

# Defilement of Women in Literature

## Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to study the sexual violence, male aggression, victimization of the black women, incest love, rape in literature specially in the black literature. Toni Morrison has dealt with violence in each novel in a unique way. Buchi Emecheta, Seffi Atta, J.M.Coetzee all have spoken and highlighted rape in their novels which is unspoken by many. The sexual assault on the black women is the real cause of their agony and violence in the community which remains unnamable and women have to suffer in silence. Literature is filled with aggression and violence against women. Women have to be strong, powerful in handling of this heinous crime against them. It's a brave attempt at highlighting an issue and the crime that exists in our society.

**Keywords:** Violence, Aggression, Oppression, Community, Culture, Tradition, Rape and Silence.

## Introduction

Nirbhaya case shook the country in 2012 and the problem of women's safety was discussed at every forum but till today no solution has been found. The culprits have not been brought to justice till today. Lately Hyderabad's rape case has brought out rage among women organization, activist, politicians and common people. This shows that women are unsafe anywhere. The victims have to suffer and keep silent about their agony.

In cultural literature while teaching about sexual violence, abduction, abuse, maltreatment of females, rape is been mentioned in Greek mythology too it has been in existence since ancient times. History talks about it. Literature is filled with aggression and violence against women.

Sexual assault is a topic many would like to ignore in public conversation and understandably so. Morrison's preface to *The Bluest Eye* shows that her goal was to shape the silence around the unspeakable. Women are denied human rights from the cradle to the grave. Sexual abuse, violence, male aggression, domination, domestic violence and flesh trade are gnawing evils, which threatens the existence of women as independent entities. Thoughts on sexual violence are difficult to articulate because of the deep repugnance the idea elicits in much of humanity. It is an unthinkable abuse of power and violation of another human being's rights, "choice theft" as China Mieville called it in his novel *Perdido Street Station* (2000). It is a crime with devastating emotional impact on the attacked and also on those who know him or her.

It is a crime easier not to think about, which is of course why so much literature on the topic has focused on lifting the veil, forcing our attention to the crime and its aftermath. Rape is a weapon to subjugate women. The women are unsafe everywhere. Justice prides herself on being blind to everything but the truth-yet as far as rape is concerned, the facts paint a different picture. Rape can occur anywhere even in the family, where it can take the form of marital rape or incest. It occurs in the community, where a woman can fall prey to any abuser. It also occurs in situation of armed conflict and in refugee camps.

## Aim of the Study

The aim of this paper is to explore the sexual violence in Toni Morrison's and Buchi Emecheta's novels and black literature. Toni Morrison's novels focus on its exploration of violence and guilt, reading it both alongside and against dominant psychoanalytic conceptions derived from Freud, Lacan and Žižek's deployment of both. Sexual violence is a consequence of a dehumanized perception of female bodies that aggressors acquire through their exposure and interpretation of *objectified* body images. Sexual assault is a pressing and prevalent concern in our society and in the African society. Writers have tried to highlight not only the trauma experienced by rape victims due to their



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assault, but also the secondary victimization many victims experience due to the negative reactions of those around them. Of these negative reactions, perhaps the most harmful is the frequent tendency to blame the victim for their assault. The rape committed by Cholly of his own daughter is the most significant event in the novel: it speaks simultaneously to the exclusion of women (especially African American women) from the national narrative by the refusal of the state or community to address the violation immediately and seriously, as well as the fact that the cyclical nature of sexual abuse in the novel is ignored or attributed to class, when it actually speaks to larger issues of race and gender discrimination. Pecola's story exposes that national narratives concerned with the Civil Rights and feminist movements of the 1960s fail to convey the horrific experiences of many African American women, whose contributions to either were often downplayed by African American men, who, feeling emasculated by white society as a whole, adopted overbearing patriarchal roles in their own communities, sometimes resorting to violence and abuse, or what Kobena Mercer describes as how 'the repressed returns through the means of repression' ('Decolonisation and Disappointment')

African American women have had a long-standing feminist tradition that is not frequently considered – and was often overlooked by the feminist movement's narrative. Nineteenth century activists like Sojourner Truth or Maria W. Stewart set the stage for the movement. In addition, the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs was established in 1896, with the National Council of Negro Women following in 1935. Indeed there were myriad other committees and organizations founded in the 1960s alone. Of especial importance to the conversation here, though, was the Black Women's Liberation Committee of 1968, founded by, amongst others, Francis Beal. Beal's 1969 essay, 'Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female' appeared in the anthology entitled *The Black Woman*. In the essay, she discusses deep fissure between African American men and women: 'It is true that our husbands, fathers, brothers, and sons have been emasculated, lynched, and brutalized. They have suffered from the cruellest assault of mankind that the world has ever known. However, it is a gross distortion of fact to state that black women have oppressed black men'. Tonni's discussion here makes clear that a persistent problem in the African American community at this time was the blaming of women for the oppression and injustice often experienced by men, socially and economically. This goes a long way in explaining Cholly's behavior towards not only Pecola, but Pauline as well, who he is often physically abusive to, seemingly for no reason at all.

Aside from the degrading and difficult work of the steel mills, which obviously cause Cholly to drink more often, or come home and just fall asleep instead of spending time with Pauline and the children, we discover towards the end of the novel that Cholly has experienced sexual degradation at the hand of a white man. This scene from his youth speaks further to the cyclical nature of sexual violence

in the text. Having experienced this as a young adult and never having addressed the trauma of it, Cholly repeats the same behaviors with his own daughter.

At the funeral for his Aunt Jimmy, Cholly runs off into the woods with another teenager, Darlene, with the intention of having sex with her. As Darlene cries out, 'staring wildly at something over his shoulder,' Cholly turns around to find two white men staring at them as they are naked under a tree. When he 'jumped, trying to kneel, stand, and get his pants up all in one motion,' Cholly discovers that the men have long guns and flashlights pointed at his rear. Holding him at gunpoint, they tell him to 'get on wid it, nigger' and 'make it good, nigger, make it good'. When the men finally get distracted by a barking dog in the distance and leave Cholly and Darlene in the woods, Cholly begins dressing himself in silence and instead of feeling badly about what had just happened, he feels hatred for Darlene, even wanting to strangle her. It is as though Cholly immediately blames her for what has happened. Afterward, we follow Cholly as he goes about his chores the next day, never mentioning to anyone what happened to him that night.

By literally being silent about the violence, it is as though Cholly is making an effort to deny that it ever occurred. This sexual violence also equates with other kinds of violence perpetrated against African Americans at this time. Because they know they are free to do so and that they would never be held responsible for their actions, the white men physically stand over Cholly and force him to have sex with Darlene as they watch and giggle. When they hear their dog barking, they casually wander off to locate it, still chuckling about the sex act that they just witnessed. At other points in the novel, white characters shamelessly mistreat Pecola, or the MacTeer sisters, like light-skinned Maureen Peel, for example, because they know they will get away with it. The shame is then seemingly absorbed by the victim, which explains why Darlene covers her eyes, disengages emotionally from what she is being forced to participate in physically. Seeing how this scene in many ways silences Cholly is an integral part to understanding how his misplaced shame and anger is able to then drive him to do the same to his daughter.

In Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* we find two important themes intertwined through the imagery of seeds, flowers, and "unyielding" land: Pecola's deluded desire for blue eyes, for beauty based on a white ideal, and Pecola's misarrying her father's child. In the second chapter, Pecola's childhood friend Claudia narrates:

*"Quiet as it's kept, there were no marigolds in the fall of 1941. We thought, at the time, that it was because Pecola was having her father's baby that the marigolds did not grow. A little examination and much less melancholy would have proved to us that our seeds were not the only ones that did not grow; nobody's did. [...] It never occurred to either of us that the earth itself might have been unyielding. We had dropped our seeds in our own little plot of black dirt just as Pecola's father had dropped his seeds in his*

own plot of black dirt. Our innocence and faith were no more productive than his lust or despair.”

Sexual abuse occurs when an adult uses a child for sexual purposes or involves a child in sexual acts. In *The Bluest Eye*, father of Pecola, Cholly is often drunk and beats his wife and children. He rapes his own daughter, Pecola, and as a result, she becomes pregnant with his child. Cholly is notorious for his indiscipline and awkwardness. In one of his drunken stupors, he lights his own house on fire and burns it down. He is a dreadful father to both his kids. He neither shows love towards his family nor is available to listen to their problems. He is absent most of the times. His blackness angers him, eventually leads him to believe he is ugly and disagreeable. He strongly believes that he does not deserve a better life. He always uses his anger negatively by hurting those around him.

Pecola is an easy prey to Cholly because she is a child and has no power or control over adults. She is a female and no knowledge has been imparted to her to oppose any form of oppression. Eventually, Pecola has to face sexual abuse at the hands of her father Cholly. He rapes her twice. She is forced to participate in a horrendous sexual act, which is just intended towards the physical gratification of her father. He rapes her regardless of the outcome. He is more powerful than Pecola, so makes her the victim. This is a form of incest, which leaves Pecola in a psychological trauma. Cholly's rape results in impregnating Pecola. The whole community, both the blacks and whites starts to hate her for carrying her father's baby. Social stigma of Pecola's sexual abuse compounds her psychological harm. By raping Pecola, her father has killed her infinite number of times. Her mother Pauline neglected Pecola's complaints to her and beat her. By neglecting her and not consoling her, Pauline indirectly made Pecola die an infinite number of times. Seneca in the novel *Paradise*, is also an abandoned girl. She is abandoned by her mother at a very early age and she starts to live a lonely life. Both her mother and sister have abandoned her, until child services discovered her and put her into foster care. In the foster house, her stepbrother starts to sexually abuse her. She is tormented by physical and sexual abuse at her early life. This transforms her into a neurotic. Her behavior becomes weird and she does not accept and adjust easily with others. She becomes an introvert. She escapes torture during her time in foster care by self-mutilation and she believes it garners positive attention. She becomes a neurotic and self-harms her by cutting her forearm during times of distress. Seneca is the Pecola of *Paradise*. The character Consolata in the novel *Paradise* also experiences childhood abuse, and was later rescued by Mary Magna at the age of nine.

A similar character, *Sorrow*, in the novel *A Mercy* also suffers sexual abuse at her foster family, who rescued her after a shipwreck. She is portrayed to be in the state of a pitiful mongrel, who is violated by all means. She is the Pecola of *A Mercy*. Rain in the novel *God Help the Child* also experiences sexual abuse and molestation through her mother. Rain even

before the age six had to endure atrocious life because of her mother, who is a prostitute. Hannah is another character in the same novel and is abused by her father. She is the daughter of Queen, Booker's aunt. Hannah is molested by her own father, which Queen was not ready to accept. Later, she understood the issue and forever was sorry for her negligence and repented until her death. However, she failed like Pauline to act in the appropriate time. Queen had many husbands and was blind to see her daughter suffer. Queen, —was rumored to have had many husbands—one a Mexican, then two white men, four black men, one Asian, but in a sequence no one recalled. Once, Booker says of Hannah to Bride, —There was a thing with Hannah. Rumor in the family was that Queen ignored or dismissed the girl's complaint about her father—the Asian one, I believe, or the Texan. I don't know. Anyway she said he fondled her and Queen refused to believe it (*God Help the Child*). Both Rain and Hannah are the Pecolas of the novel *God Help the Child*.

In Nigerian society, rape is a taboo subject, not to be discussed or written about. However, this does not mean that rape does not happen in Nigerian society. Rape is defined as sexual intercourse forced upon a female without her consent. Rape also happens “by threat of bodily harm or forced upon the woman when she is helpless”. In *The Family*, rape is a common motif and theme which not only reflects physical usurpation of the female body but also an extreme act of objectifying women. Emecheta writes about this unspoken taboo in society to create consciousness of the challenges young female characters face physically, mentally and emotionally when this form of violence, reflective of the male desire for power, is imposed on female characters to keep them subjugated. The *Family* explores Emecheta's representation of the young female character's growth into womanhood. Gwendolen experiences “double rape” in her life, by Uncle Johnny, a trusted neighbor and her father Winston. In her experience of rape, Gwendolen's emotional security is shattered by these male figures in her life that were meant to protect her. When Uncle Johnny forces himself on her, “the iron grip over her mouth”, Gwendolen can hardly believe that this was the man “who used to bring her...sweets and lemonade drinks...[and] rub oil on her grazed knee”. He threatens her to keep “this our secret” making her believe that people will think she was “a bad gal”. When the truth comes out of Uncle Johnny's action, ironically Gwendolen finds herself blamed. Her grandmother accuses her of “[rolling] her backside when she moved about...she was a bad girl, inviting trouble”.

Gwendolen finally joins her family in London, she decides she is able to put the past behind her, finally be able to be “like a child again...not a little girl who had to play adult”. Even early in the text, Emecheta shows Gwendolen's sense of maturity in being able to move past her circumstances to look towards the future. However Gwendolen's hope of a secure childhood is short lived when she is in England. She was expected to be “indispensable to

her mother", helping her care for her home and raise her siblings. Her mother, Sonia failed to notice that Gwendolen sometimes "did not jump at housework she was asked to do" because it never occurred to her that her daughter "needed some time for herself". Sonia expected her daughter to take up the role of a woman in terms of her duties. She also could not accept an independent Gwendolen who was becoming "confident and free". When Sonia is away from London for Granny Naomi's funeral, Gwendolen is raped by her father, the man she regarded as "her daddy and daddies did not hurt their daughters". Here Emecheta "ventures into the forbidden terrain of familial rape". Winston rapes Gwendolen, justifying that her "flimsy gymslip... [And] her young bosom taunted him". Shortly after Winston's rape, Gwendolen finds herself pregnant with her father's child and is accused of getting "[hitched] up with a dirty white" boy Emmanuel. Despite her difficulties Gwendolen never reveals who raped and impregnated her. She does this because she realizes that the rest of her family needed her father to "pay for their rent and bring the food money". In the chapter "Institutionalized", when Gwendolen is admitted into a mental hospital to help her cope with her pregnancy, her decision to remain silent about her baby's father shows the metamorphic development of her character into an independent woman. She exudes womanist qualities as she turns into a strong, assertive woman after a traumatic event such as rape and decides to put the needs of her family and her baby before her own situation, "beyond the concerns of self to that concern for the needs of others". In the psychiatric institution, Gwendolen realizes that she is not mad but traumatised. In this 'madness', Gwendolen decides to keep her baby, a process Liz Gunner refers to as "a new symbolic order" representing Gwendolen's ability to re-shape her future despite the traumatic event that has happened to her. In this situation, even after finding herself emotionally and physically violated by her father, Gwendolen does "[develops] internal control", evolves into a mature woman who decides to keep and raise her baby herself. Even in Winston's death, Gwendolen does not reveal her baby's father but chooses to live an independent life away from her mother, who cannot seem to forgive her for getting pregnant and being a loose woman. At the end of the novel, Sonia is in for a rude shock when she visits Gwendolen, the realization dawning on her that Winston was the baby's father. In contrast however, she sees a different Gwendolen, her metamorphosis complete, "a grown woman in a white running suit, carrying a tray full of tea-things".

Gwendolen fully embraces her role as a 'woman', naming her child Iyamide which means "my mother is here", moving towards subjectivity, away from objectification seen through her experience of rape. The child in this context is used as a symbolic metaphor of womanist qualities embodying warmth, security... [and] comfort". Gwendolen recognizes her female subjectivity as a 'woman', moving away from the events of her past, to fully embrace her role as a 'mother' to her daughter. Like Kehinde, who has Taiwo as her chi, Gwendolen's relationship with her

daughter symbolizes the womanist bond between mother and daughter, her daughter inspiring her to rise to her full potential as a 'woman'. The act of rape as a metaphor for power in Emecheta's novels does not hinder her young female characters from recognizing their need for their 'female subjectivity and rising to their full potential as 'women'. They refuse to be victims, challenging myths of silence and weakness among Igbo female characters demonstrating the changing and growing strength in the representations of Igbo female characters.

Buchi Emecheta's Kehinde reflects the complete transformation of the Igbo female character from the confined role as 'wife' and 'mother' to understanding and perceiving herself as 'woman'. This transformation towards individual subjectivity is developed through the rejection of patriarchal conventional expectations of women. The development of the 'self' is done in two ways in the novel, first through the 'unborn child' that helps Kehinde conceive the notion of her identity as a woman outside the definitions of motherhood and secondly through the rejection of polygamy as a way of life where women are more than mere appendages to their husbands. KehindeOkolo is an independent, modern woman who holds a good job working in a bank in England and contributes a substantial amount of money to the running of her family with Albert, her husband. However, Albert is unable to accept Kehinde's freedom and is resentful towards her autonomous individuality. He longs to return to Nigeria and participate in the oil boom so that he may once again feel important as an African man in African society unlike in England where "women rule in this country". He returns to Nigeria and leaves Kehinde in England for two year's while she waits for him to send for her. It is Kehinde's unborn "man-child" that begins her process of recognizing her worth as a woman when she realizes Albert's selfish prioritizing of his ambitions over their lives. Her unquestioning role as a 'wife' and 'mother' is destabilized when she realizes Albert puppeteers her life without a single thought of her well-being despite her contributions to the dynamics of their marriage. Female subjectivity on issues surrounding gender and sexuality is raised as Kehinde is unable to make the decision of keeping her own child, the decision being made for her. The idea of polygamy is played out when Kehinde returns to Nigeria and finds out Albert has "got another wife". Kehinde's life changes and she is forced to take on the role as "the senior wife of a successful Nigerian man". She is stripped of her own personhood and is unable to call Albert by name but has to learn to refer to him as "our husband or Joshua's father". Kehinde is neither able to discuss matters with Albert nor reconcile herself to the role she is expected to play in Nigerian society. When Albert gives her the "first housekeeping money in over eighteen years", she is expected to kneel to take it. When she refuses to do so, Albert's sisters "levied a fine of one cock" which "took half the housekeeping" money from her. However, true to the womanist solidarity that exists between Nigerian women, Moriammo extends a helping hand by sending Kehinde the fare she

requires and reminds her to not let “fear of what people will say stop you from doing what your chi wants” .Kehinde decides to leave Nigeria and returns to England. She makes a decision for herself and explains to Ifeyinwa that she had “never lived in a polygamous family before, except when [she] came to visit [her]” and she was not willing “to go through all this again now” .Kehinde’s rejection of polygamy and her decision to return to England explains her realization that she deserved to be valued. When Albert and his family refuse to value her, Kehinde claimed it for herself. Kehinde’s act is her recognition of seeing herself beyond role as ‘wife’ but as a ‘woman’ to be valued. In England, Kehinde’s spirit twin Taiwo declares “Home, sweet home!” and advises Kehinde that “we make our own choices as we go along...This is yours. There’s nothing to be ashamed of in that” . With the encouragement and support of her chi, Kehinde’s alternate identity in the spirit world, she confidently throws away the signboard in front of her house declaring, “This house is not for sale...This house is mine” . In recognizing the house belonged to her, Kehinde learns to not only value herself but also value what she worked so hard to own because it was “her position in the bank that they had been able to get a mortgage”. The assertion of the individual ‘woman’ here is clear. In an interview, Emecheta states that Kehinde signifies how Nigerian women “coped with the changes from one culture to the other and survived...Kehinde came here [London], went back, and then returned after a long stay. It shows the spirit of Black women toward survival” . In their relationships, Kehinde, Taiwo, Ifeyinwa and Moriammo reflect Nigerian women’s solidarity towards each other as they have a “healthy love for [themselves], [their] sisters, and [their] community which allows [them] to continue [their] struggle and work” .Kehinde is able to draw strength from women like Ifenyiwa (her sister), Taiwo (her spirit twin) and Moriammo through their physical, emotional and monetary assistance as well as compassion. Taiwo’s wisdom helps Kehinde make astute decisions in her life while Ifenyiwa and Moriammo offer her assistance when she needed it. Emecheta not only reflects how Kehinde is able to make her own decisions but she does this with the help of the women in her life. Kehinde’s full metamorphosis (Ogunyemi) into her identity as a ‘woman’ occurs in London, when she acquires a university degree. In her letter, Bimpe congratulates her mother’s achievements stating: “Congratulations! I can’t believe that in such a short time, a little over three years, you could get a degree! I know you said you were determined to be a university graduate” .Emecheta here implies that education is a step to a woman’s advancement, self-fulfillment and self-achievement. When Joshua returns to England as a young man, he returns home to a more confident and self-fulfilled mother. When he asks his mother why a certain Mr. Gibson was tenant in their house exclaiming “this is my house, and I want him out”, Kehinde immediately corrects him and tells him that “it’s not quite like that. This is my house, though it may be yours one day” . As Joshua continues to prod Kehinde on her duty as

a mother in which she was “supposed to live for [her] children”, Kehinde tells him firmly that I did when you were young. My whole life was wound around your needs, but now you’re a grown man! Mothers are people too; you know...I just don’t have the energy to be In using the first person ‘I’, Kehinde recognizes her dignity and her need to be acknowledged as a person and as an individual, not just as a woman confined to roles dictated by her culture. In standing up to her son, Kehinde recognizes her identity as a ‘woman’ and places value upon her womanhood. When Joshua is unhappy with his mother’s stand, Kehinde resigns herself to the knowledge that “claiming my right does not make me less of a mother, not less of a woman. If anything it makes me more human” . She tells her Taiwo, “now we are one” . In uniting herself with her chi, Kehinde finds the strength to stand up against social conventions, with a pertinent message that “things cannot go on as they used to” . Unlike Emecheta’s previous heroine Nnu Ego, who struggled to stand up against societal conventions and pressures, Kehinde rises above these traditions, learns to claim worth for her life and her individual subjectivity as a woman. She is able to say “I have a degree and a job at the Department of Social Services. I’m enjoying meeting people and leading my own life”. Through Kehinde’s independent and determined character, Emecheta shows that future prospects for the Nigerian woman are bright. Emecheta opines that Nigerian women like Kehinde reflect “the black woman survivor just like her ancestors survived slavery...these women try to make the best of a bad situation” . Armed with a determined spirit inspired by her female heritage, her knowledge and self-awareness, Kehinde not only speaks of the possibilities of Nigerian women everywhere achieving and claiming a sense of individuality but also their rightful place in society, moving International Journal of Social Science and Humanity, Vol. 2, No. 2, March 2012 148 the carrier of everybody’s burdens any more beyond the limited definitions of their roles as ‘wives’ and ‘mothers’. Another aspect in which the role of ‘woman’ is explored more fully is in Emecheta’s representation of the young female character. The young female character in Emecheta’s *The Family* (1990) matures into an understanding of her personhood as ‘woman’ through a traumatic experience, rape. Emecheta uses rape as an act of physical violence and as a metaphor to describe these young female characters metamorphosis into womanhood. Emecheta shows how the violent act of rape on her sexuality, although tragic, does not hamper this young character but instead teaches her to grow into a maturity of protecting herself as a woman.

*Everything Good Will Come*, a novel by Sefi Atta, a Nigerian-born is a coming of age novel about a girl growing into a woman in postcolonial Nigeria and England. Throughout the novel the main character, Enitan, is faced with various issues such as family troubles, rape, cheating boyfriends, and imprisonment. Beyond Enitan’s personal entanglements, the novel is a biting commentary on post-independence governments in Nigeria and

tensions between Igbo (Biafrans), Yoruba, and Hausa ethnic groups after the Biafran War. Enitan and Sherry are friends one day both of them go to a party. Enitan, who doesn't feel comfortable in the situation, wants to leave. On her way out, she witnesses the three men pinning Sheri down raping her and bruising her body as they degrade her. The image of Sheri's rape affects Enitan's ability to allow herself to trust men. The aftermath of Sheri's rape leads to a partial termination of their friendship and Sheri being sent to the hospital due to an attempt to give herself an abortion.

*Disgrace* is a novel by J. M. Coetzee, published in 1999. It won the Booker Prize. David Lurie is a South African professor of English who loses everything: his reputation, his job, his peace of mind, his dreams of artistic success, and finally even his ability to protect his own daughter. He is twice-divorced and dissatisfied with his job as a 'communications' lecturer, teaching a class in romantic literature at a technical university in Cape Town in post-apartheid South Africa. Lurie's sexual activities are all inherently risky. Before the sexual affair that will ruin him, he becomes attached to a prostitute and attempts to have a romantic relationship with her (despite her having a family), which she rebuffs. He then seduces a secretary at his university, only to completely ignore her afterwards. His "disgrace" comes when he seduces one of his more vulnerable students, a girl named Melanie Isaacs, plying her with alcohol and other actions that arguably amount to rape; later, when she stops attending his class as a result, he falsifies her grades. Lurie refuses to stop the affair, even after being threatened by Melanie's eunrsthwhile boyfriend, who knocks the papers off Lurie's desk, and her father, who confronts him but whom David runs from. This affair is thereafter revealed to the school, amidst a climate of condemnation for his allegedly predatory acts, and a committee is convened to pass judgement on his actions. David refuses to read Melanie's statement, defend himself, or apologize in any sincere form and so is forced to resign from his post. Lurie is working on an opera concerning Lord Byron's final phase of life in Italy which mirrors his own life in that Byron is living a life of hedonism and excess and is having an affair with a married woman.

Dismissed from his teaching position, he takes refuge on his lesbian daughter Lucy's farm in the Eastern Cape. For a time, his daughter's influence and natural rhythms of the farm promise to harmonise his discordant life; for example, in attending farmers markets where Lucy sells her wares, and in working with Petrus, a polygamously-married black African

whose farm borders Lucy's and who nominally works for Lucy as a "dog-man" (Lucy boards dogs). But the balance of power in the country is shifting. Shortly after becoming comfortable with rural life, he is forced to come to terms with the aftermath of an attack on the farm. Three men, who claim to need Lucy's phone to call for aid for a sick relative, force their way into the farmhouse. The men rape Lucy and attempt to kill David by setting him on fire. In addition, they also shoot the caged dogs which Lucy is boarding, an action which David later muses was done since black people in South Africa are taught to fear dogs as symbols of white power and oppression. The men drive off in David's car: it is never recovered and they are never caught, although police once contact David to come pick up "his" car, which is in fact evidently not his car (different colour and registration number, different sound system). To David's relief, newspapers spell Lurie's name inaccurately ("Lourie"), meaning nothing will tie his disgraced academic persona to the news story describing the attack on his daughter's farm. Lucy becomes apathetic and agoraphobic after the attack.

#### **Conclusion**

Thus in all the novels mentioned above rape is the most horrific act of violence. Sexual violence has existed since ancient times but in modern days it has become horrific. The victims are treated badly by the society and always blamed. The culprits are never brought to justice and the victims have to suffer in silence. Society everywhere in the world is the same, the physique of men will never change, they always want to overpower women through defilement. To conclude one can say that the abuse of women will continue till a concrete solution for this heinous crime is found like hanging of the culprit till death.

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