

**RAPE AS A WEAPON OF WAR AND MARGINALIZATION OF BLACK WOMEN
IN LYNN NOTTAGE'S *RUINED***

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Abstract

*The aim of writing this paper is to show how the rape is used as a weapon of war by the men in Democratic Republic of Congo to revenge on each other and how rape becomes a priceless weapon to marginalize and victimize the black women in Congo in Lynn Nottage's play *Ruined* (2007). This weapon is used by the men on all the women depicted in play including Mama Nadi, the protagonist of the play, Sophie, Salima and Josephine. These women are raped brutally and now they are leading the life of degradation. Till the end of the play it is not revealed that Mama Nadi is raped and ruined like Sophie. Throughout the play she is a domineering woman who runs her brothel/bar and protects and feeds the raped girls. When rebel soldiers, government officers and soldiers enter into her bar, they have to follow her order. But these men dominate her by sexual harassment and money. Lynn Nottage, being an archivist, by visiting and interviewing the women and children of Congo has depicted the real experience of the women of Congo.*

Keywords: Double Marginalization, Lynn Nottage, Velazquez painting, Slave, Migration, African, Black woman and white woman

Introduction

Lynn Nottage (1964-) is an African American playwright. Her works often deal with the lives of women of African descent. She is an associate professor of theatre at Columbia University and a lecturer in playwriting at Yale University. She won the Pulitzer Prize for drama in 2009 for *Ruined*. Her published works include *Poof!* (1993), *Mud, River, Stone*

(1998), *Las Meninas*(1989), *Intimate Apparel* (2003), *Becoming American* (2003), *A Stone's Throw* (2004), *Crumbs from the Table of Joy* (2005), *Por'knocker*(2005), and *Fabulation, Or the R-education of Undine* (2006). Recently she wrote the play *Sweat* (2017). It has been named the recipient of the 2017 Pulitzer Prize for drama. She makes history as the first female playwright to win the prestigious award twice, having won previously for *Ruined* in 2009. Nottage decides to write a reworked copy of Bertolt Brecht's *Mother Courage and Her Children* which is based on the war-ravaged nation, the Democratic Republic of the Congo. *Ruined* was commissioned by Chicago's Goodman Theater, where it received world debut in a coproduction with New York's Manhattan Theater Club.

Assessment of the Theme of Double Marginalization in the Play:

The play is set within the Democratic Republic of the Congo likely at some point between 2001 and 2007. Amid this time (and still today) the Congo may be a place of regional savagery and limitless enduring. It has been appropriately labelled as "the rape capital of the world." In a recent study published in the American Journal of Public Health by US scientists Peterman, Breden Kamp, and Palermo reveal that

the number of women who have been the victims of rape in the Democratic Republic of the Congo estimates of rape among women aged 15 to 49 years... 1150 women raped every day, 48 women raped every hour, and 4 women raped every 5 minutes. (Peterman)

These women are the victims of the Civil War fought in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. For more than twenty years, the Congo had a brutal Civil War between the insurgent groups and the government military in which the civilians suffered incredibly from unstable conditions. This civil war resulted in serious cases of gender violence, which were considered as crimes against humanity that necessitated a considerable effort to denounce the women's situation.

Mama Nadi is an owner of a bar and brothel isolated in a mining town in the middle of a rainforest, from which rebels and government soldiers roam and return. Mama Nadi provides music, food, drink, and prostitutes. The whole play takes place within the slipshod bar. Nottage has realistically presented how rape is used as a weapon of war and marginalization of black women like Mama Nadi, Sophie, Salima and Josephine. All these women are raped and deserted by their family.

There are four types of rape identified by International Alert in the province of South Kivu in the study of "Women's Bodies as a Battleground". They are individual rape, gang rape, rape in which victims are forced to rape each other, and rape involving objects being inserted into the victims' genital organs. Nottage's all women characters face these four types of rape. In individual rape a victim is raped by one offender. In gang rape a victim is raped by a group. Sometimes the family members are forced to rape each other. In the last type of rape objects such as bananas, rifle barrels, pestles covered in chili pepper, bottles, and sticks are

inserted in victim's genitals. Sometimes their genitals mutilated or burned, or were wounded by machetes.

Christian is a cheerful travelling salesman. He sells Sophie and Salima to Mama Nadi. It is through Christian, Salima and Sophie's past is revealed which highlights the painful life of the black women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Christian informs that, Salima is an 18 year old, plain young lady, has been assaulted by militiamen, who assaulted her, before snatching her and keeping her as their 'concubine' within the woodland. Her husband has denied to take her back and she has been banished from her town. And even Sophie's past is more terrific than Salima's. Christian describes her as "ruined". Sophie is also an eighteen year old beautiful girl. She was an awfully good student and planning to take her college entrance exams. However, she has been untouchable by her town, after enduring a few appalling and brutal mishandles from the local army - she has been 'ruined', genitally ruined. Poverty is one of the major causes to use rape as a weapon of war. Armies are unable to adequately pay their soldiers. As a result soldiers are unable to fulfill the fundamental needs of their families. This creates a build-up of frustration and restlessness among soldiers in the camps. They start raping women to grab their possessions. If soldiers' basic needs are fulfilled, they will spend their energy working for civilians. Both Sophie and Salima have been raped by the militia. They face gang rape.

John Holmes, the undersecretary general for humanitarian affairs for the United Nations, has described the women's situation,

The sexual violence in Congo is the worst in the world. The sheer numbers, the wholesale brutality, the culture of impunity; it's appalling. (Gettleman)

The woman like Sophie and Salima becomes a prey to the Civil War in Congo. While working in bar these women suffer a lot. In one occasion a soldier bits Salima and she goes away but Mama forces her to entertain him.

Nottage shows here that the bar/brothel though primarily is a business setting, is ultimately a safe haven for the girls. Nottage presents prostitution not as a binary—evil or liberating, but rather as a viable option of safety in the midst of chaos. The bar/brothel is originally a business place that depends on the power of money as an exchange for sex, and it becomes a domestic and safe location for them.

a brothel is a place of sexual exploitation... the girls working there are much more respected and safe than they would be outside where they would be constantly in danger of being raped, ruined, or even murdered. (Garcia)

By sending Salima to the drunken soldier, Mama Nadi acts businesslike woman but she protects them. Nottage herself finds out that,

She exploiting them, but in a twisted way she's able to nurture them and keep them alive. (Gener 21)

Due to poverty these women have to stay in brothel and have to bear the sexual violence. In one of the scenes Salima expresses her will to run away from the brothel but Sophie convinces

her that living in a brothel is safer than living outside. She describes the horrible condition of war.

SOPHIE: I'm sorry, but you know it's true. There is a war going on, and it isn't safe for a woman alone. ... (Nottage22)

It shows that a woman is not safe during the war time.

Women, often seen as the bearers of the culture, or the representatives of any given community, are raped systemically as an instrumentation of open warfare, under the guise of national security employed by a nervous state and recreationally when soldiers perceive there is an inadequate supply of accessible women. (Maneuvers 109-110)

Government and rebel soldiers, police, criminals, bandits, civilians and even husband use this form of sexual violence against women and girls. According to Friedman *Ruined* is a play that strives to

bring attention to sexual abuse, rape, survival sex, and psychological violence toward women in countries ravaged by conquest and conflict between government and insurgent forces. (Friedman 594)

Rape as a weapon of war refers to the deliberate, strategic and widespread use of rape as a tact to achieve military goals. The aim of the war is generally to gain control of a territory and its sources. To achieve this aim it is needed to exterminate, subjugate, win over or cause to flee the enemy or target population. It is also needed to minimize the cost, outlay and loss of our own soldiers' lives, and to take care that the enemy is not able to regroup any viable opposition. Rape is a cheap and easy means to achieve this. In the DRC, Pratt and Werchick conducted a three-week assessment, "Sexual Terrorism: Rape as a Weapon of War in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo," on the sexual terrorism that is so prevalent in this region. From their research they found that,

sexual and gender-based violence increased concurrently due to its effectiveness as a weapon of war. Together, these acts could "subdue, punish, or take revenge upon entire communities." (Pratt and Werchick 6-7)

In *Ruined*, Sophie is ruined. She is left to death by the rapists. Sophie explains to Salima the physical and psychological pain of being ruined.

SOPHIE: ... Every step I take I feel them in me. Punishing me. And it will be that way for the rest of my life. (Nottage23)

Friedman also states Enloe's assertion that,

rapes of captured women by soldiers of one communal or national group [are] aimed principally at humiliating the men of an opposing group. (Enloe 109-110)

Sexual assault has a similar definition to rape. It is "any type of forced or coerced sexual contact or behavior that happens without consent". (United State) However, that sexual attack

against women is being exposed internationally as researchers who have visited the Congo to examine the situation shared their observations.

In one occasion Josephine recalls an event from her painful past life. Her father was a chief. But when she was attacked, not a single villager comes ahead to help her. The plight of Josephine shows that Sophie is not a single Congolese woman who is raped and ruined; there are many more who have the same fate. Now she wants to settle with Mr. Harari who is a jewel businessman from the Lebanon, in the Congo on business. He has been visiting the bar for some time and has developed a relationship with Josephine but this is a business deal. He is a gentleman who frequently advises Mama. He flirts with Josephine just for comfort. To fulfill basic needs the woman like Josephine follows his order.

Commander Osembenga is holding a top position in the government, charged with bringing the region encompassing Mama Nadi's bar back into law and order. He is looking for the rebel local army and destroying their army. He could be a man utilized for getting what he needs without having to inquire twice. He frequently visits Mama's bar.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is a patriarchal society with social standards that most commonplace men in positions of power over ladies. But when these men enter into the bar they put their patriarchal supremacy aside. At Mama Nadi's request men take off behind their clear markers of power usually related with manliness such as weapons. But in any case, these men still hold control over the young ladies by paying them for sex. They again marginalize these women economically. Mama has to keep quiet for the sake of money also. The widespread effects of poverty on the population have created a culture of desperation. For instance, in the eastern parts of Congo, the war "has ravaged this region intermittently since 1996 [and] has destroyed the local economy. The burden of survival has fallen upon women, as they struggle to keep not only themselves but also the rest of their families alive.

The lack of economic infrastructure and social development in the country only furthers this impoverishment of women, especially in semi-urban and rural areas.

The position of women in economic terms is described as the "feminization of poverty," which is worsened "by the lack of any policies or mechanisms for women's advancement."

All of these factors greatly increase a woman's vulnerability as well as help to legitimize gender-based violence. (Ohambe, Muhigwa and Mamba 15)

This subordinate view of women fuels the use of rape as a weapon of war and magnifies the devastating effects it has on women, not just physically but socially and psychologically. Commander Osembenga, Mr. Harari, Jerome Kismbe and even Christian all are opportunist. They use money to get sex. Hence poverty is one of the major reasons to use rape as a weapon of war and marginalization.

The second most important reason to use rape as a weapon of war and marginalization is patriarchal society. Nottage aims to depict the Congolese women's struggle in their

patriarchal society. Salima is the best example of a victim of a patriarchal society. Salima when escapes from soldiers and returns her village, her husband and villagers are not ready to accept her. They banish her from her own house. Though she is innocent, she is treated as a criminal by them. The soldiers by using their power, rape her and her husband also using his power banishes her from his life. The soldiers abuse and rape her by their physical power, whereas her husband tortures and rejects her using patriarchal rights offered by the society. Being a black and being a woman, Salima becomes puppet at the hands of soldiers and her husband. At one point women's physical delicacy and at another point women's gender makes her to be a victim of the patriarchal society. Woman's chastity is a prestige of family and especially of men. Hence if she loses it, they desert her. A woman like Salima has to accept the prostitution for her survival.

Mama is reluctant to take Sophie, Christian's niece. Christian insists on taking Sophie. According to Christian,

Christian: She's my sister's only daughter. Okay? I told my family I'd find a place for her... And here at least I know she'll be safe. Fed. (He stops himself and gulps down his soda.) And as you know the village isn't a place for a girl who has been... ruined. It brings shame, dishonor to the family. (Nottage 7)

Like Salima, Sophie is also an innocent girl. It is not her fault that someone has raped her and mutilated her genitals. The men who have raped Salima and Sophie are the real criminals, but in this patriarchal society these criminals are set free, and the innocents like Salima and Sophie are punished. Both are marginalized for being a woman and being raped. Instead of supporting these women, their families take the plight in these girls' life as a shame and dishonor to their families. So these girls have to turn to prostitution. A ruined woman like Sophie has no future. Mama agrees to take Sophie on the condition that this is the last time.

There is a deliberate intention behind rape that transcends the physical into the psychological and sociological. In this sense, rape is used as a mechanism to instill fear and terror into the minds of civilians, to discourage any interaction with the enemy. Oxfam International and the Harvard Initiative teamed up to investigate this catastrophic use of sexual violence in the DRC. During their study, they found that

“[rape] is strategically used to shame, demoralize and humiliate the enemy. By systematically raping women and girls, armed groups assert power and domination over not only the women, but their men as well.” (Now the World, 2010)

This use of rape sends a powerful message to the men of the community of which the rape victims belong. Mullins writes that rape is an assault on the husband's or father's masculinity. As a result of these

“long-standing patriarchal value systems, both the men and the women simultaneously experience the destruction of their ability to enact enforced gender norms.” (Mullins 421)

It highlights their inability to protect their women from attack, essentially calling into question the men’s usefulness and masculinity. What this study also revealed collaborates with this idea. They found that sexual violence

“is used by the opposing force to signify the weakness and inadequacy of the men in the targeted social grouping or community. These men absorb this message, perceiving their inability to protect women against assault as their own final humiliation in war.” (Now the World, 2010)

Rape sends a psychological message to men through the physical brutalization of women. Sophie and Salima are deserted by their families due to this patriarchal structure. It is the inability of Sophie’s family and Salima’s husband Fortune to protect the women in their family. In short rape is used as a weapon to challenge the masculinities of men.

Fortune is Salima’s offended spouse. He was an agriculturalist some time recently been enrolled in the government armed forces. Simon is Fortune’s cousin, accompanying his companion to explore for his spouse; in spite of the fact that he does not accept she is still alive. He too has joined the government armed forces. They search for Salima in Mama Nadi’s bar.

Salima asks Mama about Fortune. Mama tells her that he is outside the bar. Salima hates him and she does not want him to see her. Sophie is aware about Fortune that he will not leave until he spots her. She thinks that Fortune still loves Salima. But Mama discards this dreamy thought. Mama tells them that a man will not bear the infringement of his spouse by other men.

Sexual violation is used as a tool of marginalization of women. Salima also faces the same problem. She is in a dilemma whether to go with Fortune or to stay in a brothel to live a degraded life of a whore. Mama makes Salima aware that living with husband is a dream now.

When Sophie insists her to go with her husband, Salima says,

SALIMA: He called me a filthy dog, and said I tempted them. Why else would it happen? Five months in the bush, passed between the soldiers like a wash rag. Used. I was made poison by their fingers that is what he said. He had no choice but to turn away from me, because I dishonored him. (Nottage45)

It shows the after-effects of sexual assault on Salima. At first these women are regarded subsidiary for being a black woman, but when raped and having spent five months in the bush with soldiers, the woman like Salima is marginalized and brutally called as a filthy dog or a temptress.

Mama goes to drive Fortune away. Sophie urges Salima to converse with Fortune, but Salima denies, as Fortune does not know she is pregnant. Salima narrates the story of her cruel assault by the troopers to Sophie. To give an accurate perception of Salima's sexual assault, Nottage presents an interesting conversation between Salima and Sophie. In a tragic tone, Salima describes the day she was abducted.

SALIMA. ... I was working in our garden picking the last of the sweet tomatoes. I put Beatrice down in the shade of a frangipani tree, because my back was giving me some trouble. ... He was in town fetching a new iron pot. ... I had been after him for a new pot for a month. ... It was such a clear and open sky. ... And I felt a shadow cut across my back, and when I stood four men were there over me, smiling, wicked schoolboy smiles. "Yes?" I said. And the tall soldier slammed the butt of his gun into my cheek. Just like that. It was so quick, I didn't even know I'd fallen to the ground. Where did they come from? How could I not have heard them? (Nottage45)

The abduction occurred during the morning. She put down Beatrice, her daughter in the shade of a Frangipani tree as her back was aching. She was picking the last of the tomatoes from their garden. Fortune went to buy an iron pot from the town. Suddenly a troop of insurgent arrived in the territory. They abducted her.

Her story reveals the horrendous treatment of soldiers to Salima and the psychological effects of gang rape Salima has faced. They announced that Salima was a "soup for everyday". The soldier's crushing Salima with his boot indicates the general attitude of men towards the women. The worst thing is that they are forcing women to have sex and also ask her to do the things they need. She says,

Salima: ... They tied me to a tree by my foot, and the men came whenever they wanted soup. I make fires, I cook food, I listen to their stupid songs, I carry bullets, I clean wounds, I wash blood from their clothing, and, and, and... I lay there as they tore me to pieces, until I was raw... five months. Five months. Chained like a goat..." (Nottage46)

She received bestial treatment from soldiers who say they are fighting for liberation. It is very contrary thing that the one who fights for liberation, makes sex slaves.

The sexual crimes result in Salima's becoming pregnant and she describes the fetus as "the child of a monster". (Nottage46) In this case Salima has been abandoned by her tribal group. She tells,

SALIMA: I walked into the family compound expecting wide open arms. An embrace. Five months, suffering. I suffered every single second of it. And my family gave me the back of their heads. And he, the man I loved since I was fourteen, chased me away with a green

switch. He beat my ankles raw. And I dishonored him? ... He was too proud to bear my shame... but not proud enough to protect me from it. ... (Nottage47)

The experience of sex slavery, gang rape, and violence raised psychological issues for Salima. She is triple marginalized by her husband, by her family and by the society for being a black, for being a woman and for being raped. Salima declares that she cannot see Fortune now.

Simon appears for Fortune, out of breath. They have to leave, but Fortune cannot bring himself to leave Salima. He persuades Fortune that Salima may be dead. Fortune's determination to reclaim Salima is problematized by Simon's admonitions and Salima's rejection. Seemingly Fortune's behavior is praiseworthy, but it is also out of place because of the other men's commentary about the disreputable places where he searches to find Salima and the kind of women who live in such a place. Through Simon, Nottage makes it clear that the patriarchal structure condemns women's sexual status regardless of man's culpability that places women in such spaces. Further, he states that,

"... Look here, Fortune, they're making a joke of you. The men are saying "Why won't the man just take another woman." "Why is he chasing a damaged girl?" "... Everyone. Every damn one of them". (Nottage49)

Simon's statements show that the women and their bodies are not valued. Simon's description of other people's viewpoints in the army shows that Salima is a damaged girl and she is no longer worthy of attention. As Salima has low value, both Fortune and Simon dedicate anytime, especially three months in finding her. Simon's statement about serving in the army and killing others also highlights that he offers the rapists' action against Fortune not Salima. Instead of referring Salima, he states that they have stolen from his (Fortune) pocket. It means that Salima's body is the possession of her husband, which is stolen by the rapists. Simon has not any concern for Salima as a woman. He shows concern for her as Fortune's wife.

Such a patriarchal view towards rape is exemplified in the patriarchal militarized theory. Carlsen describes this theory succinctly in that the sexual violence occurring during wartime is

"motivated by the desire to exert control and power over women and men who are perceived as feminine." The rape that occurs during conflict "is a by-product of a system of patriarchy where power relations are hierarchal and motivated by masculinity." (Carlsen 76)

Rape serves as a type of reminder of the women's place in society and men's power over them.

Fortune banishes Salima when she was raped and now he wants her in his life. It is he who controls the life of a woman like Salima. It shows that the men are ready to combat the rape of the women by joining the very forces that participate in the rape. These men are also

satisfied in the rape of other women and attack of other men in an attempt to reclaim lost honor. They kill when told to kill; it then makes sense to presume that when gendered attacks take place, they too follow those orders. It means Fortune has the same perspective of women that Simon has. Both of them marginalize women to a secondary position. They regard women just as an asset of men. Judith Fetterley posits a worldwide and trans-historical situation for women wherein they endure:

not simply the powerlessness which derives from not seeing one's experience articulated, clarified, and legitimated in art, but more significantly, the powerlessness which results from the endless division of self against self, the consequence of the invocation to identify as male while being reminded that to be male – to be universal... is to be not female. (Fetterley xiii)

The crisis of female subjectivity marginalized under patriarchy is in focus here. By rape women are made powerless.

Meanwhile, two rebel soldiers enter with Jerome Kisembe, rebel leader. Mama welcomes him. He informs Mama that Commander Osembenga has been troubling revolutionary armed force. He affirms that they are the single insurgents as they do not follow the administrative rule of law. According to him the law is brutal and has no regard for mercy. Mama offers drink for this truth. They leave.

Mama comes in and welcomes the Commander anxiously staring at the entrance. There would be difficulty if the insurgent leader came back. The Commander demands a whiskey and a pack of cigarettes and "... Osembenga strokes Mama's backside. She playfully swats away his hand..." (Nottage54) It shows his misbehavior with Mama. Sophie offers him drinks, but shrinks apparently due to the presence of the brutal man. Immediately he grabs Sophie's hand.

(... He grabs Sophie's wrist and pulls her toward him. Laughing.) Come here, you pretty, pretty thing. (Osembenga aggressively grabs Sophie around the buttocks and pulls her onto his lap. Laughing.)...(A moment. Sophie struggles to free herself. Mama, sensing the tension.) (Nottage55)

Sophie tries to free herself, but Mama forces her.

OSEMBENGA: (Smiling, Osembenga pulls Sophie onto his lap.)...
Osembenga moves his hand up her skirt. Sophie gasps and struggles harder. (Nottage55)

Nottage deliberately uses the on-stage violence to visualize the humiliation and sexual violence against the black women. The Commander's attack on Sophie and Mama's fear about safety shows the helplessness of women. Mama asks him to leave Sophie and she will offer other girls. But Osembenga talking with command says, to bring the girl around back, his men will teach her a lesson. She needs proper schooling.

(Laurent shoves Christian out of the way and grabs Sophie. This is the first time we've seen Mama scared. Sophie spits on Osembenga's feet.)"
(Nottage55)

Christian moves to assist but the Commander persists with Sophie on his lap. A struggle ensues as Sophie pushes him away. Mama wipes out Sophie's spitting. Sophie shouts, "I am dead! Shetani! [Satan!] Fuck a corpse! What would that make you?" (Nottage55) Mama tries to calm the situation down, but the Commander still insists on Sophie. Sophie calls herself as a dead. It means a woman who is ruined is living death in life. Her life is worthless. Mama controls the Commander and he takes Mama's arm and pulls her to the back with his man. "Sophie desperately scrubs her hands in the basin." (Nottage56) It shows how Sophie is psychologically affected by the sexual assault. The consequences of sexual crime affect both the body and the mind of the victim. Sophie and Josephine is victim who is brutally, sexually exploited by the soldiers. The men who enjoy Josephine's dance cannot understand her feelings, her pains. In her article, Carlsen discusses the documentation retrieved by Human Rights Watch and Doctors Without Borders that found that

"women and girls are tortured before, during, and after the rape takes place, with estimates that as many as 30 percent are sexually mutilated." (Carlsen 76)

Mama is horrified and the Commander is furious. Mama tries to placate the situation to no avail and the Commander relents-if Mama will accompany him outside. She knows what this means and acquiesces. Mama re-enters, and slaps Sophie hard across the face, ordering to go out to the Commander and give him some pleasure. Christian is shocked, but Mama knows how dangerous the situation is - offending the Commander is no light matter and is damaging to her business. The poverty and patriarchy both hinders Mama to revolt against Commander. Meanwhile Fortune tells Commander that he has seen Jerome Kitembe in Mama Nadi's bar, that she was hiding him today. Fortune tells him that Mama is also hiding his wife. The Commander and Laurent exit quickly, in pursuit of Jerome Kitembe.

Mr. Harari paces, ready to leave and awaiting a lift out of the area with an aid worker. He is very anxious to leave this war-torn area. Mama does not care about which faction is in control of the country as she profits from all the drinking. Mr. Harari expresses his concern for girls like Sophie and makes to leave.

MR. HARARI: You are the most devilish of optimists. You, I don't worry so much about you. But what about a lovely girl like Sophie?
(Nottage60)

These words of Mr. Harari hurt Mama. An inner battle starts in her mind. Mama transfers from being the one who profits first and foremost to the one who is willing to sacrifice for the sake of Sophie. Mama stops Mr. Harari and asks him to sell the diamond. She gives him her most precious diamond to sell in the city, so that Sophie can get the operation to repair her body and live a better life. Mama offers him the diamond she has been saving to purchase land, just so that Sophie can have a chance at being healed. When Mr. Harari agrees to do as

Mama asks, she exits to the back room to get Sophie. Here Mama becomes self-less and in the role of mother, she is ready to sacrifice for her better future. While Mama is in the back room an aid worker demands Mr. Harari to leave immediately. Meanwhile the worker warns Mr. Harari that there are three vehicles rapidly approaching and they should not be there when the vehicles arrive. Aid Worker hurries to leave. Mr. Harari calls for Mama Nadi, but after hearing the sounds of gunshots and the engine revving he leaves. When she returns with Sophie, Mama explains what she has done and pushes her out the door to run behind them. As Mama celebrates her most precious possession for a good cause, Sophie enters and says that Mr. Harari has gone. This event creates an atmosphere of hopelessness.

Commander Osembenga and soldiers with Fortune stand over Mama and accuses her of hiding Jerome Kisembe. The soldiers raid the bar, finding Mama's lock box. They break it open and take all the money. Fortune also joins them calling Mama as a "witch" who hides his wife. The soldiers throw Sophie, Mama and Josephine onto the floor. They are ready to stop only when Mama tells them where is Kisembe? "*(A soldier grabs Josephine and bends her over the table poised to violate her. The women scream.)*" (62-63) When the soldiers force Josephine to the floor, trying to rape her, Salima appears on the scene bleeding, having a self-abortion, yelling to them, "STOP! Stop it! ... (Screams.) For the love of God, stop this! Haven't you done enough to us? Enough! Enough!" (Nottage63) Salima is pregnant and does not want Fortune to see her because she cannot see him rejecting her again. With a triumphant smile upon her face, she dies in Fortune's arm. She represents the horrible violence, including rape, humiliation, and sexual assault. However death liberates her from the shackles of racism and sexism. Through this onstage violence Nottage shows the brutality of soldiers how they use rape as the easiest weapon to marginalize women.

Soldiers' discomfort physically, financially and domestically results in using rape as a weapon of war. Such violent acts of soldiers may not be about a woman in particular, but instead may be about releasing frustration upon women. Such contempt for women may arise from men being forced to fight away from their homes and their families, risking their lives, while women are able to stay behind. But only the soldiers themselves know the roots of such disdain. Again, women are seen as objects, forced to bear the brutalization of men's frustrations.

After some days Mama strives to catch the customers, but they do not come. She worries about running the business now. It is a hard time for her. Christian visits the bar wearing fashionable clothes. He requests Mama to marry with him. But she denies and diverts the subject of their argument. Christian then boldly confesses his love for her. He wants to marry and to settle down with her.

MAMA: *(With surprising vulnerability.)* I'm ruined. *(Louder.)* I'm ruined. *(He absorbs her words.)* (Nottage67)

Even if she feels that she deserves love, she believes that she cannot have love because she is a ruined woman. Christian is apologetic and self-effacing, but his words have the possibility of carrying great healing.

Nottage writes that she breaks in tears after finally succumbing to his heartfelt embrace. After being interrupted Mama breaks away and says to Christian that it will not change anything. The real test is when Christian swears that this is the last time, he has asked. Mama dances with Christian. Sophie pulls Josephine into the room to watch Mama and Christian's dance. Josephine joyfully says Mama to go. The parrot is given the last words, "Mama! Primus! Mama! Primus!" (Nottage 68) The ending of the play is far from obviously romantic, as the war still rages north of them, business is bad, Salima has committed suicide and Mama lost possession of the diamond while unsuccessfully attempting to trade it for Sophie's crucial redemptive operation. The women remain ruined, but the possibility of a new beginning is created by Nottage.

Conclusion

Ruined concluded on an optimistic and promising note with the engagement of Christian and Mama Nadi. It was a delightful resolution not only for Mama Nadi, but also for the women who had experienced rape and other forms of sexual violence. *Ruined* respected the tragic, real-life stories of women who had been sexually assaulted by soldiers.

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