

Love-Rape in Contemporary Northern Nigerian Literature: A Feminist/Reader-Response Critique of Audee T. Giwa's *I'd Rather Die*

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ABSTRACT: *If Audee T. Giwa isn't amongst the first generation of male African writers: Chinua Achebe, Cypran Ekwensi, Wole Soyinka, Ngugi wa Thiang'o, Sembene Ousemene for instance, who have cast women stereotypes as principal characters or heroines in their novels, he has indubitably joined the arty queue. Be that as it may, only Ngugi and Ousemene of the five have been textually hailed by Flora Nwapa in "Women and Creative Writing in Africa" for mirroring the ebullient "faces" of women in their novels and plays and the other three have been palpably indicted for being misogynist and sextially-biased in their portrayal of women in their early literary master pieces. Women Without Borders (2012), a novel, in which Professor Aliyu Kamal underscores the intersection between patriarchy, culture, religion and the rights of women in Northern Nigerian Muslim world has brought the Kano-born novelist into the queue. In the latest queue to which he has joined, Giwa seems to have picked a distinctive literary path. This is the thrust of this paper. It explores another patriarchal mode in *I'd Rather Die*, as the opulent Alhaji Maikudi becomes a rapist, smoke-screening with poverty to rape love. This inimical and baleful attitude inflicts an incomparable misery and trepidation in the green and morally-raised Fatimah, whose heart has truly Muhammad's embraced. The psychological gore caused in Fatimah's heart when her love is raped by Alhaji Maikudi is tantamount to patriarchal subjugation and insubordination. The paper employs feminism and the reader-response paradigms for its analytical stands.*

KEYWORDS: love-rape, contemporary Northern Nigerian, literature, a feminist/reader-response, Audee t. Giwa's *i'd rather die*

INTRODUCTION

Who is the new writer on the literary scene today whose message?
is large enough to elicit spontaneous response from the critic
because the critic feels challenged by the depth of the writer's insights?
Charles E. Nnolim, *Approaches to African Literature*, (264).

Very much so Nnolim, whose critical standpoint quoted above, is the impulse behind this paper and its rubric. As Eagleton in *The Function of Criticism* (2005) argues "the point" of this critical perspective and "whom it is intended to reach, influence and impress" (8) and all of which the critic ought to bear at the back of his/her mind are absolutely fundamental. If it were so, what then the he/she squeezes out of Audee T. Giwa's *I'd Rather Die* indubitably beckons to Nnolim's and Eagleton's critical remarks, both of which encapsulate the functions of criticism the "wife" and the critic its "husband". As a different, worldly creation, *I'd Rather Die* expresses Giwa's unconcealed artistic purpose and motive. In this world, the novelist unveils love-rape as a new patriarchal discourse in recent Northern Nigerian Literature. Set in one of the historic northern Nigerian cities, Zaria, in the 1980s, he laments at the repulsive attitudes of some men of substance the likes of Alhaji Maikudi, who turns money as a bait meat set to lure a human prey to it as would a fish. The prey thus becomes helpless when he/she falls into his trap, becoming a master who dashes instructions to a feeble slave. So, by using the power of his opulence to alter the susceptible Fatimah's love fate of Muhammad to his own self-centred advantage, Alhaji Maikudi has raped love as man would a woman, and when his filthy hands run into the body of the tied Fatimah in his guest room, all in his unsuccessful machination to rape the young girl, so as to revenge his disrespectful treatment by Muhammad has spelled out the intensified degree of the the love-rape.

Consequently, the world of *I'd Rather Die* is a man's world. It is that world which Virginia Woolf in "Women and Fiction" depicts man as "the lord and master", who rules the women and dictates what is to be and what is not. In "The Second Sex, the renowned French feminist critic Simon de Beauvoir argues that French culture and of course western societies in general are patriarchal. To corroborate this assertion, Ann B. Dobie argues that "western cultures had operated on the assumption that women were inferior creatures", for which reason "leading thinkers from Aristotle to Darwin, reiterated that women were lesser beings" (103). However, Garder Learner's perspective has transcended the western world. So, in *The Creation of Patriarchy* she writes "male dominance is universal and natural" (1). Patriarchy bears myriads of faces, from subordinating women to meting out varying degrees of ill-treatments to them such as disparaging remarks, shouting, beating, slapping, denying them some socially and religiously prescribed rights *exemplata gratia*, portrayed by male and female African literary writers. For Giwa, love-rape is a new patriarchal mode and which this article sets to unveil through the theoretical lens of feminism and the reader-response theories.

What is Love?

In August the 4th, 2020, the American-based on-line literary magazine, Praxis, published my poem entitled “What Is Love?”

Love,
Is an invisible plant,
That germinates,
Steadily grows,
In a voluptuous garden.

Love,
Is a loosen bird,
Faster than the Rocket,
Gleefully flies,
Unpredictable,
Until it touches down.

Itinerant,
Like the cattle herd,
Plane,
That travels to distant lands.

Love,
Is like an infant moon,
Matures,
When it grows full.

Stranger,
Searching for an enclosure to nap,
Disappears,
At the music of the morning cock.

Love,
Is a mysterious river,
Folding your trousers,
As you trudge,
As dry as a bone,
When you return.

Love,

Is not what the hand gifts,
Natural,
That the heart feels.

Love,
Is not glitter,
Natural,
That flows like the cow milk,

Love,
Is not what the mind thinks,
What it feels,
Blanket,
That envelops the dancing heart.

Love,
Is not a fake gold,
Genuine,
Drinks,
By the thirsty heart.

What is love?

While to some readers this poem has defined what love is and what it is not, others may contrarily argue that it has not, for which reason it ends with the rhetorical question that constitutes its title. This unveils its complex and contradictory disposition. Richard Garlikov shares an analogous view, so, in *The Meaning of Love* he writes "...the concept of love is more complex than most people think and that it needs to be analysed and understood at a deeper level". To display the complexity of love, Richard Garlikov in *The Meaning of Love* cites a survey of college students reported in J. Richard Udry's *The Social Context of Marriage* (1966) that:

40% believed that love was a feeling or kind of attraction and said things like: "Love represents a magnetic attraction between two persons". Love is a feeling of high emotional affliction...which sends a person's ego to dizzying highs". Love is the emotional feeling two people receive when they both have sexual and platonic in the proper proportions". Still another 20% love had more to do with companionship and compatibility and they said things like: "Love is the end result of mature union of two compatible personalities." "Love is helping the other person whenever he needs it...being his companion". "Love is doing thing together and liking it". Still another 20% thought

of love in terms of giving: “Love is giving time, understanding yourself”. “Love is to give oneself to another. “Love is giving trust”. “Love is a give and take relationship” 17% responded they thought of love in terms of security: “Love is having security in being wanted and knowing you have someone to rely on”. When a person is in love, the world is right and a person has security. Finally, 3% look at love in terms of efficiency, practicality, or roles: “Love for the girl is cooking for him, washing his clothes and keeping the home in order. For the man is providing security, safety and helping his wife. “Love to me is faithfulness to my mate and caring for our children” (26-27).

On the other hand, Richard Garlikov provides the problems that are likely to arise when we think of love in any of the categories above mentioned:

If love were the kind of feeling mentioned then, how long should it last, how intense should it be, and how frequently should it occur? If the feeling someday goes away, never or rarely to return, was it really love? If infatuation is also that kind of feeling how can one tell the difference between love and infatuation? If love is a feeling and we have little control over sense could there be in promising eternal love, long lasting love, or even love through tomorrow? That would seem more a prediction, than a promise. If you have to wait to see how long and/or under what conditions before you can honestly tell someone you love them? If love is a kind of compatibility mentioned, then it would seem that all friends were lovers, that people at work who got along well together and helped each other pursue common ends, etc were lovers, and that, in general, there is little difference between good friendship and love. Further, it would mean two people could not be in love if they had different goals or joys, even they might get along perfectly well together and have great fondness for each other. I am not sure what is even meant by physical and mental compatibility. Cannot big people love smaller people; bright people; less bright people; intellectuals love athletes; and vice-versa. And if by physical compatibility is meant sexual compatibility, then aren't there million of potential lovers for any normal person, since I doubt there is that much sexual incompatibility in the world. “Love giving is a popular theme- many sermons in church find this a fond message, usually coupled with some prescription that each person should give 10% or that in most marriages it is 60/40 (then everyone believes they are the one's giving 60% and giving 40%). Security: being in love certainly does not make the world all right or make all your troubles disappear; just think of loving when one is incurably ill, or think of loving under war conditions or bad economic conditions were

it is difficult even to get food or safe shelter. There are many situations in which loved ones are powerless to help one another, and the ability to help a loved one in a trouble often causes more distress or agony than does the inability to help a stranger. Love certainly does not always bring peace of mind or security (28-29).

Indeed it doesn't. In *The Rules of Love* Richard Templar, argues that "love between people almost always has its complications- because people are complicated. Love can be tried and tested and stretched to its limits. Sometimes we love the wrong person. We can love too much, or not enough. We can feel it but not know how to show it- or be unsure if we've found it or not. And sometimes we think it's still there, but we can feel it ebbing away and not knowing how to restore it to its full glory" (11). Furthermore, the 100 rules of love Templar provides and which he has compartmentalised into six prime sub-headings spell out the veracity and the intricacies associated with it. These encompass: "rules for finding love", "rules of relationships", "rules of parting", "rules of family", and "rules of friendship".

Love-Rape

In my own standpoint, love-rape can be defined as an act of wounding a woman's feeling which she has for someone by another man, who uses the efficacy of his wealth to force her indigent parents to trade her love with his opulence, and who in turn brazenly resorts to marrying her off to him with or without her consent. At times the parents may consult the young lady and even if she repudiates their wish, they would not reverse their poverty-induced and self-centred decision. Consequently, the inner and the inexplicable melancholy, as well as, the psychological distress the lady has severely suffered and in some instances impelling her to run away or to commit a suicide amounts to raping her original love for her chosen heart.

Love-Rape as a Patriarchal Mode

The English term patriarchy is derived from the Greek word *patria* which means a father and *arche* which denotes rule. The New edition of the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (2009) defines patriarchy as either "a social system in which men have all the power, or a social system in which the oldest man rules his family and passes power and possessions to his sons" (1277). According to Edgar and Sedgwick "the term patriarchy literally means the rule of the father. It has been adopted by the majority of feminist theorists to refer to the way in which societies are structured through male domination over, and oppression of, women"(269). Patriarchy therefore refers to the ways in which material and symbolic resources (including income, wealth and power) are unequally distributed between men and women, through such social institutions as the family, sexuality, the state, the economy, culture and language. In a parallel view, the *New Age Encyclopaedia* volume P argues that patriarchy is a domination of society by males. It expounds further that the anthropologist of the 19th century believed that a stage of matriarchy (domination

by women) evolved into patriarchy. As men began to desire control of their children and of property they wrested political power from the women, instituted the reckoning of descent and inheritance through the male line, established patrilocal residence and took over control of the women and children. It concludes that many societies have legends of such transition in their mythology, but there is no evidence of any actual stage of matriarchy in gender history (122). Quoting Alexander and Welzel (2011) Walby defines patriarchy as the “systematic subordination of women to men” (227). This subordination they argue has structural and cultural facets. The structural facet is evident in organizational patterns that enforce female subordination. The cultural facet is manifest in values that legitimize female subordination”. For Kandiyoti. “Radical Feminists were the first to initiate a fairly liberal usage of the term patriarchy to almost any form or instance of male dominance” (24).

However, Edgar and Sedgwick argue that “the reduction of patriarchy to biological invariants, such as the roles of women and men in child-birth and nurturing, suggests that patriarchy is an essential and unchangeable natural relationship. In the Feminist perspective, patriarchy is ‘at least, the cultural interpretation of those natural relationships if not wholly cultural’” (270). What is more ‘psychoanalytical theories they argue further may associate patriarchy in the early socialisation of the child (and especially the break of the child from the mother at the oedipal stage). Feminist responses to Lacanian psychoanalysis, from Krestiva to Cixous, are significant in seeing dominant culture, language and reason as inherently patriarchal. They therefore seek to recover a pre-patriarchal stage, expressed in *écriture féminine*, through which woman can articulate to themselves outside the distortions of male language. They conclude that the relationship of patriarchy to other forms of oppression, such as class and race receives diverse theorisation. Questions include that of the primacy or otherwise of patriarchy over other forms of domination may interact and reinforce each other. Thus socialist feminists have typically sought to link patriarchy to class exploitation. The significance of race and ethnicity cannot be over-emphasised as it indicates the potential flaw in all-encompassing theory of patriarchy which remains indifferent to divisions between women. The exploitation and domination of all women is not alike, and women cannot be theorised as a single homogenous group (270-71).

The Genesis of Women Subordination

Lerner argues that the traditionalists hold the view that biological factors are the causes of men’s dominance over women. These encompass men’s greater physical strength, their ability to run faster and lift heavier weights and their greater aggressiveness paved their way to becoming hunters. Consequently, they became the breadwinners of their tribes and were more highly valued and honoured than women (17). The skills they derived from their hunting escapade prepared them to become warriors. For Lerner, ‘man-the-hunter, superior in strength, ability, and the experience derived from using tools and weapons “naturally” protects and defends the more vulnerable female, whose biological equipment destines her for motherhood and nurturance.’ The most

fascinating thing about this view for Lerner, is that ‘from the Stone Age to the present, the sexual division of labour based on man’s natural “superiority” is a given and therefore as valid today as it was in the primitive beginning of human society.’ This theory Lerner expounds a little more is ‘the most popular version of the traditionalists’ argument and has had a powerful supremacy’ which has affected the ‘feminists theoreticians like Simon de Beauvoir. Beauvoir concurs that man’s “transcendence” was derived from hunting and warfare and the use of tools necessary for these pursuits’ (17). To this end, love-rape is a patriarchal mode that bears a double man’s supremacy over a woman: as men of substance purchase the love of a young girl or a lady that she has for another man from her penniless father or parents, who force/forces her to marry the man she has zilch feelings for. With the wounded feelings (love-rape), the young girl/lady would adhere to her father’s/parents’ wish to live with a husband she does not love and who in turn deems her as a purchased commodity he posses and hence, whom he would control as driver would a bus or an explorer would a compass.

Love-Rape in *I’d Rather Die*

With the rise of reader-response approach to literary studies, Ann B. Dobie, writes “literary criticism turns its spotlight on the reader, without whose attentions and reactions the text would be inert and meaningless. In one sense, the work would not exist at all. It would be like the proverbial tree that falls because there is nobody there to bear it”. (129) *I’d Rather Die* exists, the reader has not let it fallen and his silent dialogue with this textual world has filled in the invisible gaps left behind by the authorial presence, what Wolfgang Iser calls the “poles of indeterminacy” - the rape-love discourse. *I’d Rather Die* is a patriarchal world, where the men are the “head of states” and the women are their “ministers”. For the former, the time-honoured culture has bequeathed to them a ruling prowess or supremacy over the latter, whom they deem as mediocre sex, and must equally be appendage to them, so long as they want stand firm and attain lively prosperity. Mallam Umar, Alhaji Maikudi and the young Mohammed are the stereotypes of these men.

Mallam Umar, like most Hausa men, was not the type who would apologize when he’d done something wrong, especially to his wife who would but agree with almost everything he said (11).

Similarly,

“I don’t think that is any of your business since I didn’t go out of the house”, she said frowning at him.
No one ever talked to him as stubbornly as his new bride. He would very much like to beat the hell out of her if only she had given him what he wanted (65).

Furthermore:

Now, Alhaji was not as foolish as his bride had thought. Whenever He was in a frustrated mood when she refused him- he would go and Make special arrangement with any of the girls he knew, and at times Even prostitutes. The girl would then come to Alhaji's house, go through His car garage and into his guest room where she would meet the boss (68).

Equally significant,

It was at that moment when they were strolling to the pavilion that Mohammed realized one hidden fact. He had never been serious with any woman before. In fact he never really liked any of the women he had had affairs with except for concupiscence and temporary sexual gratification. It was high time he changed. He made up his mind to tell his friends (30)

In this world, while Mallam Umar subordinates Amina his better-half, who does not only succumbs to his presence as constable army would to a Captain, but she also behaves to him as slave would to his/her master. Alhaji Maikudi is a chauvinist whose ill-treatment of women is so severe that he strikes them as master whips his/her slaves. What is more, for this aged traditionalist, women are mere sexual machines, whom he generously treats at the moment he needs them and when their usefulness end the early generous treatment turns ungenerous. The young and the early (not the later) Muhammad deemed women as a "pleasurable kingdom", which he visited at his leisurely moment to satiate his sexual urge. In *Theorizing Patriarchy*, Sylvia Walby argues that patriarchy is a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women" (20). Be that as it may, love-rape is the dominant patriarchal mode in this new textual world, and Alhaji Maikudi, who is at the centre of this patriarchal game is the love rapist.

This we swiftly decipher as we first meet him, shortly after marrying his fourth wife Zainab, a seventeen-year old young girl. She has become his latest wife, following the divorcing of her predecessor and whose room she now occupies. Alhaji Maikudi's unbridled divorcing and re-marrying a new wife is not barely opulence-induced out of his believe that in his status that this would have him "complete and respectful image of a good Alhaji in the society by having four wives" (65), rather his vehement predilection for a male heir apparent, whom would grow up and runs his businesses should he give up the ghost: "to have a son who would carry on with his business after he was dead" (65). This male gender-bias heir apparent in preference to a female,

which is culturally and patriarchally-induced have revealed not only Maikudi's patriarchal or chauvinist character, but it has also impelled him to turn marriage into a new apparel, which he euphorically wears and dejectedly takes out whenever it becomes worn out. The end result is that he becomes a love-rapist that tears love euphoric hearts apart, making them tearful on the one hand and melancholic on the other. Simone de' Beauvoir writes "marriage is not only an honourable carrier and one less tiring than many others. It alone permits a woman to keep her social dignity intact at the same time to find sexual fulfilment" (327) but not to the women whom Alhaji Maikudi has raped their love.

How he has wedded Zainab his new, young bride, whom we meet shortly after we have met him is an indisputable testimony. The young lady's initial marital ambition of getting married to a young man she loved was shattered as soon as Alhaji Maikudi's salacious eyes tracked her : "but she that wanted to be married to a young boy she loved but was given to a sixty-year old man, old enough to be her grandfather whom she loathed." (64). The raison d'être for her abhorrence at her aged husband soon becomes crystal clear to us. Zainab's love for the young man she hoped to be her potential husband was traded by her penniless parents to Alhaji Maikudi in exchange for his wealth:

Zainab, his new bride, was bought-almost literally. He had met her only three months ago and decided to make her his fourth wife. She was barely seventeen years old. Twenty years younger than his first wife! The moment he first set eyes on her, he decided she was going to be his fourth wife. On Zainab's part, however, it was hate at first sight. She had never thought of liking him, let alone loving him and even marrying him. And it was obvious she never would. Not really any way (63).

Yet, her concurrence with her parental resolution to marry her off to the man she detests, as opposed to the young man she dearly loves, and which the young Zainab acknowledges out of her parental obedience, whom she deeply fears translates the resonance of the trio patriarchy of the father, (for even as a spinster whose parents in consonance with Islamic precepts have the prerogative to marry her off to a husband of their choice should respect her opinion if she detests their choice for the marriage to last forever more) husband, and wealth. According to Simone de Beauvoir, to be feminine is to appear weak, futile, docile as Zainab has exemplified. This patriarchal attitude and character unequivocally denotes how Alhaji Maikudi married the other three wives whom are older than Zainab, raping their love, which they naturally gave elsewhere, thereby trading it in place of money with her parents. He believes in his newfound theory that wealth can make anything possible, including purchasing love which the buyer could therefore own or possess. "Alhaji Maikudi was used to getting what he wanted when he wanted it. The money was there" (64). For him, money can cause or create love where it doesn't naturally exist.

Moreover, it is the raping of Fatimah's love, a young lady of impeccable manners and emulative character that demonstrates the enormity of Alhaji Maikudi's malevolent love-rape disposition and which in the long run leads to his tragic downfall. Disallowed to proceed with her education following the compilation of her secondary school by her parsimonious and patriarchal father, Malam Umar, a primary school teacher, Fatimah has been in love with Muhammed, a young man, who on coming across this well-mannered and innocent young girl, he concluded that he has discovered a potential wife. As he discloses to his friends in their ritual friendship conversation when Abdul teases him that "this one is a decent girl" (29) not a prostitute as they presumed. On the first day he meets Fatimah what Mohammed tells the young girl unveils how her differential character has tempted him to her:

Today is not the first day I've seen you. To be sincere, I have been seeing you for quite a long time. To be sincere, I have been seeing you for quite a long time about six months or so and since then I have been in love with you. It was rather unfortunately I couldn't talk to you then. But I kept telling myself there was no harm in loving someone secretly, was there? After studying your character for so long, I reached the conclusion that if there is any girl I could ever love sincerely and truthfully it's got to be you. I feel relieved now that I have unveiled my heart to you. I would be the happiest man on earth if you you understand my feelings and approve of them and at the same time tellme yours this night (51).

Consequently, he vows to backslide, for from then on, the young man halts the social vices of patronising the prostitutes, alcoholism and smoking; sudden attitudinal changes that have dumbfounded his parents, "Mallam Muhammadu and Hafsatu Mohammed's parents, were surprised at the gradual changes that were overcoming their son. He seldom needed any advice from them. But since the moment he met Fatimah and told them about it, things began to look different" (57). It has transcended his parents, for his friends are flabbergasted either. "Mohammed was no longer interested in prostitutes and even no longer interested in smoking! The tree top bottles in his room were broken and thrown away. His pornographic magazines were destroyed and the dirty pictures were removed from the wall and burnt" (60).

Hence, Alhaji Maikudi's fateful encounter with the seventeen-year old Fatimah on the bus symbolises the destructive premonition that awaits the 18-months peaceful and amiable love relationship that has naturally been existing between this young girl and her boyfriend Mohammed. The restless state this encounter has thrown Alhaji Maikudi and the infatuation of Fatimah that has obsessed him out of his mounting love for a male heir apparent are what have trembled these couples and their affection. To get married to her, one of his four wives must be divorced as the

Islamic precepts dictate and this is tantamount to yet another patriarchal oppression: for whoever is to leave a room for Fatimah to occupy would be forced to leave without any justification. Earlier, Alhaji Maikudi must have raped her love to bring her to a matrimonial home she has detested and to live with a man she deems as a stranger to her life and love. How to rape Fatimah's love is a replication of what he has done to his first three wives, including Zainab the latest bride and hence it is uncomplicated as Alhaji Maikudi sums it up to Hamza, one of his trusted servants and Mohammed's childhood friend, who wants his boss to decipher the truth that the young girl's heart might have been elsewhere:

Money talks you know. It speaks even the language of love. I don't care who she has in mind, provided her father gives the word, and I am sure he will, she would have to consult. From her look, I am sure she's the type who'd rather cut their throat than offend their fathers (76).

On the contrary it isn't all the time that love is successfully traded in exchange for wealth and that she is not the type of such young girls as Alhaji Maikudi presumes. Given the poverty-stricken state of her father, Mallam Umar, he thinks that a quick triumph knocks at his door step as he reveals to Hamza, "I knew Mallam Umar for more than twenty-years now and there is no man who so much wanted money like him. I assure you that the girl would be in this house as my wife within six months" (76). Mallam Umar's money-induced concurrence of Alhaji Maikudi's marital proposal isn't Fatimah's and this symbolises his momentary victory in his Fatimah's love-rape journey. What Mallam Umar's daughter herself observes in her father's latest life seems to have appalled the young lady as what she translates as her father's shameless bid to sale his daughter's love for money, opening the door for Alhaji Maikudi to rape her love. "It had been only three-months and he was already a changed man. A new bicycle, expensive clothes, abundant food stuff, all given to him by Alhaji. He even proposed buying him a car after the marriage had taken place" (92). Thus, Fatimah's conclusions about her father's self-centred intention are not far from the truth ... "her father was greedy, money, luxury and all things in that line were what occupied his mind" (93). Consequently, "what he really wanted she told herself was to sell her. And that she won't allow as long as she could breathe" (93).

Albeit fate disallows Alhaji Maikudi to wed the young lady, who by nature's law does not deserve to be his wife, he does succeed in raping her love in two ways. First, when he tries to avenge Mohammed's disrespectful treatment of him to Fatimah, following his selfish-induced visit to the young man at his parents' residence, to purchase Fatimah's love from him, after he has failed to purchase it from her father, "no one has ever treated me like this. And you that have done it I assure you, you will live to regret it. He went out" (110), Alhaji tells Mouktarr. So, when in connivance with Hamza and Mouktarr Alhaji's duo, trusted confidants and in turn Mohammed's trusted

friends Alhaji succeeds in having Fatimah helpless with her legs tied in his guest house's bed, brought by these two loyalists to rape her; a plan they have subsequently altered by putting the young girl into the true picture of things with a vehement pledge to save her from the trap set to her by Alhaji Maikudi, so as to wound Mohammed as soon as the news gets to him, touching the young girl's body in the intentional and unsuccessful rape attempt has thrown the girl into cobwebs of uncertainties, pain, misery and trepidation all of which amount to love-rape:

Before he could say anything, Alhaji went on bitterly to tell them how Mohammed had treated him. "It is something I won't forgive. Look at the money I squandered on her old man! And imagine that boy, the sole cause of my not getting the girl. If I cannot have her as a wife, then he can't as well. Or if he does, it will be with a difference. He won't get her as a pure woman he was wishing to, except if I die. And that is why I want everything to start and finish today. I would go satisfactorily with the knowledge that that shameless boy has only married the girl after I have finished with her" (119).

Wounding Mohammed's love for Fatimah should Alhaji succeeds is tantamount to raping her love either. The whole drama of tying the young girl, clogging her mouth and lying her on bed for Alhaji resembles the stage Gerder Lerner depicts which puts men-women status asymmetrical:

Men and women live on a stage, on which they act out their assigned roles, equal in importance. The play cannot go on without both kinds of performances. Neither of them "contributes" more or less to the whole: neither is marginal or dispensable. But the stage is set by men. Men have written the play, have directed the show, interpreted the meanings of the action they have assigned themselves the most interesting, most heroic parts, giving women the supporting roles (29)

Mouktarr, Hamza and Alhaji have written the play they have acted hence giving themselves dignified roles and Fatimah the inferior, degrading scandalous and subordinating role, accompanied with an unprecedented humiliation. He hasn't "finished" with Fatimah and this is what has brought about the second way in which he has raped this young girl's love. The plan by Alhaji Maikudi to get Mohammed out of the way through Mouktarr and who has revealed to his friend every bit of it, so that Fatimah will accept Alhaji's marital proposal when he dies and which forces Mohammed to subsequently go into hiding following the dramatisation of his killing by Mouktarr in Alhaji's presence forces the young lady to disappear in her bid to get out of the world as well, on hearing the false news of her boyfriend's death. The inexplicable wound this has caused in Fatimah's psyche, compelling her to get out of her senses and to further attempt to commit the

unsuccessful suicide which Mohammed has saved her from in the long run has raped her love either.

Thus, Fatimah's abrupt resistance against her father's patriarchal-induced self-centredness to sale her love to Alhaji, which has appalled Mallam Umar himself when she said to him: "no I won't marry him father! I won't. I would rather go to any whore house in town to live. Or better still I'd rather die! Anything. But I won't marry him! For the first time since she was a child, Fatimah shouted at her father and even threatened him (91), Zainab's mortification of Alhaji Maikudi when she orders him to take out his clothes to superintend him before she allows him to take her to bed, the succession of slaps Alhaji Maikudi experiences from his four wives when they discover about his plan to rape Fatimah in his guest house which leads to divorcing all of them symbolise the overthrow of the patriarchal system in this textual world and by extension in the 80s. However, for Giwa love-rapist the likes of Alhaji Maikudi ought not to go scot-free. Consequently, the burning of his shops at Sabon-Gari market shortly after divorcing his wives, a premonition of bankruptcy which beckons at this aged criminal that maddens his senses which further leads to fatal accident in which he loses his life symbolises not only the downfall of a great man, but also a poetic justice so much deserved. Consequently, Giwa, in the words of Charles Nnolim is a "gynandrist", who like his predecessors belongs to the "male writers' camp that champions the female cause" (138) in *I'd Rather Die*. True to Wolfgang Iser who In "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach" argues that it is the reader's unvoiced dialogue with the text that "causes the literary work to unfold its inherently dynamic character" (212) as it indeed has in *I'd Rather Die*.

CONCLUSION

So, rape as a social crime is unrestricted to the female body (though a man could also be raped); it transcends it instead. It could be of hope, of strength, of diligence, of courage, of life, of power, of love for instance. Where wound and blood physically appear in the body rape, in these cases, particularly of love, the wound and the blood that oozes from it are invisible. They reside in the mind, troubling the raped as chronic ulcer torments an ulcerous patient. This could throw the love-rape victim into varying degrees of inestimable and immeasurable depressions. She could instantly faint to be found in a horrible and interminable coma state, or to increasingly emaciate, or become lunatic or mad, or to commit suicide or be knocked down by an on-coming vehicle. Our heroine, Fatimah, "the little one" is a lucid example. Finally, this could in some rare cases causes a long-lasting frightful effect in the surviving mind, as does the dramatic form tragedy, theorised by the Plato of antiquity. Iser, is right that "the significance of the work then does not lie in the meaning sealed within the text, but in fact that brings out what had been sealed within us" (130).

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