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### **The Manifestation of Girl's Self Realization in Aminatta Forna's The Devil that Danced on the Water**

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## **Dedication**

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

I dedicate this work to the person who helped me to complete it, expressing all my gratitude and respect to him because he never hesitated to provide me all support I needed to finish. This dissertation is dedicated to my supervisor Ben Abderazak Abdenaser.

Besides my lovely sisters who supported me from the beginning till the end.

A special thanks to my teachers in Batna Ms. Labaal and Ms. Belehcen because they were the reason why I choose literature.

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## Abstract

Over the centuries women are struggling to gain respect, recognition, and independence in a racist and patriarchal society. African women follow the standards and values of their societies. Nowadays they tend to break the stereotypical images that disturb their position and social classism. Thus, this paper scrutinizes thoroughly women's intellectual ability from a psychoanalytical feminism perspective using black feminism's thoughts on Aminatta Forna's *The Devil That Danced on the Water* as an example to study. It also attempts to shed light on some common feminist themes such as family, identity, and the women's relation to the motherland. Forna explains the male dominance in Sierra Leon. *The Devil That Danced on the Water* is a multiple-layered allegory that can stand for different historical aspects, religious, political, psychological, and even moral to send messages to the world about truth and reality. Aminatta's biographical novel studies and analyses past memoirs following her path toward reviling the curtain about her father's execution. The research paper concludes that women are unable to speak freely. Thus, women view writing as the only salvation for their voice to be heard and for self-assertion.

**Keywords:** Psychoanalytic feminism, African women, literature, identity, self-assertion.

## المخلص

على مر القرون، تكافح النساء لكسب الاحترام والاعتراف والاستقلال في مجتمع عنصري وأبوي. تتبع النساء الإفريقيات معايير وقيم مجتمعاتها. في الوقت الحاضر، هن يملن لكسر الصور النمطية التي تشتت موضعهن وطبقتهن الاجتماعية. ولهذا، تفحص هذه الورقة بدقة القدرة الفكرية للنساء من منظور التحليل النفسي النسوي باستخدام أفكار النسوية السوداء في كتاب أميناتا فورنا "The devil That Danced on the Water" كمثال للدراسة. كما تحاول إلقاء الضوء على بعض الموضوعات النسوية الشائعة مثل الأسرة والهوية وعلاقة المرأة بالوطن الأم. فورنا تشرح هيمنة الذكور في سيراليون. *The devil That Danced on the Water* هو قصة رمزية متعددة الطبقات يمكن أن تمثل جوانب تاريخية مختلفة، دينية، سياسية، نفسية، وحتى أخلاقية لإرسال رسائل إلى العالم حول الحقيقة والواقع. رواية السيرة الذاتية لأميناتا تدرس وتحلل الذكريات السابقة التي تتبع طريقها نحو كشف الستار عن إعدام والدها. تختتم ورقة البحث إلى أن النساء غير قادرات على التحدث بحرية. لهذا ترى النساء أن الكتابة هي الخلاص الوحيد لسماع صوتهن وتأكيد الذات.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** النسوية للتحليل النفسي، المرأة الأفريقية، الأدب، الهوية، تأكيد الذات

## **List of Acronyms**

**UNDP:** United Nations Development Program.

**SRSG:** The United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

**RUF:** The Revolutionary United Front.

**USA:** United States of American.

**BBC:** British Broadcasting Corporation.

**TRC:** Truth and Reconciliation Committee.

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## General Introduction

Over the forty years, a huge number of African women writers like Tsitsi Dangarembga, Doreen Baingana, and others have emerged in the African literature. While figures such as Ama Ata Aidoo, is supposed to be the chief focus of African writing of female authors' discussions. She has been at the forefront of interrogations of African identity formation and history nowadays. She is trying to fix the image of women in African society based on real facts from the depth of society.

Aminatta Forna has been affected by past memories, which led her to write biographies in the form of novels that tell about her memories and diverse events about her life and her family. Forna is considered as prestigious contemporary African English woman writer. She has written on different themes but the majority of themes are based on her vision of some painful scenes in her childhood as she did in the novel "*The Devil That Danced on the Water*". She has written about the effect of the Sierra Leonean civil war on the women's views to inherited things "*Ancestor of Stones*". Aminatta dealt with the women and their sufferance about love and how they scarify to keep it alive in "*The Memory of Love*". Forna has a unique inner method in her way of writing addressing the women psyche. She is analyzing it with careful sensitivity. The author simply shapes her deep understanding of women's sufferance in Africa.

The study concentrates on the journey of a real young female character called Aminatta. She is searching for truth about her father and revealing all that was happening under the table in her country. Throughout the novel, Forna proves her literary status in the realm of writing. This study has contemporary relevance because it deals with issues that represent the contemporary reality of African black women. African English literature originated as a necessary result of the introduction of English education in Africa under colonial orders. After the struggles of Africans

under British rule, the African novel finally made a plea for a unified Africa. In recent years, it has attracted widespread interest, both in Africa and abroad. It is now known that African English literature is not only part of Commonwealth literature, but also occupies a significance in the World literature. African English writings started with authors like Nadine Gordimer, Aminatta Forna, Petina Gappah, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie ... These writers charmed the readers with their writings about African suffering during and after colonization. Each one of them has her own touch in the African literature. Nadine Gordimer believes that “African writing done in any language by Africans themselves and by others of whatever skin color [...] who share the African experience and who have Africa centered consciousness” (Kenyon 22).

In the 19th century, more women actively participated in African society's reformist movement against the colonizer rule. This participation led to what is called “women literature”. African women writers are concerned with scrutinizing the ‘Mother Africa’. African English literature is a national image valuing the motherland and its people. The image tends to show a close relation between African women and their motherland.

The primary theme of feminist writings is the insistence on expressing women’s point of view about their own lives and the way they want to live. In the past, men dominate writing because women have no chance to express their views or engaging in education. The main purposes of feminist writing are to place women in a strong position of authority in their lives and experiences, to appreciate and believe women’s voices. The African women writers demonstrate that women are no longer shy, afraid, and a willing prey or victim of male prejudices of oppression.

The novels of Forna are out-spoken. Emily Mead says about *The Devil that Danced on the Water*: “In this heartbreaking memoir of Forna's quest to find the truth about her father, she outlines the grim prospects of a poor and largely illiterate populace that still suffers the legacies of colonial”

(Aminatta 03). In this memorandum, Aminatta revealed national dangerous secrets about the state, corruption of politicians, smuggling of diamonds, and various crimes that Council members had committed to gain power. These crimes include the crime of assassinating her father and fabricating charges by his closest friends to arrest him then executing him.

Forna is known for her bold views that are reflected in her novels. Basically, this kind of novel is like a protest and a result of reservations and falsifying the facts. Unlike the past, where the works of women were given less priority, worthless, their works were not appreciated. The classification of feministic or male writings hardly makes any sense today. The majority of the African readers look for some Africans in the write-ups because they seem more interesting. A number of African women novelists have the ability to convey the messages of feminism in the African way. The womanistic manifestations of Aminatta Forna in her various works provide an exploring sight of Aminatta's novels. *The Devil That Danced on the Water* is a stunning example of female struggling that is concluded by success in finding facts and exposing corrupted people.

The protagonist is a young girl named Aminatta. She is remembering the events of her father's disappearance without return. Upon her old age, she decided to face her fears by looking for what happened when her father was taken. During her investigation, she revealed secrets that she should never know mixed with betrayal, Non-fulfillment, treachery, tragedy, and pain because her father was killed by his friends' decisions. The female protagonist in the novel shows how the change is occurring in the image of the African women from nothing to everything. Women like her stepmother; who takes care of them and left Africa for their safety. Her mother, in the other side, was an independent woman who drives a car, works in an office, and goes against the stream of the traditional way of African life. She obliged people around her to accept the new way of her

life and ideology. All these women characters break the social conventions and emerge as new strong independent women.

The female quest for identity and truth is observed in Aminatta's character in particular. She portrays the image of future modern women who face gaps in her memories that needed to be filled in her life. Aminata struggled to reach her goals despite her dangerous journey to the African tribes. She met criminals in prison and forced herself to deny her identity to maintain her safety during the investigation.

### **Statement of the problem**

*The Devil That Danced on the Water* by Aminatta Forna considered as a postcolonial novel, the researcher is going to discuss the concept of girlhood throughout the novel. Analyzing the memories presented in the novel. This study considers the ways in which the writer gives a new voice to a woman character and inhabits her in her novels. A woman's character is constructed to reflect the author's views on how a girl's quest can lead to a positive change.

### **Major research question**

To what extent can a girl's quest for truth can be a cause for positive change in Aminatta Forna's *The Devil That Danced on the Water*?

### **Research questions**

1. What is the contextual Framework of Aminatta Forna's *The Devil That Danced on the Water*?
2. In what way, gender and psychoanalytic feminism appear in the novel?
3. How can *The Devil That Danced on the Water* stand with her own?

### **Aims**

The dissertation will study the novel to survey aims that concern with literature:

1. Defining the contextual framework of Aminatta Forna's *The Devil That Danced on the Water*, and put it in the right historical context.
2. Memorization of girlhood by determining its features in Aminatta Forna's *The Devil That Danced on the Water*. Mastering the theoretical debate of Gender, Black Feminism, and Girlhood.

### **Purposes**

Postcolonial literature is in struggles because of the western's colonization effects and the designed stereotypes. Writers try to find the path in the world literature. So that the research is going to reach the following purpose:

1. To provide a comprehensive review of representing the hidden concept in a literary work by applying a number of theories on it.
2. To outline the methodology in tying the literary work to a historical or biographical background
3. To review the path of postcolonial literary work is studied by highlighting the postcolonial theory coupled with other theories.

### **Literature review**

A preliminary literature review shows that past studies are primarily focused on understanding and modeling For Forna's memories when she was young. The review is going to highlight some points around the topic.

According to Haper Collins, Aminatta as a young girl has an incomprehensible problem because of the destruction of her parents' marriage. She sees that Amanita was obliged to go with her father since she got married again. She was not welcomed to play with white children, which create a kind of problem for her. On the other hand, the work is considered as an appropriate

paradigm of an autobiographical, “a shining example of what autobiography can be: harrowing, illuminating and thoughtful” (USA Today).

### **Methodology**

This study uses a qualitative method to study the representations of women characters in *The Devil That Danced on the Water*. Research on the topic demonstrates that Forna attempts to expose common expectations about women's traditional roles. This study examines the common stereotypes based on a set of questioning assumptions on African literature. The critical materials like books, journals, research papers, books review are to be collected and read thoroughly so the theme of the representation of women is understood specifically. In addition, interviews of the writer along with the views of leading critics and other authors writing about the same subject would be taken into consideration. The research would be analytical and psycho-analytical feminist taking into account the primary sources of the writer.

### **Significance**

The study of the novel *The Devil That Danced on the Water* can be a process paradigm in the literature module. It enhances the ability and knowledge of students. The work's goal is designed to help students to improve their literary competence in analyzing novels of postcolonial literature and put the literary work in its contextual framework using appropriate approaches. This work will help the students to understand and study the postcolonial literature without difficulties, and provide them with the methodologies that have been followed.

# Chapter One: Aminatta Forna's *the Devil that Danced on the Water*: Contextual Framework

## 1.1 Introduction

African people experienced hard times during the colonial era. They became slaves and transmitted to America and Europe. Colonization forms the bulk of the current African studies and literary works as well. The previous circumstances of slavery, poverty, and the western desire to destroy the African identity inspire African writers like Chinua Achebe, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Mariama Bâ, Aminatta Forna, Nadine Gordimer, and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o to include different themes, literary traditions, and forms in the African literature. They attempt to depict African social life. African writers tend to express their feelings, memories, diaries, and life experiences in the form of literary works. Literature is set to express different human experiences through different times of their lives. The African literature is known as oral literature and rarely was written. The reality of African history is hidden by the westerners to hide their crimes in Africa. The African writers on the other side attempt to reveal the truth of the colonizer.

Literature in Africa is an international matter since it is not classified yet. It is considered as a way to report the fact of European colonization to the world and say what happened in Africa. Not only men who are writers but women also involved and play an important role in passing the message over the seas. African women writers break the traditions of men's writings. It is better to clarify what African literature means. It could be considered as unique literature since its origins are both oral and written. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o is considered as the leader of the African east literature. He is seen as the first novelist in the English language. His works such as *Petals of Blood* and *Matigari* discuss the effects of colonization in Africa and express the clash between the



African culture and colonialism in a fictional way. African women writers like Mariama Bà (Senegal), Flora Nwapa (Nigeria), Penina Malma (Tanzania), and Mariam Tlali (South African) rose in the literary sphere.

The writers who left to Europe called the Diaspora writers. One of the African women writer symbols is called Aminatta Forna. She is a Sierra Leonean writer. Forna considered as one of the women writers who reconsider the African women literature. The dissertation discusses one of her works "*The Devil That Danced on the Water*". It investigates the facts of Mr. Forna's case, and questing for truth.

African women's literature has been shaped through history, culture, and life experiences. Amintta is designed to be the central novelist in the dissertation, which discusses childhood memories about the novel between her past and present including her father's execution issue.

## **1.2 Women Literature of African Diaspora**

During the past 25 years, the growth of immigration in Africa to the New World increased. These years witness the development of New African Diaspora. The term "African Diaspora" used to present the diverse groups of peoples and cultures extends around the world. This diversity remains a consciousness of shared origins and struggles of the African people .

Legislation changes in immigration issue begin with the Hart-Cellar Immigration Act of 1965, the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, the Immigration Reform Act of 1990. The reforms include the establishment of the Diversity Lottery among other laws. This kind of laws has made it possible for immigrants to enter the US from Africa, especially during the 1990s. In addition to the changes that occur in USA immigration laws. The United states of American (USA) became an increasingly attractive destination for Africans, who seek to leave Africa

because of the prospects for reinforcing the socioeconomic mobility and the USA's position in the world as a technological world leader in the next decades.

In the late 1980s to the present, political and socio-economical conditions in Africa served as the principle "push" factors for increasing migration to the world. The principle factor of immigration is globalization. As a result, some Africans have migrated to further their education, to escape from poverty, and seek asylum. The majority of Africans enter the world legally under provisions in immigration law for family reunification. As an example of the USA: the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001, becomes increasingly difficult for Africans to visit or settle in USA. Throughout the years of African migration to the world, both women and men from different domains of educational and occupational backgrounds participate in the African Diaspora. The last events of immigration create a new social group in the world societies including the Africans, especially women. They occupied entrepreneurs' and leaders' jobs in different communities. African women develop their transnational identities to successful women in civil society. Although African women immigrants are universal, in their civic lives, they differ from their male counterparts in their strong commitment improving the lives of their families and communities.

Women make valuable contributions to the maintenance of their families in their nations of origin, they are committed to develop and improve life for their families and communities in the place they live in. When compared to their male counterparts, women demonstrate a stronger commitment to building civil society organizations in the world, while males have been more concerned with the development in their nations of origin. The roles and responsibilities of women explain in large part. Their strong commitments to community building in the world work as opposed to their countries of birth (Mary 01-02).

### **1.2.1. African Women Literature**

The migrated literature describes the achievements of various featured groups of contemporary African writers. It focuses on migration within the context of globalization. It also claims that the past of immigration is indelibly complicated with colonial processes. The writers are often rewording the politics or discourses of earlier movements within the black radical tradition, such as Negritude or pan-Africanism, as a way to engage immigration in the present. Black Migrant Literature principally focuses on African women writers within new Diasporas in the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries such as Somali-British writer Nadifa Mohamed, and Kenyan-born Shailja Patel. These writers now live in the United States. The migrant women's bodies are targeted and managed in ways that both overlap and differ from their male counterparts (Christopher 02).

Globalization is not the only framework but also urbanization and education have combined to expend African women's outlooks. Achebe's newly sees female's roles are to be outspread, articulated, and secured by women themselves. The modern African woman represents a small minority of women in failed system in which African men receive a good education while women receive only purposive cosmetic skills. Achebe's view is that women are equal citizens in the construction of the nation as men. Women are depicted as contributors to the nation. For Achebe, women represent new hope for the transformed world and may even take over as fathers and husbands. On the other side, men are portrayed as fragmented and lost just to win a position against the favorite scene of women in solidarity and collaboration. Strives set to confirm the moral strength and intellectual integrity of African women especially since the social conditions keep women stuck in the past are now highly absent (Elda 02). Forna in the novel represents the

relationship between the past and the present using her memories of her father. She even teaches the people of Sierra Leon how to remain connected to their past.

### **1.2.2. Diasporic Issues in African Women Literature**

The word Diaspora appeared in the Greek language. It is based on Speiro (to sow) and the preposition Dia (over). In Ancient Greece, the word refers to migration and colonization. The African Diaspora was first appeared in the 1950s because of colonization's feedback on the African people. The word Diaspora is a fancy word used to describe the Atlantic slave trade. It is the obliged dispersal of the African people to the new world and towards Europe. By time, the term has become to be brooded to similar situation around the world for example Mediterranean and India.

The word included in literature fields as Diasporic literature. This kind of literature questions the binary of identity as a principle question. However, there is a literature that explores the full definition of Diaspora and how does and does not differ from the idea of migration. It begins as a slave trade process. The trans-Atlantic slave trade was one of the largest immigration of Africans from the Old World to the New World. The 1<sup>st</sup> leg of the triangular trade involves ships from Europe carrying goods (e.g., iron, brandy, and weapons) that were traded for slaves in Africa. The 2<sup>nd</sup> leg appoints the Middle Passage, involves the shipment of between 12 And 14 Million enslaved Africans across the Atlantic Ocean to America. The 3<sup>rd</sup> leg was about the transportation of goods (e.g., sugar, cotton, tobacco, and molasses) from America to Europe (Charles 77).

Generally, the Diasporic women literature face issues include alienation, displacement, rootlessness matters, nostalgia, and the question of identity. It also investigates issues related to the dismantling of cultures. It reflects the immigrant experiences that come out of the immigrant

settlement. This literature discusses many Diasporic issues such as hesitation between the motherland and the host country, the cultural struggles related to migration, and exile (Ashcroft 62).

### **1.3. Aminatta Forna's Works**

Aminatta spent her childhood in discursiveness between her Sierra Leonean father and European mother. She chooses not to name the war in her works but when she writes the novel simply wants people to enter the stories and not overlay upon them. What they thought they knew about Sierra Leone that is a war torn country of summary executions, amputees, killing, and child soldiers (Renee 165).

Aminatta gets her inspiration from the war in Sierra Leone. The war lasted from March 1991 to January 2002, when a group of rebels withdraws by the Liberian leader Charles Taylor invaded the country from Liberia. The United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) declares the end of the war in Sierra Leone. There are no accurate statistics of causes. The conservative estimates suggest that almost 70,000 people were killed and about 2.6 million people, which mean more than half of population, were displaced from their homes. The brutality of the war has been widely recorded. It involved terrible and often bloody atrocities on all sides against civilians. These atrocities include widespread execution, amputation of limbs, lips, and ears, decapitation, and gang rape. Children were kidnapped to fight on all sides, and injected with drugs or given alcohol to give them courage. Criminals freed from prisons. They were also loaded against everyone they meet. The experience of Sierra Leone led Robert Kaplan to formulate the term 'the coming anarchy' (James, Kaldor 17).

Based on what has been mentioned above it can be said that Forna's works are inspired by what happened in Sierra Leone. She focuses more on memories, family, identity, love, and the motherland. Forna in all her works represents these elements as a sacramental feature in the African being.

### **1.3.1. Ancestor Stones**

"I was asking my stepmother what people in her village in Sierra Leone believed in before Christianity and Islam [...] The only thing that she could recall was about these stones" (Aminatta 12).

The story begins with the question above, and her co-mother provided her with more details about those stones. She said that her mother died because of her Muslim husband when he arrived to house, he found her talking to stones then he drops them away. The mother got sick then she died. Forna claims that the story of the stones is true because she found a paper written by a Scottish missionary. The paper was about that area in Sierra Leone. The paper mentioned that women have stones that they worshiped and divine with. They represent their ancestors and each woman, on her death gives a stone to her daughter. Forna takes a breath. Then she realized that she wants that character and all those characters. She wants to explore the question of what are you doing to somebody when you just empty their culture and identity.

The question describes what happened in Africa and colonized countries over and over again. Stripping away culture, beliefs and telling people they can't believe what they've always believed in anymore. Keep telling them it's irrelevant and doesn't matter. Colonization obliged them that they have to do it this way. So that's where the character of Mariama in *Ancestor Stones* comes from. Aminatta needs someone who had gone through that kind of experiences of having

things growing up with and taken away. People will find themselves obliged to find their way back to their stripped things.

The story gave Forna's 2006 debut novel, *Ancestor Stones*, its name and its heart. *Ancestor Stones* tells the story of an unnamed country in West Africa. The story is about four sisters. The mesmerizing tale told by the four half-sisters: Asana, Hawa, Mariama and Sarah. They are *Stones* captures for several decades of Sierra Leonean history through the female eyes of one family. They establish a coffee plantation, through the disturbing crash and burn days of the recent civil war. The stones are an unflinching passage through history that expertly evokes the oral traditions and the unique rhythms of rural African life. That exactitude didn't happen automatically.

Forna spent years in Sierra Leone researching *Ancestor Stones*; found that women have different perspectives of war. She worked at the BBC for 10 years before leaving in 1999 to write full time the writer interviewed many women, collecting multiple stories to imagine her own, even coaxing her priceless as a resource stepmother to teach her temne. "Coffee mug in hand, dark hair haloed around her face" (Aminatta 32). Her manner is nothing less than effusive, a vocal, wonderfully energetic woman with whom listening becomes a pleasure, and she describes her.

Forna's eloquence in writing, it strikes me whether she is turning her hand to fiction; memoir or journalism is mirrored in the way she speaks. She can tell a story, this one. 'It was a crash course,' she agrees. 'I speak baby Temne really, but what I wanted to be able to do was to recreate the way the women speak, the rhythms. I wanted to capture the thinking and the feel of the language; it's got a very particular (Aminatta).

Throughout the novel we learn about the complex hierarchical system of marriage. The women support each other and undermine one another. Place of truth and memory in the telling of stories.

### **1.3.2. The Memory of Love**

War and its outcomes are at the center of *The Memory of Love*. Looking for loss and misery, the novel examines the possibilities of feelings in general and love in particular. As the title inspires, through the survived characters who witness the civil war in Sierra Leone. The novel supports the readers who have no experience in such similar painful events to realize the emotional spaces of other people (United Nations Economic and Social Council 209).

The winner of the Commonwealth Writers Prize and the shortlisted for the Orange Prize in 2011, *The Memory of Love* one of Aminatta Forna's books written after the war of Sierra Leone. The Revolutionary United Front (RUF) led by Foday Sankoh attempted to overthrow the President Momoh. The war ended in 2002 with the disarmament and demobilization of RUF's army. The effects of war are in the heart of *The Memory of Love*, thus, it analysis and focuses on the pain and human rights claims (Norridge 48). *The Memory of Love* has a trauma surgeon as one of the main characters and she is one of those ghoulish people who can spend a lot of time in operating theatres so she was happy to allow them to regale her with their stories (Brandon).

### **1.3.3. The Devil That Danced on the Water: A Daughter's Quest**

The memoir of *The Devil that Danced on the Water* 2002 is a novel written by the Sierra Leonean author called Aminatta Forna. The novel is about her childhood memories and an investigation about the execution of her father in 1975 after several years of independence (Helen 18). Forna's father was a courageous man. He was elected to become a minister of finance in 1968. He was shuttling the maze of alliances and enemies that shape the African politics: tribal loyalties,



personal rancor, and battles to control the diamond trade. Mohamed's popularity and integrity were considered as a threat to the dictatorial and corrupted government. In 1974 Aminatta was just 11 years old when her father executed for treason in Sierra Leone (Renee 32). According to Aminatta, her father's crime was being a popular leader of opposition in the country under one man's control and headed for civil war "He didn't know what it meant to feel afraid; he saw no reason to explain his actions to anyone but himself" (Aminatta 46).

Forna and her family fled to Britain. She took a breath there till she decided to return, as a journalist, to write her memoir *The Devil That Danced on the Water*. In this heartbreaking memoir of Fornas quest, she tries to find the truth about her fathers execution. She selects the possible prospects of a poor and largely illiterate populace. People there still suffer the remains of colonial exploitation in Africa, especially in Sierra Leon. She focused on the misleading concept of being a dictatorship and brutal civil war. She put her works in social framework written as fiction.

Fornas works describe how her people lose their identity under the economical, political, cultural, and religious control of colonization. She investigates the struggle to recover what has been taken. Aminatta surrounds her work with the theme of loving family and memories that live in the heart of people after losing someone closer to them.

#### **1.4. Aminatta Fornas *the Devil that Danced on the Water* Main Themes**

The need to investigate the truth, the fear of returning to the past, sense of family and belonging are central themes in *The Devil that Danced on the Water* by Aminatta Fornas. The power of women in *The Devil that Danced on the Water* about the girl chooses to find her identity and truth as well. The novel is a phenomenon in which memories are represented as a means to reach a particular truth or dream.

### 1.4.1. Family and home

Arguably, G.P. Murdock defines the family as a social group identified by one residence of members. It unifies adults of both sexes to preserve generations. Whether loving or charity, the relationships with parents, kids, and brothers have gross impact on members' lives. (Atharva02). The same works with literary characters. Their beliefs about family can be examined, reconfigured, or reasserted as result of their trips through the whole story (Sara01).

*The Devil that Danced on the Water* shares major themes, including the theme of home and family. At first glance, these similarities seem paradoxical. Also, the fact that the novel of *The Devil that Danced on the Water* shares these themes despite its origin sheds the light on the prominence of the concepts of home and family in Diasporas societies.

Throughout this novel, this theme is conveyed in different manners. First of all, the idea of home and a family are portrayed as the source of a civilized society. Moreover, these letters are the subject matter of defense and revenge. Besides, betraying and loyalty are described as consequences of the false concepts of home and family. Finally, home and family make the transmission of fame and reputation possible through societies. The first human civilizations have emerged when human beings decide to stabilize and to reverse from a nomadic to a steady way of life. This change transformed the broad notion of territory into the precise and definite notion of property: families divided into homes, and then villages emerged forming the society.

The importance of home and family are even more stressed in the novel because they are the reason why she suffers from her father's death. As a matter of fact, the only aspiration of the girl is to come home knowing the whole truth about her father, despite numerous temptations along her journey. The situation of Forna in facing the reality of her father's death drives her to do anything just to know the facts. Dash from this perception raises the idea of defense and revenge.

Homes have to be defended, and families have to be avenged. Defense and revenge are two important parts of *The Devil that Danced on the Water* and stem directly from the concepts of home and family developed in this piece of literature. Freetown City is almost like a huge family throughout the entire town. The people are very close and everyone in town is supportive to each other as Aminatta depicted.

#### **1.4.2. Identity**

Sharing the same history of colonization is not the same matter as sharing the same identity history. There is no homogeneous African identity. Forna may be seen as Miss of art and cloaking a trivial item of news in fog and mystery. Her works have stemmed mostly from the complexities of her childhood. It also examines the art of memory with which she has evoked the most ungraspable human destinies and uncovered the life world of the occupation. Her early writings explore the mysteries of both childhood and adolescence.

A major theme that runs throughout Aminatta's fantasies is them of identity. She wanders through events from her memory and tries to find out who she is. In this excerpt, she pinpoints a key element to her identity. *The Devil that Danced on the Water* describes a universe of haunted memories. They are all located in Sierra Leon, the author's hometown, with the shadow of independence. After several years of war ended, Forna's novel delves into the puzzle of identity as the characters try to tract evidence of their existence through the traces of the past. Obsessed with the troubled and shameful period of colonization, she returns to the theme of identity in most of her novels.

*The Devil that Danced on the Water* deals with the theme of identity crisis as well. The protagonist in the novel suffers from the loss of her father in mysterious circumstances and travels from one place to another in attempt to reconnect with the past. The novel addresses the never-

ending search for identity in the world where the sands hold the traces of one's footsteps for few moments. The narrator recalls his shadowy memory. Forna recalls her memories again after years when the accident of her father happened. Forna's obsessions and elegiac prose that typifies dreamlike incidents make the readers members of family do not understand an individual in the family. The reader may feel alienation and faces a family crisis. For instance, in the work, one comes across many individuals who are not appreciated in their own families.

In the words, 'presents the characters whose voice doesn't pervade in their own family.' The third category feels what is real, for example her family and how they were living and what is not real like describing the man as evil. *The Devil That Danced on the Water* is literary hybrid. It is built on the true tale of memory in Forna's childhood. The individual in any society yearns for peace and bliss. If he doesn't get it, he feels alienated and faces a crisis in life. This experience is loosely called 'alienation' or 'identity crises'. Two major factors are responsible for an identity crisis. The society around the person marks his existence. If the society is highly materialistic and the individuals are spiritual, they feel alienated. In Whole novel the protagonist feels alienated in the reign of a dictator and patriarchal society. The second category of identity crisis may be included in the family where person lives. Supposing belong to alienation within the mind of a person, means that any person can be mentally alienated. Usually, the individual is an inconsistent person and he is a psychopath.

The novel presents quite a few characters are psychologically perverted. Thus, one can find the theme of identity crisis in the modern literature in general and in Commonwealth Fiction in particular because of colonization. According to Malcolm Bradbury, 'In the commonwealth fiction one finds 'nowhere men' who are displaced outsiders'(T.Jeevan 02). Aminatta Forna, Sierra Leonean significant writer has returned to the same themes such as the theme of identity, the pull

of the past, the threat of disappearance, the blurring of moral boundaries, ‘the dark side of the soul’ Modiano says thus: "After each novel [...] I know I’ll come back over and over again to tiny details, little things that are part of what I am, in the end". Every person is determined by the place and the time in which he is born. Taking the above remarks, one may say that Aminatta searches for the truth about her father’s death, childhood and memories become the central theme of her novel (Jitendra, 05).

It fuses several genres like biography, autobiography, and detective novel. It tells the history of the title character the girl. She is a ten-year-old daughter of a Sierra Leonean father. Aminatta focuses obsessively on the figure of her father. As a writer, she tries to explore the mysteries of childhood. This drive to solve the riddles and to clarify the mysteries with a real chance of success is the source of her desire to write, as though the exploration of her country’s identity, and writing, could finally help her to link up all the loose ends of her life. Her ingredients are always the same – Her own story and that of her parents, her father’s execution, her memories of abandoned childhood, and a string of sordid events, often related to the Occupation and its consequences, the original day that still haunts her. She sifts and mixes her material and then breaks it down into tiny droplets.

The novel can be seen as an autobiography. In other words, the best shorthand definition of the work might thus be that of an ‘auto-bio-fiction.’ Aminatta simultaneously endeavors to overspill the generic framework of the novel holding autobiography in a distinct category. As one reads the novel, one understands that Fornia explores the ways of breaking out of the cultural-psychological framework distinguishing one’s memory from those of others. Apart from this, she also focuses obsessively on the figure of her father.

The novel presents the never-ending search for identity in the world where the sands keep the traces of one's footsteps for a few moments. It mixes several genres like biography, autobiography, and mysterious novel. It tells the history of its principal character. She moves from the safety of convent that was hiding her. Forna has written the novel with the help of her stepmother, co-mother, and her friends. Though the writer gives plenty of geographical details in the novel, the reader is left with a sense of ambiguity such as what happens to her and when. Aminatta creates several instabilities on different levels of her text and this signifies how literary figures can or cannot be created.

To conclude, Forna has remained a mysterious character to her readers by writing such works that deal with various themes and aspects. This has led to the origins of the French term "modianesque," used to describe a mysterious person or situation.

### **1.4.3. Nationhood**

The issue of nationhood has taken as a major theme in social science studies and the center focus of juridical, political, and cultural debates in all democratic societies. In Africa, nationhood has taken different shapes and ideologies. It is a question for African construction itself. Within nation-states, nationhood has been expressed in different domains extending from the national community to the civil society. It allows individuals and groups to participate in the political community. Andrade indicates that African women writers have not 'national consciousness' which is often neglected. Obviously, women writers of African origins supposed to make their voices heard and opinions respected as the rest members of their societies. This was a combating in the literary arena. Even they want to portray the unjust suffocation and destruction of the African women's thoughts and feelings on the earth, as one of the risky faults of their cultures and societies.

Bessie Head, Assia Djebar, Nawal el Saadawi; Lauretta Ngcobo, and Yvonne Vera are writers pave the way for contemporary writers including Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Unity Dow, Delia Jarrett-Macauley, Valerie Tagwira, and Aminatta Forna. They try to prove that women writers throughout the continent have powered the sense of nationhood, but that they can express their awareness strongly, critically, and in complex and individual ways.

Interestingly, Diaspora writer such as Forna does not include ‘cosmopolitan’ perspectives in her writings. It is acknowledged as emotional, cultural and political presence in the authorized phantasm. This “gesture” subtly indicates Forna’s affiliation to her adoptive country Sierra Leon. The unaggressive nature of the movement (which is neither harsh nor loud) indicates dedication rather than possessiveness. It comes after long and harrowing struggle to re-root herself in the new country, an account that has unblinkingly reported awareness of ugly and dangerous power emerges in the society and the protagonist’s psyche.

Head’s text can therefore be taken as early instance of the “affiliative critique” balancing a sense of national bonded with a lucid articulation of social flaws and damaging histories, characterizing this essay’s focal texts. While suggesting that women writers in articulating their knowledge of their societies write nationhood “differently” from the way male authors generally do this, on the assumption that “knowledge is not only situated historically and culturally but that it is always gendered” (Lara 80). It is as wary of indicating belief in ‘gender enclave’ for Africa’s women writers as it appears to disregard the fine work of the continent’s male authors and their complex representations and interrogations of nationhood.

Yet it seems necessary to draw attention to the phenomenon of women writers continuing to show strong interest in national communities at time, the nation has often declared an idea whose

time has passed. The idea described as an entity inimical to women's welfare. Instead, the women writers listed here want to write about women into their nation's histories, present, and future, rather than 'writing off' their nations.

*The Ancestor Stones*, sketches a type of history in narrated installments of Sierra Leone between 1926 and 1999. The author's continuing preoccupation with her African original community, despite all she has relocated to Northern countries. In her articulation of national imaginaries that are female centric and her discerning political analyses of the sources of her nation's woes and failures, and particularly as complex verbal and stylistic constructs, this noteworthy example of newer African writing. she illustrates Trinh T. Minh-ha's dictum: "Neither entirely personal nor purely historical, a mode of writing is in itself a function", which Trinh refers to as "an act of historical solidarity, articulated in addition to the writer's personal standpoint and intention, a relationship between creation and society" (Native 20). This may refer to something like synergy discernible in the text discussed here. It is an indication of profound emotional investment by the author. Aminatta wants to create work of verbal art that delineate and archive her nation's perspective of being or life quality within specific time frames. The frames implicitly renew and review (perhaps rediscover) the nature of her own belonging to the nation she acknowledges herself (through her characters) to be a part of. Far from denying or rejecting the national for the anti-national, Africa's contemporary and younger Anglophone women authors seem overwhelming to embrace nationhood.

They could be aligned with the position adopted by Fanon in his essay "*On National Culture*". In which he insists that the "nation is not only the condition of culture" but "a necessity", since "the re-establishment of the nation" will not only "give life to national culture". But "make such a culture open to other cultures" (Wretched 197). The younger female African writers in



question here do indeed in their texts vivify as much as critique their national cultures. While their sophistication, cultural confidence, and openness to the societies which they have relocated themselves differ markedly from the resentment discernible in many of the more reactive, resistant and distant perceptions of those cultures by colonial-era or earlier postcolonial African writers.

While in the late nineties it was appropriate and necessary to note that by the second decade of the twenty-first century. This remark is nonexistent anymore on African writing and even to scope on political life, especially writings written by women. The women writers, in particular, are inscribing women into the nation. Women writers from Africa like Forna is increasingly assuming the stances of national duty and authority in and through her texts. She gives recognition to women's non-military but vital struggles within their societies. She centralizes women's battles and efforts in her texts. Forna demonstrates close connections between the national or social imaginary that dominates in a particular chronotype, and the nature of the predominantly female characters' struggles for a dignified life. Nana Wilson-Tago speaks of "the gendered time within the redefined national space of women's narrative that yields innovative recreations of culture and identity" (237).

Commentators on women's testimonies at the South African Truth and Reconciliation Committee hearings noted that "the women's stories primarily testified to the difficulties in maintaining relationships [...] and their perceived struggles and failures to maintain families and homes. Women have tended to tell different stories which are at odds with [...] Women lift up the woven weight of race, culture and class discourses in shaping their social worlds" (Motsemme and Ratele 308). The commentators observed: "the [T.R.C.] commissioners pit the struggle to remake nation against what they regard as privatized anguish" (315). By both honoring and focusing on women's socially and domestically constructive role as vital for the survival of communities and

nations; by examining women's works, thoughts and not in close women to the symbolic role of nationhood carriers as in literary texts by male African writers such as Senghor and Ngugi.

Representing women in Forna's texts is a way of presenting women in their: labor, achievements, struggles, authority, organizational roles, and daily dealings. Within the novel, there is a sense of cross-generational transmission of an experientially obtained perspective on and knowledge of the nation in question, and it functions by means of narrative by a young girl becomes a woman as an account and guiding explanation offered in terms of her experience.

In the earlier sections of Forna's text, accounts of rural Sierra Leonean co-wives' lives in a polygynous household are recounted and reinterpreted by their middle-aged and older daughters, the 'aunts' of the narrator who has been invited to return to post-civil war Sierra Leone to take charge of the family's plantation. She remembers her life with the family as exceptional and ideal. Sadly, her father was executed by those who are anti-regime activities. The heart of the extended family was maintained by her cousin, mother, and brother.

An interesting parallel among the text is that it uses the first person narrative voice and all make use of multiple narrators. In one sense, such a combination of testimonies indicates the variety and eschews the single homogenizing perspective of monolithic nationhood. Another perspective each voice is given a narrative equal turn to express its sense of what it was or is like to be Sierra Leonean, Nigerian. The authenticity of what is told about the portrayed societies whereas, in combination, the composite or mosaic quality of the portrait of the African nation, in the more distant past and present. It gives a convincing image, authority or validity, to how the nation is portrayed.

Besides, the deep fondness for her people exhibited by the author through her characters, the irrevocable connectedness felt with their compatriots. The opening sentence of her “Acknowledgements”, right at the end of her long novel, states: “Many women from among my family and friends spent hours sharing their memories with me of how it was to live as a woman in our country’s past” (Unpaginated 317).

## **1.5. Conclusion**

African languages did not utilize in African literature enough. What exists more in African literature is written in foreign languages like French and English. Most, this language spread is because of colonization. Even more, African writers work to restore the esteem and value of African literature in the world through including a national theme that expresses the African society. This paper highlights the importance of African literature and the different crisis faced. As well as the Diasporic literature and most issues that dealt with the writers. In addition to the important role that African women have served the African literature. Aminatta highlights the most used themes in African literature as well.

## Chapter Two: Gender, Black Feminism and Girlhood: Theoretical Debate

### 2.1. Introduction

Many people would respond with examples of dress, desires, manners, or biological features, to the asked question of what makes someone feminine or masculine. People may describe one woman as less feminine. Man, as more masculine than another or a man may also be described as more feminine and a woman more masculine. These two terms are related to each other in such points depending on the people's understanding. However, the two terms are more complex than stereotypes. They are cultural across the intersection of one's sex, gender, and sexuality.

In Western societies, gender is considered as an aspect of individual identity. It starts affecting us in our lives from the first moment we are born in. *The Devil That Danced on the Water* includes those aspects of being feminine or masculine. Aminatta indicates her scenes with small details that provides the reader with specifics to analyze the characters mentally and even physically. This description paves the way to enter into the writer's mind which leads us into the girlhood concept that deals with the state of being a girl.

## 2.2. Gender

"A person chooses work according to interest, talent, strength – what has sex to do with that?"(Leguin 17)

Gender is an academic study that emerged in the late 1960s. Gender identity is generated in early feminist works. It came into academic use in the late 20th century. It is the result of the second wave of feminism. The majority of feminist writers of this period show strong opposition to patriarchy. The second wave focuses on how personal relationships of women in society were suffering from inequalities (Abiha 01).

Gender is the roles and responsibilities held by men and women that exist in our families, our societies, and our cultures. Gender also includes the expectations held about the characteristics, and behaviors of both women and men (femininity and masculinity). Gender roles and expectations are learned and not born with it (Dale 06). Sociology and women's studies suggest that differences between men and women are observed and explained. Male prejudice had left certain gaps in the knowledge about women and this focuses upon by sociologists, especially women sociologists. They focus on the experiences and issue that these women face such as male violence and being an object.

Gender according to West and Zimmerman is defined as something we are not born with, and something we do not have, but something we do. Gender is an achieved and learned status means not born with. It is presented through the psychological, cultural, and social conditions according to them (West and Zimmerman 125). Gender is also seen as something we perform (Butler). So, gender can be defined as the state of being either a male or female. It is also known

as a set of roles and responsibilities associated with being a girl or boy, in some cultures, a third gender.

Women are the major focus in the arena of humanities compared to other fields. So, women studies were an interdisciplinary subject and have strong roots based on English, history, and sociology. While men considered the idea of masculinity in the same way as women considered femininity. In the late 1980s and 1990s, men's studies emerged as an area of academic interest. Men's studies programs are part of either a gender studies program or as a subject associated with women's studies. It is not taught on its own. Books on men and masculinity became very popular in the 1990s, to the extent that 'men's studies' is now recognized as a specialist area of academic focus.

The difference between women and gender studies is that Gender studies begin from the critical position established by women's studies to look more broadly at gender as a phenomenon. (As mentioned before in 1970 there was no depth study of different genders and their phenomenon. Male favoritism was inherent). Gender studies are also seen as more inclusive than 'women's studies', taking in men and women. In Aminatta's *The Devil That Danced on The Water* is easy to notice a kind of equivalence in both genders. Forna through the story describes her parents as heroes in her life.

Researches about women arose from a feminist, a critical and a women-centered view of society, politics, power, etc. It is built from females' voices, Women of the past and of the future. Women's study focuses simply on women and their issues. Focus is only on women's feminist theory, women's history, social history, women's fiction, etc. (Abiha 02)

The traditional perceptions about men are being the model of economical providers of their families and for women to be as caregivers in her house is a gender norm in most cultural contexts.

Thus, the etymology and usage of terms of masculinity and femininity are clearly integrally tied to our conception of gender. However, women always prove that they are able to do traditionally male works just like men do (e.g. both men and women can do housework and being leaders and managers). Gender Balance has the same number of women and men at all levels within the association, to ensure equal representation and participation in all scopes of activities and interests. (Miliann, Donovan, Laura and Sonny 04)

### **2.2.1 Definition of Femininity and Masculinity**

### **2.2.2 Definition of Femininity**

Any one may be unable to easily express what femininity means but still can identify these constructs and aspects in oneself and others well (borders et al 04). According to the American Heritage Dictionary (1982) feminine is the state of belonging to the female sex, and femininity presents the conditions and standards of being feminine "womanliness" (The American Heritage 496). The terms "femaleness" and "maleness" might be synonymous with "femininity" and "masculinity," Indeed, this perspective is presented by Spence (1985, 1999). It is significant to show that the perception of femininity as femaleness denotes that women have innate personal characteristics with which they are born with. Those characteristics are diverse from those that men possess (borders et al 04).

Femininity represents more than a psychological or biological feature. Although the importance of biological and psychological mechanisms in the production of gender. It is important to introduce it as a non-essentialist term shaped through socio-cultural processes. Margaret Mead is one of the anthropologists, she questions the essentialist understanding of gender features. In her work, she represents that modern ideas of femininity and masculinity are not generalizable concepts. The idea that femininity is based on both sex and gender is against



essentialist programs, which presents it as a biological matter and take it for uncertainty (Qarakhani 75). Anthropologists discussions about femininity is generated in a complicated system of socio-cultural contexts rather than psycho-biological factors (Borgata and Montgomery).

The general idea of femininity formed around biological roles like giving birth consecrated by a halo of cultural standards. As the anthropologist Rosaldo (1974) suggests, women's roles have long been affected, nonetheless not explicit by their sexual functions. Garrett (1987) also sees femininity as a series of roles and responsibilities attached to the biological sex, and terms shaped around these functions such as motherhood, marriage, and holding child.

Garrett also suggests that these perceptions of women are fake. They are depicted as beings that are not able to live on their own and rely on men to encourage them (Garrett 44). These ideas that formed in social contexts give a great cultural value to masculinity. Ethnic group, as an important factor that empressees the identical shape and the sense of belonging. It is considered as an important feature in forming conceptions on cultural values such as sexuality.

#### **2.2.2.1. Feminine Spaces and Roles**

Gendered roles are attitudes predicted by people as a result of their gender. Gendered division in function is needed and important information on gender relations. Roles like taking care of children and the seniors, and keeping peace in the family and home are closely seen as feminine features.

#### **2.2.2.2. Female Personality and Characteristics**

Gendered clichés are known beliefs between people that cover different mental and personal characteristics to both men and women. This kind of clichés is widely accepted as reality. Williams and Best argue that women are such as 'sentimental', 'dependent', 'sensitive' and

‘emotional’ and sometimes included only to women. The common opinion held between people is that ‘women are more emotional’. Some ordinary people say that women’s sentimentality is not a weakness in their character, but sometimes it is an advantage. According to Mariana, she sees that girls, in contrast, develop in closer relations with their mothers, and they have more fluent psychic communication that simplifies a great ability for intimacy but leaves them less prepared to face the public sphere (Mariana 04).

### **2. 2.1.3. Feminine Beauty and Competition**

Wolf discusses that the female aesthetics of beauty are constructed socially. Beauty is an important part of any women’s everyday life. The findings of Ladan Rahbari and Zeinab Mahmudabadi's studies show that beauty as a concept seems to be essential of a feminine nature. The natural beauty is born to empower the state of being feminine. Considering beauty as a feminine characteristic was universally accepted among many people. They believe that beauty is a feminine characteristic (Zeinab & Ladan 02-07).

### **2.2.3 Masculinity**

All societies have the cultural background of gender, but not all have the concept of 'masculinity'. In its modern usage, the term assumes that someone's behavior comes from the type of person is. That means an unmasculine person will behave differently. For example, being peaceable than violent, conciliatory rather than dominating, not able to kick a football, uninterested in sex, and so forth (Connell 67). Definitions of masculinity are mostly based on a cultural perspective; however, it follows a variety of strategies to characterize the type of person who is masculine. There are strategies followed; and they are easily distinguished in terms of logic, though most of the time combined in practice.

Later, the authors attempt to pick the essence of masculinity, that is varied: risk-taking, responsibility, irresponsibility, aggression. On the other hand, another idea of masculinity is the sociobiologist Lionel Tiger's idea that true masculinity, underlying male bonding, and war, is elicited by 'hard and heavy phenomena' (Connell 68). Here it is better to illustrate by the Father work concept. Father work refers to caring for and contributing to the life of the next generation. The term also implies that becoming a positive influence in a child's life is developmental, not only for the child but for the father (Dale 02).

“Masculinity” does not exist unless if it is used in contrast to “femininity.” It is a comparatively modernistic historical production of massy social change. Indeed, women have always been seen as different from men. Masculinity indicates that there are many definitions socially constructed to be a man and that these definitions can change over time and from one place to another. The concept relates to notions and ideas about how men are expected to behave in society. Masculinity and femininity are related terms, which only have meaning when are together. Masculinity is a set of arrangements about practice structured by gender relations. They are historically inherent; and their making and remaking is a political process touching the balance of social interests and the direction of social change (Dale 09).

If it is spoken only about the variations between men as a group and women as a group, there will be no need for the term's 'masculine ' and 'feminine' at all. It can be just spoken of 'men's' and 'women's', or 'male' and 'female '. The terms 'masculine ' and 'feminine' indicates what is beyond the categorical sex variation to the ways men and women differ within themselves, in matters of gender. The differences between girls and boys emphasize separation and autonomy for boys make men emotionally stunted and having less ability to make intimate personal relationships, but they get better prepared for public life and the work world (Marian 04).

### **2.3. Overview (introduction to) about Black Feminism**

There are a variety of definitions and disruptions that many women are facing to understand the contemporary feminist movements. These definitions can be a result of a long and difficult history of the Women's movement. Furthermore, young women are overly unaware of the gaining that feminists achieved over the years. They focus only on the contemporary presence of feminism without understanding the movement itself in the context of its long history.

Feminism is called "womanism". Womanism, a term formed by Alice Walker. It has four aspects which first include "a Black feminist or feminist of color." Second, is one who "appreciates and prefers women's culture". Third, is the "love" of culture and "self." Finally, "womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender (Walker, 1983). It seems that many people keep linking the feminist movement only to the white activists' bourgeois women. They do not match it to struggles started by African Americans for their: freedom, justice, and equality.

Nevertheless, this popular fallacy, the truth is that the history of feminism is marked by three prominent waves (Latayna 19). First-wave of feminism includes a period of feminist activity during the 19th and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It dealt mainly with the rights of women and girls like education and work conditions [...] The Second-wave of feminism (the 1960s-1980s) dealt with the social and legal inequalities. In addition to raising consciousness about sexism and patriarchy, gender, violence, domestic abuse [...]. The third wave of feminism (the 1990s-2000s) is seen as a continuation of the second wave and a response to the failures that faced the previous waves (Anastasia 05-09).

The third wave that followed those historical periods witnessed significant changes. Number of black women activists developed a special feminist consciousness. The consciousness

gives them a strong community which aims to empower them on their terms. Collectively, their theory of feminism was more extended than the agenda put by white women. In that agenda, they select specific social, economic, and political issues that face black women communities around the world. These issues were combined into a theoretical paradigm that we call today black feminism. Some of the fundamental aspects of the black feminist theory appear in the activism of black women, during the tail end of the second wave of feminism. When black women defend black feminism, through their speech it can be recognized how systems of power are formed around preserving the social construction of categories of both gender and race.

Black feminists refuse all forms of racism, sexism, and poverty together. The ultimate goal of black feminism is to create a political movement that not only struggles against capitalism's exploitation but also what Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham calls the "racialized construction of sexuality," but also seeks to develop institutions to protect what the ruling culture has no respect and value for black women's minds and bodies (Higginbotham, 1992). In the end, womanism is a theoretical framework, in which black women tend to select the most interesting parts of the theory that meet their needs. Unfortunately, black feminists' efforts to draw their path and destiny are often ignored (Latayna 16).

### **2.3.1. Black Feminism**

For a long period, black people felt disappointed because of the world's reaction toward them. Black feminists engaged in a special feminism speech in the mid-nineteenth century, in the 1970s the term Black feminism emerged. Feminists made the case that Black women have to deal socially and politically with the concept of the "double bind" which is being Black and being a woman at the same time. Recently, Black feminists have spread the notion to include issues of class and sexuality, in addition to race and gender. Each of these social identities mentioned before

put the Black woman in a double position of fighting not just against one status, but the intersectionality of all social identities leads to discrimination. Black feminist theory is differentiated by some very specific ideologies because it concerns the justice movements for women in general and African Americans in particular. For example, the civil rights movement, led by men, effectively fought for Black rights as a racial minority while completely ignored the rights of black women. Conversely, the popular feminist movement that took place in the sixties and seventies sought to fight gender discrimination in a manner that ignored the needs of minority women in regards to equality. Thus, two of the most important civil rights movements at the intersection of race and gender essentially excluded the needs and the voice of Black women (Kelly & Davis 02).

Hill Collins (2000) effectively added to the discussion of Black feminism by empowering the shift in the sample of oppression. She conceptualizes the idea that many systems of persecution are complicated comparing to additions. For African American women having a job, they should deal with possible racism that White people who do not experience before and sexism that male counterparts will not transact with. This situation makes a different trip from others in a way that is influenced by race or gender. As a result, the Black feminist position can be seen as divided leading to “tensions Black feminists experience with both Black men and white society at large [...]” (LaTayna20).

Salzman explains that Black feminists resist the separatism of white feminist counterparts for generations. Traditionally, it did not include racism and social classes as part of the women’s rights list. The journey to execute sexism, racism, and classism should not be a war for Black women only, but it should be interlocked in the fight for social justice for all people of all origins

(Salzman 20). The viewpoint of Black feminist is that must include the intersectionality of women who suffer from race and gender standpoints (Kelly, Davis 03).

### **2.3.3. Black Feminism Thoughts**

The publication of *Black Feminist Thought*, black feminism has moved to a new level. Collins' work sets standards for the discussion of black women's lives and experiences. Patricia in her book *Women's Review of Books* describes the painful daily assaults. Those situations teach her that being an educated and working black woman will not make her better in a white society. According to Patricia, black women in general and African-American women, in particular, had created a collective knowledge.

Black feminist theory is deeply taking roots within the historical experiences and ideas reflections of black women (Collins 12). In other parts, Patricia dealt with the issue of Maria Stewart. Maria challenged the black women to deny the negative image of black womanhood. She assumed that race, gender, and class oppression are the reasons for black women's poverty. In 1833 speech, Maria announced that the treasure of white people is made by black people's efforts. She also explained how they plant the grapevine and white people eat the grapes. Maria points out the principal reason for black women's oppression which is: self-definition of self-reliance and independence. She also calls black women to rely on those reasons to fix their problems on society. Stewart challenges black mothers to create a strong political foundation. She is one of the first black women who encourage the relations between black women themselves to create such unique communication. (Patricia 03)

Black feminism remains important because black women shape a persecuted category. As a group, Black women engage in a debate about the relationship linking African women's persecution and activism. This kind of debate means that there are two parties are in opposition.

As long as Black women are still subordinate within the oppressions of race, class, gender, sexuality, and nation. The purpose of Black feminist thought is also to struggle with the persecution, both its practices and ideas that justify it. If persecution did not exist, Black feminist thought and similar oppositional knowledge would not be necessary. As a critical social theory, Black feminist thought tends to empower black women within the context of persecution performed by the injustice society. Black women cannot be fully empowered unless intersecting persecution themselves is the breakdown.

Ruth Shays, a Black inner-city resident, points out how differences in men's and women's experiences lead to variations in perspective. "The mind of the man and the mind of the woman is the same" she adds, "but this business of living makes women use their minds in ways that men don't even have to think about" (Gwaltney 33).

Recognition of this connection between experience and consciousness that shapes the everyday lives of the individual black women often intervenes in the works of Black women activists. In her autobiography, Ida B. Wells-Barnett describes how the execution of her friends has such a hard effect on her view of the world. She devotes much of her life to fighting against the execution case (Duster 1970). The sociologist Joyce Ladner disturbed with the variations between the teaching of scholarship and her experiences. She met a young Black woman in the South led her to write *Tomorrow's Tomorrow* (1972). It is about a Young black female (25)

#### **2.3.4. Psychoanalytic Feminism**

Freud states that "psychoanalysis does not try to describe what a woman is—that would be a task it could scarcely perform—but sets about enquiring how she comes into being" (Freud 116)

Psychoanalytic feminists point out that women's oppression is rooted inside the bathe sic psychic system. It's strengthening by the continual repetition of dynamics formed during



childhood and infancy. Because of these deeply engrained patterns, psychoanalytic feminists deduce to change the experiences of childhood and family relations. In addition to linguistic styles, that generate and reinforce the sense of masculinity and femininity. Freud describes that women are more inferior to men concerning the psychological, moral, and biological factors related to them. Clara Thompson claims that the authority of men comes from the weaker egos they have. This claim reinforces the point view of Freud about the inferiority of women. Psychoanalytic feminists examine political and social elements affecting the progress of male and female subjects (Marian 01).

There are two major schools of psychoanalytic feminism: Freudian and Lacanian School. Freudian feminists are more interested in abinale dominance and the development of gendered subjects in societies where women are responsible for mothering, whereas Lacanian feminists analyze the relations between gendered identity and language. Early feminist appropriations of Freud emphasized that each human being is unique over straightly gendered evolutionary paths and explained women's psychic illnesses as produced and conducted by their social inferiority within patriarchy, rather than determining the biological lack. These theorists reinterpreted some women's neuroses as an attempt to address the social subordination. Later Freudian feminists critique the traditional family construction in which primarily mothers undertake house care and other responsibilities. In the *Reproduction of Mothering* book, Nancy Chodorow, argues that disparate experiences in boys' childhood toward different developmental paths, boys definitively separate from their mothers to follow the father's social power and to discover what is in his society. Girls, in other parts, develop a continuous sense of self concerning their mothers (Marian 02).

Chodorow and other object relations theorists support the binary of parenting as one way to remove the characterological imbalances rooted by the gendered extremes because children will be able to see both parents as individuals in relation. Lacanian psychoanalytic feminists refused the analysis of self-construction through the discussion about the biological and psychosocial traces of parenting.

The group of French Lacanian feminists including Luce Irigaray, Helene Cixous, and Catherine Clement is known for their project named the *écriture féminine*, it is an attempt to embody the status of women to challenge women's position in phallogocentric culture. These writers argue that women need to abandon the neutral, scientific masculine language and create disobedient creativity based on subjective experiences of the body and the feminine. For Irigaray and Cixous, this involved celebrating women's spread and autoerotic sensuality.

*In the Devil that Danced on the Water*, Aminatta describes that girl has power and self-confidence in her society. It appears when she is narrating her story without referring to the power of men over women in her society. She has confidence in herself and her life without feeling that men can play an important role in women's life.

## **2.4. Girlhood**

For more than a century, early studies in the culture of girlhood come from Mitchell and Reid- Walsh (Melanie 01). They argue that girlhood studies are the scheduled rights basis to research and activity that fulfill the achievement of gender equality for girls of all ages in both local and universal contexts. Mitchell and Walsh defend the seeking to reinforce girls' and young women's empowerment through different contexts and places. Feminist and other activist scholars working in this field manifest a strong commitment to enable girls' participation in their societies

and to listen precisely to girls' voices in different domains (Brown and Gilligan 1992; Mazzarella and Pecora 2007). Indeed, the field of girlhood studies considered as a new field (Carolin 122).

Girlhood is the point where the childhood and adulthood meet. It is a fine circle that includes both childhood and adolescent. Nevertheless, it is a complete and significant period that indicates the transformation to womanhood. There are some attempts by the British imperial power to introduce girlhood in the original context, carefully and precisely to determine an age from which girlhood begins. Historiography dealt in detail with late-nineteenth century try to list and codifies the age of adulthood. Seen from the perspective of reparative and feminist studies consider the issue of determining the age of adulthood as a saver (Ghosh 79).

The girl's position is in the narrow spaces between both childhood and adolescence. The one aged between seven and twelve, is an interesting subject with her own special mixture of cultures and experiences. The early twenty-first century, most of the research on girls in the scope of girlhood studies supposes that girl is the young one and this leads to work on the pre-adolescent teenager. While the girl is seen as an important figure since the beginning of twenty-first century. In the other side most of the researches are conducted on girls in the approach of girlhood. Studies suppose that the girl is the young one and this means that work on the teenage pre-adolescent. Girl for long time was ignored and marginalized. Part of these studies may be the result of methodological issues related to the hardness of accessing to teenage girls. the groundbreaking study done by the Georgetown Law Center on Poverty and Inequality for the first time provides information define adults view toward black girls as less innocent and more adult-comparing them to their white peers, especially in the age between five and fourteen years old. Studies in the similar filed argues that black boys have the same view by the white people and adults' perceptions about them (Rebecca, Jamilia and Thalia 01). As well as the predisposition to treat the cultures of teenage

girls, who considered as worthless since the rebellion, disobedience and resistance of older girl. This is the focus of so many researches on girls' studies. The girl arises less overtly at the teenage stage. Another reason may be that social media culture is perceived largely and overly as associate culture media (Melanie and Natalie 01).

The goal of this special issue of *Girlhood* is to treat these censorships by concentrating specifically on the cultures, politics, and experiences of pre-adolescent girls in their own, rather than as an expansion of children or young girls. It provides a chance in timely opportunity to find out the importance of girlhood in the development of tweenhood and to question the continued advantage of the introduction of tweens presented in academic form and popular speeches in the early twenty-first century (Melanie and Natalie 01).

## 2.5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the suffering of African women of racism, persecution, and gender discrimination, African women attempt to find a solution. In this paper, we tried to study the psychology of African women through their writings using a psychoanalytic feminist perspective, as a result of the study women at some point they become strong and have the ability to destroy anyone who may stop them. Concerning girlhood, many scholars dealt with it like Claudia, she argues that one of the study's purposes of the girlhood study is to own the ability to compress the history in one hand. On the other hand, is to come up with the final timeline for the girlhood approach. While Rebecca and her partners try to restore the consideration and value of the black girl by changing the way they look at her.

I remember her now, as I write, the little girl who once was me. If I concentrate my will I can still summon her, sometimes. She is there, the girl who believed there was a place somewhere on this earth, a place where a devil came down at dusk to dance alone on the water. (Aminatta.387)

## **Chapter Three: *The Devil That Danced on the Water*: Stand with her own.**

### **3.1. Introduction**

The struggle for asserting the female self can be considered as a major thematic preoccupation of literature in the world. The females over the years have struggled to break down the walls and barricades that have been consciously or unconsciously built against her by the society that seems to be unaware of her being in it.

There are challenges confronted by the black woman in their society and around the world in asserting her special self. It equally highlights the procedures adopted by Forna to investigate her father's case. Aminatta investigates different mechanisms adopted in the novel by her in combating the traditions against their self-assertiveness right from the family, which is considered as a microcosm of the larger society. Forna embodies how the female fights both internal and external oppositions to her self-assertiveness in the novel and especially seeking for the truth. It comes out with the finding that the black female in Africa has overtime developed in her quest for self-assertion. In Africa, the war begins when the woman is obliged to fight and break the wall or barricade of invisibility to be seen as a human being. The black woman was never accepted to be in existence in the agenda of patriarchy.

Forna symbolizes the journey of the black woman 's struggle for both assertion and truth that has been very long but, despite this, she had resisted and determined to seek and gain space in a patriarchal society where she finally could assert herself despite the societal hegemony that is against her. Forna shows how the assertive black woman has survived from the depth of oppression, brutality, ignorance, and violent subjugation of both societies and the system of law as well. The black woman had to accept such compromises as a way to stop being viewed as an outcast in

society. After all, the African woman kept seeking the truth of what was happening around her and fought to be what it is now. Amina presented her father's case in order to reveal the truth.

### **3.2. Struggle for Self-Assertion**

“Sue for your rights and privileges. Know the reason you cannot attain them. Weary them with your imports. You can but die if you make the attempt; and we shall certainly die if you do not” according to Stewart, the power of self-definition is important for the black women's survival (Patricia 01) black feminist thought

Aminatta Forna's novel *The Devil That Danced on the Water* can be considered as a favorite selection for collections of novels of African literature. The novel says: its heroine tragically success in her searching for the truth about her father and discovering the corruption in her country, just as she has been freed from a constricting tradition of being a weak woman and has realized self-assertion as the deepest and strongest component of her existence in any society, she lives in.

There is evidence of a deeper level of tragedy in the story that regards Aminatta Forna as a heroine but as a powerful girl stands alone against her society and talks about what men and ministers have no right talk about. She writes... ‘Leave them in their ruined country,’ ‘surrounded by ruins, ghosts, flies, motherless children’ ‘Fatalism, disloyalty.’ ‘No conscience. No personal responsibility’ because she has the whole evidence about corruption, bribes, piracy, and betrayal. She had interviews, documents, and records that allowed her to discovered the truth and raised the curtains of lie that have been told. The self-assertion is not achieved by reflection but the opposite which is by "a suspension of intelligent thought" covered as "illumination" and "striving." As a result, a paradigm of basic contradictions and incredible attitudes and emerges which gives structure to the story and forecasts its conclusion.



The key to recognizing this deep tragic level is to distinguish carefully between the story's narrator, author, and protagonist. The process of distinguishing leads to one river which is the same person 'Aminatta' who plays the whole roles in and through the novel. Aminatta's early biography involved in the novel subjectively, it can be considered as an extreme example of the theme of self-assertion in her novel *The Devil that Danced on the Water*. Freud was interested in tales told by the troubled souls. But he tries to grasp their inside demons. He knew he would first have to deal with his own first (Freud 06).

The recent interpretations have broadly followed a strong, and sometimes an extreme feminist resistance. The representative of this in both approach and language is Achebe's *Arrow of God's* well-known characterization of the novel as one of Achebe's most representative of self-assertion. Achebe in his novel *Arrow of God* shows clearly the challenge of the historical moment and specifies the African experiences with both imperialism and colonialism in a way that speaks directly to the circumstances of many colonized African people. Achebe's early writings *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*, in particular, are programmatic novels of nationalist self-assertion that investigate the Eurocentric presumptions of colonial and postcolonial writing on Africa.

Although her father's death is an occasion for deep tragedy directed at governmental blindness about all kinds of corruption and abusive men in the system. Mohamed Forna dies in the unfair world of his country where he has always sacrificed for others. In the story's surfaces, Aminatta struggles for selfhood against society's decree for female selflessness, ignorance, and being for others. This struggle appears in her investigations for the truth "with the task I had set myself. It had taken me months of work to get this far" but in this novel, there is no hard evidence of self-sacrifice by her father to show his innocence to the world or any ongoing struggle for selfhood. On the opposite, it is clear that Aminatta provides much evidences of sacrifice in order

to detect the truth. These positions are all read into the novel through the way she pretends to gather the fragment facts and assumptions “Whether I was right to come here, seeking salve for old wounds among people whose own suffering was so raw.” The complicated truth is that this novel is not about death or corruption only, but about Aminatta Forna. The strong single possible reference in the novel to difficulties in her life is a sentence, which says "When I was ten after my father was taken away, I began to suffer migraines that remained undiagnosed for years".

The novel enables us to make certain results about Aminatta, but it does not submit us with any information about the truth of her life except her perceptions, and what she is thinking about herself. These perceptions are taken as the statements of the story's omniscient narrator, who is the same person. Support for this position is spread throughout the novel but the most dramatic elements appear in the following quotes:

“All my life I have harbored memories tried to piece together scraps of truth and make sense of fragmented images.” She has her own world.

“Gradually I learned to spy: I eavesdropped on adult conversations, rifled hidden papers, devised lines of questioning and I began to build onto my fragments layers of truth.”

In these paragraphs, Forna takes us into her mind and describes her ideas about her father's case. It is significant, in the quotations, that Aminatta builds her thoughts based on real facts. Whatever that paragraph, Aminatta discounts her memories as a phase to self-assertion. It is obvious that there is quite a discrepancy between the way Aminatta feels about herself, her father, and the people she knows, but all the mystery of the difference is on Aminatta's side. Whatever her original reason had been for the quest for truth, it is clear now that feeling the way she does about it she would be better off not looking for the truth "I just felt tired – exhausted – and strangely

emotionally detached, as though I were watching a show". For a while, she thinks that this research will not drive her to any result since people were lying about the truth.

Aminatta has a powerful and strange view of the truth about her father and her country as well. The wording of the following sentence includes her as an obligation to know what exactly happened. The feeling of responsibility leads her to bend the other person to tell her the truth however it is "It was an obligation I held myself to. I never talked about 'my father' only ever 'Dr. Forna'; I did it to encourage people to respond to me". She could convince her father's friends to convict themselves because of the lies and bribe they accept in order to declare the falseness witness "My father had not been facing one man or even a government, but a system, an entire order, in which everyone from judge to juror knew their role."

At the beginning of the novel, for example, she describes how they took her father forever "I am ten years old. It is on 30 July 1974. I am watching a dust devil heading for my home." Even more to the point, Forna's whims imperiously put everyone into a no-win situation where anything they do is not only wrong but also a crime against her absolute freedom.

These thoughts go beyond being merely strange and impossible views for any social case. She is about to deal with a whole country's corrupted system. What Aminatta considers as illumination is the dark and twisted fancy that clearly reflects a confused and unhealthy mind mixed with old pain. In truth, Aminatta is sick, emotionally as well as physically. In the novel, she tells us that she suffered from migraines exactly after they took her father. She also suffered from Malaria while she was with her mother. The phraseology is vague; however, the rest of the novel gradually makes clear the nature of her emotional trouble. Alone in her room, when she abandoned herself in an attempt to gather her old memories to find any slit of hope about her father's place or even what happened to him "if I moved fast enough, I might succeed in leaving the pain behind."

What Aminatta is doing, in a very subtly, is depicting herself in the early stages of her childhood, the nightmare that is disturbing her unstable health by aggravating her pain about her father and suffering of racism in England "My dad doesn't like black people. He told me he won't have anybody black in his house." even her close friend did not want her to attend her birthday party. In the following chapters, Aminatta contemplates a long procession of years full of memories and events that she always belongs to.

The joy takes Aminatta through the thoughts of absolute truth and power of the future. In the following quote, she mentioned her beginning the investigation. After a while they left for London, she could not remember anything about how she left there and how many years she was stuck in the past. Aminatta was occupied only with her father's story "I felt this was how it should be: time to prepare after so many years." what she wants is, literally, not obtainable in this life. It is a fantasy truth and a puzzle that will never be solved yet.

Aminatta wants nothing but just facts and truth. She tries hard and worked for months to follow any person that may know the truth about the accusation that presented against her father "I went back the next day... in fact; I went back every day for a month. Sometimes I succeeded in seeing Thomas Gordon, sometimes I didn't."

### **3.2.1. With Society**

The participation of women in society and the role of women in it during the time were remarkably different across ethnicities and strongly related to the way of thinking. The sexual division of labor was broadly associated at that time. The gender division varies significantly across societies. Each gender has a specific situation viewed by society in particular. There are large differences in the extent to which women participate in activities outside the home. Recent literature argues that these differences reflect differences in underlying and old cultural values and

beliefs. Cultural values and beliefs tend to be transmitted from parents to children, through generations and stay to some extent stable over time.

Although the female's will in being resisted in working force participation. The historical persistence of diversity in female service force participation and add new evidence on various societal differences regarding the historical role of women in society by looking at marriage arrangements. The differences in inheritance rules favoring women; for the most recent period, the similar outcomes together with a more general index summarizing the gap between men and women in four fundamental categories: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment.

In her seminal work, Forna argued that the origin of differences in the role of women in societies lays in the different types of work's domain practiced by societies. In the novel, Aminatta describes how her stepmother struggles to keep the children safe in the other country after they leave Africa. Women find themselves obliged to work to help the father economically and childcare, which is an absolute obligation. The stepmother suffers from the children to find a place to stay when the father is rested "I began to suffer migraines... my stepmother or Santigi were in the house they'd take me to my bed, fetch me aspirins and try to subdue me, holding me by the shoulders and pushing me down against the pillows" (26). It is almost always the responsibility of women. As a result, men tended to work outside the home. Given this specialization of labor across gender lines, men tended to work outside of the home in the field, while women specialized in activities within the home. This division of labor then generated different patterns of fertility and different norms about the appropriate role of women in society. Societies characterized by traditions developed the belief that the natural place for women is within the home. These cultural beliefs tend to persist even if the economy moves out and developed, affecting the participation of women in activities

performed outside the home, such as market employment, entrepreneurship, or participation in politics.

Regarding the impact of different technologies on fertility, at first, one may expect that societies with historic plow use will have higher levels of fertility. If women are less likely to participate in market activities outside of the home, this lowers the cost of having children and increases fertility. The differences through societies continued until today and determined differences in labor force participation and the perceptions about the women's role in society (Alesina et al. 2013), fertility (Alesina et al. 2011), these differences shaped in inheritance rules, freedom of movement, restrictions in the dress role, and marital arrangements. There are documents shared the salient facts on women's role in ancient societies using data from the Ethnographic Atlas.

The women in Africa are not treated as women in other parts of the world. It is not easy to make the role and status of women in traditional African societies besides other aspects of African life because Africa is not one culture space. A proper view and good understanding of the status of women in African societies depends on the appreciation of the different cultural sides in which they are brought up, and of all the family and tribal customs in each of those multitudinous societies which put the exact place given to each member, the respected duo to each and the duties and privileges which membership of a family confers.

However, African women are not distinguished from the rest of the women in the world. There are certain factors particularly true on Africa in traditional societies which are important for a proper. In terms of African tribal law, women are considered as the lower class. Generally, the status of women is inferior to men. She is treated as a minor before and after marriage and must

always be under the guardianship of her father before marriage and her husband after it. A married woman always is under the complete control of the husband. And her husband has the right and power over her. Concerning his opinion, she never dares to go counter to his husband's wishes.

A woman cannot usually any public office. The same case with barrenness, it is considered as a blemish in a woman to be barren, and in fact, she is considered as failure in her marital duties. The possibility of the husband's impotence is often discounted and ignored.

### **3.2.2. With Men's Habit of Thought**

No one can deny the obvious status that women have played in leadership roles in the development of African societies from pre-colonial days until now. Even though the patriarchy system in Africa cannot be ignored as well, yet, the African woman possesses the power that relates the society together [...]

In traditional African society, the survival of the family relies on the African woman. The African woman played a key role in the different levels of teaching children. They teach them social, ethical, and moral values which were part of the cultural basis for evaluating proper societal behavior (Secretariat)

*The Devil that Danced on the Water* is a novel that seeks to establish a new authentic parameter for the African women's judgment of true beauty and virtue in the African society, where the patriarchy has the major dominance. Through the character of Aminatta, the protagonist, Forna portrays the black female character who's questing for truth. She indirectly does not arrive at her dream as she planned but everything around her seems to Collapse. She is abused when her father token away. She is deceived by her father's closest friends. She does not come to the flowering of her dream of having the full image of the truth but she got a heap of broken images of truth. The

problem is predicated upon the interracial turbulence that exists in white society. The black female therefore would have to fight this racial disturbance to assert herself in both countries.

More specifically, Aminatta would have to define herself if she should get to her dream of finding the truth and ends all nightmares she has. Unfortunately, her dream cannot become true since all her father's friends were not loyal to him so that she cannot know who is the one says the truth and the one lies. in the novel, she says: "My intention was to conduct this interview just as I would have any other in my years as a professional journalist ... I never talked about 'my father' only ever 'Dr. Forna'; I did it to encourage people to respond to me as a more or less impartial enquirer" (Aminatta 258). Without any prejudice to her father she only followed the truth. She is seeking help from her father's friends in finding the complete images of facts but she fails because there is no way she can outsmart her father's enemies.

However, in *The Devil that Danced on the Water*, Amanita's quest and struggle for truth is not carried out within the patriarchal hegemony because women are always considered as weak human and have no permission to investigate any case. Mohamed breaks the patriarchal roles and constructs to assert herself in her society. This is seen in her engaging with her father while he was working with patients. She struggles against the subjugation of Siaka Stevens the members of government and the dominance of the illegal diamond trade. The dealers were accomplices with the security team. Her pursuit of economic justice competition is embarking on a very risky journey and her resolve to return to her ordinary life realizing all that happened that day.

The literary text is to highlight the measures adopted in the societal consciousness which are injurious to the woman and her self-actualization. This quest is based on the fact that the black woman in particular, over years has been subjected to the patriarchal will. Feminism is an ideological disposition that seeks to put the woman to her rightful position. On the other hand,



Psychoanalysis investigates the "reason" of human behavior as well as personality. Psychoanalysts' debate about women and femininity has become an interesting topic in recent years. Through the years it became what's called psychoanalytic feminism which investigates the memories of girls till getting older. Psychoanalytic feminists explore women's oppression in their societies formed in infancy and childhood.

The father, Mohamed Forna, himself is a product of a lovely home, is full of a sense of family love. Forna described as brilliant, ambitious, ruthless. He, therefore, knows how to give love to his children even when he has the desire to do so. The relationship between Aminatta and her father is full of love and joy. She loves being a vet while her father wanted her to be a doctor.

Equally, Aminatta 's family is lovely. At the beginning of the text, Aminatta notes: "The extraordinary story of my family's past came to me through the collective memory of my uncles and aunts. I am grateful to them and the whole Forna family for this and other kindnesses." It is against this intoxicating atmosphere that Aminatta finds herself alongside with devils that betrayed her father and break the promises they give to him in protecting his secrets. She finds herself obliged to face the men that cheat her father and finds the truth.

She must fight to break free from the hegemony of men's status in society towards the new position of the black woman in her society. Aminatta is not yet given the time that she deserves as a daughter. She does an effort to have her way, has learned to fight back against people who caused her to lose. The children are not seen as well as mere objects. Aminatta notes that when her father token no one told her the fact about that. She pointed: "We were just family who wanted the facts, nothing more". Aminatta 's depth of the black self-love is so strong and her determination to fight against anything that stands against finding the truth. (Ene Ojima 11-17)

To accomplish her dream of being aware of all facts that she fights for it along. The author is under interrogation is a feminist writer. Aminatta sees that the woman should not hold the traditions that reduce the role of women in society.

The walls against the black female gender across the world have been closed and dismantling. Nevertheless, Aminatta shaped the black woman as the woman who has been systematically overpowering and breaking every wall that stands against her self-assertion and dream actualization. Despite the patriarchal walls that faced the black women, they never give up. They try each chance to surmount these walls (Ene.Ojima 23).

### **3.3. The Quest for the Truth**

The reality of the truth is not always as comforting as it seems to the ones to discover the truth. The world of truth is a dangerous place to walk alone especially if it is the truth that liberates. Mostly the people who are sincere to the truth are ready to sacrifice their lives. Frank Kermode writes in his book *The Genesis of Secrecy* “We are most unwilling to accept mystery, what cannot be reduced to other and more intelligible forms (143). Forná’s novel *The Devil that Danced on the Water* is not just a story of artifacts of the sierra Leonean revolution against colonialism and the local system only. The novel is about a girl’s dedicated struggle to restore the truth of what happened to her father as well. Aminatta in the novel tries to distinguish between what is secret and what is the expectation by showing how the seeker of truth investigates the discovery of any secret with his/her presuppositions and interpretation.

From 1991 to 2002, Sierra Leoneans suffered through a brutal civil war that left great destruction, ruins, and millions of displaced people. The war was followed by the nationally and internationally funded Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission (SLTRC). The

organization is designed as a set of public venues. This kind of place allows the victims of war to testify to their experiences of violence as a mode of release and validation, and perpetrators could confess to their crimes and seek forgiveness without the fear of legal prosecution. This period paved the way for Aminatta to verify her father's case to find the truth and discover the corrupt system that she had somewhat shocked (Imma 01).

Aminatta is born in Scotland and raised in Sierra Leone and UK. She is a cosmopolitan writer. Forna probingly explores how places can shape their inhabitant native and nonnative alike. Aminatta Forna is the narrator and the heroine at the same time. Researching for truth and bringing together missing images and defaced ones became a life-time passion and she went on to assemble only facts.

At the beginning of the novel, Forna does not know what exactly happened to her father. After getting young enough she discovered that her father is executed. She vows to avenge his death, saying...

Forna tries hard to restore to her memory the countless victims of Sierra Leonean civil war. She tracks down the original documents that make up the large part of this show that destroyed her father. By organizing the side of the original record by side with his friends' court testimonies given by the court against her father, Aminatta provides incontrovertible evidence of the ruthless re-writing of history "brush away the layers of secretiveness and unlock her (Yabom) memory", "She came back with the names, saying they were witnesses at the treason trial." The succeed politicians like Mohamed Forna has to be removed not only from life but from all images, for the Stevens myth to prevail "To change the constitution and introduce a republic with himself as president with sweeping new powers."

Aminatta chooses to illustrate events about the Sierra Leonean revolution. She forms the photograph of Stevens trying to deceive Muhammad by bribing his friends and falsifying facts regarding the case of treason unjustly accused.

Both the girl as the main character of the novel, and the readers pursue the answers to Aminatta's past but find a complicated truth of their presumptions. Aminatta exhibits the natural fallacy of human reasoning when confronted with the truth. There is no truth available to humans that were not in some part looking for it. Forna's attempt to discover the secrets of her father's past blinds her to the truth and proves that humans cannot disclose any absolute answers. The tragedy of this passage in which Forna curses herself to a fate that she must suffer shows that she already has certain expectations concerning the mystery of the murder.

Yet Forna's reaction is sensible and natural to the reader and one cannot find fault with his reasoning at this point in the novel. She assumed that she cannot trust anyone anymore "At some point, not all that long ago, I learned to be careful of people who said they had been great friends with my father."

She added "I feigned confidence, but I was experiencing the sensation of walking back into my dark past ... A feeling of dread; too late to turn back. So much of the past was covered in veils. Whatever was coming, he would expect me to provide the answer and as likely I would not be able to do so."

Humans generally take each mystery as a separate problem to be solved there is a more general sense of Secrecy that will always prevent us from finding truth in pure shape. Though Forna thinks she has discovered the clear truth about her past and her father. She is still also frustrated, disappointed, and confused with the gods and the ultimate answers concerning her

miserable life. Despite the many answers Aminatta finds to satisfy the past secrets surrounding her she feels further from the truth than before his quest for knowledge. Her presuppositions not only bring her further from uncovering the truth of her past but also prevent her from actually understanding her fate or the purpose of her life. Forna has such faith in the answers she compiles and gathers from a variety of sources. Within the novel, Forna develops explanations for her father's past. Small details from the novel analyses every witness, memories, and a piece of evidence. For example, she discovered the party conflict. She also discovered her father's enemies through her investigations with his old friends.

The novel can be interpreted as a conspiracy against Mohamed for or as a tragedy of Forna's loss. These interpretations can discuss the possibilities of the answers. In this sense, the reader is in the same position as Forna, whose every effort to find answers leaves her with a reflection of herself. Interpretation becomes another form of disclosing and solving secrets and is, therefore, perpetual as original meaning, or Secret, However, in casually reading the novel there seems to be mystery or secrets for the reader that does not know yet. The characters within the novel are included in the riddles that Siaka Stevens has created and ended by crime because of a jalousie. The devil that danced on the water is a biography story most readers are familiar with this kind of novel. They can to some extent make clear conjectures because Forna did not show the scene of the crime in the beginning. The novel has much suspense for the readers. Aminatta could fantastically and present her story.

The many examples of tragedy allow the reader to feel like all events are mixed and hard to make relations between them especially the secrets that frustrate Aminatta. But with this viewpoint, the reader accepts Forna's efforts to investigate her father's case by jumping through different memories in the past and other during her research and regarding the small clues that

point to other possible discoveries. Though the reader enters the novel with no knowledge about what Fornia says in the beginning, the non-overlooking details and jumping to conclusions force the reader into Fornia's position of awareness. The reader feels that he is along with Fornia on her quest for truth. The reader is also sympathetic towards her because he has figured out to some extent the riddle about her father. Fornia manipulates her father's friends by showing them her foolishness when confronted with secrets and past. The tragedy in the novel shows the reader the faults in Fornia's search for the truth and the impossibility for her to ever find answers to her past because all his friends cheated him.

The novel evolves into something much clearer and gradually towards the truth behind her father's death, after it was mysterious and complicated in the beginning. By allowing the readers to think about the story as a riddle and jump to conclusions about Fornia's past.

It can be realized that only too late that we have been in Fornia's position for the entire story and that we have mimicked the very characteristics that we pitied in Fornia. But instead of taking the play as a lesson and leaving it with a sense of experience, the readers walk away with a feeling of hopeless ineptitude. Aminatta does not outline a way for humans to better solve secrets or even offer a preventable fault that humans could overcome to disclose the full truth. Instead, it is realized with frustration that it is our nature to insert our presuppositions and logic into an answer; no secret exists whose disclosure is not a mirror image of the discoverer and in the end, Secrecy is eternal and inescapable

### **3.4. Conclusion**

In conclusion, it can be said that Aminata has finally solved a nightmare that haunted her for years as a young girl, and then after she grew up, she came to see her as a national issue, not just her father's issue. Despite being a woman, she took the necessary procedures like any investigator searching for the truth. It was a painful and difficult memory at the same time because she sometimes had to deny her connection to her father only because she thought that in this way she would obtain real information and in the end she was able to break the barriers of traditions and be a symbol of the future African woman

### **General Conclusion**

In conclusion, Aminatta tries to achieve women's rights and freedom in a patriarchal society. She seeks their rights in expressing, speaking, thinking, and having their own identities, names, and emotions. She rejects and abandons the idea of misrepresentation of women as “the Angel of the house” and replaces it with the rebellious woman who calls for an equal treatment inside and outside the home in their societies. She demands women’s anger and revolution against male’s hegemony, control, and oppression in the house, society, and everywhere through writing.



She bravely criticizes issues like Diamond smuggling, political corruption, and social classism discrimination in a country that claims democracy and celebration of diversity. She also deals with racism in other countries where either she or her family was not accepted. The author rejects women's identity crisis in which women depend completely on men without developing themselves. She concentrates on creating women's own identity through knowing the other, men's identity. Aminatta, in "The Devil that Danced on the Water", calls for the quest the truth and investigating the past without relying on men. She defends all women who try to achieve her independence and find her identity.

Forna constructs her intellectuality and refuses to be a victim of the patriarchal society. Her act of writing her diaries and memories reflects her decision to have her revolutionary actions to reveal the full image of truth far from the sphere of men. She seeks her sight where she can have her special voice and express herself freely without men's superiority or any oppression. In doing so, Aminatta's representation of women in the devil that danced on the water presents a clear attempt to overcome the convictions of society and move beyond them just to prove how women can be strong without men's restrictions. She invites women to have their special, unique mark and impact on men's sphere. Forna in her work *The Devil That Danced on the Water* rejects both submissive womanhood and evaluates praising female superiority to encounter male dominance.

Forna that once women kill the "Angel in the House" in their minds, hearts, and society, they can live, work, create, experience life, and gain independence. Forna does the same in the novel she could prove her competence and capacity of the black women in daring the real society and especially men. Furthermore, Forna depicts the role of the daughter in her family until becoming-woman in her husband's home. In the novel, the protagonist resists the traditional roles of women. Aminatta, the daughter, engaged in her father's domain and she still young.

In the recalled memories throughout the story, she always says that her father was perfect to her and her family was happy. She never felt the Betrayal and non-fulfillment of the people who were around her father. Her previously childish behavior made her carry memories of her testimony during the reopening of the investigation into her father's accident. She remembered people, incidents, and even newspaper articles about corruption that helped her strengthen her arguments during the dialogue with the same people who developed the case.

Aminatta wants facts only to gain her independence and individuality in her rest life. Aminatta's choice of the quest the truth is not a coincidence but a result of pain and nightmares as a major theme is vital in her literary works. However, this theme shows society's impact on women writers and how female writers write themselves and reflect their society in different literary works. Aminatta represents African women's experience and describing how hard their life was. She asserts African women's writing and documenting their own experiences. In fact, in her novel *The Devil That Danced on the Water* critical work, Forna declares and shows how African women develop themselves if they achieve their own economic and social life in such a point, they can be equal to men.

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