



Perception Of Negative Attributes Of Single Motherhood, Their Causes And Consequences With Reference To The Selected Works Of Angie Thomas And Anna Quindlen

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Abstract

This paper explores the multifaceted portrayal of single motherhood and its intersection with trauma, as depicted in the selected works of Angie Thomas and Anna Quindlen. Through Thomas' "On the Come Up" and Quindlen's "Black and Blue," the narratives delve into the complex dynamics of domestic abuse, resilience, and societal stigma surrounding single parenthood. Quindlen's portrayal of Frannie's cyclical abuse and subsequent escape to Florida illustrates the enduring psychological impact of trauma on familial bonds, while Thomas' depiction of Jay's battle with addiction and her daughter Bri's quest for authenticity in the music industry sheds light on the intersecting challenges of race, class, and gender. Both authors confront readers with ethical dilemmas, societal perceptions, and the transformative power of community support in navigating the complexities of single parenthood amidst trauma and recovery. Through nuanced characterizations and compelling narratives, the works underscore the urgent need for trauma-informed interventions and destigmatization efforts to support survivors and challenge systemic oppression.

Keywords: perception, negative attributes, single motherhood, Angie Thomas, Anna Quindlen, Black and Blue, On the Come Up, domestic abuse, trauma, cyclical nature, patterns of control, violence, freedom, psychological impact, familial bonds, community support, resilience, moral dilemmas, societal attitudes, stigma, isolation, single parenthood, societal perceptions, societal challenges, trauma-informed interventions, intersectionality, race, gender, class, authenticity, representation, systemic oppression, institutional racism, resilience, empowerment.

Discussion

The perception of negative attributes of single motherhood, their causes, and consequences can be explored through the selected works of Angie Thomas and Anna Quindlen. In Anna Quindlen's "Black and Blue," Frannie's story epitomizes the cyclical nature of abuse, as she endures years of mistreatment at the hands of her husband, Bobby. The narrative illustrates how patterns of control and violence escalate over time, trapping victims in a cycle of fear and dependence. Frannie's decision to flee to Florida symbolizes her quest for freedom from

this cycle, showcasing the courage and determination required to break away from abusive relationships.

Frannie's relationship with her son, Robert, serves as a focal point for exploring the complex dynamics of trauma within families affected by abuse. Robert's conflicting emotions towards his father reflect the profound psychological impact of witnessing and experiencing domestic violence. The narrative delves into the emotional turmoil faced by both Frannie and Robert as they navigate their shattered family dynamics in the aftermath of abuse, highlighting the lasting scars left by trauma on familial bonds.

Amidst the darkness of abuse, the narrative illuminates the transformative power of community support in facilitating healing and recovery. Frannie's relationships with individuals like Mike and Cindy demonstrate the importance of solidarity and empathy in assisting survivors on their journey towards healing. Through these connections, the novel portrays the potential for resilience and growth in the face of adversity, emphasizing the significance of social networks in overcoming the isolation and stigma often associated with domestic violence.

Frannie's agonizing decision to prioritize her own safety over her relationship with her son raises profound ethical dilemmas regarding the complexities of survival and sacrifice in abusive situations. The narrative confronts readers with challenging questions about the limits of maternal instinct, the weight of self-preservation, and the difficult choices faced by victims of abuse. Frannie's internal struggle serves as a poignant reminder of the moral ambiguities inherent in navigating the fraught terrain of intimate partner violence, prompting readers to critically examine societal attitudes towards victimhood and agency in abusive relationships.

Despite Frannie's physical escape from her abuser, the novel poignantly portrays the enduring psychological scars left by trauma. Frannie's ongoing doubts and fears, as well as her profound grief over the loss of her son, underscore the profound and lasting impact of abuse on survivors' lives. The narrative serves as a sobering reminder of the long-term challenges faced by individuals in rebuilding their lives after escaping abusive relationships, highlighting the need for continued support and understanding in addressing the pervasive issue of domestic violence.

Frannie's journey as a single parent in the aftermath of escaping abuse delves into the profound complexities and challenges inherent in single parenthood within the context of trauma and recovery. As she navigates the unfamiliar territory of rebuilding her life in Florida, Frannie grapples not only with her own emotional scars but also with the responsibility of providing and caring for her son, Robert, amidst the upheaval of their fractured family dynamic.

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The narrative explores the unique struggles faced by Frannie as she assumes the role of sole caregiver and protector for Robert, bearing the weight of ensuring his safety and well-being in the absence of a traditional family structure. Frannie's efforts to shield Robert from the trauma of their past while fostering a sense of stability and security underscore the immense resilience and strength required of single parents in the face of adversity.

Frannie's experience as a single parent also highlights the profound sense of isolation and vulnerability that often accompanies the journey of rebuilding one's life after escaping abuse. Without the presence of a partner to share the burdens and joys of parenthood, Frannie must navigate the complexities of raising her son alone, grappling with feelings of loneliness and uncertainty as she strives to create a nurturing and supportive environment for Robert.

Moreover, the narrative delves into the societal perceptions and challenges faced by single parents, particularly those who are survivors of domestic violence. Frannie's decision to assume a new identity and forge a new life for herself and Robert underscores the stigma and judgment that single parents, especially those who have fled abusive relationships, may encounter in their communities. Frannie's journey sheds light on the importance of destigmatizing single parenthood and providing support and resources for survivors as they rebuild their lives and families in the aftermath of abuse.

Through Frannie's poignant portrayal as a single parent, the novel offers a nuanced exploration of the complexities and triumphs inherent in the journey of rebuilding one's life after escaping domestic violence. Frannie's unwavering determination to create a brighter future for herself and her son amidst the shadows of their past serves as a testament to the resilience and strength of single parents in the face of adversity.

Robert's experiences of domestic abuse have a profound impact on his psychological and emotional well-being. The constant exposure to violence and fear within the household leaves a lasting imprint on Robert's psyche, leading to feelings of anxiety, fear, and confusion. His internal conflict, manifested through his longing for his father despite knowing the harm he has caused, highlights the complex and often conflicting emotions experienced by children exposed to domestic violence.

Robert's relationship with his parents is deeply affected by the trauma of domestic abuse. His attachment to his father is fraught with ambivalence, as he grapples with feelings of love and loyalty towards Bobby despite the harm he inflicts on his family. Conversely, his relationship with his mother, Frannie, is characterized by a sense of dependence and protectiveness, as he seeks comfort and safety in her presence amidst the chaos of their turbulent family life.

Frannie's decision to assume a new identity and flee to Florida exacerbates Robert's sense of identity confusion and dislocation. Forced to adopt a new name and conceal his true identity, Robert struggles to reconcile his past with his present, grappling with feelings of alienation and loss. His inability to openly acknowledge his family history, as evidenced by his difficulty completing a family tree assignment, underscores the profound impact of secrecy and shame on his sense of self.

The trauma of domestic abuse complicates Robert's ability to form healthy interpersonal relationships outside of his immediate family. His experiences of betrayal and violence at the hands of his father leave him wary of trusting others, making it difficult for him to forge meaningful connections with peers and authority figures. Moreover, his sense of isolation and secrecy further exacerbates his struggles to navigate social interactions and form genuine bonds with others.

Robert's psychological trauma stemming from witnessing his father's abusive behavior towards his mother permeates his entire being, leaving indelible scars that shape his development and worldview. The constant exposure to violence and fear within the household creates a volatile emotional landscape for Robert, where feelings of anxiety, helplessness, and confusion become his normative experience.

At a tender age, Robert is thrust into the role of witness to the horrors of domestic abuse, an experience that not only shatters his innocence but also distorts his understanding of healthy familial dynamics. The trauma he endures manifests in a myriad of ways, including nightmares, hypervigilance, and emotional dysregulation. Even in moments of apparent calm, the specter of violence looms large, casting a shadow over his perception of safety and security.

Moreover, Robert's psychological trauma extends beyond the immediate aftermath of abusive incidents. The cumulative effect of sustained exposure to domestic violence leaves a lasting imprint on his psyche, shaping his beliefs about himself, others, and the world around him. He internalizes the message that violence is a normative aspect of intimate relationships, leading to distorted views on love, trust, and vulnerability.

Additionally, Robert's psychological trauma impedes his ability to develop healthy coping mechanisms to navigate life's challenges. The constant state of hyperarousal and hypervigilance ingrained by his experiences leaves him ill-equipped to regulate his emotions effectively, resulting in outbursts of anger, withdrawal, or dissociation as maladaptive coping strategies. Furthermore, Robert's psychological trauma undermines his sense of self-worth and agency, eroding his confidence and autonomy.

Overall, the psychological trauma inflicted upon Robert as a result of witnessing domestic abuse is profound and far-reaching, permeating every aspect of his being and leaving enduring scars that shape his emotional, cognitive, and relational development. Through Robert's harrowing journey, the narrative underscores the urgent need for trauma-informed interventions and support systems to mitigate the long-term effects of abuse on children like Robert.

In "On the Come Up," Angie Thomas delves deeply into the nuanced and pervasive impact of negative perceptions associated with single motherhood. Through the lens of Bri's family and her own experiences, Thomas paints a rich tapestry of the struggles, stereotypes, and societal barriers that single mothers and their children often face. At the heart of the narrative lies the character of Jay, Bri's mother, whose journey embodies the complexities of overcoming addiction, rebuilding a life, and combating the stigma attached to her past.

Jay's battle with addiction, despite her years of sobriety, is a central theme that reverberates throughout the novel. Thomas sensitively portrays the challenges Jay encounters in finding stable employment, a predicament exacerbated by the societal prejudice against individuals with a history of addiction. Despite her determination and resilience, Jay finds herself trapped in a cycle of rejection and judgment, forced to confront the harsh reality that her past continues to dictate her present circumstances.

Through Jay's character, Thomas explores the intersectionality of race and single motherhood, shedding light on the disproportionate burden placed on Black women in navigating systemic barriers and societal expectations. Jay's struggles reflect broader patterns of discrimination and marginalization faced by Black single mothers, who often contend with limited economic opportunities, social stigma, and the pervasive myth of the "welfare queen."

Moreover, Thomas interrogates the impact of these negative perceptions on familial dynamics and individual identity. Jay's efforts to provide for her children and create a stable home environment are constantly undermined by external judgments and internalized shame, highlighting the emotional toll of societal condemnation on single mothers and their families. Bri, as Jay's daughter, grapples with the weight of her mother's past and the external pressures that shape her own aspirations and self-image.

Bri's journey as a budding rapper serves as a poignant exploration of identity, authenticity, and the commodification of Black culture within the music industry. As she navigates the predominantly white spaces of her suburban school and the wider hip-hop scene, Bri confronts entrenched stereotypes and expectations that seek to define her according to narrow and limiting narratives. Her passion for rap becomes both a vehicle for self-

expression and a battleground where she must assert her agency in the face of erasure and misrepresentation.

Central to Bri's narrative arc is her quest for authenticity and autonomy in an industry rife with exploitation and appropriation. Thomas deftly examines the tension between artistic integrity and commercial success, as Bri grapples with the pressure to conform to marketable images and performative personas. The character of Supreme, Lawless's former manager, embodies the predatory nature of the music industry, exploiting Bri's talent and vulnerability for financial gain while perpetuating harmful stereotypes and narratives.

Through Bri's interactions with Supreme and other industry figures, Thomas underscores the commodification of Black pain and trauma within mainstream media and entertainment. Bri's reluctance to perpetuate harmful stereotypes clashes with Supreme's cynical manipulation of her image, highlighting the ethical dilemmas faced by artists of color navigating an industry that profits from their marginalization and exploitation.

Furthermore, Thomas interrogates the role of representation and visibility in challenging and subverting dominant narratives of Blackness and single motherhood. Bri's insistence on speaking her truth and reclaiming her narrative through her music embodies a powerful act of resistance against the erasure and marginalization of her community. Her refusal to compromise her authenticity or dilute her message for mainstream appeal underscores the importance of self-determination and self-representation in confronting systemic oppression and reclaiming agency.

The novel's exploration of the intersectionality of race, gender, and class illuminates the complex web of privilege and prejudice that shapes individual experiences and collective identities. Bri's navigation of predominantly white spaces highlights the enduring legacy of segregation and systemic inequality, as she contends with microaggressions, stereotypes, and institutional barriers that perpetuate social and economic disparities. Through Bri's interactions with classmates, teachers, and authority figures, Thomas exposes the insidious nature of racism and the ways in which it manifests in everyday interactions and institutional practices.

Moreover, the novel interrogates the complicity of white institutions and individuals in perpetuating racial inequality and perpetuating harmful stereotypes. The character of the school principal, who defends the violent actions of security guards and blames Bri for her own victimization, epitomizes the systemic bias and institutional racism that permeate educational systems and law enforcement agencies. His dismissal of Bri's concerns and his willingness to prioritize the comfort and convenience of white students and faculty underscore the pervasive nature of white supremacy and the ways in which it operates to maintain power and privilege.

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Throughout the novel, Thomas challenges readers to confront their own biases and assumptions about race, class, and gender, urging them to interrogate the ways in which they contribute to and perpetuate systems of oppression and inequality. By centering the experiences and perspectives of marginalized characters, she invites readers to empathize with their struggles and recognize the humanity and dignity inherent in their stories. Through Bri's journey of self-discovery and empowerment, Thomas offers a powerful testament to the resilience, strength, and beauty of Black single mothers and their children, affirming their right to exist and thrive in a world that too often seeks to diminish and dehumanize them.

In conclusion, the selected works of Angie Thomas and Anna Quindlen offer a nuanced exploration of the complexities and challenges inherent in single parenthood, particularly in the context of trauma and recovery. Through the poignant portrayals of Frannie and Robert, the narratives highlight the profound impact of domestic abuse on individuals and families, emphasizing the importance of community support, resilience, and determination in overcoming adversity.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the selected works of Angie Thomas and Anna Quindlen provide a rich tapestry of narratives that deeply explore the complexities and challenges inherent in single parenthood, particularly within the context of trauma and recovery. Through poignant characterizations and intricate storytelling, both authors delve into the profound impact of domestic abuse on individuals and families, highlighting the cyclical nature of violence, the resilience required to break free from abusive relationships, and the lasting psychological scars left in its wake.

Quindlen's "Black and Blue" vividly portrays Frannie's harrowing journey of escaping abuse, shedding light on the enduring psychological trauma and the profound ethical dilemmas faced by survivors. Frannie's struggles with societal stigma, isolation, and the complexities of single parenthood underscore the urgent need for community support and trauma-informed interventions to facilitate healing and recovery.

Similarly, Thomas' "On the Come Up" offers a nuanced exploration of single motherhood through the lens of Bri's family, delving into the intersecting challenges of race, class, and gender. Through Jay's battle with addiction and Bri's quest for authenticity in the music industry, the novel exposes the systemic barriers and societal prejudices that perpetuate the marginalization of single mothers and their children.

Both authors confront readers with challenging questions about societal attitudes, moral ambiguities, and the transformative power of community support in navigating the

complexities of single parenthood amidst trauma and recovery. Through their compelling narratives, Thomas and Quindlen underscore the resilience, strength, and agency of single parents and their children, affirming their right to exist and thrive in a world that too often seeks to diminish and dehumanize them.

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