

Split Personality and Repression in Okey Ndibe's *Arrows of Rain*

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Abstract

This study explores split personality and repression through a psychoanalytic lens, focusing on the characters Bukuru and Iyese. Drawing on Sigmund Freud's theory of the unconscious, it examines how traumatic experiences compel individuals to dissociate from their primary identity as a means of psychological survival. Bukuru oscillates between his former self as a fearless journalist and a fragmented persona shaped by guilt and loss while Iyese suppresses her traumatic past by adopting the identity of Emilia, a name that allows her to function in a world of exploitation. Repression, in both cases, serves as a defence mechanism that distances the characters from their painful histories, allowing them to endure otherwise unbearable realities. The study shows how trauma is encoded not only in the psyche but also in the characters' speech, silence, and behaviour. By closely analysing their psychological transformations and patterns of repression, this research reveals the deeper implications of trauma on identity formation in postcolonial African narratives. The characters' disjointed sense of self reflects the broader socio-cultural disintegration around them, highlighting the intersection of personal and collective trauma. Thus, this study contributes to trauma literature by demonstrating how identity, memory, and repression interweave in shaping human response to psychological suffering.

Keywords: Split Personality, Repression, Trauma, Identity, Behaviour, Memories, Coping Mechanism and Mind

Introduction

The human psyche is susceptible to fragmentation, particularly under the weight of sustained trauma. In the Nigerian context, post-independence history has been marked by a succession of destabilising events: ethnic conflicts, military coups, systemic corruption, and widespread socio-political unrest. These conditions have not only shaped the nation's collective memory but also deeply affected individual psychological stability. As a result, many individuals, especially victims of political violence and oppression, experience profound disillusionment, leading to psychological conditions such as split personality and repression. In the efforts to survive, some resort to adopting multiple identities or masking their true selves, often as a defence mechanism against the enduring fear and trauma of their past. This psychological fragmentation reflects a larger narrative of identity crisis and alienation in post-colonial Nigerian society.

The conflict between the mind and body is a persistent one, particularly subjected to traumatic experiences. Trauma holds the capacity to reshape and destabilise an individual's identity, often compelling victims to adopt coping mechanisms such as renaming and repression to navigate the psychological aftermath. As psychoanalytic theorists suggest, trauma disrupts the continuity of self, leading to the fragmentation of consciousness and the emergence of disassociated identities. This fragmentation not only alters one's perception of self but can also result in the manifestation

of split personalities, where individuals construct alternate selves to contain or escape the overwhelming weight of memory. In this context, a split personality becomes both a shield and a signifier of loss, reflecting a fractured identity forged in response to unresolved internal conflict.

For Sigmund Freud, traumatic events can cause dissociation, which can lead to a "split personality" or dissociative identity disorder. To preserve control and sanity in the face of severe trauma, the person uses this self-fracturing as a coping method, repressing and compartmentalising traumatic memories and emotions. Many trauma victims attempt to live in a world that they have made for themselves, distancing themselves from reality and creating new identities in an attempt to forget their past. According to the *Cambridge Dictionary*, split personality behaves so differently at different times that it seems to have more than one character. Split personality is a mental health condition, where one has two or more separate personalities that control one's behaviour at different times. When personalities switch, one will have gaps in one's memory. The identities are usually caused by living through trauma. It is also known as Dissociative Identity Disorder, as it is associated with overwhelming experiences, traumatic events and abuse. Dissociative identity disorder was previously referred to as multiple personality disorder, which involves problems with memory, identity, emotion, perception, behaviour, and sense of self. Dissociative symptoms can potentially disrupt every area of mental functioning. Examples of dissociative symptoms include the experience of detachment or feeling as if one is outside one's body, and loss of memory or amnesia. It is frequently associated with previous experience.

Split personality has drawn interest from the scientific community and is now referred to as dissociative identity disorder (DID) in the field of mental health. People with split or two personalities (alternated personalities) sometimes experience a sense of alienation because of a memory barrier and because the "second layer" of the mind frequently has a distinct sense of identity. Freud referred to this mental layer as the "unconscious." The ideas and feelings that we experience in our normal conscious state are not always the same as those found in the unconscious. Disorders and symptoms related to mental health arise when the conscious and unconscious minds are highly polarised. Pierre Janet claims that a "split personality" is the result of traumatic events that cause a person's consciousness to dissociate, separating aspects of their personality into distinct, subconscious "systems" that are capable of operating on their own. This results in a "double" or "second state" of consciousness. In his book on psychological automatism, Pierre Janet describes dissociation as a flaw in the related system that generates the secondary consciousness, which he dubbed the subconscious fixed thought.

Repression, as conceptualised by Freud, constitutes the foundational mechanism through which the psyche defends itself against distressing internal conflicts. Freud posits that the essence of repression lies simply in turning something away and keeping it at a distance from the conscious (Freud, 1915b, p. 147), illustrating how the mind actively resists acknowledging painful or traumatic material. For many trauma survivors, repression functions as a psychological refuge, an unconscious process that conceals overwhelming memories to preserve emotional stability. Freud further asserts that the theory of repression is the cornerstone on which the whole structure of psychoanalysis rests (Freud, 1914a, p.16), emphasising its centrality in understanding post-traumatic psychological states. This mechanism underscores the way the human mind attempts to

regain equilibrium by distancing itself from the psychic disruption caused by trauma, thereby shaping identity, memory, and behaviour in the aftermath of such experiences.

Freud posits that the unconscious mind is a repository for repressed desires, impulses, and memories often rooted in early childhood that are barred from conscious awareness due to their anxiety-inducing nature (1915). These repressed elements, though hidden from consciousness, continue to exert pressure on the psyche, often manifesting through symbolic expressions and neurotic behaviours. Repression, as one of the primary defence mechanisms, involves the unconscious exclusion of distressing thoughts and emotions from conscious thought. Freud conceptualised repression as a means of mitigating guilt, shame, and anxiety, allowing the individual temporary psychological relief. However, he also warns of its long-term consequences, noting that unresolved repressed material may resurface in maladaptive ways, contributing to psychological dysfunction. As the cornerstone of psychoanalytic theory, Freud regards repression as central to understanding the formation of personality and the aetiology of mental illness, underscoring the profound influence of unconscious processes on human behaviour.

In Okey Ndibe's *Arrows of Rain*, the characters Bukuru and Iyese exemplify how trauma fragments the psyche, leading to identity splitting and repression as survival strategies. Drawing on Freud's concept of the splitting of consciousness, where the mind oscillates between conscious and unconscious states, this study aims to analyse how both characters disassociate from their traumatic pasts and use split personality and repression as coping mechanisms. Bukuru, silenced by injustice and haunted by memory, adopts an altered identity, while Iyese, subjected to sexual violence and systemic marginalisation, internalises fear and loses her sense of self. Their psychological fragmentation reflects a broader post-colonial disillusionment, where silence, renaming, and repression become coping mechanisms in a society that punishes truth and suppresses individual agency. This study adopts the psychoanalytic theory, employing its core concepts to interrogate the unconscious fragmentation, repressed desires, and psychological defence mechanisms that inform character behaviour, identity formation, and narrative structure.

Psychoanalytic theory provides a critical framework for understanding individual personality structures, particularly unconscious processes, and serves as the theoretical foundation for this study. Originally developed by Sigmund Freud, the theory emerged in response to the contemporaneous advancements in scientific and medical research that occurred during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Freud's insights, drawn largely from his clinical practice, emphasised the significance of unconscious drives, repressed memories, and internal conflicts in shaping human behaviour and identity. Over time, psycho-analytic thought has evolved, incorporating insights from modern psychology and neuro-science, yet its core principles remain influential in literary analysis. Within the context of this study, the concepts of split personality and repression are especially pertinent in examining the psychological dimensions of characters and the author-text relationship. Freud's emphasis on the unconscious as a repository of repressed experiences offers valuable tools for exploring the fragmentation of identity and the lingering effects of trauma in literary narratives. Okey Ndibe's *Arrows of Rain* serves as the primary text for exploring the psychological constructs of split personality and repression,

drawing on psychoanalytic theory to examine how trauma, identity fragmentation, and suppressed memories shape character development and narrative progression.

Okey Ndibe's novel, *Arrows of Rain*, is a complex and engaging work that delves into the blurred lines between reality and the inner turmoil of the human mind. *Arrows of Rain* is the first novel by Nigerian-American author Okey Ndibe. It was published in 2000. Through the protagonist Bukuru's experiences in the fictional town of Madia, the novel masterfully weaves together thought-provoking themes, an intricate narrative, and deeply nuanced character development. Critics have engaged with *Arrows of Rain* in various ways, highlighting diverse discussions from the text.

Scholars such as Akingbe, Awelewa, and Onwuka have explored similar themes and concerns in their critiques of Okey Ndibe's *Arrows of Rain*. One of the major concerns of critics has been the novel's portrayal of the dark side of military rule and its civilian collaborators. Akingbe notes that the novel marks a shift in theme and concern from the previous emphasis on the impact of colonisation and the focus on the historical past to an examination of current socio-political problems of abuse of power by the ruling elite, as well as widespread brazen corruption and social inequality in Nigeria. He focuses on the brutality of the military and its related dehumanisation of the people. Awelewa then contends that Africa's leadership problems have inspired many writers to explore these themes. He argues that suicide is a direct result of Africa's leadership failures. Awelewa contends that the novel demonstrates how the failures of leadership have led to a sense of hopelessness and despair among Africans, increasing suicide rates. This is portrayed as Bukuru commits suicide as he knows he can never win against the government.

Onwuka examines the power relations between the military and civil society through Ndibe's *Arrows of Rain*. He concludes that the novel exposes the brutal nature of soldiers against civilians. Onwuka argues that the novel demonstrates how soldiers in politics often use violence and intimidation to maintain their power and control over civilians. Major Bello's aggressive behaviour towards Iyese and his arrogant remarks in her apartment reveal how he, as a military officer, perceives himself as being above the law and having absolute authority over civilians like Iyese. This argument is supported in Wisely C. Mkandawire's review "Alienation and Despair in Okey Ndibe's *Arrows of Rain*," which discusses the theme of poor governance and corruption, loss of identity and isolation, and prostitution. He explores these issues using the thoughts of the characters in the text. The government of Madia is poorly managed by the military, and there is a lot of corruption, which leads to the suffering of the people. This is the root cause of alienation and despair, as the people are disillusioned by their current state after being freed from the colonial masters and are ruled by their own.

Onyeiwu Lilian, in her review, "Scarring and (Re)covering The Female Body in Okey Ndibe's *Arrows of Rain*", discusses the theme of prostitution and (re)covering the traumatised female body. It is portrayed in the text that many young ladies engage in prostitution for some reasons, just like Iyese. Iyese is betrayed by her husband, Dr. Maximus Jaja, who had an illicit affair with a lady, who becomes pregnant for him. Iyese divorces him because she could not bear the pain, and she decides not to return home because of the shame, leading to her becoming a prostitute.

The prostitutes are seen as tools for sexual gratification, and many a time their users claim ownership of them. They forcefully rape them, commit violence against their bodies as Major Isa Palat Bello does to Iyese by stabbing her Virginia after raping her. This is done because she refuses to marry him. This violence is also done to Tay Tay, the prostitute. Bukuru revives after being violently raped by soldiers. After all these assaults are inflicted on the female gender, there is no justice for them, and their bodies are abandoned.

The condition of the public sphere serves as a reflection of a country's overall state of governance and functionality. Youssouf Fofana's review, "An Exploration of the Public Sphere in *Anthills of the Savannah* and *Arrows of Rain*", highlights the impact of military regimes on the public sphere. The novel critiques the military's control over the media and the dissemination of knowledge and information, undermining the public sphere and silencing citizens. The military's control over the media allows it to shape public opinion and maintain its grip on power. This raises important questions about the role of the media in promoting democracy and holding those in power accountable. Notable critics Niyi Akingbe and Edwin Onwuka have shared their insights on Okey Ndibe's novel, *Arrows of Rain*. Akingbe's analysis highlights the novel's focus on military brutality and its devastating effects on human dignity. He sees Ndibe as a contemporary Nigerian writer, who boldly speaks out against pressing issues like abuse of power, corruption, and social inequality. On the other hand, Onwuka explores the personality traits associated with soldiers in politics, noting that the novel portrays the military as oppressive and fear-inducing. He argues that Ndibe's representation of military leadership in the novel presents a scathing critique of the military's role in politics.

This study explores the interplay of split personality and repression in *Arrows of Rain* through a psychoanalytic lens, examining how characters employ naming and identity fragmentation as coping mechanisms in response to trauma. It further interrogates split personality not only as a psychological response but as a symbolic and naming construct that reflects deeper internal and societal conflicts. By highlighting repression as a coping mechanism, the analysis contributes to trauma studies and broadens the discourse on the psychological effects of trauma, offering a nuanced understanding of how victims navigate distress through split personality and repression.

Split Personality in *Arrows of Rain*

According to Freud, the conscious mind is aware of the present perceptions, memories, thoughts, and feelings. In Okey Ndibe's powerful novel *Arrows of Rain*, split personality emerges not as a clinical pathology but as a profound psychological mechanism of survival, intricately woven into the fabric of individual and collective trauma. The novel presents a nuanced exploration of how psychological fragmentation becomes a critical strategy for navigating the complex and often violent landscape of post-colonial Madia society. At the core of this psychological phenomenon is the understanding that split personality represents a dynamic, adaptive response to overwhelming experiences. Unlike traditional clinical interpretations that view such psychological splitting as a disorder, it is portrayed as an intricate survival strategy, a sophisticated psychological architecture designed to protect the core self from disintegration.

The primary mechanism of this psychological splitting manifests through multiple dimensions. First, there is the linguistic dimension, where naming becomes a powerful tool of identity displacement. Characters create alternative identities that can absorb pain, negotiate traumatic

experiences, and shield the vulnerable core of self. This is seen when Bukuru tells the detective, “ I have no name... (16)”, portraying that he does not want to associate himself with his past, which has a connection with his identity, even if he is being referred to as Bukuru by the residents of the beach. These alternative identities are not mere passive vessels but active psychological constructs. They represent different modes of experiencing and surviving. This is most brilliantly illustrated in the passage, where the character describes two identities: Iyese, who navigates the daylight world, and Emilia (101), who becomes the repository of physical and sexual violence. She witnessed a profound linguistic and psychological strategy of compartmentalisation. Each identity becomes a protective layer, a psychological buffer against total emotional and mental collapse.

Crucially, this psychological splitting extends beyond individual experience to become a metaphor for national trauma. Just as individual characters fragment to survive, the novel suggests that Madia society itself is psychologically fractured by colonial history, political instability, and systemic violence. The persona becomes political, and the psychological becomes a reflection of broader societal wounds. What emerges is a nuanced understanding of split personality not as a disorder, but as a dynamic, adaptive response to trauma. It is a psychological strategy of resilience, a way of maintaining integrity, when confronted with painful experiences that threaten total psychological disintegration. Bukuru flees his immediate environment because of Major Isa Palat Bello, who represents the brutality of the military against the citizens. Bukuru's transformation and exile from his journalistic past signify more than personal trauma; they symbolise the silencing of truth and memory in a society, where power distorts reality. Similarly, Iyese's adoption of a new identity and suppression of her past reflect how gendered trauma is internalised and hidden to navigate a hostile world. The act of fleeing both mentally and physically reveals how identity fragmentation serves as a coping mechanism not only for individuals but also as an expression of resistance within oppressive systems.

In the intricate landscape of Okey Ndibe's *Arrows of Rain*, split personality emerges as a profound psychological strategy of survival, with naming serving as the primary architectural mechanism through which individuals negotiate trauma, protect their core identity, and maintain psychological integrity. Naming becomes the critical instrument of this psychological strategy. Names are transformed from mere linguistic identifiers into complex psychological boundaries, protective zones that allow individuals to compartmentalise traumatic experiences. When a character creates alternative identities, they are essentially constructing intricate psychological spaces designed to absorb, contain, and manage painful memories while preserving the core self. The conscious adoption of new identities, complete with new names, allows characters to adapt without directly confronting their trauma, thus preserving mental equilibrium.

Split personality manifests in characters, who seek to disassociate from traumatic experiences, often adopting new names to embody alternate identities. This shift enables them to exist in a different psychological realm, detached from the pain of their past. It becomes a mechanism of escape and survival. In *Arrows of Rain*, Bukuru, the protagonist, is introduced as a madman living in B. Beach, accused of murdering a prostitute on New Year's morning. During interrogation, when asked by Lieutenant Lati, “What is your name? (16)” He is questioned about

his identity but deliberately rejects any formal designation, refusing to lay claim to a specific name. This act of denial becomes a symbolic erasure of self, reflecting a psychological detachment from past identity shaped by trauma, guilt, and fear. This refusal to claim a name reflects his rejection of any fixed identity, a desire to remain unanchored. His birth name, Ogugua – meaning “a wiper of tears” – once tied to his former life as a journalist, is abandoned. The horrors he witnessed and the guilt over Iyese’s death scarred his psyche. To escape the threat posed by Major Isa Palat Bello and the weight of his past, he suppresses his former identity, choosing instead the fragmented persona of Bukuru.

This transformation results in a new identity for him within the margins of B. Beach. Bukuru, as he is now known, is perceived by the dwellers as a madman – an eccentric figure detached from reality. However, behind this façade lies Ogugua, a once-fearless journalist, whose words once unsettled the corridors of power, but who now lives in fear, burdened by guilt and haunted by loss. The shift from Ogugua to Bukuru is not accidental; it is a deliberate psychological retreat from trauma – a coping mechanism triggered by the fear of death and the anguish of abandoning Iyese. Though he claims to have no name, Bukuru becomes his chosen mask, a symbolic disconnection from his former life. In this assumed identity, he severs ties with his past – his friends, profession, and social standing – creating a protective boundary between who he was and who he must become to endure. This dissociation offers him a fragile form of solace, allowing him to exist in the present without confronting the full weight of his memories. Bukuru, then, is not merely a name; it is a sanctuary of survival, a vessel through which Ogugua can grieve, repress, and endure.

Moreover, Iyese embodies two distinct identities in the novel. While her given name is Iyese, she adopts the name Emilia as a shield within her profession as a prostitute. This new identity becomes a psychological buffer – one that allows her to separate her inner self from the emotional toll of her external reality. Bearing the name Emilia is not merely a professional alias; it is a coping mechanism that enables her to endure the dehumanising nature of her work without completely losing her sense of self. She confides in Ogugua that;

“The false name acts as a shield against my nighttime encounters?
I couldn’t sleep with a customer who knew my real name. It would be totally frigid.
“Why?”
“Because Iyese is not a prostitute but Emilia is.”
“Do all prostitutes experience this split phenomenon? The idea of being two persons in one?”(101)

Iyese adopts a dual identity as a psychological strategy to navigate the emotional toll of her profession. By taking on the name Emilia, she creates a mental and emotional barrier between her true self and the persona required to survive in the world of prostitution. In a conversation with Ogugua, she makes it clear that Iyese – her original name – cannot be associated with the act of selling her body. Emilia, on the other hand, is a constructed self, a necessary façade that allows her to engage in sexual activity without feeling emotionally or morally fragmented. This deliberate division of identity functions as a coping mechanism, preserving a part of her humanity and inner self from being consumed by the degrading realities of her work. Through

this split, Iyese manages to satisfy the desires of her male clients while maintaining a fragile sense of personal integrity and mental stability. Her split personality reflects the deep psychological cost of trauma and exploitation, showing how names and identity can become tools for survival in oppressive environments.

In Okey Ndibe's *Arrows of Rain*, split personality transcends its psychological definition to become a profound symbolic representation of broader societal and existential experiences. Far more than a mere psychological mechanism, split personality emerges as a complex symbolic language through which the novel explores trauma, identity, and survival. The protagonist, Bukuru, embodies a fractured self – one shaped by trauma, political repression, and personal guilt. His adoption of a new identity is not merely a psychological escape but a narrative device that reflects the disintegration of self in a society, where truth is dangerous and memory is a threat. Through this duality, Ndibe dramatises the inner turmoil of those silenced by history, whose sanity becomes a battleground for survival and resistance.

Split personality symbolically represents the fractured experience of post-colonial Nigerian society. Just as individuals fragment their identities to survive, the novel suggests that entire national identities are similarly split – negotiating between colonial legacies, traditional experiences, and contemporary challenges. The individual's psychological splitting becomes a microcosm of national psychological experiences. Each fragmented identity symbolises different historical and cultural experiences coexisting within a single narrative space. The personal becomes a metaphorical representation of the collective, where individual survival strategies mirror broader societal survival mechanisms. Bukuru symbolises the historical and cultural experiences where the military brutality on the Madia people is vividly portrayed, which contributes to his fragmented identity. Also, Iyese symbolises the contemporary challenges people face daily as she tries to survive in a dehumanising society. The violence inflicted on her by Major Isa Palat Bello portrays how the lower class survives in a lawless society.

Repression as a Coping Mechanism in *Arrows of Rain*

Repression is a psychological defence mechanism through which uncomfortable, threatening, or unacceptable thoughts, memories, and impulses are systematically pushed out of conscious awareness and into the unconscious mind. This process is not a voluntary act of forgetting, but an unconscious psychological strategy designed to preserve mental equilibrium and protect the individual from potentially overwhelming psychological pain (Freud, 1915, p. 148). Thus, the novel uses Bukuru's fractured psyche as a powerful narrative device to explore the enduring impact of trauma and the mind's unconscious strategies for self-preservation,

Freud identifies multiple forms of repression, each with distinct psychological characteristics (1915). Primal repression represents the initial psychological act of pushing unacceptable impulses out of consciousness. For example, Bukuru tells Mr. Femi that after witnessing the traumatic events in which Iyese is violently raped and stabbed in her vagina, the image of her keeps flooding his mind, and he decides not to visit her again not to associate himself with her (127). He does it to suppress the memories of her and the event that happen on that day. Also, repression involves the ongoing process of maintaining these psychological barriers, continuously blocking associated memories, thoughts, and emotional experiences from conscious recognition. This is seen as Bukuru refuses to accept the baby as his own when Violet, Iyese's

friend, tells him about it. He does everything to break any connection that links him to Iyese so that he can run away from his fears and live peacefully.

Crucially, repressed information is actively preserved in the unconscious mind rather than merely going away. Similar to a locked psychological vault, these memories and impulses persist, influencing a person's behaviour, emotions, and social relationships in subtle but significant ways. This is what Freud called the "return of the repressed" – the resurgence of suppressed experiences in other forms of psychological expression. This is explicitly articulated in the trajectory of the protagonist, Bukuru, who is trying to forget his memories of Iyese is reminded whenever he sees a helpless situation, just like Tay Tay. These triggers symbolise the re-emergence of unresolved trauma that continues to haunt his consciousness. This involuntary resurfacing of the past underscores the novel's exploration of how trauma is never truly buried but rather lives on beneath the surface of identity. Bukuru's struggle is not just a personal one but emblematic of a broader psychological condition in post-colonial contexts, where historical and individual traumas linger unresolved. His internal conflict reveals how repression, though initially a defence mechanism, can evolve into a chronic condition that fractures the self and distorts perception. Through Bukuru, Ndibe critiques the illusion of forgetting and exposes the enduring weight of suppressed truths.

The awful sight of Iyese's assault and murder, witnessed by Ogugua, left an indelible scar in his mind. He tries to repress the memories of those events, but they still have a powerful impact on his psyche, which leads to psychological distress. "As time passed, my guilt grew less acute; the image of Iyese seemed to fade..." (137). The excerpt shows the memories of Iyese begin to lose hold on him because he has kept the memories of her in his unconscious so as not to disturb his conscious thought. This portrays that the character uses repression as a coping mechanism to free his mind from any remembrance of Iyese, who was brutally murdered by Major Isa Palat Bello.

Furthermore, Iyese represses her memories and emotions by changing her name to Emilia to survive in her present world. She tries to hide her pain in her unconscious mind to live a comfortable life as a prostitute. She cannot sleep with anyone, who knows her as Iyese because to her, Emilia is a different entity that is not connected to Iyese. This division is created in the mind, which affects the subconscious, enabling her to live differently with one body and two identities. Her duality – living in one body but with split personalities exemplifies how repression can manifest as dissociation, enabling survival in emotionally hostile circumstances. This narrative dynamic reflects Freud's notion that repressed memories and identities often remain active in the unconscious, subtly shaping behaviour and emotional response. Iyese's coping strategy, while effective in the short term, hints at a deeper inner conflict – one that reveals how trauma does not simply disappear when buried but continues to influence the psyche.

In conclusion, repression in *Arrows of Rain* functions as both a psychological defence mechanism and a narrative tool that reveals the depth of trauma experienced by the characters. Faced with painful memories and harsh realities, they unconsciously push parts of themselves – names, identities, emotions into silence, just to keep going. But even when hidden, those repressed parts still shape how they speak, act, and relate to the world. The mind may try to forget, but the body

and behaviour remember. Repression allows them to function, but it also fragments who they are, revealing how trauma does not just leave scars – it changes how a person exists.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the concepts of split personality and repression in Okey Ndibe's *Arrows of Rain* open a compelling pathway for rethinking trauma narratives in literature. This exploration not only deepens the psychological reading of the text but also introduces a nuanced understanding of how trauma can fracture the mind. Through examining Bukuru and Iyese's experiences, this study shows how psychological trauma triggers both split personality and repression as survival mechanisms. After witnessing his girlfriend's murder, Bukuru's mind both blocks the memory and develops an unstable alternate self. Similarly, Iyese creates her Emilia identity while suppressing her original self. This research reveals that when faced with overwhelming trauma, the mind employs dual protective strategies- hiding painful memories while creating new identities to cope. These findings deepen our understanding of psychological trauma responses and their impact on identity formation, suggesting that effective healing requires addressing both buried memories and fractured identities. This study demonstrates that the boundaries between memory, identity, and survival are blurred in the face of trauma. What emerges is a complex portrayal of the human mind's effort to shield itself from psychological collapse. Ultimately, split repression and repression are not signs of weakness, but evidence of the mind's resilience in the aftermath of profound suffering.

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