rangan and Chow 5).

Postcolonial African people were subjected to the act of racism for a long time, they are reduced to their skin color regardless of how educated, talented, or smart they are. In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Adichie brings to light most of the racist practices of white people against Africans, they are highly illustrated through some scenes. Susan, Richard's white British ex-girlfriend, is the true embodiment of how Westerners perceive formerly colonized people. The majority of Nigeria's wealth is owned by westerners, who live there like Susan, and still regards the locals as savages and uncivilized, "The people were bloody beggars, be prepared for their body odors and the way will stand and stare at you . . . never show weakness to domestic staff" (53). Adichie demonstrates how these white individuals even engage in coarse humor, making fun of black descent people, the narrator says: "There were jokes to illustrate each African trait. The uppity African stood out in Richard's mind: An African was walking a dog and an Englishman asked, 'what are you doing with that monkey?' and the African answered, 'It's a dog, not a monkey' - as if the Englishman had been talking to him! Richard laughed at the jokes" (54).

The racial discrimination a black female is subjected to is more emphasized. Susan never considers black females as equal to her, whenever Richard speaks to another white woman, Susan becomes furious and mad at him and throws glasses on the wall. However, she never reacts in the same way when Richard speaks to black women; she remains calm when Richard speaks to Kainene. It is at that moment when Richard "realized simply that black women were not threatening to her, were not equal rivals" (55).

Despite the efforts of Richard to consider himself a Biafran, his interaction with Kainene is the most obvious manifestation of his white supremacy. Adichie's portrayal of Richard as a white British man, a helpful journalist with good intentions toward Nigerians can be viewed from different perspectives. It is according to Aliza Mirza that: "Richard's intention is clean; Adichie is trying to show that not all westerners are bad. He tries very hard to be a part of Nigeria and later part of Biafra too". However, in her study "Who Speaks? Who Listens?: The Problem of Address in Two Nigerian Trauma Novels", Amy Novak opposes the idea that Richard has a good intention toward all Nigerians. She believes that "in Richard's final appearance in the novel, the barely suppressed racist attitude towards Kainene's friend Major Madu comes to the surface" (40). Adichie writes: "Come back, he wanted to say, come back here and tell me if you ever laid your filthy black hand on her" (430). Richard's racist attitudes at the end are the embodiment of the inherent racism in all westerners, even if they show the opposite.

It is widely known that race, racism, and oppression are among the significant concerns addressed by postcolonial literature. Daghamin believes that postcolonial studies aim to highlight the issue of racism, in all of its manifestations, marginalization, and segregation perpetuated on subalterns or "the others" (63). Racism and oppression imposed on Africans have many harmful and negative effects, including severe psychological injury, racial discrimination, physical and sexual assault, rejection, and dehumanization.

The concept of racism is tightly linked to people of color descending from Africa. Africans are reduced to their skin color and treated with a sort of inferiority which affects their mental health and way of living. Furthermore, Post-colonial theory investigates how colonization has affected civilizations and cultures. This idea demonstrates how the white nations took control of third world cultures and societies, as well as how these oppressed communities responded to and opposed such infringements (Daghamin 62).

Through many scenes in the novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*, the author succeeds in shedding light on political, racial, and cultural discrimination postcolonial Nigerian people had to endure.

The perspectives of postcoloniality and racism interconnect in ways that are relevant to trauma studies. This means that postcolonial African people were subjected to the act of racism for a long time that it affected their lifestyles as well as their mental health.

Furthermore, racism results in trauma, race-based trauma that marks a psychological injury in black people's psyche. Maia Niguel Hoskin declares that "Race-based trauma refers to the emotional and mental injuries that result from continued exposure to racism, ethnic discrimination, racial bias, and hate crimes". In other words, African people of color have endured the psychological and emotional harm brought by racism, ethnic discrimination, racial discrimination, and hate crimes for a long time which eventually led to their trauma.

Additionally, in the article "Racial Trauma: Theory, Research, and Healing: Introduction to the Special Issue", Lillian Comas-Díaz et al. declare that:

Racial trauma ... refers to People of Color and Indigenous individuals' reactions to dangerous events and real or perceived experiences of racial discrimination. Such experiences may include threats of harm and injury, humiliating and shaming events . . . racial trauma is unique in that it involves ongoing individual and collective injuries due to exposure and reexposure to race-based [discrimination]. (1)

Racial trauma is challenging since racial wounds occur on a continuing basis (Comas-Díaz et al. 2). The current definitions of trauma itself are embedded in European points of view. Consequently, they tend to lack cultural relevance for most postcolonial non-westerners which also tend to marginalize the postcolonial subjects' individual and collective trauma.

Race-based discrimination can leave scars for those who are dehumanized. Those scars would not only affect individuals but also are engrained in the collective memory of the up-coming generations. Collective memory of trauma differs from individual memory

because it extends beyond the actual survivors of the traumatizing events and is remembered by the whole group, despite the indirect effect of those events. Trauma of racism is highly integrated in postcolonial works, *A Brief History of Seven Killings* (2014) by the Jamaican writer Marlon James would be a good example. In the article “Racial Discrimination and Identity Crisis in the Select Novels of Marlon James: A Postcolonial Study”, Devi Suman and Kumar Gaurav see that James in his book depicts the three decades of Jamaican traumatic history of colonialism, slavery, and racism (2712).

Being constantly confronted with racism has a great influence on black identity construct, in the article “The Psychology of Black Identity”, Mtose Xoliswa and Anass Bayaga state that it is according to Peter Lambley:

The encounter with racism and the encounter with Whiteness do trouble Black identity construction. The avoidance of the encounter with racism and encounter with Whiteness impacts negatively on Black identity development. The battle of Black identity takes place in the mind and, because oppression is internalised, it always finds ways to construct a negative image of Black identity. (512)

The black identity is exposed to a long history of western racial oppression. Being forced to live in white supremacy for a long time, as well as adopting a different culture and way of life had a negative effect on the formation of black identity. White people are responsible for creating the image of black identity as inferior because they want to present black people as different from them to impose their superiority. This latter idea is depicted in *Half of a Yellow Sun* when Odenigbo declares: “I am Nigerian because a white man created Nigeria and gave me that identity. I am black because the white man constructed *black* to be as different as possible from his *white*. I was Igbo before the white man came” (20). In the same context, Frantz Fanon in his book *Black Skin, White Masks*, states: “As long as the black man is among his own, he will have no occasion, except in minor internal conflicts, to

experience his being through others” (109). This indicates that black individuals face less problems when they are around other black people. In fact, the actual problem occurs when they engage with white people where they are frequently treated only based on their skin color. This emphasizes the shameful reality that racism affects the way of interaction between black and white people.

William Cross developed a theory called Nigrescence theory in 1971. It is considered as the black racial identity development model in which the black identity formation goes through different stages: pre-encounter, encounter, immersion-emersion, internalisation and internalisation-commitment. He assumes that black identity is constructed through stages marking its development, thus, moving from non-Afrocentric to Afrocentric (qtd. in Mtose and Bayaga 506). In the article “Black Identity Development”, Keyiona Ritchey believes that the first stage of Cross’ model tends to be created as a result of a long western oppression. Black people at this pre-encounter stage are not aware of their black race values simply because they were raised under a white westernized ideology. In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, the author shows how Harrison, the steward, is highly influenced by the western culture; he never cooks native African food, he only cooks European food for his masters. Harrison declares: “The food of white people makes you healthy, it is not like all of the nonsense that our people eat” (210). Cross states that “persons have frequently been socialized to favor a Eurocentric cultural perspective” (qtd. in Ritchey 102).

The discussion of racism necessitates focusing on Frantz Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Masks*. Fanon pinpoints at the internalization process of black people from a different perspective. He believes that a relationship of a black individual with himself is always shaped in relation to his white oppressors, saying that: “For not only must the black man be black; he must be black in relation to the white man” (110). Fanon argues that this internal

fragmentation is reinforced by denigrating interactions in the colonial world, in which the black subject is regularly reduced to his skin (qtd. in Rangan and Chow 5).

Fanon's idea is highly depicted in the postcolonial context by the author of *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Odenigbo, the revolutionary lecturer, is very proud of his African descent and calls for African unity. He discusses with Dr Patel and Miss Adebayo why Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the Nigerian prime minister at that time, broke off diplomatic relations with France, Odenigbo says "The white man is the only master Balewa knows. . . If the British tell him to call himself a castrated monkey, he will" (110). There is another scene of Odenigbo talking to Kainene, where he declares that "The white man brought racism into the world. He used it as a basis of conquest. It is always easier to conquer a more humane people" (402). According to him, westerners created the white superior creature in order to differentiate themselves from others.

The character of Madu highly reflects the idea of internalization and self-perception as a black individual and shows how black people perceive themselves after experiencing racism for a long time. Madu is Kainene's friend and he is a military man in the Biafran army, he fights genuinely for the Biafran cause. Major Madu represents how most postcolonial people of color perceive themselves in accordance to white westerners. He thinks that if Richard writes a letter to the world about Biafran cause and Biafran people's sufferings, the westerners will certainly believe him. He asks Richard to write for propaganda directorate although he does not like him, "Of course I asked because you are white. They will take what you write more seriously because you are white" (305). The inferiority that black people experience is reflected in Madu, the racial discrimination against black people results in a trauma that makes Madu think that the world would believe a white journalist's article rather than a black one's.

In conclusion, African people had to endure racism for decades and yet, they are the ones who are perceived as barbarians and uncivilized. Thus, postcolonial writers, including Adichie, highly address the issue of racism besides civil war, rape, and silence in their writings. African writers depict the horrors and traumatic incidents black people suffer throughout their characters. Rangan and Chow write in their article that:

Said, for example, in his famous discussion of Orientalism, deals with the systematic and structural relationship between textual power and economic-political power, and interrogates the material prehistory of the representational traditions that have contributed toward constructing 'the Orient' as an entity that is racially distinct from—and inferior to—the western world. (6)

Textual authority has a significant role in portraying white westerners as the superior race mainly because of history manipulation that highly participated in constructing the idea that black people are considered as a racially inferior other. Thus, through the use of many modernist and postmodernist techniques, African writers rewrite trauma they show that factual historical texts are not the only source of information. They reflect through their writings the damaged psyche of black people who encountered racism for a long time.

Chapter III: Narrative Techniques in *Half of a Yellow Sun*

The third chapter is analytical. It shows how Adichie uses narrative techniques to raise the issue of suspecting history as well as to get the long-silenced voices heard. As it contains two sections, the first one deals with self-reflexivity in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, and how it serves as a tool to rewrite history and to point that history is not the only source of information. The second section tackles polyvocality and how the author uses it to refute misconceptions about Africa. It also seeks to reveal that not all black-skinned African individuals share the same identity and characteristics. It shows that although they experience the same incidents of the civil war, they don't have the same version of the story and each one of the characters experience trauma differently.

III.1. Self-Reflexivity

In literary works, trauma can be depicted through a variety of narrative techniques. This allows the writers to communicate the deep emotional and psychological impacts of traumatic situations. These literary techniques allow the writer to effectively portray the complexities of trauma and its deep impact on individuals. Additionally, in postcolonial context, these narrative techniques serve to unveil the long-ignored traumas of the former colonized subjects since it allows the writers to rewrite their own history.

One of the narrative techniques utilized by Adichie in *Half of a Yellow Sun* to portray trauma is metafiction where she combines fiction with historical events. Adichie also merges narrative with literary criticism to show that this is not a historical book rather it is a fictional work. In the article “‘He Writes About the World that Remained Silent’: Witnessing Authorship in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*”, Emmanuel Mzomera Ngwira affirms that *Half of a Yellow Sun* is a highly metafictional work (46). Metafiction is defined by Patricia Waugh as “fictional writing which selfconsciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship

between fiction and truth” (qtd. in Ngwira 46). Metafiction is when a fictional work purposely draws attention to its fictional nature in order to remind the reader that the text is fictitious. Additionally, in historical metafictional works, the act of writing itself is an important point of interest (Ngwira 47). This type of fiction narrates the process of its own writing i.e., writing about writing.

Self-reflexivity is a western postmodernist technique that postcolonial writers also use in their writings. Ngwira states that *Half of a Yellow Sun* “reflects upon the moment of writing history through a metafictional element known as self-reflexivity, which in postmodernist thinking, refers to how a text reflects upon its own making” (43). In other words, self-reflexivity as a metafictional aspect is highly present in *Half of a Yellow Sun* where it narrates the writing of a book that appears under the name of ‘The World Was Silent When We Died’. Hence, Adichie permits the reader to witness not only the traumatic events of the civil war, but she also attempts to chronicle this trauma by bringing the reader into witnessing the process of writing the Book (Ngwira 52).

Further, it is according to Steven G. Kellman in his article “The Fiction of Self-Begetting” that “The self-begetting novel is supremely reflexive” (1253). That is, self-reflexivity can also manifest in self-begetting novels which are defined by Nasrullah Mambrol as works that are written by a character within that work. In this context, Adichie utilizes the character of Ugwu to write the events of the book ‘The World Was Silent When We Died’.

Adichie uses this technique in *Half of a Yellow Sun* to chronicle the process of writing the experiences and tragedies of her people as well as to remind the reader that history has many possible truths. Furthermore, Adichie in her TED talk “The Danger of a Single Story”, addresses the issue of telling a single story of Africa as she shows her distrust to the version that the west recounts about her country and people. She explains that the west has long viewed Africa as “a place of beautiful landscapes, beautiful animals and incomprehensible

people fighting senseless wars, dying of poverty and AIDS, unable to speak for themselves and waiting to be saved by a kind white foreigner” (00:06:12-00:06:28). Adichie also states that her early exposure to western literature made her assume that people like her do not exist in literature (00:02:46-00:02:49), and even if they do, they are depicted in a falsified way. Listening to a story from one perspective would lead to the belief that it is the one and only story; a condition that generates a stereotype. Adichie adds that her novels were criticized by the westerners for lacking “African authenticity” due to the fact that her characters do not meet their expectations about African people. She mentions that “The [American] professor told me that my characters were too much like him, an educated and middle-class man. My characters drove cars, they were not starving. Therefore, they were not authentically African” (00:08:06-00:08:20). This implicates that the single story told about African people is widely spread and is believed to be the absolute truth.

Thus, due to the manipulation of history, westerners do not accept the fact that Africans are equal to them. Therefore, this manipulation affects African people in a way that led to their trauma since they are portrayed as non-human creatures, savages, and barbarians. Their trauma is not recognized because they are pictured as the villains who cannot be subjected to trauma. In this context, Chinua Achebe in his interview “Achebe Discusses Africa 50 Years After *Things Fall Apart*”, proclaims that “I knew that something needed to be done” (Achebe, 00:01:20-00:01:24). Achebe feels the need to write a book that tells the story of Africans from the perspective of an African in order to depict the other truth. He adds that in his book *Things Fall Apart* (1958) he does not try to give an idealized version of his country, yet a true one (00:03:02-00:03:18).

Throughout the novel, the book ‘The World Was Silent When We Died’ is believed to be written by Richard, the English man who is interested in learning about Igbo history and culture. Yet, by the end of the novel, it is revealed to the reader that the book is actually under

the authorship of Ugwu, the houseboy. In fact, Adichie was criticized for this matter. Several critics point that Adichie troubles the issue of authorship by giving authorial agency to Ugwu, a houseboy who does not belong to the category of educated middle-class men who are usually associated with writing history (Ngwira 43). In other words, Ugwu's authorship is criticized since he does not meet the requirements of an author to narrate history. However, we believe that by doing so, Adichie tries to refute the idea that history should be recorded by westerners only.

Novak defends Ugwu's authorship as she claims that "Ugwu becomes the chronicler of trauma as the colonial voice that Richard represents fades into the background, marking the exit of the Western subject from narrative control" (40). Hence, Adichie ascribes the authorship to Ugwu, the non-educated houseboy, rather than Richard, the English man, to allude that Africa's history should be told by its people regardless of their status. Also, she highlights the process of narrating trauma of Africans in general and Nigerians in particular which was ignored in the western literature.

In this context, Adichie speaks in her TED speech about the concept of power and its relation to telling one-sided stories. She argues that power is associated with "How they [the stories] are told, who tells them, when they are told, and how many stories are told" (Adichie, 00:10:03-00:10:08). The possession of power determines who tells the story and how it is narrated. Adichie adds that, "Power is the ability not just to tell the story of another person, but to make it the definitive story of that person" (00:10:12-00:10:19). Hence, the ones in power, particularly the west, have the audacity to manipulate other people's history by telling either a false or an incomplete truth and make their version of the story as the only and absolute truth. This permits them to create a version of history that honors their side while ignoring and rejecting others' experiences.

History manipulation has been a powerful tool used by westerners throughout time to create falsified narratives, control postcolonial people, and retain power. In the African context, the resulting effects of historical manipulation are strongly depicted in the misbeliefs held by individuals from different generations. The African writer Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o addresses the issue of misbeliefs amongst the elder and the younger African generations about their own heritage and history. In his *Weep Not, Child* (1964), Ngũgĩ portrays the inherited hatred, that springs from historical manipulation of the younger African generation for their elders; mainly because they believe that their ancestors surrendered to the western colonization (Abebe and Mengistu 70). Abebe and Mengistu add that "Boro [A character in *Weep Not, Child*] has little respect for his father, and he even expresses his disdain for him on occasion . . . He feels that there are awful historical situations in Kenya—a history of surrender" (70). The traumatized character of Boro believes that his ancestors did not fight during their wars and simply surrendered their land to the colonizer. They add that Boro is always upset throughout the novel since he thinks that it is due to the stupidity of his ancestors, their land had been taken (70). What is apparent is that because of the historical manipulation and heritage erasing, postcolonial Africans carry various misbeliefs which are rooted in the colonial literature. These misbeliefs incite a rejection of the African heritage as well as African identity; a condition that is certainly responsible of an identity crisis.

Further, when the westerners have the authority and privilege to narrate the experiences of former colonized individuals, cultures, and races, they are simply capable of establishing and manipulating misconceptions and incomplete truths about those they believe to be the other. Adichie affirms in her interview "Humanising History" that, "Nigerian students have much more access to books about realities that are not theirs than they do to books about realities are theirs" (Adichie, 00:06:36-00:06:44). Because they are not given the

tools to write about their own history, culture, and race, African individuals endure identity crisis that can even transform into a traumatic experience.

Accordingly, the author Adichie uses what she calls “Emotional truth” (00:01:32-00:01:33) to recount the true history of her own people. Relying on stories of people who experienced Biafra, she reveals her people’s dreadful experiences and rewrites her country’s long history from the perspective of her people. Through the novel, Adichie proposes that: “The real tragedy of our postcolonial world is not that the majority of people had no say in whether or not they wanted this new world; rather, it is that the majority have not been given the tools to *negotiate* this new world” (101).

In that case, self-reflexivity is used by Adichie to re-narrate history and to depict the trauma that was ignored. The book ‘The World Was Silent When We Died’, unlike the rest of the novel, is written in the present tense and comprises of sections that narrate history ranging from the British colonialism to the traumatic incidents of the Nigerian civil war. Furthermore, in these sections, the reader is not provided with the actual text of the book yet with fragments which denotes that the author is going through the process of writing the book. Thus, the readers are put in the moment of writing history i.e., witnessing the process of writing history (Ngwira 47). The novel’s regular flow is disrupted by the book Ugwu writes which is divided into eight fragments that have a different style and tone from the rest of the text (Novak 40).

The book ‘The World Was Silent When We Died’ narrates fragments of the traumatic events of the Biafran war. Here, Adichie tries to bring to light the voices that were long silenced in order to get their trauma to be recognized. Ugwu chronicles the events that other characters experience: “He recounts the story of the woman with the calabash . . . Olanna tells him this story and he notes the details . . . She describes the carved designs on the woman’s calabash . . . and she describes the child’s head inside: scruffy plaits falling across the dark-brown face, eyes completely white, eerily open, a mouth in a small surprised O” (Adichie 82).

Ugwu's book recounts not only the tragedies of Nigerian people, but also refers to other postcolonial Africans' traumas that were intentionally ignored. By referring to German women's agonies during late years of World War Two, he writes in parallel the traumatic incidents that Rwandan women endured during the civil war. He mentions, "the German women who fled Hamburg with the charred bodies of their children stuffed in suitcases, the Rwandan women who pocketed tiny parts of their mauled babies" (82). Despite experiencing the same tragedies as the Germans, postcolonial African people's trauma is not recognized due to the fact that they are black.

In his book, Ugwu vividly pictures the devastating weapon used against the Biafrans in the civil war, that is starvation. He captures the physical as well as the psychological effects of starvation on Biafrans. He describes in details the thin bodies and desperate hollow stares of children that are fighting to survive. In his poem, he says:

Imagine children with arms like toothpicks,
 With footballs for bellies and skin stretched thin.
 It was Kwashiorkor- difficult word,
 A word that was not quite ugly enough, a sin.
 . . . Their skin had turned the tawny of weak tea
 And showed cobwebs of vein and brittle bone. (375)

Ugwu sheds light on the West's misrepresentation of the Biafrans' starvation. He portrays the West's indifference to the pain and trauma of these innocent children. He sadly narrates how western journalists and photographers used the tiny skinny bodies of Biafran children as aesthetic glossed magazine covers. He explains that "Starvation aided the careers of photographers" (237). He goes on describing:

You needn't imagine. There were photos
 Displayed in gloss-filled pages of your Life.
 Did you see? Did you feel sorry briefly,
 Then turn round to hold your lover or wife?
 . . . Naked children laughing, as if the man
 Would not take photos and then leave, alone. (375)

Consequently, *Half of a Yellow Sun* serves as a testimony for the Nigerian silenced voices. It captures the traumatic incidents that people have undergone during the years of civil war. Also, it shows through its narrative techniques that history is not the only source of information. History is twisted and written in a way that serves those who are in power causing the postcolonial people's trauma to be overlooked. Thus, along with self-reflexivity, the author employs polyvocality as a mode of narration to show the reader that there is not only a single truth and that Africans' trauma could be told from different perspectives.

III.2. Polyvocality

Through the use of polyvocality, Adichie tends to show that history should be told from different perspectives, especially from the view point of the people who experienced trauma. In the article "Reclamation of History: Discerning Polyvocal and Decentering Voices in *Half of a Yellow Sun*", Nida Sarfraz et al. state that "In order to give multi-dimension version of reality postcolonial writers employ polyvocal mode of narration in the writing of history" (164). They also explain that polyvocality is borrowed by postcolonial theorists from the Russian theorist Mikail Bakhtin, and it is defined as a mode of narration that gives rise to multiple narrators. Such a work depicts the viewpoints of numerous characters where each narrator gives his or her own version of reality (162). Polyvocality is when the text is narrated

from several points of view of multiple characters. Each of the characters perceives the events from a different perspective. Moreover, postcolonial writers employ this narrative mode to show various sides of the traumatic experience as well as to show that history does not have a single truth.

Half of a Yellow Sun utilizes polyvocality through three main focalizers. In the article “Focalisation and Polyvocality in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun*”, Aghogho Akpome states that Mieke Bal defines “The focaliser as the narrator’s delegate that influences the way narrative content is perceived by the reader” (26). Moreover, focalization permits the reader to view an event through the lens of a character. It also expresses the narrator’s perception on a certain historical event. Knowingly, these narrators can be focalized characters as well (Sarfraz et al. 162). In other words, the focaliser refers to the character or the perspective through which the events and experiences in a story are perceived and presented. It also shapes the reader’s understanding and interpretation of events.

Although Adichie is not a direct witness to the Nigerian Civil War, she inherited her trauma through the stories she heard about its savagery. This highlights the immense and long-lasting effects of collective trauma of the Biafran war on the following generations. Adichie, in “Humanising History”, states that she “was a lot more concerned about the people who had in fact lived in Biafra and experienced Biafra. I was a lot more concerned about telling their stories . . . I inherited the sense of loss” (00:08:34-00:09:39). Her exposure to narratives of violence and despair shaped her perception of the conflict and left a permanent mark on her psyche. Her novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* serves as a tool through which she expresses her inherited trauma. She employs multiple focalizers within her narrative, each portraying different experience that she heard. Through this, Adichie seeks to capture the multiplicity of perspectives and reflect the deep impact of the war on individuals as well as on the whole community.

Adichie employs polyvocal mode of narration to show that not all of characters experience the same traumatic incidents, as well as to write history from different lenses. This mode of narration is “Opposite to omniscient mode of narration which is employed in Eurocentric historiography” (Sarfraz et al. 162). *Half of a Yellow Sun* stands as the strongest depiction of black identity in the context of postcolonial Nigeria. Ugwu’s identity, for example, goes through many levels of development, from being an illiterate village boy to an author who writes his own country’s history. By doing so, Adichie shows how the black individual can integrate in his environment and is able to evolve in a different way from his other black fellows. This also reveals the immense impact the Biafran war has on the characters’ identity development and how the traumatic incidents they undergo transformed their perceptions throughout the book.

Adichie also shows how her characters depict the same traumatic event in different ways. Ugwu, Olanna, and Richard are the three focalizers through which the author makes the reader feel, see, and live what those characters experience during civil war. The novel’s scenes are narrated through the perspective of different characters. For example, the stories of the horrible killings of Igbo people in the north are depicted through the eyes of Olanna. She sees the bodies of her relatives, and on her way to station, she sees the dead bodies of human beings thrown on the streets “Like dolls made of cloth” (148), and finally she sees “The little girl’s head with the ashy-grey skin and the plaited hair and rolled-back eyes and open mouth . . . She visualized the mother plaiting it” (149). These horrific scenes eventually lead to Olanna’s trauma where she experiences a paralysis along with madness episodes. She is always driven back by her traumatic memories to the moment of the traumatic incidents.

The author also brings to light the trauma of Ugwu as he returns back from the war. Ugwu did not experience trauma in the same way as Olanna or Richard, he projects his trauma on the process of writing the book and recounts the traumatic experience of being

soldier in the Biafran army. It is an experience that continues to haunt him day and night. Ugwu seems to be the most important focalizer in the novel because Adichie uses him to narrate even other characters' experiences, "Olanna tells him this story and he notes the details" (82). Like Olanna, Odenigbo is first introduced to the readers from the perspective of Ugwu who also gives a full background about other minor characters, such as: Okeoma, Dr. Patel, Miss Adebayo, and Professor Ezeka (Akpome 28). Akpome also denotes that, "The narrating recorder is attached physically to Ugwu as the narration and the reader literally moves with him" (29).

Correspondingly, Richard also focalizes the traumatic experience of the civil war as a white man. He narrates the bloody scenes of the brutal killings of Igbos he witnesses in the airport where Hausa soldiers murder anyone who sounds Igbo. Richard is shocked by what he sees to the point that he "Felt himself wet his trousers. There was a painful ringing in his ears" (153). His trauma comes to the surface when he starts to have flashbacks as well as hallucinations, "He stared at himself and wondered if it really had happened, if he really had seen men die, if the lingering smells from shattered liquor bottles and bloodied human bodies were only in his imagination" (155). Adichie adds that "He had often wished that he would lose his mind, or that his memory would suppress itself . . . he had only to close his eyes to see the freshly dead bodies on the floor of the airport and to recall the pitch of the screams" (165). According to Sarfraz et al., because Richard is an outsider and the novel's only main white character, he is not as affected by trauma as Olanna (172). Richard is not affected in the same way as other focalizers since he "Remains a colonial observer" (Novak 40).

It is according to William Nelles that "Focalization deals with the perception –real and imagined" (qtd. in Sarfraz et al. 167). Adichie succeeds in the application of such method in a way she mixes reality with fiction. Presenting real historical events through diverse imaginary characters seeks to refute the idea that postcolonial black subjects have the same identity. She

also gives the right to African people to write their own history from their own perspective. Therefore, it serves as a special tool for addressing the difficulties and the trauma of Nigerian civil war as a colonial legacy.

Examining racism's long history can show how it has contributed to the formation of false ideas or incomplete truths about black people. Racism has been maintained for generations through systems of oppression, stereotypes, and falsified narratives that have twisted the perspective of black persons and communities. Understanding this history reveals how these false narratives were developed resulting in misconceptions which eventually lead to black people's trauma.

For this matter, Frantz Fanon uses Jacques Lacan's idea of "misrecognition" to describe how people are influenced by the stereotype of "Negro". Fanon argues that "The 'gestalt' as Lacan calls it, is the founding feature of ego-formation of black people, which can be understood only under a postcolonial context" (qtd. in Rangan and Chow 4). In other words, white people are responsible for creating the different inferior 'black' to impose their image of superiority. White people, according to Fanon, view black people in terms of homogeneity; they are placed together to form a one black identity, gestalt as Lacan calls it (Rangan and Chow 4). It is this idea of homogeneity that is behind the West's indifference to Africans' trauma; the inability to notice the individual differences of Africans leads to overlook their distinct traumatic experiences. Given this fact, one can understand why Adichie in *Half of a Yellow Sun* narrates history through various narrators. Adichie shows that her people have different personalities, characteristics, and experiences even of the same events to promote the idea that history accepts more than one story. Thus, each character narrates trauma in his/her own way and each has a distinct voice and view of the postcolonial world.

Conclusion

Postcolonial writers try by all means to illuminate the marginalized experiences of postcolonial individuals. They represent the bloody incidents that former colonized subjects have undergone in the colonial era, and how they are still suffering from colonial legacies. Doubtless, civil wars that ravage Africa embody one of the colonial legacies and Nigeria is a vivid example of the countries that faced the brutal scenes of civil war.

Many African authors wrote about the horrific incidents of the civil war in Nigeria through their works. They mainly addressed the trauma of former colonized nations in general and Africa in particular. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is one of the African writers who sought the recognition of African people's trauma and dreadful incidents they faced. *Half of a Yellow Sun* served as a unique and vivid depiction of those awful traumatic experiences during Biafra war, whereby Adichie succeeded in her novel at picturing the different experiences of Biafrans who are physically and psychologically wounded.

This thesis showed how western trauma theory disregarded the pains and traumatic experiences of non-westerners. It investigated how postcolonial writers interpreted trauma theory in the postcolonial context to get the long-silenced voices heard. For this matter, the study examined the specificities of trauma in Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* which illuminated the sufferings of Nigerian people during and after the civil war. It also sought to highlight the permanent effects of the war on postcolonial people's mental health. Thus, the novel served as a unique postcolonial testimony to the Biafran civil war as a colonial legacy; it demonstrates how this war brought about the Nigeria's trauma.

This work has delved deep into the Eurocentric vision of trauma. It explored how the concept of trauma was exclusively viewed from the western lenses that excluded postcolonial individuals. Based on the studies of Sigmund Freud and Cathy Caruth, this study showed the

difference between individual and collective trauma, and how this latter highly affected the identity as well as the psyche of postcolonial Africans although they did not directly experience war. The study showed that sharing the horrific stories of civil war between the older and younger generations caused the new generations to inherit war memories, which eventually led to a collective trauma; it is a trauma that was rooted in the memory of postcolonial people as a long-lasting result of the exposure to horrific incidents.

This study also discussed how postcolonial trauma theory criticizes the Eurocentric vision of trauma theory. It was through the last section in chapter one that this work looked into the urgent redefining of the concept of trauma because non-westerners are ignored and eventually excluded from trauma i.e., their trauma was not recognized. For this matter, Africans, among numerous postcolonial authors, address the marginalization issue in their writings seeking a recognition of their people's traumatic experiences and calling for a broader definition of trauma; a definition that includes postcolonial individuals' trauma as well. Thus, the current research sought the recognition of the oppressed and the silenced all over the world and specifically in Africa.

This dissertation explored the effects of western superiority over postcolonial subjects. Via the analysis of *Half of a Yellow Sun*, the second and third sections of chapter two examined silence and racism as manifestations of postcolonial trauma. The unspeakable sorrows are sometimes a conscious choice because African people of color are fully aware that even if they speak, they will not be heard due to the fact that they are black. The study also investigated how silence should be studied as a symptom of trauma and how silence and trauma are interrelated. Additionally, the same chapter tackled the theme of racism. It demonstrated how the exposure to racism for a long time leaves a lasting mark on black people's identity which eventually leads to identity crisis.

The final chapter examined the narrative techniques used by the author in *Half of a Yellow Sun* and the main reason behind using them. It probed into self-reflexivity and how it is used to express the distrust to stories that history tells. It also followed the argument that history is not the only source of information because, according to Adichie, it encompasses many truths. In a detailed analysis, the final part dealt with polyvocal mode of narration and how it is employed to explain that not all black people experience the same traumatic incidents. It showed as well that experiencing similar dreadful events during the civil war does not mean encountering the same trauma; it explained that through different focalizers, the history of Biafra is genuinely rewritten.

In conclusion, postcolonial people had to endure myriad traumatic experiences. Africans mainly faced the cruelty of civil wars as a colonial legacy and had to suffer in silence. Consequently, African writers such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie tried to get the voices of those marginalized people heard through postcolonial writings. This study showed how Africans encountered trauma on the individual and the collective levels, and sought for an urgent redefinition and revision of the Eurocentric theory of trauma.

Work Cited:

Abebe, Addisu H., and Melakneh Mengistu. "Intertextuality in Selected Novels of Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o." *International Journal of Language and Linguistics*, vol. 10, no. 2, 2022, pp. 67-76. *Science Publishing Group*, doi: 10.11648/j.ijll.20221002.12.

"About." *Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie*, 18 Oct. 2022, www.chimamanda.com/about/.

"A Brief Explanation of the Nigerian Civil War (Biafra War) | African Biographics."

YouTube, uploaded by African Biographics, 30 Dec. 2020,
www.youtube.com/watch?v=npAHguZ_0nk.

Achebe, Chinua. "Achebe Discusses Africa 50 Years After 'Things Fall Apart'." *YouTube*, uploaded by PBS NewsHour, 22 Mar. 2013,
www.youtube.com/watch?v=JHF_w0gkyiI.

---. and Innes Catherine L., editors. "Civil Peace Chinua Achebe." *African Short Stories*. Heinemann, 1987.

Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. *Half of a Yellow Sun*. 2006. HarperCollins Publishers, 2017.

---. "Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: The danger of a single story | TED." *YouTube*, uploaded by TED, 7 Oct. 2009, www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9Ihs241zeg&t=509s.

---. "Humanising History - Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie." *Youtube*, uploaded by RSA, 15 May 2013, www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Lx1BDdNF4w&list=PPSV.

Akpome, Aghogho. "Focalisation and Polyvocality in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*." *English Studies in Africa*, vol. 56, no. 2, Oct. 2013, pp. 25–35, doi:10.1080/00138398.2013.856556.

Amandeep. "Redressing the Trauma: Gender, Slavery and Survival in African Literature." *Journal of East-West Thought*, 19 Dec. 2020, pp. 71-79.

- American Psychological Association. "Apa Dictionary of Psychology." *Dictionary.apa.org*, 2022, www.dictionary.apa.org/trauma.
- Benaouda, Lebdaï. *Post-independence African Literature*. Office des Publications Universitaire, 1992.
- Caruth, Cathy. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016.
- Chukwudi, Victor M. "Themes and Techniques in African Novel: A Review of Ngozi Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*." *Journal of Language and Literary Studies*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2015, pp. 345-359.
- Comas-Díaz, Lillian, et al. "Racial Trauma: Theory, Research, and Healing: Introduction to the Special Issue." *American Psychologist*, vol. 74, no. 1, 2019, pp. 1-5. *American Psychological Association*, doi: 10.1037/amp0000442.
- Craps, Stef. "Beyond Eurocentrism: Trauma theory in the global age." *The Future of Trauma Theory: Contemporary Literary and Cultural Criticism*, edited by Gert Buelens et al., Routledge, 2014, pp. 45-61.
- Daghamin, Rached A. "A Postcolonial Reading of Racial and Cultural Traumas in E. M. Foster's *A Passage to India*." *Journal of Transdisciplinary Studies*, vol. 12, no. 1, 2019, pp. 61-71.
- Danticat, Edwidge. *Breath, Eyes, Memory*. Soho Press, 1994.
- Devi, Suman, and Kumar Gaurav. "Racial Discrimination and Identity Crisis in the Select Novels of Marlon James: A Postcolonial Study." *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, vol. 6, no. 4, 2022, pp. 2710-2715.
- Emecheta, Buchi. *The Slave Girl*, edited by George Brazillier, Allison and Busby, 2008.

Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translated by Charles Lam Markmann, Pluto Press, 1986.

Freud, Sigmund. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud: Early Psycho-Analytic Publications*, vol. 18, 1920-1922, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Group Psychology and Other Works*. Translated by James Strachey et al. The Hogarth press and the institute of psycho-analysis, 1955, www.sas.upenn.edu/~cavitch/pdf-library/Freud_Beyond_P_P.pdf.

“Freudian Slip.” *GoodTherapy Blog*, 7 Aug. 2015, www.goodtherapy.org/blog/psychpedia/freudian-slip.

Graham, Allen. “Intertextuality”. *The Literary Encyclopedia*. 24 Jan. 2005, www.litencyc.com/php/stopics.php?rec=true&UID=1229.

Hancock, Lynn. “Drowning out the Silence: Nigerian Civil War Literature and the Politics of Gender-Based Violence.” *UCLA: Center for the Study of Women*, 2012, pp. 1-15, www.escholarship.org/uc/item/5519m7qk.

Hirschberger, Gilad. “Collective Trauma and the Social Construction of Meaning.” *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 9, 10 Aug. 2018, pp. 1-14, doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01441.

Hoskin, Maia N. “What Is Racial Trauma?” *Mental Health America*, 16 June 2022, www.everydayhealth.com/emotional-health/trauma/what-is-racial-trauma-and-how-does-it-affect-health/.

Kalampung, Yan O. “The Theory of Postcolonial Trauma and its Impact on the Religious Studies.” *Potret Pemikiran*, vol. 25, no. 2, 2021, pp. 207-218, www.journal.iain-manado.ac.id/index.php/PP.

- Kellman, Steven G. "The Fiction of Self-Begetting." *MLN*, vol. 91, no. 6, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Dec. 1976, pp. 1243–1256, doi:10.2307/2907134.
- Madu, Lovina I. "Perspectives of War in Chimamanda Adichie's Half of a Yellow Sun." *African Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2019, pp. 143–156, www.ajosing.com/.
- Mambrol, Nasrullah. "Self-Reflexive Novels and Novelists." *Literary Theory and Criticism*, 19 Mar. 2019, literariness.org/2019/03/19/self-reflexive-novels-and-novelists/.
- Mirza, Aliza. "A Postcolonial Analysis of Half of a Yellow Sun as a Postcolonial Novel." *Social Money*, 10 Feb. 2022, www.en.social4money.com/a-postcolonial-analysis-of-half-of-a-yellow-sun-102.
- Mtose, Xoliswa, and Anass Bayaga. "The Psychology of Black Identity." *The Journal of International Social Research*, vol. 4, no. 17, 2011, pp. 504-515, www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2hUKEwi397DSwsrAhW7VaQEHaI8CKEQFnoECCUQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.sosyalarastirmalar.com%2Farticles%2Fthe-psychology-of-black.
- Ngom, Mamadou A., B. "Chris Abani's *Song for Night* and the Battlefield Trauma of Child Soldiers." *International Journal of Advanced Academic Studies*, vol. 2, no. 3, 2020, pp. 253-261.
- Ngwira, Emmanuel M. "'He Writes about the World That Remained Silent': Witnessing Authorship in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Half of a Yellow Sun." *English Studies in Africa*, vol. 55, no. 2, Oct. 2012, pp. 43–53, doi:10.1080/00138398.2012.731289.
- Noringriis, Julie H. *Sex, Rape, and Narrative in Adichie's Half of a Yellow Sun*. 2021. Truman State University, MA dissertation.

- Novak, Amy. "Who Speaks? Who Listens?: The Problem of Address in Two Nigerian Trauma Novels." *Studies in the Novel*, vol. 40, no. 1 & 2, 2008, pp. 32-51.
- Nungki, Heriyati, et al. "Speaking through Silence: Trauma in Literary Work." *Proceedings of the International Conference on Business, Economic, Social Science, and Humanities – Humanities and Social Sciences Track (ICOBEST-HSS 2019)*, vol. 391, Jan. 2020, pp. 166–170, doi:10.2991/assehr.k.200108.037.
- Nwanunobi, Adaobi T. "Remembering Nigeria's Biafra war that many prefer to forget." *BBC News*, 15 Jan. 2020, www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-51094093.
- Obi-Ani, Paul, and Ngozika Obi-Ani. "January 15 1966 Coup D' Etat Reconsidered." *Nsukka Journal of Humanities*, vol. 24, no. 2, Aug. 2016, pp. 16-25.
- Okolo, Philips O. *The Nigeria Civil War*, edited by Opukiri C. O., El-mercy printing press, 2010.
- Pooja, Rangan, and Rey Chow. "Race, Racism, and Postcoloniality." *Oxford Handbooks Online*, Dec 2013, pp. 1-19, doi: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199588251.013.0025.
- Prathesha, Jency J., and Margaret Priscilla J. "Handcuffs of Slavery: A Study on Slavery in the Novel of Buchi Emecheta the Slave Girl." *Online International Interdisciplinary Research Journal*, vol. 08, no. 05, Sept-Oct 2018, pp. 358-360.
- "Repression." *GoodTherapy Blog*, 21 Aug. 2015, www.goodtherapy.org/blog/psychpedia/repression#:~:text=Sigmond%20Freud%20originally%20developed%20the,becomes%20unaware%20of%20its%20existence.
- Ritchey, Keyiona. "Black Identity Development." *The Vermont Connection*, vol. 35, no. 1, Jan. 2014, pp. 99-105, www.scholarworks.uvm.edu/tvc/vol35/iss1/12.

- Rothberg, Michael. *Decolonizing Trauma Studies: A Response*. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008.
- Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. Vintage Books, 1979.
- Sarfraz, Nida, et al. "Reclamation of History: Discerning Polyvocal and Decentering Voices in *Half of a Yellow Sun*." *Language in India*, vol. 16, no. 3, Mar. 2016, pp. 160–193.
- Shoukat, Laila, et al. "An Analysis of Personal and Collective Trauma in Khaled Hosseini's Novel *Sea Prayer*." *JEE (Journal of English Education)*, vol. 6, no. 2, 23 Jan. 2021, pp. 117–130, doi: 10.30606/jee.v6i2.457.
- Sletvold, Jon. "Freud's Three Theories of Neurosis: Towards a Contemporary Theory of Trauma and Defense." *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, vol. 26, no. 4, 3 July 2016, pp. 460–475, doi: 10.1080/10481885.2016.1190611.
- "The Biafran Flag Symbol Analysis." *LitCharts*, www.litcharts.com/lit/half-of-a-yellow-sun/symbols/the-biafran-flag.
- "Trauma Definition & Meaning." *Merriam-Webster*, 9 Mar. 2023, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/trauma.
- "What is Racism?" *Australian Human Rights Commission*, www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/race-discrimination/what-racism.
- Williams, Seretha D. "'Dark Swoops': Trauma and Madness in *Half of a Yellow Sun*." *Madness in Black Women's Diasporic Fictions*, edited by Brown Caroline and Garvey Johanna, Palgrave Macmillan, 2017, pp. 139-161, doi: 10.1007/978-3-319-58127-9_6.
- Zapata, Beatriz Pérez. *Zadie Smith and Postcolonial Trauma*. Routledge, 2021.

المخلص

تسعى هذه الدراسة الى اظهار صدمة ما بعد الاستعمار في رواية شيماماندا نغوزي أديشي نصف شمس صفراء 2006. لطالما تم اتخاذ مفهوم الصدمة من منظور أوروبي، متجاهلا عمدا نضالات جميع الشعوب المستعمرة سابقا. تتناول دراسات سابقة لا تعد ولا تحصى نظرية الصدمة باعتبارها تتمحور حول الأوروبيين فقط، بحيث لا يتم اعتبار المستعمرين السابقين الغير اوروبيين على أنهم متأثرون نفسيا وجسديا أو بالأحرى مصدومون. وعليه فإن العديد من الكتاب الذين ينتمون الى حقبة ما بعد الاستعمار يختارون معالجة موضوع ما بعد الاستعمار في مؤلفاتهم سعيا للحصول على الاعتراف الكامل بتجارب شعوبهم المؤلمة. توضح هذه الأطروحة أن رواية نصف شمس صفراء للروائية النيجيرية أديشي والتي تنتمي الى كتابات الخيال الأدبي لصدمة ما بعد الاستعمار، أنها بمثابة شهادة على صدمة شعب ما بعد الاستعمار التي أثارها الأحداث القاسية للحرب الأهلية في بيافرا. يتبنى هذا البحث نظريات الصدمة الأدبية مثل أعمال كاثي كاروث وسيغmond فرويد للبحث بعمق في الصدمة لفهم الفرق بين الصدمة الفردية والذكريات التاريخية الصادمة بالنسبة للمجتمع، وآثار هذه الأخيرة على نفسية الشعب في مرحلة ما بعد الاستعمار. علاوة على ذلك، يسلط هذا البحث الضوء على أعمال كبار الباحثين في الجانب النظري لمفهوم صدمة ما بعد الاستعمار مثل فرانتز فانون لإثبات أن صدمة ما بعد الاستعمار هي واحدة من العديد من موروثات الاستعمار. أخيرا، ومن خلال الاهتمامات الموضوعية التي تناقشها الرواية مثل الصمت والعنصرية ضد السود الافريقيين كأفراد من جيل ما بعد الاحتلال، بالإضافة الى الاعتماد على التقنيات السردية الحديثة أن الخيارات الموضوعية والسردية تقنية الانعكاس الذاتي للروائية وتعدد الأصوات خلال الرواية، تظهر المذكرة مثل لكتاب ما بعد الاستعمار تخلق صوتا فريدا يعيد تصوير مفهوم الصدمة من منظور ما بعد الاستعمار.

Résumé

Cette étude examine la représentation du traumatisme postcolonial dans "*Half of a Yellow Sun*" (2006) de Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Le traumatisme a longtemps été abordé du point de vue eurocentrique, ignorant délibérément les luttes des peuples ex-colonisés. De nombreuses études considèrent la théorie du traumatisme comme une préoccupation occidentale, où les anciens colonisés ne sont pas perçus comme psychologiquement blessés ou traumatisés. Ainsi, de nombreux écrivains postcoloniaux choisissent d'aborder le traumatisme dans leurs œuvres afin de faire reconnaître les expériences traumatiques de leur peuple. Cette thèse démontre que "*Half of a Yellow Sun*" d'Adichie est le témoignage du traumatisme du sujet postcolonial, provoqué par les événements cruels de la guerre civile biafraise.

S'appuyant sur des théories du traumatisme telles que celles de Cathy Caruth et de Sigmund Freud, l'étude explore en profondeur le traumatisme pour comprendre la différence entre le traumatisme individuel et collectif, ainsi que les effets du traumatisme sur la psyché des peuples postcoloniaux. De plus, l'étude utilise les idées de grands théoriciens postcoloniaux tels que Frantz Fanon pour démontrer que le traumatisme postcolonial est l'un des héritages du colonialisme. En discutant des préoccupations thématiques du roman telles que le silence et le racisme, ainsi que de ses techniques narratives telles que l'autoréflexivité et la polyvocalité, le mémoire montre que les choix thématiques et narratifs des écrivains postcoloniaux créent une voix unique qui représente le traumatisme d'un point de vue postcolonial.