

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Traumatic Memory in Ishmael Beah's *A Long Way Gone*

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Mr. Bikash Poudel has completed his thesis entitled, **Traumatic Memory in Ishmael Beah's *A Long Way Gone*** under my supervision. He carried out his research work from January to August. I hereby commend his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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This thesis titled **Traumatic Memory in Ishmael Beah's *A Long Way Gone*** submitted to the central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by **Mr. Bikash Poudel** has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research committee.

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Contents

	Page
Acknowledgements	
Abstract	
I. Ishmael Beah and <i>A Long Way Gone</i>	1-12
II. Traumatic Memory in <i>A Long Way Gone</i>	13-37
III. Trauma Creates Problem in Humanity	38-40
Works Cited	

I. Ishmael Beah and *A Long Way Gone*

This research explores how the traumatic memory of the past of Ishmael Beah, channelized in the form of an autobiographical novel *A Long Way Gone*. It aims to study practices of trauma, memory, identity and witness in the novel. The narrator of this memoir is highly traumatized due to the war, when he gets the flashback scenario of war. *A Long Way Gone* represents trauma of violence perpetrated in the course of Sierra Leone war. It especially focuses on child soldier and about the fate of the children in war zones, and how children take part in the atrocities. By the direct war between government and Revolutionary United Front (RUF), the whole novel depicts the trauma. The memoir not only highlights the complexity of human nature under stress but also adds an important voice to political and policy discussions on the effects of war on children.

Due to the war, people were handicapped and felt crisis of identity and freedom. There was excess punishment, suffocation and ultimately death to the people, which brought turmoil and disturbance, physical and psychological pain and many other internal and external suffering in the people. They lost identity in their homeland and were compelled to leave their own homeland. People's life, liberty and pursuit of happiness are shattered by armed activities.

Ishmael Beah's *A Long Way Gone: Memories of a Boy Soldier* captures the history of Sierra Leone's civil war. The Sierra Leone Civil War began on 23 March 1991 when the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), with support from the special forces of Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), intervened in Sierra Leone in an attempt to overthrow the Momoh government, sparking a gruesome 11-year civil war that enveloped the country and left over 50,000 dead. This war has had impact upon the Sierra Leone people. Now, people have traumatic

memory of that civil war. Ishmael Beah is the one who faced several traumatic pain in the civil war even though he is a thirteen years old child. Same experience he has collected here in the memoir *A Long Way Gone: Memories of a Boy Soldier*.

Identity is the development of the distinct personality of an individual regarded as a persisting entity in a particular stage of life in which individual characteristics are possessed by which a person is recognised or known. This process defines individuals to others and themselves. Pieces of the entity's actual identity include a sense of continuity, a sense of uniqueness from others, and a sense of affiliation. Identity leads to a number of issues of personal identity and an identity where the individual has some sort of comprehension of him or herself as a discrete, separate entity. This may be through individuation whereby the undifferentiated individual tends to become unique, or undergoes stages through which differentiated facets of a person's life tend toward becoming a more indivisible whole. Furthermore, in the war period, people have lost their individual identity. They are involved in war either known or unknown about their nationality.

War has always taken a toll. Accounts throughout history tell of nightmares and other emotional problems associated with the horrors of war: "It seems that we repeatedly discover the effects of trauma on humans every time we go to war" (Holmes 1). War trauma may cause the cognitive problem to the human being. They have lost their individual identity at the war period. Even the children, women and old are not remained untouched by the adverse impact of war. In this memoir, *A Long Way Gone: Memories of a Boy Soldier*, Beah presents the same condition of the Sierra Leone people at the time of war. The narrator of the memoir is only thirteen years old when he is directly attached in war. He faces numerous difficulties at the

time of war. This memory always haunts him. He thinks about his identity in the war period. Actually, he is a child but he is known as a government soldier.

Beah acknowledges in the prologue, the readers will probably be emotionally distant from the subject matter. For part of a page, he provides details that set up a contrast with what will follow. The narrator describes speaking with high school friends who are curious about the war in his home country. They think it is “cool” that Beah “saw people running around with guns and shooting each other” (3). He promises to tell them about it sometime. Although many of the details in the memoir are horrific, Beah helps the reader through it by maintaining the tone of a storyteller somewhat distanced from what had happened. Though many of Beah's memories include tragedy, personal loss, and extreme violence, he lets the facts speak for themselves.

Ishmael Beah, born on November 23, 1980 in Sierra Leone, is a former child soldier, and the author of the memoir, *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier*. In 1991, a vicious civil war overtook Sierra Leone. He claims that at the age of 13, he was pressed into service as a child soldier. According to Beah's account, he fought for almost three years before being rescued by UNICEF. He fought in the war, and after the war he continued to fight. Later in 1998, he fled from Freetown due to the increasing violence there and traveled to New York City. He now considers his foster mother, Laura Simms, his mother. In New York City, Beah attended the United Nations International School in Manhattan. After high school, he attended Oberlin College, graduating in 2004 with a degree in Politics.

Ishmael Beah grew up in Sierra Leone, Africa, living a very simple, unremarkable and happy life. He went to the river to fetch water in the morning, bathed in the river, and went to school, playing soccer afterwards. At the age of 12,

Ishmael's life was turned upside down when civil war came to his village and claimed the lives of his family. Because he lost everything, he joined a group of boys who wandered the countryside until they joined the government troops and became soldiers. Ishmael lived a life handling AK-47 rifles and machetes. Often on drugs, he learned to kill. *A Long Way Gone* is Ishmael's first-hand account of his experience in the army.

Beah starts his memoir with the beginning of civil war in his homeland. When their village is invaded by rebel soldiers, Beah and his brother Junior are visiting friends in town. Separated from their family and not knowing if any of them are alive, they and their friends wander from village to village trying to stay away from the soldiers. Most people are too afraid of teenage boys to help them. They encounter other homeless boys in their travels, but there is no system in place to help them. In fact, all semblance of normal society has fallen apart. It's not clear what the fighting factions stand for, and no governmental services remain. There are no police officers protecting anyone, no one to feed or shelter the war orphans, and no one to help children separated from their families to find them or to find food while they search.

After being separated from Junior and his friends, Beah spends time alone, lost in a forest, and eventually meets up with another group of boys, some of whom he knew before the war. After months of roaming, he meets someone from his former village who knows where his parents and brother Junior are. As they approach the village where the family is staying, gunshots break out. They hide in the jungle until the fighting ends, but by that time everyone in the village is dead.

Around the time, Beah calms down, soldiers return to the village. From where he is hiding, he can hear them casually discussing their attack on three villages,

killing everyone in the somewhere Beah's family was staying. Their conversation shows on compassion for the people they killed and on remorse for their actions. They laugh as they talk and sit playing cards in the middle of the carnage. The horror of soldiers who have lost all sense of humanity is clear.

By the time, Beah and his friends become soldiers, their lack of options is clear. They have lost their families and their homes; they have no source of food or shelter; few people who are willing to help them risk their lives to do so. When the boys are taken to a village where they are given food and a place to sleep, they feel safe for the first time in a long time. However, when their safety is threatened by the rebels, whom the soldiers blame for killing their families, their willingness to join the fight comes as no surprise to the reader. When the boys are called up for their first military encounter, they have spent the day in typical childhood activities-playing soccer and swimming.

Unlike most war memories, which are often written by military leaders or adult soldiers with some knowledge of the strategy and politics involved, Beah's is a first person account by a child with little understanding of the reasons for the war. In fact, Beah's memoir describes a society in so much chaos that it is not clear that even the military leaders have a good understanding of what the war is about. Young boys are given guns and drugs and persuaded to fight because they want to avenge the deaths of their families and because they have no other way to get food. The boys hear rumors about political developments but have no real understanding of the war.

Once Beah is rescued from the fighting and taken to a center for rehabilitating the young soldiers, it becomes clear that the boys who fought for the opposite side have no better understanding of the reasons for the war and endured horrors just as extreme. In the end, the book gives no evidence that one side had

greater moral authority than the other. At the rehabilitation center, the boys fight with those who came from rebel's side. The center's administrators are patient and do not punish them; their repeated refrain is "this isn't your fault"(143). As the drugs slowly work out of his system, Beah begins to trust the center's nurse Esther and other workers. He begins to tell her what has happened to him and to return to more civil behavior. After learning details about his life and family the workers at the center find Beah's uncle, Tommy, who lives in the same city, based only on his first name and occupation. Beah's uncle and his family welcome him into their home. Despite the constant dangers of the war, Beah is able to attend school.

Beah is invited to interview to be one of two children from Sierra Leone to speak at the United Nations at a conference about children affected by war. Children from around the world attend the conference, and Beah recognizes how his story fits into the larger issue of how children are taken advantage of and suffer because of war.

At the conference, Beah meets an American storyteller named Laura Simms. After he returns to Sierra Leone, his uncle dies, and the fighting in the city escalates. Beah asks Simms if he can stay with her if he can get to New York, and she later adopts him. After escaping the country, he finishes high school in the United States, where the prologue's conversation with his friends takes place.

Ishmael Beach, from *A Long Way Gone*, has drawn the attention of numerous scholars and critics since its production and premiere in 2007. Critic Irina Kyulanova glorifies the war asserting that "war can serve as a rite of passage of maturity and can accelerate the transition from childhood to adulthood." (28)

There are some critics who have proposed that the non-fiction depicts the historical ground realities of the contemporary Africa. James Thorsen examines,

“Rarely does one encounter anything but outrage, sadness, and pain when reading about the exploitation of child soldier, but Beach's account also offers hope, humanity, bravery and yes, peace" (1).

Another critic Joan Hopes says that Ishmael Beah's memoir tells how an ordinary boy becomes a ruthless soldier and then overcomes his terrible experiences. He asserts that, "The memoir not only highlights the complexity of human nature under stress but also adds an important voice to political and policy discussion on the effects of war on children" (90). He further adds:

Although many of the details in the memoir are horrific, Beach helps the reader through it by maintaining the tone of a storyteller somewhat distanced from what has happened. Through many of Beach's memories include tragedy, personal loss and extreme violence, he lets the facts speak for themselves." (91)

The text has been analyzed from various perspectives, but the psychological approach through trauma study in case of identity formation has not been applied yet. There exists strong need to carry out research on this from a new perspective, without proper study on this issue the meaning of text will remain incomplete. Having taken this fact in consideration, the present researcher proposes to carry out research from the perspective of trauma studies by highlighting the identity of the people from all kinds of follies of war by involving upon it or denying it.

The term trauma, in general, refers to an emotional wound or shock that creates substantial lasting damage to the psychological development of a person. It is an action shown by the abnormal mind to the body and provides a method of interpretation of disorder, distress and destruction aroused by the psychological repression.

Trauma study includes many fields, focusing on psychological, philosophical, ethical and aesthetic questions about the nature and representation of the traumatic events. This concern of trauma to theory "ranges from the public and historical to the private and memorial" (Lukehurst 497). Trauma is physical as well as psychological wound that causes terror and shock, but that wound is not only the cause of individual's memory but also the affection of political, social, and cultural aspects of the society because "[t]rauma that paradoxically becomes the basis for collective and/or personal identity" (Lacpra 724). So, this thesis tries to depict the traumatic experience collected by the people of Sierra Leone in the war time.

Cathy Caruth in her book *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*, is concerned principally with question of references and representation: how trauma becomes text, or how wound becomes voice. Caruth sketches a theory of trauma as instigator, of historical narrative which describes the intersection among traumatic narratives. Caruth argues that trauma as it first occurs is incomprehensible. Traumatic narrative, then, is strongly referential, but not in any simple or direct way. The impact of major traumatic events is never identical to any two people and those trauma manifest where political and psychological forces fuse.

Regarding the matter of trauma theory, Anne Kaplan in the essay "Why Trauma Now?" focuses on trauma culture. The remembering of recent catastrophes implicates us back into the trauma of industrial warfare, totalitarian atrocities, and the annihilating speed of modernization that, along with imperial invasion and colonial subjugation, demolished traditional cultures. Supporting the idea of trauma memory as Caruth explains, Kaplan argues:

In arguing that trauma is a special form of memory they stated that in trauma the event has affect only, not meaning. It produces emotion --

terror, fear, shock -- but perhaps above all these destruction of the normal feeling of comfort. Only the sensation sector of the brain -- the amygdale -- is active during the trauma. The meaning making one, namely, the cerebral cortex, remains shut down because the affect is too much to be register cognitively in the brain. Caruth, taking this theories for granted, argued that just because the traumatic experience has not been given meaning, the subject is continually haunted by it in dreams, flashbacks, hallucination. (34)

Moreover, about the memory she further adds the idea of Sushana Radstone. She views that “memory is the outcome of complex processes of revision shaped by prompting from the present whereas trauma theory posits the linear registration of events as they happen, albeit such registration may be secreted away through dissociation”(109).

The types of the trauma are different such as mental/psychological trauma and physical trauma. Mental trauma is described as a disorder. Sigmund Freud describes it as a disorder which has its roots in some experience long since consciously forgotten and repressed and which later on manifest itself in nightmares, overwhelming anxiety and motor disturbances. Therefore, physical and psychological disturbance arising from the unconscious remaining after effects of trauma upset the patients “*Beyond the Pleasure Principle*” 19. The physical trauma is taken as the response to the physical injury the previous physical condition of the victim. Physical trauma is related more to the physical hurt and damages which affect vital organ leading to the serious condition of the patient. The physical trauma is medic that is serious injury or shock to the body, as from violence or an accident. Trauma theoretically is a real psychological disorder. Trauma comes with the individual feeling and subjective

assessment of victims of how threatened and hopeless they feel. The extra-ordinary events closely affect the victims and they come fundamentally as the trauma itself.

This thesis mainly uses the psychological trauma and its effect on human identity especially in children. Psychological trauma may accompany physical trauma or exist independently of it. Typical causes and dangers of psychological trauma are sexual abuse, bullying, domestic violence, indoctrination, the victim of alcoholism, the threat of either, or the witnessing of either, particularly in childhood. War or other mass violence can also cause psychological trauma. In the memoir, Ishmael Beah presents the psychological impact of war upon the children. He recollects his own experiences in the Sierra Leone war from his early childhood and forms them in the form of memoir. Children directly involved in war unknowingly and faced numerous difficulties. Ishmael Beah shows these kinds of experiences in this memoir.

In any case, trauma theory within literary studies does shift attention from etiology to effect among which a literary sensibility is often found. This shift, increasing our consciousness of the power as well as impotence of words, has both an intriguing and a more dubious consequence. When we speak of the nightmare, suffering of war, or of the holocaust's break with civilized values, these extraordinary determinants of trauma are different from ordinary ones, whether "unguarded phrases, or deliberate insults, or more violent but random excitations that inflict psychic damage" (260).

Trauma theory bridges the gap and enables to approach the political /national structures that produce catastrophe while at the same time shaping its impact according to prevailing ideological and other discourses.

The study makes significant contribution mainly in three areas of concern. First, this study shows the bad impact of war upon the human psychology. And

secondly this research makes a significance theoretical connection of the trauma theories with the identity of the people in the war time. Lastly, the significance of this novel exists in its theme on the trauma and its effect on human. Without the study of the war and its bad effect upon the human society, we cannot understand the gist of the novel.

The objectives of the study are to highlight the futilities of war and its effect on the identity of people. Through the critical analysis of Ishmael's journey from war to the UN, this research aims at exploring the psyche of the people and the successful effort of the people for the formation of their own identity. Moreover, the study also aims at denouncing of institutionalized war in a more encompassing way. Although, this study makes significant use of concept developed in trauma scholarship, it does not offer a comprehensive analysis of trauma theories. Rather an analysis of understanding trauma studies remains the primary tools of analysis.

Ishmael is a young man who becomes a victim of devastating civil war in Sierra Leone. Like most other civilians, he is a victim of terror campaign on the part of both sides of the war. He is forced to participate in war just to survive. By the age of 15, Ishmael is a remorseless killer whose life consistency solely depends on military maneuvers. Thus, here Beah's characters move from one mode of life to another, by involving initially in the war and ultimately denouncing the institutionalized war.

This research has been divided into three chapters. The first chapter presents an introductory outlines of the novel's raising issues, its problems, and a short account of Ishmael Beah's life along with the reviews on *A Long Way Gone* by different critics. Moreover, it gives a bird's eye view of the entire works. The second chapter analyses the novel *A Long Way Gone* by highlighting the traumatic experiences recollected by the people of Sierra Leone in the war time. So, this chapter tries to

prove the hypothesis of the study - in this *A Long Way Gone*, Ishmael Beah tries to explore the consciousness of individual identity emerging in the people of Sierra Leone as a result of the massacre and bloodshed caused by war. Finally, the third chapter sums up the main points of the present research and finding of the research.

II. Traumatic Memory in *A Long Way Gones*

The narrator of this memoir, Ishmael is doomed to bear the traumatic condition frequently due to the war, which comes in the form of flashback, magraine, and memory. The memoir not only hightlights the trauma through the eyes of adults but also through the eyes of the children and the innocent people. As a child, Ishmael faces numerous traumatic events in the war time. He expresses his experience in this way: "In my mind's eye I would see sparks of flame, flashes of scenes I had witnessed, and the agonizing voices of children and women would come alive in head. I cried quietly as my head beat like the clapper of a bell" (103).

Trauma denotes a severe wound or injury and the resulting after effect. There is something true or literal about the memories encapsulated in the flashback of the survivor. Traumatic experience is unique in relation to history. Trauma means that it is referential precisely to the extent that it is not fully perceived as it occurs, or to put it somewhat differently that the history can be grasped only in the very accessibility of its occurrence. However, traumatic history is reliable in the sense that it does not claim to project reality and it is based on the testimony of the survivor and not those in power, "Memory is a midfield, looking back the mind distorts, forgets, invents and play tricks." (Caruth 3). The spatial memory of trauma is the role of ruins play in housing what is absent. History like trauma is never simply one's own we are implicated in each other's trauma.

In the memoir, *A Long Way Gone* the protagonist, Ishmael Beah, loses his real identity by the war. Ishmael Beah is a wonderful youngman who becomes a victim of devastating civil war in Sierra Leone. Like most of the other civilians, he is victim of terror campaign on the part of the both sides of war. Thousands of civilians die in this conflict and in that way, Ishmael is lucky because he lives. However, he

comes out of the experience as a boy soldiers are badly damaged by war. He has lost his family to the rebel atrocities just before he has the chance to be reunited. He sees friends and comrades die the most horrible death before his eyes, he lives in horrible conditions day in and day out, and most of the time, he sees little hope that his existence will ever change. So, he tries to formulate his own identity through the war experience collected by him. He is badly damaged by war, the mental disorder creates physical and psychological pain, the individual identity is lost. But fortunately, he is taken by the UNICEF and rehabilitated in the centre. In this rehabilitation centre, he tries to formulate his own identity. In this way, Ishmael Beah searches his identity through war at first and finally, he tries to create identity through peace in the rehabilitation centre of UNICEF.

Trauma is a memory of past and its after effect. It comes out through multiple ways according to circumstances and according to age factors. Trauma not only makes people panic and anxious but it also turns them rebellious and angrier. Specially, war trauma turns into resistance. The Vietnam War, Iraq and Afghan war have some of its paradigms where trauma turned into resistance. This memoir, *A Long Way Gone* as a complete war memory of a boy soldier, which includes memory, resistance, anger, turmoil, disturbance, mental and physical torture and many other traumatic phenomena.

Ishmael Beah starts his memoir with the discussion of him, in New York, with his school friends. His friends want to know that why he left his own native country Sierra Leone and they also suspect that he hides some of the true history of his life. The memoir opens with this lines:

"Why did you leave sierra Leone?"

"Because of war".

"Did you witness some of the fighting?"

"You mean you saw people running around with gun and shooting each other?"

"Yes, all the time." (2)

This opening vignette shows the narrator as he has arrived in the United States of America after his lost boyhood in Sierra Leone. He is attending high school there and his fellow friends question him over and over about his life in his homeland. He observes that they have not begun to suspect his full story. Their inquisitiveness is ironic; because they think that his being in country at war is cool. He can only smile a little and say that he will tell them about it sometime. This memoir is the result of experiences collected by Ishmael in his own native country Sierra Leone at the time of war. All the collections of this memoir represent the traumatic memory of people of Sierra Leone at the time of war, especially the traumatic condition of Beah is beautifully presented.

Ishmael and his family have little connection to the war that is taking place in their homeland until refugees begin passing through. There are families that have walked hundreds of mile to escape the fighting and atrocities. They told how relatives has killed and their houses burned. "Some people felt sorry for them and offered them places to stay, but most of the refugees refused because they said that war would eventually reach our town" (5). The experience recollected by refugees show-the traumatic condition of the townspeople in Sierra Leone along with the refugees themselves. Ishmael is most impacted by the traumatic memory now. He remembers his past and says:

The only war I know of were those that I had read about in books or seen in movies such as *Rambo: First Blood*, and the BBC news. My

imagination at ten years old did not have the capacity to grasp what had taken away the happiness of the refugees. (6)

In this way, Ishmael is most impacted by the fact that the children would not even look at them. They jumped at the slightest sound and they are tired and malnourished. It is evident that they have seen things that so plagued their minds that if they explained it, Ishmael and his family, friends would refuse to accept it. He is only ten years old child at this point and his imagination does not have the capacity to understand what these children have witnessed.

Ishmael only heard about the war in different movies and BBC news before experiencing war. At the age of twelve, he was touched by war: "The first time that I was touched by war I was twelve" (6). His country Sierra Leone fell into the war. The rebel attacked there and the war was started between the government of Sierra Leone and the rebels. This war badly damaged the country; its people; its cultural, political, religious as well as natural heritages. People felt the excessively hurt from this war. They were physically, emotionally and psychologically damaged by this brutal war. Especially, the children were used as soldiers. It created a problem in the identity among the children whether they are school children or the soldiers. Children do not entertain there due to the war. Their interests of enjoyment with the musical environment along with the free life in the country was seized by the war.

When the war was started, Ishmael, his brother, Junior, and their friend Tallo decide that they will go to the town of Mattru Jong to participate in a talent show. They had organized a rap group when he was just eight and had been together ever since. Ishmael says, " On the morning, we left for Mattru Jong" (7). On the way, they stay at Khalil's home and wait for their friends to return home from school. The three boys from their village come home early from school because they heard the

rebel has attacked Ishmael's village of Mojbwemo. School in Matru Jang had been cancelled indefinitely. According to the teacher:

The sudden outburst of gunfire had caused people to run for their lives in different directions. Fathers had come running from their workplaces, only to stand in front of their empty house with no indication of where their families had gone. Mothers wept as they ran toward schools, rivers, water taps to look for their children. Children's ran home to look for parents who were wandering the streets in search of them. And as the gunfire intensified, people gave up looking for their loved ones and ran out of town. (9)

Ishmael, Junior and their friends from village leave for the wharf to see if people of their village are arriving there. They sit there for three hours, but none of the boys sees anyone of their families. Talloi declares that they must go back and see if they can find their families before it's too late. Ishmael and Talloi eventually begin to question the refugees from their village. And amidst the cries of women and children, an old woman tells, "Too much blood has been spilled where you are going. Even the good spirits have fled from the place" (12).

Trauma disturbs the people in the formation of their own distinct identity. Those people who got involved in war in past, they remembers the past incidents when they had shared their identity with the nation.

Furthermore, in the war period, identity is taken as a tough job. Ishmael Beah, the narrator of the memoir, tries to form his individual identity. For that, he wanders to and fro mentally, physically, and emotionally for his own identity but he never find the way what will be happened in his life in the future and he did not know what he was doing. These lines clarify so:

One of the unsettling things about my journey mentally, physically, and emotionally was that I was not sure when or where it was going to end. I did not know what I was going to do with my life. I felt that I was starting over and over again. I was always on the move, always going somewhere. While we walked, I sometimes lagged behind, thinking about these things. To survive each passing day was my goal in life.(69)

War affects everyone those of being involved in war or not. The soldiers and rebels are not only affected by war but also the innocent people, even the domestic animals are affected by war. The children are also brutally affected by the war. We all know that war has a destructive nature. So the writings (novel, memoir, poetry etc) based on the issue of war always include wounds, deaths and certain memories of past.

People at war lose their freedom, even they cannot find their identity. The rules and regulations are dismantled and human life becomes valueless. The given lines make clear that how civil rights have gone and human life becomes valueless: "The war had destroyed the enjoyment of the every experience of meeting people. Even a twelve-years-old child could not be trusted anymore" (48). Ishmael's speech in the first part of the novel clarifies that war not only affects the humanity of the human being, but it also badly affect the animosity of the domestic animals. Even the dogs are running here and there and looking for their owners. So war has adverse impact upon all creature of the Earth. These lines clarify so:

We saw children walking themselves, shirtless, in their underwear, following the crowd. 'Nya nje oo, hya keke oo,' my mother, my father,

the children were crying. There were also dogs running, in between the crowds of people, who were still running, even though far away from harm. The dogs sniffed the air, looking for their owners. My veins tightened. (12)

The war creates fury to those people who want to live free individual life. But war destroys the freedom of the people. They are bound in the chain of “do” or “die”.

Gun is the symbol of supremacy, power and more than tyranny. An armless person with some sort of view in his mind cannot speak anything in the presence of gun. So, in the memoir, *A Long Way Gone*, people were frightened by the gun and its supremacy. So, they escape from their town and settle in next place as the refugees. They transform into refugees. It may create obstacle in the individual identity of the civilians.

Trauma is the sudden catastrophic event where destruction, violence, death and devastation take place with certain after effect. *A Long Way Gone*, a complete war memoir raised so many traumatic situation that the whole memoir runs top to bottom with traumatic experience. Ishmael Beah is used to be one of them who has recollected great traumatic experience in his childhood. He says:

Every time people come at us with the intention of killing us, I close my eyes and wait for death. Even though I'm still alive, I feel like each time I accept death, part of me dies. Very soon, I will completely die and all that will be left is my empty body walking with you. It will be quieter than I am. (70)

These kinds of experiences recollected by Ishmael Beah always haunt him nowadays in New York. He presents his life journey from the war effected child in Sierra Leone to the becoming an successful writer in New York. In other words, he describes his

life Journey from the age of ten, when he was in Sierra Leone and highly affected by the war. Due to this war, small children were used to join in army. It means the children directly involve in war.

War creates great physical as well as psychological pain to the civilians. It may create disturbance in the mental order of the human too, The locals of the Sierra Leone/villagers of the Sierra Leone had experienced the physical and psychological pain. Especially, Ishmael Beah had experienced such kind of physical and psychological pain, vigorously, from his early childhood. He involved in war when he was twelve. "He was at first a reluctant soldier in Sierra Leone's long, all-consuming civil war, fighting for a corrupt, besieged government whose center was from their native town" (Thorsen 1). This shows that all the children of Sierra Leone do not remain untouched by the brutal war effects. They search their individual identity by involving in war. They are in dilemma whether they are school children or the soldiers of the country. Nowadays, their experience as a war soldiers is come into the mind of Ishmael Beah.

In the memoir, *A Long Way Gone*, Ishmael Beah has faced the numerous physical and psychological pain when he was a war veteran. He always remembers his family. When he went for walk in the late evening, he saw some women who were preparing dinner for their family. At that time, he remembers his mother. The memory of parents greatly shocked him. He wanted to return home but his duties and responsibilities as a soldier compelled him to stay there. He was highly traumatized by the separation from the other family members due to war. Ishmael says:

I would sometime go for walk myself in the late evening. The sight of women preparing dinner always reminded me of the times I used to watch my mother cook. Boys were not allowed in the kitchen, but she

made an exception for me, saying 'you need to know how to cook something for your Palampo life'. She would pause, give me a piece of dry fish and then continue. 'I want a grandchild. So don't be a palampo forever'. Tears would form in my eyes as I continued my stroll on the tiny gravel roads in Matru Jong. (23)

The memory of the family always haunts him. He wept many times by remembering his mother. He wants to join with the family members again but also thinks that it is impossible to reunite due to the never-ending game of war. He says " I thought about where my family was, whether I would be able to see them again, and wished that they were safe and not heartbroken about Junior and me. Tears formed in my eyes, but I was too hungry to cry" (26). The sentence 'I was too hungry to cry' refers to the real condition of the soldiers at the war time. They must forget their families and the needs of them. They are hungry but compelled to fulfill their duties and responsibilities. But, at the time of war, they remember the family member. They have longed for home, music, laughter, girls and enjoy with the family members. In the memoir, *A Long Way Gone* Ishmael also has a desire to reunite with the other family members who were separated due to the war in their own home town. All members of family are suffered from the psychological pain. Ishmael has collected his psychological as physical pain here in the memoir, *A Long Way Gone*.

In its most general definition, trauma describes an overwhelming experience of "sudden or catastrophic events, in which the responses to the events in the after-delayed and other intrusive phenomena" (Caruth 181). Particularly, in war period, freedom is cut off but people who have the taste of freedom cannot think life without freedom. So, this memory of freedom made them angrier. Ishmael and other civilians become so angry when they found that the great unlawful act of the rebels. Rebels

have no humanity, their act revealed that they are not the man of humanity rather man of animalistic nature. One of the event presented in the memoir, not only made angrier to the civilians and Ishmael, it also germinated the impulses of its reader too. The following lines are the evidences for that:

While we stood there under gun point, an old man who had escape from Mattru Jong was heard crossing a creekly wooden bridge leading to the village. [. . .] The man was probably in his sixties, but looked weak. His face was wrinkled from hunger and fear. The rebel pushed the old man to the get up on trembling knees, The old man managed to stand. The rebel laughed at him and made up laugh loudly, but I was crying internally and my legs and hands trembled. I clenched my fists, but that made the trembling worse. All the captives stood at gunpoints watching as the rebel proceeding to interrogate the old man (32).

All the civilians of Sierra Leone are highly affected by war. Even the old men above 60 and the children under 10 cannot remain untouched. The murder, bloodshed, massacre are simple. Civilians tolerate the brutality, suppression, oppression from the rebels. They are suffering from physical as well as psychological pain. This pain remains as a memory of all the civilian. This always haunts the mind of Sierra Leone people.

The war highly damaged the psychology of the civilians. "People stopped trusting each other, and every stranger becomes an enemy. Even people who knew you become extremely careful about how they related or spoke to you" (37). Ishmael says that people are afraid when they saw the group of boys. But making group has the different interest. The aim of becoming a group was not their advantage. But they needed to stay together because they "had a better chance to escaping from the day-

to-day trouble they faced" (37). It means all the civilians have such kinds of traumatic memory due to the war. On the other hand, when the civilians work in their farmland, the rebels came and attacked them, destroyed the herbs produced by them. Ishmael lives in Kamator for three months with his friends. They farm their land, Ishmael never gets used to it. The sad thing about all the hard labor is that the rebels eventually did come, and their hard work all went to ruin. What is even sadder is that it is during this attack that Ishmael and his friends are separated and Ishmael never sees his older brother again. When rebels attacked in Kamator, Ishmael is truly alone. No one trusts him. The people have all disappeared. Ishmael is frustrated living in fear. He says:

I became frustrated with living in fear. I felt as if I was always waiting for death to come to me. So, I decided to go somewhere where at least there was some peace. Kaloko was afraid to leave. He thought that by leaving the bush we would be walking towards death. He decided to stay in the swamp. (46)

Ishmael leaves the existing place in search of peace. For five days, he walks, never coming into contact with any human being. He says, "There were no finger print to be seen, and only sound I heard were those of my breathing and my footsteps" (46). On the sixth day, he comes into contact with humans. He wants to go in Bonthe, an Island to the south, which is supposed to be the fastest place in Sierra Leone. He reaches in the thick forest where he spends most of his time fighting himself mentally in order to avoid thinking about what he has seen and where his life is going. He is even afraid to sleep because the images will haunt his dreams. In the jungle, he is reminded of his childhood and a story told by his grandmother about how wild pigs had come to hate humans. Again, he remembers the word of his father: "If you are

alive, there is hope for better day and something good to happen." (54). But, he continues his journey without concerning about the fear of wild animals.

Just as Ishmael starts down the hill, gunshots ring out with dogs barking and people screaming. The boys hide in the bushes and listen to the gunshots. Ishmael runs into the village as soon as the shooting stops. It is completely on fire with bullet shells covering the ground. People have been looked into their houses and the houses set on fire. Some get out with the help but later die. A burned child's yelp is seared on Ishmael's brain. Then Gasemu begins screaming for another side of the village and Ishmael goes to him where he sees over twenty young men and boys all dead from gunshots. Ishmael then continues to run through the village looking for his own family. He finally comes to the house where Gasemu says they were living and it is only charred from the outside. However, the flames inside have so totally destroyed everything and everyone inside that there are only ashes left. Gasemu then tells him that he looked at everybody, but did not find Ishmael's family. Ishmael is more than devastated now . He feels like something has been placed on his head that is heavy that his neck aches.

Ishmael is doomed to bear because the supporting structure of family and religion are no longer favorable to him. Due to the war, all the member of the families are separated and the news come with the death of the families. He has no option except to escape from the battle field. The old values concerning human trauma ceased to operate. In the evaluation of new vision, regarding man and his trauma, no one is whole, rather one passes over a number of cross-fertilizing influences. Critics support that the idea of pain and hallucination of man emerged in literature that tried to diagnose the human situation in a society of shattered beliefs. Thrown into an incoherent, disordered and superstitious society in which individual

destinies were obstructed and torn apart. There is direct connection between feeling of pains, consequence of haunting memory and the longing for death. Ishmeal says " I felt as if I was always waiting for death to come to me. So, I decided to go somewhere where at least there was some peace" (46).

It is traumatic memory of an event but also the effect of cultural, political and religious practices that force subject to support their political desire which are stored by the unconscious mind and they may want to articulate in any forms such as dreams, verbalization and narrativization. The remembering of recent catastrophe implicates us back into the trauma of industrial warfare, totalitarian atrocities, and the annihilating speed of modernization that, along with imperial invasion and colonial subjugation, demolished traditional cultures.

Leila Gupta in her writing *Psychological Intervention for War Effected Children in Sierra Leone*, cited the history of war in Sierra Leone, "Given the sudden, cruel and interpersonal nature of the violence inflicted at close range during the real invasion in Sierra Leone, it is a wonder that these survivors experienced intrusive images, bad dreams, nightmares, and intense arousal systems" (14).

A Long Way Gone raises the issue of political conflict in which common people are increasingly not only the victims but the weapons of war. Ishmael's sensitive and careful telling of a story has not been allowed to tell, obliges us to examine the limits of representation.

Ishmael faced many obstacles on the way. The bloodshed, mass destruction, murder and the bloody men are common which he found on his Journey. They walk for days, but Ishmael cannot remember how many. Suddenly, they are stopped by two government soldiers with rifle who take them to another village:

We must have been walking for days, I do not really remember, when suddenly two men put us at gunpoint and mentioned, with their guns, for us to come closer. We walked in between two rows of men carrying machineguns, AK-47s, G3s, and RPGs. Their faces were dark as if they have bathed them in charcoal, and they started intrusively at us with their extremely red eyes. When we got to the back of the line, there were four men laying on the ground, their uniform soaked with blood. One of them lay on his stomach, and his eyes were wide open and still, his insides were spilling on to the ground. I turned away, and my eyes caught the smashed head of another man, something inside his brain was still pulsating and he was breathing. I felt nauseated. Everything began to spin around me. One of the soldiers was looking at me, chewing something and smiling. He took a drink from his water bottle and threw the remaining water at my face. (100)

Along the way, they see two dead bodies that make Ishmael want to vomit. One of the soldier smiles and says, "You will get used to it, everyone does eventually" (100).

They are taken downriver to Yale, which is occupied by the military.

Again, he is turned into a soldier. He joins in the direct war at first at the age of 15. At that time, he thinks about his identity whether he is an child or soldiers.

These lines make clear so:

In the daytime, instead of playing soccer in the village square, I took turns at the guarding posts around the village, smoking marijuana and sniffing brown brown, cocaine mixed with gunpowder, which was always spread out on the table, and of course taking more of the white capsule, as I had become addicted to them. They gave me a lot of

energy. The first time I took all these drugs at the same time. I began to perspire so much that I took off all my clothes. (121)

In this way, Ishmael's identity of a child is turned into a soldier. At the time of taking pleasure by playing with the children and loving with their parents, he was compelled to enjoy with the guns. He says, "My squade was my family, my gun was my provider and protector, and my rule was to kill or be killed" (126). This gives the hint that the war has no good side, its adverse impact upon the whole human being whether they involve in war or not, may show into the human psyche. The physical and psychological pain was realized by everyman at the war time. Even the children are also involved in war. They faced numerous difficulties by these war. They can't formulate their own identity. So this research prove that war has no good side. It means the present researcher proves the negative impact of war into the human society.

Ishmael Beah has faced various difficulties in the ways. He becomes sick though he dares to revolt against such physical as well as psychological pain.

The top of my eyes began to ache and the pain slowly rose up to my head. My ears become warms and tears were running down my cheeks, eventhough I was not crying. The veins on my arms stood out and I could feel them pulsating as if they had begun to breathe of their own accord. We waited in the quite, as hunters do, our fingers gently caressing the triggers. The silence tormented me. (117)

In this way, his childhood has gone by without his knowing and it seems as if his heart has frozen. However, everything is about the change in January 1996. He is fifteen years old. He, Alhaj, Kanai, and twenty members of his squad leave one morning for Bauya, a small town a day's walk away. They are excited to see Judah,

who is stationed there. Ishmael is also looking forward to seeing the lieutenant who might find some time to talk about Shakespeare. They find Jumah sitting in a hammock on the verandah of a cement house. His face seems older and he nuds nervously, as he talks. Later that night, they gather in the yard at the center of town where it is a social event for the commanders to mingle with everyone else. Ishmael is amazed at his lieutenant who has managed to stay alive ever after most of his commander friends have been killed. He recites some of *Macbeth* for Ishmael, but does not stay to talk. None the less all salute him and sing a national Anthem: "High we exalt thee, realm of the free, great is the love we have for thee[. . .]" (128).

Fortunately:

A few hours later a truck came to the village. Four men dressed in clean blue jeans and white T-shirts that said UNICEF on them in big blue letters jumped out. One of them was a white man [. . .]. The man were all to clean to have been in the war. They were shown to the lieutenant's house. [. . .]. The lieutenant shook hands with the two foreigners and he called over the private who was guarding the meeting. The private ran toward us and told us to form a line. We formed a housemate line and waited. (129)

Lieutenant selects fifteen boys for sending to the members of UNICEF. The UN agency made a plan to send the child soldier in school by removing them from the duty of soldier. He thanks to the boys who help him to serve the nation: "You have been great soldiers and you all know that you are part of this brother hood. I am very proud to have served my country with you boys. But your work here is done and I must send you off. These men will put you in school and find you another life" (129).

Now, Ishmael's life takes another turn. He was sent with the members of UNICEF. Obviously, UNICEF has stepped into the war with the intent of rehabilitating these child warriors. Unfortunately, it is just as obvious that they are brainwashed to involve in war ferociously. The children are ready to die for their own groups without understanding what is good or not. One of the boys says, "We fought for RUF; the army is the enemy. We fought for freedom, and the army killed my family and destroyed my village. I will kill any of those army bastards every time I get a chance to do so." (134). It becomes clear that war has nothing good side. It only destroys the villages and happy and peaceful family. The boys have not forgot their habit of fighting in the battlefield. In the rehabilitation centre of UNICEF, there are the boys from both sides. So they started fighting each other in the rehabilitation center. But the member of UNICEF taught them that the adverse impact of war into the human society. Creating the good/appropriate environment for the children, UNICEF try to change the mindset of the psyche of the boys. One of the evidence in this memoir is as follows:

At the end of the every meal, the nurses and staff members come to talk to us about attending the scheduled health check up in the mini hospital in Benin House and the one-on-one counseling sessions in the psychological therapy centre that we hated. As soon as, they started speaking, we would throw bawls, spoons, food and benches at them.

We would chase them out of the dining hall and beat them up. (138)

After a month, the boys realize that they are wrong because they are in the withdrawal stage. They also think that the war has separated them from their family and villages too.

So, the fastened mantle of boy's war memories slowly began to open. This has been described in this memoir as follows:

It had been more than a month and some of us had almost gone through the withdrawal stage even though there were still instances of vomiting and collapsing at unexpected moments. The outbreaks ended, for most of us, at the end of the second month. But we were still traumatized, and now that we had time to think, the fastened mantle of our war memories slowly began to open. (145)

It takes several months before he began to relearn how to sleep without the aid of medicine. Ishmael thinks that a faceless gunman had tied him up and began to slit his throat with the zigzag edge of soldiers' bayonet. He feels the pain that the knife inflicted as the man sawed his neck. He tries desperately to think about his childhood, but he could not. The war memories had formed a barrier that he had to break in order to think about any moment in his life before the war. In this way, in the rehabilitations center of UNICEF, Ishmael starts to feel pain from the war memories, his childhood can go without entertaining as children. The war trauma starts to haunt him. The memories become the barrier for the overall life for him. But the UNICEF remains as god for them which saves life from war and change their life into a school children.

The environment of the rehabilitation centre helped Ishmael move towards the next life from the warrior's life. One afternoon, during a table tennis match, he feels a tap on his shoulder. It is the nurse from the hospital. She gives him a coca-cola and invites him to come to see her anytime he wants. Ishmael is relocated to a separate rehabilitation centre after a battle erupts in the rehabilitation center, Ishmael tosses grenade, he has smuggled in, and within minutes, six boys lie dead. In the separate

rehabilitation center, he suffers withdrawal from the drugs and violence that have become his addictions. A nurse's compassion helps him let go of these demons. Over and over, she tells him, "it's not your fault. It's not your fault" (143). As a gift, the nurse, Esther, brings Ishmael a walkman and a tape of Bob Mairly, reignig his passion for music and performance, which further reconnect the boy to his lost childhood.

Ishmael makes great progress. He begins writing music again and puts on shows for the rest of the boys at the center. Ishmael has great pain due to the war. He tries to remember his past or his childhood life but never succeed. One day, during his fifth month of Benin houses, Esther comes by and Ishmael tells her, "I feel as if there is nothing left for me to be alive for. I have no family, it is just me. No one will be able to tell me stories about my childhood" (167). Esther tells him, with a hug, that he can think of her as his sister, "Think of me as you family, your sister" (167). By showing the continual progress shown in Ishmael, the following day, Esther tells Ishmael that there are visitors coming to the center and they want the boys to hold a talent show. Esther wants him to sing his reggae songs, but Ishmael suggests a monologue from Shakespeare. She says yes to that idea, but still wants him to sing. The visitors are from European commission, the UN, UNICEF and several NGOs. When they arrive, they melt into the crowd of boys to get to know them and sit in anticipation of the talent show. It commits of stories like the Bra spider, Ishmael's monologue, and a short hip-hop play that Ishmael had unbitten about the redemption of a former child soldiers. Mr Kamara, the center director, is so impressed with Ishmael's play that he asks him to be a spokesperson for the center. The programme locates Ishmael's uncle, and finally, after many months, the staff allows him to leave the center to join his uncle's family. The rehabilitation center nominates him for a special United Nations project to bring two Sierra Leonean children to the United

States to speak about the war under the aegis of Children Associated with War (CAW) in order to raise wariness about the plight of child soldier.

In this time, Ishmael's life takes the new turn. Now, he becomes spokesperson of the United Nations and finds his family members. He was suffering from migraine before but all of a sudden, it may collapse after the meeting with his uncle. Ishmael is finally "repatriated" to live with his uncle. He is worried about what to do there especially if his nightmares and migraines return. He also feels such guilt over being the only one in his family to have survived the war. Nonetheless, he packs his few belongings and with his heart beating very fast, he says goodbye to Mohamed, Alhaji and Mambu. Mohamed embraces him, but Alhaji just claps him on the shoulder. Ishmael never sees this longtime friend again. Esther gives him her address and tells him that he can come any time. "This is my address, come by anytime." (130)

As soon as Ishmael arrives at his uncle's house, his uncle picks him up and carries him to the verandah. He says in a formal manner that he welcomes him like he would welcome a chieftain. This incidents, Ishmael describes as follows:

My uncle picked me up in his arms as soon as I got off the van and carried me into the verandah. "I welcome you today like a chief. Your feet may touch the ground. When you lose your chieftaincy, which begins now, my uncle said, laughing, as he sat me down. I smiled but was nervous. My four cousins-Allie and the three girls, Matil, Kona, and Sombo-took turns hugging me, their faces bring with smiles. You must be hungry; I cooked you a welcome home sakie thomboi', my ausnt said. (181)

Ishmael lives pretty beautiful life with his cousin's family but he was suffering from migrain. He wanted to tell with his uncle that he "had one severe migraine where in

the image of a burning village flashed" in his mind, "followed by watching of many voices", that he "had felt the back of his neck tighten and head become heavy as if a huge rock had been placed in it." (184-85). His Uncle, Lislie prepares him for the interview in UN where he was selected as a nominee for the spokesperson.

Ishmael is chosen as a spokesperson of UN. Mr. Karmara comes to his uncle's house and says, "The first step is completed. Now we will have to get you the visa" (189). Again, Ishmael's life takes a new turn. Times and again, the changing scenario of the life of Ishmael's life creates the problem of his identity. War has impacted the identity formation of Ishmael Beah. He was a child soldier at first then a school children and finally he becomes a spokesperson at UN. He flies to New York. He is a spokesperson from Sierra Leon selected for the participation in the United Nations first international children's parliament.

At the United Nations first International children's parliament, Ishmael meets Laura Simms, a facilitator who is a professional storyteller. Ishmael is impressed that this white woman from New York City knows many of the stories told by his people. He says, "When she become by mother years later, she and I would always talk about whether it was destined or coincidental that I come from a very storytelling-oriented culture to live with a mother in New York who is a storyteller". (197)

On the last day of the conference, a child from each contry spoke briefly at the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Chamber about their country and experiences. There were children from Lebanon, Cambodia, Kosovo, Brazil, Norway, Yemen, Mozambique, Palestine, Guatemala, the US, South Africa, Peru, Northern Ireland, India, Papua New Guinea, Malawi, Sierra Leone. In this conference, Ishmael shares his experiences on his own country at the time of war. He says:

I'm from Sierra Leone, and the problem that is affecting us children is the war that forces us to run away from our homes, lose our families and aimlessly roam the forest. As a result, we get involved in the conflict as soldiers, carriers of loads and in many other difficult tasks. All this is because of starvation, the loss of our families, and the need to feel safe and be part of something when all else has broken down. I joined the army really because of the loss of my family and starvation. I wanted to avenge the deaths of my family [. . .] what I have learned from my experience is that revenge is not good. I joined the army to avenge the deaths of my family and to survive but I've come to learn that revenge and revenge and revenge will never come to an end [. . .].

(199)

He collects many more experiences in New York, Back in his home country, Ishmael returns to school in Freetown, and his future looks bright. But on May 25, 1997, the city is awakened by gunshots. Johnny Paul Korma, lead of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), announces that he is the new president, and chaos is unleashed in the city. During this time, Ishmael's beloved uncle suddenly dies of illness.

Finally, Ishmael realizes he cannot stay in Freetown, or it will be in danger swept back into the army, as some of his friends have already been. Ishmael calls Laura, the storyteller, and asks if he can stay with her if he can make it to New York. She says 'yes', and he makes his preparation to escape from Sierra Leone. Ishmael leaves Freetown in October 1997, telling only his friend Mohamed from the rehabilitation center, that he is going. To get to the United States, he must make it across the border to Guinea. The bus ride is long and dangerous, but Ishmael arrives

at Conakry, the capital of Guinea, after many close calls with soldiers who wish to rob him of his money and prevent him from leaving the country. Across the border, he breathes a sigh of relief. He is a long way from home, from his childhood, from the horrors that have consumed him for the past four years. He is alone in a foreign city, looking to make his way to an even more foreign city in an unknown land. Here, the narrator possesses the dwelling state of identity. But all that is okay. What is important is this: he will never be a soldier again.

In this way, Ishmael Beah's memoir, *A Long Way Gone*, tells the harrowing and horrified state of Sierra Leone war. Due to the war, people have lost their real identity. So, Ishmael Beah's memoir covers the adverse impact of war.

Ishmael Beah's *A Long Way Gone* highlights the traumatic memory through the protagonist or narrator Ishmael. Traumatic memory haunts the viewer tellingly and undercuts the temporal continuity. The person who was haunted by the traumatic memory becomes helpless, and rootless. He finds himself distinguished from the larger boundary of society. Similarly, Ishmael Beah feels aimless, rootless and not knowing what to do with his life. He goes where the wind blows. He is often introspective and indulges in self criticism, lacking sense of direction and does not believe that he fits anywhere. Traumatic memory and mourning will force to reconnect with those persons, in spite of debilitating distrust. Ishmael's narrative is one of the gaps, evasions and sudden fusters of erupting emotion and unstable discourse that resembles those of traumatic people, pulled by conflicting impulses controlled by the need for safety. Multiple repetitions and returns are another features of Ishmael's narrative, illustrating the human compulsion to return to and even reenact, disturbing situation.

For the quest of identity, traumatized people need other individual in spite of distrust. They join in traditional rituals and social ceremonies that helps them to find the place in the community. By the network of the community those people are helped to remember their past stories. Similarly, the narrator of this memoir reconstructs the identity by joining the network of community. The community not only helps him but also shares the suffering of his as their own. Likewise, a war trauma leaves indelible marks on their group consciousness and allows them to share the suffering of others as their own and it also helps them to reconstruct the identity. Similarly, communities and school friends can enable Ishmael to remember his past and reconstruct his identity.

Trauma creates a speechless fright that divides or destroys identity. This serves as the basis for a larger argument that suggests identity is formed by the intergenerational transmission of trauma. However, a discursive dependence upon a single psychological theory of trauma produces a homogenous interpretation of the diverse representations in the trauma novel and the interplay that occurs between language, experience, memory, and place. Considering the multiple models of trauma and memory presented in the trauma novel draws attention to the role of place, which functions to portray trauma's effects through metaphoric and material means. Descriptions of the geographic place of traumatic experience and remembrance situate the individual in relation to a larger cultural context that contains social values that influence the recollection of the event and the reconfiguration of the self.

Finally, in the memoir, we can see how he is expressing his traumatic experiences in emotional way. Traumatic experiences focuses on the lack of meaning and purpose in the life and solitude of human trauma. He does not find any way to escape from this trauma. The traumatized people always memorize his/her past in the

form of flashback. These lines shows that how he expresses his past memory in the memoir; “when I was child, my grandmother told me that the sky speaks to those who look and listen to it. She said, ‘in the sky, there are always answers and explanations for everything: every pain, every suffering, joy and confusion’” (166).

In a nutshell, Ishmael is a young man who becomes arctic of devastating civil war in Sierra Leone. Like most of the other civilian, he is a victim of terror campaign on the part of both sides of the war. He is forced to participate in war just to survive . By the age of 15, Ishmael is remorseful killer whose life consistency solely depends on military maneuvers. He recollects more traumatic evidences when he is a remorseful fighter from the government soldiers. He is separated from his family and later heard that his parents have been murdered in the war. Thus, here Ishmael Beah's characters move from one mode of life to another mode of life, by involving initially in the war and ultimately denouncing the institutionalized war. The whole memoir shows the traumatic seffering from the first day when was involved in war.

III. War, Trauma and Its Impact in Humanity

Trauma is a physical or emotional wound that causes stress or shock.

A Long Way Gone is a war memoir dealing with emotional, psychological and physical effects and aftereffects of war. This story involves the lives of Ishmael Beah who lives a fairly happy life in Sierra Leone until civil war breaks out. Then, like other civilians, he was forced to run for his life, becoming separated from his family and later losing them to be murdered by the rebels.

The traumatized protagonist in fiction brings into awareness the specificity of individual trauma that is often connected to larger social factors and cultural values or ideologies. We can see that the trauma novel provides a picture of the individual that suffers, but paints it in such a way as to suggest that this protagonist is an 'every person' figure. In this regard, the fictional figure magnifies a historical event in which thousands or millions of people have suffered a similar violence, such as war, torture, rape, or nuclear devastation. Same as discussed in the above part, in this memoir *A Long Way Gone*, Beah provides a picture of the individual that suffers by the war. He has various traumatic experiences during the Sierra Leone civil war.

In the early 90s, Ishmael Beah was a bright and promising, youngster displaced by the Sierra Leone civil war. He wanders the country side alone or with other displaced boys until recruited by government forces to combat the insurgent revolutionary united front. He faced numerous difficulties when he joins in the armies. Like most of the other civilians, he is a victim of terror campaign on the part of the both sides of war. Thousands of civilians die in this war. But those, who remain alive in war, had the haunting memories of the past.

We have all seen war portrayed in movies, in media and books , mostly from and outside perspective. This powerful book makes us look at war from the eyes of

one scared boy participating in it. He is forced to participate just to survive. We see it from a whole new set of eyes. He does not sugarcoat the situation making it seem better than it is. He just tells us straight out what he saw and what he felt. Through, Ishmael 's eyes, we see humanity towards other men, suffering of the innocent and what all these fighting can do to each person. Ishmael was taught to kill without emotion. He was taught not to look at the person and decide with compassion, but to just look at the situation. The situation was desperate and the only way to survive would be obliterate the competition. They give him no hope for a compromise. It was their way to death. Ishmael and other soldiers just saw the rebels as something in the way of their goal something to be destroyed, not as another human being. They had that thought imprinted so deeply in their mind some never could get it out.

Furthermore, war creates great physical as well as psychological pain to the civilians. It may create disturbance in the mental order of the human too. The locals of the Sierra Leone/villagers of Sierra Leone had experienced the physical and psychological pain which is beautifully presented in this memoir by Ishmael Beah.

To wrap up, this novel covers the total age of war and portrays its effect of war in the Sierra Leone people. War torture and memories haunt not only common people but also haunt to the rebels force; this is clearly exposed by Ishmael Beah. In the war, the loss of lives and properties and physical wound bring long lasting effect in the survivors. These physical and psychological tortures and memories enlarge the trauma of survivors. Moreover, the war between civilian and the rebel forces hinders the identity of the local people or natives and widens the traumatic condition.

Abstract

Ishmael Beah's memoir, *A Long Way Gone: Memories of a Boy Soldier*, tells how an ordinary boy becomes a ruthless soldier and overcomes his terrible experiences. The memoir not only highlights the complexity of human nature under stress but also adds an important voice to political and policy discussions on the effects of war on children. Similarly, the whole memoir includes the traumatic suffering of the narrator. Due to the traumatic memory the narrator goes through the dilemma about life. Life for him is utterly hallucination and worthless. It seems that he equates life with death. It also deals with the issue of adverse impact of war upon the humanity. The narrator of this memoir reconstructs identity by joining the network of community. The community not only helps him but also shares the suffering of his as their own. Likewise, a war trauma leaves indelible marks on their group consciousness and allows them to share the suffering of others as their own.

Le Clezio's *Onitsha* narrates a story of a young boy named Fintan who, with his mother Maou, travels to Onitsha, a Nigerian city on the bank of a Niger River to meet his English father whom he has never seen in his lifetime. Both Fintan and Maou cherish a beautiful dream to meet the father in Onitsha and see the beauty of Nigeria. But as soon as they reach Onitsha, they encounter with the ugly face of Onitsha ravaged by colonialism. Then tension starts as both Fintan and Maou can't tolerate the series of brutality and exploitation upon the local Nigerian people by the colonizers. Even being colonizer themselves, they stand on the side and support of the local Nigerian people and protest the callous mannerism of colonizers whereby embarking resistance against the colonialism in African country, Nigeria.

The novel highlights the resistant acts carried out by the colonizers themselves against the colonialism in African country, Nigeria. Maou, Fintan and Geoffrey are the colonial agents who stand against the colonial rule in Nigeria. Some colonial agents could not tolerate the series of colonial torture and exploitation by colonizers upon the colonized people. They find the beautiful Nigeria ravaged by the colonial rule. Then, Maou adamantly stands on the side of local Nigerian people protesting the colonial cruelty. She befriends the local people instead of wives of other colonial agents posted in Nigeria. Some colonial agents like Maou, Fintan and Geoffrey pursue the local culture renouncing their colonial culture. They learn pidgin language and practice. Thus, they resist the colonialism in Nigeria both politically and culturally. She strongly advocates the rights of colonized people and gives voice to the voiceless African people. And she fearlessly faces the challenges appeared before her after she, a colonial agent, acts against the colonialism and in support of the local people. Tension heightens between and among the colonizers. As a result, the colonizers not only face the hindrances from the local people but also from the colonizer themselves. Finally, colonizers lose the battle and colonized recover their seized land from the grip of colonizers.

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