



## الانتهاك الإنساني في مسرحية ليان نوتاج المحطمة

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### الملخص

تعتبر الكاتبة المسرحية الأمريكية المعروفة لين نوتاج واحدة من أبرز كتاب دراما الأفرو أمريكية في الدراما الحديثة. فازت بجائزة Pulitzer للدراما في (2008) عن مسرحيتها المحطمة. حصلت الكاتبة على سمعة طيبة باعتبارها واحدة من المدافعات عن حقوق المرأة الأفريقية خصوصاً بعد نشر مسرحيتها. يقدم البحث الدور الساخر واستراتيجية الجيوش في زمن الحرب كحامية ومدافعة عن حقوق الناس بشكل عام والنساء بشكل خاص. على العكس من ذلك، تصور نوتاج الصورة النمطية المعاكسة لذلك الجيش من خلال الجرائم المروعة والقصص المسجلة لضحاياها. تقدم نوتاج إلى المسرح قضية مهمة تتعلق بوضع المرأة الأفريقية في وقت الحرب من خلال مسرحيتها المحطمة. حيث تكشف الأزمات والفوضى المباشرة وغير المباشرة للنساء المعتصابات على أيدي القوات المتحاربة. وكذلك تحاول نوتاج في روايتها سرد الروايات المنسية والمؤلمة وقصص ضحايا الاغتصاب في جمهورية الكونغو الديمقراطية من قبل الجنود المتمردين على حد سواء. أخيراً، يشير نوتاج إلى فكرة روح التغيير داخل هؤلاء النساء المدمرات ونضالهن من أجل حريتهن المحرومة واستقلالهن وحقوقهن بالرغم من الحرب المستمرة. يسلط هذا البحث الضوء على قضية حرجة وحساسة تتعلق بمعالجة لأزمة النساء أثناء فترة الحرب حيث تصبح اجساد النساء المنتهكات سلاحاً خطيراً في تلك الحرب.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** المحطمة، جرائم مروعة، اعتداء جنسي، انتهاك جسم، ليان نوتاج.



# Humanist Infringement in Lynn Nottage's *Ruined*

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## ABSTRACT

An American well-known playwright, Lynn Nottage, is considered one of the most prominent Afro-American dramatists in modern drama. She won the Pulitzer Prize for drama (2008) for her play *Ruined*. She has obtained a good reputation as one of African women's right defender after publishing her play. This paper presents the moral contradiction role and strategy of armies in wartime as a protector and defender of people rights in general and women in particular by using women's body as a weapon in wartime. Affected by modern wars, the female body is violated and turn into a part of conflict to accomplish definite political and military schedule. Armies substitute bullets by prostitution and sexual assault. In addition, throughout *Ruined*, Nottage raises a contemporary issue concerning African women situation in wartime. She portrays the opposite typical picture of conflict interests for army by staging the horrible and disastrous crimes and records stories of its victims. She is exploring the direct and indirect dehumanization and crises of the chaos on raped women by the warring forces. In her play, she attempts to retell the forgotten and painful experiences and stories of raped victims in the Democratic Republic of the Congo by the soldiers and rebellions alike. This paper sheds light on a critical and sensitive issue that addresses the dilemma of women during wartime in an armed conflict country where women violated bodies become a severe weapon for that war.

**Keywords:** *Ruined*, horrible crimes, sexual assault, violated body, Lynn Nottage.



## 1- Introduction:

Lynn Nottage indicates human brutality in war as one of the most critical problems that brings massive consequences such rape, sex slave and social ostracisation. Nottage masterpiece *Ruined* brings to the stage an interlocking issue concerning the repercussions tremendous suffering of African women especially in wartime. Like many other African writers who focus on explicating a fundamental task that relates to the sense of belonging, Nottage announces a strong attachment to her African roots through her literary works. After her visit to the refugee camps in Uganda, Nottage divulges her real intention in writing *Ruined* to document the disastrous terror of war perpetrations against women in particular and humanity." I'm African American, she said. —When I was sitting with the women, I definitely felt a level of sisterhood, and I understood on some fundamental level that I was telling a universal story. Yes, this is specific to the Congo in this day and age, but I do believe at any moment it could happen in any place". (Buckner, 2016, p.198).

No one can deny the fact that literature "could be viewed as a taking cure to a higher degree" according to some psychologists such as Dominick LaCapra, Cathy Caruth and etc. (Hartman, 2003, p. 259). Nottage believes in this conception, insisting on how to make her play as a mirror reflecting the atrocious grim statistics that resulting from war against these noncombatants women. She comments:

I am a storyteller by trade. I remain committed to telling the stories of women of the African diaspora, particularly those stories that don't often find their way into the mainstream media. Sexual violence against the women of Congo is one of the great human rights crises in the world today, and I am using the tools that I have at my disposal to raise awareness and draw attention to the situation; those tools are my imagination and my storytelling skills. I feel the onus is on all of us who have the ability to reach audiences to try and bring an end to the scourge. I cannot bear to live in a world where such horrific things are happening to my African sisters without doing whatever I can to help them. (Nottage, 2012)

Consequently, *Ruined* focuses on the sexual exploitation of Congolese women in such hostile environment. It is important to write about this issue because it does not threat the women only but the human race in general. We do not exaggerate when we say it is concerned with genocide phenomena in Africa. Nottage's "aim[s] to raise awareness about the situation of women in the war in particular and to inspire activism to stop gender-based violence". (Bystrom, 2013, 228). Nottage motivated by her interest in the affairs of womenfolk's forces her to create a literary work to be as a bridge between these women and the world to evoke the public conscious against this widespread phenomenon to search for a solution to such brutal experiences and crimes against these women. Throughout *Ruined*, Nottage tries to share the forgotten



painful experiences and stories of raped women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nottage says: "I'm trying to find a human way of dramatizing these women's experiences that will provoke thought,". (Shannon, 2007, 188).

## 2- Congolese Women: Trapped in Political, International and Governmental Conflicts:

Nottage focuses on the voice of survivor silent women who have been drastically crushed and marginalized under the civil war and tribal traditions. Hartman indicates that "verbalization remains a basis for making the wound perceivable and the silence audible" (Hartman, 2003, p. 259). It is disappointing to discover that writers who are interested with such phenomenon are focusing on documentation and description of such issues more than on the political and structural reasons which allow such phenomenon to occur. Nottage's play tackles stories that "don't often find their way into the mainstream media" (Nottage, 2012). She made many interviews and recorded many real stories of victims' women of sexual violence as Nottage indicated:

In 2004 I went to East Africa to collect the narratives of Congolese women, because I knew their stories were not being heard. I had no idea what play I would find in that war-torn landscape, but I traveled to the region, because I wanted to paint a three dimensional portrait of the women caught in the middle of armed conflicts; I wanted to understand who they were beyond their status as victims. I was surprised by the number of women who readily wanted to share their stories. One by one, through tears and in voices just above a whisper, they recounted raw, revealing become battlefields. (Nottage.2012)

The Republic of the Congo is one of the African countries which is rich in minerals and natural resources such as gold, diamonds and Colton. Nottage indicates that "As long as they can extract Colton cheaply, we have a stake in the war that's being fought there." These minerals enter into the modern electronic and communications industries. Due to technological development, Congo has become an open ground for rival militias to control its natural sources, these resources causes grossly genocidal and human rights abuses there (Muhi, Maysoon T. 2019). The rape of the women's body implicitly embodies the crime of raping of the earth itself "waged not just over women's bodies, but over the ruined body of the Congo herself." (Esther J. Jerry, 2016, 166)

According to the UN estimates reports there are more than 200,000 women "from infants to old women" have been sexually violated by government soldiers and different militias despite the Existence of the peacekeeping forces there. Congo is



described as "the rape capital of the world" (Tramboo and Khanna, 2015, p.193) because conflicted forces there are given a complete liberty to kidnap and rape Congolese women. In fact, rape is the first ghost that attacks every woman in wartime, it is considered the most painful power in wartime that cannot be indelible. In wars and armed conflicts in the whole world, manly power spin not only on land but also on the body of the woman. Earth and women's wombs are metaphorically unified in this play. The nation's continuity and fertile power will be decreased and may even terminated throughout this unity.

In the core of *Ruined*, Nottage assigns a responsibility to unfold a social, political and moral message; the play reveals one of the biggest conspiracies of silence in history according to the former United National undersecretary-general for humanitarian affairs' declaration Jan Egeland. "Silence is complicity. I believe that. Our silence on this issue sends a message to the Congolese government that it can continue to rape the land and its people with impunity. Our silence on this issue means that every time we use our cell phones, we are inadvertently fueling a war that is being fought on the backs of women". Nottage shoulders the responsibility of depicting the suffering of these pariahs' women. She wants to be their defender voice who calls for their rights after they have been stripped from their essence of existence. Nottage said: "We were expecting horror stories, but we weren't prepared for this extent of brutality". (Nottage, 2012)

Any force that wants to extend its control and influence over other countries has to follow a "pre-planned tactic" as what happened in DRC. This tactic according to Gottschall's theory means "highlights war rape as a pre-planned military strategy. The enemy emasculates men and attacks them morally by raping their women. Consequently, men's failure to protect their women causes them to give up resistance, leave their lands and families because of shame and humiliation". (Salih, 2016). It seems that the rape as a weapon in war is still regarded as a marginal effect and uncontrolled, in fact manly conflicts is not on earth, but on women's bodies, too. These men used rape as a technique to gain political and economic power. Louise Nzigire, a local social worker, states that "this violence was designed to exterminate the population." Nzigire observes that rape has been a "cheap, simple weapon for all parties in the war, more easily obtainable than bullets or bombs." ( Buzzatto. 2011, p.392)

It is a mistake to think that these attacks are practiced rape only to satisfy the sexual needs of these unscrupulous soldiers. Notoriously, by using the strategy of separating fears within their enemy, they stripped abused women from their humanity using them as a weapon in that deadly war to crash and detach them from their families and societies because woman is considered the unifying element in the family and community unit "the symbolic representation of a culture, ethnicity, and the unifying fabric of their people and nation". (Salih, 2016). These soldiers will ensure the absolute controlling over their victims physically and emotionally and causing a





deeper physical and psychological damage. "The problem [of rape] is destroying our households and families, foreigners are coming and raping our wives, devastating them. Since you are not God or an angel, you will stop loving her. That is why we say those people are ruining our communities". (Salih, 2016).

In current conflicts women's bodies became part of modern wars. Rape becomes a devastating weapon in war in current era. According to deliberate military strategy rape aims to emasculate men, destabilize communities and spread terror and exert control over their wrestler's areas. For this women and girls are targeted in various conflicts, imprisonment, torture and executions as a means of punishment. Victory becomes entitled to dispose of its own life and under the eyes of governments and blessing. The refugee camps have become part of the struggle to win the biggest booty of war. "The human body becomes the weapon, the teenage boy the terror, and a woman's womb "the battleground" (Fitzpatrick, 2018. 141).

Moreover, rape victims suffer daily from insulting and ostracism from their community and families. "This is a stigma that I'm going to have to carry forever. Hence the word "ruined." (Cruz 2010, 27). As the play progresses, it is revealed that the title refers to the social stigma attached to rape victims in eastern Congo (and many other places) and to the physical damage done to these victims' genitalia. Not only are these rape victims stigmatized, but many are rendered incapable of reproducing, so violence is the act to which they are repeatedly subjected as Stephen Lewis, comments, "there is no precedent for the insensate brutality of the war on women in Congo. The world has never dealt with such a twisted and blistering phenomenon" (Wakabi, 2008, p. 15).

The African woman is unjustly located at the edges of the social hierarchy hegemony of the patriarchal authority. They described as a curse, after the rape husbands reject their wives and refuse to accept them again. Some communities who express their anger toward raped women have avenged them because they consider them immoral women. Sometimes they are forced by their families to end their lives. "the whole family is deeply shamed by association". (Pratt and Werchick, 2004, p. 12).

In a manner identical to her female contemporaneous coordinates, Nottage deals with black female who are concerned in the request for self-definition. Instead of facing the lack of insecurity and confront men who have exercised the brutal violence against them and their women, their society prevents any systematic approach to rehabilitation of these women and any pronouncement about that brutal phenomenon and its catastrophic effects. In addition, they take away any chance of importance from them to return to their society and work in it. Thus, women stay economically under the control of men's hands again and continuously insulting these women. Conversely, their society marginalizes and pushes them down into the ladder of social and political injustice and oppression. Women are portrayed in this play as "doubly



victimized—sexually assaulted and impregnated or left unable to reproduce . . . they [also] must endure shaming by male members of their families and communities, who perceive the violation of ‘their’ women as another form of defeat” (Friedman, 2010, p. 597).

As long as that "rapes as a weapon of war" is not defined as a human security issue, in addition to using it as a weapon of genocide and ethnic cleansing, rapes, women continue to suffer from the fighting parties. It goes much further than where they replaced pillage and plunder which was marked by wars and conflicts in previous centuries of sexual assault, by raping women and girls and forced prostitution and trafficking in human beings especially women and children. Patricia Hynes (2004, p.441) indicates that "Of all who suffer the trauma of war, women and girls pay the highest price for the military culture and war environment that prepares and inures men to kill and exploit humans—no matter the age, gender, and civilian status".

Community problems and disorders resulting from the exploitation of women in wartime make it a crime against them .It causes psychological problems faced by girls and women as a result of the war on the one hand, as a result of being affected by post conflict rapes on the other hand. The family problems and violence against women is caused by the incapability feeling of men to safeguard their women and their homes, and death due to suicide or violence against women in periods of war or subsequent periods, all these results and more by international studies and reports as a weapon, implications, and how to destroy it for women and the family and to society as a whole .Zainab Salbi, an Iraqi women rights activist, states her own conception about the indelible impact of war on defenseless women saying that :

War is not a computer-generated missile striking a digital map.  
War is the color of earth as it explodes in our faces, the sound of child pleading, the smell of smoke and fear. Women survivors of war are not the single image portrayed on the television screen, but the glue that holds families and countries together. Perhaps by understanding women, and the other side of war ... we will have more humility in our discussions of wars... perhaps it is time to listen to women's side of history. (Salbi, 2010)

*Ruined* is a play set in a brothel house which provides safeguard for ruined and hopeless women which is run by a businesswoman call Mama Nadi. The play opens with Christian a salesman who used to bring girls and sell them as commodities to Mama Nadi to work in her brothel house. He brings her new girls and offers them in a cheap price \$20 because they “damaged” goods. “I’ll give you two for one,” Unfortunately, there is a painful fact that the position of women in (DRC) is situated under oppression and dangerous more than anything else. These women are ill-treated as objects more than human beings as a result of the lack of respect and the inferiority position of Congolese women make them victims for the tribal, social and political



system. Nottage endeavors to shake the audience's imagination to the atrocities committed against female through submitting a description how the female's body is culturally and socially constructed in a post-colonial circumstance. Nottage describes her state and reaction after listening to these women saying: "the situation in the Congo is so complicated and chaotic that...I decided to focus on one war: the war against women. There are many wars being fought, but this seems the most inexplicable—and the one most easily stopped—and yet it continues"( **Mazelis, 2009**).

Moreover, the playwright bring attention to another crime against humanity in General and women in particular, which is the issue of human trafficking. Cahill characterizes how sexual violence can be used as way to maintain social and political power, and to what extent feminist theories exploring sexual abuse as "one means by which patriarchal culture maintained control over women" (**García, 2012**). In this context, "rape as a weapon of war" does not become an individual issue, but a social one. The crash and the dissolution of families as a result of civil wars have left women in particular vulnerable and prone to violence, women are abducted, imprisoned, and forced to practice sex with soldiers. These are the basic attributes for women: to become vulnerable to rapes, forced prostitution and trafficked with the complicity of the Governments and military authorities in times of war which is what happened in Congo.

I expected the men to be contrite, apologetic and ashamed," she adds. "I was shocked, because they could tell their stories divorced of emotion: 'And we cut off their lips, and we—' I went, 'Okay.' Also I was shocked that people would be around them listening to their stories. I thought to myself, 'These are war criminals. Why isn't someone arresting them?' But people were listening and not horrified in the way that I was horrified. We interviewed a couple of refugee camp members who had been victims of these Lord's Resistance Army soldiers and who were coexisting with them. That coexistence really confused me. (**Nottage, 2012**)

### 3-The Voice of Voiceless: The Cry of Dehumanized Women:

Notoriously, the moral ambivalence of making ruined women working as prostitutes in *Ruined* is implicitly obligate the audience to focus on the nefarious realities of their worlds. In their lives as whores to both conflicted forces in Mama Nadi's house, they are forced to re-live their anguish, something that has destroyed them every moment. These raped women cannot live or have any role in their harshly and predominant communities. Mama Nadi explicitly explains to Salima,





whose husband is now looking for her, the reality that those women may face death or raped again if they return to their village: Becoming raped women means that they are "damaged goods". For this they regrouped to work in prostitution in order to delight men soldiers, rebels, militias and other outlaws. In fact, this is their only way to prove and find themselves. CHRISTIAN, one of the ruined girls: "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, 2009, p 11)

In fact Mama Nadi's brothel is a significant symbol in the drama. The traditional view of a whorehouse is an arena of belittling and dehumanizing women. Nottage reverses this view and create another image of the brothel as a considerable paradigm of hope to redeem the lives of these ruined women. If the brothel does not exist it will be a disaster for these women to be raped and enslaved by destructive armies. So, for those Congolese women there is no safe place to live peacefully than this brothel house which provides "some kind of dignity that is not available outside" (Garcia, 2019, p. 133).

From the beginning of the play the audience thinks that Mama Nadi is a cruel and selfish woman who cannot think only of herself and money. The development events of the play reveal a different picture of that woman. Mama Nadi is a diplomatic, cunning and is a self-made woman who can manage her business successfully through her personality. She considers the brothel house her own empire and does not endure anyone who cannot conform the rules that she has framed. In fact Mama Nadi is considered the main character of this play who runs her establishment with an iron hand because she never fails to affirm her authority in her empire. She knows when and how to speak with each side. She realizes that she cannot incline to the rebels or the soldiers' side. She seems to be faithful to any side who comes to her establishment and pay money.

This woman knows how to deal with these savage men, she puts her rules in order to keep her works and girls safe. "MAMA. Once you step through my door, then you're in my house. And I make the rules here." (Nottage, 2009: 29). She asks all armed men to put their weapons, gung and bullets outside when they come to her whorehouse. There is a big contradiction between the outside and the inside of the brothel. She succeeds to keep the conflict outside her house. "Mama: They're safer with me, than in their own homes... Because I give them something other than a beggar's cup." (Nottage. 2009: 57) The rebels and the soldiers can find pleasures and entertainment inside Mama's house because the place is full of dance, music and life. There is something hidden in the depths of Mama, trying to hide it from others. Like many girls and women in the brothel and Congo, it has been destroyed. Mama has tried to make up this feeling through her success and prosperity "Black female characters in her plays buck the system to boldly assert their individuality or undergo painful journeys that end in self-discovery". (Sandra G. Shannon, 2007, 189)



Nottage always displays a depth of perception and estimation for her characters. Through the character of Mami Nadi, Nottage tries to reflect her personality as a woman and she becomes the defender voice for those girls. Nottage succeeds in showing this through Nadi's good relationship with the girls who worked with her in the brothel. Many of these girls have been brutalized by soldiers and rebels, but at the same time they have a defiantly journey of attempting to gain self – recognition. Mama Nadi supports and helps these girls to overcome their plight and shelters them after being ostracized by their families and communities. However, the war-afflicted area (brothel) becomes their new world despite being a world beneath them. They accepted it because of the destruction of war on the outside. Although Mama Nadi profits from the young women, she also protects them from the even more brutal world outside her doors. Nottage states that “I was interested in exploring the darker aspects of a woman who has a very complex, serious relationship with the war, someone morally ambiguous, a woman who made difficult choices to survive. The only way for these women to survive is by pleasuring these men in mama's house”. (Nottage. 2009. p.xi)

Moreover, ruined women trying recognize themselves to start a new life searching for tranquility and new beginning away from their physical and psychological destruction. This sense of change is quite tangible in the image of the black woman struggle for survival and emancipation herself from crushing spirit. The women's fervent pursuit are significantly distinguished by their courageous nature to resist the persistent attempts of silencing their voice. According to existentialism philosophy which is focused on analyzing the individual existence, freedom, choice and experience in this world. The core of existentialism is the discussion of the purpose of human existence and the meaning of life in this irrational universe. Thus, this movement believes that the individuals are entirely free. He should hold the responsibility of giving meaning to this absurd and crucial life of humanity which is filled with suffering and dead, changed it into something worth and filled with passion and sincere.

Nottage's purpose does not criticize prostitution itself, rather, condemn the fate which is worse than prostitution that anticipate women in the Democratic Republic of Congo. These women have to re-live their awful experience. Of course, Nottage does not justify the subsistence of prostitution on female rather to be suggested that in such dreadful situations, prostitution may be a much more suitable exit for those women who have been strictly inadmissible by society because of their ruined sexuality such as Sophie and Salima. Mama Nadi points that: “My girls . . . they'd rather be here, than back out there in their villages where they are taken without regard. They're safer with me than in their own homes” (Nottage, 2009: 86).

*Ruined* presents an invitation to witness the intensity and complexity of a situation of these homeless women who are totally precluded from their husbands, children and society. They pull away from any public space and cannot participate in the business



(mining) that manages the country. As Mama Nadi claims: "I want a powerful slip of paper that says I can cut down forests and dig holes and build to the moon if I choose. I don't want someone to turn up at my door, and take my life from me. Not ever again. But tell, how does a woman like me get a piece of land, without having to pick up a fucking gun?" (Nottage, 2009: 27).

Nottage shows one of the main victimized female characters called Salima who is raped by the government soldiers. In fact Salima's character is based on a real story of a real woman called Salima. It's the reality of the events that makes Nottage succeed in transforming the real condition and suffering of these women. Salima is a hopeless and a destructed woman; she has been discarded by her husband after being raped by a group of soldiers and worked as a prostitute in a brothel. After killing her baby, they have chained her into a tree and raped her repeatedly for five months in a brutal way. "They tide me to the tree by my foot.....I lay there as they tore me to pieces, until I was raw.... five months. Five months. Chained like a goat." (Nottage, 2009, p.46)

Salima is a victim of the firm cultural attitudes and traditions of her community who cannot forgive her vicious rape. They blamed her for a crime (rape) that she does not commit by her own choice. Sometimes, women are attacked by strangers, but most often they are hurt by people who are close to them, such as a husband or partner. Salima pathetically comments "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 then she is painfully described her husband's behavior: "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? I dishonored him?!" (Nottage, 2009, 70).

Whether one is attacked by a stranger or mistreated by a partner, violence and abuse, one can have terrible effects. One can get help for any physical and emotional problems. One can feel better. This is particularly relevant in patriarchal societies, where female sexuality is linked to male honor, virginity is a core value, and where a culture considers ethnicity transmitted through male genes. Salima recalls her memories comments:

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? I dishonored him?! Where was he? Buying a pot? He was too proud to bear my shame...but not proud enough to protect me from it. (Nottage, 2009, 44).



Because of their terrible condition and uncertain future, these women have no safe place to go from just that brothel house. The irony in this play introduced throughout the contradictory situation which these women expected from the part of government soldiers "the expectation of security" who violated women rather than protecting them. Salima painfully cries expressing her traumatic experience saying: "These men fighting...fighting for our liberation. Still I close my eyes and I see such terrible things. Things, I cannot stand to have in my head. How can men be this way?"(Nottage, 2009.46)

Salima is traumatized and became rootless, homeless and damaged, her pain is unbearable after her separation from her daughter and husband. Salima described her world as an "empire of trauma" (Edmondson, 2018, p. 199). Finally, after her long suffering, it seems that Salima has a courage to put an end to her miserable life. Her death is a protest to stop the deleterious exploitation of her body. Her death indicates a symbolic message to the fighting men on allowance for all the plagues women of the Congo that "you'll not fight your battles on my body anymore" (Nottage, 2009, p. 63). Salima's impressive cry is a corollary ever- growing realization indicated her love for her own sense of identity and humanity despite her harassment and worst human experience. Her speech shows a kind of revolution against her traumatic experience.

Salima's body represents wombs and genitals of the Congolese women collectively. She censures the nefarious truth that she and other women in their country are stuck between the civil war and the soldiers who demand rights to their body and lands. "Most of [the women] where incredibly traumatized and yet they still found the strength to tell their stories. As painful as was, I felt this urgency for them to recount every comment...At times I wanted to close my ears and stop listening. But I think they really wanted to go on record...They wanted the world to hear their stories".

Nottage highlighted another victim Sophie, she is a young beautiful girl who has been raped by a bayonet, and she is victimized perverted sexual crimes. At the beginning Mama Nadi refuses to accept her because Sophie cannot work in prostitution. There is obvious perpetuating disability in Sophie. She is suffering from genital mutilation because of a group of armed men has raped her by a bayonet. There is no doubt that these raped women are suffering from dual rapes by men who hurt these women physically causing dangerous diseases such as HIV and gentile and psychology in their struggling to retrieve their mental health. Nonetheless, the assailant forces usually used rape as a way to humiliate, demoralize and subdue the enemy; "a tool to humiliate the women or to degrade the opposing side's masculinity; [it is] a way to strip women of their wombs" (Whoriskey, 2009, p. x.).

Christian tries to convince Mama Nadi to take Sophie. Christian tells Mama Nadi that Sophie is her niece; she is a well cooker, singer and educator. Under the urgency of Christian, Mama Nadi accepts to take her and becomes her bookkeeper bar singer.



The pain and suffering are obvious in her eyes, she is very sad because of the unforgettable injury of that man. CHRISTIAN: "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, 2009, p 11)

There is a melancholy look in Sophie's eyes. Sophie describes her singing as resonances for narrating the unbelievable suffering of being ruined: "While I'm singing, I'm praying the pain will be gone, but what those men did to me lives inside of my body. Every step I take I feel them in me. Punishing me. And it will be that way for the rest of my life. (Nottage, 2009, p.23) Sophie used to read romance stories and this makes Mama think that romance sensation confers her an unrealistic impression of Sophie's crucial reality and misfortune. It seems that reading is a minor thing but in fact this sense contributes Sophie and gives her aspirations to confront her circumstances to be loved. Sophie's challenging spirit hopes that one day she can submit reconstructive operation and reform her genitalia. She and the other girls condense their despairing situation and the injustice for a glimmer of hope in their lives.

Josephine is another pitiful victim, despite her father is the chief but she shares the same grievous predestination and violent act of the Congolese women. Through Josephine's desperate figure, Nottage is revealed a painful fact that neither your fiscal situation nor your father's effective position in the community will not separate you from being a prey of this gruesome and outrageous crime against humanity. She is suffering from unforgettable plight of dual traumatic dilemma from her family and militia at the same time. Josephine bitterly describes her brutal rape in front of her family and the villagers who have done nothing to rescue her. She expelled from the village just like all the raped women:

My father was chief! ... My father was chief! The most important man in the villages, and when the soldiers raided us, who was kind to me? Huh? Not his second wife. 'There she is the chief's daughter!' Or the cowards who pretended not to know me, and did any of them bring a blanket to cover me, did anyone move to help me? NO! So you see, you ain't special! (Nottage, 2009, p.26)

However, Nottage, as a dramatist, seems to have an intense awareness with the depiction of the characters' plights who are lived marginalized in their community, and in studying "what she calls 'the space between the lines', that is, the innermost thoughts of marginal characters whose voices remain muted and whose stories have been deemed irrelevant by those around them who wield more power" (Shannon, 2007: 187).

In another side, it is believed that *Ruined* is a play of love but in different aspect. Josephine, Salima, and Sophie are vigorous women to rebuild and redefine themselves





## مجلة الفنون والآداب وعلوم الإنسانياث والاجتماع

Journal of Arts, Literature, Humanities and Social Sciences

[www.jalhss.com](http://www.jalhss.com)

Volume (50) March 2020

العدد (50) مارس 2020



and defeat any physical or psychological injuries. Nevertheless, from her point of view each one of these characters display the spirit of revolution for change through their love of life. They rebuild and redefine themselves in order to create their own spaces for restoration a better life as independent victors. Nottage comments: "I found my play *Ruined* in the painful narratives of Salima and the other Congolese women, in their gentle cadences and the monumental space between their gasps and sighs. I also found my play in the way they occasionally accessed their smiles, as if glimpsing beyond their wounds into the future". There is a kind of love relationship between Christian and Mama that emphasizes the importance of love that can emerge from the worst conditions in the world, which was manifested by the dance between them "a physical embodiment of hope—hope that Christian can begin a new life with Mama Nadi, and hope for the brothel's women that they too will experience the happiness Mama Nadi finally embraces" (Jordan, 2010).

The experiment of abused women is unique in the brothel, as it has been seen with the narrative's view "tells a tale of unsung struggle for survival and personal happiness amongst individuals living along and beyond the margins of society." (Buckner, p .9) They show love for each other in the form of support in a world that renounce these aspects where these women are supposed to be ruined. It can be ensured that the women can establish love and prohibit them from being ruined within the brothel. It is love and fraternity towards one another that chain them. It confirms their ability to persist in the brutal circumstances of war. However, "this female exclusion can be viewed —as a space for the female protagonist [s] to cope with, and at times, to transcend exile. They resist domination and attempt to reconnect with their bodies and communities". (Ketu H. Katrak, 2006, 2).

In conclusion, Nottage indicates that the dilemma of these women cannot be neglected. This view brings to tolerate the dimension of the patriarchal frame and corrupt orders that exile African women to place them in much more obscure and problematic affair. *Ruined* as a story is desirable play because it is clarifying how the external conditions such as fight ,the exploitation of female's body and land can both affect the feminine experience of life and their existence in the shadow of margins of society therefore it is not completely safe spaces. Nottage is more concerned with the fate of that region's women, hundreds of thousands of whom have endured gang rape by both government soldiers and anti-government guerrillas.

### Conclusion:

Nottage brings the audience attention to an important moral message through her play that civil war brings brutal consequences for country in general and for women in particular. It is obvious that the government and the militias are mainly responsible for the plight of these women alike. The crisis of war against Congolese women and the role of their armies make women suffering from unforgettable traumatic psycho-social diseases. The play concentrates on the condition of women who have been

**مجلة الفنون والآداب وعلوم الإنسانياث والاجتماع**

Journal of Arts, Literature, Humanities and Social Sciences

[www.jalhss.com](http://www.jalhss.com)

Volume (50) March 2020

العدد (50) مارس 2020



deteriorated by war. There is no doubt that this modern winner drama has a social and political message at its essence. This play examines an accurate commentary on the frightening reality of the soldiers and wars on ruined women. Nottage remarks that she was concerned in reconnoitering the darker sides of women who have very complicated and serious connections with the war. Sometimes there is a moral ambiguous forcing woman to make difficult choices to survive by pleasuring these men in mama's house.

The shadow of civil war has made these women prey for the hunger of that men leading theme suffering from severe social destructive. It seems that rape as a weapon in war is still regarded as a marginal effect and uncontrolled, in fact manly conflicts is not on earth only, but on women's bodies, too. In recent times rape and violence against women especially in wars became a stain and thus raped women are shamed their community and family. In addition, Nottage states that these men do not have a real battle with another men or fight for a political issue only. But these soldiers are practiced rape to satisfy their sadistic desires, girls and women in concentration camps and prisons become spoils of war. It has also become almost common among armies to use the rapes as a weapon in war just for being a military strategy pursued by the warring parties to impose its power and humiliate the other party. These crushed women are striped from any form of human existence regarding them as a curse. These dehumanized women have no definite future and ironically speaking, this the brothel house becomes their only shelter and might be the best place to liberate themselves from the pain and suffering which is caused by conflicted forces.



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## مجلة الفنون والآداب وعلوم الانسانيات والاجتماع

Journal of Arts, Literature, Humanities and Social Sciences

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Volume (50) March 2020

العدد (50) مارس 2020



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