

**A WRECKED SELF: A PSYCHOANALYTICAL READING OF RAPE
VICTIM IN ATTA'S *EVERYTHING GOOD WILL COME***

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Abstract

This research is an investigation of *Wrecked Self: A Psychoanalytical Reading of Rape Victim in Atta's Everything Good Will Come*. This work fills the scholarly gap of bringing to light, the traumatic experience female rape victims endure and the psychological dent this experience leaves on their mental health forever. This study applies Freud's psychoanalysis and Burgess & Holmstrom's rape trauma syndrome theory in exploring the excruciating pain Atta's rape victim endured. The psychological damage she suffers as a result of many horrifying experience and debasement pushes her to adopt repression as a defence coping mechanism. This study not only explores the evil of rape; it goes further to enlighten rape victims and the society on the dangers of rape on the human person; the phases of rape trauma and its coping mechanisms. It also explores the essence of debunking rape myths and possibly avoids the factors that constitute to rape increase in the society. It urges the readers to insist on the need to hear the voices of those that are powerless and victimized.

Keywords: Rape, Psychoanalysis, Trauma, Burgess & Holmstrom's Rape trauma Syndrome Theory

Introduction

Rape is invasive; it is the violation of the victim's privacy, and threatening the victim's sense of control as well as undermining the victim's self-worth. There are fast growing incidences of rape in our society today and there are misconceptions concerning rape including the belief that it is the victim's fault. African writers write to refute those beliefs and emphasize to the society, rather than apportioning blame on the victim, the destabilization and dehumanization on the victim should be recognized instead. They engage in debunking rape myths, revealing the factors that are linked to rape, rapist attitude towards the victim and most importantly, the negative impact of rape on the victim; how it alters, destroys and dehumanizes the victim. Simply put, rape is a forceful

penetration of vaginal, oral and anal sex on another without consent Bourke in Rape Work: Victims, Gender and Emotions in Organizations and Community Context describes rape as “a felony in which a person is forced to have sexual intercourse without giving consent” (90).

In Nigeria, there are no accurate statistics for rape case; but this can be excused as even economic policies are drafted without correct statistics. This does not take away the fact that rape is endemic in the country. Can anyone give an account of the number of house maids that are regularly raped by their employers? The number of male children being raped by their care-givers? Or the students raped in universities? Or the daughters that are raped by their step-fathers? Rape may be seen as part of Nigeria culture because of the government’s negligence in effectively punishing such crimes as a warning to the culprits perpetrating the evil. Abadamosi, Hakeem published in Nigerian Tribune Online media in 2018 on how Ondo Police arrested a 50 year old carpenter for allegedly raping Autism challenged girl in Ondo state(www.tribuneonlineng.com). Olowolagba in February 8, 2019, published rape cases in Daily Post media which include a rape case of a 65 year old man arrested for raping and impregnating a minor- 11 year old girl who happens to be a hawker in Unguwar Gawo Village, in Babura Local Government, Jigawa state (February 8, 2019. www.dailypostng.com). IOL an online media house in January 4, 2019, updated an article, “Lavender Hill Rocked by Eight Rape Cases on New Year’s Day Cape Times,” exposing the number of rape cases already on the desk. According to the article, Lucinda Evans, who started an anti youth and gender based violence campaign called ‘Save Our Vaginas’ the previous year, took to her Facebook page to ask why rape is a culture that is still allowed in our communities? That it is 11:00am of a new year but 8 rape survivors approached her organization for help after their ordeals. Most rape victims rarely open up due to the humiliation and stigmatization that go with it (January 4, 2019, www.I’ll.co.za).

More so, following the careless commentaries of peoples on social media platforms like: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and so on, rape is often misinterpreted to be the fault of the victim for: wearing clothes exposing some of her body parts, walking alone in lonely places at an ungodly hour, drinking in the company of men, clubbing, visiting a male friend and so on. Some as well believe that women should be weary of the danger that is part of their everyday life. The society still plays the blame-game on rape victims. It is typical to ask the rape victim, especially a woman, if she tried to resist while she was being raped. Rape is a traumatic and life-threatening experience that cannot be easily forgotten. It may leave a survivor full of fear, doubt and anger. Not only does it affect the survivor, the pain ripples through her family and friends if the survivor chooses to tell them. Emecheta states in one of her works, The Rape of Shavi that “rape ages and humiliates any woman, young or old”

(98). The memory of being raped and the fear experienced during and after the occurrence may never vanish completely which may leave some of the victims severely traumatized throughout their life time.

It is important to note that rape has escalated in our present day society due to lack of interest in knowing the excruciating pain rape victims undergo. How does a rape victim feel after being raped? Does it have a long or short term effect on the victim? How does the society at large perceive rape issue through the representation of characters by African writers? Why do most people neglect the dehumanization and psychological trauma on rape victim? To them, is it the victim's fault; or connected to male dominance; Rape Myths; Psychological factors? The concept of the trauma associated with rape is neglected by the majority of the people of the society particularly in African. This is because people still make careless commentary on rape victims like, how can a victim take her life because of mere rape; how can rape turn one into prostitute; so, mere rape makes a victim to lose focus in life? significantly, this study is carried out in order to reveal the psychological damage as well as the near-death traumatic experience a rape victim is compelled to endure; with the intention to educate the public on the importance of being supportive to a rape victim instead of prejudicing; and to also understand the depth of the psychological damage it causes and help curb rape in the society.

Psychoanalysis and Rape Trauma Syndrome Theory as Theoretical Tools

There are many theories which may be applied to this study; but this study adopts Freud's Psychoanalysis and Rape Trauma Syndrome Theory. The later theory is described by psychiatrist, Ann Wolbert Burgess and sociologist, Lynda Lytle Holmstrom in 1974. These theories help in reading and interpreting the mind of the character under study relating the consequences of the rape incident to the character's later life choices. In examining Freud's psychoanalysis, Freud explores the three persons "Id", 'ego", and "superego". Freud believes that his structured model of the mind (id, ego, and superego) could be in conflict at anytime since they perform different functions. Therefore, a person's ego adopts one or more defence mechanisms to protect him or her when he or she could not cope with the stress of the conflict. The defence mechanisms include: repression, denial, projection, displacement, regression and sublimation (Eagleton 132-134 qtd. in Odinye 2019). Repression is an unconscious defence whereby the ego pushes disturbing feelings, ideas or thoughts out of consciousness. Eagleton argues that "that what has dominated human history to date is the need to labour and for Freud, that harsh necessity means that we must repress some of our tendencies to pleasure and gratification. In essence, every human being has to undergo this repression of Freud named the 'pleasure principle' by the reality principle'....If too much is demanded of us, we are likely to fall sick" (Freud 131qtd. in Odinye 2019). This form of "sickness is known as neurosis" (Eagleton 132qtd. in Odinye 2019).

In 'Denial' as a defence mechanism, the ego blocks the traumatic experiences from consciousness causing the individual to disbelieve the reality of the experiences. Psychoanalysis as a therapy is based on the observation that individuals are often unaware of many factors that determine their emotions and behaviour. Therefore, it is important to note that Freud built much of Psychoanalysis on his patients' trauma; thus trauma theory also becomes very relevant in exploring the experiences of the rape victim in this study. Ifeoma Ezinne Odinye (2019) in "Violence and the Girl-Child in Selected Novels of Buchi Emechara, Yvonne Vera, Nuruddin Farah and Ikechukwu Asika" summarizes that:

Basically, psychoanalysis as a theory finds connections among an individual's unconscious mental processes. This connection is linked to an emotional wound resulting to psychological injury or distress that leads to trauma. Trauma theory is an extension of Psychoanalysis. (51)

Judith Herman in "Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence – from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror" asserts that "to study psychological trauma is to come face to face both with human vulnerability and with the capacity for evil in human nature" (8). Herman further stresses that the "study of psychological trauma means bearing witness to horrible events" (8). Meek supports Herman's view by emphasizing the "role psychological theories of trauma play in explaining how life-threatening situations or physical violent experiences can cause individuals to suffer behavioural and memory disorders over extended periods of time" (5). (Herman qtd. In Odinye 2019, 51).

According to Burgess and Holmstrom in *Rape Trauma Syndrome* theory, Rape Trauma Syndrome (RTS) is "the psychological trauma experienced by a rape victim that includes disruptions of normal physical, emotional, cognitive, and interpersonal behavior" (981). Tewksbury (2007) states that "both male and female victims of rape exhibit RTS symptoms. RTS paved the way for consideration of complex post-traumatic stress disorder" (27). Sandoval (2002) opines that RTS is "a cluster of psychological and physical signs, symptoms and reactions common to most rape victims immediately following a rape, but which can also occur for months or years afterwards" (1). Burgess and Holmstrom identify the three stages of RTS thus:

The acute stage, the outer adjustment/disorganization stage, and the long term reorganization stage, though some researchers and therapists discovered another phase known as underground phase. The acute stage occurs during the rape, or days or weeks after a rape. The immediate symptoms may last a few days to a few weeks and may overlap with the outward adjustment stage. (981-986)

According to (Scarse 1997,) *Male on Male Rape: The Toll of Stigma and Sham* there is no typical response amongst rape victims. However, the United State's Rape Abuse and Incest National Network, (RAINN) asserts that;

In most cases, a rape victim's acute stage can be classified as one of three responses: expressed- he or she may appear agitated or hysterical, and may suffer from crying spells or anxiety attacks; controlled- the survivor appears to be without emotion and acts as if 'nothing happened and everything is fine; and shock/disbelief- the survivor reacts with a strong sense of disorientation. They may have difficulty concentrating, making decisions, or doing everyday tasks. They may also have poor recall of the assault. (98)

Though, Sandoval in *Handbook of Crises Counselling, Intervention and Preventions in the Schools* asserts that: "not all rape survivors show their emotions outwardly. Some may appear calm and unaffected by the assault" (1).

While Desirée (1992) in *What is Rape Trauma Syndrome?* opines that:

Behaviors present in the acute stage can include: Diminished alertness; Numbness; Dulled sensory, affective and memory functions; Disorganized thought content, Vomiting; Nausea; Paralyzing anxiety; Pronounced internal tremor; Obsession to wash or clean themselves; Hysteria, confusion and crying; Bewilderment; Acute sensitivity to the reaction of other people. (92)

According to Burgess and Holmstrom, they note that in the Outward Adjustment/ Disorganization Stage (OADS), the survivors in this stage seem to have resumed their normal lifestyle; but that all but 1 of their 92 subjects exhibited maladaptive coping mechanisms after a rape (986). Burnam *et al.* in "Sexual Assault and Mental Disorders in a Community Population" reveals:

Other coping mechanisms that may appear during the outward adjustment phase which include: sense of helplessness; hypervigilance; extreme anger and hostility (more typical of male victims); sleep disturbances such as vivid dreams and recurring nightmares; insomnia, wakefulness, night terrors; flashbacks; dissociation (feeling like one is not attached to one's body); panic attacks; reliance on coping mechanisms, some of which may be beneficial (e.g., philosophy and family support), and others that may ultimately be counterproductive (e.g. self harm, drug, or alcohol abuse). (843-850)

In this vein, Herman points out that:

Complete amnesia known as dissociative states may occur... Dissociation can be so severe that a fragmentation of the personality can result in the emergence of alter personalities. Victims attempt to return to their lives as if nothing happened. May block thoughts of the assault from their minds and may not want to talk about the incident or any of

the related issues. Victims may have difficulty in concentrating and some depression. This phase may last for years and the victim seems as though they are over it, despite the fact the emotional issues are not resolved. (84)

Lastly is the Re-organization or Recovery stage. Here, Burgess and Holmstrom emphasizes on the importance of family, friends and institutions reactions towards the victim. They opine that: "in this stage, rape victims survivor integrate the sexual Assault into their lives; the rape is no longer the central focus of their lives; negative feelings such as guilt and shame are resolved; and they no longer blame themselves for the attack. They have come to terms with their past" (981-986). The major ongoing critique against this ideology according to the critic, Stefan (1993) in "Protection Rackets: Rape Trauma Syndrome" explains that: "the literature on RTS constructs rape survivors as passive, disordered victims, even though much of the behavior that serves as the basis for RTS could be considered the product of strength. Words like "fear" are replaced with words like "phobia", with its connotations of irrationality" (88).

Summarily, the criticism is rational, but it is worthy of note that the theory of RTS is relevant in this research as well as Psychoanalysis because they not only specify defence mechanisms for mental and emotional assaults, they also encompass behavioural and psychological reactions along with recuperation common to victims of rape; they equally help in understanding the mind of the victim. RTS theory describes the stages of response and recovery that victims of rape experience. Conclusively, the RTS theory testimonies help to educate the jury about the psychological consequences surrounding rape; persuading them to dispel rape myths by explaining counterintuitive post-rape behavior. Especially in cases in which prosecutors have introduced RTS testimony, defendants have also sometimes proffered RTS evidence, a practice that has been criticized as undermining core values embodied in rape shield laws, since it can involve subjecting victims to compelled psychological evaluations and searching cross-examination regarding past sexual history. Therefore, these theories are indispensable in understanding as well as interpreting rape victims.

Aspects of Psychoanalysis and Rape Traumatic Experience in Atta's *Everything Good Will Come*

This is a coming of age novel about two girls growing into women in post colonial Nigeria. Throughout the plot, one of the female protagonists, Enitan' faces different personal entanglements; ranging from family troubles, rape, cheating boyfriend's and imprisonment. While Sheri on the other hand is Enitan's friend and the rape victim in the story; whose life falls apart after the rape incident. Sheri is not only gang raped but her virginity was snatched. Sheri

is raped, devalued, ruined and is robbed of her womanity and pride on the day she went for a picnic with her friend, Enitan. Atta (2005) explores thus:

Sheri was lying on the seat. Her knees were spread apart. The boy in the cap was pinning her arms down. The portly boy was on top of her. His hands were camped over her mouth. Daramola was leaning against the door (*Everything Good Will Come*, 65). {She further laments}: there was blood on her pubic hairs, thick spit running down her legs. Semen. (*Everything Good Will Come*, 66)

This singular event changes the life of Sheri. Atta's use of first person narrator eliminates the chance for the reader to feel the impact of the psychological damage 'the act' inflicted on Sheri immediately after the rape; especially Burgees et al. acute phase of trauma. But, through Enitan's narration, Sheri's disoriented state of mind is made clear as RAINN stipulates in *Rape Trauma Syndrome* that in the acute phase of RTS, the rape victim is disoriented (36). Sheri's rape is a pivotal moment in the novel for both girls. It is as 'a misfortune that binds them,' and which both of them are unable to speak about into adulthood. Silence marks every aspect surrounding the rape. The three boys hold Sheri down, gag her, and then proceed to silence Sheri through the rape which she is unable to articulate. Atta through Enitan describes it thus:

A silent moment; a peaceful moment." "N-nm, she moaned... [It is the only sound she is able to make] I dressed her, saw the red bruises and scratches on her skin, her wrists, around her mouth, on her lips.... There was blood on her pubic hairs, thick spit running down her legs. Semen. I used sand grains to clean her, pulled her panties up.... (*Everything Good Will Come*, 66)

Atta's character, Sheri depicts Freud's analysis in *An Outline of Psychoanalysis* which states that: "the ego adopts different defence mechanisms when faced with a difficult situation" (Sigmund Freud, 18). The rape incident weighs heavily on Sheri denting her superego of uprightness and her self esteem that has been trampled. To avoid reaching the neurotic state, her mind represses the horrifying rape experience as a defence mechanism to cope with the horrors of the rape. She silences the incident that all through the narration, she never mentioned the rape not immediately nor after she was abused. The fallible narrator Enitan, does not know how it happened except for the scene she witnessed herself. This clearly indicates that some rape survivors prefer repressing their experiences; they avoid talking about it as a way of defence mechanism and recovering from their emotional trauma. Sheri prefers to live in denial of the rape incident because she fears public criticism and stigmatization associated to being a rape victim.

RAINN asserts that; "in acute stage, rape victim may suffer from crying spell, anxiety, nauseating and vomiting (36). Atta explores these syndromes in the

novel, when Enitan takes Sheri home and bathes her. "Sheri, unable to say a word of what happened...stood up and let out a cry... just as she lurched, her vomit splattered over the table, hitting my face. She lunged forward and another mound of vomit plopped on the veranda floor" (*Everything Good Will Come*,68).This analysis concludes Burgess and Holmstrom's ideology on RTS that whether or not rape victims are injured during a sexual assault, rape survivors exhibit higher rates of poor health in the months and years after an assault (959). And the above conclusion is Sheri's fate. She becomes deteriorated; the vibrant and agile Sheri shuts down to a mute and self detached lady almost removed from reality because she prefers to live in denial.

Atta explores the blame the society puts on the victim and the impact of such blame on the victim's mental health through the narrator Enitan. Enitan blames Sheri for her rape. She is confused by what she has seen and as a result of this, feels anger towards Sheri who is the victim. She internalizes the blame against Sheri thus "the fist in my stomach explodes.Yes. I blamed her. If she hadn't smoked hemp it would never have happened. If she hadn't stayed as long as she did at the party, it would not have happened. Bad girls got raped. We all knew. Loose girls, forward girls, raw, advanced girls. Laughing with boys, following them around, thinking she was one of them" (*Everything Good Will Come*, 68). Unconsciously, it is the teachings of her mother that surface and influence Enitan's interpretation of events.

The rape has far reaching consequences and is detrimental to the psyche of both women and men. The physical and psychologically effect of rape is explored in this novel. Atta portrays both the physical as well as the psychologically effect of rape through her character Sheri which includes: unwanted pregnancy, self-hate, damaged uterus, self-absorption and so on. She further explores other consequences of rape through the actions of Sheri. Firstly, she attempts to self-abort the pregnancy with the use of a hanger Atta states: "She struck a hanger up herself and nearly killed herself" (*Everything Good Will Come*, 70).This action results in damaging her reproductive system, leaving her barren. This outcome not only exposes the physical negative effect; it also explores the rape victim's mental state that is detrimental to her wellbeing. Sheri, despite her biology knowledge forgets the danger of self-abortion because she is not in the right frame of the mind. She is psychologically drained and devoid of feeling; her demented state of mind completely clouds her judgement making her oblivious of the grievous harm she is about to inflict on herself through self abortion.

Through this novel, Atta tries to tell the readers that it is better to be ugly, crippled, or even a thief, than to be barren as a woman. Women are linked to some of their reproductive parts and while "marriage could wipe out a slutty past, angel or not a woman had to have a child." She further explains through

Enitan to Sheri that: "A woman may be forgiven for having a child out of wedlock if she had no hope of getting married.... Marriage could immediately wipe sluttish past, but an angel or not a woman had to have a child" (*Everything Good Will Come*, 105). This exposes Sheri's general poor health and damaged psyche. The emotional trauma and psychological damage of feeling self pity, low esteem, disorientation, fear of being talked about, little or no social life, unwanted pregnancy, damaged uterus are all the consequences arising from being raped. These emotions lay emphasis on Burgess and Holmstrom's RTS theory of the Outward/Adjustment and Disorganization stage (OADS) of rape (1981-1986). Her realization that the incident leaves an indelible memory of pregnancy triggers a crisis in her 'frail self' as she describes herself since the rape incident (*Everything Good Will Come* 105). She feels that her body has betrayed her. It is as if her body, the foundation of her suffering as she tells herself is an autonomous thing; acting independently from herself in ways detrimental to the body. This experience anchors to Burnam et al's assertion of "dissociation (feeling like one is not attached to one's body) [as second phase coping mechanism OADS]" as stipulated in RTS (849). She makes out her body to be a different person, different from her and outside of herself.

This psychological state of depression that forces Sheri to create two entities; one defiled being 'her body' and the other undefiled 'her mental state of denial'. This explains Herman's point that "...dissociation can be so severe that a fragmentation of the personality can result in the emergence of alter personalities" (84). The issue of unwanted pregnancy, where Sheri has been nurturing an absence of memory (as a coping mechanism) in the acute stage of rape as Desiree 1992 states that "diminished alertness, dulled sensory, affective and memory functions, disorganized thought content...are all part of some individuals coping mechanism" (92). Also, the damaged womb is a constant reminder of the traumatic experience of the rape incident which has stuck with her like a life long burden affecting her decisions in later life.

According to Burnam et al. (1988), he clearly mentions other visible RTS coping mechanism paramount in the OADS to include: "sense of helplessness, hypervigilance, extreme anger and hostility....some of these coping mechanism may be productive or counterproductive like self-harm, drug abuse alcoholism" (843-850). And these mechanisms especially the sense of helplessness is clearly indicated in the life of Sheri and her coping mechanism is counterproductive because it propels her to self-harm. This is revealed during a conversation that ensued in later life between Sheri and Enitan; one can clearly point out Sheri's sense of helplessness and psychological state of mind that propels her and pushes her into making life changing decision by self aborting the pregnancy that leads to damaged womb the writer says: "What did I know? Taking a hanger to myself, with all the biology I studied. I still thought I had a black hole inside me so which single man from a normal family would have a

person like me?" (*Everything Good Will Come*, 105). But at that moment, Sheri feels getting rid of the pregnancy by herself is what is best for her. It is not in her making to destroy her future; but when a victim is mentally traumatized, the psychic is usually damaged.

To the society, Sheri's act of self aborting is abominable and degrading but what the society does not understand is the current mental state of the victim. When victims are emotionally derailed, their reasoning becomes asocial and absurd. Sheri's human sense of reasoning has been damaged at that point of time, that she couldn't remember the implications of the actions she took rather she is overwhelmed with decisions that will make her feel better and not bring shame to her person thereby getting rid of the pregnancy that damaged her womb. Atta through her character suggests that a barren woman has no future. Therefore, Sheri's barrenness sets up her future as a "sugary girl" because she is convinced that no single man from a normal home will want her (*Everything Good Will Come*, 100). After several years have passed, Sheri and Enitan meet again when Enitan comes home from England. Enitan finds out that Sheri is the mistress of the Brigadier. In exchange for an easier lifestyle, she plays the role of housewife and does all of the cooking, cleaning, and care of her man. Sheri knows how to take advantage of the fact that men often stray from their marriages. This new found life of Sheri is a clear indication of Burgess and Holmstrom (1974) RTS of OADS which suggests that some rape victims at times become hypersexual, promiscuous or probably withdraw from a positive lifestyle to a negative one because they are emotionally destabilized (981-985). This is attributed to Sheri; after realizing that she is barren, she believes that marriage is no longer for her therefore she chooses an easier lifestyle with the Brigadier rather than carrying her misfortune to an innocent man's house in the name of marriage. She fears that the society will still ridicule her when she finds it difficult to conceive. In understanding the implications of trauma, Sheri's decision in trailing the negative aspect of life is not surprising, rather, her traumatic experiences or better still, psychological state of mind put her in a spot that she does what is best for her not minding its implications.

Another devastating nature of rape x-rayed by Atta in *Everything Good Will Come* is that it makes the victim disengage from any social activities; identity crisis is also triggered following the abuse; the victim is in constant confusion and fear of the society perception of her and her perception of herself (204). Atta's set triumphant strategy is the possibility of her female character reclaiming her alienated bodies. This proves problematic in the context of the cultural isolation of the character. Atta tries in presenting her character with reintegrated identity, but takes this to the social stigmatization of a raped woman. Due to Sheri's past experience, she separates herself from social activities. Atta opines; "Sheri would not come for her party. She was not interested in people who will gossip about her....scrutinized her whenever they

see her unhappiness, sexual frustration, and other deprivations, so that they could say her life was well and truly ruined" (*Everything Good Will Come*, 204). This makes Sheri to be self-conscious, often minding her business especially in public places like Enitan's office. She rarely responds to greetings because she feels awkward and convinced she is being talked about.

Furthermore, long term effect of RTS is explored in this novel; one of which is the feeling of vengeance. In the later life of Sheri, through her discussions with Enitan, her feeling of vengeance on the rapists is showcased, Atta reveals Sheri's lamentations: "I did not rape them; they raped me, and if they see me they'd better cross the road...be vengeance cause if I get my hands on them, there will be nothing left to cross with" (*Everything Good Will Come*, 104-105). This is to say that some rape victims never forget the incidence, they are traumatized thereby carrying with them an unforgiving spirit and yearn for as a way of knowing that justice has to be done. Sheri's anger and emotional trauma are drawn from her predators' attitudes towards her and this falls in line with one of the acute phases of rape trauma syndrome by (RAINN) which stressed that victims' pain is a disorder caused by the actions of the rapist. Atta achieves this as Sheri laments: "the boys were absurd in my mind, with their red eyes and hemp, and skinny bodies. I would have to exaggerate them to explain why they jinxed her life and why I still couldn't open my mouth to talk about them" (*Everything Good Will Come*, 105). Though through Enitan's discussion with one of her classmates in London, it is portrayed that Sheri's justice came when Damola Ajayi was admitted into a mental institution where drug addicts in Lagos end up.

According to Herman, "complete amnesia known as dissociative states may occur..... victims may attempt to return to their lives as if nothing happened" (84). And Sheri shows symptoms of this coping mechanism in the novel. She lacks the zeal to talk about the rape after the horrifying incident. In addition, she represses her emotions (as her coping mechanism); living as though it never happened pointing to Sandoval (2002) assertion that "not all rape survivors show their emotions outwardly. Some may appear calm and unaffected" (1). Atta through her character buttresses the fact that Freud's defence mechanisms and RTS coping mechanisms can help a person to successfully cope with rape traumatic experience and heal its psychological damage.

Sheri's rape armed her with a revengeful spirit, she becomes hyper vigilance. During her discussion with Enitan, she is of the view that in as much as she lives under the dictation of a man, she cannot be mistreated or mishandled. Atta makes it clear that her victim has control over her life and determines what happens next in her life. She flares thus: "now, where I differ from most women is, if you lift your hand to beat me, I will kill you, god no go vex" (*Everything Good Will Come*, 107). Sheri's hyper vigilance conformsto Burnam et al (2002)

claim that it is one of the attributes rape victims exhibit in OADS of RTS coping mechanism.

Throughout the story line, Sheri who could not defend herself during the rape incident later becomes too defensive. The ugly experience put her in a way that she refused to be subjected to any form of oppression from any man aside from the ones she chooses for herself. Atta confirms this as Sheri fights the psychological impact of being rape and moves ahead in life; she also indulges in physical combat with Brigadier when he goes beyond what seems to be his boundary with his different attempts at making a complete chattel out of her. Sheri's repressed feelings erupt, and "she beats him for every person who had crossed her path in life" (*Everything Good Will Come*, 161). This confirms that a repressed feeling may sometimes be triggered by a similar act of events that put the victim in such a state (Freud 1974 in *Outline of Psychoanalysis*, 20).

Atta portrays that Sheri's healing starts with the suppression of the rape incidence, alongside Enitan who supports and encourages Sheri to trail in the positive aspect of of life. She decides not to rely on the past "I'm a today-tomorrow woman. I can't look back. I have my business, plenty of children around me. Someone will always chase me. I still have a pretty face. Abi? Its other people who worry about me. Me, I have no worries except when I die" (*Everything Good Will Come*, 299). But despite that she feels so, she worries about her death because no child of hers will bury her since she is barren (long term effect of trauma). Also, Enitan reuniting with her becomes part of her recovery process that makes her retreat from the negative aspect of life and channels her energy on becoming a better woman tomorrow thus: "You are better than this, Sheri. Anyone you want, you can have" (*Everything Good Will Come*,104). Enitan gives Sheri the idea of a catering business, which she puts into motion when the Brigadier hits her. This enables Sheri and her family to take care of them without being supported by a man. "Sheri had become guarded about her personal life" (*Everything Good Will Come*, 245). The reunion of both women in the novel marks the beginning of a new era in Sheri's life. With Enitan, Sheri begins to realize that though life has not been fair to her, she has the capability of making life treat her better. She realizes her potentials and struggles for a better life rather than living under the confinement of the Brigadier.

The psychological impact of rape on the loved ones is evident. Although Enitan does not experience the rape physically, she is emotionally and psychologically scarred by it; her innocence is disrupted. Atta further reveals how Sheri's rape sharpened Enitan's horizon for a better perception of the world. She begins to ask some questions about existence: "Sheri had gotten pregnant from the rape. Didn't a womb know which baby to reject? And now that the baby had been forced out, how did it look?" (*Everything Good Will Come* 73). Sheri's rape to Enitan is an enduring distrust of men, a notion bolstered by the fact that so many

seem to betray her. Enitan's first relationship did not end well due to her frigidity towards her partner. Her sexual experiences become more varied while she is in England, she is still tainted by Sheri's rape and the puritan voice of her mother. The memory from the rape is a visual reminder as she could not bear the thought of semen leaking out of her 'rolling down her thighs', so she always needed to wash afterwards because she believes sex was a filthy act. Her experience of the opposite sex is still largely uncomplimentary; some men who take from women and do not give much in return. Atta further portrays that each time Enitan opens her mouth to tell him "about Sheri and me that awful summer, I thought my voice would blast my ribs apart, flatten him, flatten the bed, toss my sheets around like the wind, so I said nothing." (*Everything GoodWill Come*, 77). Her boyfriend complained of her frigidity in bed and described it as a form of mental illness. Referring to Enitan that "she is like other Nigerian women in bed. You just lie there, like dead women (*Everything GoodWill Come*, 77). Through Sheri's rape, Enitan learns the brutality that women can occasionally endure at the hands of men. The narrator draws our attention to the treatment of Nigerian women by Nigerian men, so that whether at home or in the diaspora the cultural implications that implicitly allow men to treat women as sexual objects in the next generation of boys. But in the end, she regains her life back and overcomes her traumatic experience. This proves that rape victims needs love and understanding neither pity nor criticism to overcome the traumatic experience.

Conclusion

It is established in this research that Atta is of the opinion that rape in its entire entirety is demoralizing on the human person. Rape and its traumatic experiences on the human psyche is devastating and deteriorating. It is still a trending issue and its growth is on rapid increase in our society today. Many rape victims have threaded in negative aspects of life after the incidents due to the negative effects of the psychological trauma on such victims. Moreso, lack of knowledge of rape psychological trauma on the victim by the society by blaming and degrading rape victims with distorted notions of rape on the victim without realizing its harm contributes immensely to victims' counterproductive defence mechanism.

This research finding also exposes how rape affects a child's growth and development. It equally exposes how rape is a destroyer of woman's dream and aspirations. It is clear that an aftermath of rape may turn some victims to thread in the negative aspect of life believing that it is the best life can offer them since it is proven that rape affects human reasoning as this paper's theoretical anchors suggests; that one of the effects of rape is that some rape victims may become disoriented thereby indulging in unhealthy lifestyle like promiscuity, drug and alcoholic abuse and so on. From the research done, it is deducted that rape is attributed to poor parental background, peer group influence, moral and societal decadence.

In all, this study encourages the society to be more considerate towards rape victims. To understand and realize the psychological damage and mental trauma rape victims are forced to undergo and instead of shaming the victims, they should be a support system to the victims helping them get justices and ensuring that whichever coping defence mechanism the victim may adopt will not be counterproductive but instead productive. This research concludes that with love from family and friends; and through successful application of defence mechanisms by Freud and RTS coping mechanisms, a rape victim can overcome the traumatic experience and move on happily in life.

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