

Aminatta Forna's the Memory of Love: A Chronicle of Psychological Disaster in a Post-War Context



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ABSTRACT: This paper examines the Civil War that hit Sierra Leone from 1991 to 2002 and the psychological trauma that results in the consequence upon people's psyche as contextualized in Aminatta Forna's *The Memory of Love*. It purports to establish an intertwining between this narrative and history through the analysis of some historical events such as riots, coups, the invasion of Freetown by rebel soldiers. Thanks to the psychoanalytical approach and the New historicism, this study has enabled not only to highlight the ferocious atrocities committed by Sierra Leoneans. It has also shown how escapees of this fratricide war cope with the physical and mental scars of those years in their day-to-day lives. As a final assessment, Aminatta Forna's *The Memory of Love* can be read as a chronicle of Psychological Disaster in a post-war context that still haunts Sierra Leoneans.

KEYWORDS: Civil War, atrocities, psychological disaster, Sierra Leone, memory of love.

INTRODUCTION

Civil Wars erupted in many regions across the African continent continue to haunt Africans and have attracted a great deal of interest in literary studies. For, "the function of the artist in Africa, in keeping with our traditions and needs, demands that the writer, as a public voice, to assume a responsibility to reflect public concerns in his writing...because in Africa we recognize commitment is mandatory of the artist"(Chinweizu et al, 1983:19), many committed African novelists contextualize the atrocities, the gory scenes, the disasters and even the after-effects of wars their respective countries have gone through. They manipulate the event, history either tragic or fortunate or joyful to have a masterpiece, as Chinyere Nwahunhya (1991:441) accordingly furthers: [...]. war novels [that] would be seen to reveal various degrees of artistic success, and this is often determined by the extent of each writer's weaving of history into art and by the degree of attention each writer pays to such aspects of novelistic art as plot, language (especially dialogue), and characterization.

Conducting research on 'Socio-Cultural Dynamics of Displacement in Adichie's Novels', Victor Onyango et al. (2018:4) shares Nwahunhya's opinion about the topical centrality of 'post-war psychological' in African writings when he writes: The experiences of War, with their psychological scars, still haunt many generations of African writers and what is more deeply felt at a social level is not the direct effects of conflagration (number of deaths, loss of property, political instability), but a sense of insecurity, a deeply felt psychological trauma which destabilises the entire structure on which the individuals caught in the conflict had constructed their identity.

Interviewed by Boyd Tonkin for *The Independent* about her commitment to unveil the tragic impact of the historical 'parentheses de sang'¹ that Sierra Leone had gone through from 1991 to 2002, Aminatta Forna, accordingly states "My country had a war. I think it would be extraordinary, as a writer, not to want to write about that". (Online) Appreciating the contribution of writers the nation-building, Olusegun Obasanjo, the former Nigerian president almost shares Chinweizu's opinion when he writes declares:

I hope this modest contribution will also serve as a stimulant to other active participants, on both sides in the crisis and the Civil War, to record in writing their experiences. It is my belief that in this way our history will be enriched and future generations will perhaps learn to avoid the pitfalls of the past. (1980:x)

After war, it is not easy for survivors to recover the state before the war because there is a feeling of guilty for those who survive, Aminatta Forna thinks that writing about post-war trauma is essentially a courageous act of remembering and challenging everybody

¹ Expression coined by the late Congolese famous writer Maxime Ndebeka as a title of his novel published in ...

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else to remember the past, even tragic of their country if they want to safeguard the future. Yet, Aminatta Forna's writings come to exhume what was buried or seemed to be forgotten in order to awake the patriot spirit from the younger generation.

This paper aims at analysing Aminatta Forna's *The Memory of Love* as a chronicle of psychological disaster. It purports to show how this novelist dramatizes the historical events and particularly the impact of the civil war on the Sierra Leoneans' individual psyche in her third published novel under consideration.

'Psychological disaster' carries connotations of 'trauma', a concept which, according to J. Roger Kurtz, has increasingly attracted a great deal of interest in literary studies. The Cambridge Dictionary of Psychology (2009: 552) defines 'trauma' as "any event which inflicts physical damage on the body or severe shock on the mind or both". In the same connection, the Concise Dictionary of Psychology (200:133) furthers that a trauma is "a physical or psychological shock resulting from an injury of violent incident". Trauma is therefore, an emotional wound leading to psychological injury, that is to say, an event that causes a great distress.

Introducing his seminal work, Kurtz whose research focuses primarily on English literature of the early modern period with attention to the overlap between literary representation and intellectual history but also on "Trauma and the Literature of War", theorizes about 'trauma' as follows (2018:1):

A key term in psychoanalytic approaches to literary study, trauma theory represents a critical approach that enables new modes of reading and of listening. It is a leading concept of our time, applicable to individuals, cultures, and nations. This book traces how trauma theory has come to constitute a discrete but influential approach within literary criticism in recent decades. It offers an overview of the genesis and growth of literary trauma theory, recording the evolution of the concept of trauma in relation to literary studies. In twenty-one essays, covering the origins, development, and applications of trauma in literary studies, *Trauma and Literature* addresses the relevance and impact this concept has in the field.

In « Emotional (Un)Belonging in Aminatta Forna's *The Memory of Love* », Irene Pérez Fernández furthers this pronouncement when she opines that applying the trauma theory to literary studies is to analyse a fictional work, "stressing the processes of healing, emotional recovery, and identity (re)negotiation after the experience of suffering and loss." (2017, p.210) With regard to the review of the related literature, it is worth noticing that the issue of 'post-war trauma' is increasingly receiving critical attention. Merve Sarikaya-Sen, for instance tackles that burning issue in her paper entitled 'Correlation between Western Trauma Poetics and Sierra Leonean Ways of Healing: Aminatta Forna's *The Memory of Love*'. She accordingly shows how Forna centralises trauma and healing by reflecting on dreadful historical facts of Sierra Leoneans suffering from 1991 to 2002.

In "Sex as Synecdoche: Intimate Languages of Violence in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* and in Aminatta Forna's *The Memory of Love*", Zoe Norridge highlights 'sex' as one of the novels' burning issues. For Zoe, the descriptions of sex serve to provoke a response in the reader and function as an aesthetic language with which to explore the legacies of conflict.

Hence, talking about Psychological Disaster in Aminatta Forna's *The Memory of Love* is an attempt to highlight the harmful effects people experienced in wartime and that diminish the chance to their way of recovery. The hypothesis backing up this research can be stated as follows:

With the **déclenchement** of the Civil War, Sierra Leoneans, mainly those caught in the conflict have more deeply experienced a psychological shock which destabilizes the whole structure on which they had constructed their identity.

This analysis will be conducted through the prism of two critical approaches: the Psychoanalytic, and the New historicism. Psychoanalytic approach which is the application of Sigmund Freud's theories helps scrutinize a literary work not only from the mind of the author but also helps probes human nature and understands how circumstances affect or influence the characters' motivations, behaviour and reactions in a fictional work. This tallies Alain De Mijolla's opinion quoted in International Dictionary of Psychoanalysis, (2005:1362; 1365) when he writes:

Sigmund Freud himself provided the most complete, and now most classical definition for his invention, psychoanalysis: Psychoanalysis is the name of a procedure for investigating mental processes which are almost inaccessible in any other way, of a method (based upon that investigation) for the treatment of neurotic disorders and of a collection of psychological information obtained along those lines, which is gradually being accumulated into a new scientific discipline. [...] Later, the spread of Freudian ideas attracted the interest of writers, artists, and critics, who made use of them to enrich their own work. [...] literary texts, like dreams, express the secret unconscious desires and anxieties of the author, that a literary work is a manifestation of the author's own neuroses".

Theorizing on this critical approach, the Ghanaian critic Kofi Agyekum (2013:30) lends credence to this view when he accordingly states:

Psychoanalytic critics analyse a work of literature from the point of the author's mind, personality, mental and emotional characteristics. [...] They employ symbolism to identify, explain and interpret the meaning of some psychological state of minds of writers and characters they create. [...] They use basic and ordinary objects [...] to explain emotions, desires, love, hatred, repressed desires, oppression and suppression, etc. [...] These objects and other literary devices reveal the psychological motivations of the characters, their settings, and the psychological mind-set of the author.

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As can be seen, this approach helps people analyze not only the spiritual link that characters have with their community, but also the work itself. One understands the work by examining conflicts, characters, dream sequences and symbols. Indeed, beyond the psychological implication it may have, 'psychological disaster' deserves also to be analyzed within a literary angle as N. Heidarizadeth (2014:789) states:

Literature illustrates the mental trauma by the literary studies. It is a social challenge for gaining new, fresh, and sharp knowledge by self. Interestingly, trauma has an inherently ethical, social, political, and historical dimension? Therefore, we cannot limit it only in the psychological studies. It influences naturally to the different fields of the studies in order to show its interdisciplinary role and profound impact that it has both within and beyond the field of studies.

The New historicism helps us establish the link between what really happen in Sierra Leone with the setting the writer creates in her novel. In so doing, I will borrow from the history of Sierra Leone some of the references linked to the period before, during and after the civil war to show how real facts inhabit fiction and how the novel of my corpus is influenced and inhabited by those historical facts. In this connection, Forster (1962:70) writes:

In the novel, we can know people perfectly, and apart from the general pleasure of reading, we can find here a compensation of their dimness in life. In this direction, fiction is truer than history, because it goes beyond evidence, and each of us knows from his own experience that there is something beyond evidence, and even though the novelist has not got it correctly, well he has tried. From this quotation, one can understand that the New historicism is a theory of literature that consists in showing the relationship between the text and history. It shows how a given writer integrates history within a work of fiction. This is to say that what is said in a given work of literature is naturally linked to the experience of people in the society in which they live.

Hence, this study will be completed through the exploration of a few main points going from the first going contextualization Sierra Leone's Civil War atrocities to the manifestations of Post-war Psychological Disaster through noticeable symptoms of fugue state, silence breaking.

I- CONTEXTUALIZING THE FEROCIOUS ATROCITIES OF THE SIERRA LEONE'S CIVIL WAR

During Sierra Leone Civil War, the confrontation between army and rebel soldiers was brutal, cruel and turned out to be a very dramatic experience for civilians, as Aminatta Forna reveals: "war was worse for civilians [...]. Civilians were like rats in a barrel". (The Memory of Love, p. 279) This point aims at revealing some of the atrocities committed during this tragic period as they appear in Forna's novel. These atrocities rang from insecurity, bloodshed, drugs addiction to the enrolment of child soldiers.

I.1- Sierra Leone Civil War: The Reign of Insecurity

A peruse of the novel reveal that in the turmoil of the battles, life expectancy worsens since people fled away leaving behind commodities, houses, families and communities so that they survive. Life became a challenge, a real struggle for survival against starvation, diseases and permanent danger brought by rebel soldiers, army soldiers or even those who want to survive by all means.

Being trapped and fearing massacres, civilians are compelled to move from camp to camp to feel more secure. The camps are seen, by escapees, as havens where they can shelter and protect themselves from raids. Unfortunately, once on the ground, they are disappointed with regard to how camps are depicted, as milieu ruled by the 'jungle law'. The authoress epitomizes living conditions in the refugee camps as follows:

In the camp it seemed they faced more dangers than on the outward journey. In the forest the dangers were from snakes, buffalo and rebel soldiers. In the camps there was hunger, typhoid and cold. But the greatest threat of all came from their own kind, gangs of men who searched the weak out from among the rest: those without family, women without menfolk. (The Memory of Love, p.310)

Here, one easily infers how critical the living conditions are inward than outward the camps. For, Refugee camps settled here and there are nothing but 'anteroom to hell' since people are forced knowing the fatality awaiting them: food shortage, hygiene and insecurity culminating in death. To limit damages, some refugees elaborate some survival artifices to overcome this tragic episode. For, "They survived by clinging to order: queuing for food, washing their clothes in the river, fetching water, hunting for firewood and edible plants in pairs" (The Memory of Love, p.310). The phrase "in pairs" reveals that they understood that they should watch over each other if they wanted to have a chance to survive as the proverb said "Unity makes strength". In the other hand, as refugee camps get overcrowded, epidemics burst out with lack hygienic conditions narrator illustrates: "Instead two cholera epidemics arrived within the first year. The third took Yalie. Marian died six months later, poisoned by a cut on her foot". (The Memory of Love, p.311)

Contextualizing insecurity in wartime, The Memory of Love reveals that since there are no established rules to run the refugee camps, the stronger hits the weaker. As generally observed in such critical times, children and women are the most vulnerable persons devoid of any social protection. Yet, Forna echoes the sexual vulnerability of displaced women under men's yoke through the testimony of two female characters with their children who left Sierra Leone and arrived, by foot, in a refugee camp in Guinea: The first day they arrived Isatta and Agnes saw a row of girls at the edge of the camp, blood leaking from between their open legs. And on many mornings to come the bodies of young women were found dumped behind the tents, their lappas bunched around their waists". (p.310)

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Narrations such as "... a row of girls at the edge of the camp, blood leaking from between their open legs" and "... on many mornings to come the bodies of young women were found dumped behind the tents ..." epitomize the plight of women who abruptly 'objectified' by men who perceived them as disposable to be "dumped". The authoress keeps on disclosing vulnerability through Mamakay's discussion with Adrian Lockheart about the daily threat of rape during wartime and measures taken by women to challenge sexual harassment:

We wore jeans under our dresses. There was a time we dressed like that every day, because nobody knew when they were coming. One day the radio would say the rebels had been pushed back to the border, another day people arrived in the city saying they were at Port Loko. We stopped believing the government. We wore blue jeans. She pauses and then gives a short, strange laugh, as if remembering something absurd or possibly painful.

Still he doesn't understand.

Mamakay turns to look at him. "Have you tried to get a pair of tight jeans off in a hurry? It was the only thing we could think of to do. To stop them raping us. Well, to make it harder". (p.279)

In such situation, when human beings cannot stand, they refer to God's aid and pray, as the narrator evidences: "In the evenings they slept together and Isatta's son lay across the entrance. Outside lean shadows stalked between the tents. They prayed nobody would notice they were four women, protected only by a young boy" (p.310). If the young boy protects the women against wrongdoers, but he could not do anything against "two cholera epidemics arrived within the first year. The third took Yalie. Marian died six months later, poisoned by a cut on her foot" (p.311). Agnes could not stand to lose her daughters in such conditions and disappeared since the burden was too heavy. Isatta and her son searched her and once retrieved, they let Agnes in a fugue state, alone mourning as the narrator reveals: "For days Agnes neither spoke, nor moved, nor ate. Isatta was not disturbed by Agnes, for many were the women who mourned in such a way" (p.311). Through this passage, one sees the portrayal of a sinister aura that accompanies the threat of war. Also, it highlights the feeling of a mother who, escaping the turmoil loses her children with a great emotion.

However, atrocities depicted in the novel are so excessive that the authoress continues to account for them through massacres. Indeed, history keeps on reciting the same old tale of the brutality of humans and the inability to live at peace. Most of its account is filled with spilled blood, anarchy, betrayal, and conflicts. That does not only greatly alter the lives of those involved, but also innocent civilians, women and children.

A serious opposition aroused between the leaders of the country and the students concerning the management of the university. Students got a petition to demand the Vice Chancellor's resignation. But this was not well perceived by the authorities. The latter sends security forces on the campus to rebuke students and show how strong they, as the narrator evidences:

'That was the night security forces raided the campus. They attacked the students. A lot of people were hurt. They went through the hall of residence. Twelve students were arrested. Most of them were the ones who had organised the petition. They were expelled and we never saw them again. (...) By then the students knew what was happening; some of the male students tried to barricade the doors and to fight back.' (The Memory of Love, p336)

This may be the reason why the escapees from this raid enlist in rebel forces to fight the army soldiers so that they revenge their comrades. Aminatta alludes to violent combats which oppose army soldiers and rebel soldiers with a focus on the wrongful actions perpetrated by rebel to their fellows:

Adecali had belonged to the rebel Sensitisation Unit. The Unit's task was to enter a town marked for invasion ahead of the fighting contingent of the rebel army and by methods to ensure the villagers' future capitulation. As a strategy it worked. It saved on casualties – among the rebel forces, that is. It saved on ammunition. The Unit's planning was meticulous, the process merciless, the outcome effective. Adecali's job, his particular job, was to burn families alive in their houses. (The Memory of Love, p.372)

The thing that hits the reader's attention is when the authoress keeps on disclosing the way mutineers as well as government officers perpetrate these war atrocities:

They looted everywhere and set fire to people's houses, burned hundreds alive. The poorest people, of course. Always. Forced them to march into the city, to act as a human shield for the fighters. There were atrocities on all sides. (The Memory of Love, p.83)

In fact, the rebels' primary plan was to massacre people for supporting the existing government that had brought the country to ruins with the Operation No Living thing. They sack the city, kill and mutilate hundreds, if not thousands. They forced civilians "to march into the city, to act as a human shield for the fighters". The authoress emphasizes on the category of people "The poorest people, of course. Always" (p.83) who is trapped in wartime to show that they are the most suffering people.

Also, to ensure people's future capitulation, rebels' resort to atrocious methods that inspire terror. The authoress paints a scene starring mutineers who execute army soldiers publicly as written in the below paragraph:

One of the boxes was opened and the man brought out, an army soldier(...) she missed the motion of the hand to the belt, the drawing of the weapon, the way Jaja took lazy aim before he shot the army soldier in the head. (...)A second cage was opened, another man brought forward. He held his bound hands up and Binta could tell he was begging for his life. Seconds later he too crumpled to the ground. (The Memory of Love, pp.308-309)

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This public execution of soldiers is a message to villagers that if they treat soldiers in such away without any hesitation, they will do the same thing with them. And they also want to warn them to refrain from heroic acts. That is why "The Unit's planning was meticulous, the process merciless, the outcome effective." (p.372)

Besides, rebel soldiers are pitiless. They do whatever they want. For example, they kidnap Dr Kai Mansaray and a nurse Balia because they were needed to treat some injured soldiers. Even when they did what was expected from them, they did not come back to their home, only Kai survived. Balia was raped and killed in Kai's hands, as evidences in the following passage:

He saw the man stop and retrace his steps, much as though he'd forgotten something. He came back around the vehicle, approaching Kai with sudden determination. Kai knew what was coming. He saw the man pull the gun out of his belt, raise his arm and take aim. Kai closed his eyes. He leaned his body backwards, holding tight on to Balia, backwards over the railing, until he felt himself topple under the weight of their combined bodies. He kicked out. Something thudded into them. A bullet. He could not tell whether he had taken it or Balia. (...) The sting of the water to tell him he is alive. (The Memory of Love, p.434)

Through this quotation, Forna utilises the character Kai to portray the bitterness of the war due to the intensity of atrocity experienced by Sierra Leoneans. This is an example among many that the writer uses to tell the sufferings endured by people during the conflict. Apart from carnages and rapes, one also notices the threatening influences of drug addiction which lead the predisposes the fighters perpetrate criminal actions.

I.2- Drugs Addiction

The noun phrase 'drugs addiction' is generally referred to as a misuse of drugs, dependency on drugs that becomes pathological. According to The Concise Dictionary of Psychology (3rd edition, 1998:3), the substantive 'addiction' refers to "Physiological and psychological dependence on a drug in order to function. It implies both a physiological and psychological 'adaptation' to an altered 'normality'.

Yet, The Memory of Love depicts how people, mainly among insurgents and regular soldiers are addicted to drugs during the wartime. It is through Adrian that we learn that when people join the army, they abuse drugs such as cannabis and other hard drugs which they kindly call "Booster Morale (p.84), Ganja (p.159) or Brown brown (84)". Additionally, one learns how they get addicted to drugs even after their time in the army, as shown with John:

'(...) John's been in and out of here for the best part of a decade. The war began in 1991 and I'm not sure exactly when he was discharged. Certainly, the army was where he began to use drugs. It was encouraged among the new recruits. They called it Booster Morale. As far as Dr Attila is concerned, he's a casualty of war'. (The Memory of Love, p.84)

Addiction to drugs is seen as a survival artifice that helps soldiers overcome the fighting so that they quickly get out of this mess. These drugs play a role of anabolic steroid, that is, they increase the size of muscles, numerous hormones. In other words, drugs can be seen as a booster since the 'addicted' is somehow emotionless to the point that he seems unaware his deeds; he then executes whatever order given. The Memory of Love tells the story of Adecali a former scout rebel soldier who burns and kills people without pity under the effects of hard drugs given to him, as the narrator states: "Adecali's job, his particular job, was to burn families alive in their houses" (p.372).

Furthermore, another psychological ferocity with drug addiction is that at a highest level of addiction, cases of malnourishment are reported since food which is essential for the development of the body is abandoned in profit of drugs. The novel evidences how, after a hard-working day, the 'addicted' prefer drugs to food: "In the evenings the men curbed their hunger with ganja" (p.159). This is the treatment rebel soldiers reserved to their compatriots who work them just hard.

Drugs that strengthen people's morale is the same substance that led some to paranoia or showed the reality to the others. At the end of war, there was regulation in all layers of society. Those who committed atrocities during the war and the victims returned to almost a "normal life". Following these events, mistrust gains each other for everyone now is warned about his fellow's nuisance capacity, the narrator asserts: "Now, without the gang, the drugs and the drink, the spur of violence, out beyond the triumph of survival, the desolation steals up and surrounds them" (p.372). The use of these drugs provides a temporary haven and an escape from the traumatizing memory of the war period. And now people are confronted to the desolation of war.

Some could not stand living in the society with others. They lost their minds because of what they faced or committed. This is the case of Soulay who is a permanent patient at the mental hospital. Reading his notes, Dr Adrian Lockheart discovers that "Soulay had a prolonged history of violence and erratic behaviour and also suffered agonising headaches, which he claimed were due to the drugs he'd been given" (p.316). In fact, Soulay was an active rebel who did wrong to many people. Now, he spends his time in a crazy hospital, unable to live with others in the society. That is one of the after effects of drugs.

Let it be emphasized that, one of the most tragic shortcomings of drug addiction is the mental illness or disorder. It is difficult for a patient suffering from a mental illness to fully recover from bereavement and emotional turmoil. The recurrent terms used to identify illness in the novel are "Psychosis" and "Schizophrenia". This can be evidenced in the book through this declaration: "Afterwards, as they leave the ward, Adrian asks: 'What's his diagnosis? Psychosis. Drug-induced'" (p.84). The authoress continues: "When he stops speaking, she says, without taking her eyes away from him, 'You are considering schizophrenia, of course?' (The Memory of Love, p.141).

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I.3- Enrolment of Child Soldiers

It is critically shared view that during Sierra Leone's Civil War, a record number of children and adolescents get involved in an extremely rapid scale of wars that reaches around thousands of child soldiers between the ages of eight to fifteen. Approaching child soldier's phenomenon, a consultation organised by UNICEF and NGO group for the CRC at Cape Town in 1997 came up with the following definition, which hold for many years thereafter:

A child soldier is any person under 18 years of age who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to cooks, porters, messengers and anyone accompanying such groups, other than family members. [...] It does not, therefore, only refer to a child who is carrying or has carried arms. (UNICEF, 1997:12)

These child soldiers prove particularly vulnerable in all times, for on the frontlines, they generally perform risky roles such as raiders, porters, spies, messengers, human shields, and worse of all suicide bombers, or sex slaves.

Aminatta Forna devotes a slight consideration on the theme of Child Soldiers. Indeed, she does not evoke the reasons that urge young people young to engage themselves into army forces and does not describe them individually so that they bear a name but as a group. Even though, possible motivations of these youths' enrolment can be found in the following extract: "Hundreds, thousands of young men, high on drugs and very, very angry. No jobs. No families. No futures. Nothing to lose. The thing that was coming had arrived" (p.86). This is may be one of the immediate results of the mismanagement evoked in the political causes. The authoress refers to the "young men" that represent the future; through the revolution, they wish overthrowing the ruling class so that they may have a chance, a possible future. Unfortunately, each action has consequences be it good or bad.

With regard to war atrocities, one assumes that youths have no alternative in order to survive in the middle of chaos but joining the army. They willingly exchange their enrolment for secure food and protection. Since most of these young soldiers are recruited among the orphans, they are trained to obey and look upon their chiefs as parental authorities, as the authoress clearly evidences: "They are nothing if not compliant. Boys, still. Their commanders had taken the place of their parents" (p.317). paradoxically, the commanders abuse of their submission and exploit them to achieve their objectives. They dope youngsters with drugs so that they execute orders without any hesitance, remorse, as the novel reads: "During the war commanders had given the drug to child combatants just before they sent them into battle." (*The Memory of Love*, p.94)

Equally, poverty and home abuse are far enough reason for youngsters to regard the army as a prospect of survival and power. It also happens that children enrol in the armed group for the sake of revenge. For, many of them aspire to fight for social justice, seeking to avenge their deceased relatives. As an illustration, Ishmael Beah, a former child soldier and a Sierra Leonean writer, in *A Long Way Gone* tells his own story, unveiling the reasons that prompt him to the security forces and how he leaves his 'New family'. Indeed, after learning that the insurgents have slaughtered all his family, Beah decides to join the government army at the age of 13 in search of protection and food. In the army, the child Ishmael dramatically turns into a ruthless and drug-addicted child soldier with the ultimate goal to avenge his dead family.

In the same perspective, being under the effects of drugs, child soldiers commit a series of heinous crimes as well as rapes. Forna provides the readers with a striking rape committed on a man as a result of sexual violence perpetrated by soldiers. In fact, Dr Kai, having been forcibly taken from the hospital with a young nurse Balia, is kept, beaten and stripped naked by rebel soldiers as the fighting in the city worsens. Kai is then forced by the young soldiers to rape his colleague, but he declines their offer, the narrator epitomizes:

'Fuck her or I fuck you'

The gun was removed from his temple. Kai tried to force himself to think. He was helpless. He felt something – the gun barrel – being pushed between his buttocks, heard the laughter, felt the end of it being pushed rammed into him. The pain was acute and rippled through his body. Clapping. Cawing laughter. The gun barrel was thrust further into him. He flopped forward and was forced up, back on to his hands and knees. (*The Memory of Love*, p.433)

The male doctor is raped with a gun barrel for his refusal to rape the young nurse. For such a refusal he is brutalized, sodomized as punishment. Some young combatants initially resist and express the will to free them as they say "these two came from the hospital. I saw them there. Let us leave them" (p.431) but since they do not want to be seen as cowards, they participate without much hesitation since "One of the boys pulled Balia up by arm and began to yank at her clothing, push his hands between her legs" (p.431). This illustration summarises how youngsters systematically turn into monsters during the wartime.

All things considered, Aminatta Forna's *The Memory of Love* draws back the reader to sorrowful atrocities committed during Sierra Leone's Civil War to show that, as in any war, life becomes unbearable in terms of death, famine and human rights. The novel reveals that this explosive atmosphere has had a serious impact on the population psyche after the end of the war.

II- MANIFESTATIONS OF POST-WAR PSYCHOLOGICAL DISASTER IN THE MEMORY OF LOVE

Almost two decades after the upheavals that devastated their country and peaceful lives, Sierra Leoneans, like all Africans caught in such post-independence fratricides wars, are still struggling to get rid of the subsequent aftermaths. This represents what psychologists refer to as a post-traumatic stress or plainly a trauma. Alluding to the issue D. Darie (1996:831) writes:

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Research shows that 60-80% people exposed to war and political violence directly or indirectly suffer symptoms of post-traumatic stress. Research findings also indicate that mere living in a violent prone area where the media is filled with images and reports of horrible violence destruction [...] can result in people experiencing symptoms of post-traumatic.

Daric's words clearly evidence that the rate of brunt of war and political violence upon individual is manifest. Additionally, psychological disaster is not only limited in war but victims of, for example, accidents, rape, death or suicide of a love one, life-threatening diseases, childhood calamity and political persecution, as well as witnesses of such incidents, could be considered the victims of trauma. Trauma is not a rare event, and those affected by it can be damaged in various ways. People can experience psychological disaster at any stage of life for, there is no protection against it. Hence, they bear symptoms of 'psychosis' that The Concise Dictionary of Psychology (1998:110-111) referred to as:

A psychological disorder which is severe enough to disrupt a person's everyday life and require institutional treatment. Apart from organic causes like brain damage it has been thought by many psychologists that a psychosis is a severe form of neurosis. [...] because of the close connection between mind and body, psychologists argue that every illness is psychosomatic at least to some extent. Deriving from the Greek words psyche (mind) and soma (body), 'psychosomatic' relates to psychological disorders in which emotional stress produces physiological symptoms.

The main concern of this point is to x-ray the manifestations of the trauma resulting from the Civil War in Sierra Leone as depicted in Aminatta Forna's *The Memory of Love*. A peruse of this novel reveal that symptoms of post-war are manifest on individuals through some psychological scars. These psychological marks ranging silence, post-traumatic stress disorder, to Fugue state which is like a state of trance in which some characters are caught in.

II.1- Silence' as a Psychological Scar in a Post-War Context

'Silence' carries psychological connotations of 'mutism' that The Concise Dictionary of Psychology (3rd edition, 1998:89) refers to as "the fact of deliberately refusing to speak about something for the goal of not mentioning or revealing a secret" (1995:1101). That is to say, the individual keeps a piece of information hidden; in this context his sorrowful experience unspeakable. As a consequence, the victim prefers silence and does not talk about such situations in order to prevent a reactivation of traumatic memories.

In the framework of this study, 'silence' refers to a nation descends into whilst its people try to survive and cope with the physical and mental scars of the Civil War years. Yet, Aminatta Forna, acting as 'psychologist' in the process of writing about her country, challenges her escapees and the survivors of this historical 'parentheses de sang' to break silence and to remember so that she uses their witnesses to preserve the future. The task awaiting sounds arduous some the target characters still bear evident scars that they dare not speak out loud but in whispers. A few however still insisted that they had no memory whatsoever of the things she described (Forna, 2006:75). After the publication of her writings, people of a different generation, her own and younger, were overwhelmed and had approached their own elders to ask them whether all those things could be true; they were told that it was so. Consequently, the young ones grew angry and persisted in asking: "Why did you never tell us? Why did you never tell us that these things happened when you knew all the time? And the elders shook their head and each one gave the same reply: Because I made myself forget". (Forna, 2006:75)

Indeed, Dr Adrian Lockheart, a British psychologist, functions as a conduit through which we learn the stories of the Sierra Leonean characters. In fact, he already appeared in the final story in Forna's debut novel *Ancestor Stones*, where he served the same function, listening to a Sierra Leonean woman recounting her experience of the invasion of Freetown. Also, in *The Memory of Love* Aminatta Forna confers him the mission of a listening ear when she contextualises the theme of silence through characters like Agnes and Kai Mansaray who speak on the behalf of the victims of war atrocities. Agnes attends to a public execution of her husband, a civil servant, by Colonel Jaja, a leader of rebel soldiers. During the war, she loses sight on her daughter Naasu. And at the end of war, Agnes retrieves her daughter pregnant and married to the murderer of her husband. Fearing to lose both her daughter and grandchild, she decides not to reveal the secret to her daughter and to keep quiet. The authoress makes Kai and Abass, his young nephew discuss the matter as expressed in the following dialogue:

'So, the man killed the lady's husband and then he married her daughter,' Abass says.

Kai doesn't spare the child, but replies, 'Yes.'

'And now she has to live with him and keep quiet because her daughter doesn't know what he did.'

He had been listening to every word spoken in the house.

'That's right,' says Kai.

'And everybody else keeps quiet, too.'

'Yes.'

'What about us?'

Kai turns briefly to look at Abass, who does not return his look but stares straight ahead. The darkness seems to hurtle at them, breaking apart on the windscreen and closing up again in their wake. Abass says, 'Do we have to keep quiet?'

'No,' says Kai. 'No, we don't.'

'What if we lived in that town? Would we have to be quiet then?'

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In the silence all Kai can hear is the rush of air. 'I don't know' he says. (pp. 313-314)

Narrations such as "And now she has to live with him and keep quiet because her daughter doesn't know what he did" and "What if we lived in that town? Would we have to be quiet then?" clearly indicate the dilemma the survivors of the Sierra Leone's civil War are caught in for they wonder if should break the silence and courageously face their tragic past so as not only to help healing themselves from trauma but allow the younger generation understand historical events.

In the same perspective, Aminatta furthers the idea of silence when Dr Adrian, newly arrived in the country is not told anything about what people experienced in the wartime. Mamakay, the woman with whom he nourishes a relationship, questions him: "Have you never noticed? How nobody ever talks about anything? What happened here. The war. Before the war. It's like a secret" (p.321). as a Psychotherapist that is to say, "someone or a social worker who uses of psychological techniques to treat psychological disturbances" (The Concise Dictionary of Psychology, 3rd edition, 1998:111), Adrian is a listening ear and has to know his patients and all the contours if they want to raise their chances on the way of recovery. Yet, he brings familiar western ideas to the problems of the local population that he has been parachuted in to help solve. This strategy proves unsuccessful. The novel makes it clear that Adrian's approach is inadequate to the situation he is confronted with. True to his name, Lockheart, there is something remote and detached about Adrian when he first arrives in Freetown, an attitude shared by most international aid workers, as the novel repeatedly points out (Craps 2014:52). Feeling uncomfortable and out of place, he initially fails to connect with his patients: "Adrian's empathy sounded slight, unconvincing in his own ears" (p.21). These patients are for the most part traumatized survivors of the war, it is suggested that they suffer from physical pains that began "sometime after the trouble", so they tell him, yet "the doctor could find nothing wrong" with them that is why they referred them to Adrian (p.21). The psychologist urges them with encouragement to explain what they endured. At his insistence, "they described headaches, pains in their arms, legs, abdomens. Here, here, here. Touching body parts" (p.21) and all of his patients request medicines from him. When he does not oblige, explaining that he is "not that sort of doctor" (p.21), they thank him and leave and "none of them ever returned" (p.22). There is no need to put the blame on patients maybe they behaved this way because they were not told the function of a psychologist when they were referred to Adrian. As a result, he found sceptic and reluctant people who do not want to share any of their experiences, as shown in this passage:

Adrian remembers his early patients, or would-be patients, their reluctance to talk about anything that had happened to them. He put it down to trauma. Since then, he has grown to understand it was also part of a way of being that existed here. He had realised it gradually, perhaps fully only at this moment. It was almost as though they were afraid of becoming implicated in the circumstance of their own lives. The same is true of most of the men at the mental hospital. Questions discomfit them. Remembering, talking. Mamakay is right, it's as though the entire nation are sworn to some terrible secret. So, they elect muteness, the only way of complying and resisting at the same time. (The Memory of Love, p.321)

This quotation reveals that keeping silence is the only way to survive and "it was also part of a way of being that existed here". As can be seen, it is not easy for Adrian, as a newcomer, to adapt himself to Sierra Leonean reality because he who came to help "... is not helping" (p.64). In other words, it is not enough to empathize with people from a very different culture, but also to know their mores, the local myths and popular expectations. For, one really needs to understand the society and not merely the emotion.

Besides, *The Memory of Love* evokes the possibility to sunder chains that link people to silence. Indeed, breaking silence implies trust between individuals that is the psychologist and the patient. The latter, when specifically questioned, reveals events that remained unspeakable. Trust is at the centre of friendship between Kai and Adrian, both doctors. After Mamakay's death, while discussing, Adrian lets Kai know that there is a way to release the burden he bears by using a therapeutic technique as we discover it in the below passage:

'It would involve returning you to the scene of whatever happened.'

'Hypnosis.'

'Not hypnosis. I won't put you in a trance as such, though I will ask you to focus your concentration on what happened. It's a way of reprocessing past events and desensitising you to the impact of them, I mean the way you think about them, if we know what those events were. In this case we do, at least you do. It can reduce the symptoms you experience, the dreams.' (p.426)

Adrian is frank with Kai when he warns him that the process involves returning him to his sorrowful souvenirs. Since Kai trusts Adrian, he gives him a chance to help him. Under hypnosis, Kai recounts that sordid experience with the soldiers who kidnapped Balia to tend to their injured colleague. As a result, this process works as "they [Kai and Abass] cross the peninsula bridge" (p.445) at the end of the story.

As can be seen, one of the best ways of treating post-war trauma is certainly to prompt the victim to challenge and exteriorize the horrifying truth of his/her past. For when a traumatized individual is given the opportunity to confront his past and put his pain in words, that person is gradually on the way to recovery. This is the aim of Adrian's therapy sessions for people with psychological problems in the novel of my corpus. Apart from silence, post-traumatic stress disorder could be diagnosed among some characters as symptoms of post-War psychological disorder.

II.2- Symptoms of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder

To begin with Trauma as an immediate consequence of War on Individuals, it is worth reminding that 'psychological disaster', is according to the APA Dictionary of Psychology, the "sudden intrusion of new and unexpected knowledge into someone's psyche, usually due to a sudden confrontation with violence or death" (2015:1104). In other words, it is a very difficult or unpleasant experience that causes someone to have mental or emotional problems usually for a long time. A traumatic event affects the psychological well-being of an individual. As for 'post-traumatic stress disorder' or 'PTSD', the APA Dictionary of Psychology (2015:815), refers to this phrase as: "a disorder that may result when an individual lives through or witnesses an event in which he or she believes that there is a threat to life or physical integrity and safety and experiences fear, terror or helplessness". As such, PTSD is obviously a consequence of trauma that is characterized by flashbacks, recurrent dreams or nightmares that many people, all around the world, experience or have experienced in a lifetime.

Aminatta Forna tackles the issue to portray a distressful situation and one notices large-scale individuals coping with such psychological disorder in the country. In *The Memory of Love*, she alludes to the coming in Sierra Leone of a Medical Team in order to survey the traumatized population by investigating the aftermaths of war on individuals. They say that the situation was alarming since "the conclusion they reached was that ninety-nine per cent of the population was suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder" (p.319). Accordingly, they suggest that "therapy can help them to cope with their experiences of war" (p. 319). Unfortunately, the Mental Hospital is overcrowded with patients that Dr Attila, the senior psychologist cannot help all of them. Consequently, the country lacks skilful staffs to perform the therapy sessions; that is the reason of the presence of foreign psychologists like Adrian and Ileana.

At this level, let us emphasize that it is a critically shared view among psychologists that a patient suffering from PTSD systematically avoids activities or discussion related to the traumatic past that can uncover the emotion. Despite artifices s/he can employ, the event keeps coming back to the individual's mind in flashback or in nightmare and this leads to sleep disturbances such as hypersomnia or insomnia. (Bayer Gerd, 2018, p.215) This is the case of Kai Mansaray who embodies the lives of most citizens, and is full of secrets that finally haunt and torment him at night. Indeed, Kai has not only been sexually harassed but he attended the execution of the nurse Balia by rebel soldiers. A dramatic sequence that renders him insomniac, for as the narrator reveals: "This is the third night in a row and the lack of sleep is beginning to tell on him. If tonight he doesn't get a few more hours it will start to affect his work, his concentration, even his hands"(p.125).

Additionally, the individual faces any other helplessness or horrific situation, he seems is vulnerable because the grief felt during the traumatic experience can be felt again at the time of remembrance. Thus, he tries to avoid situations and triggers that could remind him of such disasters. This is what happens to Kai when he retrospectively describes the tormenting glimpse of the war scenes that he experienced on the peninsula bridge. Indeed, this situation re-emerges when Kai, going on a trip with Adrian, is terrified to cross the bridge since the place reminds him the traumatic event with Balia and the rebel soldiers:

'For Chrissake!'

'It's OK.' Adrian smiles, thinking Kai doubts his driving skills.

'I said stop! I don't want to go that way. Would you just do as I ask and drive on?'

This time Adrian hears the effort at control in Kai's voice and turns briefly to regard him. Kai is sitting forward, kneading his forehead with the tips of his fingers. A vein stands out on his neck, a node visible beneath the skin. He doesn't look at Adrian but stares straight ahead through the windscreen. He looks terrified. (*The Memory of Love*, pp.255-256)

This textual snippet shows how much Kai Mansaray, deeply traumatized, is very apprehensive and panics at the thought of crossing the bridge because of a predicament he once experienced. This entails that after experiencing the traumatic event, Kai becomes very sensitive to anything that can remind him of the dramatic experience. Adrian analyses the situation and tries to think whether they have ever taken that route before, and realises they have not. From the sentence "He looks terrified", one surmises that he lacks an accompaniment, a psychological one; since he still bears his burden. Later in the plot, Adrian deduces that Kai is haunted by nightmares. Nightmare is also a condition that characterizes a patient suffering from PTSD and there are a lot of people exposed to it, as evidenced in the following conversation:

'What? That other people don't suffer recurrent nightmares? Yes. I am sure. Though I am also sure there are a lot of people in this country who do, people who have survived a trauma. It would be extraordinary if it was otherwise.'

'No, I mean about me.'

'I know you suffer nightmares. The rest is an educated guess. I know you're afraid to cross the bridge. The one over to the peninsula. You always drive the long way around.'

'Yup, you're right. I dream. I dream about the same thing. I dream about something that happened. I could tell you, but it wouldn't make any difference. You can't undo it. And how could you ever understand? Unless you were here how could you ever understand? The truth is none of you wanted to know then, so why do you care now?' Kai is not looking at Adrian but staring into his glass, swirling the liquid around and around. He stops, raises the glass to his lips and drinks, recommences the same circular movement. (*The Memory of Love*, p. 423)

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The sentences "I could tell you, but it wouldn't make any difference. You can't undo it" show how difficult it is for Kai to release his burden. He does not really trust Adrian because as a British psychologist, he could never understand African realities and, he blames him for his sudden attention for Africans for, as he contends: "The truth is none of you wanted to know then, so why do you care now?"

As mentioned above, a core remains when the individual does not uncover the souvenirs since PTSD maintains the link between the individual and the traumatic event. They cannot be split except when the patient decides to release his burden and asks forgiveness for him and the others. The following conversation illustrates forgiveness as a therapy between Adekali and Dr Adrian. 'But now she is coming after me. She is in my dreams. She appears even when I am awake.'

'What does it mean to you to see her?'

'Her spirit sees me and is coming after me, for causing the death of her child.'(p.373)

This dialogue proves therapeutic since it is nothing but a confession, this time between the psychologist who embodies the priest and the patient as the penitent. For psychologists, forgiveness is so an interesting instrument to heal traumatic scars that they remand to handle it with the maximum of care, confidence and discretion. (Jennifer M., Doran et al. (2012:620). For, to opens up, a guilty patient and needs a confident person at his disposable to listen to him telling what he has to say and why not expecting forgiveness from his victims. The patient knows that it is not easy but just like, a penitent meeting a priest for confession, he is ready to re-establish the relation between him and the others through whatever ways.

Similarly, many traumatized people are characterized by the avoidance of activities that recall the traumatic event, as well as diminished responsiveness, with disinterest in significant activities and with feelings of detachment from others. That is to say that people express the inability to enjoy experiences or activities that normally would be pleasurable.

Forna highlights the destruction of relationships as a result of war through Kai's perspective. Indeed, Kai who plans to get married to Nenebah, unfortunately abandon this desire with advent of the civil War. For after the war, Kai's interest to be engaged in a relationship diminishes or almost disappears. This is because he is frighten to start a relation which can be doomed to failure; thus he stops thinking about loving another woman than Nenebah, his beloved and immerses himself in work to forget the memories, as "The hollowness in his chest, the tense yearning, the loneliness he braces against every morning until he can immerse himself in work and forget"(p.185). However, the novel reveals that he has at least tried to find her after the war wherever she might be, but he could not find her. So, he vows his life to his work taking care of the others as explained below:

As with all the most traumatic injuries, the pain followed later. He'd tried to find her, to go back to her. By then she'd left her father's house and was moving around the city. He went to find Mary, but Mary had gone too. In the scale of what had happened in the city, the echoes of which were still ringing through the streets, Kai had felt shamed. He went back to work. And had never stopped working since. (*The Memory of Love*, pp.380-381)

The experience of these sweethearts show how war can negatively impact lives and instigates misunderstanding and subsequently destroys a relationship that hitherto, was peaceful. However, it is true that as a traumatized patient, Kai faces a terrible situation but he has discovered a way to better comfort himself for his loss. He practices activities other than his job which help him relax, feel better such as cooking, as it can be seen through the narrator's mouth:

He loves the routine and rhythm of preparing food. It brings him to a feeling of peace, being able to close off a part of his mind, just as he was in surgery, putting the cast on Foday's leg, or is sometimes suturing a wound, tying off the ends stitch after stitch. Operating affords him a privacy, an escape from the world into a place which has its own narratives, its own emergencies, but which is a less random world, one he can control with his skills. Cooking, though less absorbing, does something similar. (*The Memory of Love*, p.123)

This passage shows that the traumatized patient has found a way to temporarily get rid of his distress. It also reveals that he might close himself up, but he does not remain totally insensitive to the environment. He can still open up even if it remains partial.

Silence and Post-traumatic stress disorder are not the only manifestations of psychological disaster Forna evokes in her book. In exploration of *The Memory of Love* also reveals the existence of Fugue state which is like a state of trance in which the individual enters.

II.3- Fugue State as Symptom of psychological disaster in *The Memory of Love*

According to the APA Dictionary of Psychology, the 'fugue state' as connotations of "a dissociative disorder in which the individual suddenly and unexpectedly travels away from home or a customary place of daily activities and is unable to recall some or all of his or her past" (2015:440). In other words, 'fugue' is a condition in which the individual wanders away from his home for periods of hours, days or even weeks. During that period, the individual appears to be in a semiconscious state, sometimes engaging in routine activity and subsequently has no memory for events during that period.

Yet Aminatta Forna points out this issue as an aftermath of dramatic events experienced by Sierra Leoneans. She accordingly quotes *A History of Mental Illness*, a reference book of psychology belonging to Dr Adrian the psychologist. The authoress uses Kai as she depicts him when he picks up a book in Adrian's apartment and it falls open in the place where the spine is broken. Idly, he turns the book over to read the title. Kai returns to the text and reads, guided by Adrian's markings and annotations, at first casually and then with greater intensity:

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Fugue. Characterised by sudden, unexpected travel away from home. Irresistible wandering, often coupled with subsequent amnesia. A rarely diagnosed dissociative condition in which the mind creates an alternative state. This state may be considered a place of safety, a refuge. (p.325)

One notices that fugue implies wandering and amnesia for an unspecific time. The patient is characterized by the failure to recall important information about his/her personal experiences, usually of a traumatic or stressful nature. Being semiconscious of the reality and wandering through different areas give the patient an opportunity to escape any traumatic event likely to harm him. So this state is "considered a place of safety, a refuge".

Fugue is a concept that the reader discovers through the perspective of Dr Adrian. This concept takes into account the western reality since most of examples related to it, in the novel, refer to Europeans. The first case of fugue was registered in 1887 thanks to the research work of a French psychiatrist. The extract below better put the matter in the context:

A time of vagabonds and gypsies, of travellers, wayfarers and tramps. A French psychiatrist working in Bordeaux treated for a number of years a patient by the name of Albert Dada. Dada was not a drifter or a tramp, he was something else – an obsessive traveller. At regular intervals he would abandon his family and his work to journey on foot as far as Constantinople and Moscow. At times he ran out of money, at others he was arrested for vagrancy, thrown into jail and made to return home. But within a few months, always, he set out again. Dada could not say why he travelled, or what he planned to do when he reached the end of his journey. At times he couldn't even remember his own name. He knew nothing, save his destination. The psychiatrist published a paper, *Les Aliens Voyageurs*, which brought him a modest fame. Albert Dada became the world's first recognised fuguer. (The Memory of Love, p. 127-128)

The French psychiatrist whose name is not mentioned in the novel becomes famous thanks to the book he published: *Les Aliens Voyageurs*. Being a pioneer, his book paved the way for other investigations since many cases of fugue were declared years after the publication of this book mainly after the two World Wars as the narrator explains it in the coming passage:

A spate of fugues followed the publication of *Les Aliens Voyageurs*, Adrian reads. Most accounts related to missing servicemen between the First and Second World Wars. The men eventually turned up hundreds of miles from home. All claimed to suffer memory loss, not to know who they were, or how they had ended up in the place in which they were found. Some were using other names and pursuing new occupations. All appeared to inhabit a state of obscured consciousness from which they eventually emerged with no memory of the weeks, months or even years they had spent away. These were not isolated incidents in the lives of these men, but a constant, a pattern of behaviour, of journey, of wanderings, of compulsive travelling. (p.128)

Here, patients are described as absent-minded people who inhabit a state of obscured consciousness from which they come out without any memory of the time spent far from their relatives. Further, one can hypothesize that forgetting who they were, certainly created new identities or could not even remember their names as Albert Dada. The condition may be traced to severe emotional shock, in which case personal memories are affected. Such amnesia seems to represent a psychological escape from or denial of memories that might cause anxiety. All they knew was to wander in order to feel free.

Once in Africa, Dr Adrian Lockheart resorts to western trends to face the reality he found on the ground. Regarding Agnes's case, he does not limit himself to the diagnosis "drug-induced" as his colleagues do with most of patients in the Mental Hospital. He refers to his background and orders books from England into a pile. He selects a slim volume, subtitled, *A History of Mental Illness*. Searching the list of chapters and then the index for the word 'fugue', he finds the reference he wants, turns to the page and begins to read. Dr Adrian finds similar Dada and Agnes's case that is why he resorts to the theory of fugue. In fact, Agnes is a casualty of war and she witnessed horrible events. As if losing her entire family was not enough, she was forced to live with the assassin of her husband. The latter got married with her only surviving daughter and beacon of hope. Agnes is manipulated by the man to keep quiet about his identity in order not to lose her only daughter and her grandchild for Naasu was pregnant. These happenings psychologically affect her till she makes a fugue. In the case of westerners, men are registered are the ones who make fugue, but in the African context the identified case is a woman as Adrian says: "The European fuguers one hundred years ago were all men. Here they are women" (The Memory of Love, p.129).

Adrian's mission in the country is to help his colleagues performing psychotherapy session for they cannot consult all the patients. Agnes is Adrian's first patient at the Mental Hospital. During the session therapy Salia the nurse accompanies Adrian lest Agnes speaks in a local language. Salia's presence was also important because she was familiar to Agnes and this could help Agnes be confident. One should know that at the very beginning of sessions Agnes is absent-minded as if she tries to guess where she is. Her memories are not actually lost, since they are generally recovered through psychotherapy or after the amnesic state has ended. Adrian is astonished to hear Agnes, who kept silence for ages, telling him her story, how it began and the different places where she was found far from home. It is thanks to the discovery of her account or record of journey that Adrian could draw her itinerary on a map, as evidenced in the following passage:

She gazes at the map, then shakes her head. 'Tell me.'

'They're all the places she was found before she was brought here.'

'Jesus fucking Christ!' says Ileana.

Side by side they stand and stare at Agnes's journeys mapped in colours and jewels.

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Fugue, they call it in his profession, a condition in which the body and the disturbed spirit are joined in shadowy wanderings. Agnes is searching for something. Something she goes out looking for and fails to find. Time after time. (The Memory of Love, pp.115-116)

The narrator continues the idea when she says:

But Agnes isn't searching for anything. She is fleeing something. She is running away from intolerable circumstances. Escaping the house, her daughter, most of all escaping JaJa. The difference between Agnes and the injured people who arrive at the hospital is that for Agnes there is no possibility of sanctuary. (The Memory of Love, p.326)

Through this passage, one can see how Adrian deduces that Agnes fled away because she was looking for something. As a matter of fact, she is not searching for anything but she is escaping the house and whatever linked to her son-in-law, Jaja. She tries to find a 'sanctuary' whatever the place and wanders away from home, roaming from town to town in an unconscious effort to distance herself from the intolerable situation in which she finds herself.

Occasionally, amnesia may last for weeks, months or even years, during which a person may begin an entirely new life. When recovered, the person is usually able to remember events that occurred prior to the onset, but events of the fugue period are forgotten. To achieve this expected result, the psychologist must put the patient in confidence and not rush her. This is true for Agnes who feels confident with Adrian, as the narrator evidences: "She [Agnes] is not dissembling, this Adrian can see. In turn he doesn't contradict her, but says, 'Tell me about the first trip you made, the first one you remember making that you didn't plan to make' (The Memory of Love, p.162).

Agnes' confession is informative of the wrongful actions Sierra Leoneans experienced during the Civil War. For, she not only witnesses her husband's execution, but she also attends to the death of her two daughters in a refugee camp in Guinea. The first passes away due to a cholera pandemic that struck the camp and the second of a poisonous cut on her foot. She could not stand the loss, so she makes a fugue. Isatta and Hassan, her son, the people Agnes shares her tent with worry and go looking for her. This passage well evidences the argument:

The day after Marian's death Agnes disappeared. Isatta and her son searched the camp until dusk drove them to their tent. All night Isatta lay awake, fearing for Agnes. For if age was a woman's protection at home, it was no protection here. The next day she found Agnes sitting on the other side of the stream, unharmed. She guided her back to the tent. For days Agnes neither spoke, nor moved, nor ate. (The Memory of Love, p.311)

What Forna describes here is a loving mother whose daughters are seen as her heir. Losing them creates an extreme anxiety. Agnes finds herself incapable in front of the death of her daughters and thinks that she failed in her duty to protect her children as a mother. Now, she is at a dead end.

Confronting the westerners' trends, Africans defend a conception which refers to their customs. The theory related to African tradition is different from the theory of psychology developed by westerners. They rather talk of the overpowering nature or God's will than dissociative disorder or fugue. Aminatta Forna approaches this aspect in the novel to illustrate African beliefs which are most of the time questioned by westerners.

Adrian is accompanied by Salia the head nurse at the Mental Hospital during his investigations to check the veracity of Agnes's story. They come across a former doorman of the department store in which Agnes's daughter worked. He reveals them that: "Agnes was not always this way, he says. 'Before she was like you and me. And then she became crossed'" (p.306). After the war, Agnes no longer was the same person for she behaved in a different manner. He could not bear to see her wandering in the streets of the capital city because of the familiarity between them so he brought Agnes to the crazy hospital. In a conversation with Adrian, the former doorman contends:

'I have seen her here before. Sometimes, for some of us, they say spirits call. She is not possessed, but she is crossed, yes. And that makes some people afraid. I am not afraid, because I knew her before. But people now are not as they were, they are more fearful'. (The Memory of Love, p.114)

It goes out from quotation that Africans do not first establish a link between a mental disorder and a possible event that may affect the person, but for them a mental disorder is, as said before, related to God's will as a 'gift' or a 'punishment'. That is to say it is linked to a spiritual matter. This is the reason that pushes the man to say that "she is crossed". He keeps on saying that "people are more fearful" because in their minds they think that such person may be capable of putting a spell on them. So, they prefer to stay away. But this kind of language "She is not possessed, but she is crossed" is not common to Adrian's reality as a British. Fortunately, Salia is there to clarify and put the words in context: "When a spirit enters a person sometimes it makes them act a certain way, what people call crazy. So, he is trying to tell you the woman was acting crazy when he found her. That is all." (p.115)

The doorman facing Adrian keeps on providing more explanations so as to help Adrian well appreciate the situation: When he spoke, he said, 'If a spirit possesses you, you become another person, it is a bad thing. Only bad spirits possess the living. I am telling you what some people believe, you understand.'

'Yes.'

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'But sometimes a person may be able to cross back and forth between this world and the spirit world. That is to say, a living person, a real person. And when they are in between the worlds, in neither world, then we say they are crossed. This woman is travelling between worlds. It is something that happens.

When I was a small boy there was a woman who became crossed, she was my aunt, in fact. There were times she would move from one village to another, alone, even as far as Guinea and Liberia. People saw her, they said she did not recognise them. Her hair grew long. People believed she had special powers. (The Memory of Love, p.129)

As can be seen, since every people have their morals on which they living resides, one cannot easily implant another moral, it would be wrong if one pretentiously undermines the other people's way of thinking. So, Adrian has to learn that for Africans, when a spirit enters a person sometimes, it makes him act a certain way that Westerners would consider him as crazy.

Eventually, Forna shows some advantages of being amnesic. For example, suffering from memory loss helped many to overcome the wrongdoing actions they were submitted to during the wartime. They were in a semiconscious state and it is the unconsciousness that saved their lives. It seems as if they were in a 'trance' guided by a natural tendency of surviving as the authoress states: "And afterwards, if you had asked any of the survivors how they had managed it, they would not have been able to tell you. It was as if those days, the escape to the city, had passed in a trance. The mind creates an alternative state." (The Memory of Love, p.326) Sentences like "the escape to the city, had passed in a trance" or "The mind creates an alternative state" prove that the people have endured violent incidents even when the body could no longer go ahead, the instinct of survival raised up and boost people to resist. Many of them, after surviving the war atrocities, felt guilty or ashamed because they wondered why they were the only people to survive.

CONCLUSION

The gist of the study has been to show that psychological disaster forms the fictional and historical core in Aminatta Forna's The Memory of Love, for the authoress draws the reader back to the war episode that devastated Sierra Leone for a decade. Drawing from psychoanalytical approach and the New historicism, it has shown Forna's efforts to account for this dramatic experience in The Memory of Love. For, she contextualizes the memory of war that seems to disappear, the writer challenges her people to remember these happenings. They want, for example, to forget the war episode and get rid of the experience related to it. But this experience is now a part of their inner lives and they should find ways or technique to cope with the predicament if they want to go ahead. With regard to the sorrowful experience contextualized in the novel, we have attempted to highlighted some aspects of trauma manifestation that the authoress evokes in the unfolding of her story. Then, we have tried to discuss the consequences of trauma in the social life of Sierra Leoneans. As a final assessment, one can assert that The Memory of Love is the contextualization of the Civil War in Sierra Leone to the extent that it reveals Aminatta Forna's political and ideological perspectives and commitment to denounce the consequences of the Civil War whose scars are still visible. Indeed, Forna has depicted the real facts of the Civil War in Sierra Leone which she has successfully mingled with ingredients of her literary world, not only to denounce and bring out of oblivion consequences and trauma that changed the life of people, but also to pay a tribute to the victims of the war Aminatta Forna's The Memory of Love can be read as a chronicle of psychological disaster in a post-war context that still haunts Sierra Leoneans.

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