



## Rape, Trauma, and Romanticized Recuperation: An Evaluation of Omung Kumar's *Bhoomi*

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### Introduction

The caged bird sings/with a fearful trill  
of things unknown/but longed for still  
and his tune is heard/on the distant hill  
for the caged bird/sings of freedom

Maya Angelou, "Caged Bird" from *Shaker, Why Don't You Sing?*

The National Crime Victimization Survey (U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2010) defines rape as "[f]orced sexual intercourse including both psychological coercion as well as physical force" (13). Rape trauma syndrome (RTS) resulting from rape (Holmstrom and Burgess 1975, 1288) is closely intertwined with post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), yet specifically tailored to the context of sexual assault, delineating a spectrum of trauma-induced manifestations encompassing disruptions in customary physical, emotional, cognitive, and interpersonal functioning. According to Bell, RTS is an "acute stress reaction on the part of the victim, emanating from the threat of being killed" (Bell 2015, 4). The syndrome divides reactions into three categories: a) physical, b) emotional, and c) behavioural (Burgess and Holmstrom 1979). When it comes to rape victim-survivors, it is important to consider the biological, psychological, and sociological impacts on them in order to develop effective treatment and intervention methods for RTS. "The trauma of rape extends far beyond the actual assault, and society's response to this crime can also affect women's well-being" (Campbell, Dworkin, and Cabral 2009, 226).

Incidents of rape get reported but the psychological trauma of the victim-survivors is overlooked by the mass media. Films remain a significant

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