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Can the Raped Woman Speak?: a Study of Coetzee's *Disgrace* and Drakulic's S: A *Novel about the Balkans*

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Preface

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The thesis explores the representation of rape in literature, with special reference to John Maxwell Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999) and Slavenka Drakulić's *S.: A Novel about the Balkans* (1999). Rape is a deeply felt trauma that has its moral, social and psychological effects not only on the victim him/herself, as rape is defined in gender-neutral terms, but also on society at large. Its practice is rooted in ancient history and could be traced to the present time. Rape is such a devastating, horrifying experience that sometimes women victims are unable to speak about. Literature has always been the domain in which this traumatic experience has found expression. The role of literature is to uncover what is barred from expression. Literature has the ability to represent the unrepresentable; hence, rape archetype has been depicted in many literary works in different societies, by different authors, during different eras and during different political and racial conflicts.

Within this perspective, this study aims at showing the fictional texts of Coetzee and Drakulić as two novels that represent the experience of rape where both the patriarchal and the colonial ideologies collaborate in silencing and oppressing the women characters. There is an ancient metaphor which equates "land with women and women with land" (Faulkner). During war and conflict times, large groups, especially women, are abused and exposed to the most devastating form of abuse: rape. Hence, women become the territory upon which violence is inscribed.

The thesis is sustained by post-colonial feminist theories; since the colonial and the patriarchal overlap. Moreover, since rape is a fundamental human experience, so psychoanalytical theories inform the analysis of rape attempted in this thesis. Hence, the research relies on a number of relevant theories and schools related to but not exclusively postcolonial. The views of Ania Loomba, Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, Frantz Fanon, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and Hélène Cixous will be employed to analyse the texts. It is worthy of mentioning that it is the interlocking of these theories which informs the methodology behind this research. The thesis does not

claim that it can provide an explanation of these theories' main preoccupations.

Chapter one demonstrates the different literary representations of rape throughout different periods and cultures. The works that will be discussed are Classical, British, American, African American and Arabic. An analysis of these works aims at showing how much raped women are victimised by the rape experience, patriarchal ideology, and colonial ideology and sometimes by their own selves leading inevitably to their silence.

Chapter two discusses, in *Disgrace* and *S.*, the relationships between women's bodies and land. The sexual and the colonial relationships are examined showing how women's bodies are used and abused for the benefit of men and how this is a manifestation of the acquisition of territory. The events of the novels take place in the light of post-apartheid South Africa and in Bosnia during the Balkans war respectively.

The rape experience has many consequences on the raped woman and on others around her. Nevertheless, the concern of this paper is rape and its aftermath on the victim rather than those around her. As the consequences of rape on the victim's body are discussed, the consequences on her psyche are mandatory to discuss. The psyche of the victim and her suffering during and post rape are the focus of the third chapter. Post-rape trauma is also tackled in an attempt to show how much the rape victim suffers. The psychological consequences of rape and its trauma are discussed in the light of the views of Sigmund Freud and Cathy Caruth.

Chapter three also refers to the problem of representing the rape experience. Since the two texts under investigation are written by male and female authors, thus problems of representation arise. The problem lies in whether the rape experience should be represented or not. If yes, then the problem of how it can be represented and who can represent it arise. Hence, the appropriateness and possibility of speaking for the raped woman is discussed in chapter three in the light of the views of Hélène Cixous and Gayatri Spivak.

Chapter One

Archetypal Representation of Rape

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The rape experience has been tackled in many literary productions since the dawn of history. Since ancient literary productions are mostly written by men, the rape experience – mainly a woman based experience - is represented from an outsider's view point; moreover, the texts are sometimes female prejudiced. This chapter will examine the archetypal representations of rape in a number of literary works ranging from the ancient ones till the modern ones written in English and in Arabic. These literary works are: Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (1 A.C.E.), William Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* (1594), "Rape of Lucrece" (1594), Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* (1747-1748), E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924), William Faulkner's *Sanctuary* (1931), Joyce Carol Oates's *Rape: a Love Story* (2003), Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982) and Fuad Al-Takarli's *The Long Way Back* (1980).

Archetypal analysis takes "the literary work out of its individual and conventional context and relates it to humankind in general" (Knapp X). The famous psychologist Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) highlighted the theory of "collective unconscious", which he believes connects the artistic creations throughout history and across cultures. He defines the collective unconscious as:

> the reservoir of our experiences as a species, a kind of knowledge we are all born with … It influences all of our experiences and behaviors, most especially the emotional ones, but we only know about it indirectly, by looking at those influences … The contents of the collective unconscious are called archetypes (Boeree).

Archetype is a "pattern or prototype of character types, images, descriptive details, and plot patterns that find their way from our minds to our myths to our literature to our lives" (Kharbe 328).

One of the collective experiences, which many have suffered from across ages and cultures, is rape. Rape as a collective experience has found expression in many literary works throughout history and

across cultures thus connecting the artistic creations around the world and across time and place. As Jung states "archetypal or primordial images, which emerge from the deepest layers of the unconscious, are found in myths, legends, literary works the world over and from time immemorial" (Knapp xi). The rape archetype serves different aims and plays different roles in each historical era and in each culture. This is determined by the era in which the rape archetype is presented, and the viewpoint from which the rape experience is presented.

It is closely related to gender which refers to "the distinctions cultures make between people and things based on the idea of sexual difference … Though gender systems vary, however, what does not change from culture to culture, period to period, is the persistence of gender difference as a central system for organizing society" (Howard 411). Gender has been ignored by male myth critics of the 1950s and 1960s "in their scientific classifications of myths and archetypes" (Mythological and Archetypal approaches). Accordingly, archetypes related to gender have been equally ignored. Moreover, the rape archetype is a shameful enough topic to be ignored, hidden, denied and negated.

The most famous literary work that dealt with the rape archetype and in fact has been the model on which other literary productions are based is: Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In the Sixth Book of *Metamorphoses*, the rape archetype is presented through the infamous story of Philomela.

In Ovid's work the rape archetype is presented through Philomela's rape. She is first described within the boundaries of the female stereotype. She is "virgin", "divine" and "defenseless". Philomela is raped and had her tongue cut off by her sister's husband, Tereus. There is a "persistence of powerful archetypal narrative explicitly connecting rape, silencing and the complete erasure of feminine subjectivity" (Cutter). Philomela has been raped and silenced; hence, she has neither voice nor free will.

Living in a patriarchal society which is "a social system based on male domination and female subordination" (Bryson), condemns

Philomela. The Roman society highly valued honour which results in the making of a strong relationship between a female's chastity and her father's, brother's, and husband's honour. Hence, Philomela's rape makes her responsible for the loss of her male kinship's honour. She does not spare herself the guilt; she thinks that being raped, means she is stained and deserves to be punished. What increases her suffering is that she is burdened with the sense of guilt that the patriarchal values impose on women.

Nevertheless, Philomela is not passive, she thinks of a way to deliver her voice to her sister through waving a tapestry. The death of speech "brings about the birth of writing: Philomela's weaving, which Sophocles called 'the voice of the shuttle', functions as a text in which the story of the rape may be deciphered" (Ellmann 34). She and her sister avenge themselves by killing Itys, her sister and Tereus' son. However, such an alternative voice is not praised by Ovid; as the myth "suggests that an assertion of alternative feminine voice merely imprisons women all the more exhaustively in pejorative master texts that make men, as Procne says, the 'author of our evils' " (Cutter). The final revenge by the two sisters is brutal. In the end "the gods intervene: the three are turned into birds. But paradoxically, this change changes nothing. *Metamorphosis* preserves the distance necessary to the structure of dominance and submission: in the final tableau all movement is frozen. Tereus will never catch the sisters, but neither will the women ever cease their flight" (Klindienst). Thus in the end of the story, women are remembered as being more violent and cruel than the man.

Having read Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Shakespeare bases his *Titus Andronicus* on this ancient work. The archetypal representation of rape in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* demonstrates the power of the masculine over the feminine. It is a play "which dramatizes relationships between representations of virginity, chastity and rape and constructions of masculine power" (Harris). In the second act of the play, Lavinia, the victim, "refuses to name rape; she refers to an impending sexual assault as that which "womanhood denies my tongue to tell" and as a "worse-than-killing lust" (2.3.174, 175). Lavinia's refusal "to say the word 'rape' reminds the audience that even to speak

of rape brings a woman shame" (Detmer-Goebel). It is also part of the "silencing" associated with such an experience.

The original meaning of the word "rape" heightens the male authority over the female. Originally, "rape" "meant 'theft', and the crime was understood as an offence against male property, a theft of woman from her rightful owners … [Women have been] regarded as a more or less transparent medium through which men insult, assault and prey on other men" (Ellmann 36). This is clearly shown in the actions of the male characters when the word "rape" is mentioned. The word "rape" is first introduced when Bassianus declares Lavinia his. Saturninus calls his brother's action "rape" and Titus- her father- describes it as an action which "dishonour[s]" him. It seems that in Shakespeare's play the first meaning of 'rape' is "the abduction of a woman … as [a] property ... 'Honour', then, is a function of ownership" (Harris), it is primarily in regard to Lavinia's body, and most especially in regard to her maidenhead, that Titus can mark his power as specifically masculine. Lavinia's silence regarding Bassianus's declaration shows assent to his action, which suggests the breach of Titus's masculine authority. Shakespeare does not present Lavinia as a victim or a woman that is voiceless since the beginning of the play. Eventually, she undergoes two kinds of silence; voluntary and involuntary.

Shortly before the rape Lavinia comments on the love scene between Tamora, the queen of Goths, and Aaron the Moor saying "let her joy her raven-coloured love; / This valley fits the purpose passing well" (2.3. 83-84). Lavinia's remarks are not only contemptuous but also sexually knowing. In effect, Lavinia is

> punished, by rape, for her nascent sexuality and independent voice. The rape fixes her, within the play, within the theater, and within the critical discourse, as an object of pity. Thus the rape achieves the goal of ensuring that Lavinia will not be powerful, but will be frozen in a posture of dependence and humiliation. (Marshall)

This serves the patriarchal society's values.

Like Philomela, Lavinia was raped and her tongue was cut off by the queen of Goths' sons: Demetrius and Chiron. Lavinia was "[r]avished and wronged, as Philomela was" (4.1. 52). However, unlike Philomela, her hands were cut off to prevent her from telling who the perpetrators were: "[Lavinia] hath no tongue to call, nor hands to wash … If thou [Lavinia] hadst hands to help thee knit the cord" (2.4. 7&10). Lavinia's involuntary silence makes it impossible for her to tell about her misfortune, which is contrasted to her first voluntary silence that led her to the union with her lover/husband Bassianus. Her "eventual discovery of the Ovidian text comes as a great relief to her family and to the audience" (Marshall). The deeds of Tamora's sons are revealed and through the use of the phallic symbol of the stick, Lavinia is able to regain her power. Hence, Lavinia is unable to refer to what happened except with the help of the masculine power, even if this power is represented as a mere symbol.

Lavinia's revenge desire is doubtful. She joins the kneeling circle who swears to take "[m]ortal revenge upon these traitorous Goths, /And see their blood, or die with this reproach" (4.1.93-94). Nevertheless, the other alternatives available to her are madness and death, and as Titus says, "What violent hands can she lay on her life?" (3.2.25). Lavinia is violated, without either a tongue or hands, she is left with no communicational means but her gestures which requires that she should be looked at rather than heard. She has no other choice but to participate in her kinsmen's plot.

Lavinia was killed in the end by the hands of her own father because she was "enforced, stained, and deflowered" (5.3. 38) and because "the girl should not survive her shame, / and by her presence still renew his sorrows" (5.3. 40-1). The third scene of the fourth act presents Titus re-establishing himself as the powerful phallic male. Titus had lost sexual control of his daughter after her abuse at the hands of Demetrius and Chiron, the only way he repossesses her is through her death. Her brother does not stir at the sight of his sister's killing. However, he kills the king without hesitation the moment the king kills Titus; his father. The 'insinuating hussy' "has been silenced, and no chance remains of knowing Lavinia's thoughts or feelings ... [Her rape

experience] and ensuing muteness comprehends the history of too many women to be thus contextualized" (Marshall).

In the Elizabethan Age, the Scottish protestant leader John Knox wrote: "woman in her greatest perfection was made to serve and obey man" (445). Women were regarded as "the weaker sex". It was believed that women always needed someone to look after them (Elizabethan Women). With these concepts in mind the Elizabethan Age continued to oppress and suppress women. Shakespeare based "Rape of Lucrece" on Livy's *History of Rome* and Ovid's *Fasti* (Hendricks 88) alongside with an English work: Chaucer's *The Legend of Good Women* (Cousins 53).

Women's bodies in Shakespeare's Roman works have special roles and stand for special sets of values in an intensely patriarchal society, women are "values convenient to Roman men: chastity, domesticity, and silence" (Leggatt 236). "Rape of Lucrece" is a "founded myth of patriarchy" (Kahn 259). In this Elizabethan literary work "speech and rhetoric are inextricably related to gender, sexuality, and power" (Kahn 261). In this poem Lucrece is raped by Tarquin; a noble friend of her husband. Shakespeare constructs Lucrece's dilemma so as to "expose not only the contradictions she experiences as a woman in patriarchy, but the thinking and the institutions that create them" (Kahn 261). Unable completely to absolve herself of some degree of complicity, "Yet am I guilty of thy honour's wrack;/Yet for thy honour did I entertain him" (841-2), "she embraces the role of both judge and executioner to expiate her "crime" – even though she must rely on her husband, father and kin to punish Tarquin for his actions" (Hendricks 89). Shakespeare used the rape archetype to vouchsafe the patriarchal values; one of these patriarchal values is to condemn women. A Woman's chastity is highly valued and it resides mainly in her sexuality;

> according to the norms of chastity by which Lucrece is governed, a woman's sexuality is her shame, and must be modestly concealed. Even then the shame of the rape is concealed by darkness that shame 'most doth tyrannize,' because for Lucrece it resides not in what can be seen of her but in her awareness of what Tarquin has done to her body. (Kahn 265)

Like Philomela, Lucrece, in the poem, is described according to the female stereotype. She is a “dove”: “The dove sleeps fast that this night-owl will catch” (360). The “dove” is white which shows the purity of Lucrece. It also indicates fragility and weakness. These are the characteristics of the “good” woman in the Elizabethan patriarchal society. While the male figure: Tarquin - compared to Tereus- is a bird of prey; a “falcon” (511).

Sometimes “women have been associated with the body and men with reason” (Howard 411), Shakespeare used a close contrast between males and females. This contrast highlights the patriarchal thoughts that Shakespeare was preaching: “For men have marble, women waxen, minds” (1240). Stressing the difference between men and women with the privilege of men, Shakespeare maintains that women cannot hide the shame and guilt while men can: “Though men can cover crimes with bold stern looks, / Poor women's faces are their own faults' books” (1252-3) because of the “weak” nature of women: “Make weak-made women tenants to their shame” (1260). Though Shakespeare has “given tongue” to a heroine who hardly speaks at all in Livy or in Ovid, Lucrece is not a free agent. First, Lucrece was denied her voice before the rape. In the Ovidian tradition “rape is the call that interpellates the female subject” (Kahn 265). Lucrece’s words are quoted for almost 1,000 lines (747-1722) since the threat of rape. When she finally speaks, her speech reinscribes Collatine’s claim to her body rather than makes any claim of her own. Though a mere body after she commits suicide the male authority over her does not cease: her father and brother call her “his”; “The one doth call her his, the other his” (1793). Like Lavinia, Lucrece's death solves the problem. The problem is solved either by suicide to show the importance of honour or by “mercy” killing to save her and ease the sorrow of her owner.

After stabbing herself, Lucrece’s “bleeding body”, understood by the “Romans as an icon of their newly won republican liberty, must also be read as a disturbing after-image of how patriarchy – whether in monarchical or republican form – configures the feminine” (Kahn 271). In the end, the private matter is taken to the public and political spheres. Lucrece’s suffering is used by Brutus- a man who is not one of

her family members- to change the state government from kings to consuls. Brutus also suggests that Lucrece's body would be carried and revealed to all the Romans so they can know what befell her. The private suffering of Lucrece is used for political reasons and exposed for everyone, while she is a dead body. Like Lavinia, Lucrece's revenge is performed by the phallus figure as "Lord Junius Brutus sware for Lucrece's rape" (4.1. 90).

Women, money and land are "commodities which males desire and exchange among themselves in the form of transactions and alliances" (Saigol 110). The rape archetype has been also used in the poem in relation to the colonial endeavour that pervaded the Elizabethan Age. The "sexual promise of the woman's body indicates the wealth promised by the colonies" (Loomba 73), as the Elizabethan age is one of colonial expansion "English imperialism required such a narrative" (Hendricks 93). Therefore, Lucrece in the eyes of Tarquin is like the undiscovered land: beautiful, mysterious and attractive. "She is colonized: in his eyes she becomes a body of claimed territory that, as he tells it, lies subject to his autocratic rule" (Cousins 78).

The rape archetype has been used to propagate patriarchal values in many works. Samuel Richardson also used the rape archetype to stress patriarchal values of condemning women and confirming the male authority over them. Richardson's Clarissa is an epistolary novel that presents the rape of Clarissa, who is first presented as a religious, virtuous, obedient and loyal daughter to her father. She fulfils all the criteria of the "good" child and woman of the eighteenth century's patriarchal values prevailing then. It was expected of her to accept the suitor that her father thinks best for her because "[t]raditionally parents were regarded as having the authority to arrange a child's marriage, and the child was expected to accept their decision. Such a view follows naturally from the idea of the father as God's proxy in the family" (Parent-child Relationship). Neither her family, nor the eighteenth century reader would expect an obedient daughter to go against her father's will especially in such an important matter as marriage. In his *The Whole Duty of Man*, Richard Allestree asserted: "of all the acts of disobedience ... that of marrying against the consent of the parent is one of the highest [because] children are so much the goods, the