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The Afterlives of War in Ishmael Beah's, *Radiance of Tomorrow*

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DECLARATION

I declare that **The Afterlives of war in Ishmael Beah's, *Radiance of Tomorrow*** is my own unaided work and that the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of references.

Eva Wangari Muriuki Date

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ABSTRACT

This study is conceived and developed with the intention of initiating a discussion around post-war life in African literature and how this is portrayed through realistic fiction writing. Ishmael Beah in his novel, *Radiance of Tomorrow,* aims to tackle several issues around neo-colonialism, orality, tradition and development. My aim in this study is to analyze the ways in which Beah uses literature to communicate a larger message about post-war life obstacles. Following his well received memoir, *A Long Way Gone,* Beah wanted to tell a less romanticized story of what life really looks like after the war. Beah makes use of several literary techniques in unique ways that go against their conventional literary uses. Irony which is a form of satire is often used to illustrate the difference between what lies underneath what is taking place on the surface. It is used to show the reader the realities behind certain actions and situations. However, Beah makes use of irony to illustrate the similarities between life during and after the war. He uses irony to illustrate that though the ending of the war should be bringing forth time of peace that represents life that existed before the war, this period instead is simply a continuation of war in another form. He uses personification to humanize the environment to portray how the people and the environment around them are one. He relies on oral genres to portray the distorted histories that are being formed in order for the future generation to be shielded from the memories of war. This study seeks to add to the current literature on culture and post-war development, while working with ecocritical theories to explain the personification of the environment in the novel. With a close reading and analysis of the novel, as well as secondary readings from scholars who deal with trauma, literary devices and post-war literature, I attempt to understand how Beah uses these different literary devices, how he chooses to organize his novel and most importantly, why.

The Afterlives of War in Ishmael Beah's *Radiance of Tomorrow*

INTRODUCTION

This study is primarily concerned with the representation of post-war life in Sierra-Leone in, as portrayed in Ishmael Beah's, *Radiance of Tomorrow (2014).* Beah pays particular attention to three main issues in this novel: culture, the environment and development. In Ishmael Beah's memoir, *A Long Way Gone (2009),* he gives the impression that the civil war in Sierra-Leone has come to an end and that with the ending of the war, peace has begun. The study seeks to question if war really ends. It analyzes the violence that takes place against the environment, the people and the culture in this post-war setting. Environmental violence in the specific context reflected in the text refers to the degeneration of the environment through the destruction of the air, soil and water by the mining company that moves in after the war has come to an end. In the village Imperi, examples include the poisoning of the water, the dust on the roads and other activities by the mining company that imperil the safety and the livelihoods of the villagers. The study also looks at how and why Beah depicts modernisation, development and the disruption caused by the war as an assault on pre-existing forms of knowledge and modes of being in the village and how Beah focuses on the ironies of development as a means of complicating the reader's understanding of peace, which he represents not simply as the absence of open war.

The study investigates why Beah represents violence that mirrors that which took place during the war, but in a post-war setting. Why does he present the war as being a continued event, rather than something that started and ended in his memoir? What is the logic behind this kind of representation that draws significant affinities between war-time and post-war violence? He makes use of character flashbacks and reminisces of the war severally in the novel. He also depicts violent acts in the novel like rape, alcohol abuse, exploitation and death and illustrates them in such a way that they mimic the acts as they happened during the war. I explore this notion of an unending narrative and find out why and how Beah uses this to depict the violence that takes place in comparison to the preceding civil war.

I want to show how and why Beah represents the rhetoric and practice of development, as exemplified in the mining company, as low-grade war or war by other means. Beah makes use of irony in this novel to depict these acts. He compares these present acts of violence committed by the mining company in such a way that they have very close ties to the acts

that occurred during the war. Though the irony is not blatantly presented, when closely read, the similarities between war time and post war time are seen. Beah reinforces this by having characters in the novel make mention of times during and even before the war and that is the clue that Beah is making use of irony to send a message to the reader. This message is what I intend to analyse in the study. In pursuing this line of enquiry, the research report will weigh the ethical and political claims of 'tradition' against those of an externally-imposed 'development/modernisation', with the objective of showing what is at stake in the conflict between the two constructs. The study will investigate the circumstances that bring about these conflicts and what the long-term effects of these are on the people of the village of Imperi and the multinational companies alike.

War is defined as being in a state of armed conflict. This state of armed conflict takes place between communities, governments, countries, societies and even tribes. The characteristics of war include aggression, destruction, death and armed combat by recognized and unrecognized military forces. The opposite of war is known as peace. While Smihula (2013) argues that war is a result of human nature, James (2006) argues that war is a result of specific socio-cultural or ecological circumstances. In Sierra-Leone, the socio-cultural factors refer to the poverty and the politics that surround Sierra-Leone pre-war. The ecological factors refer to the extracting of minerals and more specifically diamonds found in Sierra-Leone that were used to enrich specific political and non-political parties, as well as finance the civil war. This is discussed in more detail below.

The historical recordings and accounts of the civil war in Sierra-Leone claim that the war began on the 23rd of March 1991 and continued for eleven years to the 18th of January 2002. The war begun when the RUF (Revolutionary United Front) with the support of the Liberian NPFL (National Patriotic Front of Liberia) attempted to overthrow the government and Joseph Momoh. On the 18th of January 2002, Sierra-Leone civil war was declared over with a new President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah.

Ishmael Beah the author of the two books, *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier* (2009) and *Radiance of Tomorrow* (2014) was born in 1980 in Sierra-Leone. His first work,

a memoir, documents his childhood in Sierra-Leone and later on, his life as a child soldier, when he is captured by the RUF (Revolutionary United Front) soldiers. During this time he is forced to kill and is also roped into the abuse of drugs. The memoir concludes with what Beah illustrates as the ending of the Sierra-Leone civil war and Beah being admitted into a rehabilitation program. He subsequently goes to the United States when he is seventeen years old, where he attends school and eventually graduates from Oberlin College in 2004.

His memoir, *A Long Way Gone,* reads like a Sierra-Leone fairytale story with a happy ending. However, in his novel *Radiance of Tomorrow,* he breaks away from this fairytale mode and depicts the war as a continuing experience, showing readers what happens after the supposed happy ending of his memoir. Beah, when describing his memoir says that 'people have a very romantic notion of war', a statement by which he seeks to distance himself somewhat from the popular reception of his memoir as yet another creation of the myth of America and the west as being the rescuers of the needy third world refugees and asylum seekers. He uses his novel to show what the west symbolizes in impoverished African countries and more specifically Sierra-Leone, by portraying the exploitation and the violence that the western countries inflict on African developing nations.

From a literary perspective, Beah's novel serves as a reference point to articulate the social ills afflicting Sierra-Leone after the ending of the civil war. This research report will essentially focus on how Beah uses this novel to represent post-war life in Sierra-Leone. Post-war experience as an individual topic of study, is lacking in literary studies. However, when broken down into the characteristics that are associated with it for example, development, capitalism, and trauma and so on, we are able to identify several scholars and critics who have discussed these issues at length in their different contexts. Part of this project's intention is to add on to our understanding of post-war life as a whole as is represented in African literature.

By exploring existing literary work on the topics/characteristics surrounding post-war life, I draw more light on these issues from the perspective of life after war. A writer who has written on issues associated with post-war life includes Cyprian Ekwensi (1976) in his novel *Surviving the Peace* based on the civil war in Nigeria. Like Beah, Ekwensi centers on

the time after the war has supposedly come to an end. Ekwensi's novel illustrates the idea of war being a distinct event, however, simultaneously illustrating that the war has not really ended.

Ekwensi's novel has been accused of being superficial with Paul Iheakaram (1978) saying that Ekwensi takes a more materialistic view of the war and shows that the characters have learned nothing and that the war has had no real effect on them. Unlike Ekwensi, Beah does not have a firsthand account of what coming back to one's home and attempting to start life again, as he restarted his life in America. However, the reader will find that even though his story is fictional, he addresses the issues that surround post war life and that is what this project unpacks.

The choice of *Radiance of Tomorrow* for this research report has been influenced by the fact that it is one of the few novels that engages with several literary forms and styles in creative and even unconventional ways, to illustrate the social ills that affect post-war life in Sierra-Leone. It is not simply a personal account of the war and the effects of the war. It addresses issues that affect the world today while still maintaining the literary flair of a novel. My hope is that my engagement with this text will stimulate future exploration of literature on post-war life in other African countries affected by war. This study will contribute to the existing scholarship on war in postcolonial African literature by discussing these pertinent issues not as separate topics, but by unifying them to illustrate the complete picture of what we call post-war life or life after war Also it will illustrate the complexity that is post-war life because the study sees war as a continuing event and not something that begins and ends.

There is a wide selection of articles and books on Sierra-Leone and on the civil war that took place there. Ishmael Beah's, *A Long Way Gone (2007)* and a film titled, *Blood Diamond* (2006) starring Leonardo Dicaprio and Djimon Honsou, directed by Edward Zwick are among some of the works that have been written and produced to narrate the story of the Sierra-Leone civil war. While there may be several critics, writers and scholars who have

written exhaustively on the civil war, the literature about post-war life, especially coming out of Sierra-Leone is wanting. Ishmael Beah's, *Radiance of Tomorrow,* is one of the inaugural novels that deals specifically with post-war life in Sierra Leone.

Ishmael Beah's *Radiance of Tomorrow*, the primary text for this research report, narrates the story of a small fictional village called Imperi based in Sierra-Leone. The story takes place after the proclamation of the end of the Sierra-Leone civil war and people, who have survived the war, have started to make their way back to villages where their homes or potential new homes are based. The story begins with the arrival of these various people to the village of Imperi. As people arrive one by one and also in groups, the village starts to fill and they all begin to rebuild and start new lives again. Bockarie and Benjamin the protagonists of the novel become teachers at the local school trying to provide for their family under the corrupt management of the principal.

The larger section of the novel centers on the arrival of a multinational company that comes to Imperi to mine the natural resources. It brings with it the promise of new jobs, while at the same time exploiting not only the people of Imperi, but the environment in which they live in as well. Along with the arrival and settlement of this new company is the increase in violence, rape and alcohol consumption in the village, similar to some of the happenings that took place during the war. In the novel we are able to identify three main themes that the author is trying to bring: the irony of development, post-war violence and cultural violence.

Beah makes use of irony when describing the violent acts that take place within the novel, especially those that pertain to the mining company. He attempts to illustrate how this mining company should bring development to an otherwise impoverished village and impoverished country; however, in actual fact they are simply here to drain the country even more of its natural resources which in essence should enrich the country and its people. Beah attempts to investigate the conventional idea of peace. He does this by pointing out the ironies that surround peace, by drawing attention to the ironies surrounding development, the environment and violence in a post-war setting in the village of Imperi.

Beah makes use of flashbacks towards the beginning of the text: as he introduces each character to show the reader the characters background. While this helps the reader to understand the characters more, it also gives us the notion that the war is not a very distant memory and very much a part of the lives of these characters even if the war has supposedly come to end. There is also a sense of avoidance from the characters themselves and this is seen when Beah uses orality in the novel. The stories that are told to the children are not about war and some of the stories are even used to cover up some of the tragedies of the war, so that the children do not have to experience or even know what happened. Orality in this text is not used to educate the children about their past, but rather to shield them from it. We see this avoidance as well when the characters reminisce about the war as if they long for it more than they long for the supposed peace they now have. This gives us insight to the fact that maybe the war has not really come to an end and that is what Beah tries to portray.

Beah also uses the novel to draw attention to issues pertaining to the environment that are a result of the presence of the mining company that has based itself in the village. Through his use of direct translations from the Mende language to English, Beah points out how important the environment is to the people of Imperi and how it plays a part in the daily life and understanding of life by the local people. Beah manages to weave the environmental issues into the text in such a way that the story of the people and the environment becomes one story and by doing this he gives some kind of artificial life to something that could be considered non-human.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

The study will work with the Dependency Theory which investigates what is called 'core' or wealthy states and the 'periphery' or poor and underdeveloped states and how resources flow between the two. The theory claims that resources flow from these periphery states to the core states enriching the core states at the expense of the periphery. Therefore the main idea in the dependency theory is that the poorer states are impoverished and the rich ones enriched because of the way the poor states have been incorporated into the 'world system'. The 'world system' refers to the inter-regional and transnational division of

labour, which divides the world into core, semi-periphery and periphery countries. The core countries focus on higher skill, capital intensive production and the rest of the countries focus on low-skill, labour-intensive production and extraction of raw-materials. This continuously reinforces the control and dominance of the core countries on the semi-periphery and periphery countries.

Core countries are seen to be countries situated in America and Europe, while periphery states are largely situated in Africa and other formerly colonized regions of the world. In this case Sierra-Leone falls into one of the periphery countries. Dependency theory attempts to explain the present underdeveloped state of many nations in the world by examining the patterns of interactions among nations and by arguing that inequality among nations is an intrinsic part of those interactions. Dependency theory states that poor nations provide natural resources and cheap labor for developed nations, so that developed nations can have a high standard of living. When underdeveloped countries try to remove the Core's influence, the developed countries hinder their attempts in order to keep control. This means that poverty of developing nations is not the result of the exclusion of these countries from the world system, but because of the way in which they are integrated into this system.

The study will look to locate Beah's work within an eco-critical framework. According to Habeeb and Habeeb (2012), Eco-criticism investigates the relationship between humans and the natural world in literature and the way in which environmental issues, cultural issues concerning the environment and attitudes towards nature are presented and analyzed. It investigates how individuals in society react and behave in relation to nature and ecological aspects. This theory seeks to emphasize the importance of the human and non-human in literature. This non-human element is woven carefully into the text and the aim of the critic therefore, is to study the relevance of the non-human, or the environment rather, to the human element.

One of the ideologies that marry both culture and development is known as the Post-Development Theory. According to post-development theorists, development is just a mental image, of the developed and under developed countries, where the underdeveloped

nations want to be like developed nations. This theory claims that poverty is caused by a state being dominated by a core state through the provision of jobs and what would be seen in those circumstances as a better life. In this case, culture is rejected and the need to survive over takes the need to maintain one's culture.

It is not that the people of Imperi are attracted to the 'glitz and glamour' of the mining companies. They do not portray signs of wanting to emulate them or have a country that looks like the one they are from, but rather that this mining company has brought jobs which essentially help the locals to take care of themselves and their family. This need for survival, therefore dominates their desire or need to maintain and respect cultural practices and this will be explored further in the study.

The study will closely analyze of the novel *Radiance of Tomorrow* by Ishmael Beah. The main focus is on the after-lives of war as portrayed in the novel. The afterlives of war in this research report refers to what everyday human life looks like after a war has come to an end. This delves into traditions, culture, enterprise, and trauma and so on. How does a war affect how people behave and relate to one another? What is the difference between how life was before the war and after the war? This analysis is further guided by the Theoretical Framework which is made of the following concepts: post-war violence, ironies of development, cultural practices and development. This together with works on cultural practices, tradition, irony, orality, oral traditions and the writing of development in African literature are applied in the research report to analyze the novel.

CHAPTER ONE

HUMANIZING NATURE

In *Radiance of Tomorrow*, culture is represented in several ways. One of the ways that culture is introduced and illustrated to the reader is through the use of orality, and literary devices such as personification, simile and metaphor. Traditions in Beah's novel, *Radiance of Tomorrow*, are the practices that make up the culture in the village of Imperi. These traditions are greatly intertwined with the environment. Nature in the novel refers to the land, trees, wind, sky, sun, moon, stars, rain, animals, paths and soil. I am interested in investigating how Beah, through the use of personification, seeks to illustrate the importance of nature and through the use of orality, illustrate the intimate relationship between nature and tradition.

Culture in Beah's novel, *Radiance of Tomorrow,* is both a reference to the life that existed before the war and the life that begins to exist after the war. Culture is crucial to the healing and the creation of what is considered in the village of Imperi as a normal life. Culture, customs and norms are the laws that govern a society and a community; however, they are not legally binding. They are also a set of practices and these practices that are also enduring inheritances, are what we call traditions. Traditions altogether, when carried out, make up the culture of a community.

Beah in his foreward to the novel draws attention to his use of direct translation of the Mende language to English. In this case, he does not translate and then restructure the sentence so as to make sense in the English language. He simply translates directly from the Mende language to English just as it has been said. He gives the example,

> 'Mende is very expressive, very figurative, and when I write, I always struggle to find the English equivalent of things I really want to say in Mende. For example, in Mende, you wouldn't say 'night came suddenly', you would say 'the sky rolled over and changed its sides.' (Beah, pg viii)

Beah explains that if he expressed such things in written English then they would have a different meaning. We see this at the very beginning of the novel when we are introduced to one of the main characters of the novel Mama Kadie as she is making her way back into the village Imperi. However, translation from any language to another language is always a creative work. Anything in a language can be translated a number of different ways. Therefore, it is possible that these translations that Beah talks about are done to serve a different purpose. This is what this chapter seeks to investigate what this purpose is and how he achieves this in the novel.

> 'The long winding paths were spoken of as "snakes" that one walked upon to encounter life or to arrive at places where life lived. Like snakes, the paths were now ready to shed their old skins for new ones, and such occurrences take time with the necessary interruptions." (Beah, p3).

Berry (2003) gives description of what a path is;

> A path is little more than a habit that comes with knowledge of a place. It is a sort of ritual of familiarity. As a form, it is a form of contact with a known landscape. It is not destructive. It is the perfect adaptation, through experience and familiarity, of movement to place; it obeys the natural contours; such obstacles as it meets, it goes around. (Berry, p12).

The novel begins with a description of nature. Beah is very particular with his choice of words. He calls the place where people walk, a path and not a road or a street. There is a deeper meaning to this as Berry (2003) explains. The paths in this context 'were spoken of as snakes', because the people in that community have a deep knowledge and understanding of the paths. This goes beyond knowledge of the paths; it is a relationship with the paths, a relationship with nature. The shedding of the old skins gives a subtle reference to the war in Sierra Leone that has now come to an end. It is a sense of new beginnings and letting go of what has passed. However, when he writes that, 'this takes time with the necessary interruptions', it also shows that this new beginning will not be an easy one and will take time and have obstacles. In a sense, in just a few lines, Beah introduces the entire narrative even though the reader is unaware of this.

Beah continuously throughout the novel attempts to connect nature with the people and their tradition. This interaction of nature and people to form tradition explains why further in the novel, nature is highly valued. In this village the earth is seen as taking on human qualities and Beah expresses this through the use of personification,

> "Evening was approaching and the sky was preparing to roll over and change its side. She sat on the ground, allowing the night's breeze to soothe her face and her pain, to dry her tears." (Beah, p7).

The night's breeze is seen to be a friend or confidant. While it is simply blowing as it should, it is portrayed to be comforting Mama Kadie and figuratively wiping her tears away, even if this is not a physical possibility. The fact that Mama Kadie is 'allowing' the breeze to do this goes to further portray and emphasize the connection with nature. Though the village is practically empty, it still feels like there is someone with Mama Kadie all the time. This continuous representation of the relationship between humans and nature and the interaction of tradition in every representation of this relationship shows the in-depth connection that the three elements have with one another and how a disconnection from one, creates an even larger disconnection with the others.

Beah also represents the traditions of the village through the use of oral tradition. Oral tradition is a form of human communication where things like knowledge and art are transmitted from one generation to another. This communication is received, preserved and transmitted again from one generation to another. Mama Kadie sits reminiscing about her grandmother:

> "When she was a child, her grandmother told her that at the quietest hours of night, God and gods would wave their hands through the breeze to wipe just a few things off the face of the earth so that it would be able to accommodate the following day. Though her pain didn't totally disappear with the arrival of the morning, she felt some new strength within her heart that gave her the idea to pluck herself from the earth and begin cleaning the bones." (Beah, p7).

Okpewho (1992) defines this passing on of history from the old to the young, through stories, as being traditional literature which is derived from Orature. He says,

> Orature is a recent but seldom used term that again emphasizes the oral character of the literature. Traditional literature puts an emphasis on the fact that this form of literature comes from the past and is handed down from one generation to another. (Okpewho, p3).

Okpewho also defines orality and oral tradition and explains the relationship it has with Orality and Literacy.

> It simply means 'literature derived by word of mouth' and has turned out to be a very useful concept for those scholars interested in examining the cultural relationship between those who can read and write and those who cannot- or, in a more professional language between orality and literacy. (Opewho, p3).

Orality can also be a useful concept in this novel to examine the relationship between the young and the old. In the novel stories are passed on from Mama Kadie who is an elder in the community to Oumu a young girl. Oral tradition is a major part of the culture in the village of Imperi and therefore, it is a useful concept to examine when looking at the relationships between the young and old in a wider context which we explore more in chapter two. Traditions are that stories which are the histories of a community or a group of people are passed on to the younger generation and they are tasked with the duty of carrying these stories and passing them on. That is why it is Mama Kadie's grandmother who passes on the stories to her and she has now chosen Oumu. However, in chapter two we see a break in the respect and the reverence of tradition once the mining company arrives.

The elders of the village of Imperi, are seen to be the carriers of tradition and that is why they are narrated to be the first to enter Imperi after the war has come to an end. This within itself, though it is easy to see it as simply an author's decision in terms of the way he has chosen to narrate this story, has some allegorical element. We can connect this back to the way the story begins with the land, with the elder and with an introduction to the

culture using oral literature, 'the paths were spoken of as snakes.' (Beah, p3). Culture and the carriers of this culture form the beginning of this novel and in the end oral literature is referred to once more as the novel closes.

> "She thought about the moments when she had heard stories from the elders. Something brought the voice of Mama Kadie to Oumu's mind. 'Always press your bare feet to the ground and listen to what the earth says and what it has to give you for the day. She always has something, but you have to listen to receive it,' Mama Kadie had said to Oumu during one of those times when the little girl had sat with her, peppering her with questions, which Mama Kadie had enjoyed because she knew the little girl was ready to receive the stories of the past, the ones that strengthen your backbone when the world whips you and weakens your spirit." (Beah, p236).

We can derive from this then, that culture is what ties the whole community together and that this culture forms its grounding on the environment around the carriers of the culture who are the elders and the people who inhabit the village.

Beah uses orality predominantly to show the traditions that existed before the war and the traditions that exist now. He also aims to portray the difference and the similarities that exist in the culture that was pre-war and the culture that is now post-war. It is not that culture does not exist or was destroyed by the war, but that it must change and adjust because things in the surrounding have changed too. People who once lived together in a village harmoniously are divided by war, where neighbours who once knew one another, killed one another as some joined the rebel army or were forced to do so. Therefore the relations between these individuals, regardless of the idea of forgiveness, will adjust slightly. However, we find that in the novel, the infusion and emphasis of culture and tradition which is enforced by the elders is what keeps everyone together. This is what Beah tries to emphasize when he introduces orality and oral tradition, as well as descriptions of how the village and village customs are carried out.

The greetings that take place between individuals are directly linked once again to the earth and environment around them.

> "Please remove your eyes from the body of the earth and see your friend...his eyes surveyed the body of his friend while his mind confirmed: her hands are both there, her legs too, nose, ear, lips" (Beah, p8).

The earth is described as having a body. It is not clear what kind of body this is. However, considering how in the last few pages, the earth has been personified as a human being, it can be assumed that this is a human body.

> "My feet touched this land on the day that gave birth to this one. And I walked the path, as that is the way in my heart...She believed in the knowledge of her great-grandparents, who had made the paths and knew the land better than those foreigners who just get into their machines and carve roads into the earth without thinking about where the land breathes, where it sleeps, where it wakes, where it entertains spirits, where it wants the sun or the shade of a tree. They laughed, both knowing that part of the old ways remained though they were fragile." (Beah, p9-10).

Edward B. Tylor views culture as being something fragile and a figment of the human imagination. Among the many things that he claims are merely products of culture, the land and the environment are not one of them:

> Culture is a powerful human tool for survival, but it is a fragile phenomenon. It is constantly changing and easily lost because it exists only in our minds. Our written languages, governments, buildings, and other man-made things are merely the products of culture. They are not culture in themselves. (Tylor, 1917).

So what do we make then of this relationship that exists between tradition and the environment? Tradition is not a product of culture but it is so intertwined with the culture of the people of Imperi that they are almost the same thing. In every greeting, action or decision made there is a reference made to the land, there is a certain respect given to it. Beah shows this not only by incorporating it into the greetings and the oral literature, but also through the way in which he describes it using personification.

Moore and Bryan (2008) explain why personification, despite it being an old literary technique, is still used by contemporary creative writers to date:

> for writers whose principal subject is the natural world- more particularly, for those who write in defence of preserving wilderness- personification remains, as it has been since antiquity, one of the key figures employed to explore and explain the place of humans on a planet (Moore &Bryan, p2).

However, Moore and Bryan (2008) also argue that personification is used by nature writers to advocate for an ecocentric view. Unlike the anthropocentrism approach Beah seeks to show that the land here is more supreme than human beings:

> People who hold an anthropocentric view acknowledge themselves as being the only most significant entities in the universe while disregarding animals and plants unless they provide life necessities such as nutrition, clothing, shelter and medical benefits. (MacKinnon 2007, p.331)

The way the villagers view the land is with such reverence and this can be seen for example when Mama Kadie and Pa Moiwa are collecting the bones that have been left over after the war.

> "Mama Kadie and Pa Moiwa, as all those younger would respectfully call them, spent weeks removing things that did not belong to the surface of the earth... During the entire process, they never cried; they spoke very little to each other except when they rested. And even then, it was in the most general terms, about the past before the land had changed." (Beah, p10).

The things that did not belong to the surface of the earth are the bones of the people who had been killed. They did not belong to the surface of the earth because their deaths were not natural and because the amount of death that was caused, this is what had caused the land to change. Maybe by removing these bones, the land would once again return to itself as we see Beah illustrating further on in the novel when he compares the two types of fire flames.

By use of personification Beah explains that in this village of Imperi the land and the people are one and the same. Because land is not an actual person, he must employ personification, however, its use is not to simply describe and give the reader some kind of mental image. Personification in this sense is used to illustrate the value of the nature and how nature's value is not any less than that of the humans who inhabit it. He also wants to portray how the culture of the community is derived and maintained through the consistency of the earth's functions. For example the sunrise and sunset, the wind and so on are all things that are used to maintain the memory and consistency of the intricate parts of the culture and beliefs. What we see being changed are aspects of the culture that have been affected by things man-made or man-caused.

> "As they entered town, their pace slowed while their eyes ran ahead, surveying the bullet holes on the walls, the dark spots where fire had licked with its red tongue, the grasses that had grown in the remains of what used to be homes." (Beah, p20-21)

> "A good part of the sky was red, as though it were on fire or someone were cooking on it with firewood, The hue was not that of a threatening fire but of something playful and inviting." (Beah, p36).

The fire that is described before the war is different to the one described after the war. In the first description the fire is said to have licked with its red tongue. This gives us the idea of consumption. The effortless act of licking paints a picture of how easily the fire consumed everything in the village. However, because it is fire we understand the amount of destruction it caused. Then on the other hand we have fire being described as something playful and inviting. Here we have fire being used to cook and to create light and warmth for storytelling. The same thing can be both a powerful consumer and a playful inviting thing. This illustration is similar to the description of the paths shedding their skin. Beah describes the fire and the paths with reference to the war. He illustrates the differences between how things were before the war and how things are now that the war is over. The paths shed their old skins and the fire goes from being a consumer to something that brings joy.

Moore and Bryan (2008) describe this type of writing as ecocentric personification:

> ecocentric personification works by intersecting the two essential points of rhetoric and ecology: it seeks to persuade an audience that all living things are connected. It does this by directly addressing ecocritical (and ecological) concerns on at least three major fronts: representation, relationship, and morality. (Moore & Bryan, p10).

When looking at all the written descriptions of the land and tradition we see Beah using personification to first represent what the land is and what the land means. He gives the land human characteristics to show the value it has in this novel. He then brings in the characters and shows how they relate with the land through their greetings, customs, tradition and he portrays a direct, if not intimate relationship with the land.

> "The bones and muscles in my feet never felt tired of wandering; in fact, they felt restless. It was only when I set foot here- 'He placed his palms on the ground and rubbed the dirt with his eyes closed for a few seconds before continuing. 'It was only here that my feet and spirit suddenly felt tired,' He let his tongue rest for the passing wind to speak" (Beah p14).

We then have the morality aspect which will be dealt with in the next chapter when we look at development.

> "Mama Kadie wanted to ask, *How are you, your children and grandchildren, your wife, their health?* As greetings were in the old days, but she held her tongue. These days one must be careful to avoid awakening the pain of another. She placed her hands on each of their shoulders, gently releasing her friends from the stupor of all that had come to pass. She thought, *We are here, alive, and we must go on living"* (Beah, p18).

The trauma caused by the war prevents Mama Kadie from upholding the basic tradition of greeting. Tylor (1917) explains that language is a product of tradition and that tradition is in the mind and therefore subject to change, but he does not mention land and nature. So we see here that Mama Kadie, should have performed the standard greetings as required

by tradition but does not do so, so as to not bring forth someone's pain. Mainly because many people's children, wife, grandchildren had been killed in the war and so to ask a peron how they were, would be to remind them of what they had lost.

However, we are then introduced to Sila who comes into the village and his greetings somehow follow the protocol of tradition.

> "Greetings to you, all my elders, to the trees, to the land and all that remains...' Greetings were customarily done with the shaking of right hands. The elders bowed slightly to acknowledge Sila, who was in his forties." (Beah, p28-229).

When Sila greets the elders he also greets the land. This greeting is accepted and does not have to be changed or adjusted. We can see then from this nature maintains its consistency. It is not a product of culture but it is an intricate part of it.

Tradition begins to change as people begin to enter and settle in the village of Imperi,

> "Shake my hand with your left, and we should do so from now on, as this hand has the responsibility of both, Pa Kainesi said to Sila.
>
> But this isn't proper. The right hand is customary for greetings.
>
> Times have changed and so must certain traditions. The respect for the tradition is in your eyes and mannerisms. So from now on I choose to shake your left hand.' Pa Moiwa and Mama Kadie shook Sila's hand and rubbed the heads of his children. Maada and Hawa felt comfortable knowing that the elders treated them the same as all other children." (Beah, p45).

Tylor (1917) explains this new type of culture which he refers to as a subculture,

> The second layer of culture that may be part of your identity is a subculture. In complex, diverse societies in which people have come from many different parts of the world, they often retain much of their original cultural traditions. As a result, they are likely to be part of an identifiable subculture in their new society. The

> shared cultural traits of subcultures set them apart from the rest of their society.(Tylor, 1917).

In the village of Imperi we do not have people coming from different parts of the world, but rather a community of people scattered by war. All these people who have returned experienced the war in a different way. This is why Beah makes use of flashbacks as each individual character's comes to Imperi. We are provided with a narrated back story of every character's war experience. While Sila and his children are amputated, Mahawa is raped and gives birth to a child that is born as a result of this rape, Mama Kadie's whole family is slaughtered, Pa Kainesi is chopped by a machete but not killed. All these character's may have been one community before the war, but have come back different people. While the old ways are remembered and respected, practicing them brings about memory of life before war and that inevitably makes everyone remember the war which opens a wound that reminds the people of this village of the trauma of war. Creating a new culture therefore, is essential to the healing and inevitably the survival of the people of this village.

The question we can ask here is wouldn't the changing of the culture in itself, work as a reminder of the war. Can it not be seen then as a sign of pity? This change of culture to accommodate these individuals can also be viewed as a form of avoidance. There is sensitivity about following the old ways so as not to remind people where they have come from. This raises a conflict because culture essentially forms a large part of the history of a society. So when the history becomes distorted what effect does that have on the culture, and how it is passed on from one generation to another?

> "Were you born like this, or is this what happens when you become so old?' Everyone laughed without answering the little girl. She was of the generation that didn't witness the war and had been told only good stories of this land, so she still believed that people get old and then die and that marks such as the ones on her grandfather's face were a result of old age and not other consequences." (Beah, p33).

The children in this novel, especially the ones born after the war, are shielded from knowing their past. No one ever explains to them the reasons why certain things are

happening or have happened. When Bockarie's children see Sila's children whose arms have been amputated, he immediately tells them that their mother will explain why they are like that, in other words, why they do not have hands. In the above quote we see a child asking if this old man's face is like that because he is old and no one gives an answer. There is a large part of these children's history that is simply being taken away from them. The intention may be good, but what does this do to the cause of oral tradition.

> "Children born toward the end of the war had no understanding of it; by the time they could form memories, the guns had silenced. And no one wanted to explain what had happened- because they didn't want to remember and they couldn't find the right words." (Beah, p20).

Okpewho and Finnegan both view oral tradition as something that must be passed on from one person to another. So what can be said about this break in the intergenerational transmission of communal history? Where one party holds the full account of the events that took place to form the historical background of a society, but when they pass on this history, it is edited or changed altogether. We cannot then full trust in this account of history that is given by word of mouth. In fact we would have to call into account all the history we know into question.

> It isn't about knowing the most stories, child. It is about carrying the ones that are the most important and passing them along. I have already decided to tell you all the stories I carry. You have to be patient, though, for the stories can only remain in the mind and veins of a patient person. Come visit me anytime you need a story.(Beah, p35).

Ruth Finnegan (2012) writes:

> the connection between transmission and very existence is a much more intimate one…without its oral realization and direct rendition by singer or speaker, an unwritten literary piece cannot easily be said to have any continued or independent existence at all.(Finnegan, p5).

We see here that Mama Kadie chooses Oumu a child as the audience for her stories. Oumu is then tasked with the responsibilities to learn the stories and to pass them on. This decision in itself is, as Finnegan says, an intimate one. Stories in this context are looked upon as precious cargo. Mama Kadie says that it is not just about knowing the stories, but carrying them. The stories here are seen as valuable things that cannot just be known, they must be carried. Looking deeper into that statement, it could also be deduced that these stories also play a part in the way that people choose to live. They act as a guide to everyday decisions that could be made. This is why they cannot just be known they must be carried. This places a lot of responsibility on Oumu who is just a child.

> "The evening brought back one of the old ways and feelings, which was that children were everyone's and that they belonged to all adults, who had the responsibilities to care for them…All the men and boys ate together and the woman and girls did the same, bringing a lively aura to that evening that resembled the way things used to be."(Beah, p34-35).

Okpewho (1992) explains how tradition and oral literature come together under one title known as folklore,

> the concept of folklore: 'manners, customs, observances, superstitions, ballads, proverbs, etc' are roughly its constituents. Oral literature- which comprises riddles, puns, tongue-twisters, proverbs, recitations, chants, songs and stories- represents only the verbal aspects of folklore… Other aspects of folklore include traditional methods of cooking, architecture, medicine and dressmaking as well as religion or ritual, art, instrumental music, and dance. The total body of information which a community possesses about all these things is it folklore…however, it is important to note that the folklore of a people consist essentially of two kinds of activity: what these people traditionally say…and what they traditionally do. (Okpewho, 4-5).

This concept of folklore brings together oral literature and traditional practices under one idea. We are therefore able to understand that the relationships the villagers have with the land and the way in which it is encompassed in all the say and do is part of their folklore. The way in which the land is an intricate part of their oral literature that is to become their

history, all falls under their folklore. The changes that are taking place to their traditions and customs because of the effect of the war are all geared towards creating a new folklore for the community.

In conclusion Beah succeeds in illustrating the value of nature, by personifying it and illustrating the intimate relationship between nature and humans. Oral traditions are an intricate part of tradition and the passing on of history. This is important in the novel because of the controversial issue of the war. The village people want to forget it, but yet it is still an intricate part of the history of the people. So oral traditions lean on nature which has been consistent regardless of the war and this is what the community leans on for survival of their tradition and for them to be able to move on from the remnants of war. However, this process is greatly interrupted as can be seen in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

IRONIES OF DEVELOPMENT

This chapter explores how Beah makes use of irony in order to illustrate the exploitation that takes place in the village Imperi in the novel, *Radiance of Tomorrow*. While irony, which is sometimes viewed as a form of satire, has been described by several scholars as being used only as light humor to point out social wrongs, I argue that irony can also be used, without humoristic aspect, to point out the same social wrongs, for the purposes of informing the reader and this is what Beah does with this novel. He makes use of irony to show how war time conditions persist in a time that should be considered peaceful. His subtle comparisons of present conditions i.e. post-war in the novel to those incidents that took place during the war are the ways in which he makes use of irony. He uses irony specifically when illustrating the arrival of the mining company and what soon follows after their arrival. By comparing their arrival with war time conditions we are able to see how development although in several instances is considered to be a good thing, here in the novel it is not. This chapter aims to add to the current scholarly work around irony and its use in literature, but more so to add to the scholarly work done on how irony in literature is used to portray social and economic issues in Africa.

Abrahams (2013) distinguishes satire in two different aspects namely Horatian and Juvenalian satire. He explains that Horatian satire is more playful and mild and criticizes social vices through light humor. Juvenalian on the other hand is more aggressive and forceful and addresses social ills through scorn and outrage. This type of satire is portrayed using irony and sarcasm. We can link Beah's work with Juvenalian satire simply because of the lack of humor when he narrates the social ills taking place in the novel. Beah's novel however, uses irony in a very specific way. Instead of bringing out the irony of the language itself, for example through what the characters say, or through using oral literature, Beah uses irony in his narration of events. What he does, is describe events taking place in the novel when the mining company arrives. However, before that we are presented with a

very clear image and account of what the villagers endured during the civil war. When he uses flashbacks we get the background stories of almost every villager.

The irony lies in the fact that war is now over and peace has apparently come. To add to this, foreign investors have now come into the country which means that the economy will grow and everyone stands to benefit. Or so the assumption goes. However, instead what we do see is exploitation, violence and disrespect to culture, all symptoms of war-time conditions. It is in this way that we see how Beah uses irony.

There are three types of irony in literature, namely: verbal, situational and dramatic. In this chapter I pay more attention to situational irony. Situational irony is where the events or actions that occur are the complete opposite of what is expected. In this chapter I will be analyze these different events and identifying the situational irony that has been used and the message that Beah is trying to convey, as well as look at what other scholars have said about the use of irony and satire in literature.

At the beginning of the novel the foreigners and the mining companies are not presented in detail. The focus is more on the arrival of the villagers to Imperi. However, in some of the flashbacks we are reminded about how the foreigners who were present when the war begun, fled.

> "He had made a temporary home in one of the many burnt vehicles by the river. Those vehicles had once belonged to the mining company that had been preparing to start operations six months before the war. The company had refused to build a small bridge across the river, which it regretted when the war came, as it couldn't get its new cars and equipment across. The foreigners were supposed to start working for the mining company had at first dismissed the possibility that they would ever have to abandon their cars, loaded with food, clothes and other provisions, but the first gunshot had sent them running with only a bag each, packed in canoes that almost sank, shaking with their nervousness. They pleaded with eyes wide open for the canoe owner to paddle faster." (Beah, p9).

Beah narrates that the foreigners ran at the sound of the first gunshot. This may appear as some sort of overreaction on their part. What is ironical is that the bridge that they refused to build for the locals, is the very one that could have saved their lives. Now they have to depend on the same locals they dismissed to ferry them across the river to safety. Having this memory in mind, one would assume that upon their return to this country that was torn by war, which they witnessed, that they would have more consideration and empathy for the people they left behind. Beah narrates something entirely different.

> "a number of private security personnel arrived carrying heavy weapons and ammunition. The sight of such uniformed and armed men aroused fear and anger in the dispirited people. They didn't want to return to anything closer to what had happened here not so long ago. When women and children who were on their way to the river, to farms, and to markets saw the 4x4 vehicles filled with armed men, they dropped whatever they were carrying and ran either toward town to alert their families or into bushes. The foreigners in the front seat of some these vehicles laughed at what they considered uncalled-for and silly reaction." (Beah, p73-74).

Having witnessed what the war was like, even as they fled, these foreigners should know that the sight of armed men and vehicles like this would open an old wound that has not even begun to heal. Instead they laugh that the villagers are reacting in a silly and unnecessary way. This view is a very condescending one, the same view they probably had when they refused to build the bridge. When we look at these two incidences together we can see how Beah tries to portray the foreigners as being people who easily forget what went on in this village and in this country, maybe simply because it is not their home. That lack of sympathy and empathy already sets the tone for the actions we witness as we read further on into the novel.

Situational irony can be humorous or tragic, but it is always shocking and the success of its use lies in its ability to surprise either the protagonist or the reader. Beah plays on this strength by the way in which he structures the narrative. He presents this flashback of the foreigners fleeing, just a few pages before he narrates their arrival in Imperi. The reader may be expecting that these foreigners will return grateful having read how locals carried

them in canoes across the river, or even return aware of the trauma that these people have faced. Instead they arrive laughing because people scattered afraid of the guns and the large vehicles, which in themselves, though they are for security, are a symbol of war.

Singh (2012) says,

> Irony is often an effective way for an author to express ideas of what she thinks describes the society in which she lives. Irony can explore the differences between what a society or person says or does and how they actually live. A society which claims to value truth and justice, but actually tolerates or encourages lying and injustice is ironic. (Singh, p67).

From this we can see that Beah is making use of irony because there is an underlying message he is trying to send. In a YouTube clip (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aTjOBZBbTyY) he made about the novel he says that his aim with this novel is to make people aware of the injustices that take place in Africa and especially in post-war countries. He claims that people are moved by the trauma and drama of a war, but once that war is over they move on and forget that there are still people who have been left behind and who are still suffering under the hand of what has been termed as neo-colonialism.

However, before the mining companies arrive in Imperi, Beah describes the people as they arrive and how they begin to try to settle down into what is perceived to be a normal life. Everything is peaceful; however, the people are restless because they have no jobs or way to earn a living. This restlessness is also caused because with nothing to do, the mind has time to think and this thinking brings memories of war:

> "The simplicity that had once been life had become a burden, especially when it seemed everyone waited for something to do. In the silence of that waiting, memories of war were awakened, bringing restlessness and irritability. People didn't spend much time on their verandas anymore. Besides the farming that had started on a very small scale just for people to feed their families" (Beah, p38)

The first sight of development appears when the local school reopens and jobs for teachers are made available. For everyone this is a sign of hope and now they can begin to feed their families. However, they soon learn that the salaries they are being paid are not enough and also not consistent.

> "The neglect of this part of the country had increased. Before the war, they at least sent some school materials even if a month or sometimes a semester late. Salaries, too, unprecedentedly lagged behind. In nine months of teaching, the teachers had received only three months of salary that came every three months. As a result, Bockarie had started selling cigarettes, chewing gum, batteries, mosquito coils, and other small items at night on his veranda…it was difficult to provide for his family, and he continued teaching only because as a teacher he received a reduction in school fees for his three other children. His pay was 150,000 leones, which could barely buy a bag of rice. Kula helped by selling food items such as salt, pepper, and magi cubes at the market, but they still struggled to make ends meet." (Beah, p58-59)

There is a culture of greed that appears to be descending down on the village Imperi. Throughout the novel we see lots of references to how things were before the war and how things are now. It appears as if before the war there was a larger sense of community and unity and now, it is simply everyone for themselves. When we take a deeper look at what the war was, it was neighbor turning on neighbor. Individuals who joined the war as rebels or children who were forced to become child soldiers, are all people who knew one another. Even, if this was not the case, these communities were designed in such a way that there was a sense of unity among them and they share certain traditions.

When the war broke out and the killings, the rapes and violence broke out, it led to a break in community and a break in trust. This is why we see that it is the elders who are holding the community together and trying to maintain the culture that governs the society while the younger generations are quickly swept away by the chance to make money.

> "All three pairs of eyes landed on a page that listed the name of more than twenty teachers, teachers who were not at the school. And next to their names were the

> salaries they'd supposedly received for three months of the year. The principal froze; he could not bring himself to pick the book up off the ground. Bockarie leaned over and handed it to him. The principal plucked it from his fingers and hurriedly left them standing their speechless." (Beah p65).
>
> "They knew no one and wouldn't be granted an appointment to see the educational district officer, who was currently being investigated for worse. They also needed the work to take care of their families. So quietly, and feeling defeated, their morals imprisoned by necessity…He continued with an expression that they hated, as the very idea had already destroyed the country: 'Where a cow is tied is where it grazes.' He added that it was 'my time to graze and the school is my field, my little portion of the bigger grazing field for those whose time it is to eat." (Beah, p67).

One could view this as ordinary corruption that comes as a cause of colonialism. Beah, however, could be communicating that this corruption has a come because of the war. Yes there is a presence of the mining companies and a presence of the state of neo-colonialism, but what if this type of behavior especially from locals is simply a result of the trauma that they have had to endure during the war and this is how they have learned to be? Could this war be an absolute turning point in the life of the village? Chinua Achebe wrote in his Novel, *Things Fall Apart (1958),*

> He has put a knife on all the things that held us together and we have fallen apart' (Things Fall Apart, 145).

Could this war have been the knife that was put into all the held the village of Imperi and its surroundings together and now they are simply falling apart?

> "The paramount chief was the head of all the local chiefs in various towns around Imperi and was the direct representative of the people to the minister of the province, who resided in the capital. Thus, all grievances beyond local matters went through the paramount chief…She lived in one of the dilapidated villages, her house the only one in good condition and with a generator. When the chiefs arrived, having walked five miles from Imperi, where they gathered for the journey, they were

> treated to cold water, a rarity in this part of the country and sometimes enough to distract people from pursuing their grievances- and this was exactly what happened." (Beah, p74-75).

The paramount chief who essentially is supposed to hold all the interests of all the people at her core, is also only looking out for herself. You would expect that because of how dearly the elders of the villages carry their culture and the traditions that form it, that the paramount chief would carry these traditions at an even higher level than the people she has been tasked to lead. This is not the case when the elders arrive at her house. Instead, she has been bribed by the mining company to make sure that she keeps the elders in line and that they do not disrupt what the mining company is trying to achieve.

> ''They are bring jobs!' she exclaimed, but no one shared here excitement. She had no intention of looking into the complaint and wouldn't mention anything to anyone. She knew of the company's arrival and had received her bribe and some of the supplies the foreigners had brought. Nonetheless, the chief's had faith in her and believed that she would represent her people.' (Beah, p75).

Unlike the principal of the high school, the chief does not openly state that she has indeed taken bribes and does not apologize for it. Instead she tries to convince the elders why the presence of the mining company is a good thing. Everyone can see that she is doing much better than the villagers around her so why not openly say why she did not follow tradition and protocol or even apologize? Her justification is simply that they have brought jobs. An attempted distraction just like the water and soft drinks she is offering.

All the locals who have somehow participated in the mining company coming to the village and beginning operations all carry with them a sense of shame. This shame is portrayed in how they do not address or formally admit their participation in the move in of the company, in their operations or in their acceptance of their bribes. The principal of the school however, when caught by Benjamin and Bockarie, does not deny that he is stealing from the government. The irony lies in the fact that he has more to lose because his corruption can be traced and is of his own volition. The other locals with corrupt ties to the mining company however, have nothing to worry about in terms of being caught out. They

have no reason to have to hide their involvement, therefore we see that deep within them they know this is wrong and they know they are going against culture.

> "Hawa, this is your land, too, and I am sure that fragments of the wisdom of our ancestors remain within you. Your eyes tell me that you do not believe what you say. We do want our people to have jobs that provide better lives for them and their children. We want improvements- but not ones that destroy our spirits, our traditions and literally kill us while we are still alive. Goodbye now." (Beah, p117).

The arrival of the mining company becomes the beginning point of the domino effect.

> "They had come to mine rutile, a black or reddish-brown mineral consisting of titanium dioxide, which forms needlelike crystals in rocks in the earth. Rutile is used as a coating on welding rods; as pigment in paints, plastics, paper, and foods; and in sunscreen to protect against ultraviolet rays. And wherever rutile is found, you also find zircon, ilmenite, bauxite, and, in the case of Lion Mountain, diamonds. Not that the mining companies reveal they are mining all these minerals. They obtain permits to dig up only one- rutile. So it is rutile alone that is mentioned in the reports it sends out, but the workers come to learn the truth." (Beah, p73).

This effect spills over even into the locals. Getting money becomes the main priority for every individual who chooses to associate themselves with these foreigners, so much so that they begin to forget traditions and customs.

> "He climbed into his vehicle and left without offering the elders a lift back to their homes. This was not a respectable thing to do. One always asked to accompany the elders, even on foot, and even if your eyes could see where they lived, and especially after they had walked to seek a discussion with someone younger." (Beah, p80).

Here we see Beah making use of verbal irony. Wonde says that he wants to have a respectable conversation with the elders at a later time and then immediately does something disrespectful. Wonde being a local is well aware of these traditions, but ignores them and drives off, thus reinforcing the already heavy presence of mistrust forming between the elders, the villagers, the foreigners and some of the locals who work for them.

This use of verbal irony in this case, I believe is on purpose because a large part of the culture in Imperi is built upon the things that are said between people, especially things said to and from the elders of the community. Therefore, what one says when speaking to the elders must always be thought through and must always follow tradition. Therefore, when there is a discrepancy between what one says and what one does, this is a great sign of disrespect. Beah tries to show how the influence of the mining company has penetrated into their local employees that they have begun to forget who they are and where they come from.

Beah makes use of verbal irony that can be somewhat seen as satire to portray or to compare rather, how life was before the war and after the war.

> "We are permanently waiting for the temporary war that is nearing ten years to end,' a musician had said in a popular song." (Beah, p20).
>
> 'If only it was during the war. We would have solved this situation rightly, as we, too, would have had weapons.'

There is some irony to be seen here when we look at the similarities that exists between the process of the locals joining the mining company, with the recruitment of child soldiers during war time. Although there is a difference in both recruitment processes, the change in people's characters has some similarities. In both circumstances, you forget who you are and where you came from. In one situation this is forced to forget through brain washing and administering drugs to the children. As a child soldier, you are forced to join the fight and kill or be killed. In the other situation, circumstances around you and the influence of the mining company and foreigners slowly make you forget who you are and where you come from. For the mining company, the financial situation and desperation of the community have indirectly created circumstances where people are forced to join the mining company in order to support their families and themselves. Galtung (2013) defined this as structural violence.

> The subject of violence can be any actor, as in intended actor or direct violence. Or, a structure at work, churning out harm, causing basic human needs deficits, as

an un-intended, indirect, or structural violence.' (Galtung, p35).

The difference here however, is that the basic human need deficits e.g. food, water and shelter are not caused by the mining company in the beginning when they arrive. However, if we are to look at this on the larger scale of the Maslow's Hierachy (Maslow, 1943) of needs we see that the need for safety is compromised with several acts of violence and negligence that take place, which I will explore further on. However, as we read further, the mining company does begin to compromise the basic needs of the people, but this occurs only after several people have already begun to work for them.

In essence the mining company has not directly created a deficit of human needs, but rather shown that it can help fulfill those needs through the jobs it is offering. So indirectly the mining company creates a situation where people have to work for the company and then soon to follow after is a string of violent acts. So the mining company doesn't have to create a need, as one already exists, instead rather, it shows how it can fulfill this need and then exploits the people. After it exploits the people it then begins to exploit the land and this will be analyzed further in to the study.

At the beginning of the novel Beah describes the path that Mama Kadie walked on as long and winding like snakes. There is a realistic element to this description of the roads, in that the paths of life will never be straight. However, when the mining company arrives, a references to the roads is made once again,

> "If the elders had been asked, they would have advised the company to let Imperi become stable before beginning operations. But this wasn't the case, and the presence of the mining company took the town and its people in a direction of 'many crooked roads; as the elders said, softening the truth about the devastation that gradually became accepted as the only condition possible for the inhabitants. The direction to the crooked roads began with the arrival of mostly men, including the foreigners, as employees and those looking for work. They were everywhere in their hard hats-surveying the roads with long poles and equipment, while the children gathered around to marvel, waiting to be picked up by vehicles for work, sitting by the roadside to eat their lunches. Then, older students, mostly boys over eighteen,

> stopped going to school and sought employment. The possibility of an immediate salary was enticing in a place where it was difficult to find any way to earn income. Soon, some of the teachers followed their students to labor in hazardous conditions for just a few more leaones- not a significant difference from what they had earned, but at least it was steady pay." (Beah, p76).

The roads are described as 'crooked'. There are many ways to interpret the word crooked, but when looking at it in context we see that the elders mean that these roads that the people are heading down are wrong and against the natural way of life and culture in that community. The use of the word road instead of path could pertain to the fact that paths take on a more natural form, they are created by nature. The more people walk along a certain route, somehow a path is formed. A road on the other hand is man-made and requires some kind of destruction to be formed. Berry (2003) writes,

> The difference between a path and a road is not only the obvious one. A path is little more than a habit that comes with knowledge of a place. It is a sort of ritual of familiarity. As a form, it is a form of contact with a known landscape. It is not destructive. It is the perfect adaptation, through experience and familiarity, of movement to place; it obeys the natural contours; such obstacles as it meets, it goes around**.** A road, on the other hand, even the most primitive road, embodies a resistance against the landscape. Its reason is not simply the necessity for movement, but haste. Its wish is to avoid contact with the landscape; it seeks so far as possible to go over the country, rather than through it; its aspirations, as we see clearly in the example of our modern freeways, is to be a bridge; its tendency is to translate place into space in order to traverse it with the least effort. It is destructive, seeking to remove or destroy all obstacles in its way. The primitive road advanced by the destruction of the forest; modern roads advance by the destruction of topography. (Berry, p12).

We can look at the path and the road as metaphors for the mining company and the elders and villagers of Imperi. The elders and people of Imperi who do not support what the

mining company is doing are the path. They know who they are and they are one with the environment around them as is their culture to be.

> "And I walked the path, as that is the way in my heart… Kadie almost never walked on the roads. She did so only when there was no path. She believed in the knowledge of her great-grandparents, who made the paths and knew the land better than those foreigners who just get into their machines and carve roads into the earth without thinking about where the land breathes, where it sleeps, where it wakes, where it entertains spirits, where it wants the sun or the shade of a tree." (Beah, p9-10).

The mining company on the other hand, as Berry explains, embodies resistance against the landscape and therefore shows resistance against the people who choose not to join them. They not only want to operate within the village, they want to operate and mine as fast as possible so they can leave. They had no intentions of dealing with the elders of the villagers directly, so they went over their heads to the relevant authorities and paid the necessary bribes to begin operations.

In Chapter One, we explored how the environment is very much a part of the culture of Imperi and the people's identity. There is a continuous reference to the land through greetings, thoughts, memories and even oral literature. Therefore, when the mining company comes to the village and begins operations, they attack two main pillars of this community: the land, which can be seen as a direct attack on the people and the traditions. They bring about all these physical changes, but they also undermine the elders and undermine tradition.

> 'A young boy, sixteen years old, one of Bockarie's students, had stepped on a live electric wire in the dark. The blood in his body had been sucked dry and his remains looked as if he had died a very old man. By the time his friends pulled him from the wire that continued to spark, burning his peeled flesh that had been left behind, it was too late. This was the first death since life in the ton began after the war…The police did nothing further. Instead of investigating what had happened, they blamed the boy who died for his carelessness. They neglected to mention the fact that there

had been no danger signs alerting the presence of live electrical wires, or that the wires should have been covered in the first place. The mining company's work continued uninterrupted.' (Beah, p88).

The cables that are being placed in the ground are supposed to provide electricity to the mining company and their staff compound. They run electric cables through the village, but they do not want to provide electricity to the locals themselves. Yet these same cables are the ones that kill a young boy. There are no danger or warning signs that are placed near or around the cables to warn anyone about them. However, in the mine, there are signs with pictures of skeletons warning workers that the environment is extremely dangerous. In both cases we see the mining company placing themselves in a situation where they do not have to take responsibility if people die and they reinforce this irresponsibility with the support of the local police. This situation sits very close to what was witnessed during the war where people are killed and no one takes responsibility over their deaths, because no one has to and no one will follow up anyway.

However, the difference lies in that, during the war there was no official police force protecting the people from rebel forces, so people sought safety in refugee camps across the borders. Once the war ended and there was a proper government in place then a proper police force was established. So people are now aware that the police are there to protect you. So then what happens when they don't? How different is this from the war?

> ''Why are you doing this, my brothers? You are supposed to protect us,' some people said, stretching their arms toward the policemen they knew very well.
>
> 'Would you let this happen if it was your brother who had died, or your child?' the older women pleaded. A group of men shielded those carrying the coffin, batons hitting their backs, so that the boy's body wouldn't fall out in the commotion. The police succeeded in pushing the burial procession to the side for the machines to go ahead.' (Beah, p89).

Money seems to have overwhelmed the mutual respect that people conventionally have for one another in this village. According to those inventions, burial processions should be

seen to be sacred and should be respected and allowed through without trouble. However, as a result of the mining activity, tradition is being disrespected and disregarded even more as days go by. This is an expected occurrence from the foreigners, but it is even more difficult when it is the local villagers War and the survival of it should have been the glue that held the people of Imperi together. Their ability to lean on each other and rebuild the old ways should have created the unity needed to maintain at least basic respect. However, whether Beah points it out or not, there is trust that has been broken and even tradition cannot hold it together.

> "Tradition can live only if those carrying it respect it- and live in conditions that allow the traditions to survive. Otherwise, traditions have a way of hiding inside people and leaving only dangerous footprints of confusion." (Beah, p80).

Once the company has attacked traditions, it begins to inflict actual physical violence on the people of Imperi. The death of the boy is the first case we see, and then there begin to be even more a death in the mines, but worst of all, rape finds its way into the community.

> "This town- where not so long ago, even after the war, one allowed one's daughter to play under the moonlight with other children; where, even though things weren't even close to perfect, a mother and father didn't stand barefoot in a pot of hot oil each time their daughter left the house to fetch a bucket of water- this town…what was it now and what would become of its people? Soon there were rapes that no one spoke of, not only because the women were ashamed but also because the families felt helpless and the only dignity left was silence." (Beah, p123).

Rape was a common act of violence that occurred against women during the war. A heinous and deplorable act that left several women disabled, pregnant, infected with HIV or dead. After the war ended and people begun to attempt to heal, people resumed their normal everyday practices and for women this involved going to the river to fetch water, cooking outside and so on. However, soon in Imperi this becomes difficult nearing impossible as mine workers, foreigners and locals kidnap and rape women every night. The men who should be protecting them are few or nowhere to be found because they are both getting arrested and thrown in jail with no notice to their families or they die in the mines again

with no notice to their families. Therefore, before a society has even had a chance to heal from the trauma of war they are being forced to relive it over again.

> "Bockarie sat on the ground and cried, the only thing he could do to honor his friend. He couldn't go to the police and he had no way of spreading the truth- no money to pay for a radio announcement or a notice in the newspapers. He and the families of the other men couldn't even recover the bodies- the company stuck by its story, which was that no one had died. They hung a printed roster of the names indicating that they had been accounted for. Benjamin's name wasn't there, nor were those of the other who had died. The dredge was lifted and operations resumed. The incident reminded people of the war, when they'd suffered the same emotional and psychological toll, burying people without their bodies or graveyards." (Beah, p170).

Beah narrates these acts taking place at such a swift pace, just as they did during the war. Without making direct reference to the war itself, the similarities are seen through the pace at which the events are taking place and the acts of violence we see taking place as well. All the while however, mining company has come to Imperi to bring jobs and better the lives of the people.

After attacking the tradition, carrying out acts of violence against the people and their families, the next stage of attacks is against the land. In Chapter One we analyzed how much the people of Imperi value the land and how the land is an intricate part of who the people of Imperi are. So much so that they all leave the different refugee camps or places they had taken refuge in during the war, simply to return to the place they call home.

> ''When I was a boy, my father told me that there are three important things one's heart must be satisfied with before choosing the location of a village- now a town, but this still applies,' Pa Kainesi said, his voice trembling terribly. It had been a while since he had spoken in public. He had been quiet since Wonde had humiliated them. 'There must be a good source of water, good land for growing crops, and a suitable place for burying the dead. We are losing the first two, and this is tormenting my old spirit.' He ended there." (Beah, p112).

Pa Kainesi an elder in Imperi says this not knowing that the mining company has decided to take all three things away from the people in that exact order. The first attack is on the river.

> "Several artificial dams had been created for the mining of rutile, but the dams were overflowing, spilling into and destroying the roads the company needed for its vehicles. So the company had begun draining excess water directly into the river, thereby contaminating it. 'The river as our only source of clean, drinkable water,' said the men. 'Why did they not direct the water somewhere else?' The farmers among them were livid. Their lands for planting next season had been dug up and flooded without any consultation. 'This means that our rice fields have also been contaminated,' one of the farmers added, as he dipped a hand in the water and smelled it. Among the gathering were men who had laid the very pipes that now spilled dirty mining water into their collective river. They had operated the very machines that dug up the land and flooded it. But they said nothing. Though they were ashamed and realized what their work had done, they had needed the job." (Beah, p110-111).

In the first few chapters of the novel Mama Kadie tells a story to the children about the river spirits. This story like many others, are stories that are passed on from the older generation to the younger so that the history of where they come from is not forgotten and can live on through the generations. The river itself is a part of the village of Imperi, its history and its people. Then the mining company moves in and occupies the land where the villagers live and the first thing they dig up is the graveyard, dumping all the dead bones into a large hole in the ground. Again, the elders are not consulted regarding this decision. The government has given it to the mining company under a ninety-nine year lease. Taking note of the relationship the people have with the land, especially the elders, this attack is the biggest and the most destructive on the people of Imperi. At the beginning of the novel we are introduced to Mama Kadie and the first relationship we see is the one between her and the path that leads to Imperi. Pa Moiwa in the first few chapters explains how his soul could not rest till he touched the land. Pa Kainesi explains the fundamental aspects that must be present in an environment for one to call it a village or a home.

We can equate this taking of the land to a similar psychological attack like the cutting of the hands during the war. The rebel army cut off people's hands so they cannot vote for the government. There was no voting at that time and that is how they spread fear through the people. Internally this act was a way to break the spirit of the people not to resist the movement or the cause of the rebel army. However, these acts are justified publicly with the true horrors being hidden from public knowledge. A scene taken out of the movie, *Blood Diamond* (2006), shows a rebel army leader instructing for hands to be chopped off shouting, 'RUF is fighting for the people.' (2006). Yet the same people you fight for, is the same people you rape, kill and maim. Similarly, after the land is taken, the elderly begin to die. 'Pa Moiwa died a few weeks later and so did many other elderly people.' (Beah, p163).

The elderly in this community are the ones who hold everything together. They are the keepers of tradition and reinforce the culture that makes the community what it is. If the elders die, then this dies with them and everything then, as Chinua Achebe is famously quoted for, falls apart. This is exactly what takes place as the people are moved to land that is not theirs and even Bockarie and his family leave to go to Free Town to look for work and a better life.

> "It was the time for teaching the heart to relocate to another land, to hold the memories of the land that would soon be abandoned, to embalm the image of what had existed so it wouldn't decay with time, so it could live on vibrantly in the stories. How do you pack up to leave your town for mining? It was easier to run during the war- you knew that no matter what, if you stayed alive, you would be able to return home and stand on your land. Now the land would be flooded; it would disappear." (Beah, p164).

CONCLUSION

In a critique of African disaster literature crafted for Western audiences, Ojaide (2010) notes that:

> 'An unchanging image of Africa persists in the West through globalization, as western publishers' choice of African works to publish and promote tends to be those dealing with negative experiences. Western publishers generally seek manuscripts of Africa bedeviled by conflicts and misery, hence, the many works of child-soldiers, either as autobiographies, memoirs or fictions, have been published recently in the West. Copious examples tell this bias of Western publishers for Africa that is static and incapable of change to something the Mother Continent's own children can dream for her! African writers who paint a grim picture of their people thus write in the self-fulfilling manner and become darlings of the West. To western publishers, African writers are themselves expected to validate the CNN and *The National Geographic* negative type of coverage of Africa. The author will give some examples. The autobiography of the Sierra Leonean Ishmael Beah, *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier*, was for long at the top of the literary charts in the United States. Its author was interviewed by the media many times and appeared in the *New York Times* book review pages. Uzodima Iweala's *Beast of No Nation*, a novel set in an unidentified but presumably Biafran (Eastern Nigerian) setting and followed the growing up of a child-soldier, is promoted across the United States. Literary works that deal with war and violence appear to be promoted by western publishers of African literary works.' (Ojaide, P3).

Ojaide criticizes African authors who promote the negative image the West has on Africa and who fulfill their preconceived ideas that Africa is full of negativity, death, wars, famine and sickness. When reading Ishmael Beah's first work, a memoir, *A Long Way Gone*, the war is romanticized and though it was a factual retelling of what he went through during the war, it was highly aesthetic for the reading pleasure of a more western audience. However, it appears as if Beah heard his critics and hence why he wrote his next work which is a realistic novel titled, *Radiance of Tomorrow.* Unlike his first work, none of the characters or

villages are real, however, they are modeled against people, things and places that could be real hence a realistic fiction.

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However, it appears as if Beah heard his critics and hence why he wrote his next work which is a realistic fiction novel titled, *Radiance of Tomorrow.* Unlike his first work, none of the characters or villages are real, however, they are modeled against people, things and places that could be real and hence why I call it a realistic fiction.

> 'Literature in Africa is an artistic production, through which writers do not only express the aspirations, frustrations and other experiences of their people/societies, but also exhibit their culture. Creative writing, like other arts or trades, comes with responsibilities. That one has the talent and so chooses to exercise it in creative writing is not enough, but one also owes a measure of responsibility to the society and culture that have nurtured one's talent and to the potential readers/audience of one's literary contribution. In recent times, writers have been compelled to respond in their respective works to the phenomenon of globalization, which is not new but in many ways threatens their culture, identity and survival. Addressing globalization in all its ramifications, therefore, is related to the quest for peace…In the African tradition, literature tends to be utilitarian rather than art for art's sake. In their works, writers often interrogate the socio-political, economic and other problems in their respective societies. It is in this tradition of commitment towards positive values and ideals of their societies that they address not only the quest for peace,

> but also a defense of their culture, two core literary missions, which are oftentimes intertwined.' (Ojaide, P2)

Beah has achieved these two core literary values; however, he has paid more attention to the defense of the Mende culture. In chapter one we analyzed how valuable culture is and I believe that through the different literary devices he used to show and illustrate culture and tradition as well as how it was attacked by the foreigners and mining company, he sought to defend his culture and largely the culture of African people. However, Beah took a risk because this book may not have been as well received as his memoir, simply because it gives a more realist account of what goes on after the war is over. People are excited by these war stories as Ojaide says, but Beah wants to tell the story of globalization, exploitation, culture and this is not as 'Hollywood' as stories around war, violence, rape and child soldiers. This type of narration is what Rob Nixon in his work, *Slow Violence (2006-2007)* calls slow violence. It is where the writing is in fact about violence, it is just not as dramatic or romanticized, although still important. It takes a longer time to get to the climax of the violence and the build up to this event carries more weight than the event itself. In fact, the message of the author often lies in the buildup than in the actual violent act:

> Because slow violence is unphotogenic, makes for undramatic copy, and requires a long attention span, when rapid, direct violence erupts it is far easier for the media to briskly ascribe it to "atavistic ethnic hatreds" than to track the deeper, systemic roots. (Nixon, P30)

One of the ways Beah overcomes this is by how he uses irony to compare the violent acts that took place during the war, to the violent acts taking place now. Therefore he still gets his message across and doesn't not lose his audience who want to read a more action packed African novel.

Through the reading of Rob Nixon(2006-2007) slow violence, we are able to locate Beah's work as falling under this description. When he writes about the violence that takes place

in Imperi, it is not as loud and instant as war is and nothing happens fast or immediately. This can be seen as Beah takes us slowly from the arrival of the villagers to Imperi and only further in to the novel do we finally read about the arrival of the mining company. As analyzed in the chapters we see the different attacks carried out and these are predominantly attacks on tradition and the environment. In fact, Beah spends very little time narrating the deaths and the rapes. This type of novel can be seen, as Nixon says as unattractive and unappealing to the reader.

> To confront what I am calling slow violence requires that we attempt to give symbolic shape and plot to formless threats whose fatal repercussions are dispersed across space and time. Politically and emotionally, different kinds of disaster possess unequal heft. Falling bodies, burning towers, exploding heads have a visceral, page-turning potency that tales of slow violence cannot match. Stories of toxic buildup, massing greenhouse gases, or desertification may be cataclysmic, but they're scientifically convoluted cataclysms in which casualties are deferred, often for generations. In the gap between acts of slow violence and their delayed effects both memory and causation readily fade from view and the casualties thus incurred pass untallied. The long dyings that ensue from slow violence are out of sync not only with our dramatic expectations, but with the swift seasons of electoral change. How can leaders be goaded to avert catastrophe when the political rewards of their actions will be reaped on someone else's watch, decades, even centuries from now? How can environmental storytellers and activists help counter the potent forces of political self-interest, procrastination, and dissembling? (Nixon, P14)

However, Nixon and Ojaide agree that this type of creative work serves the purpose of informing people of the social ills of one's community and educating the readers about culture and give them a more realistic view of what Africa is without all the aesthetics and drama that go into a novel to make it exciting and I believe that this is what Beah has done with this work.

> "News of such things did not make it to the papers or radio of nearby cities, let alone the capital of the country. The mining company's annual brochures were filled with colorful stories of community buildings, stories of new schools and libraries. There were no mentions of the destruction of towns and cemeteries, the pollution of water sources, the loss of human life, or the children who now frequently drowned in the many dams." (Beah p162-163).

This scholarly enquiry is important because it fills the gap in the studies around post war life. Doing this project really revealed the lack of sufficient literature and study that exists not only on this book but in the area of study around post-war life. We have to pay attention to the topics that Beah brings out in his book which are discussed in this project. The humanization of nature and the irony around development are all issues that are affecting Africa even in our present day. While there is some literature that has touched on these issues in the past, none has done so with such detail and literary tact as Beah does.

Through this novel Beah shows us a different side to violence. Building on his first novel, we go into this read with the expectation that we will read more about the war and the trauma that comes with it. However, we are shown that violence can take on a different more complicated face. A face that requires a deeper study ad understanding than a more obvious civil war represents. This face is controversial and unexplored and in a sense maybe even overlooked and that is why Beah writes *Radiance of tomorrow,* to enlighten scholars and readers a like that even when we think there is peace, there is still violence, just in another form.

Beah's work is important as he is using his narrative to educate and inform the world on the issues affecting post-war Africa. Steering away from his first work, he takes a less aesthetic approach to this novel by using literary devices in new ways. This novel and this research report will add to the scholarly work done around issues like neo-colonialism and globalization. As well as add to the analysis around the use of ecocriticism and new ways that ecocriticism can be looked at and thought about in literature.