



CORPUS PUBLISHERS

Current Research in Psychology and Behavioral Science (CRPBS)

ISSN: 2833-0986

Volume 3, Issue 8, 2022

Article Information

Received date : 19 October, 2022

Published date: 09 November, 2022

*Corresponding author

Guy-Bertrand Ovambe Mbarga,
Department of Philosophy and
Psychology, University of Maroua,
Center for Psychological Research
RAPHA-Psy, Cameroon

Abbreviations

PTSD: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder;
DSML Diagnostic and Statistical Manual
of Mental Disorders

Key Words

Experiences; Cultural mysticism;
Psychotrauma; War; Africa

Distributed under: Creative Commons
CC-BY 4.0

Research Article

Experiences of Cultural Mysticism in War Psychotrauma in Traditional Africa

Guy-Bertrand Ovambe Mbarga^{1,2*}

¹Department of Philosophy and Psychology, University of Maroua, Cameroon

²Center for Psychological Research RAPHA-Psy, RAPHA-Psy Psychology Foundation, Cameroon

Abstract

The article addresses the issue of experiences of cultural mysticism in war psychotrauma in an African cultural context. It starts from the clinical observations of a fear of the mysticism among certain soldiers engaged in the war against the separatist groups “Amba Boys” in North-West and South-West Cameroon. The objective of the study was to understand the experiential experience of Cameroonian soldiers psychotraumatized by war in their cultural signifiers. The study was conducted using a phenomenological approach. The data was collected at the RAPHA-Psy Psychology Foundation, from four psychotraumatized soldiers, through semi-structured interviews. The results reveal that these soldiers experienced the psychotrauma as resulting from a complex of mysterious conflicts. Also, the psychotraumatic symptomatology was for them a set of manifestations of supernatural attacks. According to them, there are two worlds in the battlefield, one visible and the other invisible.

Introduction

Very often, the socio-cultural environment in which we are born, grow up and live affects our experiential experience of situations. Cameroon, from East to West and from North to South, in its multitude of ethnic groups, is very much imbued with beliefs in the ancestors, but also with various mystical practices [1]. It is in this context that the anti-separatist war in the North West and South West regions is taking place. There is therefore a specific way in which Cameroonian soldiers experience the psycho-trauma of which they are victims. They have a particular experience of the etiology, symptomatology, prognosis, evolution, complications, therapy and restoration of this disorder. Indeed, S. Freud [2] considers psycho-trauma as an experienced event which, in the space of a short time, brings into the psychic life such a surge of excitation that its suppression or assimilation through normal channels becomes an impossible task, resulting in lasting disorders in the use of energy. For him, psychic trauma is therefore due to a great flow of unassimilable excitations, and consequently, traumatic neuroses emerge at the time of the traumatic event. The various works on the etiology of trauma have many points in common. They recognize that the traumatic intrusion that generates the experience of fear is crucial. They describe the fright as those soldiers who had no time to be afraid. The fright at the origin of psycho-trauma would be an experience of absence of word, emotion and support for thought. For them, the trauma clinic is a clinic of an unmissed encounter with the reality of death. According to the studies of R. Bernet [3], T. Bokanowski [4] and L. Crocq [5], psycho-trauma arises from the fact that death does not figure in the unconscious; we wonder what could represent nothingness. Thus, we live as if we are immortal and at the time of the traumatic intrusion, there is nothing to receive the image of death. For most of these earlier studies, war psycho-trauma therefore results from the dread of a missed death.

As far as psycho-traumatic symptomatology is concerned, we should remember that in the first studies of psychic trauma, S. Freud [6] suggested that the clinical picture of traumatic neurosis is similar to that of hysteria in terms of the wealth of similar motor symptoms. But as a rule, it exceeds it in its pronounced signs of subjective suffering, as in the cases of melancholia or hypochondria, in a weakening and a very pronounced disorganization of almost all the psychic functions. Similarly, the repetition of trauma through dreams gave rise, in this Freudian thought, to the notion of repetition compulsion. This would attempt to evacuate the stigma of overly exciting experiences by re-enacting them. Thus, for the organism, this repetition would be an attempt to actively control what it had passively experienced. For him, “man defends himself against terror by anguish” [6]. However, Bokanowski [4], like Ferenczi [7], places more emphasis on the “traumatologic” effect of repetitive dreams. He believes that the tendency to repeat in traumatic neurosis also has a useful function, in that it will lead the trauma to a better, if possible final, resolution than was possible during the original concussive event. Freud [8] explains that the ego, which has passively experienced the trauma, actively repeats an attenuated reproduction of it in the hope of directing its course as it pleases, and that it seeks to psychically control the impressions of its life.

For L. Crocq [5], war psycho-trauma is characterized by traumatic alienation or personality change, “a new being is inside them, a being they do not recognize themselves in”. In this sense, psycho-traumatic disorder appears to be the inauthentic expression of a disrupted personality whose memory is fragmented and ill-informed. This explains the experiences of depersonalization that psycho-traumatized soldiers may express. This experience “infiltrates the present”, “obstructs the future” and “reorganises the past that stopped at the trauma experience”. It thus causes a disruption of temporality. The symptoms of psychic trauma will try to stop this deadly process or to engrave the traumatic scene. This idea of a traumatic image of death by L. Crocq [5] is shared by F. Lebigot [9] who, however, believes that it is inscribed in the individual’s psyche and will reappear as it is in the present time. It is this image of death that generates anxiety and depression. Subsequently, there is a “transformation” of the subject characterized by the feeling of abandonment and character disorders [9]. Finally, guilt appears omnipresent, reinforced by the repetition syndrome mentioned by Freud [8]. Nevertheless, for S. Daudin [10] and L. Daligand [11], the revivals in psycho-traumatized war soldiers can be explained by the fact that the trauma is equivalent to a plunge into the original, i.e. to a transgression. For this reason, each reappearance of the traumatic scene will be connoted with guilt.



However, our clinical practice of treating psycho-traumatized Cameroonian soldiers in the anti-terrorist and anti-separatist wars has enabled us to make a different observation. During consultations, the psycho-traumatic symptomatology of certain soldiers was essentially coloured by mysticism elements. Indeed, soldiers suffering from PTSD revealed that their dreams, nightmares, flashbacks and hallucinations were overwhelmed by images of terrorists who wore 'gris-gris' on them; who disappeared and reappeared 'miraculously' to strangle them; whose bullets bounced off their bodies without penetrating them; whose bayonet knives did not pierce; who were buried and resurrected; who killed their comrades just by blowing on their noses - in short, terrorists with various mystical powers. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in these soldiers seems not only to result from the horror of a missed death, but is more related to a mystical horror linked to cultural signifiers. Indeed, according to I. Sow [12], in traditional Black Africa, the mental disorder results from a violence suffered by the ego which is conceived as an ordered totality, and constituted by a triple polar relationship that situates it vertically in relation to the Ancestor, horizontally in relation to the extended community and ontogenetically in relation to the bio-lineage family. The conflict of relationship within an antithetical couple is what defines the essence of the theoretical framework of African psychopathological thought. It is the anchor in the conception of the genesis and meaning of mental disorder. The study therefore seeks to capture the singular experience of Cameroonian military personnel on wartime psycho-trauma in relation to their socio-cultural signifiers.

Methodology

The study is qualitative research. The purpose of this research is often to study human phenomena with a view to understanding them. For us, it is a question of understanding the experience of Cameroonian soldiers suffering from war psycho-trauma in their socio-cultural environment. To better understand this experiential experience, the phenomenological approach was used. Its aim is to highlight, through description, the ways in which the world appears to the subject. It therefore allowed us to describe the meaning that these soldiers gave to war psycho-trauma according to their history, their perception and their subjective reality. The clinical method, because it is defined above all by taking into account the singularity and totality of the situation, enabled us to grasp the singular experience of each of the soldiers. We relied mainly on case studies because of their ability to provide an in-depth analysis of a phenomenon such as psychological trauma and in a specific context, that of traditional black Africa. The research took place at the RAPHA-Psy Foundation. This is one of the main structures that provides psychological follow-up of individuals in Cameroon. The use of a small, non-probability sample was preferred. The participants were selected on the basis of their ability to provide interesting and relevant data on their unique experiences of the war and as perceived by themselves. They were four Cameroonian soldiers who had participated in anti-separatist missions in North-West and South-West Cameroon. The main characteristics of these all-male soldiers are (Table 1):

Table 1: Four soldiers were diagnosed with severe psycho-trauma using the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder checklist scale.

Table with 5 columns: Characteristics, Soldier Anaba, Soldier Bomoko, Soldier Mefirou, Soldier Kalanga. Rows include Age, Ethnicity, Level of Education, Grade, Matrimonial Status, Armed Force, and Number of Missions.

These four soldiers were diagnosed with severe psycho-trauma using the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Checklist Scale. This scale has a cut-off score of 44 for the diagnosis of PTSD, a sensitivity of 97% and a specificity of 87% [13]. It is therefore effective in identifying psycho-traumatized individuals in need of psychiatric or

psychotherapeutic care. As a further criterion of choice, the participants did not adhere to hospital care. For their recovery, they only practiced rituals in their respective villages. Data collection was done through semi-directive interviews. This technique enabled us to focus on the participants' experiences of war psycho-trauma. We met with each participant four times according to the principle of saturation, where continuing to collect data gave us no new elements. The interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes each, depending on the participant's availability. These voluntary participants, after signing the informed consent, were free to suspend the interviews at any time. It was therefore up to them to say only what they could. As a data analysis technique, we used content analysis, focusing on the identification of significant themes. Within this framework, we used inter-coder agreements to ensure the relevance of the themes and sub-themes identified. Fragments of the participants' discourse are retained as the empirical basis for the analysis.

Results

The cultural mysticism in the emergence of psychological trauma

The Anaba soldier and the supernatural resistance of an Amba boy: The Soldier Anaba approaches the question of the mystical through an apparently banal story linked to the surprising resistance of a terrorist. He says: "We had a very scary event. We had arrested an Amba boy who had zapped eight comrades. At first we fought from a distance. It was his resistance that surprised us, because he was alone, with only one Kalach and there were 12 of us". The mystical facts are set out in the rest of his account: "The comrades went around him and caught him. He had bark attached all over his body. They stripped him naked, took off all those barkings. While doing so, he blew on the nose of the comrade who was searching him. Our comrade fell down dead. It was immediately clear that he was a man to be shot". The description of the bark on a combatant, as well as the fact of killing someone with a simple breath, would be mystical for this soldier. This demonstration of the supernatural will continue in the face of the soldiers' fire. Private Anaba recounts:

We tried to kill him, we couldn't. They shot at him, the bullets did not enter, the bullets bounced off his body like a kind of rubber (shaking his head). They shot at him at zero paces, but the bullets did not penetrate him. An angry comrade empties his magazine box on the guy, nothing. Another comrade comes along and shoots the guy in a hail of bullets, nothing. I myself finished two boxes of ammunition at point blank range on him, "shot by shot", nothing. We tried the little secrets that our northern comrades had given us, nothing. We tied the red cloth on the gun, nothing. We urinated on the gun, nothing. That day we met "boy". He talks, he screams, when we whip him, he cries, the tears flow, but he doesn't die.

The fact of firing a bullet at someone at close range without it penetrating them is therefore incomprehensible, even traumatic for private Anaba. Furthermore, this soldier highlights a set of cultural practices (tying the red cloth on the gun, urinating into the barrel) for the resolution of the dilemma. However, the events that follow are also traumatic, as they are difficult to elaborate. Private Anaba continues:

He was then hanged. For eight days he was still alive. On the ninth day, they found that he had passed stool on himself, that he was already frozen (puckers his lips). We didn't know what finally killed him and at what time he died. Because we were on watch for eight days. There was always a sentry watching him when he was hanged. We got up. But we didn't know when he finally died.

It therefore appears that being hanged for eight days and being able to stay alive would be mystical, and would be an event that would test the mind of the soldier Anaba.

The Soldat Bomoko in the face of a mysterious appearance of a separatist: It is through the phenomenon of a mysterious appearance of a separatist in the middle of the forest that the Soldier Bomoko approaches the mysticism problematic in the emergence of war psycho-trauma. He recounts: "One day we went on a reconnaissance mission to a post where we had heard about the Amba Boys. A man suddenly appeared in front of us, emerging from the ground". The suddenness of this event, considered mysterious by the soldier, makes it traumatic. Moreover, the terrorist's behaviour afterwards seems unintelligible:

He had a Kalashnikov with a retractable stock. He was shot, he fell, he got up. He was stopped, the weapon was taken away. As the bullets did not penetrate him when he was shot, we tried to cut him, but the knife did not hurt him, not even the machete. It was a real mystique. That is to say, everyone tried to cut his flesh (simulating the cut with the hand), but it would not cut. Fortunately, there was one of our comrades from



the north, I don't know how, after doing some incantations, he shot him and he died.

This frightening situation for Private Bomoko can only be mystical. He recounts:

We dug deep into the ground, buried him and filled in the soil. The next morning, some villagers came to tell us that the Amba boy brothers of this man had returned to the village. So, we went back for a brief reconnaissance. This is where we found this bad guy sitting where he was buried. The ground was up to his kidneys, but the body was standing. To tell you the truth, it scared me a lot (starts sweating, with breathing difficulties). I myself had participated in his burial, I had buried him. How come he's sitting there? We dug the ground well and then we flattened it. When we came back to find him there, we were very scared.

This mysterious situation seems to be beyond the understanding of the Soldat Bomoko. This would explain the fact that his ego was in turmoil. But on the battlefield, the constraint of survival forced him to continue the action: "We started shooting at him again from a distance. Some time later, we went forward to see exactly. We found him still sitting, but rotting. We dug him up and buried him again. He smelled terrible already, but we did it, and it gives me the creeps when I think about it, right! I have goosebumps as I speak (silence for about three minutes)". The horror of this situation would therefore be at the origin of a state of overwhelmed stress that would have led him to a state of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Soldier Mefirou and the "armoured" Amba children: The mysticism facts are highlighted in Soldier Mefirou's account of a war scene in which snipers failed to hit "armoured" Amba children. He recounts: They had sent the dark Amba children towards us. We asked them to stop (hold out your hand as a stop sign), they just went for it. So, we had to reach them without killing them, to stop them in their mad rush. Generally, the feet are calculated. This is the job of the snipers. They are very good shooters, plus they have sophisticated weapons for that. Brother! No sniper could hit any of these three kids. And strangely enough, they all claim to have had shooting incidents.

The fact that private Mefirou could not hit any of these children is incomprehensible. It does not reflect a lack of efficiency on the part of the snipers. Rather, it creates fear and makes the situation traumatic, as the soldier feels insecure. This fear seems to be increased by the mystical equipment that will be discovered in these children. He reports:

"In the meantime, we retreated and hid. The comrades who are deminers caught them. It's certain that they felt that the terrorists' manoeuvre to set off the bombs had failed. They were caught with explosive belts. The bomb squad did its job. We stripped them, they had not only bark attached all over but also scarification all over. It was real magic. I often heard that terribly mystical things happen in the North West and South West. I myself saw it. Even the children?

What seems to affect private Mefirou more is the fact that children are associated with these mystical events. Certainly, that is why his questioning about children is a sign of fear. However, he will mention other mystical-cultural events that also arouse fear:

I'll give you just a few examples. There was a man who was killed, he had gris-gris all over him, I mean all over him (pats his body). It was a comrade who had a stronger bark than his share that hit him. There's another one, I myself faced him. You shoot, the bullet passes by, that is to say, either to the left or to the right (points the finger to the left and to the right of us), but it doesn't hit him. And he's just moving forward, he's just running at you and without a gun. At that time I ran away, I tell you I ran away with the gun in my hand. I was confused, for the first time I saw my death coming true. It was a comrade, one of my classes, a northern guy too who had managed to kill him. My comrade there had a bark attached to his weapon.

According to private Mefirou, by facing the power of the terrorist's gris-gris, he experienced his imminent death. This life threatening experience is one of the main characteristics of a traumatic event. His reaction to this event was therefore one of intense fear and helplessness. Moreover, on his return to the traditional practitioner's house, Soldier Mefirou himself finds himself in the middle of a mysterious battle with a woman who is responsible for mystically equipping the terrorists. He says:

In fact, our barks were measured in power during our two-man battle. She would appear, she would disappear. But I finally got her. Only, I was very shaken after that fight. As the nightmares and dreams started again, I went to see the traditional practitioner.

Soldier Mefirou thus describes a mystical fight that became traumatic.

Soldier Kalanga facing an evil vortex: According to Private Kalanga, the use of gris-gris is systematic in the terrorists' combat strategy. He says: "Almost all terrorists use gris-gris. When we kill them, it's frightening what we find on them. Just to see all this on one person is mind-boggling. There are even gris-gris that are scary just looking at them. It's usually bark, rope, human bones, padlocks (bend your fingers while counting)". The simple contact with these gris-gris by sight for the Kalanga soldier would be frightening, or traumatic. This fright would be amplified when these gris-gris are put into action. He says:

There was a day that I will never forget, we clashed with a group of Amba Boys, and as they fled they left two of their brothers behind. And these two had no ammunition left in their Kalash. They had to surrender. When they were caught, when they wanted to search them, one of them whistled on a small ox horn. My brother (exclaims, raising his voice)! A whirlwind of soil rose up, accompanied by a very violent wind and a tornado in the middle of the forest. Everything suddenly went black around us. It was like "sauve qui peut". As I did not die that day, hmm (silence for a few seconds).

The account of this mysterious event is imbued with a sense of intense fear, a great emotional upheaval, a missed encounter with death on the part of Private Kalanga. Indeed, the situation signals the disappearance by mystical means of the two terrorists: "... this ground swirl lasted for too many minutes. Afterwards, everything went back to normal as if nothing had happened. But the koukougououfs (referring to the terrorists) had disappeared. I had urinated in the camouflage without realizing it. On the spot there, we didn't even make any comments. We just retreated to the CP. It is clear here that the soldier experiences the mystical-traumatic situation with a sense of terror and powerlessness.

The cultural mysticism in psychotraumatic symptomatology

The mysterious strangulation dreams of the Soldier Anaba: Among the most severe psycho-traumatic symptoms of the soldier Anaba are the reliving of mystical-cultural events. He says: "But the dream in which I often recognized the face, and this dream was the most regular, was the terrorist who had terrorized us with his bark. We couldn't kill him. He would come back to strangle me. And even during the day, I kept seeing this image. And it often gave me headaches". The soldier relives this traumatic event of a mystical-cultural nature through dreams and flashbacks. This situation is also a source of the neuro-vegetative manifestations in his psycho-traumatic symptomatology.

Soldier Bomoko and his flashbacks of the resurrected separatist: One of Soldier Bomoko's traumatic events, namely that of a resurrected terrorist, is constantly relived in his dreams. He says: "This story of the resurrected separatist that I told you disturbed me for a long time in dreams. I saw him again every night". In addition to dreams, the revivals also extended to nightmares and flashbacks: "I was constantly having nightmares about him. Not only in dreams, eh! Sometimes I'd be like that during the day, I'd see that image again. I was so scared, it really bothered me". These repetitive and invasive sensory impressions of this mystical-cultural event provoke a feeling of distress in this soldier.

The presence of these persistent symptoms will reflect neuro-vegetative activation, including sleep difficulties as Soldier Bomoko testifies: "It was so bad that I was depriving myself of sleep individually. This guy was like a ghost, appearing and disappearing, whether in dreams or during the day". Furthermore, it is important to note the persistence of the phenomena of resurrection and ghost that are very present in the dreams of the Soldier Bomoko. These phenomena will invade all his dreams. For example, speaking of other dream scenes, he states: "I dreamt of the dead Amba boys we had to kill at the front. I saw as if while we were killing them, they were resurrecting and coming after us". So it was not just the terrorist he saw resurrected, but in his dreams all the enemies he had killed at the front became ghosts. This is the case of the female suicide bomber he had seen blow herself up in a market: "I had this dream night and day, I saw this scene again, but in the dream she came as a ghost. Even in the daytime, when I'm chatting with people, it's like it appears".

Soldier Mefirou in a recurrent nightmare of the woman with gris-gris: In his psycho-traumatic symptomatology, Soldier Mefirou will again evoke this woman who provided gris-gris to the terrorists. He states: "But the dream that bothered me a lot before my second round at the traditional practitioner was the dream of a lady. I kept dreaming of one person, the same person. It was only afterwards that I realised that it was the woman who concocted gris-gris for the terrorists. The truth is, I can't tell you what I did to her, but it was terrible". The traumatic event linked to this woman



is constantly relived, not only in the form of dreams but also in a hallucinatory way.

Private Mefirou describes:

It was not only in dreams that I saw her. Even during the day I saw her. It was a woman, the same woman, hard to see her face, she was asking me something. I don't know what she was asking me when she was crying. When I told people, they said it wasn't real. But it was real, I tell you I could see her. For example, as we are here, she appears. It's just that I couldn't see her face properly. It was a lady, not a girl. I sleep I see her in the dream. I wake up, I still see her. When I am talking to someone, suddenly I see her, as if she is replacing the person. When I get scared, she disappears and then I see the person I was talking to again.

The mystical-psycho-traumatic situation that Private Mefirou faced at the front gives rise here to a symptomatology in which hallucinations and hallucinogens are intermingled, giving rise to a feeling of distress in this soldier.

Solda Kalanga and the nightmare of the separatist with the magic ring: The symptomatology of PTSD in Soldier Kalanga is essentially characterized in this context by reliving: '... in the dream, this number of gris-gris is even more frightening and they have strange shapes. Also, in these nightmares, these gris-gris become even more powerful. It is apparent here that the soldier constantly relives the mystical psycho-traumatic situation via dreams and nightmares. The soldier recounts a regular nightmare:

"There was, for example, a nightmare that I had regularly, it was a powerful AMBA that we had killed. In the nightmare, he had a bark attached to his finger like a ring. He would point his finger at me from a distance. He would lift me up and throw me high, I would come back down like a big rock. And it was when I was about to crash to the ground that I woke up, my body was often drenched in sweat, I was breathing very hard, my whole body was shaking. A very horrible nightmare. I wouldn't wish this on anyone".

This recurring nightmare is steeped in mystical-cultural facts. It is characterized by great anguish. This would reflect the intensity of the trauma suffered by Private Kalanga.

Discussion

The occurrence of war psycho-trauma in connection with the fear of a missed death has been widely demonstrated. However, Sow [12] points out that these demonstrations failed to specify that these schemes, the common ground of their theoretical knowledge, were constructed not only within a certain intellectual framework, in a certain language, but also according to an implicit anthropological horizon, necessarily implying a certain conception of the notion of mental illness, according to a certain theory of the organization and dynamics of the psyches. Indeed, he questions whether the problem of mental disorder, which in this case is the wartime psycho-trauma of African soldiers, can be seriously grasped with the help of general, abstract, rational, universal categories that would be external to the overall system that produces them. This is why he wonders whether we are not condemned to interpret the patient's interpretations, his psychic facts, using the same system of interpretation as he does, the system in which he has constructed himself. Moreover, for J.P Tsala Tsala [14], the subject necessarily constructs himself through cultural mediations and it is within these that he expresses his suffering. Thus, for this author as for us, a better understanding of the etiology of war psycho-trauma here would be in the patient's cultural system. This understanding becomes all the more coherent, heuristic and valid when it refers fundamentally to the systems of thought of the African patient. Indeed, as regards the problem of the etiology of trauma in principle, like L. Côté [15], R. Bernet [3] and M. Marchand [16], we admit the possibility of diversity and mixed etiology. However, in daily African practice, Sow [12] emphasises that what is important above all is to identify the rupture of the link in the structure of the patient's personality, much more than to detect the objective cause. For J.P Tsala Tsala [14], this bond can be affected by guilt towards ancestors or loyalty to traditions as we have seen in this study. However, beyond the multiple reasons that can explain relational affection, the rupture of the bond is more approached from the angle of a conflict [17], very often between an aggressed and an aggressor. Any person, any reality, any act aimed at destroying, disjoining the relations of the ego with one and/or other of its essential constituent dimensions can be considered as an aggressor. It is within this framework that H. Collomb [18] and then M. Marchand [16] affirm that the notion of actual conflict is at the basis of all traditional African interpretations of mental disorder.

With regard to the issue of witch terrorists in this study, I. Sow [12] clearly states that "the action of the witch doctor is in no way a diurnal, physical, direct and immediate action. The sorcerer's action is conceived essentially as a nocturnal action in the double sense of the term, i.e., an illicit, hidden, marginal action, but also one that takes place in the darkness of the night". TO M.T. Mengue [19] joins D. Zahan [20] in adding that the sorcerer's action can only be carried out within the family and the lineage in general. Witchcraft would thus be an essentially intra-community conflict. Consequently, these combatants endowed with mystical powers would be nothing other than gris-gris-terrorists or terrorist-fetichists, so the aggression would essentially be that of the Enemy as conceived in the relational network of the person-personality. Nevertheless, L. Nguimfack [17] points out that, in certain African societies such as the Mandari, the witchcraft system also takes foreigners into account. However, in this context, it is about integrated foreigners. However, the soldiers engaged in the anti-separatist war in North and South West Cameroon cannot be considered as integrated.

As far as psychotraumatic symptoms are concerned, a variety of explanations have been and continue to be offered. The most prominent explanatory approaches are psychoanalytic, cognitive and neurobiological. However, cultural studies are now providing new ways of deciphering the phenomenon. Let us take the example of reliving in the form of dreams, the dream image, which will not have moved the patient, will remain, for the African dreamer, a banal phantasmagoria without substance, quickly forgotten, and in any case, never recounted, because it is empty of emotion, warmth, and therefore of the possibility of communication [21]. On the other hand, if the image of the dream is accompanied by affects such as anguish, as in the case of war psycho-trauma, it is maintained; it becomes relatable, communicable, in short "dialog able". Under these conditions, the psyche of the dreaming patient will not cease to seek to understand the secrets of his upheaval. On the other hand, the dreams of revivals, in this study for example, were more characterized by persecution. Yet, persecutory thematization for A. Lamessi [22] is indicative of deeper, more hidden and more fundamental tendencies, especially as this theme is just as commonplace in the various practices and manifestations of African daily life, and in particular in interpersonal social relations, whether conflictual or not. It is therefore remarkable that psycho-traumatic symptomatology in this cultural context revolves around persecution.

Also, contrary to what is observed in the West, according to H. Collomb [18] and B. Collignon [23], the African clinic indicates that persecution does not derive directly from guilt through the mechanism of projection. However, here, we could have clung to this Western thought, knowing that the feeling of guilt often animates several war psycho-traumatized. The role of the traditional practitioner, at the level of interpretation, is to give it a name and a face that is acceptable to the subject and the community, according to the pre-existing cultural frameworks. This is why, in this research, the separatist gris-gris is easily identified and accepted by all. To clear up the ambiguity, I. Sow [12] reminds us that, in the language of international psychopathology, the relationship of witchcraft of which some terrorists are suspected is rather close, in a certain sense, to the syndrome of influence and external action. It would be a feeling of aggression at the level of the person, of the biosocial being for L. Nguimfack [17], whereas the feeling of aggression of the body and vegetative life would be the fact, according to the traditional doctrine, of fetishism, that is to say of evil magic according to P.M. Hebga [1] recognised here to the Enemy (terrorist-sorcerer). However, the signs relating to witchcraft aggression would rather result from the attack on the vital principle due to the relational disjunction with the Ancestor, which affects all the constituents of the person [24].

Conclusion

War trauma is an important issue in the history of psychopathology. In the classical conceptions, psychic trauma is the result of a break in the psychic apparatus following a great flow of excitations that cannot be assimilated by the latter. It is also understood as resulting from a missed death. The symptomatology of war psycho-trauma has been more focused on repetitive dreams. The repetitive dream of wartime traumatic neuroses has allowed a distinction to be made between reproduction, recollection and repetition. Also, by exploring anxiety and narcissism in psycho-trauma patients, Freud moved traumatic neurosis away from hysterical psychoneurosis and towards early dementia. Today, wartime psycho-trauma is better known as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). In the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), PTSD has been moved from the category of anxiety disorders to a new category, trauma and stress disorders. This disorder is identified here through a symptomatology grouped into three major syndromes. These are the revivification syndrome, the avoidance syndrome and the neuro-vegetative syndrome.



To this triptych, dissociative symptoms are generally added, notably depersonalization and derealization. The participants in this study exhibited almost all of these psycho-traumatic symptoms. However, it was seen in this study that war psycho-trauma has many specificities in traditional Black Africa, far from neurobiological, cognitive and classical psychoanalytic explanations. Its origin was experienced as a result of mysterious attacks and its symptomatology as the manifestations of these attacks operated in the invisible world of the battlefield.

References

1. Hebga Pierre M (1979) Witchcraft, dangerous chimera?.
2. Freud Sigmund, 1916, Introduction to psychoanalysis. Paris.
3. Bernet Rudolf (2000) The traumatized subject: Subjectivity and language. Review of Metaphysics and Morals 2 : 141-161.
4. Bokanowski Thierry (2002) Trauma, traumatic, trauma. The Freud/Ferenczi conflict. Psychoanalytical Society of Paris, Program 2001-2002.
5. Crocq Louis (2014) Psychological trauma: Psychological support for victims. 2nd (Edn.), Elsevier Publishers, USA, pp. 1-495.
6. Freud Sigmund (1920) Beyond the pleasure principle. The International Psycho-Analytical Library, pp. 1-55.
7. Ferenczi Sándor (1978) Psychoanalysis of war neuroses. Booksworld Publishers, India, pp. 1-428.
8. Freud Sigmund (1926) Inhibitions, symptoms and anxiety. W. W. Norton & Company, USA, pp. 1-176.
9. Lebigot François (2005) Treating psychological trauma. Clinic and care. Paris.
10. Daudin Sylvien (2014) Psychopathology in Gestalt therapy under the direction of Gianni Francesetti, Michela Gecele & Jan Roubal Edition l'Expressimerie, October 2013. Gestalt therapy notebooks, pp. 173-185.
11. Daligand Liliane (2016) Domestic violence. Paris.
12. Sow Ibrahima (1977) African dynamic psychiatry.
13. N'guessan YS, Jean C, Ivan-Druon N, Chantal DM, Evelyne M, et al. (2003) Evaluation of post-traumatic stress states: Validation of a scale, the PCLS. The Brain 3(29): 232-238.
14. Tsala Tsala, Jean-Philippe (2009) African families in therapy. Cameroonian family clinic, Yaoundé, Harmatan.
15. Cote Louis (1996) Factors of vulnerability and the psychodynamic stakes in post-traumatic reactions. Mental health in Quebec 21(1): 209-227.
16. Marchand Manuel (2012) Another armchair: Freud with regard to applied psychoanalysis (Thesis).
17. Nguimfack Léonard (2016) Psychotherapy of Cameroonian families confronted with witchcraft. Systemic intervention with the family of a delinquent child, Family Therapy 3(37): 57-66.
18. Collomb Henri (1965) Delusional outbursts in African psychiatry. African Psychopathology 1(2): 167-239.
19. Mengue Marie T (2006) Cameroonian youth and the phenomena of witchcraft. In: Rosny E (Ed.). Justice and witchcraft, Karthala, Paris, pp. 136-154.
20. Zahan Dominique (1970) Religion, spirituality and African thought. Paris.
21. Lahlou Saadi (2005) Can eating behaviors be changed? Nutrition and Dietetics Notebooks 40(2): 17-28.
22. Lamessi Alain (2014) The shadow of the ancestors. Depressive states in Black Africa. Paris, Knowledge and Knowledge.
23. Collignon Béatrice (2002) Inuit Toponyms, Territory Memory: A Study of the Inuinait History. Anthropology and Societies 2(3): 45-69.
24. Sow Ibrahima (1978) The anthropological structures of madness in Black Africa.