

Challenging the Literary Norm:

Decolonizing Trauma Theory through Narrating Postcolonial Biafran
Trauma in Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*

تحدي المعيار الأدبي:

تحرير نظرية الصدمة من خلال استقراء ما بعد الكولونيالي لرواية أديشي

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Abstract:

*This paper endeavors to have a postcolonial reading of Adichie's trauma novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*. It suggests that Adichie's novel challenges the Eurocentric literary norm by fictionalizing trauma in a non-Western postcolonial Nigerian context. Indeed, in the accomplishment of the decolonizing project of trauma theory, several critics have stated that Adichie's reshaping of the field challenges trauma literary norms by transcendentizing its canonical originality and applying it to document the 1967 to 1970 violent war inflicted upon the Igbo people in post-independent Nigeria. Accordingly, since trauma theory is a Eurocentric coinage, Adichie's novel seems to challenge this classical norm by inviting readers to recognize a non-Western distant Nigerian suffering creating, through such an artistic work, a cross-cultural recognition and solidarity. Several terrifying traumatic realities are therefore experienced by her fully-rounded characters Olanna, Richard and Ugwu. The aim of this article is to analyze how Adichie challenges the Eurocentric literary norm by applying trauma theory on the postcolonial Biafran context.*

*Key words : Trauma theory - Eurocentric literary norm – non-Western context – *Half of a Yellow Sun* – Biafran war*

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ملخص

تسعى هذه الورقة إلى الحصول على قراءة ما بعد الاستعمار لرواية أديشي "نصف الشمس الصفراء". إن رواية أديشي تتحدى القاعدة الأدبية التي تركز على مركز أوروبا عن طريق تخيل الصدمات في سياق غير غربي. في الواقع، عند التعامل مع المشروع المعاصر لإنهاء نظرية الصدمة، يمكن تصنيف نصف شمس أديشي بأنها رواية غير صادمة عن الرواية الغربية، لأن أديشي وثقت الحرب الأهلية في بيفان والأجواء المؤلمة الناتجة عنها. يبدو أن رواية أديشي تتحدى المعيار الكلاسيكي الأوروبي المركزي عن طريق دعوة القراء إلى التعرف على معاناة نيجيرية بعيدة غير غربية، من خلال هذا العمل، اعترافاً وتضامناً بين الثقافات. لقد كشفت أديشي عن حقائق مرعبة، وقد تعرضت شخصياتها المدورة بشكل جيد، أولانا وريتشارد وأوغو

كلمات مفتاحية: الصدمة - المعيار الأدبي الأوروبي - السياق غير الغربي - نصف الشمس الصفراء - حرب بيفان

1. INTRODUCTION

With regard to its European essence, the concept of trauma seemed to appear as an introvert literary act firstly released through absurdist elements dating back to Ancient Greek where Aristophanes is to be the first to come in mind with his comedies fully depleted with traumatic absurd elements. Likewise, traumatic shadows can also be chased in the Elizabethan stage and works of Shakespeare and in the comedies of Moliere in the late of the nineteenth century as a reaction of the realistic constraints. Eventually, flourishing psychological discourses and the emergence of psychiatry as a discipline characterized the "Age of introspection" (Faas, 1999.p, 57). Indeed, Romantic literary scene devoted deep attention to the pathologies of the mind. Accordingly, mental fascinations with the unconscious, irrational, and pathological sides of the psyche were strongly reflected in the literature of the time and herein the nomenclature trauma first appeared as a Freudian psychological neurobiological output. Authors like Godwin and Shelley saw themselves as "mental anatomists" portraying in their works -with a deep psychological interest- the fictitious life-stories of characters suffering from mental disorders and identity turmoil.

This harmonic intersection between the several psychological

attentions and the literary discourses is further bloomed in the contemporary age literature namely in Caruth's Unclaimed Experience. Particularly, contemporary criticisms to trauma studies bring into dialogue late-nineteenth-century Caruthian psychological interpretations and contemporary interdisciplinary trauma criticisms. Perhaps, thus, through this historical timeline, it is well shown that trauma writing is a tendency that does not settle on a particular ground but rather haunts multidirectional traditional and modern literary scenes and that does not form part of any self-proclaimed or self-consciousness school or movement , it rather exists in a multidimensional realm.

*To apply the trauma thesis on Chimamanda Nguzie Adichie's Half of a Yellow Sun seems to be a challenging task as her work proves to be a non-metropolitan trauma narrative that is set between **1967 to 1970**: the pivotal landmark in the Nigerian history wherein Biafran civil war has taken place. Indeed, Adichie tends to capture instances of a purely postcolonial dystopian world showing that the horror inflicted by Nigerians on Nigerians – by the Hausa on the Igbo people- has decayed the social mobility and depraved one's peace of mind.*

Accordingly , the ethnic Biafran tension that Adichie has signaled in her book created a mob violence, rape and murders, mass famine and financial crisis, an aerial and an overland bombardment and mostly personal and collective psychological traumas. In drawing these horrific pictures, Adichie has drawn attention for the need for the Igbo traumatized victims to have their trauma recognized, narrated and transferred and scripted in the personal and the collective memory. Perhaps , thus , this what made Adichie's novel a such popular that , among several other postcolonial trauma works , challenges the Eurocentric cannon , makes the non-Western Other's trauma recognized and produces a new platform for an ethico-political solidarity.

Originally evolving in the domain of psychology and psychopathology, the trauma thesis has been regarded as a purely Eurocentric biological scholarship. Basically, Freud has defined trauma in his Beyond the Pleasure Principle as "a mental state of

disturbance of those who survived devastating events” which involves “a risk such as that of railway disasters, accidents, or of a terrible war which has just ended’ (Freud.1920.p,12). Accordingly, Freud’s coinage of such a mental turmoil condition was first established with shell-shocked Great War veterans wherein he introduced his first bio-psychological theories and assumptions.

In a similar vein, and as literature has conventionally been recognized as the mirror of society, several writers found it promising to integrate and depict the human jungle-like psychological complexities and predicaments in their fictional pieces of writings. However, this does not totally bracket off the claim that traumatic shadows did not appear in pre-Freudian corpus, but it rather means that Freud’s trauma nomenclature and epistemologies have been explicitly exposed and thus paved the way for a more dynamic platform wherein trauma thesis is widely represented in fictional criticisms and multidisciplinary approaches.

2. The Reconsideration of the Field of Trauma

Adichie’s reshaping of the field challenges trauma literary norms by transcendentalizing its canonical originality and applying it to document the 1967 to 1970 violent war inflicted upon the Igbo people in post-independent Nigeria. The reconsideration of the field of trauma therefore suggests that the classical trauma theory should not be limited to Eurocentric contexts inviting for a trauma application in African postcolonial contexts.

*In the dialogue between trauma theory and postcolonial literary studies, the central question remains whether trauma theory can effectively be “postcolonialized” in the sense of being usefully conjoined with postcolonial theory. As a typical challenging case of study, a third generation Nigerian trauma novel that may serve the contemporary pluralistic claim is Chimamanda Nguzie Adichie’s work *Half of a Yellow Sun*. The novel could be read as a sophisticated postcolonial traumatic chronicle whereby the writer weaves national and personal traumatic historical memories with fiction. Basically, Adichie seems to engage with a comprehensive conceptualization of the Nigerian postcolonial legacy of trauma and formulates possible directions in order to respond more adequately to postcolonial ways*

of understanding African's history, Nigerian's memory and Igbo's trauma. Basically, Adichie's reshaping of the field challenges trauma literary norms by transcendentalizing its canonical originality and applying it to document the 1967 to 1970 violent war inflicted upon the Igbo people in post-independent Nigeria.

The seemingly contested relationship between trauma studies and postcolonial criticism characterized the contemporary literary imagination. Indeed, prospects of Decolonizing Trauma Theory endeavor to bring into the scene accounts of distant suffering of Rest "the non-western nations", broadly defined as cultures beyond the West. In his book "Postcolonial witnessing", Stef Craps interrogated this globalizing move beyond a Eurocentric trauma paradigm. He tends to challenge the canonical theorization and bias by representing the postcolonial case against trauma theory and construct a thoroughly decolonized trauma thesis. Craps advocates that "though its laudable ethical origins that tended to create a cross-cultural solidarity, trauma theory has failed to accomplish that objective in shedding light on the suffering of the non-Western others"(Craps.2013.p,61). Accordingly, Adichie seems to be the voice of the silent others as she follows Craps's footsteps by showing that a literary reading of the novel suggests that apparently because of the inherited Biafran shadows and memories of the writer, Adichie's traumatic experiences as a child are assumed to commensurate with the portraits of her Igbo characters in her chronicle. Protagonists like Olanna "the educated lady", Ugwu "the subordinate identified boy with his master Odenigbo", and Richard "the inappropriate writer of the Book" are merely exposed to experience extreme traumatic scenes of murder, rape and war.

In another vein, Frantz Fanon's "The Wretched of the Earth" seems to be a worthy reference in analyzing Adichie's notions of "insidious trauma" and "postcolonial syndrome". Like Craps and Fanon, Adichie tends to design her work in this special model of trauma to cope the "decolonizing trend, to voice the hidden non-Western nations and minorities and "to address the normative, quotidian and persistent nature of racialized trauma" (Crap.2013.p111). Irene Visser's essay "Decolonizing Trauma Theory: Retrospect and Prospect" might seem of a similar

significance as it tends to establish a dialogic relationship between trauma theory and post-colonialism. For her, in order to accomplish the decolonizing project, a great openness towards the non-Western cultures and beliefs and indigenous healing rituals is required; accordingly, Adichie, through her *Half of a Yellow Sun*, has proved promising in establishing a new framework wherein trauma universalism evolves and less Eurocentricism vanishes.

3-The Prospect of Decolonizing Trauma Theory in *Half of a Yellow Sun*:

3-1 Adichie, The Traumatized Writer :

As a seemingly leading figure in deconstructing the Eurocentric hegemony over trauma theory, it is noteworthy that initiatives to produce such a piece of literature were sustained by reflections of the author's deep involvement in the inherited Biafran trauma of her parents and relatives; Indeed, *Half of a Yellow Sun* is Adichie's reincarnation and dedication to her parents and grandparents who were prioritized to be glorified in her in the epigraph: "My grandfathers, whom I never knew, Nwoye David Adichie and Aro-Nweke Felix Odigwe, did not survive the war. My grandmothers, Nwabuodu Regina Odigwe and Nwamgbafor Agnes Adichie, remarkable women both, did" (Adichie.2006.p,1). "This book is dedicated to their memories: ka fa nodu na ndokwa. And to Mellitus, wherever he may be. Their non-presence in her childhood can be seen as a bodily absence which influenced her; their death was a trauma that was passed down to her through her parents "Our histories cling to us to construct and delight" .(Adichie.p,1)

Adichie inherited her parents and her ancestors' trauma and this novel is an incarnation of their past, suffering and empathy. This phenomenon has been discussed by scholars such as Eva Hoffman, Marianne Hirsch, Melvin Jules Bukiet and Susan Suleiman who have advocated that Adichie is a direct witness to the testimonies of her family members who experienced the traumatic events firsthand as she explicitly mentions this in several interviews: "My parents' stories formed the backbone of my research: for *Half of a Yellow Sun* (Adichie. p,1) .For the purpose at hand, Adichie's ultimate goal for exposing the Biafran historical landmark and its postcolonial

aftermaths is much more intrinsic and deeply rooted in her sense of Igbo belonging . Accordingly , Adichie , thereby , openly makes reference to her inner traumatic empathy as she states “because I grew up in the shadow of Biafra” (Adichie.2006.p,2)and “because I wanted to engage with my history in order to make sense of my present, many of the issues that led to the war remain unresolved in Nigeria today”.(Adichie.p,2). In several occasions, moreover, Adichie keeps acknowledging her family’s deep involvement in the Nigeria-Biafra War and the instable and naughty rhythm she and her family were obliged to live through. Adichie explicitly says “because I lost both grandfathers in the Nigeria-Biafra war, ... because my father has tears in his eyes when he speaks of losing his father, because my mother still cannot speak at length about losing her father in a refugee camp, because the brutal bequests of colonialism make me angry, because the thought of the egos and indifference of men leading to the unnecessary deaths of men and women and children enrages me, because I don’t ever want to forget.” (Adichie.p, 2).

For that purpose at hand , the unforgotten Biafran shadows that haunted Adichie’s present inspired her to write Half of a Yellow . The novel won the Orange Women's Prize for fiction in 2007. In this vein, several literary critics have agreed on the legitimacy of that success stating that the epigraph “our histories cling to us,” is such a significant inclination toward universalizing the Biafran case and issues related to the authorship and the ownership of its historical incidents. Heather Hewett , accordingly ,discusses the Nigerian writings in her essay, Coming of Age: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and the Voice of the Third Generation” . In her essay , Hewett mentions that Ngugi wa Thiongo’s three “stages of African literature” does fit and include Adichie’s portrayal with excellence ; Ngugi’s division namely reset stages in African literature : the age of anti-colonial struggle, the age of independence, and the age of neo-colonialism ; Ngugi , then substituted these stages with archetypal African novels and novelists .Adichie’s novel therefore may posit her as a leading feagure in the third generation wave. Genuinely, Adichie’s work went beyond the canonical aesthetics and broke the classical norms as she minutely chronicles the ethnic Biafran horrors and the aftermaths of witnessing those horrors from a psychological perspective. The Biafran war, for Adichie, seems to be a shattering

hard experience that should be uniquely portrayed sine it is inflicted by African on African, by Nigerians on Nigerians: by Hausa on Igbo people.

3-2 Half of a Yellow Sun and Trauma:

Traumatic shadows seem to haunt almost the overall of Adichie's Half of a Yellow Sun. In the first hand, Adichie's novel waves between two pivotal periods in the Nigerian Biafran history: the early and the late sixties, the turning timeframes in the postcolonial history of Nigeria. Universal and Nigerian historical corpus exposes that Nigeria, in the late sixties, was involved in a bloody ethnic secession called the Nigeria-Biafra War between the Hausa and the Igbo people and that was such a devastating period that has entirely deconstructs the understructure of the country. Adichie, for that purpose, devoted several sections of her novel to sketch the smooth degradation of the events leading up to the three-year Biafran War and hereby the main characters Olanna , Ugwu and Richard are introduced.

In the second hand, traumatic shadows in Half of a Yellow Sun seem to resemble postmodern literary techniques of repetition, lacunae, and confusion, open uncertain and undecided endings, hesitations, disrupted chronology, stream of consciousness and the multiple uses of the past and the present tenses. Basically, in her chronicle, Adichie makes use of all these literary techniques and many others for the sake of creating a well-fictionalized portrayal of the postcolonial Biafran situation and in order to stabilize trauma in a non-western ground.

Purposefully, Adichie waves the events from the past to the present but with gaps and hesitations in between in order to assert how the past can haunt our present and how the present can retrospectively be the output of our past realities and experiences ; the lacunae that is found in this process may serve to show the gap resulted from the traumatic incident itself and the posttraumatic disorder generated thereby. Adichie also exposes a set of multi-interpretative repetitive actions of the same traumatic scenes from the eyes of the aforementioned characters as if she wants us to realize that trauma is confusing, illusive and can be perceived and interpreted

differently, this enhances the claim that in trauma novels, there is no universal reachable truth.

The chronology of the events is also challenged and disrupted and the order of scenes is scrambled namely through the use of flashbacks and stream of consciousness; Indeed, the traumatic shadows in Adichie's text can be hard to be situated in a clearly defined timeframe: they seem rather existing in a temporal vacuum. The presence of a deep quest for the unreachable truth through the unreliable narrators: Olanna, Ugwu and Richard show the presence of different versions of the past in a way to show that both the present and the past are unreachable.

Olanna, Ugwu and Richard are Adichie's chosen characters to manifest the role of the traumatized subjects in Half of a Yellow Sun. The three victims are exposed to extreme horrific situations and are forced to battle with nightmarish, fragmented and haunting posttraumatic traumatic shadows. In the same vein, Adichie reveals how can trauma and the posttraumatic stress disorder, scars and memories identifiably effect not only Olanna , Ugwu and Richard's memory but also on their linguistic patterns. Indeed, as a direct consequence of the terrific Biafran experience, the posttraumatic uncontrollable downfall impairs Olanna's memory, Ugwu's innocence and Richard's well being.

3-2-1 Olanna , Ugwu and Richard , the Traumatized Subjects

The posttraumatic memory started functioning after Olanna's three-day clinical rest. Olanna's trauma is manifested in a terrific nightmarish episodes as "that night, she had the first Dark Swoop: a thick blanket descended from above and pressed itself over her face, firmly, while she struggled to breathe. Then, when it let go, freeing her to take in gulp after gulp of air, she saw burning owls at the window grinning and beckoning to her with charred feathers". (Adichie , 2006 ,p.25).

Olanna's memory was a melting pot full of unclear and dizzy flashes describing the horrors seen and experienced in her escape toward home, she tries to purge her unbalanced mind by transferring the images into somebody else's memory: "a slight movement of the fingers neither denies the fact of death, a chimera nor the illusory

investment of a frail nor said to images too horrible to grasp.... the bodies are like a poorly wiped blackboard...they are objects left behind by the interpreters from a morality with an implausible title such as Death is forever.... She continues saying “the rusty mauve of the shrine cries the desperation of a mother who is incapable of coping with losing her son. The braided hair, as a routinely loving gesture, tries to annihilate the act of killing, the disappearance of the innocent victim.” Olanna finds her houseboy all ears to hear her; Ugwu was her empathic unsettlement, that’s why she chunkily narrates diverse episodes of the massacres.

In the novel, the image of the calabash in Olanna’s memory is carved by Adichie in a flowing manner. The calabash becomes more of a symbol than of a historical representation, as the remembrance of their delineating horrid memory of an ever-present past : “the woman with the calabash nudged her, and then motioned to some other people close by. “Bianu, come, she said. Come and take a look. She opened the calabash. Take a look, she said again. Olanna looked into the bowl. She saw the little girl's head with the ashy-gray skin and the braided hair and rolled-back eyes and open mouth. She stared at it for a while before she looked away. Somebody screamed. The woman closed the calabash. Do you know, she said, it took me so long to plait this hair? She had such thick hair”. (Adichie, 2006, p.150).

On the other hand, the history of the beheaded child also perpetuates in Olanna’s memory as an oral historical item: a history which will be documented and graved in the book of the young historian novelist Ugwu as Olanna “tells him how the bloodstains on the woman's wrapper blended into the fabric to form a rusty mauve. She describes the carved designs on the woman's calabash, slanting lines crisscrossing each other, and she describes the child's head inside: scruffy braids falling across the dark-brown face, eyes completely white, eerily open, a mouth in a small surprised” (Adichie ,2006 ,p. 6).

Shadows of Biafran trauma kept haunting Olanna’s mind and that was a prospect for Ugwu to listen, imagine and write. Olanna describes “The eyes completely white, eerily open to a tragedy beyond the human comprehension witness individual and even collective acts of sociopathic climaxesOlanna thought about the plaited hair resting in the calabash. She visualized the mother braiding it, her

fingers oiling it with pomade before dividing it into sections with a wooden comb” (Adichie, 2006, p.80).

Olanna’s posttraumatic memories and terrific shadows which could not linguistically located were a heavy burden that resided in her psyche. It was only through the empathic unsettlement that Ugwu has provided that this burden was released and Olanna’s psychological stability returned.

In Half of a Yellow Sun, Ugwu’s part of the traumatic narrative is of crucial importance within this discourse since Adichie examines the trauma from the eye of an innocent young boy. Ugwu is a thirteen year-old houseboy. He acts as Odenigbo’s houseboy and Olanna’s obedient student. Ugwu is a rural poor house-boy educationally limited whose ideas about the world are shaped by his an innocent, naïve and pastoral life experience. However, within this innocence, Ugwu’s careful observation has transformed him into a mature person who raises questions and a deep interest thanks to the influence of the intellectual atmosphere omnipresent in Odenigbo’s soirees. Moreover, Ugwu critically and academically challenges himself to grasp the current Nigerian political issues. Being influenced with the intellectual political context, Ugwu conducted questions on potential Nigerian issues and discussed them with sophistication with his master Odenigbo.

The character of Ugwu is described, from the beginning of the novel, as a guileless servant who gradually becomes involved in the war politics and the atrocities of the civil conflict. Becoming a child soldier, Ugwu, the young boy, is nicknamed the “Target Destroyer” (Adichie.2006.p,220)who fought against the vandals and was deprived of his innocence and identity and is referred to as Kill and Go and High Tech. Basically, Ugwu’s identity transition from the villager to the intellectual stimulating atmosphere at Odenigbo’s house and then to the traumatic atrocities of the Biafran war marks such a dramatic negative alteration in his character formation; accordingly, the act of raping an innocent bar girl manifests a crucial turning point in the transformation that occurs at the level of Ugwu’s identity. The traumatic war context” releases a rumbling wave of self loathing” (Adichie.2006. p120) within Ugwu’s selfhood which forces him move from the edge of innocence to the edge of evil. In this realm, thus, the

atrocities of war and the traumatic turmoil challenges, to a great extent, Ugwu's embodiment of the innocence, purity and originality.

The rape act traumatizes Ugwu as he keeps dreaming about the raped girl's eyes: "He woke up hating the image and hating himself. He would give himself time to atone for what he had done." (Adichie.2006, p197) .He makes amends by writing his book; he essentially "atones for his act by inheriting Richard's role as a writer". (Cooper, 2010, p.133).

Adichie's challenging issue over the authorship and the ownership of history is central in the novel. Indeed, Adichie has purposefully chosen two different back-grounded characters Ugwu and Richard as each of them represent two opposite views of history. Ugwu, who comes from the small rural village Opi, comes to Nsukka and works at Odenigbo's house. Richard, unlikely, is an academic Englishman who comes to Nigeria to study the Igbo-Ukwu art and who works as a journalist.

Adichie shows that these two characters are the authors in the novel, and it is through them that Adichie signals the issue to whom history belongs, who should narrate it and who should write about it. For much of the novel, readers believe that Richard is the author of the Book but only on the last pages the real author of the Book is declared. Adichie's herein has several motives behind stereotyping this mistaken identity; Adichie allows for the significance of writing in enhancing the process of healing from trauma : Richard struggles in writing and he is the one who entitled the book as " The World Was Silent When We Died" .

However, he was not able to write because the atrocity of the war was as such heavy on his European mind; Thus, by giving the Book to Ugwu, Adichie here tries at asserting who has got the right to write about Biafra history and preserving it from misinterpretation, suppression and assimilation.

Indeed, the act that Ugwu is the real writer of the Book enhances the claim that African history should be transferred then by the African themselves out of the colonizer's grip. Adichie, therefore, raises a crucial question of **"who has the authoritative voice to represent the history of Africa?"**. This authorship confusion is a content-addressed device used by Adichie to the Africans to remind them that Africa's history had longly been a topic for the colonizers as

a dark continent with no history. Ugwu thus is taking back the right to word and narrate his own history. Richard, as Masterson argues “is writing to compensate for his post colonial neurosis” (Masterson.2005 .p,144) .

Richard, likewise, has experienced trauma and is suffering from traumatic haunting shadows. Adichie shows how Richard’s character is contaminated by several frustrating emotions of shame, guilt, helplessness and frenzied silence. For that purpose, Richard is seen in the novel as a selfish outsider who, though his powerlessness in front of the clash between two ethnic groups, “rationalizes his own too humanly boundaries” (Mmuntean .2011.p, 167) did not react to stop the murderers from killing all the Igbo passengers except him.

Adichie captures Richard as the one who “could not have saved Nnaemeka, but he should have thought about him first” (Adichie.2006.p, 115). Richard’s echoed voice kept putting him in a contradictory situation as “he stared at himself and wondered if it really had happened, if he really had seen men die, if the lingering smells from bloodied human bodies were only in his imagination ...but he knew it had certainly happened and questioned it only because he willed himself to.” (Adichie.2006.p, 115).

Richard, like Olanna, remembered everything, in purges in which he hopes his memory would suppress itself, but instead everything “he took on a terrible transparency and he had only to close his eyes to see the freshly dead bodies on the floor of the airport and to recall the pitch of the screams. Madness appears to be the expression of a freedom, but the escape is denied by the lucid mind. A mind enough lucid “ to write calm replies to Aunt Elizabeth's frantic letters and tell her that he was fine and did not plan to return to England, to ask her to please stop sending flimsy air-mail editions of newspapers with articles about the Nigerian pogroms circled in pencil.” (Adichie, 2006 ,p.29).

Richard guilt’s feeling haunts his entire psyche long after and in an attempt to redeem himself from that guilt, Richard wanted to bring solace to Nnaemeka’s family by being “the magnanimous angel who brought the last hours of their son to them.” (Darie.2008.p, 7).

However, Richard's visit did not really matter for Nnaemeka's parents as the reality that "their son was gone" would not be altered by seeing him for the last time and "the people surrounding the grieving close circle are still shadows pursuing a tradition rendered meaningless by the loss" (Adichie.2006.p 123). Richard, like Olanna, deeply hoped that "his memory would suppress itself, but instead everything took on a terrible transparency and he had only to close his eyes to see the freshly dead bodies on the floor of the airport and to recall the pitch of the screams." (Adichie.2006.p, 123).

For both characters Richard and Olanna, as Adichie wants us to realize reaching the edge of traumatic madness is an expected reaction that allows for a proposal that their lucid minds deny escaping and favor defiance. Indeed, in the chaotic atmosphere, Richard's lucidity is shown through his "calm replies to Aunt Elizabeth's frantic letters and tell her that he was fine and did not plan to return to England, to ask her to please stop sending flimsy air-mail editions of newspapers with articles about the Nigerian pogroms circled in pencil." (Adichie.2006. p,123). Richard's honest reply comes as a reaction of his anger when seeing that in the canonical press "there was a hollowness to all the accounts, an echo of unreality" which underestimated the atrocity of the Biafran war and described it as an "ancient tribal hatred" because "Nigerians were so naturally prone to violence that they even wrote about the necessity of it on their passenger lorries" (Adichie.2006.p, 123).

4. CONCLUSION

A postcolonial reading of Adichie's trauma novel Half of a Yellow Sun suggested that Adichie's novel challenges the Eurocentric literary norm by applying trauma in a non-Western context. Basically, despite the fact that canonical theorizations have limited the trauma theory as a psychological Eurocentric coinage which serves only the Western contexts, Adichie's novel seems to challenge and transcends this norm by inviting readers to recognize a non-Western distant Nigerian suffering creating, through such an act, a cross-cultural recognition and solidarity. Indeed, in coping with the contemporary project of decolonizing trauma theory, Adichie's Half of a Yellow Sun can be categorized as a non-Western trauma novel since Adichie documents the Biafran civil war and the traumatic atmosphere generated thereby. Adichie's has exposed terrifying realities of her main characters

Olanna, Richard and Ugwu 's whose living conditions gradually deteriorated as their journey goes on and as Biafra is cut off from the outside world : herein peace of mind becomes a quest.

Perhaps so, anyone who comes across Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*, figures out that her work is to shift the power of depicting from the Western metropolitan centers of academe to more localized peripheries of knowledge. Accordingly , the ethnic Biafran tension that Adichie has signaled in her book created a mob violence, rape and murders, personal and collective psychological traumas. In drawing these horrific pictures, Adichie has drawn attention for the need for the Igbo traumatized victims to have their trauma recognized, narrated and transferred and scripted in the personal and the collective memory.

Finally, Adichie has stressed the fact that Biafran traumatic realities are to be told by African chronicles: African history should be owned and narrated by Africans.

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