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**GENOCIDE AND TRAUMA IN JOE USHIE'S
ECLIPSE IN RWANDA AND TAYEB BOUAZID'S
*MEMORIES FROM THE BLACK DECADE***

Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and English
Language in Partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master's
Degree

Candidates:

Ms. Ikram ACHOUR

Ms. Khaoula BOUGOUFA

Supervisor:

Dr. Bachir SAHED

2023

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2023

Declaration

We hereby declare that the dissertation entitled, “*Genocide and Trauma in Ushie’s Eclipse in Rwanda and Bouazid’s Memories from The Black Decade*” is our own work and that all the sources we have quoted have been acknowledged by means of references.

Signature:

Date:

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First and foremost, all the praise to Allah, who guided us and granted us the strength and patience to accomplish this work.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to our supervisor **Dr. Bachir SAHED** for his unbreakable patience, continuous support, wise supervision and insightful guidance.

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DEDICATION

Words can never express my deep love and gratitude to the two heroes of my life:

To my father “Naoui” and my mother “Saadia” to whom I owe great debt...

To my dear brothers,

Kamel, Abd elkarim, Amin, El Hachmi and Hossam...

To my sisters,

Salima, Saïda and Assma...

To my three best friends,

Aida, Saïda and Manel who believe in me and surround me with their care, and love and to

whom I wish successful lives...

To my dear friends,

Siham, Meriem, Aicha and Zahra...

To my teachers: Mr. Nassim and Ms. Laila to whom I wish successful lives...

Ikram

DEDICATION

To my loving parents,

who have always believed in me and provided unwavering support...

Your encouragement and sacrifices have been the foundation of my journey.

I am forever grateful...

To my dear brother,

who has been my cheerleader, and best friend...

To my incredible friends,

whose presence in my life has been a source of joy and encouragement...

Khaoula

List of Abbreviations

PTSD: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

FLN: Front de libération Nationale

FIS: Front Islamique de Salut

GIA: Groupe Islamique Armé

MIA: Mouvement Islamique armé

AIS: Armée Islamique de Salut

Abstract

This dissertation discusses genocide and trauma in Joe Ushie's *Eclipse in Rwanda* and Tayeb Bouazid's *Memories from The Black Decade*. These two poignant poems vividly portray the traumatic experiences and enduring psychological impact of mass violence on individuals and societies after the Biafra civil war and the Algerian black decade. As such, the main purpose of the present dissertation is to investigate the psychological impact brought upon individuals, as well as the traumatic experiences reflected in the poems. With a specific focus on the concepts of historical trauma and postmemory, this research employs trauma theory so as to examine how poets portray the aftermath of years of fear and violence on the people. To conclude, the civil wars in Algeria and Nigeria both had severe and long-lasting traumatizing repercussions on individuals and societies, despite their different historical contexts.

Keywords: Algerian black decade; Biafra civil war; genocide; historical trauma; postmemory

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Introduction

Literature serves as a powerful reflection of historical events and a poignant unveiling of cultural realities. Its unique ability to encapsulate the boundless range of human experiences makes literature a gateway to explore the depths of the past. Within this, poetry emerges as a particularly potent medium, as it reflects the rawest truths of war and illuminates its darkest facets. Through its evocative language and imagery, poetry becomes a mirror that reflects the profound impact of war on the human psyche and mind. It strives to offer insightful understanding of how the traumatic and violent nature of war leaves an indelible mark on individuals, particularly those who have directly experienced its horrors. As a result, the interconnection between literary works and history runs deep, creating a profound and intricate bond.

Joe Ushie, a renowned poet from Nigeria, holds a significant position in Contemporary literature due to his profound influence and prominence. His poetry has garnered substantial critical acclaim, capturing the attention of scholars and readers alike. Ushie has authored and published numerous volumes of poetry, such as *Popular Stand and Other Poems* (1992), *Lambs at the Shrine* (1995), *A Reign of Locusts* (2007), *Hill Songs* (2000), and *Eclipse in Rwanda* (1998). Notably, his poetry stands out for its discerning commentary on the socio-political circumstances prevalent in Nigeria and Africa as a whole.

Comprising approximately twenty-five poems, *Eclipse in Rwanda* is a poignant poetry volume that delves into the impact of history and memory on the collective consciousness. The volume addresses themes of warfare, conflict, and the pervasive sense of degradation and destruction that has permeated postcolonial Africa. Ushie skilfully employs this masterpiece as a metaphor, paying homage to the victims of the devastating genocide that took place in his homeland during the 1960s and 1970s.

Tayeb Bouazid, an Algerian poet and short story writer, has crafted a notable body of work over the years. Among his accomplishments are several poetry collections, including *The Feather* (2014) and *Golden Tears on Drooping Leaves* (2014). Additionally, he has delved into the realm of short stories with his collection entitled *Beehives* (2014). Among these, *Golden Tears on Drooping Leaves* stands out as a compilation of poems that tackles compelling subjects such as the Arab Spring, the iconic figure of Madiba, and poignant recollections from the black decade. Through his poetry, Bouazid addresses these weighty subjects with sensitivity and insight, inviting readers to contemplate the complexities of history, society, and human experiences.

Previous research on trauma had primarily centered on the Western world. Events like 9/11, the Cold War, the Holocaust, World Wars, and other Western tragedies received significant attention in the field of research. However, literary works originating from African countries, specifically Algeria and Nigeria, did not receive the same level of attention, often considered of lesser importance.

Therefore, this study aims to explore how poets depict the enduring traumatic experiences that occur in countries torn apart by civil wars and their strategies for overcoming war trauma. Furthermore, this research endeavor seeks to shed light on how trauma inflicts pain and fundamentally alters the lives of individuals.

By going through this research, there is a set of objectives to be achieved. Firstly, it aims to carry out a detailed study of trauma, examining its various dimensions and related tenets. Secondly, the research aims to shed light on the poets' traumatic experiences and explore how they cope with their traumas. Lastly, the study endeavours to analyse the relationship between war violence and psychological trauma, understanding how these elements interact within the context of the selected poems.

Therefore, to achieve the aforementioned objectives, the study attempts to answer the following main question: How do Ushie and Bouazid depict trauma and genocide in *Eclipse in Rwanda* and *Memories from the Black Decade*? In order to answer this question, the dissertation attempts to answer the following sub-questions: To what extent does the inherited trauma of the Biafra war and the Black Decade manifest itself in the poems? How do the concepts of historical trauma and postmemory intersect in the poetry of Ushie and Bouazid? and How do these poets use their works to explore the collective memory and inherited trauma of their respective cultural and historical contexts?

Countless researchers have shown interest toward Joe Ushie's literary corpus for their investigations. Critics have praised Ushie's style and his profound treatment regarding the socio-political issues in Nigeria. Among the researchers who have attempted to discuss Ushie's poem is Onyekachi Onuoha in his article "*Eclipse in Rwanda as Remembering in Psychosocial Poetics of Trauma*" (2019). The researcher views the poem as a text of memory, where the poet uses the genocide in Rwanda as a literary metaphor to evoke memories of the Nigerian civil war. The purpose behind this, according to Onuoha, is to indict society's collective conscience by immersing the readers in the memories of the deceased through poetics of remembering.

Moreover, in his article "Textual Patterns and Significance in Joe Ushie's Poetry: A Semiostylistic Study" (2020), Mike T. U. Edungi examines few of Joe Ushie's poems through semiostylistics lens. The researcher asserts that the poet intentionally utilizes language units to create patterns within the poems that compel reader's interpretive senses, thereby enhancing the transmission of the poet's message.

Still, in an article entitled "The Womb of the Earth: Eco-feminist Consciousness in Joe Ushie's Poetry" (2022), Chinonso Okolo explores Joe Ushie's poetry through an eco-feminist

lens. He points out that the poet personifies nature and considers it as a female who loves her children with a motherly affection and passion. The researcher concludes that women exhibit a greater ecological consciousness compared to men.

Underlying the previous works, it is noticeable that critics and researchers have explored the issue of trauma and genocide in Ushie's *Eclipse in Rwanda* from a limited scope by giving more emphasis to style and socio-political issues. Apparently, the existing literature on *Eclipse in Rwanda* did not extend far enough to address all the psychological issues of war trauma. Whereas for Bouazid, scholars have not given this talented poet deserving attention. However, this dissertation will examine the individual and the collective trauma presented in poems, as well as how the inherited trauma of the poets is presented in the poems.

To accomplish this research, the study relies mainly on trauma theory, which is an interdisciplinary field in literary criticism. As a theoretical approach, the basic tenets of trauma theory can be traced back to the pioneering work of Sigmund Freud, who paved the way for further research on trauma theory. Yet, it was not until the years following the Holocaust that trauma emerged as a distinct field in literary studies. As such, trauma theory has received a great deal of attention from literary critics, as it endeavours to offer an overview on how distressing events like war, genocide, and colonialism affect human psyches. Accordingly, trauma theory attempts to provide a broad understanding and a deep scrutiny on its impacts. Furthermore, trauma theory aims to investigate how the inherited traumatic experiences of the poets as well as speakers in the poems may affect their literary productions.

The present study relies on various works on trauma, including Cathy Caruth, Judith Lewis Herman, and Dominick Lacapra, to examine the symptoms of trauma in the selected poems. The study will explore concepts such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and

acting out throughout the poems. Caruth defined PTSD in her book *Trauma Explorations in Memory* as a delayed response experienced by victims following a traumatic event. Additionally, this study explores the concept of acting out as elucidated by Lacapra in his book *Writing History Writing Trauma*. This concept is seen as mode of responding to loss or historical trauma.

Moreover, nations that experience mass atrocities and historically traumatizing events like civil wars, violence, and genocide share common plight. This phenomenon is known as “historical trauma”, which is a concept coined by Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart. Additionally, she notes that historical trauma is characterized by its transgenerational nature. That is, historical trauma is carried from one generation to another. Equally significant, Marianne Hirsh has explored the aftereffects of historical trauma in the context of postmemory. Accordingly, Hirsh comes to the conclusion that parental traumatic memories can be passed on to their children through their behaviours, tales, and conventions.

The present study is divided into two main chapters. The first chapter is devoted to the theoretical framework and the socio-historical context. It begins by shedding light on the bloody Nigerian civil war and the Algerian black decade. In addition, this chapter examines the emergence of Nigerian literature in English, highlighting its significance and the contributions of third-generation writers. It also delves into Algerian Literature and Art during the Black Decade. Lastly, the chapter discusses trauma theory which is applied as a theoretical understanding of the framework.

The second chapter is an analytical framework. The selected poems are analysed based on Cathy Caruth’s trauma theory and other concepts related to this theory. The chapter then establishes a connection between war violence and psychological trauma. Besides, the chapter deals with war violence, genocide, and starvation by viewing them as historical and collective

traumas and linking them to the concept of PTSD. Concluding the chapter, an investigation is conducted into the inherited post-memory of Ushie.

CHAPTER ONE: Socio-Historical Context and Theoretical

Framework

The twentieth century is widely recognized as one of the most sombre periods in human history, primarily due to the atrocious events that unfolded during this time. Africa, in particular, bore witness to a series of smaller-scale wars and conflicts, often fuelled by racial or religious tensions. These conflicts inflicted deep wounds upon African nations, leaving a lasting impact on their societies and serving as a wellspring of inspiration for countless writers. Joe Ushie's *Eclipse in Rwanda* and Tayeb Bouazid's *Memories from the Black Decade* vividly capture the brutality of these conflicts and the profound psychological trauma endured by the affected nations.

The first chapter is intended to be an analysis of the socio-historical context and an explanation of the theoretical framework. The first section of this chapter sheds light on the causes of the wars in both countries. The second section of the chapter delves into the rise of Nigerian literature written in English, focusing on the emergence of the third generation of writers to which Ushie belongs. In the third section, the chapter shifts its focus to Algerian literature and art during the Black Decade. Lastly, the chapter concludes by discussing trauma theory, which is employed to analyse the poems.

1. Socio-historical Background: From the Biafran War to the Black Decade

As the European empires began exploring and colonizing the world, the African coastline became crucial for ships in need for resupply and repair. It also quickly became part of the worldwide slave trade. However, as slavery was gradually outlawed during the course of the 19th century, the economy of these kingdoms crumbled. As such, European countries

decided to invade Africa, and it was the Berlin conference who codified these spheres of influence. By the end of the conference, Britain was handed the area of West Africa, which would eventually become Nigeria. Although Britain abolished slave trade in 1807, it pushed for other forms of commerce such as cotton and palm oil. The latter has attracted the British merchants and helped them expand their market to launch a number of military campaigns. Their influence has increasingly grown in the area. They initially upheld their rule with a series of manoeuvres emanating from Lagos. As they moved further inland, they defeated the Ijebu kingdom, the Sokoto caliphate, the Edo Empire, and the Igbo people. In 1885, they officially took control of what is roughly called modern Nigeria (Falola and Heaton 92).

In this regard, Lagos became the base for all their colonial activities and marked the start of British colonialism in Nigeria. Soon after, the British colonial power split the land into two protectorates. The Igbo and Yoruba primarily occupied the first region, the Southern Protectorate. The Hausa ethnic group dominated the Northern Protectorate, which was the second area. The British, however, made the decision to merge the two protectorates into a single colony in 1914 (Falola and Heaton 96). While the merger of the two protectorates seemed administratively logical, it proved to be a challenging and impractical decision. Nigeria is a nation comprised of numerous ethnic groups with strong interethnic ties, tribal sentiments, and a wide array of cultural traditions and languages. The lack of cohesiveness within the country contributed to a series of coups, ultimately culminating in a devastating civil war (Ejike 88).

Nigeria achieved its independence from colonial rule on October 1st, 1960. However, the country remained a member of the British Commonwealth for a year following its independence. After gaining independence, Nigeria underwent a reorganization that divided the country into three major regions, each inhabited by a specific ethnic group. The Northern

region was occupied by the Hausa people, the Eastern region by the Igbo people, and the Western region by the Yoruba people (Idegwu 58).

It was not long before this new nation was plunged into political and ethnic turmoil. Due to the sharp ethnic and religious differences, Nigeria's major ethnic groups struggled to coexist within the same boundaries. These ethnic issues threatened national unity (Usman and Garba 70). Obafemi Awolowo, in his book, *Path to Nigerian Freedom*, claims that

Nigeria is not a nation, it is a mere geographical expression, there are no Nigerians in the same sense as there are English or Welsh or French the word Nigeria is merely a distinctive appellation to distinguish those who live within boundaries of Nigeria from those who do not (47-48).

The tension between main ethnic groups and the perceived breakdown of law and order encouraged some military officers to stage a coup on January 15th, 1966. The aim behind this military coup was to create a strong unified nation, free from corruption and internal strife. The coup, however, hastened Nigeria's collapse as it resulted in the deaths of several Northern Nigerian figures, including the region's premier, numerous senior politicians and other army officers. The fact that no prominent Igbo politician was killed in this deadly coup was not considered as a coincidence, but rather a confirmation of an Igbo agenda to dominate the North (Obiani 24).

On July 19th, 1966, a number of Northern army officers launched a countercoup as retribution for the first military uprising. Sadly, the Northern retaliation did not end there. In the three months following the coup, hundreds of south Easterners living in the North were either slaughtered or starved to death. Over one million Igbo fled back to their homelands fearing for their lives (Toyin and Oyebade 37).

In an attempt to de-escalate tensions, the Nigerian military government and Colonel Okjwu decided to settle their differences at Aburi, the capital of Ghana, between January 4th and 5th, 1966. After the cordial two-day conference, the Eastern region government and the federal military government came out with different interpretations of the Aburi deal. As the last measure to disallow the country from disintegration, General Gowon decided to break the four major regions into twelve state in May 1967. Lt Col Ojukwu considered the act of the establishment of state by decree “without consultation” as the last straw and officially declared the eastern region an independent state of “Biafra”. The federal government in Lagos viewed this act as illegal and separatist and was left with only one choice, bringing back the region to the main fold by power (Adefemi 14).

On July 7th, tensions between the Biafrans and the Nigerian federal government began to escalate. The Nigerian government sent troops to the north to capture Enguju, the capital of Biafra, as well as the military governor Ojukwu and his supporters. Later, the federal government declared that its troops had successfully taken control of two significant Biafran cities. Additionally, it announced that numerous bordering bridges have been destroyed (Nkwocha 293).

On August 9th, 1967, a group of military Biafran soldiers under the command of a Yoruba military officer named Victor Banjo launched what is known as the Midwest invasion. Despite their weakness, the Biafran soldiers were able to seize the entire mid-Western region and capture several towns, including Benin City. However, Ojukwu and Victor Banjo's negotiations over who to appoint as the governor of the mid-West delayed their advance toward Lagos and gave the Nigerians enough time to secure the western borders. Additionally, during the invasion, conflict broke out between the indigenous population and the Igbo soldiers, which led the governor of the Midwest region to proclaim independence of the republic of Benin (Roy 65).

The federal government deliberated mass starvation as a war strategy. It blocked all channels and routes through which food supplies and foreign aids could reach the famished Biafran population. This blockade resulted in a humanitarian catastrophe; thousands of children and women died from severe hunger and mass food shortage. As a result, various countries made appeals on the behalf of Biafrans asking for humanitarian intervention. In this regard, the media began to cast photos of malnourished children and women on international newspapers and on television all around the world. These painful images were rapidly used by Biafran leaders to gain sympathy for their cause (Idegwu 68).

On January 15th, 1970, the war ended. Nigerian forces finally defeated Biafran troops and surrounded all areas. The Biafra leader Ojukwu fled to the Ivory Coast and his deputy, General Philip Effiong, surrendered to the Nigerian federation. Thus, General Gowon made a broadcast where he declared the end of the civil war (Heerten 298). Undeniably, the Biafran collapse came at the cost of people's and children's lives. Kwashiorkor, for instance, spread throughout the region and resulted in the death of thousands of children. Additionally, it centred its concerns on the potential physical and psychological effects on its troops. This can be summed up in Chinua Achebe's words in his book *There Was a Country*. He declared,

In Biafra, the Harmattan Season leading into 1970 was particularly harsh. I remember vividly the suffering of the people; everything seemed particularly bleak. The dry, sandy air seemed to be an additional torment, delighting in covering the body with layers of the Sahara Desert's fine dust, blown in from hundreds of miles away. This made it impossible for bare, weeping, vulnerable skin lesions to heal. It was particularly hard on the children. Looking around one could see a proud, devastated people. (205).

In conclusion, the Biafra war stands as a tragic chapter in the Nigeria's history. Emerging from a complex web of ethnic tensions, political ambitions, and perceived grievances, the war brought about immeasurable suffering and loss. The conflict's devastating toll on human lives, the widespread destruction of property, and the harrowing accounts of

starvation and exploitation have left an indelible mark on the collective memory of the nation. As the war eventually ended, the scars it left behind were not merely physical but also psychological, shaping the nation's psyche for generations to come.

In the annals of history, certain chapters stand as haunting reminders of the depths of human experience—two such chapters are the Nigerian Civil War and the Algerian Black Decade. While geographically distant, these periods share a common thread of turmoil and upheaval that have left an enduring impact on their nations. The Nigerian Civil War and the Algerian Black Decade of the 1990s, marred by violence and political instability, are emblematic of the struggle for identity, unity, and renewal in the face of adversity. The narratives of these events, though distinct, are interwoven by the universal themes of resilience, memory, and the search for a way forward after periods of crisis.

The roots of the Algerian Black Decade are intricately connected to the enduring impact of French colonialism, which spanned from 1830 to 1962. The colonial period significantly shaped the socio-political landscape of Algeria, leaving behind a legacy of deep-seated issues that would contribute to the complexities leading up to the tumultuous events of the 1990s. The French implemented a "divide and rule" strategy that exacerbated social and religious divisions, favoring certain ethnic and religious groups while marginalizing others. This strategy sowed the seeds of discord and disparities that persisted long after Algeria gained independence in 1962 (Horne 199).

In the post-colonial era, efforts were made to establish a stable political system; however, newly independent Algeria grappled with challenges in addressing the economic, social, and political consequences of colonial rule. By the end of 1988, the Front de libération Nationale (FLN), the only ruling party in Algeria since the 1960s, appeared increasingly inadequate for the situation. The population's discontent grew due to various factors, starting

with a seemingly democratic one-party system that masked a corrupt military administration. The situation was further exacerbated by the 1986 oil price decline and severe limitations on the planned economy, leading to shortages and rising unemployment. In October 1988, demonstrations against President Chadli Bendjedid unfolded across Algerian cities. The military's response, marked by the fatal shooting of over 500 demonstrators, shocked the population with the brutality of its actions (Kepel 159-160). In response, the president started a reform. He put out a new constitution by referendum on February 23rd, 1989, eliminating the one party system and any mention of socialism while establishing the rights to free speech, association, and reunion. Thirty-three parties with extremely varied political ideologies gained legal recognition at the beginning of 1991, including the Rally for Culture and Democracy, the Democratic Social Party, but also and above all the Islamic Salvation Front (Kepel 169).

In the legislative elections of December 1991, the Front Islamique de Salut (FIS) won 188 of the 232 seats available. This FIS win represented a challenge to the FLN, which had long held sway. As a result, the military intervened to call off the second round of voting and remove President Chadli Bendjedid from power through a coup d'état. As things became worse, the military took over, outlawed the FIS and all other religious groups, and imprisoned tens of thousands of its supporters. The Algerian dictatorship and the Islamist rebel organizations, who were regarded as political terrorists, quickly engaged in violent combat as a result of these events. The ensuing protests and terrorist attacks signalled the start of a terrible decade for Algeria (Ziane et al. 1260-1261).

The prohibition of the FIS and the subsequent imprisonment of its members created a fertile ground for the emergence of various Islamist guerrilla groups in Algeria. These groups organized themselves into armed organizations, with the two most significant ones being the Groupe Islamique Armé (GIA), operating in urban areas, and the Mouvement Islamique armé (MIA), based in the mountains. Initially, the Islamists targeted the police and military forces,

but certain organizations soon turned their violence towards civilians. In 1994, while negotiations were underway between the government and FIS leaders who were under house arrest, the GIA launched a war against the FIS and its supporters. Additionally, the MIA and several smaller groups joined forces to establish the Armée Islamique de Salut (AIS) (Kepel 262).

The continuous guerrilla actions carried out by the armed groups until the end of 1994 overwhelmed the security forces in Algeria. The army, police, and gendarmerie suffered significant losses, partly due to widespread desertions within the security forces and a lack of preparedness to combat a well-established guerrilla movement deeply embedded among the population. In response to this challenge, the military leadership made the decision to establish popular militias to assist the security forces and disrupt the support networks of the armed groups. By 1996, the Algerian State's anti-terrorist force consisted of approximately 500,000 troops (Martinez 92-93).

In 1995, the attempted talks between the government and various factions, including the FIS, failed, leading to a new election. General Liamine Zeroual, the candidate backed by the army, emerged as the winner. However, this period also witnessed a significant escalation in violence within Algeria. The country became increasingly isolated as the Moroccan border was closed, and foreign flights were disrupted, causing the majority of foreign news outlets to withdraw from Algeria. Additionally, the government imposed restrictions on the Algerian media, forbidding them from reporting on terrorism-related news (Martinez 228-229).

In 1997, Algeria witnessed a sequence of massacres marked by shocking cases of brutality. While previous massacres had occurred on a smaller scale, these new incidents were unprecedented. Supporters of the GIA targeted villages and suburbs, indiscriminately killing civilians without regard for age or gender. These massacres resulted in the simultaneous

slaughter of dozens, and sometimes-even hundreds, of people at a time. The atrocities continued until the end of 1998 and had a profound impact on the political landscape.

The southern and eastern areas of Algiers were severely affected, with the Rais and Bentalha massacres shocking international observers. People of various age groups suffered brutal deaths at Rais, either through knife attacks or by being subjected to burning. The violence reached horrifying levels, with children being hacked into pieces and pregnant women subjected to brutal mutilation (McDougall 432).

The policy of massacring civilians adopted by the armed groups, particularly the GIA, played a significant role in the splintering of the Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat (GSPC). During this period, the GIA seemed to have embraced the *Takfirist*¹ ideology, which regarded all Algerians who did not directly oppose the government as corrupt to the extent of being considered *kafirs* (infidels), making them eligible for “legal” execution. There are differing views regarding the motivations behind the destruction of villages. Some argue that it was perceived as evidence of disloyalty to the government's program, leading to its destruction. Others suggest that rivalry with other armed groups also played a role in these violent acts (Kepel 274).

In the cases of Rais and Bentalha, survivors have pointed out that the Algerian army had barracks located just a few hundred meters away from the massacres but did not intervene. This observation has led some individuals to speculate about possible connections between the army and the GIA, specifically suggesting that the GIA may have been compromised by the secret police (Souaidia 22). This theory gained popularity among conspiracy theorists and some Western researchers. Although the Algerian government publicly denied any involvement in these massacres, there were reports in the Algerian press suggesting the

¹ *Takfir* is an Arabic and Islamic term that signifies the act of declaring a fellow Muslim as an apostate or excommunicating them from the Islamic faith (Poljarevic 485 -512).

potential involvement of the Islamic Salvation Army. However, the accuracy and veracity of these stories remain questionable and subject to further investigation (Souaidia 23).

During that time, the AIS launched a full-scale offensive against both the GIA and the government. Members of the AIS were concerned that they would be held responsible for the massacres, despite consistently denouncing them. In an effort to distance themselves from these acts of violence, AIS leader Madani Mezrag announced a unilateral and unconditional ceasefire on September 21st, 1997, which came into effect on October 1st. Alongside the AIS, La ligue Islamique pour la Da'wa et le Jihad d'Ali Benhadjar (LIDD) also observed the ceasefire. The AIS engaged in negotiations and secured a progressive amnesty for its members over the following three years, aiming to ensure their protection from prosecution (Kapel 274-275).

On September 11th, President Liamine Zeroual announced his resignation. Following this, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, a former independence fighter, emerged as the winner in the elections held on April 15th, 1999. Bouteflika continued negotiations with the Islamic Salvation Army and on June 5th, the AIS agreed in principle to dissolve itself. To facilitate the process, the "Civil Harmony" law was presented to parliament, which allowed Islamist fighters to escape prosecution if they surrendered. Alongside this, Bouteflika declared amnesty for a number of Islamist prisoners who had been convicted of minor offenses. On September 16th, 1999, the "Civil Harmony" law was approved through a referendum. Many warriors took the opportunity to reintegrate into regular civilian life. However, the leadership of the FIS expressed dissatisfaction with these outcomes, as they believed that the AIS was ending the conflict without addressing the core issues. Following negotiations with the government, the AIS was completely dissolved. Although violence significantly decreased after the government's victory, remnants of the GIA persisted, but by 2002, they appeared to have largely disappeared (Whitlock and Craig 01).

To sum up, the Black Decade was a highly destructive and deadly conflict that greatly affected Algeria, disrupting its peaceful existence and leaving profound and lasting consequences. The conflict witnessed widespread-armed confrontations, massacres, and acts of terrorism, resulting in a high number of casualties and significant social and political repercussions. The scars of the Black Decade continue to shape Algeria's trajectory and serve as a reminder of the devastating impact of such conflicts on people and societies.

In the wake of the Algerian Black Decade and the Nigerian Civil War, the power of literature as a cathartic medium has risen to the forefront. Both Algeria and Nigeria bear the scars of brutal conflicts that have shaped their histories. These traumatic experiences have propelled individuals and communities to seek solace and understanding through the act of writing. The literary expressions that have emerged from these two nations stand as poignant testimonies to the resilience of the human spirit and the need to document the unspeakable. Authors, poets, and artists from both countries have become chroniclers of pain and healing, weaving narratives that serve as mirrors to the traumas endured by their societies.

2. Nigerian literature and Third Generation Writers

Nigerian literature, a vibrant tapestry of narratives and voices, stands at the crossroads of language, identity, and cultural expression. Yet, the language in which this literature is written introduces a nuanced layer of complexity. While English has emerged as a dominant medium, authors have also chosen to wield Arabic and Portuguese to share their stories. This multilingual landscape raises intriguing questions about the significance, appropriateness, and authenticity of these languages in capturing the essence of Nigerian narratives.

In his book *Literature in Africa and The Caribbean Africana Studies: A Survey of Africa and The African Diaspora*, Ojaide Tanure argues that for a piece of writing to be

considered Nigerian, it must reflect the values, interests, and experiences of Nigerians. Additionally, he states that literary works from Nigeria must strongly reflect their cultural heritage as well as other historical characteristics (Ojaide 318). To put it another way, a writer's choice of words is important because it shapes his identity and how he thinks. However, the priority should be given to the topics and concerns that the writer addresses and emphasizes. In his book *Homecoming*, Ngugi wa Thiong'o claims that,

A writer responds with total personality, to a social environment which changes all the time. Being a kind of a sensitive needle, he registers with varying degrees of accuracy and success, the conflicts and tensions in his changing society. Thus, the same writer will produce different types of work, sometimes contradictory in mood, sentiment, degree of optimism and even worldview. For the writer himself lives in, and is shaped by history (47).

Most literature in the world has historically existed first verbally and then in writing. In her book *Judges: A Commentary* (2008), Susan Niditch highlights the fact that “Most scholars previous and contemporary, agree that the Bible has important connections to oral literature as an oral culture” (18). In this way, the Bible, one of the oldest works of literature, is connected to the literature of Nigeria. That is to say, the oral literature of Nigeria is comparable to the literature of other human societies. In her work entitled *Mapping Nigerian Literature*, Fasan, Rotimi Omoyele states that

Pre-colonial and indigenous Nigerian societies practice the same ritual of practicing culture through poetry, folk songs, myths, legends, folktales, and proverbs. So, in addition to colonialism, which encouraged the shift from an oral to literate and written culture, the Islamic conquests and Christian missionaries are the two factors that have been the reason of the introduction of literacy in Arabic and English (Fasan 34).

The imperialist practices of British educationists imposed English as the language of instruction within schools, playing a significant role in cultivating a culturally hybrid nation, particularly among authors. These hegemonic practices have cemented English's dominance

as the language of authority, prestige, and high culture (Al Hassan Ibrahim et al. 64). This concept finds support in Saint Gbilekaa's work *Radical Theatre in Nigeria*, where the Nigerian scholar posits that the legacy of colonialism and British educational imperialism has contributed to the dichotomy of Nigerian identity. Gbilekaa contends that exposure to foreign ideologies, cultural norms, and the European way of life has had a profound influence, shaping Nigerians into citizens of two distinct universes (Gbilekaa 48). This exposure has resulted in the emergence of a hybrid nation, with writers often choosing English as their preferred medium of expression.

A variety of reasons contributed to the development of Nigerian literature in English. In his article *Nigerian Literature in English: The Journey So Far*, Taye Awoyemi-Arayela argues that historically, the Second World War's dramatic aftermath has led to a cry for freedom and independence emerging in the African countries that are bound by colonialism. Nigeria was among the nations that demanded freedom (Awoyemi 30).

The founding of Ibadan University College in 1948, as Coffey Meredith Armstrong notes in her article, *Narrow Nationalisms and Third Generation Nigerian Fiction*, is the second important aspect that contributed to the development of Nigerian literature in English. Ibadan is a cornerstone of Nigerian literature and a place where playwrights, novelists, and poets have experimented with literature to create some of the most significant works of African literature (Coffey 5).

In his work entitled *Mapping Nigerian Literature*, Rotimi Omoyele Fasan classifies Nigerian literature in English into three major generations based on the time periods of its emergence, topic interests, and stylistic preferences. First Generation Writers is the term used to describe the first group. Their literary creations were initially released in the years just prior to and following Nigeria's independence in 1960. In addition to their efforts to advance

political participation and cultural understanding, they have thought about creating counter discourse as a strategy to dispel stereotypes about Nigeria and Africa as a whole. Numerous authors are mentioned in this group, including Wole Soyinka, Christopher Okigbo, Chinua Achebe, and many more (Coffey 7).

The new generation of authors who shaped the history of literary creation from the middle of the 1970s to the end of the 1980s are known as second generation writers (Fasan 41). Unlike the writers of the first generation, who were hopeful about independence and looked forward to a new, independent Nigeria with a better future. However, the experience of the second generation with neo-colonialism has been entirely different. Their literary works thus frequently contain humour, disillusionment, and frustration. In this regard, Taye Awoyemi-Arayela, in his essay, “Nigerian Literature in English: The Journey So Far?”, claims:

For them, the First Republic had failed in its bid to rid the Nigerian populace of the shackles of colonialism; in its stead was the new monster, neo-colonialism. The old masters had not left; they had only metamorphosed into black-white masters (33).

The second generation of writers' literary works heavily reference the Nigerian Civil War. It has been a contentious subject for the writers and a crucial time in Nigerian history. In his book, *Nation, Power and Dissidence in Third-Generation Nigerian Poetry in English*, Sule E Egya insists that

It was indeed after the Nigerian civil war that Nigerian writing, perhaps in all genres, witnessed a certain renaissance due to the urgent desire of writers to challenge what they saw as the worst inhumanity to hit Nigeria and the alarming ease with which politicians and businessmen, including privileged writers and intellectuals, profited from the situation (14).

Second generation female writers have expressed female voices that were not given enough space and attention to express themselves in early colonial and postcolonial Nigerian

literature. Finally, they were able to negotiate their identity and change the course of the story. In the patriarchal society of Nigeria, female writers like Zulu Sofola, Mabel Segun, and Bunmi Oyinsan have worked to rebuild a new strong women status. As a result, they assert that western feminism is neither appropriate for the African environment nor representational of their problems and issues (O. T. Oloruntoba-Oju 5-15).

A new generation of writers began to emerge in the middle of the 1990s. This group of authors is known as the third generation writers. Their writings can be seen as a continuation of the works of the first and second generations of writers with a nod towards current problems in contemporary Nigeria (Salhi 10).

This period has been marked by a succession of crises across various dimensions. Commencing with economic upheaval in the labour market, there has been a staggering surge in unemployment rates. Simultaneously, the formidable grip of military rule (1966-1979; 1983-1999) presents yet another intricate challenge that has taken a toll on Nigeria. The backdrop of strikes and electoral turmoil further compounds the situation. These relentless and unceasing crises have heightened the imperative for third-generation writers to meticulously delineate the prevailing issues. Notably, these contemporary authors have garnered recognition for their unwavering commitment to advocating for the restoration of Nigeria's eroded identity (Bentayeb and Ladjal, 22–24).

3. The Algerian literature and Art during the Black Decade

After Realizing the tragedy that is shaking their society and bleeding their country, Algerian writers hastened to “write” and “describe” the violence, terror and panic of the Black Decade. Hence, the Algerian literary stream witnessed a different path referred to as “la littérature de l’Urgence” or “Emergency literature”. This new conception of Algerian

literature was born from the dramatic news of the 1990s. It is a body of literature that pays close attention to the social, political, and ideological shifts occurring at this period. In this regard, Joseph Ford, in his article entitled “Algiers, Paris, New York: Migrating Terror,” states that

A range of testimonial literature, more widely known as an ‘écriture de l’urgence’ was published throughout this period by Algerians in Paris, in what Charles Bonn and Naget Khadda have called the ‘retour du référent’...In a highly referential and realist style, this literature sought to document the daily lived horrors of the conflict which claimed the lives of up to 200,000 people (10).

However, this terminology was contested by a large number of Algerian writers and critics. According to Wassini Laradj, this writing "is a documentation of the events of the black decade, just like the European literature during the two World Wars," (Mustafa 1), rather than being a response to the crisis. Whereas Tahar Wattar believes that this literature is more than just a record of what happened; rather, it “personifies the true misery of the innocent” (Ben Toumi 2014). As a result, these authors and critics designated this period as being described as “Literature of the Ordeal” (Ziane et al. 1262).

The effort to offer a single, widely accepted explanation for the violence of the 1990s is a contentious one. This is partly because the state narrative and the way the civil war is seen by the public are irreconcilable with reality. Thus, it is not surprising that writers have found it difficult and confusing to interpret Algerian national history during the 1990s. As an illustration, a comparison of the opinions of Assia Djebar, Wassini Laradj, and numerous others reveals contentious positions when justifying the violence of the civil war (Ziane et al. 1263).

Writings from the 1990s were sharply condemned since they were seen as testimony meant to document the events of the Black Decade. Regarding this, Joseph Ford emphasizes in *Rethinking Urgence: Algerian Francophone Literature* that,

Around one hundred books of ‘temoignage’ were published during the 1990’s. While some have argued this testimonial writing of the 1990s constitutes a kind of ‘hiatus’ in Algerian literary production, it seems possible that the 1990s became a period of intensifying thematic readings of the post-colonial novel where literature had come to act as an affirmative statement (42).

Despite being exposed to abuse by fundamentalists, Francophone Algerian women writers have made significant contributions to Algeria's literary scene. In this regard, in an article entitled “Post-colonial Algerian writers in French: Language as Representation and Resistance” Lgoudjil claims that

Algerian women novelists took up the pen not only to testify to the horrors of the “unrest”, but also to condemn the physical violence exerted against women, and particularly, to reclaim the public space in which religious fundamentalism wanted them to be excluded (79).

Seventy of the books that were published between 1990 and 1998 were written by women. These numerous texts continue to be connected to the period's violence, historical misconceptions, and fabrications. Assia Djebar, Malika Mokeddem, Leïla Sebbar, and Maïssa Bey are a few of the female voices who vividly depicted the battle and the daily suffering of Algerian women (Daoudi45).

From that point on, the majority of Algerian literary works portrayed the predicament faced by the intellectual who was imprisoned between the Algerian government and the terrorists. Algerian authors were able to denounce horrific incidents by including them in their characters so that the reader might comprehend the violent happenings.

4. Theoretical Framework

4.1. Trauma Theory

The term “trauma” originates from the Greek word “trauma,” which means a wound or an injury. However, despite its etymology, trauma remains a complex concept that is challenging to define. There is no singular, precise definition of trauma, as it encompasses various meanings and interpretations depending on the field of study or context. Briere and Scott discuss this in their book *Principles of Trauma Therapy: A Guide to Symptoms, Evaluation, and Treatment*, stating that,

The term ‘trauma’ can mean different things, depending on the context. Semantically, trauma refers to an experience or an event; nevertheless, people use the term interchangeably to refer to either a traumatic experience or event, resulting injury or stress, or the longer-term impacts and consequences (51).

The causes of trauma can be broadly classified into two categories: impersonal trauma and interpersonal trauma. Impersonal trauma refers to traumatic experiences that are brought about by natural disasters or environmental factors. These events are typically beyond human control and can include occurrences such as earthquakes, wildfires, dust storms, tsunamis, hurricanes, and floods. Interpersonal trauma, on the other hand, is directly caused by interactions with other individuals or groups. It involves experiences in which one person inflicts harm or trauma upon another. Examples of interpersonal trauma include rape, sexual assault, physical abuse, emotional abuse, domestic violence, child abuse, human rights violations, and exposure to war or conflict situations.

Trauma can be classified into two main forms: physical trauma and psychological trauma. Physical trauma refers to lasting harm caused by severe wounds, injuries, or illnesses.

This type of trauma is tangible and often leaves visible effects on the body. It can result from accidents, falls, surgeries, or other incidents that cause significant bodily harm. Psychological trauma, on the other hand, is the consequence of exposure to overwhelming and distressing life events that can deeply affect a person's emotional and mental well-being. This form of trauma arises from experiences such as torture, war, sexual assault, natural disasters, or witnessing a traumatic event like a car accident. Unlike physical trauma, psychological trauma may not leave visible external marks but can have profound and long-lasting impacts on a person's psychological state (Reyes et al. 2).

In the context of trauma and its associated psychological condition, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) comes to the forefront. This disorder is defined as “is an anxiety disorder that can develop after exposure to a life or health threatening event” (Herman 2). The disorder is accompanied by reflecting symptoms such as, nightmares, flashbacks, severe anxiety, and uncomfortable thoughts about the incident (Mayo Clinic 2018).

The American Psychiatric Association first coined the term "Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)" in 1980, as a large number of Vietnam War veterans started exhibiting a wide range of psychological issues, many of which persisted after they returned home (Luckhurst 59). In this regard, Cathy Caruth in her book entitled *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* declares that “In 1980, the now familiar broad umbrella term “Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder” was assigned by the American Psychiatric Association by way of acknowledging the need to recognize and understand the after effects of trauma” (192).

To further understand the manifestations of PTSD, Judith Herman, In her book, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence - From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*, categorizes the symptoms of PTSD into three main categories. The first category

is “hyperarousal”, where the traumatized individual is overwhelmed by states of alertness and vigilance that dominate his thoughts and mind. This state arises from the individual's profound belief that by remaining vigilant, they can avoid reliving or repeating the traumatic experience (Herman 26). The second category is known as "Intrusion," characterized by the reliving of the traumatic event. During this stage, the traumatized individual re-experiences the event as if it were happening in the present. This includes enduring recurring flashbacks, unwelcome memories, and distressing nightmares (Herman 28). The last category is “constriction”. It is characterized by the traumatic individual's inclination to withdraw from social interactions, and a limited perception of their surroundings (Herman 31).

In addition to understanding the impacts of trauma, recovery plays a crucial role. Herman's three-stage model of recovery provides insights into this process. The first stage focuses on safety, emphasizing the establishment of a secure environment where the survivor feels protected and supported. The second stage involves remembrance and mourning, where the survivor confronts and processes the traumatic experiences, allowing for the expression of emotions and engaging in the grieving process. The final stage is reconnection, where the survivor works towards rebuilding their life, reclaiming agency, and finding new meaning beyond the trauma.

Moreover, Dominick Lacapra introduced the concept of "Acting out" to delve into how traumatized individuals react to the traumatic incidents they have experienced.

Lacapra defines "Acting out" as a state in which “one is haunted or possessed by the past and performatively caught up in the compulsive repetition of traumatic scenes” (60). In this stage, the victim feels as though he is transported back to the past, constantly plagued by memories and flashbacks of the traumatic incident. It should be noted that some researchers

argue that acting out is not limited to nightmares and flashbacks, but can also manifest through unintentional behaviours, forgetfulness, and memory loss (Lacapra 60).

Freud, in his book, *Remembering, Repeating and Working Through*, asserts that victims of trauma often repeat what they did at the moment of the trauma, unknowingly reenacting the event as a way to remember it. This repetition occurs not as a conscious recollection but as an unconscious action (Freud 151).

The emergence of trauma theory in literary studies began in the middle of the 1990s. However, it was not acknowledged in literary studies as an independent constant paradigm. Early scholars helped to develop the concept of trauma and contributed in popularizing trauma theory principles.

Jean Martin Charcot was the first to investigate the word trauma and its relation to mental illness. The main subject of Charcot's investigation was hysteria, a disorder commonly diagnosed in women. The patients were examined physically, without a focus on the main sources of the harm. However, the emphasis shifted when Charcot came to the conclusion that “the origin of hysterical symptoms was not physiological but rather psychological” (Ringel and Brandell 1). His primary research inspired psychoanalysis and helped to shape conceptions of trauma.

Later, Charcot influenced Pierre Janet, a leading psychologist who asserts a link between traumatic events, personality development, and behaviour. Thus, he discovered that "the patient's symptoms could be reduced by reexposure to traumatic memories (Ringel and Brandell 2).

Sigmund Freud was influenced by Charcot as well. In 1886, Freud introduced the “theory of seduction” which is typically related to sexual trauma and abuse that his female

patients experienced. According to this theory, hysterical patients suffer from long-term effects of sexual assaults in childhood. However, he later changed his mind and came up with the "conflict theory" suggesting that "it was not memories of external trauma that caused hysterical symptoms but rather the unacceptable nature of sexual and aggressive wishes" (Ringel and Brandell 2). Freud's writings and his perspectives are still viewed as the bases of psychological interpretations in contemporary theories. Pioneers like Cathy Caruth, Felman, and Judith Herman were highly influenced by Freud's ideas.

The field of trauma studies began to thrive in the 1990s with the publication of Shoshanna Felman and Cathy Caruth works. In 1995, Caruth released a collection of essays titled *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. A year later, she published *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*, a detailed study of trauma. Since the release of these works, Caruth has emerged as a key figure in trauma theory, and her writings become a focal point for all scholars to understand the theory. On the other hand, Felman's research on trauma began in 1992 with the publication of *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*, a book she co-wrote with the psychoanalyst Dori Laub. She also wrote a book in 2002 titled *The Juridical Unconscious: Trials and Traumas in the Twentieth Century* that explored the connection between psychoanalysis and literature (Marder 1).

Trauma theory also made significant inroads into postcolonial studies, particularly in the 1960s. This incorporation became essential because colonization is often viewed as a collective trauma, necessitating the development of postcolonial trauma theory to represent colonial traumas.

Critics like Hal Foster and Michael Rothberg approached this from a postcolonial and Neo-Freudian perspective. Others, such as Roger Luckhurst and Irene Visser, focused on examining the traumatic effects within political and social frameworks. Visser, in particular,

combined a social psychology model of trauma with a postcolonial analysis. However, it's worth noting that she critiqued the theory for its perceived inadequacy in addressing the research agenda of postcolonial studies. In "The Trauma Question," Luckhurst highlighted how trauma theory often fell short in addressing atrocities, genocide, and war (Luckhurst 213).

4.2. Historical Trauma and Postmemory

Historical trauma refers to “the cumulative and collective psychological and emotional injury sustained over a lifetime and across generations resulting from massive group trauma experiences” (Braveheart 7). Unlike individual trauma, historical trauma is collective in nature. As Caruth Cathy declares in her book *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* “History, like the trauma is never simply one's own, that history is precisely the way we are implicated in each other's traumas” (Caruth 24).

The Historical trauma response (HTR) has been defined “as a constellation of features associated with a reaction to massive group trauma” (Braveheart 35). Typical manifestations of this response include despair, self-destructive behaviour, suicidal thoughts, and trouble understanding and expressing emotions (Brave Heart et al. 283). The theory was first developed by Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart in the 1980s. Her research centred on the ways in which generations of Lakota people have been affected by the psychological and emotional traumas of colonization, displacement, and assimilation.

Historical trauma was first used to describe the experiences of Holocaust survivors' children. However, in the past two decades, the term has been adopted to several colonized indigenous groups around the world. In this regard, Laurence J. Kirmayer, Joseph P. Gone and Joshua Moses in their article entitled “Rethinking Historical Trauma” state that

“Following the recognition of the Holocaust in popular culture, many minority peoples in the United States and elsewhere saw the value of drawing analogies between the Nazi Holocaust and their own traumatic histories” (33).

Historical trauma was divided into three categories by Gregory Phillips. The first type is situational trauma, which is a trauma brought on by a specific incident, such as a murder or the shock of a car accident. The second is cumulative trauma, which refers to the way that trauma builds up over time, such as racism. Then, there is intergenerational trauma, which deals with trauma that is passed down across generations or inherited from the previous ones and shows up in actions and cognitive processes. For instance, if you want to heal children and youth, you have to heal yourself as well to break the cycle (*Social Justice Report 29*).

Judy Atkinson is another scholar involved with Historical Trauma studies. She asserts that trauma manifests as anger, violence, and criminal behaviour. She also claims that trauma in aboriginal people can be seen in adults, through an increase in domestic violence across generations, and through self-harm, suicide, and risk. As a result, trauma can be recognized as a psychological factor that represents an emotional state of discomfort, stress, and difficulty expressing feelings. It may also manifest socially through a variety of behaviours (Broderick and Traverso 144).

Judy Atkinson has also studied the intergenerational and transgenerational transmission of trauma, concluding that many issues within indigenous communities, such as alcoholism, mental health issues, family violence, or criminal behaviour, are symptoms of the effects of this unresolved trauma occurring in the present. The transgenerational effect of trauma occurs through culture, society, the relationship of parenting and breeding. The main characteristic of historical trauma is that it perpetuates a cross-generational cycle of trauma by being passed

down through biological, psychological, environmental, and social mechanisms to succeeding generations (Broderick and Traverso 145).

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is acknowledged as a significant outcome of historical trauma. Carol A. Kidron, in her article, "Surviving a Distant Past: A Case Study of the Cultural Construction of Trauma Descendant Identity", emphasizes that according to the PTSD paradigm, the enduring psychosocial effects of trauma experienced by survivors can be transmitted from one generation to another if left untreated (Kidron 514). In this context, historical trauma not only affects those who directly experienced the traumatic events but also has the potential to impact their descendants, leading to a cycle of trauma that persists across generations.

The concept of Postmemory was first coined by Marianne Hirsch in 1990 to "describe the relationship that the 'generation after' bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before" (Hirsch 3). The notion became a cornerstone in memory and Holocaust studies. According to trauma theorists like Susan Suleiman, Eva Hoffman, and Marianne Hirsch, a particular conceptualization was required to investigate the role of traumatic experience transmission through images and stories in order to establish the knowledge of experience of later generations. Nearly all trauma transmission and cultural studies have focused on postmemory over the past two decades. This notion covers not only the dynamics of next generations of Holocaust survivors but also those of other societies that have experienced societal and historical trauma (Simsek 21).

Marianne Hirsch has extensively examined the long-lasting impact of historical trauma through the lens of postmemory, using the Holocaust as a historical reference. In her book, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust*, Hirsch argues that postmemory captures her own relationship with her parents, characterized by her

own childhood memories of the traumatic post-war period in Bucharest. She notes that while reading and observing works of second-generation writers and artists, she identified shared qualities and symptoms that resonate with her own experiences. Eva Hoffman, in particular, refers to this phenomenon as the "Postgeneration" (4).

Hirsch has personally experienced postmemory, as a result of her parents' historical trauma stemming from World War II in Romania. She affirms her belonging to the postgeneration by stating:

Why could I recall particular moments from my parents' wartime lives in great detail and have only very few specific memories of my own childhood, I began to wonder? Why could I describe the streets, residences, and schools of pre-World War I Czernowitz and interwar Cernaureni, where they grew up, the corner where they evaded deportation, the knock on the door in the middle of the night, the house in the ghetto where they waited for deportation waivers—all moments and sites that preceded my birth (2).

Accordingly, Marianne Hirsch argues that parental traumatic memories can be transmitted to children through various means such as behaviours, stories, and traditions. In her article titled "Surviving Images: Holocaust Photographs and the Work of Postmemory," Hirsch states:

Postmemory most specifically describes the relationship of children of survivors of cultural or collective trauma to the experiences of their parents, experiences that they "remember" only as the narratives and images with which they grew up, but that are so powerful, so monumental, as to constitute memories in their own right (9).

In a similar vein, the majority of third generation Nigerian writers are considered part of the "Postgeneration". Their personal narratives, memories, and artistic creations are shaped by inherited traumatic experiences. An example of this is Joe Ushie, who was a child during the Nigeria-Biafra War but grew up in the aftermath of the conflict. His literary work, *Eclipse in Rwanda*, reflects his cultural identity and postmemory.

According to Hirsch, postmemory can be classified into two categories. The first category is familial postmemory, which refers to memories that are directly passed down from family members, often from parents to their children. These memories are rooted in the family's lived experiences and are intimately connected to their personal history. The second category is affiliative postmemory, which arises from the contemporary and generational connections to the second generation. This form of postmemory is not limited to familial ties but extends to broader affiliations and collective experiences. It involves the use of various mediums and structures of mediation that facilitate the transmission of memories and narratives within a larger collective. These mediums and structures may include shared cultural narratives, historical events, or other forms of collective memory that resonate and are influential in shaping the postmemory experience (Hall 13-16).

In her work entitled *Authorial Narration of Photographs: Postmemory in Erika Dreifus's Short Story Collection Quiet Americans*, Dennis Carmen Hall outlines three interrelated models for memory. The first generation consists of individuals who directly witnessed the traumatic event. These individuals have produced what Hall refers to as "survivor or witness literature" based on their autobiographical memories of the event. The second generation, comprising the sons and daughters of the first generation, does not possess personal memories of the traumatic event. However, they have what Hall calls "postmemory" derived from their parents. In simpler terms, the second generation receives the memories and testimonies of their parents and subsequently transmits them to the third generation, considering this postmemory as a familial legacy (Hall 3-9). In line with this, Hirsch acknowledges that the children of victims, survivors, witnesses, or perpetrators have diverse experiences of postmemory, despite sharing familial ties that facilitate intergenerational identification ("Surviving Images" 9).

In conclusion, trauma is a complex phenomenon that has left indelible marks on human experiences. Within this, the emergence of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) reflects the enduring psychological impact of life-threatening events, serving as a poignant reminder of trauma's persistence in memory and daily life. Expanding perspective to historical trauma uncovers the profound consequences that trauma can have on entire communities across generations, emphasizing the lasting scars of trauma on cultures and societies. Moreover, the concept of postmemory, as articulated by Marianne Hirsch, bridges the gap between individual and collective trauma, revealing how traumatic memories are passed down through familial and affiliative connections, shaping identities and cultural narratives. In this interconnected tapestry of trauma and its various dimensions, the imperative remains to foster understanding, support, and healing for those affected by its far-reaching repercussions.

The current chapter has focused on the historical and theoretical side of the research. The first section of this chapter has presented a socio-historical overview of the two poems. In contrast, the second section examines Algerian and Nigerian literature. Lastly, the third section discusses the theory that aligns with the research's objectives. In light of this section, the following part will examine the practical side of the research.

CHAPTER TWO: Reading Trauma in *Eclipse in Rwanda* and *Memories from the Black Decade*

Eclipse in Rwanda and *Memories from the Black Decade* vividly depict the profound impact of war on human existence, offering poignant insights into its effects on both physical and more significantly, psychological well-being. This chapter aims to illuminate the psychological devastation caused by war, as evidenced by the poets' traumatic attitudes and experiences. Moreover, the experience of war and exposure to its atrocities significantly impede the poets' capacity to adapt to life's challenges. In particular, the chapter delves into

the intricate relationship between violence and psychological trauma portrayed in the poems. Ushie's poignant work, *Eclipse in Rwanda*, serves as a manifestation of the poet's inherited trauma from previous generations. The chapter concludes by examining the Biafran civil war and the Algerian Black Decade as historical traumas, emphasizing the collective suffering endured by these nations.

1. Echoes of Trauma: *Eclipse in Rwanda* and *Memories from the Black Decade*

Eclipse in Rwanda and *Memories from the Black Decade* resonate with Dominick Lacapra's concept that traumatic memories haunt individuals. Coupled with insights from Ruth Leys, Anne Whitehead, and Cathay Caruth, the analysis centers on how these poems vividly portray trauma's haunting nature. *Eclipse in Rwanda* paints a picture of trauma's lingering presence, while *Memories from the Black Decade* delves into the intrusion of traumatic memories through flashbacks. The aim is to examine how both poems exemplify the enduring impact of trauma, bridging the gap between literature and psychological theory. Dominick Lacapra in his book entitled, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* declares that “the traumatized victim is triggered by memories of his past incident that keeps haunting him. The traumatic incident tends to be repressed before it disturbed one in a compulsive repetition” (Lacapra 60).

The concept of haunting is prevalent throughout *Eclipse in Rwanda*, as it effectively portrays the lingering presence and psychological impact of the traumatic events experienced. The haunting imagery and language evoke a sense of dread, sorrow, and the inescapability of the past.

The phrase "fired these sharp needles at my heart"(Ushie) implies that the documentary acts as a trigger, piercing the speaker's emotions and awakening the haunting memories associated with the genocide. This haunting effect is intensified by the use of vivid and disturbing imagery throughout the poem.

The transformation of paradisaal valleys into "bowls of 'hewman' flesh" (Ushie) illustrates the haunting transformation of a once idyllic landscape into one of unimaginable horror. The repetition of the word "see" emphasizes the visual aspect of the haunting, as the speaker invites readers to witness the scenes of suffering and devastation.

The mention of "vigilant vultures guarding their fortune" (Ushie) suggests a haunting presence that lingers over the land, symbolizing the inescapable reminders of death and destruction. The image of "ebony-black moulds wearing flies as cerements" depicts a haunting image of decay and desolation, where death becomes intertwined with life itself. Furthermore, the repeated invocation for the dead to be heard weeping for the living emphasizes the haunting nature of the past. The questions addressed to the gods and the shrines highlight the lingering sense of abandonment and the haunting absence of divine protection during the genocide.

The reference to the "real vultures perched on foreign trees"(Ushie) signifies the haunting presence of those who have contributed to the suffering from a distance, suggesting that their actions continue to haunt the nation even beyond its borders.

By emphasizing the haunting quality of the memories, the poem conveys the enduring psychological impact of the trauma experienced during the genocide. It suggests that these haunting memories persist, intruding upon the present and shaping the individual and collective consciousness of those affected.

In her book *Trauma: A Genealogy*, Ruth Leys posits that those who have endured trauma go through a psychological disintegration or dissociation brought about by the overpowering sensations of fear and astonishment. Leys suggests that trauma renders the psyche incapable of recognizing the injury it has sustained, as the usual mechanisms of awareness and cognition are rendered ineffective (2). Consequently, the precise details of the traumatic event cannot be accurately recalled, leading the traumatized individual to be haunted or controlled by it. Anne Whitehead in *Trauma Fiction* supports this notion, asserting that traumatic experiences are challenging to assimilate into memory or narrative structures, rather it “assumes a haunting quality, continuing to possess the subject with its insistent repetitions and returns” (Whitehead 12).

The opening lines of *Memories from the Black Decade*, “I want to live, to see and make true some dreams I weave / With pain and intense heat: from beneath the boil / I feel porous as a rock reflecting great latent energies” (Bouazid 28), introduce the concept of the traumatized subject's mind being fragmented or dissociated, making it incapable of fully acknowledging the wound to the psyche due to the disruption of ordinary mechanisms of awareness and cognition. This fragmentation becomes apparent in the disjointed and scattered nature of the speaker's reflections, as they grapple with the challenge of recalling the traumatic event with precision.

The haunting quality of the trauma is emphasized through the recurring motifs and images throughout the poem. The speaker expresses a desperate desire to live and pursue dreams, yet his aspirations are overshadowed by the pain. The comparison of the speaker to a rock reflecting latent energies implies a deep-seated turmoil that continually haunts them. The trauma becomes an inescapable presence, invading his thoughts and emotions.

The poem paints a vivid picture of the aftermath of the traumatic event, presenting a landscape filled with suffering, agony, and destruction. The imagery of “howling nights”, “shaken boughs”, and “sweeping chimneys” (Bouazid 28) creates a sense of chaos and devastation. The stagnant, azuring waters and the portrayal of life stopped breathing out an eternal demise contribute to the haunting atmosphere, where the trauma permeates every aspect of existence.

The poem also touches upon the collective impact of the trauma, depicting the suffering of individuals and communities. The references to people tortured, graveyards full of unburied bodies, and the loss of innocent lives, particularly children, emphasize the profound human cost and the lasting scars left by the traumatic event. The speaker stands at graves, whispering farewells and offering tributes, but even his words cannot fully capture the magnitude of the tragedy.

Cathay Caruth in her book entitled *Trauma Explorations in Memory* argues that the expression of traumatic memories through acting out often involves the recurrence of intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts, or behaviours that originate from the traumatic event itself (Caruth 4).

Flashbacks are a significant aspect of trauma and the reenactment of memories. In the poem, flashbacks are depicted through vivid and evocative language that transports the reader back to the traumatic events of the black decade.

The poem opens with a yearning for life and dreams, but the introduction of pain and intense heat signifies a shift towards the reemergence of traumatic memories. This shift can be understood as a representation of a flashback, where the poet's mind becomes engulfed by the sensations, emotions, and images associated with the past trauma. The use of phrases like "howling nights," "shaken boughs," and "sweeping chimneys" (Bouazid 28) creates a vivid

and immersive experience, capturing the essence of a flashback and the way it can intrude upon one's present consciousness.

The repetition of distressing motifs and the detailed descriptions of suffering and horror further contribute to the portrayal of flashbacks. The use of intense and emotive language, such as "hazy picturesque azuring waters all stagnant standing still // people tortured in and out with no humane feelings" (Bouazid 28-29) amplifies the impact of the past traumas resurfacing in the present moment. These vivid descriptions serve as powerful triggers, engaging the senses and evoking the reliving of traumatic experiences.

Moreover, the poet's emphasis on the recurrence and persistence of suffering and agony reflects the cyclical nature of flashbacks. The use of phrases like "creeping, mute silence overwhelms the fall dead nights / a scent of flames everywhere" (Bouazid 28) suggest the ongoing presence and haunting quality of the traumatic memories. These images and sensations infiltrate the poet's consciousness, reflecting the intrusive nature of flashbacks and their ability to disrupt one's sense of reality.

By portraying flashbacks through vivid language, intense imagery, and the repetition of distressing motifs, the poem effectively conveys the fragmented and disorienting experience of reliving past traumas. It immerses the reader in the poet's recollections, offering a glimpse into the lasting impact of the black decade. Through this portrayal, the poem engages with the complex and haunting nature of flashbacks, capturing the essence of the reenactment of traumatic memories.

In that, Caruth in her work *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* indicate that, the modern biologists claim that "[the]repetition of the traumatic experience in the flashbacks can be itself re-traumatizing; if not life-threatening, it is at least threatening to the chemical structure of the brain and can ultimately lead to deterioration" (Caruth 63).

In conclusion, both poems explored in this analysis vividly portray the haunting persistence of traumatic memories. They emphasize the enduring presence of past trauma in the present, manifesting as flashbacks and triggering intense emotions and sensations. These poems align with contemporary understanding of trauma as a reoccurring, potentially re-traumatizing experience.

2. The Aftermath of Violence in *Eclipse in Rwanda* and *Memories from the Black Decade*

Violence and psychological trauma are inseparable and profoundly impactful elements of human existence. Violence entails the utilization of physical force to cause harm, devastation, or ruin, while psychological trauma encompasses the emotional, cognitive, and psychological anguish resulting from exposure to or observation of traumatic occurrences. These themes reverberate throughout the annals of human history, where civilizations have been tarnished by conflict, bloodshed, and the enduring imprints etched upon the psyches and spirits of individuals.

Eclipse in Rwanda delves into the disturbing realities of violence and its psychological aftermath, painting a vivid picture of the Biafran civil war and its haunting consequences. Through evocative imagery and poignant observations, the poet explores the themes of human suffering, the abandonment of higher powers, and the cyclical nature of violence.

The poem opens with the speaker watching a TV documentary, which acts as a catalyst for his emotional response. The phrase by Ushie "fired these sharp needles at my heart" conveys the piercing impact of witnessing the documented violence, suggesting that it has deeply wounded the speaker's emotional state. The use of "sharp needles" as a metaphor emphasizes the pain and trauma inflicted by the visuals and narratives presented.

The poet then shifts the focus to the Rwandan genocide, a metaphor for the Nigerian civil war, describing the paradisaical valleys transformed into bowls of "hewman" flesh. The deliberate misspelling of "human" highlights the dehumanization that occurs in the face of such atrocities, where individuals are reduced to mere objects of brutality. The lines "See the vigilant vultures guarding / their fortune from a twig above" (Ushie) illustrate the predatory nature of those who exploit the suffering of others for their gain. This vivid image showcases the indifference and callousness of those who benefit from violence.

The subsequent lines depict the haunting scenes of suffering and death, using powerful imagery to convey the magnitude of the tragedy. The description of "ebony-black moulds wearing flies as cerements" (Ushie) portrays the corpses covered in flies, highlighting the desolation and lack of respect for the deceased. The mention of the youth "perforated by man-crafted death" (Ushie) emphasizes the senseless destruction inflicted upon innocent lives, further accentuating the poem's exploration of the innocent's vulnerability to violence.

The poet questions the absence of divine intervention, wondering where the gods were and why the shrines failed to fulfil their duties during the Rwandan genocide. This inquiry underscores the profound disillusionment and loss of faith that can result from witnessing such immense suffering. The echoes of "war ships' sins" at scenes of worship demonstrate the stark contrast between the sacred and the profane, as violence desecrates spaces meant for spiritual solace.

In the latter part of the poem, the speaker shifts his focus to external forces perpetuating violence. He directs attention to a drunkard in a foreign capital, symbolizing the indifference and complicity of the international community in fuelling conflicts for their own interests. The repetition of "fight" reflects the desperate cry for resistance and justice, urging the Bahutu and Watutsi to stop fighting for rights and land. The mention of the "silent earth" healing the

wounds of the fallen provides a glimmer of hope amidst the despair, suggesting that nature and time possess the capacity to bring solace and healing.

However, the final stanza confronts the ultimate injustice of death, lamenting how it disproportionately befalls the innocent. The poet emphasizes this injustice by comparing real vultures perched on foreign trees to those who fan the flames of violence from a distance. The desire for these perpetrators to share in the smoke they have fuelled underscores the poet's yearning for retribution.

Through its evocative language and striking imagery, the poem highlights the psychological impact of violence and the interconnectedness of trauma and suffering. It exposes the cruelty, indifference, and systemic forces that perpetuate violence, while also grappling with existential questions about the role of higher powers in the face of human atrocities. Overall, the poem serves as a poignant reminder of the lasting scars violence inflicts upon individuals.

In summary, *Eclipse in Rwanda* is a powerful poem that delves into the harsh realities of violence and its lasting psychological impact. Through vivid imagery and thoughtful reflections, the poem explores the horrors of the Biafran civil war and the Rwandan genocide. It portrays the emotional scars left by witnessing such brutality, questions the absence of divine intervention, and highlights the indifference and exploitation associated with violence. The poem ultimately serves as a compelling reminder of the enduring trauma caused by violence and the need for a more compassionate world.

In *Memories from the Black Decade*, the themes of violence and psychological trauma are vividly depicted, reflecting the devastating effects of the black decade. The poet explores the profound suffering endured by individuals who have been subjected to violence and the subsequent psychological scars they bear.

The poem opens with the speaker expressing a longing to live and fulfil his dreams, juxtaposing it with imagery of pain and intense heat. This contrast immediately sets the tone for the exploration of violence and trauma, hinting at the struggles and hardships that lie ahead.

The first stanza introduces the idea of the speaker feeling “porous like a rock reflecting latent energies” (Bouazid 28). This simile suggests a deep internal turmoil caused by the violence and trauma experienced. The speaker's soul yearns for peace, highlighting the desire for relief from the endured suffering.

The subsequent lines vividly describe the aftermath of violence: "Howling nights, atrocities, shaken boughs, sweeping chimneys / Lofty trees felled down, forests on fires, birds on flees" (Bouazid 28). These lines create a chaotic and destructive atmosphere, emphasizing the widespread devastation caused by violence. The use of imagery portrays nature itself being affected, with stagnant waters and a sense of life halted in an eternal demise.

The poem goes on to depict the human toll of violence and psychological trauma. The phrase "souvenirs of poor creatures" (Bouazid 28) suggests that the survivors are left with painful memories and emotional scars. They are portrayed as inhuman creatures, chased and treated as insignificant as flies. This dehumanization emphasizes the degrading effects of violence on individuals and society.

The third stanza focuses on the specific experiences of children, emphasizing their vulnerability. The poet highlights the loss of innocent lives and the abandonment of young ones. The mention of corpses amidst ill-smelling wood and posthumous babies crying for lost mothers creates a harrowing image, evoking a profound sense of despair and tragedy.

Throughout the poem, the speaker acknowledges the emotional impact of violence and trauma. The lines "More than often he wept before love as a child / In lament, alone far from the disappearing friends" (Bouazid 29) reveal the deep emotional wounds carried by the survivors. The imagery of weeping and loneliness conveys a sense of isolation and grief, reflecting the psychological toll of the experiences.

In the later stanzas, the poem shifts towards hope and resilience. The speaker urges the reader to strive for a brighter future and to take action to bring about change. The metaphor of "watering saplings beneath one's feet" symbolizes nurturing and fostering growth. It suggests the importance of nurturing peace and actively working to prevent the recurrence of violence.

The closing lines reflect on the significance of the past, portraying the "black decade" as a part of Algerian history that left indelible stains in the collective memory. The poem recognizes the enduring impact of violence and trauma on society, but also emphasizes the power of remembrance and the lessons learned.

Overall, the poem powerfully explores the themes of violence and psychological trauma. It presents a vivid and poignant portrayal of the devastating effects of violence, particularly on the vulnerable and innocent. Through its imagery, emotional tone, and shift towards hope, the poem encourages reflection, resilience, and a commitment to building a better future.

In summary, *Eclipse in Rwanda* and *Memories from the Black Decade* are two poems that explore the psychological aftermath of violence and the enduring trauma it leaves behind. They share similarities in depicting the dehumanization of victims, the profound impact on innocent lives, and questions about higher powers' role in the face of atrocities. Both poems also offer a glimmer of hope for healing and resilience. Despite their different historical

contexts, these poems serve as powerful reminders of the lasting scars of violence and the importance of learning from these experiences to build a more peaceful future.

3. The Path to Recovery: Herman's Stages

Healing and recovery from trauma are profound and transformative processes that individuals undertake to reclaim their well-being and rebuild their lives in the aftermath of deeply challenging experiences. Trauma can shatter an individual's sense of safety, trust, and equilibrium, leaving lasting emotional, psychological, and sometimes physical scars. The journey towards healing is deeply personal and unique to each individual, encompassing a range of approaches and strategies. One influential framework for understanding the stages of healing is Judith Herman's three stages of recovery: safety, remembrance and mourning, and reconnection. These stages provide a roadmap for individuals to navigate their way through the complexities of trauma, offering a framework that highlights the interconnectedness and interdependence of each stage in the overall process of healing and recovery.

Eclipse in Rwanda vividly portrays the journey of healing and recovery. The first stage, safety, is evident in the initial impact of the TV documentary on the speaker's heart. "The sharp needles fired" at the speaker's heart reflect the immediate emotional response and the need for a sense of safety and protection in the face of the distressing content. This stage highlights the importance of creating a safe space for individuals to process and confront their trauma.

Moving into the stage of remembrance and mourning, the poem vividly captures the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide. "The paradisaal valleys transformed into bowls of "hewman" flesh / the vigilance of vultures / and the ebony-black molds covered in flies" (Ushie) serve as powerful symbols of the immense loss and suffering experienced. The poem

gives voice to the pain and grief of the Rwandan people, as well as the collective mourning for the lives lost. This stage of remembrance and mourning allows for the acknowledgment of the trauma and the processing of deep emotions.

The final stage, reconnection, is explored through the call for resilience. The poem urges the Bahutu and Watutsi to stop fighting for more lands, more rights, and more space, symbolizing the collective effort to rebuild and reclaim their identity. The recognition of the silent earth's ability to heal the wounds of the fallen represents the possibility of restoration and renewal. However, the poem also confronts the enduring injustice and the presence of real vultures perched on foreign trees, emphasizing the ongoing struggle for healing and justice.

Memories from the Black Decade delves into the intricate stages of recovery, providing a profound exploration of the journey towards healing. Drawing upon Herman's three stages, the first stage, safety, is powerfully depicted in the lines, "I want to live, to see and true some dreams I weave / with pain and intense heat" (Bouazid 28). Here, the speaker yearns for a life of security and peace after enduring immense suffering. The intense heat and pain symbolize the trauma that has permeated his existence, emphasizing the profound need for stability and a secure environment as a foundation for healing.

Moving into the second stage, remembrance and mourning, the poem evokes a vivid portrayal of the emotional weight of the past. Lines such as "People tortured in and out with no humane feelings / Graveyards full, bodies unburied, decayed, unknown" (Bouazid 29) confront the horrors and atrocities endured during the traumatic period. The speaker engages in a process of remembrance and mourning, acknowledging the pain, loss, and the necessity to honour the victims who have suffered. The imagery of abandoned corpses and unburied bodies serves as a poignant reminder of the collective grief and the imperative to confront the past.

Finally, the stage of reconnection emerges as a beacon of hope. The poem encourages collective action and rebuilding, as seen in the lines, "Whet your tools, hit straight on dead dry woods / And let your sweat glow-let it drop, drop by drop"(Bouazid 30). This imagery calls for individual and communal effort in forging a brighter future. It emphasizes the importance of nurturing new growth, leaving behind the remnants of destruction, and fostering connections. This stage signifies the resilience and determination to move forward, preventing further harm, and restoring a sense of interconnectedness and possibility.

The textual evidence in the poem powerfully illustrates the progression through Herman's stages of recovery. The language employed, such as "weeping before love as a child," "lament," and "scent of civil war," intensifies the emotional impact of the trauma and the complexities of the healing process. The vivid imagery and evocative words capture the essence of trauma recovery, encompassing the challenges, the imperative for remembrance, and the strength required to rebuild and reconnect.

While *Eclipse in Rwanda* and *Memories from the Black Decade* each offer a unique perspective on healing and recovery, they both underscore the universality of the human experience when it comes to confronting and healing from profound adversity. These poems serve as powerful reminders of the enduring strength of the human spirit and the capacity to find hope amid the darkest chapters of history. In the end, they weave a narrative of resilience and renewal that transcends cultural and geographical boundaries, illuminating the interconnectedness of the human experience in the face of trauma.

4. Ushie a Member of the Postgeneration

Eclipse in Rwanda is a poetic work that highlights the significance of the past and its lasting impact on the present, mainly through the transmission of memories from the

first generation to the next generations. In this remarkable piece, Ushie skilfully blurs the boundaries between history, literature, and trauma, showcasing their interconnectedness. Moreover, the poem delves into the poet's personal involvement and how he deals with the inherited trauma from his parents. Despite not having witnessed the Nigeria-Biafra War himself, he possesses childhood memories of the civil war. This further supports Marianne Hirsch's assertion that

Descendants of victims, perpetrators, and bystanders deeply connect to the previous generation's recollections to the extent that they perceive this connection as a form of memory. In exceptional circumstances, memory can even be transferred to individuals who did not physically experience the event themselves (Hirsch 3).

Ushie's case exemplifies Hirsch's concept of postmemory, where the trauma and memories inherited from his parents have become integral to his identity. This notion of postmemory is applicable not only to Ushie as a poet but also to his notable work, *Eclipse in Rwanda*. In her article entitled "Surviving Images: Holocaust Photographs and the Work of Postmemory," Hirsch emphasizes the crucial role of familial connections in the transmission of trauma, stating that "The work of postmemory defines the familial inheritance and transmission of cultural trauma" (9).

Indeed, it is important to highlight that the poet was raised on his parents' first-hand accounts of the war, which became ingrained in his memory and ultimately shaped the person he has become. As a result, he developed a strong sense of identity and a deep connection to the past, rather than feeling detached from it. This resonates with Hirsch's argument in her book *The Generation of Postmemory*, where she emphasizes that the memories of the first-generation witnesses are passed on to later generations through various means such as storytelling, art, literature, culture, and behaviours (Hirsch 3). Put simply, the stories and

behaviours of the parents serve as the primary channels for transmitting cultural and collective memory from individuals who directly experienced a traumatic event to their descendants.

The stories passed down to Ushie through his family represent a form of familial postmemory. *Eclipse in Rwanda* provides support for Hirsch's perspective that individuals belonging to the postgeneration can form such a strong connection with the memories of others, particularly those of their family members, that they assimilate them into their own identities. Hirsch further suggests that through the creation of postmemorial works, individuals who were not directly impacted by the events can actively participate in the generation of postmemory, which can endure even after all the original participants and their familial descendants have passed away (Hirsch 33).

According to Hirsch, the term "post" in postmemory signifies not only a temporal separation or aftermath but also implies an uneasy tension between continuity and rupture. It represents a position that exists between the past and the present, characterized by a retrospective gaze. Andreas Huyssen has also explored this concept, discussing how Western society's focus has shifted from a future-oriented perspective in the earlier part of the twentieth century to a retrospective one in recent times. Huyssen refers to this shift as one of the remarkable cultural and political phenomena of recent years (Huyssen 21).

This widespread "culture of memory," as Huyssen describes it, transcends national boundaries and has become a global phenomenon. One of the driving forces behind this cultural shift is the fear, or even terror, of forgetting, which motivates a strong desire to remember (Huyssen 25- 28). Ushie's motivation for writing the poem is rooted in this fear of forgetting and a determination to ensure the ongoing remembrance of the Nigeria-Biafra War. However, this fear is not his sole reason for writing. Ushie is also interested in exploring the

intersections between history and literature, the construction of reality, and the act of narrating.

Jan Assmann argues that the family is an essential unit of transmission and that memory is passed down through three to four generations. Likewise, Aleida Assmann emphasizes the significance of the family as “a privileged site of memorial transmission” (Assmann 110). Consequently, as individuals who have first-hand experiences grow older, they strive to institutionalize their memories through ritual, commemoration, or performance, as well as through traditional archives or books (Hirsch 32-33). In this context, Ushie seems to carry both his cultural memory and post-memory, which becomes evident throughout the poem.

Artistic creations like literature, paintings, and photographs have the capacity to serve as potent channels for addressing traumatic pasts. Marianne Hirsch, in her book *The Generation of Postmemory*, emphasizes the role of photographs as a medium through which postmemory can be expressed. However, it is important to recognize that literature, including poetry, possesses its own powerful means of communication. From this perspective, one could argue that *Eclipse in Rwanda* serves as a compelling example of postmemory, as Ushie vividly describes the traumatic events of the civil war despite not having directly experienced them.

Through the process of internalizing and reshaping the memories of others, Ushie assumes the role of a spokesperson for the collective memory of the Biafrans. His work can be understood as a form of affiliative postmemory, as it revitalizes and re-enacts “more distant political and cultural memorial structures by reinvesting them with resonant individual and familial forms of mediation and aesthetic expression” (Hirsch 33). Ushie effectively engages with the memories of his parents and serves as a representative for other members of the postgeneration. His poem exemplifies the horizontal transmission of cultural memory from one member of the postgeneration to others within the same or later generations.

Finally, *Eclipse in Rwanda* serves as a testament to the profound connection that members of the postgeneration can have with the memories of others, particularly those of their family members and relatives. The poem highlights how these memories are not only preserved but also deeply felt and internalized by individuals who did not directly experience the events themselves. It underscores the power of familial ties and the ability of personal narratives to transcend generations, bridging the gap between past and present.

5. Exploring Historical Trauma and its Lingering PTSD Effects in *Eclipse in Rwanda* and *Memories from the Black Decade*

Mentioning the word war evokes various images and ideas in the human mind, often associated with terror, horror, and evil. Throughout history, all wars that have occurred on planet have brought nothing but destruction to humanity, leaving behind a trail of suffering, sorrow, and grief. Despite this grim reality, wars remain an undeniable part of human existence. Specifically, the Nigerian civil war stands as a pivotal moment in Nigeria's history, with its tragic aftermath demanding thoughtful consideration. Civil wars in particular, not only result in human losses and genocide but also lead to economic and political instability. Even though physical and material damages can be repaired over time, the psychological harm inflicted on nations and the traumatized minds of individuals cannot be easily restored. The deep emotional scars left by such conflicts linger, affecting generations long after the events have passed.

The Nigerian civil war is widely recognized as a historical trauma due to its devastating consequences on both individuals and the entire nation. In his article entitled *A Conceptual Model of Historical Trauma: Implications for Public Health Practice and Research*, Michelle M. Sotero states that “populations historically subjected to long-term, mass trauma, colonialism, slavery, war, and genocide exhibit a higher prevalence of disease even several

generations after the original trauma occurred” (93). This means that the impact of traumatic events is collective, affecting the entire country and resulting in shared suffering. During the Nigerian civil war, the population witnessed mass starvation, massacres, violence, killings, and bombings on a daily basis. In their article *Influence of Traumatization and Category of "Biafran- Nigerian" Civil War Veterans on Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) among War Survivors,*” Obinna et al. write that “millions and millions of Biafran Igbo people were rounded up in several regions, states, cities, towns, and villages in northern and western Nigeria and slaughtered” (Obinna et al. 1480).

Starvation became a devastating tool used during the Nigerian civil war. It is estimated that up to three million people lost their lives in Biafra, primarily due to famine and hunger caused by the closure of roads as a consequence of the conflict between the opposing sides. The severity of the situation led the International Red Cross to declare Biafra as its most critical emergency since the Second World War. Additionally, the dire conditions gave rise to the emergence of various diseases brought about by widespread hunger. The media played a significant role in bringing attention to this humanitarian crisis. Pictures of malnourished children and women suffering from the effects of hunger were prominently featured in international newspapers and televised broadcasts worldwide, revealing the dire plight of the people caught in the conflict's devastating consequences. To illuminate the above perception, Joe Ushie in his poem *Eclipse in Rwanda* declares,

Just before bedtime, a TV documentary
fired these sharp needles at my heart.
a screen filled with Rwandan woes (1-3).

Additionally, the violence perpetrated against Nigerians is an integral part of the historical trauma experienced by the nation. The Nigerian people endured a series of bombings, massacres, and explosions on a daily basis during the civil war. These traumatic

events were witnessed collectively by the population, which is a key characteristic of historical trauma. In this regard Ushie in *Eclipse in Rwanda* states:

See those ebony-black moulds
wearing flies as cerements.
See that youth perforated by man-crafted death
See that farmlands ploughed by missiles (8-11).

The entire nation of Nigeria has been exposed to a relentless cycle of violence, massacres and starvation. Consequently, one prominent characteristic of historical trauma is its transgenerational nature, meaning it is passed down from one generation to the next. In the case of Ushie, he has inherited this trauma from his parents who directly experienced the horrors of war. In his poem, he draws inspiration from the real events and stories shared by his parents. The deep impact of these historical events continues to shape the collective consciousness and experiences of the Nigerian people, influencing their perspectives and responses to present-day challenges.

The Nigerian civil war is often likened to the Second World War in terms of its devastating consequences. The violence witnessed by Nigerians during the civil war has inflicted profound trauma on all segments of society. In this regard, Eke Chijioke Chinwokwu and Sylvia Kaka Arop in their article titled "Socio-Psychological Effects of Political Violence and War on Gender in Nigeria." state:

Research shows that 60-80% people exposed to war and political violence directly or indirectly suffer symptoms of posttraumatic 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 as we are witnessing in Nigeria presently can result in people experiencing symptoms of posttraumatic stress. More importantly, children are more at risk than adults during political violence and war (44).

Numerous studies on historical trauma have established a strong connection between it and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Cynthia C. Wesley-Esquimaux and Magdalena

Smolewski, in their book *Historic Trauma and Aboriginal Healing*, highlight that various manifestations of post-traumatic stress disorder are intertwined with historical trauma (Esquimaux and Smolewski 52). As mentioned earlier, the speaker in the poem is undoubtedly traumatized, and it should be noted that he also exhibits symptoms of PTSD. Michelle M. Sotero, in her article “A Conceptual Model of Historical Trauma: Implications for Public Health Practice and Research,” outlines the symptoms associated with PTSD. These symptoms encompass a range of psychological issues, such as denial, depersonalization, isolation, memory loss, nightmares, hypervigilance, substance abuse and unresolved grief (Sotero 96).

Ushie, as a member of Nigerian society, clearly exhibits symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) that are vividly manifested in the poem. Throughout the poem, Ushie demonstrates a strong sense of denial when confronted with the brutal reality depicted in the TV documentary. The intense emotional response evoked by the documentary indicates an initial resistance to accepting the harsh truth of the depicted atrocities. This denial, which emerges as a defence mechanism, arises from the overwhelming and distressing nature of the trauma experienced by Ushie and others in Nigerian society.

Hypervigilance is another symptom clearly evident in Ushie's portrayal. The poem emphasizes the constant state of heightened alertness resulting from “the sins of war ships echoing at scenes of worship”. Ushie remains perpetually on guard, anticipating potential threats or danger. This hypervigilance is a direct consequence of the enduring trauma, which disrupts one's sense of safety and security.

Lastly, the poem underscores the presence of unresolved grief. “The weeping for the living and the expressed anguish” highlight the struggles faced in processing and coming to terms with the immense loss and suffering endured collectively. Ushie, like others affected by

the trauma, grapples with the weight of unresolved grief, which contributes to the complex symptoms of PTSD.

In summary, the collective suffering experienced by a nation, such as the Biafran war, leaves long-lasting trauma and psychological issues in the minds of witnesses. This trauma is not only limited to the generation that witnessed the events firsthand; it can also be passed down to next generations, especially when psychological issues in the first-hand witnesses are not effectively handled. Acts of violence, genocide, and starvation are powerful weapons in wars, and their use on a mass scale contributes to the development of historical trauma.

The Algerian Black Decade was a devastating conflict that unfolded in Algeria from 1991 to the late 1990s. This period of violence and upheaval left an indelible mark on Algerian society. The conflict emerged within a complex historical and political context, stemming from a post-independence period marked by frustration, disillusionment, and social inequality. The Algerian Civil War is considered a historical trauma due to its significant impact on Algerian society. It lasted for approximately a decade, resulting in widespread devastation, loss of life, and long-lasting consequences that continue to shape the country today. The recognition of this conflict as a historical trauma acknowledges the immense suffering experienced by Algerians during this period.

The scale and duration of violence inflicted during the Algerian Black Decade are central to understanding its classification as a historical trauma. Tens of thousands of people lost their lives, and many more were injured, displaced, or became victims of human rights violations. The conflict deliberately targeted civilians, causing widespread fear, grief, and uncertainty among the population. Entire villages were massacred and public spaces were bombed. In this regard, Benjamin Stora in his book *La Guerre Invisible. Algérie, Années 90* declares,

The fact is that this conflict has caused the death of over 100,000 people. In this regard, it is indeed a "war against civilians." This semantic dispute reveals the difficulties in pinpointing the origins, nature, and objectives of this war. The elusive nature of the war also stems from the challenge of giving it a precise name (15).

Women and children suffered more during the Algerian Black Decade. Women became more vulnerable to sexual violence, abduction, and forced marriages throughout the conflict. Meanwhile, children, especially those who were left orphaned or separated from their families, endured deep trauma that had lasting effects on them. Tragically, some children were even hacked into pieces, representing the horrifying depths of the violence inflicted upon them. To illuminate the above perception, Tayeb Bouazid in his poem *Memories from The Black Decade* asserts:

Small children forsaken not spared lost their lives
Corpses thrown amidst the dead wood ill-smelling
Posthumous new babies naked crying for lost mothers
An utter chaos spreads its flail on the scene (21-24).

Moreover, the intergenerational transmission of trauma is another aspect that characterizes the Algerian Black Decade as a historical trauma. Children who grew up during the conflict or were born into a traumatized society inherit the psychological effects of the trauma, perpetuating its impact across generations. The intergenerational transmission highlights the interconnection between past and present, as the trauma of the war continues to influence subsequent generations, shaping their worldview and experiences.

The psychological consequences of the Algerian Black Decade cannot be overlooked in understanding its classification as a historical trauma. Survivors and witnesses of the conflict developed anxiety, depression, and more importantly symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Memories from the Black Decade vividly depicts the experiences and aftermath of the Algerian Black Decade, revealing the profound impact it had on the poet, who witnessed the conflict first-hand. As a witness to the atrocities and horrors of war, it becomes evident that the poet has been deeply affected and exhibits symptoms associated with PTSD.

The poet's references to nightmares and haunting memories indicate the intrusion symptoms associated with PTSD. The poet describes how the horrors of the war seep into the nights, creating a haunting presence that overwhelms his thoughts and emotions. These nightmares and intrusive memories serve as constant reminders of the traumatic experiences, disrupting the poet's ability to find peace.

The poem also suggests hypervigilance, a symptom characterized by heightened alertness and an exaggerated sense of danger. The poet portrays a pervasive atmosphere of fear and the presence of danger everywhere, with tracked paths and victims launched on soils. This heightened vigilance reflects the poet's state of hyperarousal and the enduring impact of the war on their perception of the world.

Furthermore, the poem conveys the presence of unresolved grief, another symptom of PTSD. The poet's weeping and tender tributes at the graves of the fallen indicate an ongoing struggle to cope with loss and a deep sense of sorrow that remains unaddressed.

In conclusion, the narratives of the Nigerian Civil War and the Algerian Black Decade serve as reminders of the enduring impact of historical trauma on nations and individuals. These conflicts, marked by violence, loss, and psychological distress, continue to shape the collective memory and experiences of their respective societies. The intergenerational transmission of trauma is a reminder that the scars of war do not fade easily, affecting subsequent generations and perpetuating a cycle of suffering. Recognizing and addressing historical trauma is not only essential for understanding the past but also for building a more

peaceful and resilient future. It is through acknowledgment, healing, and reconciliation that nations can begin to mend the wounds inflicted by these traumatic events and pave the way for lasting peace and unity.

The current chapter has focused on the practical aspects of this study. It has examined *Eclipse in Rwanda* and *Memories from the Black Decade* through the lens of trauma theory. Through this analysis, it becomes evident that despite the distinctions between the civil wars in Algeria and Nigeria, these two poems share several similarities, particularly concerning themes such as violence and psychological trauma. Additionally, this section demonstrates that both *Eclipse in Rwanda* and *Memories from the Black Decade* were written in distinct locations, but with a shared objective: to depict the enduring impact of civil wars.

Conclusion

The present research aims to provide a comprehensive and profound analysis of the themes of psychological trauma and genocide as depicted in Joe Ushie's *Eclipse in Rwanda* and Tayeb Bouazid's *Memories from the Black Decade*. It employs the lens of trauma literary theory and related concepts to explore the psychological struggles faced by individuals in nations torn apart by civil wars. Going beyond the mere classification of these literary works as war poems, this study aims to unravel the intricate layers of emotion and experience they traverse.

The socio-historical backdrop against which these poetic masterpieces are set is crucial to understanding their context. This backdrop encompasses two pivotal events: the Nigerian Civil War and the Black Decade in Algeria. Within this rich historical tapestry, an exhaustive exploration is undertaken, meticulously tracing the evolution of Nigerian literature. Particular focus is placed on the significant contributions of third-generation writers such as Joe Ushie. Additionally, the intricate landscape of Algerian literature and art during the tumultuous era of the Black Decade is delved into, providing invaluable insights into the cultural and artistic milieu profoundly shaped by the crucible of the civil war. Here, it becomes evident how personal and familial trauma significantly influenced Ushie's poetry, given his role as a torchbearer of the third-generation writers, echoing his family's experiences during the Biafran war through the medium of his poetry.

Shifting the focus to the second chapter, a deeper exploration of the traumatic journeys of these poets ensues, drawing inspiration from Lacapara's insightful concepts of "acting out". Through this theoretical lens, the harrowing narratives woven within the poems are navigated. In these verses, the speakers recount the horrors of war that irreversibly alter the trajectory of their lives. This exploration reveals how these voices find themselves ensnared in the

haunting grip of the past, seemingly incapable of breaking free—a phenomenon that resonates profoundly with the concept of "acting out." However, as the analysis unfolds, it becomes increasingly apparent that these individuals gradually embark on a journey to navigate their trauma, eventually reintegrating into the fabric of everyday existence. This transformation serves as a compelling reflection of the process of "working through" their traumatic experiences. Furthermore, the complex interplay between war violence and psychological trauma is delved into, underscoring how the poets deftly depict their respective nations' collective suffering, including the stark realities of mass violence and genocides, as stark manifestations of historical trauma.

In addition to enriching the understanding of the psychological trauma and genocide depicted in *Eclipse in Rwanda* and *Memories from the Black Decade*, this research holds broader significance. It goes beyond mere categorization and illuminates the intricate emotional and psychological landscapes traversed by these works. By applying trauma literary theory and its associated concepts, a comprehensive understanding of the intricate web of emotions and experiences characterizing the lives of those who have endured the horrors of war and genocide is gained.

Moreover, this research contributes to a broader scholarly discourse on the intersection of literature and trauma. It serves as a testament to the enduring power of art to illuminate the darkest corners of the shared history, offering catharsis and understanding to both individuals and nations grappling with the lasting effects of historical trauma. These literary works not only chronicle history but also provide a therapeutic outlet for societies to collectively confront and process their traumatic pasts.

Additionally, this study underscores the enduring relevance of literature as a potent medium for understanding and healing. By examining Ushie's post-memory and his memorial work within *Eclipse in Rwanda*, an extra layer of complexity is added to the analysis,

highlighting how literature can act as a bridge between generations, ensuring that the lessons of the past are not forgotten.

In conclusion, this research not only deepens the understanding of the psychological trauma and genocide depicted in *Eclipse in Rwanda* and *Memories from the Black Decade* but also underscores the enduring power of literature to bear witness to history and facilitate healing.

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الملخص

تتناول هذه الرسالة موضوع الإبادة الجماعية والصدمة في قصيدتي "الكسوف في رواندا" لجو أوشي و"ذكريات من العقد الأسود" للطيب بوازيد. تصوّر هاتان القصيدتان المؤثرتان بوضوح التجارب الصادمة والأثر النفسي الدائم للعنف الجماعي على الأفراد والمجتمعات بعد حرب بيافرا والعقد الأسود الجزائري. وعلى هذا الأساس، الهدف الرئيسي لهذه الأطروحة هو التحقيق في التأثير النفسي الذي يُلحق بالأفراد، فضلاً عن التجارب الصادمة المتجسدة في القصائد. بالتركيز على مفاهيم الصدمة التاريخية وما بعد الذاكرة، تستخدم هذه الدراسة نظرية الصدمة لفحص كيفية تصوّر الشعراء آثار سنوات من الخوف والعنف على الناس. وفي الختام، خلصت الدراسة إلى أن الحروب الأهلية في الجزائر ونيجيريا، على الرغم من سياقيهما التاريخيين المختلفين، كانتا لهما عواقب صادمة خطيرة وطويلة الأمد على الأفراد والمجتمعات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: العشرية السوداء؛ حرب بيافرا الأهلية؛ الإبادة الجماعية؛ الصدمة التاريخية؛ ما بعد الذاكرة

APPENDICES

Eclipse in Rwanda

Just before bedtime, a TV documentary
fired these sharp needles at my heart.
a screen filled with Rwandan woes
See the paradisaal valleys turned
into bowls of “hewman” flesh;
See the vigilant vultures guarding
their fortune from a twig above.
See those ebony-black moulds
wearing flies as cerements.
See that youth perforated by man-crafted death
See that farmlands ploughed by missiles.

Rwanda, listen and you will hear
your dead weeping for the living.
O gods, where did you go when all this began?
And why did the shrines shrink from their duties?
Hear, hear the sins of war ships
echoing at scenes of worship.

Look ! Brother, look:
at hotel in some foreign capital,
some hemp-eyed drunkard with his
tank-filling tankard is paying for
more fuel to burn the mother land.

Fight, Bahutu, fight!
Fight, Watutsi, fight!
Fight for more lands
Fight for more rights

Fight for more space

Fight, brothers, fight!

Silent earth will always
be there to heal the wounds of fallen.

But death, O death,
how come your sling's stone
always lands on the innocent ?

Those vultures!
Those real vultures perched on foreign trees.
O that they were sharing in the smoke
from the flame they have fuelled !

Memories from the Black Decade

I want to live, to see and true some dreams I weave
With pain and intense heat: from beneath the boil
I feel porous as a rock reflecting great latent energies
To feed up my soul my sole desire to covet peace
After long endurance subdued and sufferings
Howling nights, atrocities, shaken boughs, sweeping chimneys
Lofty trees felled down, forests on fires, birds on flees
Hazy picturesque azuring waters all stagnant standing still
As if life stopped breathing out an eternal demise
Only sufferings, agony spread in all the parts
Bearing words of silent souvenirs, souvenirs of poor creatures
Striving alone as inhuman creatures, chased as flies.
Creeping, mute silence overwhelms the fall dead nights
Of the black decade; a scent of flames everywhere

Blazing no one dared get out or travel alone
Fear everywhere, tracked paths, victims launched
Pervading on soils, a horrible scene obscene
People tortured in and out with no humane feelings
Graveyards full, bodies unburied, decayed, unknown.

Ethereal demise longed over the impenetrable darkness
Small children forsaken not spared lost their lives

Corpses thrown amidst the dead wood ill-smelling
Posthumous new babies naked crying for lost mothers
An utter chaos spreads its flail on the scene
Revealing cruelty to its utmost heydays.

Many a time on their graves the poet stands
To whisper a farewell to their perished souls.
If no flowers were the best gift from him
Eloquent words were his finest tributes.
More than often he wept before love as a child
Babbling with sweet droplets of tears gentle but mild.
Lo! my flower is shedding dews as a weeping child
In lament, alone far from the disappearing friends.

All lost in a tempestuous night in the small hours alone,
All on their ways home from an unknown destination.
How man suffers cruelties submerged in blood ?
How inhuman leaving prints on an innocent child ?
The scent of civil war amidst the poor innocents,
The down trodden struggling their ways
The puny, the oppressed, the maimed, the destitute.

Life has got odd characters that none could stand,
Dead or divided we shall depart from this world
As if we lived no more, as if we were no friends

To see at last the spared in remorse of the dead

Now, let me turn the page to the post decade

To aspire right for a future bright and prospered

Here then, take my words to the sage that I profess –

Whet your tools, hit straight on dead dry woods

And let your sweat glow-let it drop, drop by drop

To water the saplings beneath your trudging feet

Let not the wild roots, the weed be watered.

Do save the green-leaves and fruitful boughs

Harvest the ripe and leave unturned the stones

Give free peace lovers and spray the seeds

To crop up in every valley-a symbol of your promise

A promise that ever a human mind recalls

Would sit in muse and add to the histories wild

That once upon a time there was a black decade

That ravaged a part of the young African heart abide

Leaving stains that ever with time none will erase

A human print made eternal in the mind of the wise.