

TRAUMATIC PRESENCE AND ITS EXTRICATION: A PSYCHOANALYTIC CRITIQUE OF RAPE IN TARA'S DIARY, DRY, LUCY'S DILEMMA, 2BROKEN AND PAIGE

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Abstract

Rape is a front burner subject presently plaguing Nigeria and the world at large. The consequences have been devastating as victims suffer psychological trauma which result in unquantifiable anguish, low self-esteem, fear, depression and suicidal tendencies amongst others. In view of this, many rape victims suffer serious mental health issues. However, how these victims chart their recovery from the traumatic experience is downplayed and given less focus. This paper therefore focuses on the challenges, representation of these traumatic presences and explores how female rape victims navigate, negotiate and recover from trauma in Nollywood. Using five Nollywood blockbusters, Tara's diary, Dry, Lucy's dilemma, 2broken and Paige and anchoring on the psychoanalytical theory, this paper dwells on the trauma suffered by rape victims and examines the coping mechanism used to overcome their adversity while recovering from this inimical act. This paper advocates for care and emotional support from families and friends of rape victims to weather their psychological well-being. This paper submits that filmmakers should educate the public about the severity of rape and its subsequent survival strategies through the cinematic medium.

Keywords: Defensive mechanisms, Extrication, Mental resilience, Rape, Trauma.

Introduction

Rape is a sexual assault perpetuated against a person without mutual agreement and consent. This act is carried out through coercion or physical force (Akinwale and Omoera, p.5; Brown, p. 6; Omoera, Olugbenga and Doghudje, p. 129). Chiazor *et al* (2016) define rape as “a denial of a woman's self-preservation; the intrusion of her privacy, an inhuman and violent act which leaves the victims ashamed, humiliated and afraid” (p.7765). In Nigeria today, rape has become the order of the day making it an epidemic which deserves urgent attention. Amnesty International's (2005) report on Nigeria indicates that “on a daily basis, women are beaten, ill-treated for supposed transgressions, raped.” (www.amnesty.org.uk). In corroborating this fact, Achunike and Kitause (2014) note that rape prevalence, has had a baffling upsurge which has gone up from 12.5 percent to 80 percent in Nigeria (p.32). The effects and consequences of this rape experience leaves its victim traumatized; a situation that occurs as a result of an overwhelming amount of stress that exceeds one's ability to cope or integrate the emotions involved with that experience. Bloom (2003) refers to this psychic trauma as an unexpected, overwhelming and intense emotional blow that assaults a person from outside and which is quickly incorporated into the mind (p.6). Gluck (2016) notes that the traumatic effects of rape include post trauma stress disorder (PTSD), depression, flash backs, sleep disorders, eating disorders, dissociative identity disorder, distrust of others, anger, feelings of personal powerlessness; a condition where the victims feel the rapists robbed them of control over their

bodies (www. healthy place. com/abuse/rape). This follows the effect of the raped victim developing post-traumatic stress disorders which can trigger other chain reactions and mental health difficulties which includes:

- ❖ Intrusive symptoms related to the event: distressing thoughts or mental images of the event, dreams or flashbacks.
- ❖ Persistent avoidance of things associated with the event: avoiding places, people, situations, activities or experience that may be reminders of the event. This can include withdrawing from other people.
- ❖ Negative changes in understanding and mood: a host of negative thoughts and emotions may come to dominate survivors, such as hopelessness, the loss of pleasure and feelings of mistrust and sadness.
- ❖ Changes in arousal and reactivity: physical changes that keep survivors on constant alert, leading to jumpiness, irritability, difficulties in concentration and sleep, and outburst of anger (National AIDS Committee of South Africa, 2015, p.6).

However, Crawford and Unger (2004) observe that many of these victims develop coping strategies to protect their personal integrity and dignity. According to them, these women use realistic, future-oriented fantasies to find relief from their pain and to escape their identity as victims (p.446). Hence, some focused their energy on academic achievements, others used creative outlets (e.g. writing, drama, music, dance) to enhance their ability to cope (p.446). Crawford and Unger therefore assert that the ability of these victims to cope demonstrates that rape “survivors have strengths as well as vulnerabilities (p.446). It is against this backdrop that this paper delves into Nollywood using *Tara’s diary*, *Dry*, *Lucy’s dilemma*, *2broken* and *Paige* to expose the psychological impact of rape on victims. Unearth how rape victims, as seen in Nollywood films are able to recover from such traumatic experiences through identified coping survival mechanisms.

Theoretical Framework

The psychoanalytic theory describes how the overwhelming stress of rape alters the physical, mental health and social adjustment of rape victims and explores the consequences of these changes (Bloom, 2003, p.1). It is common that rape victims experience high level of distress following the rape experience and these feelings and syndrome are highly devastating. In this respect, the psychoanalytic theoretical framework explains the complexity experienced by rape victims with such traumatic events and helps us to understand the ways in which victims respond and how they try to extricate themselves by using several coping skills in order to navigate and negotiate their return to normalcy and away from the damaging effects of rape. Sandoval (2002) explains that a cluster of psychological and physical symptoms and reactions are common to most rape victims immediately following a rape, but which can also occur months or years afterwards (p. 1). In shedding light, Bloom elucidates that these powerful images, feelings and sensations do not just go away after the danger has passed but are deeply imprinted into memory (p.16). This theory suggests that certain ideas and thoughts which are threatening to us are repressed, that is, pushed out of our awareness into the unconscious (*Psychoanalytic Theories*, 2004, p.280). By this token, Bondi (2007) emphasizes that the unconscious mind is the repository for unacceptable and repressed experiences, thoughts and feelings (p.3). However, Freud’s view is that repression is harmful and might be the cause of a patient’s mental or behavioural symptoms (*Psychoanalytic Theories*, p. 282). Admittedly, the

Psychoanalytic Theories assert that although repression helps to keep undesirable information in the unconscious and out of awareness, this repressed information is influential and can seep out and express itself through behaviours, thoughts, dreams, slips of the tongue, and the clinical method of free association (Bondi, p. 3). Thus, these disturbing memories intrude into the conscious from time to time especially when triggered by a similar event which stirs up feelings about events of the past. Bloom explains the concept of flash back as a “sudden intrusive re-experiencing of one of those traumatic, un-verbalized memories” (p. 16). According to Tiffany (2017) “flashbacks are vivid sensory experiences” in which during a traumatic experience the sufferer “might see, hear and smell things they saw, heard and smelled during the traumatic moment (www.talkspace.com). Consequently, this traumatic experience profoundly alters and impacts the entire person “the way we think, the way we learn, the way we remember things, the way we feel about ourselves, the way we feel about other people” (Bloom, 2003, p.6). Bloom traces our evolutionary experience as a key insight into fully understanding human behaviours and responses to trauma. In throwing light, Bloom asserts that the enlarged nature of the brain with its high capacity to store up information helps us retain large bodies of information while enabling us to integrate our past experience with our present experience and thus we associate sights, smells, people, sounds from the event with danger. Bloom observes that due to the complex makeup of the human brain, memories and experiences are stored and engraved in the mind and it is this progressive adaptation that leaves us vulnerable to the effects of trauma such as flashback, body memories, post traumatic nightmares and behavioural reenactments (p. 9). Tiffany gives a vivid picture and points out two key players (amygdala and the hippocampus) as responsible for memory storage and retrieval. According to her:

The Amygdala is associated with emotional memory especially the formation of fear related memories. It evolved to ensure your survival by strongly encoding memories of past dangers you’ve experienced so that you recognize and respond to those threats if you see them again. The Hippocampus, the other region of your brain heavily involved in memory, acts like the brain’s historian. It catalogs all the different details of an experience like who was there, where it happened, and what time of day it was into one cohesive event you can consciously recollect as memory (www.talkspace.com).

She writes that the body’s built in fight – or – flight mechanism takes over and the amygdala is over activated while the hippocampus is suppressed. In the face of danger, the amygdala will retrieve that memory and respond strongly, signaling that you are in danger and automatically activating the fight – or – flight system. This is why during a flashback, one starts sweating, the heart races, and you breathe heavily, explaining that the amygdala has set off a chain reaction to prepare the body to respond automatically and aggressively to perceived threat (www.talkspace.com). This therefore accounts for why experiences are imprinted into the mind and these memories are difficult to erase. Resultantly, these distressing and past ugly experiences involuntarily enter consciousness and the events are relived or reenacted in the form of flashbacks. Little wonder Tiffany terms it “waking nightmare (www.talkspace.com), because they are intense, repeated episodes of re-living a traumatic experience while fully awake.

The psychoanalytic theory while exposing the psychological and traumatic effects of rape on its victims; provides explanations on the unconscious protective devices known as defense mechanism that these victims turn to in times of such distress in order to deal with and lessen the intensity of negative impulses and rescue them from such untenable physiological state. These protective devices include: rationalization, projection, sublimation, reaction formation, displacement, denial and regression.

Rationalization: Our unconscious makes up a good-sounding reason or excuse to explain something we naturally cannot afford. Rationalization, according to the *Psychoanalytic Theories* protects us from the anxiety of seeing ourselves as deficient (p. 282).

Sublimation: is a defense mechanism where negative urges and impulses are channeled into socially accepted behaviour. It is the transformation of unwanted impulses into something less harmful. According to Freud, sublimation is a way in which people can deal with socially unacceptable impulses, feelings and ideas in socially acceptable ways. The victims “mental anguish is redirected into wonderful works of art” (*Psychoanalytic Theories*, p. 283) in order to avoid potential self-harm and the outcome is a production of worthwhile works.

Displacement: This defense mechanism entails a person’s transfer and redirection of aggression, displeasure towards some object or person other than the source of displeasure. Freud suggests that this defense mechanism explains how a person’s unconscious wishes could appear in disguise (*Psychoanalytic Theories*, p. 283).

Regression: This is a defense mechanism which involves an action of returning to a previous state. It is a psycho-therapeutic method whereby healing or solace is facilitated by the patients’ induction to act out behaviour typical of an earlier developmental stage. Regression is a Freudian concept that provides a person with feelings of calmness and security under threatening conditions. This action drives the victim to find solace and revert to earlier developmental behaviour during the psychosexual stages like thumb sucking (p.283).

Synopsis of *Tara’s Diary*

Tara’s Diary spotlights the plight of Tara, a naive undergraduate, raped by her lecturer, Dr. Dan; who takes advantage of the late submission of her log book for the Student Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES). Naive of all the schemes by Dr. Dan as she was caught unawares and raped, she is haunted by these traumatic experiences which manifests in the forms of dreams and flashbacks. Consequently bound by the culture of silence, Tara immerses her emotions into singing and writing her experiences in a diary. She uses these medium as a channel to release and cope with the painful traumatic experiences.

Synopsis of *2Broken*

2Broken follows the narrative of Bolu, a young girl whose fiancé dies in an accident on their wedding day. Afterwards, she finds out that she is pregnant. In a bid to save her parents (who are pastors) the embarrassment, she moves out of her parent’s house. Subsequently, she gets raped by armed robbers in her home with her little baby besides her, crying. Everything takes a new dimension after this humiliating experience as Bolu becomes traumatized. Bolu develops a sense of worthlessness which results to her being suicidal. However, she battles her unconscious, becomes defiant to self pity and depression. Thereafter, she immerses her

emotions into writing her experiences in a diary and also sets up an NGO charged with helping rape victims like her.

Synopsis of *Dry*

Dry spotlights the plight of Dr. Zara, a successful Nigerian Gynecologist, based abroad. Despite her success story, she bears a haunting past that leaves her traumatized. Zara is orphaned and there after lives with her Aunt's family where she is constantly raped by her Aunt's husband. In this process, she gets pregnant and is driven out. Zara then comes in contact with Madam Kojo, a child trafficker who engages her into forced prostitution. Subsequently, Zara delivers, and the baby is sold out by Madam Kojo while Zara is left with complications of Vagina Vesico Fistula (VVF). However, luck smiles on her as she is adopted by Dr. Robbins, a visiting philanthropist from Wales who treats Zara and takes her abroad. Zara becomes a successful Gynecologist, however she remains traumatic. With the advice of her therapist, she decides to visit Nigeria which she had dreaded as plague. Upon arrival, she helps tremendously with the treatment of women suffering from VVF as well as searches for her long lost daughter. Halima, her 13 year old daughter is a victim of early marriage who suffers a repeated circle of VVF complications arising from prolonged labour during child birth. Due to stigmatization from society, she is thrown out of her husband's house and left unattended to medically. Not even Zara's expertise could save her as Halima dies eventually after a surgical procedure to correct her. Her death embitters Zara and spurs her into action as she uses the media to speak against the violence meted on women. Her outcry gains her popularity over the headlines and eventually she gets the attention of the speaker of the house of National Assembly where she pushes for the child right bill which thereafter, is passed into law. Finally, Zara exposes her rapist who in turn is an honorable member. She becomes free at last from the torments of the past.

Synopsis of *Paige*

Paige centres on the trauma a newly wedded bride, Paige experiences when she is raped by her father -in -law, Chief Jacob Gbadamosi on her wedding day. Caught in the trap of threat and speechless terror, she is shrouded by silence and continues to suffer rape on a daily basis. Her brother, Michael and her friend and confidant, Joan try to help her break away from her rapist but they end up losing their lives in the process. Left with no choice, Paige hides her loath for Chief, pretends to be in love with him and then inversely, he falls for her manipulation. Finally, she poisons his drink as a way to free herself from his clutches. Consequently, Chief suffers from the adverse effect of the poison as he drools and vomits blood and then finally dies.

Synopsis of *Lucy's Dilemma*

Lucy lives with her elder sister Grace and her husband Francis. Unknown to Grace, Lucy is serially raped by her husband daily and he threatens to kill her if she divulges the incident to his wife. Consequently, Lucy is paralyzed by fear and does not disclose this heinous act to her sister for fear of her brother-in-law and also to save her sisters' marriage. Also, Lucy immerses her emotions into writing as a channel to release and cope with the painful traumatic experiences. On one occasion of this molestation, Lucy stabs Francis, in a bid to save herself from his grip which resultantly led to his death. Lucy is then charged for murder and sentenced to life imprisonment.

Traumatic Experiences and its Extrication: A Psycho Analytic Critique of *Tara's Diary*, *Dry*, *Lucy's dilemma*, *2broken* and *Paige*

Tara's Diary, *Dry*, *Lucy's dilemma*, *2broken* and *Paige* mirrors and reflects the existence and the implications of rape in Nigeria. They revolve around the psychological trauma and the identified coping mechanism which female rape victims engage to survive in the face of such adversity. These movies graphically lead the viewers through the rape experiences, the pains and psychological torture borne by these victims and how they eventually channel their negative energy into socially acceptable behaviours as a way of overcoming their trauma. These narratives acknowledge the devastating experience and psychological trauma that rape leaves its victims with. Silence, withdrawal from social settings, alienation, and dissociation, eating and sleeping disorders are truism of the outcome of their rape experience. In *Tara's Diary*, Tara approaches Dr. Dan for his help to enable her submit her log book.



Tara pleads with Dr. Dan over the issue of late submission of her logbook.

He wittingly takes advantage of this opportunity and tries to kiss her but she refutes; he also tried to draw her close but she won't oblige. The camera then captures Dr. Dan as he pins her down and rapes her while she struggles. Subsequently, Tara is seen weeping not only from the bruises sustained during the struggle with Dr. Dan as her face is swollen from the scuffle but also from the inhuman treatment by Dr. Dan as he throws some folded naira notes at her to possibly use for transportation.



Bruised Tara in tears after her rape incidence.

The humiliation and shame experienced by rape victims in these narratives results in the total loss of control of their body and mind. This loss of mind is captured as these victims ranging from Bolu, Zara, Paige, Lucy and Tara experience bouts of constant intrusion of images of their rape experience through the aid of flashbacks. Flashback is a salient tool which is creatively employed in each of the understudied films *Dry*, *Paige*, *Tara's diary*, *2broken* and *Lucy dilemma* to depict the traumatic intrusion of the mental images of rape episodes experienced by these victims. During this flashback, these characters become flooded with the images, emotions and physical sensations associated with the original trauma. They feel like the poignant experience is happening again and they have difficulty separating the past from the present (Bloom, p.16). At the end, each of these victims cries hysterically and become hyper aroused as in the case of Bolu and Paige which leads to suicidal attempts as a natural response and the fastest escape route from the pain they are undergoing. These characters employ the use of repression to suppress their emotions while forcing them-selves to forget the incidence. The *Psychoanalytic theories* liken repression to our immune system which serves as protection antibodies to germ causing sickness:

Repression works like our immune system: it protects us from dangerous things. In the case of personality, dangerous things include anything that threatens self-esteem or feelings of comfort and pleasure. When we have thoughts or ideas that are threatening, they are pushed out of consciousness because awareness of them produces anxiety. They make us feel nervous. Thereby, through repression, our unconscious protects us from anxiety (*Psychoanalytic theories*, 2004, p. 280).

However, this repressed experience into the unconscious is harmful and possibly causes mental issues for them. The resultant constant nightmares and traumatic experiences affecting these characters is the outcome of their unresolved grief experienced after the rape incidence.

This unconscious repressed state occasionally springs up its head to dominate and traumatize the victims who possibly becomes depressed as they feel alienated from everything (*Psychoanalytic Theories*, p. 282). Tara's traumatic experience is heightened by the flashbacks and nightmares she experiences as it causes her sleepless nights. Hence, Tara is captured struggling in her dreams with an unidentified male figure that pins her down and tries to strangle her while attempting to rape her. Tara struggles, screams and simultaneously wakes up. This dreams surfaces as traumatic presences as she is captured running away from unseen forces to symbolically depict the mental turbulence she is passing through. No wonder Burke and Reardon (2002) unequivocally states that rape is injurious and the trauma inflicted can be deeper, more stunting and more ingrained in the person's personality (p.2). In all of these circumstances, she wakes up startled and overwhelmed by this traumatic stress, and cries after each experience.



Tara traumatized after each nightmare experience.

Similarly, in *Dry*, Dr Zara always relieves her experiences through its manifest in her dreams as a constant reminder of how her uncle raped her while she struggled. Suddenly, in a quick succession, Zara screams and wakes up from sleep. This is granted of course that repressed information seep out of the unconscious and is expressed and manifest through dreams, behaviours and flashbacks. Hence, Zara despite having a surface of self control, deep down, she hides her anguish, fears and desperation and this ultimately comes to light through her dreams. Most essentially, she always experiences these bouts of intrusive and distressing flashback when she is upset. At every given opportunity, that Zara is upset, this emotion always, triggers a flashback of her rape experience. This is in line with the psychoanalytic theory's position that flashbacks are likely to occur when the victim is upset (Bloom, 2003, p.16). Consequently, the death of Halima is highly distressful to Zara and also triggers these flash backs. Zara tries all means possible to revive Halima but she dies. A close up shot captures Halima's body with Zara clinging unto her, weeping uncontrollably as the camera revolves around them.



Halima dies, Zara weeps

In a follow up scene, Zara is captured weeping bitterly. This is granted of course that ironically, she who saves others couldn't save her own. This weeping evokes another bout of flashback as gleaned to the psychoanalytic theory. In *2broken*, Bolu is not left out of this flashback intrusion and re-lives the traumatic experience all over again. Resultantly, the powerful images of her rape experience through an intrusive flashback come flooding in. Bloom collaborates this fact by her assertion that these powerful images, feelings and sensations do not just go away due to the fact that "they are deeply imprinted, more strongly in fact than normal everyday memories" (p.16). In other words, flashbacks occur as reminders of the previous sexual assault experienced by rape victims. To this end, Bolu becomes hyper aroused, sweats profusely and in this distressed state, she attempts strangling herself in the bathtub.



Bolu's suicide attempt

Bolu's action is best explained in trauma theories as one of the natural response to trauma. Rape Crisis Scotland Resources submits that suicide thoughts and feelings are a natural response to trauma (p.6). As a result of this hurting experience which reoccurs, the grief and

recovery of the victim is inhibited and this degenerates to depression leading to the advancement of suicidal thoughts. Bloom explains that “as the intrusive symptoms of flashbacks, nightmares come to dominate and traumatize the victims lives, they become increasingly depressed, feel more and more alienated from everything that gives their lives meaning such as their favourite activities, other people, their sense of direction and purpose, sense of spirituality and their sense of community” (p.19-20). She then observes that it is not surprising then, that slow-self destruction through addictions, or fast self-destruction through suicide becomes the final outcome of these syndromes (p.20). Rape Crisis Scotland Resources therefore submits that the survivor sees “suicide as a way of escaping from overwhelming pain and distress; or as a way of taking back control (p.3). Similarly, Paige in *Paige* also tries to stab herself with a knife but for the quick intervention of Joan, her friend who tactically retrieves the knife from her. As a way of buttress, Paige utters the statement that she is emotionally damaged and wishes to die to end her misery. She also suffers from the experience of interferences and the intrusion of her rape episode with her father-in-law always as a traumatic presence when her husband Mario tries to get intimate with her. Therefore, she consequently always psychologically displaces her husband in place of her rapist at such intimate times and pushes him away. Paige relieves and re-experience ssudden intrusion of one of this traumatic memories of her rape experience through flashbacks which Freud calls “repetition compulsion” a situation which Holmes et al (1996) explains as a reproduction of memory but relieved as an action; he repeats it, without of course, knowing that he is repeating (as cited in Blooms, 2003, p.22). Bloom notes that “when someone experiences a flashback, they do not remember the experience, they re-live it” (p.17). Resultantly, at this instance overwhelmed with the same emotion Paige screams and with a hard force pushes Mario away and embraces a pillow as both a refuge and a mask to hide her trauma leaving Mario surprised at her startled response and hyper arousal.



Paige relieves her traumatic experience with a startled Mario watching her display.



A hyper aroused Paige running and being chased by Mario and other guests.

Consequently, unable to cope with this trauma, Paige holds her head, screams, swirls and collapses into unconsciousness. This is in line with the psychoanalytic theory assertion that rape victims who are faced with traumatic experience get hyper aroused which leaves the victim both physically and emotionally exhausted. Thus, this explains why Paige runs off and since she is unable to cope with this hyper arousal, resultantly leads to her fainting and thereafter she goes into unconsciousness; a clear indication of a collapse of her vital organs due to the lack of buffering from the shock experienced in her central nervous system. Similarly, in *Lucy's dilemma*, Lucy employs dissociation as a coping mechanism to adapt to stress; a feeling characterized by depersonalization which is a detachment from one's self, mind or body. Here, she detaches herself through fainting when Francis rapes her. Bloom opines that traumatized persons make use of a built in safety valve that she calls "dissociation" (p. 18) as a way of cutting emotional responses present in the face of danger and buffering against life threatening shock. The American psychiatric association (1994) defines dissociation as "a disruption in the usually integrated functions of consciousness, memory, identity or perception of the environment" (as cited in Bloom, p. 18). Lucy's fainting is gleaned to Bloom's submission that our emotions and vital organs are closely tied in through the autonomic nervous system. Such that in cases of trauma and hyper arousal, these victims could be paralyzed with intense symptoms and cause the bodily organs to collapse. In her words, she describes psychogenic fainting as "a dramatic way for the brain to say "I can't handle this" (p.18). This hyper arousal and emotional exhaustion therefore explains why Lucy becomes terrified and faints during the process of her rape experience. This is given that the impulse of terror and stressful circumstances, if not buffered, leaves the central nervous system exposed to unrelenting over-stimulation (Bloom, 2003, p.8) which resultantly leaves the victim in Bloom's word "progressively numb" to all emotions (p.18).

Technically, in a bid to extricate such traumatic presences, and to remain sane, these victims invest their efforts in various coping tools to reduce their anxiety, and in order to adapt and tolerate such stress they channel their negative impulse to socially acceptable behaviour (such as writing, singing, academic feats, charitable works), repression, dissociation and emotional

numbing amongst others. 'To extricate' means "to remove or free from complication, hindrance, or difficulty; disentangle (www.dictionary.com). Extrication therefore has to do with the release, disentanglement of a person from an entrapment, a difficult situation or whatever that is hindering a person. So to extricate herself from all untenable plights and the traumatic presences, Tara decides to immerse herself into writing and singing. Tara uses these mediums as coping mechanisms and an avenue to protect herself from self-harm and the consequences of her traumatic experience. Here, *Tara's diary* to a large extent recognizes the vulnerabilities of rape victims as well as their mental resilience and how they can employ it to extricate their pains. The American psychological Association (2014) defines mental resilience as "the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or even significant sources of stress" (<https://www.apa.org/help-center/road-resilience.aspx>). The process of adapting well in the face of these dangers, often attracts the engagement of several coping mechanism, if these rape victims are to survive. Hence, these movies spotlights the several coping mechanisms employed by rape victims to ease out pains in the face of traumas.

The taking up of writing as a means of extricating negative urges and feelings is further highlighted by Bolu and Lucy in *2Broken* and *Lucy's dilemma* respectively. In her diary, Bolu and Lucy recount their experiences which becomes the basis of the film *2Broken* and *Lucy's dilemma*. These movies depict rape victims as overshadowed by the culture of silence wherein they repress their experiences to themselves rather than disclose their ordeal to anyone. This explains why Tara formerly bound by the culture of silence, pours out her heart out into her diary, in her words: "since I couldn't speak to anyone, I spoke to my diary. Here, this movie foregrounds sublimation as a coping mechanism which rape victims make use of as a means to channel unhealthy feelings into socially acceptable venture. The *Psychoanalytic theories* note that "sublimation entails redirecting or channeling our undesirable emotions and thoughts into a socially acceptable activity" (p.283). These films identify writing as a coping mechanism used by victims faced with traumatic experience as it serves as a way of relaxation from their displeasure. The Harvard health medical schools in their publication acknowledge the efficacy of writing as a coping mechanism to tolerate stress by putting forth this stand "writing about thoughts and feelings that arise from a traumatic or stressful life- called expressive writing- may help people cope with emotional fallout of such event" (<https://www.health.harvard.edu>). This is granted of course that by so doing, it helps the traumatic person to regulate their emotions as well as help them break free from endless threatening ruminations which consequently has a psychological effect in terms of trauma due to mental cycling.

Again, another coping mechanism identified by *Tara's Diary* which rape victims utilize to extricate their traumatic stress is through singing (music). Tara uses singing to express her feelings since she is not comfortable relaying it to people. According to Bloom, these traumatized persons use this means as a way of trying to repeatedly "tell their story in overt and highly disguised ways" (p.22).



Tara at different occasions sings to extricate herself from pains.

The use of songs in *Tara's Diary* is phenomenal because through its lyrics, salient messages that portray the plight and situation of rape victims' experiences are conveyed. Hence, Tara's woes and her traumatic experience are recounted in one of her compositions:

Stanza one:

Am all choked up! I can't find a way; am hanging on a thread.
 Every breath is like a battle. Pain is creeping in my head (repeat 2x).
 And I cry whenever am all alone (repeat 4x).
 No one will ever understand what I am going through (repeat 4x).

This song by Tara categorically states the plight and emotional torture rape victims go through which other persons might not understand or identify with. Here, Tara admits she is all choked up to suggest her highly precarious state. In line with Machisa, et al (2010) assertion that most rape victims is likely to attempt to commit suicide (p.6). This film therefore elucidates that most rape victims if not properly managed could tow the path of suicide as a way of breaking free from their torments. Bolu, in *2broken* and Paige in *Paige* are given examples that contemplate and make suicidal attempts as a fast escape route to their pains. However, Bolu after having attempted suicide, braced up and engaged the sublimation defense mechanism by establishing a support group where people with like problems (rape) as her come to encourage and seek solutions on how to adapt in face of their tragedy and negotiate recovery. *2broken* in particular, advances for a support group as this is what rape victims require as a platform to generate recovery. In light of this, Bolu demonstrated great inner strength as a rape survivor by establishing a support group; a nonprofit organization geared towards providing a forum for rape victims to share and gain experiences on how to resolve traumatic problems.

In *dry*, to escape her pain, and in order to find relief, Zara focuses her energy on becoming a successful Gynecologist. Also, with her gathered knowledge of expertise she is driven with passion for charity work where she is interested in helping women with the same plight she suffered from. An attestation to this fact is from the discussion between Dr. Brown and another colleague. Their discussion centered on how diligent and successful Dr. Zara has

become. Thus they recognize her tireless effort towards the growth of their hospital. In light of this commendation, Dr. Brown makes this observation “Dr. Zara is good with charity but it seems she is trying to make up for something”. This statement foregrounds Zara’s coping mechanism which is sublimation; a defense mechanism explained in psychoanalytical theory where negative impulses are channeled into socially acceptable behaviors in order to escape self harm and traumatic experiences.

In her own case, Ndidi in *2broken* in order to relief her pain and escape her identity as a rape victim, focused her energy towards boxing. Here, the identified coping mechanism is boxing. Ndidi enrolled in a boxing academy to enhance her ability to cope and as a way of letting off her vengeance on her rapists. At this point, Ndidi engaged the psychoanalytic defensive mechanism using displacement as a survival strategy to vent her displeasure on the punch bag; invariably a psychoanalytic replacement of her rapists. This explains why she punches the bag more than required as a way of revenge to her rapist.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper focused on the representation of the issue of rape in Nigeria using *Tara’s diary*, *Dry*, *Lucy’s dilemma*, *2broken* and *Paige* as case studies. This paper took a cursory look at the psychological implications of rape; and its resultant effect on the victims which are manifested in the form of nightmares, dreams, sleep disorder, flashbacks, and feelings of worthlessness, dejection, loss of interest in activities depression and withdrawal syndrome as well as other anti-social behaviours. From these narratives, it is evident that no rape victims react to adversity the same way. While some develop successful coping strategies for detaching from the pain and trauma of rape, others develop self destructive facts such as contemplation of suicide as a way of escaping from their pain. However, writing, academic feats, charitable works and singing were deduced as successful coping mechanisms which some rape victims engage in to help alleviate the pains and overcome their traumatic experiences while expressing themselves through the medium. Also, this paper concludes that society must not be oblivious of rape victims around us. But at all times, we need to pay more attention to the cries, pains expressed and anti-social behaviour exhibited by people who are faced with traumatic stress so as to help immobilize their challenges through emotional support.

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Filmography

Title of film: *Dry*.

Screen play: Stephanie Okereke Linus.

Director: Stephanie Okereke Linus.

Producer: Jane Lawalata; Stephanie Okereke Linus.

D.O.P: Angel Barroetta.

Year: 2014.

Language: English and Hausa.

Company: Next Page Productions.

Starring: Stephanie Okereke Linus, Zubaida Ibrahim Fagge, Olu Jacobs, Darwin Shaw, Liz Benson, Rekiya Attah and William McNamara.

.Duration: 115 minutes.

Title of film: *2broken*.

Screen play: Lani Aisida.

Director: Simon Peacemaker.

Producer: Simon Peacemaker.

D.O.P: Abdullahi Yusuf.

Year: 2015.

Language: English.

Company: Rbliss Productions.

Starring: Belinda Effah, OmotuBissong, Iyke Michaels, and Princess Chineke.

.Duration: 75 minutes.

Title of film: *Paige*.

Screen play: Liz Ibe.

Director: Chico Ejiro.

Producer: Frank Dallas.

D.O.P: Samuel Okhakume.

Year: 2017.

Language: English.

Company: Grand Touch Pictures.

Starring: Tony Umez, Daniel Lloyd, Mercy Isoyip, Lisa Onu, and Oluchi Julius.

.Duration: 75 minutes.

Title of film: *Lucy's Dilemma*.

Screen play: Chiamaka Nwokeukwu.

Director: Chinonso Aniebonam.

Producer: Chiamaka Nwokeukwu.

D.O.P: Chuks Nwali.

Year: 2018.

Language: English.

Company: Golden Steps Production.

Starring: Dave Ogbeni, Chiamaka Nwokeukwu, Georgina Ibeh, Gloria Okafor and Chuks Ihemadu.

.Duration: 75 minutes.

Title of film: *Tara's Diary*.

Screen play: AwazaJecinta / Uloma Marvelous.

Director: Charles Okwuowulu (D.G.N) / Chika Okafor.

Producer: Ameh Dennis Akoh / Charles Okwuowulu.

D.O.P: Michael Chinda.

Year: 2021.

Language: English.

Company: Department of Theatre arts, AEFUNAI.

Starring: Chidera Faustina Andrew, Kingsley Emeka, Chinelo Assumpta, Obi Okoli, Ugo Doris, and Charles Emokpae.

.Duration: 115 minutes.