

TITLE PAGE

**REFLECTING THE TIMES: A JOURNEY OF SELF-DISCOVERY
IN SEFI ATTA'S EVERYTHING GOOD WILL COME**

BY

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this research work was been supervised and approved for the award of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts(B.A. Literature) in the Department of Modern European Languages and Linguistics, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto.

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DEDICATION

In loving memory of my father. To my family, may this be the beginning of something wonderful.

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ABSTRACT

This research work presents A Journey of Self-Discovery reflecting the times of Sefi Atta's novel Everything Good Will Come. It has examined the growing up of a child from adolescence to adulthood. This research is subjected to textual analysis, using post-colonial paradigm as the framework with a view to highlighting the enduring need for female self-discovery and individuality in neocolonial Nigeria.

This research work also examines the socio-economic and political landscape of Nigeria and how it affects the psychology of the woman. The research work submits that the woman cannot continue in the space defined for her by the society, she must fight for her space both in the home and in the larger society.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Literature as a creative activity projects those deeply ingrained and relatively enduring patterns of thought, feeling and behavior of the society from which it is drawn. Apparently, literature captures the diverse forms of interaction between various parts of a society and its people. Mary Kolawole (2005:9) corroborates this assertion, as she suggests that literature is not only an imitation of life, but also a concept which derives from certain sustainable principles. The varying emphasis on social art, therefore, make literature of great Importance, as it transcend mere entertainment to expose the significant moral and social views of the writer and of his environment which form the nexus for his art. Alberto in Demeterio (2001) also suggests that:

Literature is a social institution: it is created by the writer, who is a member of the society. Its medium is language, which is a social reality. It is addressed to men who form a social body. It is centrally conditioned by social and other forces and in turn, exerts social influence (p.11).

African literature constantly reflect an attempt at narrating the African experience, the struggles associated with imperialism and its reliefs of denigration and oppression which seem to remain visible features of post-independence Africa. This accounts for the African writer's attempt at foregrounding the tension that exists within the shores of Africa, with the aim of asserting the African nation above all forms and conventions of imperialism and neo-colonialism. As it were, the African continent seems to stand at the cross road as it negotiates self- redefinition against subtle forms of imperialism while grappling with new forms of subjugation perpetuated within the nation of Africans. Regrettably, the attainment of independence has not automatically portended the realization of the cherished dreams of freedom, responsibility of self-government, socio-political and economic satisfaction. Kehinde and Mbipom (2011:62). A new reality however unfolds, maimed by anarchy, chaos, coups, disillusionment, injustice, betrayal, poverty, social unrest, hunger, oppression, corruption and war.

The African writer and his craft predictably continue to rise to the challenge of remaining committed to his community in the race of diverse

socio-political instability and the contending trend of modernization. In crafting an art which is relevant, the African writer not only probes, but also responds to the yearning of his environment. Specifically, contemporary Nigerian prose fiction continues to witness a tremendous emergence of literary works marked by diverse degrees of creative innovation and experimentation. Kehinde and Mbipom(2011:63). However, remarkable in the development of this genre is the creative effort of migrant Nigerian prose fiction writers (Nigerian writers in Diaspora) who project commitment and responsiveness to the socio-political and socio-economic realities of their Motherland through their works. There seems to be a conscious awakening of the Nigerian writer's, even in the Diaspora, to their responsibility as the conscience of their society.

This study examines Sefi Atta as an example, to illustrate the contributions of migrant novelist. Sefi Atta's novel displays certain ideological persuasions which express certain socio-political and gender commitment; it could also be described as reflecting self-realization, women-centered and nation-centered in its thematic pre-occupations. These ideological persuasions, as it were, not only project the critical perspective

from which Atta writes, but also highlight the issues she fictionalizes as socio-political and socio-economical realities and germane to the contemporary Nigerian society which she narrates from the Diaspora. This is in accordance with Boehmer's (1995:233) assertion that:

In the 1990's the generic postcolonial writer is more likely to be a cultural traveler, or an "extra-territorial"; than a national. Ex-colonial by birth, "Third world" in cultural interest, cosmopolitan in almost every other way, he or she works within the precinct of the western metropolis, while at the same time retaining thematic and/or political connection with a national background.

1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

This research is set to examine the motif of self-discovery reflecting the times in the novel of Sefi Atta in particular to appreciate her patriotic and nationalistic quest to address challenges that face migrant novelist.

1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this research is to look upon the prevalent condition that plagued the people especially the Nigerian woman during a post-colonial Nigeria experience as narrated by Enitan, the protagonist, who

realizes the marginalization of women in Atta's Everything Good Will Come as they journey through different phases of self-discovery.

The objectives are to explore the various technique used by Sefi Atta to make statement on self-discovery today, and highlight the significance of such revelations on the plight of modern African woman.

1.4 SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

In this research, scope of study shall be on the theme of self-discovery during the post-independence period in Nigeria as portrayed in Sefi Atta's Everything Good Will Come. The novel is chosen because of its significance in the history and development of Nigeria. The study is centrally limited to assessing the thematic postulations of the novelist.

1.5 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

Many critical works have explored the motif of self-discovery in pre and post colonial Nigeria.

This study is different from the works that have been done before because it will bring a comparative analysis on the motif of self-discovery of the characters in Atta's Everything Good Will Come, most especially the women folks, and their different attempts in the modern era, viewed to redeem the degraded image of Nigerian woman. Therefore, this study is meant to contribute knowledge as it highlights the new shade of meaning to self-discovery in a modern Nigerian novel.

1.6 METHODOLOGY

The research is basically conducted under library review. The materials here are gathered from internet sources, library reviews, and critical content analysis of the text. The multifaceted approach affords the researcher a more balanced viewpoint on the subject under review.

1.7 BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF THE AUTHOR

Sefi Atta was born in Lagos in 1964, and has had most of her education in the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. Although a Chartered Accountant, She is also a graduate of Creative

Writing Programme at the Antioch University, Los Angeles. Her short stories have appeared in journals including Los Angeles Review and Mississippi Review; they have won prizes from Zoetrope and Red Hen Press. Her radio plays have been broadcast by the British Broadcasting Corporation. She is the winner of PEN international's 2004/2005 David TK Wong prize, and in 2006, her debut novel Everything Good Will Come, was awarded the inaugural Wole Soyinka Prize for literature in Africa.

Sefi Atta lives in Mississippi with her husband, Gboyega Ranson-Kuti. Her works include A Bit of Difference (2013) Swallow (2010) Everything Good Will Come (2006). She also has a published collection of short stories entitled Lawless (2007).

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 INTRODUCTION

It is extremely difficult to be a woman in the twenty-first century. Women around the world are facing the dilemma of identity. Many women are struggling to discover who they are and where they stand today in the family, the community and the world. At the same time that women's personal expectations and roles are changing in some nations, many men around the world still have their own opinions about the place of women and want to impose certain standards of behavior on them. Other men are uncertain about the place of the woman's role and function, and therefore they offer little support to women who are struggling with questions of identity, Munroe (2014:9). A distinct pattern emerges of the young girl child/woman character developing into a matured, strong womanist. As female characters challenge their familial relationships, they develop their sense of personhood, reclaiming wholeness, authority and female subjectivity, changing prescribed roles and structures.

*The butterfly[...] is colorful, beautiful, flies from
Flower to flower[...] they begin life as a maggot
[...] gradually they change, little by little, day by
day. Until one day, kpam, ugly maggot has changed
Into a butterfly.*

Ogo Akube Ogbata, Egg-Larva-pupa- woman

The works of third-generation Nigerian women writers Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Unoma Azuah, Sefi Atta, and Sade Adeniran reconstruct previous notion of women in stereotypical and subjugated positions, charting the growth of female characters and the ways in which female protagonist emerge into agency and independence. Their writings provide a portrait of emerging Nigerian women that are educated, career oriented and strong willed, while being wives, mothers and daughters, a combination that replaces the idea of domesticity that has long governed the construction of women in Nigerian literature. Third-generation Nigerian female characters capture the image from female characters in the first and second generation of Nigerian women's writings. "Their female metamorphosis and self-discovery begin from adolescence, marking a shift from earlier representation of female characters", Nadaswaran (2001:19).

This chapter will analyze works of third-generation Nigeria women writers and the ways in which young female characters empower themselves through their journey of self-discovery and how they grow into independent, spirited and self-assertive women. It will also examine the challenges of post-independence Nigeria female characters face, the process of empowerment and growth they experience from an adolescent age and also address the effects of colonial rule transmitted to post-independent Nigeria, demonstrating the female character's refusal to accept ideas of physical aggression and intellectual domination who forge ahead to build an individual identity for themselves.

2.1 DEFINITION OF LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review is a text of a scholarly paper, which includes the current knowledge including substantive findings, as well as theoretical and methodological contributions to a particular topic. Literature reviews use secondary sources, and do not report new or original experimental work.

Most often associated with academic-oriented literature, such as a thesis, dissertation or a peer-reviewed journal article, a literature review usually precedes the methodology and results section although this is not

always the case. Literature reviews main goals are to situate the current study within the body of literature and to provide context for the particular reader. Literature reviews are a basis for research in nearly every academic field.

TYPES

A systematic review is a literature review focused on a research question, trying to identify, appraise, select and synthesize all high quality research evidence and arguments relevant to the question.

A meta analysis is typically a systematic review using statistical methods to effectively combine the data used on all selected studies to produce a more reliable result.

2.2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON THE NOVEL

After the definition of literature review, lets look at what writers have said about the text Everything Good Will Come. “A beautifully paced stroll in the shoes of a woman growing up in a country struggling to find its post-independence identity.... Everything Good Will Come depicts the struggle women face in a conservative society. This is convincing, more

remarkable is what the novel has to say about the need to speak out when all around is falling apart"... Times Literary supplement, UK. "An original, witty, coming of age tale: Tom Sawyer meets Jane Eyre, with Nigerian girls.... You can feel the dust and sun. This is award winning novel is an iridescent introduction to a fascinating nation"- Observer Magazine, UK. "Again and again Atta's writings tugs at the heart, at the conscience. At the same time, reflecting the resilience of the Lagosians whose lives she explores, humor is almost constant, effervescent, most often with a satirical twist."-Sunday Independent, South Africa. "This lively first novel breaks new ground with a close-up, honest story of a contemporary yoruba woman's coming of age in Lagos. Never reverential, Enitan's first person reveals the dynamic diversity within the city, the difference across class, generation, gender, faith, language, tradition, and individual character. Difference, yes, but sometimes connections, too."- Booklist. "Sefi Atta's first person novel has the nerve to redefine existing traditions of African story telling. It confronts the familiar persons of a city and a country with unusual insights and a lyrical power pointing our literature to truly greater heights." Odia Ofeimun. Everything Good Will Come is like listening to an

old friend recounting and bringing up to date and to life happenings in our beloved Lagos. I was sorry when I came to the end.” Buchi Emecheta. “What is beyond doubt is that Sefi writes brilliantly with instantly infectious wit.” Bashorun JK Randle. “There is a wit, intelligence and delicious inference in this book. But it is Sefi Atta’s courage in choosing to look at her fictional world through fiercely feminist lenses that I most admired.”- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. “This is a courageous story about friendship and self-discovery. It is a rallying cry to women to speak out in a world that tries to muzzle them.”- Helon Habila. “ An affirmation of faith in one’s capacity, especially female and national, for self-realization.” Tanure Ojaide.

2.3 THEME OF SELF-DISCOVERY AND NEW TIMES IN OTHER TEXTS

Historically, women are not new to the history of struggles in Nigeria. Well documented in Nigerian history are the enigmatic amazons who fought tirelessly, alongside the men. In the 1950’s and 1960’s for Nigeria’s independence. Mrs. Margaret Ekpo, Mrs.Fumilayo Ransome-Kuti, Hady Yinka Abayomi, Hajiya Sawaba and Chief Mrs. Janet Mokelu

were among the fearless women who struggled relentlessly to reshape the Nigerian history. Western colonization, unfortunately, had very little or no respect for women. For instance, when missionaries established the formal educational system in Africa, they did so by infusing some patriarchal ideologies into the educational system, one of which is the belief that boys, rather than girls would benefit more from the school system. For years, women's history became that of docility and sheer domesticity. Consequently, young girl's were to stay at home to practice and perfect their domestic skills which include how to behave as appropriate housewives who knew how to sew, cook and maintain proper hygiene. The boys, on the other hand, were taught how to read and write. This ushered in the first gender gap between boys and girls that has apparently persisted over the years, particularly in Africa.

In Nigeria, the story of the woman is basically that of a second class citizen. Gender bias supports and reinforce the notion that women are weaklings who can be treated violently. Adichie, in her novel, identified and confronts various sources of oppression. For example, Beatrice and Olanna in Purple Hibiscus and Half of A Yellow Sun have respectively

found out in stupefaction, that women are more abused and more reviled in the sanctuary of their own home and by the people they love most. And so, in the face of polygamy, marital incompatibility and extremely harsh patriarchal laws and conditions which can leave women totally devastated and even debilitated for life. The protagonists of Adichie's novels have taken charge of their lives.

Adichie novels are populated by psychopath, rapist, religious fanatics and ruthless rulers: all of whom terrorize women, Azuike(2009:82). She, therefore, uses her novel, as instruments of self-discovery and of healing of the abused women in Nigeria who may have undergone some traumatic experiences in their marriage. Eugene, Kambali's father in Purple Hibiscus batters his wife, and uses other violent means to correct his family. This weird behavior has therefore caused Kambali, her brother Jaja and their mother Beatrice both physical and psychological destruction.

“he started to kick me. The metal on his slippers stung like bites, from giant mosquitoes. He talked non stop, out of control, in a mix of igbo and English, like sot meat and thorny bones. Godlessness. Heathen worship. Hellfire. The kicking increased in tempo and.... I curled around myself tighter around the

*the pieces of painting... kicking. Kicking. Kicking... more slaps.
A salty wetness warmed my mouth. I closed my eyes and slipped
Away into quite.(210-11).*

Eugene is a tyrant who rules his home with draconian measure, Living under him is itself a big struggle fraught with the danger of “loosing vital body parts”, members of his household are petrified of him that “laughter never rings out in their home” the children are equally dumbfounded by their father’s hardheartedness. They go through each day extremely careful not to agitate him; for fear of the dire consequences their actions might attract. Azuike(2009:83). For example:

*[Eugene] took him upstairs and locked the door. Jaja, in tears
Come out supporting his left hand with his right, and papa
Drove him to st. Agnes Hospital..... later, Jaja told me that
Papa had avoided his right hand because it is the hand he
writes with (145)*

The children’s lives assume a positive dimension when they go to spend their holidays with their aunt, Ifeoma, and her children in Nsukka. Like Eugene her brother, Ifeoma is a Catholic, but she does not embrace a “fanatic brand of Catholicism”. She allows her children to live in freedom

and corrects them subtly when they go wrong. Ultimately, Kambali's and Jaja's stay in Nsukka plays a significant role in their self-discovery and journey to freedom. Apart from the much they learn from aunty Ifeoma and her children, they also learn a lot from their aunt's family friend, father Amadi, this young priest believes in a form of Catholicism that is liberating and life affirming rather than the oppressive and conservative one held by Kambali's father, and his lifestyle effects some positive changes in Kambali's and Jaja. Osunbade (2013:145). As Kambali slowly begins to rediscover her voice as well as desire freedom from her father's control, her independence in making her own choices, in her love for father Amadi, "I no longer wonder if I have a right to love father Amadi,; I simply go ahead and love him[....] I have not told Jaja that I offer mass for papa every Sunday" (Adichie303-6). Kambali has develop into a young woman who has learned to tap into the fullness of her emotional flexibility and feminine strength.

Purple Hibiscus concludes on a redemptive note with Kambali deciding"[.....] I'll plant ixora so we can suck the juices of the flowers" I am laughing[...] above, clouds, like dyed cotton wool hand low, so low I

feel I can reach out and squeeze the moisture from them the new rain will come down and soon. Adichie(307).

In the story, "The Girl Who Can", Aidoo presented the woman symbolically as a little child who is never to be taken seriously. And was never encouraged to air her views and thought. Muhammed (2014:212). If she attempted to, she was asked "never, never, but never to repeat that (38) or she would be laughed at. So her words, thoughts and actions are ridiculed rather than taken seriously. Her physical appearance is also ridiculed; such as her legs which should "...have meat on them with good calves.... To support solid hips "because, a woman must have solid hips to be able to have children".(29). In essence, everything about a woman should be good for childbearing. Education was also not regarded as a necessity for the girl child because "... It would be waste of time," (31) as she was supposed to end up in her husband's house doubling as a wife and mother. But when eventually allowed to attend school and to the surprise of "Nana" her grandmother, her "thin legs" were discovered to be useful "...that even though some legs don't have much meat on them, to carry

hips.... They can run”(33). She surprisingly turn out to be one of the best athletes in her school.

In “Second Class Citizen” Emecheta used both traditional and western values to explicate the over dominance of husbands over their wives and the second class position which the male dominated world has given to women. The belief that it is only a male child that is expected to have a formal and sound education is contrary to the modern belief. A woman without a male child is despised by the African society because girls are regarded as inferior to boys. Adah who is a girl and the main character in the novel is introduced this way:

She was not even quite sure that she was exactly eight because, you see, she was a girl who arrived when everyone was expecting and predicting a boy. So since she was a disappointment to her tribe, nobody thought of recording her birth she was insignificant, (7).

But Adah is a determined girl who is determined to be someone in life. She started struggling right from the time she was in primary school, she knows what she wants and worked towards it with determination and courage.

Francis and Adah represent the two sides of the coin, Francis the oppressive patriarchy, and Adah the dehumanized female. However, Adah refuses to be confined to nothingness, she becomes a dominant, vibrant and automatic individual. As Oko puts it “ Adah rejects castration as the proper mode of female existence”(230). Adah shows that “a woman needs a degree of autonomy and cannot be a man’s prey even in the interest of social cohesion” Oko,(2005:231).

We can also see in the “Joys of Motherhood” the importance bestowed upon the male folk when Nnu Ego and Adaku had misunderstanding and Adaku was being cautioned by Nwakusor. He says;

Don’t you know that according to the custom and traditions of our people, Adaku, the daughter of whoever you are, are committing an unforgivable sin? Nwakusor reminded her. ” Our life starts in immortality and ends in immortality. If Nnaife had been married only to you, you could have ended his life on this round of his visiting earth. I know you have children but they are girls, who in few years time will go and help another man’s immortality. The only woman who is immortalizing your husband you make unhappy with your fine clothes and lucrative business,(166)

Adaku was blamed even though she was right Nnu Ego was regarded right as a result of the fact that she could bear male children for Nnaife. But Adaku says “ enough is enough to chauvinism”(170). She left, and decided

to be independent and never depend on man. She left to be a dignified woman by working hard to educate her daughters.

In Mariama Ba's "So Long a Letter", she advocates urgent consideration of Africa life. Thus, consideration is essentially founded on the social construct of the relationship between man and woman. Indeed, there is an unequal power in the male female relationship; this discriminating power is what is in the novel. A form of male domination coming from society's construction of patriarchy.

Aissatou, rejects this notion and chooses her own life. Aissatou reacted to her husband's decision to marry another wife by leaving him. She choose to make a break, a one way journey with her sons, leaving a letter for her husband on the bed that used to be theirs:

And you left. You had the surprising courage to take your Life into your own hands. You rented a house and set up home there. And instead of looking backwards, you Looked resolutely to the future. You set yourself a difficult task, and more than just my presence and encouragement, books saved you. Having become your refuge, they sustained you(32).

With education and employment, Aissatou economic position improves greatly.

The face of the new woman in Zaynab Alkali's "The Descendant" is of importance here. Her views on the woman's plight as well as her fight for freedom and definite meaningful identity appear very startling and important, more so, as Alkali's consciousness raising feature as the source of power for the woman.

This feature of the "new woman" partially rest on an observed change in the artistic portrayal of the female characters within the existing larger debate on the woman question which tends to present the audience with more blunt or brutish women who could sometimes exhibit indecency and may equally lack integrity. And on a positive, it tends to present her encounter with radical forces of opposition on her way to self-development and the thirst for economic and socio-political recognition/discovery..... the artists changing perception of the woman has clearly assumed new dimensions of power and radicalism lately. It is not fair to fail to identify the initial brilliance of Li in the "The Stillborn", there is however this new zeal and courage exhibited in the woman's character which gets much

clearer in "The Descendant"; she is now a dazzling figure of brilliant light of hope from the erstwhile speechless and powerless figure she has always been. She seems to have moved away from the defensive into an independent positive posture. Seifa Karoye observes that:

The image of "the new woman is not stillborn, but a fully formed, independent person that "the Stillborn" presents is inscribed all over with the ascetic ideals of determination and virtue, roles and identity virtue in being able at the same time to forgive and redeem that man or men in her life who cannot, it seems desist from inflicting on her life the most vicious form of oppression and brutality,(47).

In "The Cobwebs and Other Stories" the stories shows the importance of education for women; without it, they blindly submit to marriage and subordination to their husbands. In the title story, Mama Dinar is married to Aliyu, a polygamist. He does not value the education she receives at the university, but the transition from country to city and from wife to student changes her world view: "she now believed in living by one's own standards knowing one's own nature and where one was going, what one wanted in life and being in full control of one's destiny.

The “The Descendant” (2005), divided into two parts. Part 1 introduces Magira Milli, the matriarch of an extended family in the village of Ramta; children are born; stern and immutable, the vicissitude of life has left her as strong as a rock. Wise and well informed, she is determined to give the younger generation a good start in the right direction “she knew education is the master key to opportunities for a better life. Education opens doors and gives an individual an option in life. “She will take the younger ones out of the kind of ignorance and superstitious, a land of poverty and diseases”. Part 2 is the story of Magira Milli’s granddaughter, Seytu. She was a damaged woman, a victim of an early marriage to a village head. But Magira Milli’s prayer for Seytu have been answered, and at thirty-nine she is a physician and a woman of charm and elegance. She has taken control of her life and has separated from her philandering second husband, the distinguished architect Yerima Gamma. Poised, educated and sophisticated, she has much love to offer, and if a man cannot appreciate her, she moves on to one who can. She is a fully realized character who demonstrates that a journey of self –discovery leads to self reliance and self worth, which in turn brings economic independence,

Ugbabe (1998:17). Men are peripheral to the pursuit. To Seytu” the Alkali woman”, who is searching for meaning and significance, torn between the country and the city and enslaved by tradition but yearning for freedom and self-expression, has finally come of age. Ugbabe,(1950:16-17).

In Ola Rotimi’s “Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again” Liza, Lejoka Brown’s Kenyan-born American trained medical doctor wife, is the focal point of women self-discovery. Liza changes the outlook of Sikira who just realized that she’s been married not out of love but to satisfy a man’s caprices. Sikira begins to wear fitting dresses made for her by Liza, packs out from her slave marriage and eventually becomes the flag bearer of the National Liberation Party. Sikira’s campaign slogan “men and women are equal”(76). Sikira cries out to all women “Rise up or forever be slaves”. For mama Rashida; the knowledge gained from Liza about demand and supply and capital, changed the fortune of her chicken trade. This change translates into a change in her outlook to life. She is no longer particular about being just a wife, but is concerned now about being a wife with full potentials for self-fulfillment and independence.

In “Half Of A Yellow Sun”, Olanna and Kainene’s assertiveness speaks volumes of their fearlessness. The young women are seemingly different in their countenance and their temperament but their loyalty to the Biafran cause is unquestionable. They both exude a supreme confidence in themselves and are not perturbed by what lies ahead for them in future. The denouement of the text is, however, catastrophe, Kainene leaves her twin sister “one morning in order to go to “afia attack” to trade across enemy lines”, sadly, she never returns. Olanna is, naturally devastated.

However, Olanna’s traumatic journey through the Nigeria Biafran war is symbolic of the state of Biafra itself: deeply ravished, abandoned, violated and volatile and in need of healing like the Amazon that she is, Olanna strives even harder to deal with her loss, interestingly, she does not buckle under pressure, neither does she give in to “mourning” her sister’s loss. Her image as the beautiful, intelligent, self-willed, resilient and quintessential mother, the nurturer, and above all, the truly independent woman that she is, will remain ingrained. Adichie shows through Olanna that every woman must create her own individuality and, at the same time, be confident with the persons she is. Azuike, (2009:90)

2.4 CONCLUSION

From all of the Reviews, the most fundamental factors militating against the female characters are all tied in one way or another to the cultural and traditional belief of the people, ethnic, socio-economic and political problem ravishing the country with the woman trapped in diverse confining situation.

In these narratives, the heroine often arrive at critical intersections where they must make choices which will propel them toward self-discovery and fulfillment, and the female who must survive will have to arise by herself and reject whatever culture places in the way of her development, self-realization and self-actualization.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the journey of self-discovery reflecting the time of Everything Good Will Come. Sefi Atta occupies a position as a “cultural traveler”, projecting the tensions which ensued from the clash between traditionalism and the different faces and phases of modernization in Nigeria. She gives preferences to the attempt by subverting stifling cultural practices and socio-economic policies which affects women in particular, and all Nigerians in general. Atta achieves this by creating characters that raise issues that are of cultural, social and political interest to any Nigerian, irrespective of geographical location or the émigré status of such an individual.

Therefore the primary motif of Everything Good Will Come reflects Atta’s desire to project the woman as a survivor of the hurdles which characterize post-independence existence, and the worrisome atmosphere in contemporary Nigeria. Her central characters education (formal and informal) and growth therefore function as a veritable launching-pad for surmounting the adversities that she encounters.

The novel reveals an unbroken growth pattern till Enitan comes of age as a self-conscious and assertive woman”. Enitan’s process of growth comes with self-Realization which prompts greater response and reaction to the activities which go on around her. These process motivate her sexuality and individuality” keyinde and mbipom(2011:67).

3.1 ANALYSIS OF STORYLINE/PLOT SUMMARY

Everything Good Will Come by Sefi Atta is a novel that tells the story of Enitan, a young Nigerian woman growing up in her homeland coping with the demands of the patriarchal society and the upheavals that surrounds her. Enitan grew up in a divided home, trying to discover herself in the midst of her mother’s religious beliefs and her father’s manipulative political ways. Being an only child, after the death of her brother, her parents had strict demands that restrain her from having a normal childhood. Her rebellious nature was first seen when she defies her mother’s wishes and leaves the house on a Sunday to play with the girl next door, Sheri, who is called yellow because her father is a black man and her mother a white English woman. Sheri is a young girl who has sassy and rebellious nature. Their friendship builds but they were soon separated,

Enitan is sent to a boarding school different from Sheri's. Enitan's father, a lawyer, hopes that she will take over his firm once she has finished school and prove herself as a lawyer. Sheri and Enitan keep in touch, writing letters back and forth telling about school, boys and when they will meet again.

During one of the long school holiday, Enitan and Sheri meet up and attended a picnic and Sheri was raped at the party. The image of Sheri's rape affects Enitan's ability to trust men, the aftermath of Sheri's rape temporarily terminates their friendship with Enitan being sent to London and Sheri being sent to the hospital due to her attempt to abort her pregnancy with a hanger.

Years passed and Enitan returns to Lagos to stay with her father, work under him and starts her career as a lawyer. She began dating a struggling artist, Mike, and has an emotionally complex but short-lived relationship with him. Enitan runs into Sheri again and reconnects with her. Sheri is a mistress to a Muslim brigadier, who pays for her living and gives Sheri a good life. Sheri believes in playing the system rather than settling down with a man.

Enitan meets and becomes close with a man by the name of Niyi Franco, who is separated from his child who was taken away by his ex-wife when she moved to Britain. This relationship quickly results into a marriage. Enitan at first feels comfortable and safe in Niyi's arms, but their relationship is soon tested when Enitan refuses to submit herself to his demanding ways. After she becomes pregnant, Niyi and Enitan's differences over each other's behavior and her father's outspokenness and subsequent arrest forces her into activism that results in a night in jail. Enitan proceeds to join a group of women in the fight against government for women's right during her pregnancy. Her drive to make change is frowned upon by her husband who wants her to stay at home and take on "women-like" task. Niyi's lack of support for his wife's beliefs, along with her unwillingness to concede to Niyi's requests, leads to their separation. Enitan continues to stand up for what she believes in, wanting women to have the ability to choose whether or not they will be submissive in the society with hopes of individuality.

3.2 ANALYSIS OF SETTING

The text is set in Lagos between 1971-1995 and it covers the experience of the nation (Nigeria). It captures the county's socio-political, domestic crises, Enitan's immediate environment and her life in Diaspora.

The text projects the tension which ensues from clash between traditionalism and the different faces and phases of modernization in Nigeria.

3.3 ANALYSIS OF CHARACTERS AND CHARACTERIZATION

The novel, as a branch of literature, deals with social reality. This means it has its major area of concern the nature of the life of individuals in the society. This is why characters are the life of a novel. In Everything Good Will Come, we have an amazing array of characters, each with his or her own peculiarities, lovable and loveless traits, virtues and vices. Of these, some occupy the foreground of the novel while some rather recede into the background. The most prominent character is Enitan; other major characters are Sheri, Bandele Taiwo, Victoria Arinola. Niyi Franco, Grace Ameh, Mrs. Clara Mukoro and Mike are a few of the minor characters.

ENITAN

Enitan is the main character in the text and everything revolves around her, the only child of her father and the only child of her mother after she lost her younger brother to sickle cell. She met and became friend with the girl next door against her mother's wish. As the story progresses alongside the happenings in her country (coup, bribery and corruption, her life in boarding school) Enitan witnessed the rape of her friend, Sheri, during school's holiday, which leads to a temporary separation between her and Sheri.

Enitan's father and later her husband Niyi Franco, encourages her to stand for herself,(24) which causes her to always speak her mind when it comes to her rights even in the face of challenges, "You have to be tougher than this, o-girl", "You can't let people push you around. Tell them to go to hell if they pressure you."(179). All the political happenings in her country affects Enitan's life in many different ways. She has to deal with military training after school, gas shortages, being stopped on the side of the road by soldiers, her father's arrest and hers too.

As she grows older, she discovered she has a brother, which leads her to reinforce the fact that she cannot trust any of the men in her life to treat a woman with respect or as an equal. Enitan is a strong woman in the novel who fights the traditional, socio-economic claws that holds down the woman. “I felt as if someone had tailgated me for miles, driving me off course. Suddenly I lost them, but I was finding my way home, small and small”(325).

SHERI

Sheri is the girl next door, daughter of chief Bakare, her life is greatly affected by her rape and her abortion with a clothe hanger which lead to her barrenness. Sheri inability to be a mother is the major value she has lost; being unable to have children in an African society is the worst thing that could happen to a woman, “Better to be ugly, to be crippled, to be a thief even, than to be barren..... A woman may be forgiven for having a child out of wedlock..... a woman had to have a child(105).

Sheri grew up in a polygamous home. She has seen more of the traditional side of her culture which certainly influenced decisions to live as a mistress in order to survive. Sheri plays the role of house wife and

does all of the cooking, cleaning and care for the brigadier. Enitan gives Sheri the idea of catering business which she put to use after her fight with the brigadier. It was through her business that she was able to take care of herself and her family.

BANDELE TAIWO

He is Enitan's father, and the person who inspired Enitan to stand for herself, he taught her not to worry about cooking because girls need not learn how to cook in this generation. He expects her to stand for herself except to what he says. His character shows how hard it is to escape the traditional mindset that the males in Nigerian culture have the final say regardless of what the woman think.

ARINOLA VICTORIA

She is Enitan's mother, she is constantly ridiculed for her beliefs and actions and seems psychotic with her part in the church, "The priest in her church had a vision of fishermen breaking into our house..... The very next day, three workmen replaced our jetty with a barbed wire fence and my mother kept watch over them..... He returned and saw her new

fence, he ran outside shouting like a crazed man. Nothing, nothing, would stop my mother, he said, until she'd destroyed everything in our house, because of that church of hers, what kind of woman was she"?(2).

She tried everything to save her son and breaks down when nothing can be done. Enitan later learn to relate to her mother because as women they are both subject to the demands of the men in their life until they separate from those men.

NIYI FRANCO

Enitan's husband, they have a child together. Niyi is just like Bandele Taiwo, he also tells Enitan to stand for her rights when the men at her work try to take advantage of her (Atta,179). Niyi acts like a child that Enitan has to take care of instead of a grown man. Later in the novel, Niyi expects Enitan to obey him and he could not handle the fact that Enitans does things that he tells her not to do like getting involved with Grace Ameh, the later separated.

GRACE AMEH

She is a journalist and through her Enitan is able to get more information about her father. Enitan was arrested attending a reading that Grace Ameh is part of. Grace also invites Enitan to the group of women who campaign for prisoners “I was wondering if you would be interested in joining a campaign,....” A group of wives will spearhead this one. I think they feel left out of the wider campaign. They’re looking for someone, anyone, who can be their spokesperson. I think you will be an ideal candidate.” This is the group that Enitan leaves her husband for when he refused to support her interest.

MIKE

Mike is Enitan’s boyfriend when she comes back to Nigeria from college. After her fight with her father about his son, Debayo, she leaves her father’s house for Mike’s and finds him with another woman.

3.4 ANALYSIS OF TECHNIQUES

Techniques are literary devices a writer employs in his/her work in the course of narration in order to pass the intended message and also to achieve the desired objectives.

The novelist made use of first person narrative technique which is also known as autobiographical technique. It is a narration where the author participates in the happenings of the story he relates. He or she comes into the story as a first person recognized by the use of “I”. The story is presented from his perspective. First person narration is a literary technique in which the story is told by one or more of the characters who explicitly refer to him or herself in the first person. The narrator is thus directly or indirectly involved in the story.

This technique is used throughout the novel. It is used by the narrator to recount her experiences as an adult. For example”

“My voice was unnaturally high, it was nothing but minstrel show, I thought except no one bothered to watch as Sheri and I headed for the kitchen. Inside, I slammed an empty pot on a

Stove, what am I doing here? ”.(213)

Flashback, is another technique used in this novel. According to Dictionary.com LLC copyright 2012; flashback is a device in the narrative of motion, picture, novel etc., by which an event or scene taking place before the present time in the narration is inserted into the chronological structure of the work. Such a flashback may be recollected through a character, a dream sequence or dialogue. For example, this technique was used by Enitan’s mother to remind her about when they used to attend church together:

“do you remember, when you used to come to church with Me, that some of the sisters would miss church for a week?

“yes, mummy”

“do you know why they missed church?”

“No.”

“because they were unclean, “she said.(26).

Another technique that is also used is suspense. It is an attention riveting contrivance created by an author. It is the creation of the state of anxious expectancy or uncertainty that usually builds up while the audience

or readers are waiting for a decision or outcome of an intense or prolonged action. The audience or readers are tensed up as to what is going to happen to the character to whom they have positive emotional disposition. The pulsations of the audience's heart happen in quick succession until they know what happens to the character. This technique is used to narrate Sheri's rape incident:

I got up when I no longer heard voice, walked toward the van. From the angle I approached it, I could see nothing behind the windscreen. As I came closer, I spotted the head of the boy with a cap bent over by the window. I edged toward the side door. 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 clamped over her mouth.(65).

In this situation, without getting to the end of it, the reader would have this feeling of anxiety as to what will happen next and this brings about suspense.

Symbol is another technique that is used in the novel. Symbol according to M.H Abrams (2005) in A Glossary of literary terms eight

edition, define symbol as anything which signifies something; in this sense, all words are symbols. In discussing literature, however, the term “symbol” is applied only to a word or phrase that signifies an object or event which in turn signifies something or suggest a range of reference , beyond itself. It can also be applied to characters who might symbolize a particular thing or group of people,

Enitan in the novel, Everything Good Will Come symbolizes a modern educated woman. She gave up her marriage for a journey of self-discovery.

3.5 ANALYSIS OF THEMES OF SELF-DISCOVERY

The novel was published in 2006. The setting of the novel revolves around Enitan’s home, her school located in Lagos and also her school abroad.

Sectionalized into four parts, the novel chronicles the heroine’s life and the activities that occur around her from childhood till adulthood. Each attests to a particular phase in the journey to Enitan’s self-discovery and realization, a journey which begins with departure and ends in no return.

Each of these sections also situates the character's experiences within the time frame of 1971, 1975, 1985, 1995 and the experiences of the nation as an entity. These sections reveal the heroine's closure on the hinds of self-discovery, freedom, and fulfillment. Different stages in the country's socio-political life are imaginatively captured. Domestic crises and tensions in Enitan's immediate environment are mirrored. Keyinde and Mbipom(67) further points out that each of these phases "attests to a particular phase in the journey of Enitan to self-discovery"(p.67).

Atta's use of first person point of view allows the narrator the opportunity to comment on everything that goes around her especially as they affect the women. However, this does not allow for objectivity, most events are narrated with overbearing sentiments. Using characters like Grace Ameh, Atta's presents the events in the story with journalistic precision. The image of Idi Amin and Brigadier Hassan becomes a metaphor for military dictatorship at the time of the setting of this novel.

Silence is another stylistic device used to achieve the self-discovery thrust in this novel. All the characters experience one form of silence or the other to achieve their aims. Sunny Taiwo's silence sends Enitan's mother

out of the house; Niyi's silence drive Enitan to the spare room(p.233). Sunny Taiwo still holds tenaciously to the patriarchal belief that a woman must seal her mouth at all times. That was why he considers Clara Mukoro a disgrace because she reported to the media that her husband Peter Mukoro is unfaithful. (p.140). When Enitan's father is arrested, Arinola uses silence as revenge. Atta uses this weapon to lampoon women who have remained silent in the face of growing oppression. According to Orabueze (2010):

Atta believes that gender silence in the face of oppression and in the Nigerian society. She shows that silence can be a weapon in the face of oppression and brutalization are contributory factors to the erection and sustenance of the walls of imprisonment of the individual and shield, depending on how the individual wants to wield it. She tenaciously believes that silence is no longer golden In the face of oppression and degradation.....indeed Sefi Atta strongly feels it is only the voice of the individual raised in protest against obnoxious native, custom and draconian leadership that can bring meaningful change in the society (96-8)

All the women bolted out of their silence and became vocal. This according to Atta is the only way they could bring meaningful change to the society.

Another stylistic effect in this novel is the reversal of stereotype. Almost all the women in this novel are bold, courageous, assertive and economically empowered. Sheri is a business woman who would not want to be controlled by Brigadier Hassan's wealth, Enitan has her job and does not bother about the Franco's wealth, and Grace Ameh played her trade in the volatile field of Nigeria journalism. Clara Mukoro refuses to be silent when her husband is arrested.

Atta also adopts the Bildungsroman narrative technique in revealing the growth of the novel. This technique according to Abrams(2005) deals with "the development passage of the protagonist's mind and character in the passage from childhood to maturity, which usually involves recognition of one's identity and role in the world" (200-1) and through this technique, Atta allows the heroine to react to the events and experiences around her. As the heroine grows, she becomes more aware of herself and begins to make changes. At the end of the novel Enitan is no longer a little girl who

sits at the lagoon fishing with a fishing rod made from a tree branch and hook from a wine cork (p.11) she is now fully matured and makes decisions that affects her, not minding the consequences of such decisions.

3.6 THE MOTIF OF A JOURNEY OF SELF-DISCOVERY

REFLECTING THE TIMES OF TEXT

The narrator (Enitan) introduces herself as an ignorant, inexperienced and gullible eleven year old child. Enitan says “from the beginning I believed whatever I was told, downright lies even about how to behave, although I had my own inclination”(p.1). By projecting herself as credulous, Enitan sets us on a pedestal through which her growth, self-discovery and assertion could be gauged as the story unfolds, Kehinde and Mbipom(2011:68). Ironically, it is from her father that Enitan learned of female liberation. Enitan’s father tells her; “if she asks where you learned such nonsense, tell her from your father and he’s for the liberation of women”(24). Nevertheless, her careful observation and participation in life furnishes her with courage and makes her the assertive heroine we see at the end of the novel.

The systems in Nigeria which unfortunately are defined by their dysfunctional nature and the predicament of the woman in post-independence Nigeria underlie Atta's discourse of motherland from the Diaspora. At this age also, Enitan begins to understand the politics of the Nigerian society coupled with the tension, the political faction and ethnic groups display.

Although Enitan gives the details of the information she obtains from the activities she sees around her and other adult conversations, her meeting with Sheri, the girl next door, is a great significance, as it marks her transition into an entirely new stage of life. This first encounter with Sheri sets the pace for Enitan's social and moral education; it also contributes to the advancement and swift unraveling of the actions embedded in the plot.

In demythologizing and deconstructing the stifling structures in a male-oriented society, Atta instructs women on the way out of retrograde patriarchal domination through the practical action of gender –assertive Enitan, Sheri, Mrs. Grace Ameh and even the mother of the prison. Kehinde and Mbipom(2011:69).

Through what could be described as age-long and diehard techniques, Eshiet (1997:27) suggests that, with “reinforcing an excess indoctrination and relentless brain-washing into unquestioning identification with patriarchal approval and culture, female emancipation and liberalization of traditional fixations are brutally constrained. This accounts for Christine Obbo’s (1980:143) observation that:

Even though the world is changing all about them, it seems that women’s own attempt to cope with the new situations they find themselves in are regarded as a ‘problem’ by men, and a betrayal of traditions which are often confused with women’s roles.

Even as young as Sheri may be assumed to be, her dissuading of Enitan whose ambition is to be a president of the nation someday shows that she has undergone some process of socialization and indoctrination through which she describes fitting gender roles to Enitan within her social context:

“I want to be something like..... the president”

“Eh?” ‘Women are not president’.

“Why not”? “Our men won’t stand for it. Who will cook for your husband”?

“He will cook for himself”

“What if he refuses?”

“I’ll drive him away”

“You can’t she said.

“Yes I can. Who wants to marry him anyway?” (33).

This conversation later helps in shaping Enitan’s life. Later she becomes aware of the political landscape of Nigeria and how it affects the women. Sheri is exposed to things higher than her age. Sheri dissuading Enitan from her dream of becoming the nation’s president is an example of patriarchal brainwashing of the woman. Keyinde and Mbipom explain thus: “Sheri sets the pace for Enitan’s social and moral education, it’s also contributes to the advancement and swift unraveling of the actions...” (p.69).” her meeting with Sheri..... Is of great significance, as it marks her transition to an entirely new stage of life”. Keyinde and Mbipom, (2011:68). Mrs. Franco also tries unsuccessfully to tutor Enitan on how to and how not to behave as a woman. She suggests to Enitan that, as a woman, she must learn to make sacrifices. Consequently, she has this to say of her mother in-law: “my father in-law had tamed his wife, almost as if he’s scooped out her brains and left just enough for her to keep on

obeying him” (249). Atta artistically conceals the indictment of the mores and values of the arrogant traditions fashioned by men, kept and transferred by patriarchs and their women collaborators such as Sheri’s step mothers and Mrs. Franco, to ensure the effacement, invincibility and the obliteration of the women fold. Thus, Atta constructs realities that recreate a formidable women’s world as well as certain socio-cultural and economic factors that collude to ensure their victimization in post-independence Nigeria, which is defined by multiple drudgery.

Armed with her father’s instruct, Enitan’s secondary school education in the boarding house at the Royal college marks another step in her social , moral and intellectual education. She is exposed to the reality of the multi-cultural nature of her nation, the myths and cultural practices that characterize these different ethnic groups keyinde and Mbipom(2011:70).

I learned also about women in my country, from Zaria, Katsina, Kaduna who decorated their skin with henna dye and lived in Purdah; women from Calabar who are fed and anointed in fattening houses before their wedding, women who were circumcised. I heard about towns in western Nigeria where every family had twins because

they ate a lot of yams, and other towns in northern Nigeria, where every other family had a crippled child because women married their first cousins. None of the women seemed real they were like mammy water, sirens of the Niger Delta who rose from the creeks to lure unsuspecting men to death by drowning(48).

It is during this period that Enitan tries out her first relationship with the opposite sex. She learns of the brutality that could result from relating with the opposite sex when Sheri is raped and commits a crude abortion to save her face.

Forthrightly, Atta's heroine not only recounts the experiences that plague her as a growing woman in a tumultuous country but yet gets "some assurance that our world is uniformly terrible." (discovery, 2011:70). The third section of the novel, which is set from 1985, puts Atta's heroine forward as having more experiences. Because of many complexities which attend Enitan's association with Sheri's strange ordeal, England becomes an option, a place where she can acquire education without distractions, which the tense atmosphere of Nigeria seems to offer. In London, Enitan learns of her sexuality, that her virginity belongs to her. Her anonymous

boyfriend who briefs her with this information which contradicts her previous perception is the same boy who takes it. She says:

I'd thought my virginity belonged to Jesus Christ, my mother, society at large. Anyone but me. My boyfriend, a first-year pharmacy student at London University, assured me that it was mine, to give to him. In those brief seconds between owning and giving up my virginity, he licked the walls of my mouth clean..... After I thought he pierced my bowels....(77).

Moreover, Atta highlights, through the words of her heroine, the selfish nature of men and the belief that her virginity is to be given to him. This persuasion is closely followed by whose ditching of Enitan with irrelevant complaints. However, her great need for love places her next with a young man nicknamed “String fellow” and “Mike Obi” subsequently. These also do not prove any better, as they reveal the fickle nature of men in their treatment of women.

Enitan’s sojourn in the white man’s land affords Atta the opportunity of comparing the life of the black with that of the white. She takes a step further to address issues of black denigration which stem from lingering colonial perspective of white-black relation. This is tackled by Enitan who

readily corrects or ignores the ones who proves to be fastidious. The separation of Sunny and ArinolaTaiwo makes Enitan's sojourn in England and her dislocation from 'home' inevitable. Enitan describes her dilemma thus:

A squabble between them, over ownership of property and me. My mother vowed to have my father debarred. Instead she developed hypertension...soon I began to spend vacation in London, working as a shop assistant in departmental stores to supplement my allowance to avoid staying with either of them(79).

This squabble eventually climaxes in later years in Arinola Taiwo's lonely death. In this light, Eshiet (1997:27) observes that the "non-involvement or lack of participation in issues vitally concerning the welfare of the woman has dire consequences for the female psychology". Despite these difficulties at "home", the social menace, the absence of basic amenities and the anarchy which defines the Nigerian government and polity, the alienation and loneliness in a strange land pushes Enitan "home".

Atta also explores, at length, the varying difficulties and tensions which characterize the relationship between mother and daughter in post-colonial societies exemplified by the ever failing relationship between Enitan and Arinola, her mother. Bungaro (2006:67) observes convincingly that:

Family relationship in African post-colonial societies manifest a growing level of tension, conflict and stress as a result of new opportunities, new interests and new Dilemmas created by increasing gender and class stratification across Africa, but especially across generations in Africa(67).

She further states that these perceived tensions transcend the mother-daughter relationship to express generational, ideological and systematic tension, which are eventually played out in the conflict between mothers and daughters. The already deteriorating relationship between mother and daughter become worse because the daughter fails to see and live by the social system which stifles her mother's advancement and joy. Adrienne Rich (1977:235), assert that "it is easier by far to hate and reject a mother outright than to see beyond her to the forces acting upon her".

In Freudian temper, Enitan continues to relate with her mother from a distance because she seems to persistently fight her father that she sees as “good”. However, Arinola retorts: “if he’s no good to me, he’s no good to you. The day you realize it, I’ll be here waiting for you. The damage has been done already. You’re blind.”(96).

Almost all the major male characters in Atta’s novel, display one moral flaw or the other, and some imbalanced gender perspective which accounts for their insensitive treatment and denigration of the “other” sex. Even though a man like Barrister Sunny claims that he is for the liberation of women, his treatment of Arinola (his wife) speaks volumes of his genuine position as the story unfolds. Enitan herself describe men as “Beaters, cheaters lazy buggers”(249)

As a matter of fact, Enitan receives a “welcome home” when she suggests that Peter Mukoro should be sued, considering the fatuous behavior which he puts up and the scandalous story which he is involved in. Not only is her suggestion treated as flimsy by the members of staff in her father’s office, it creates the opportunity through which Atta creates awareness about the excess of patriarchy. Atta easily lets off the fact that

ingrained in virtually all facets and systems of the motherland in patriarchy which may not be easily rooted out by suing the Mr. Mukoro. This sarcastic “welcome home” that Mrs. Kazeem readily offers Enitan is Atta’s attestation from the Diaspora that “home” is defined by the controlling and debilitating principles of patriarchy no matter how erroneous.

Atta also addresses the controversial issue of childbearing and “joys of motherhood” which still appears to be an integral factor in African marriages. Arinola’s struggle to attain motherhood, defined by the birth of a male child, is shrouded in irony. While she strives and loses every other form of fulfillment in order to meet the demand placed on her by her immediate society, Sunny, without taking his wife into confidence, gets a son outside their marriage just a year after Arinola’s sickly son dies. Arinola is left in the dark for over two decades. This moment becomes strategic in the question of the moral stand of men as fathers and family heads as Enitan recalls her punishment for lying as a child (143). Uko (2006:86) maintains that:

Clearly, societal constructs set motherhood and procreation as the woman’s major source of fulfillment, but contemporary African women are

seeking new avenues for self-fulfillment, arguing that it is now unattainable, obnoxious and unacceptable that womanhood is validated only through motherhood and procreation, where procreation implies the male-child principle.

It is however significant that Atta makes an effort at addressing this issue which seems to be lingering despite the contemporariness the motherland is believed to have attained. Arinola's plight and her treatment raise this as a silent question and even in the more contemporary society that Ata addresses. The implication of these new directions in women writings, as Uko (2006:86) observes, could be described as the consistent attempt at the re-positioning of the African woman from the doldrums and fringes of societal schema.

The novel also dwells on consideration of women's quest for a good degree of freedom in society to pursue goals and targets which are not and do not necessarily terminate in the mere chase of individual ambition, but transcend this to cater for the needs of other women, family members and that fraction of society who do not have as priority the stifling of women. This to a large extent, is captured in the final section of the novel. Enitan's

assertion climaxes in the fourth and final section of the novel marked by an astonishing degree of growth and self-discovery. She claimed her space as a female and tries to make meaning out of her existence in a world where all odd seem to be against women, especially those who speak out. Enitan begins to see things clearly and differently too. She began to notice the predicaments of the woman. She becomes enlightened and imbued with a revolutionary spirit. She becomes more assertive and refuses to play second fiddle. Respect for her must be reciprocal. She says:

In my 29 years no man ever told me to show respect. No man ever needed to. I had seen how women respected men and ended up shouldering burdens...and the expectation of subordination bothered me most. How could I defer to a man whose naked buttocks I'd Seen? Touched? Obey him without choking on my humility like a fish bone down my throat(184).

Although she is married to Niyi, she assumes the position of a totally independent woman, and when it does not seem convenient to maintain the status(married) and pursue her vision as an activist for the emancipation of her father and others in similar debilitating situations, she opts for outside.

Enitan says:

I couldn't remain as I was before, otherwise my memory of her [my mother] would have been in vain, and my survival would certainly be pointless. Anyone who experienced such trauma would understand... one life had gone and I could either mourn it or begin the next... this was the option I choose(323).

Enitan's fighting spirit makes Niyi's final and firm "NO" a difficult to take. She wants to be unstoppable to pursue and attain her goals. From this she will derive fulfillment. Her action projects marriage as suffocating and constricting. Atta's heroine takes a step further in controlling her space. She seems to suggest that marriage and freedom are mutually exclusive in a typical African perspective. This disparity, therefore, motivates assertion after discovery has been made, and it attests to the veracity of Maria Cutrefelli's (1983:3) assertion that:

The new characteristically urban figure of the male unprotected, husbandless single woman has significantly taken shape: and in the light of the traditional view of celibacy as a social failure, even a crime against society the consciously deliberate rejection of marriage on the part of an increasing number of urban women appears to be a courageous, indeed daring deed.

Atta, therefore, challenges the jaundiced and stereotypical literary portrayal of women and goes further to project, through her female characters, the propensity for women to succeed outside the traditional roles of wife and mother. Enitan comments on the assiduous task the self-discovery oriented woman and the socio-political activist have in addressing the ills in the motherland thus:

But it was one thing to face an African community and tell them how to treat a woman, it was entirely another to face an African dictatorship and tell them how to treat people like citizens(276).

Consequently, most of the women in the novel possess a fighting spirit we do not easily associate with them at the beginning of the novel. However, Atta would have us believe as the novel unfolds and grinds to its conclusion that it is when her characters start fighting that they start living. Peter Mukoro fights for the Niger Delta. Sunny Taiwo, despite the odds, defends him. Sheri fights the psychological impact of her rape and moves ahead in life; she also indulges in physical combat with the 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" (p.161). Uko (2006:92) argues that the sexuality of women constitute a catalyst for self-discovery and holistic redefinition, as we see in the novel.

Besides self-discovery issues, the author also pervades the issues of politics and governance. She takes a look at the different military invasions, the governance of post-independence Nigeria, the calamity, poverty and denigration that attend these dysfunctional governments.

How did we live comfortably under dictatorship? The truth was that, we... if we never spoke out, were free as we could possibly be, complaining about our rubbish rotten country, and crazy armed robbers and inflation. The authorities said hush and we hushed; they came with their sirens and we cleared off the streets; they beat someone and we looked the other way; they detained a relation and we hoped for the best (227).

Therefore, "freedom was never intended to be sweet. It was responsibility from the onset, for a people, a person, to fight for, and hold unto" (everything good,307). This seems to be the main thrust of Atta's

message. This discovery and conception which goes with it motivates self-assertion and self-realization.

As the novel climaxes, and Enitan becomes more resolute, her father is released, and other prisoners Enitan has encountered in life also stand a chance of being freed. Her victory is expressed in the dance she does to the chagrin of road users. Enitan's dance typifies the exciting and liberating effect of freedom. The novel ends on the optimistic note that "everything good will come".

3.7 EVERYTHING GOOD WILL COME AS A NIGERIAN NOVEL

The text Everything Good Will Come is a Nigerian novel because its stories lie within the historical perspectives as used by Atta to look at her character's life by basing the story in a true Nigerian culture and political atmosphere. This story has relevance to the time period in which it is set and this gives the reader insight to how likely and the effect politics could play within each character's life. Although the focus is on the middle and upper classes, the unsettled government of the 1970's through 1990s is still well represented. The history of this novel follows Nigerian through the

second and third republic, all times of different political powers but connected through the character's life.

The author has credibility for writing about this time period because much of her life experience paralleled those of Enitan. Born in 1964, Sefi was only seven years when the novel begins.

The text brings up the issue of political instability due to colonialism by showing Nigeria at a time of political influx. By showing this negative repercussion, the argument against colonialism is discussed and displayed by the character's within, " Uncle Alex blamed the British for the fighting.... Come here and divide our country like one of their bloody tea cakes"(13). All of which have become united through colonization which brought the western culture into Nigeria.

The novel is a Nigerian novel because it covers Nigerian culture, history, political unrest and Religion. The novel is set mainly before and during the Nigerian civil war (1967-1970).

3.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter has examined the growing up of the female child from adolescence to adulthood. This is her journey towards self-discovery at a time when her motherland is gripped within the claws of socio-economic and political tension and how she moves out of the space that limits her aspiration, and grows to become “the speaking voice of the voiceless people”, a liberator and emancipater.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 SUMMARY

In chapter one, an introduction of the study was given, the research examines the meaning of literature, and how it tends to reflect the feelings of the reader. The research also went further to highlight the problem to be tackled in Everything Good Will Come. The aim and objectives of this work was then described.

Chapter two dealt mainly on the reviews of other authors on the text and also on the works of various authors about self-discovery with example of writers like Mariama Ba, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Ola Rotimi, Ama Ata Aidoo, Buchi Emecheta and Zaynab Alkali.

The third chapter introduced the study beginning with the consciousness of women as seen in the eyes of a growing child. The chapter dealt with the analysis of the storyline, the settings, the techniques and the characters and characterization of the text Everything Good Will Come. The narration is in the first person. The narrator made it a point of duty to present the central character's consciousness boldly as she matures

to become conscious of the prevalent conditions that are plaguing the African woman. Finally, the research captures the motif of a journey of self-discovery reflecting the times of text as used by Sefi Atta. The research is written in simple language, which will help the reader to understand the message the project work is passing across.

4.1 CONCLUSION

Millions of people have tried to answer questions like, who is a woman? A mother? A wife? A sex object? superior, inferior, or equal to the male? Is she man's servant or pair?

Writers have tried to answer these questions in their writings, while others have been labeled physically weaker than men, more emotional, less reasonable, and less able to learn and dependant, others have been labeled as assertive, redefined, hardy, independent and very outspoken.

Everything Good Will Come deals with the effect of military dictatorship and conflict in the people and also how the people especially the women can fight to re-discover their voice and have their place in the society that tries to muzzle them.

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