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SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE. To provide security and policy review on the document at Tab 1 prior to release to the public.

2. BACKGROUND. C2C Allison Egan, C1C Ashley Christ, C1C Tobiah Kroskob, and C1C Jessica Adams have all prepared presentations for Colorado Springs Undergraduate Research Forum (CSURF). The presentations are titled respectively: REALITY OF VIOLENCE AS A PRODUCT OF IRRESPONSIBILITY; WILLIAM FAULKNER, DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILY, AND THE OLD SOUTH; RAPE OF CHARLOTTE TEMPLE AND VICTIM-BLAMING; AMERICA, LINEARLY CYCLICAL

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Tabs:
1. REALITY OF VIOLENCE AS A PRODUCT OF IRRESPONSIBILITY
2. WILLIAM FAULKNER, DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILY AND THE OLD SOUTH
3. RAPE OF CHARLOTTE TEMPLE AND VICTIM-BLAMING
4. AMERICA, LINEARLY CYCLICAL

Tobiah Kroskob

USAFA - DF - PA 248

Professor Brissett

Final Research Essay

9 May 2013

The Culture of Rape

Charlotte Temple by Susanna Rowson is classified as a seduction novel. It falls under this category due to the fact that the protagonist, Charlotte Temple, is said to have been seduced by a man into leaving her family and going with him to the United States. However, the pivotal scene in which Charlotte "leaves" with Montraville, is vague in wording and can be open to the interpretation that instead of being seduced, as the genre implies, Charlotte was kidnapped and raped by Montraville with the help of La Rue. The word seduction, in today's terms, implies some choice and fault on the victim. If one can prove that Charlotte was indeed raped, then claiming Charlotte was seduced downplays Charlotte as a victim. This also shows America's history of victim blaming, therefore (usually) blaming the woman instead of the true culprit, the person who commits the crime against the victim.

Marion Rust wrote an article entitled "What's Wrong With Charlotte Temple?" In her article, Rust examines the problems with Charlotte and why she ends up deflowered and eventually dead. Rust's main claim is that "it is in relaxing her sensitivity to her own impulses, not giving in to them, that Charlotte loses her virginity and then her life" (495). What Rust is implying is that Charlotte loses all sense of herself and who she is and in doing so, gives up the things that are most important to her, such as her chastity and her family. Rust makes the claim that "Disorientation, therefore, rather than passion, leads Charlotte from her British boarding school to her lover's arms and from there to a transatlantic crossing, the outskirts of New York,

pregnancy, childbirth among strangers, temporary madness, and death in the redeeming presence of her father" (496). Therefore at the root of all of Charlotte's problems is disorientation. What causes the sudden disorientation of Charlotte who was previously a normal girl away at boarding school? Charlotte's disorientation was caused by her kidnap and rape.

In order to claim that Montraville raped Charlotte, one must look at the definitions of the word rape both through our twenty-first century lens and the definition closer to Rowson's time. The modern definition of rape is "unlawful sexual activity and usually sexual intercourse carried out forcibly or under threat of injury against the will usually of a female or with a person who is beneath a certain age or incapable of valid consent" (Merriam-Webster). However, there is another phrase that applies to Charlotte as well and that is the term statutory rape, which is defined as "sexual intercourse with a person who is below the statutory age of consent" (Merriam-Webster).

By both modern definitions, Charlotte Temple is raped. The definition of statutory rape depends on the phrase "age of consent." In the United States, the age of consent is determined on a state-by-state basis, but the small range in all fifty states is between sixteen- to eighteen-years-old (Age of Consent). Similarly, the age of consent in the United Kingdom, the place from which Charlotte is kidnapped, is sixteen (Sexual Offenses). On the very first page of the novel, the reader meets both the perpetrator and the victim. The interaction is described as follows:

> A tall, elegant girl looked at Montraville and blushed: he instantly recollected the features of Charlotte Temple, whom he had once seen and danced with at a ball at Portsmouth. At the time he thought on her only as a very lovely child, she being then only thirteen; but the improvement two years had made in her person, and the blush of recollection which suffused her cheeks as she passed, awakened in his bosom new and pleasing ideas. (1)

From this passage, one can deduce Charlotte to be fifteen-years-old. By today's standards, this passage is disturbing for multiple reasons. The first is because Charlotte is, by our standards, still a child and is being pursued by an adult man. While Montraville's actual age is never announced, it is made known that he "was a Lieutenant in the army" thus implying that he is not still in his teenage years as Charlotte is. The next problem modern readers may have with this passage is learning Charlotte's age. In knowing Charlotte's fate concerning Montraville, one can now claim that Montraville committed statutory rape against Charlotte since she is at least a year younger than the age of consent in both the United States and the United Kingdom.

While statutory rape is clear cut, proving Charlotte is raped by the first given definition leaves more room for interpretation. To begin, one must examine the exact scene of Charlotte's kidnapping. Discerning whether or not Charlotte was kidnapped is a key point in proving that she was also raped, for if she was kidnapped, she could hardly be in a position to say no to the very man that kidnapped her and whom she depends on. After Charlotte pleads with Montraville to stop trying to persuade her, he threatens to "put a period to [his] existence" thus threatening to kill himself to which Charlotte replies "Alas! My torn heart! How shall I act?" Finally comes the decisive moment when Montraville replies "Let me direct you" and proceeds to lift "her into the chaise" where Charlotte proceeds to faint "into the arms of her betrayer" (37). Again, let us look at the definition of kidnap, "to seize and detain or carry away by unlawful force" (Merriam-Webster). According to this definition, Charlotte is carried away by unlawful force because Montaville physically places Charlotte in the carriage where she becomes incapable of making decisions due to her unconscious state.

Once it is clear that Charlotte is kidnapped, the idea that she was raped rather than seduced is easier to agree with. The most applicable phrase in the definition of rape that applies

to this situation is "incapable of valid consent." In what way is Charlotte capable of giving her consent? She is on a ship to a foreign land and dependent on the man who has abducted her from her native land. While the actual act of losing her virginity is never explicitly mentioned, the reader can deduce the act due to the subsequent pregnancy of Charlotte. However, the question remains, how can Charlotte say no to the man who has kidnapped her? The answer is simple, she cannot. The narrator never gives the reader Charlotte's inner thought towards Montraville. The reader is only given what Charlotte says. She never says words of love or caring towards Montraville, but only speaks of her dependency on him. When he believes her to be unfaithful and tells her that he will no longer be seeing her, she cries "kill me, for pity's sake kill me, but do not doubt my fidelity. Do not leave me in this horrid situation; for the sake of your unborn child, oh! Spurn not the wretched mother from you" (64). She does not beg him to stay for the sake of her love for him, but for the sake of the situation she is in.

There are some that would argue that by the time they reach the United States, Charlotte chooses to remain with Montraville for the sake of her deep feelings for him. In fact there is a line that very much supports this opinion. Once in New York and settled Montraville becomes so engrossed in "business and pleasure" that they "entirely occupied his time [so much so] that he had little to devote to the woman, whom he had brought from all her connections, and robbed of innocence" (50). The narrator then goes on to describe the few times he visited Charlotte and she was so "attached to him, that all her sorrows were forgotten while blest with his company" (50). This leads the reader to believe that Charlotte has feelings for Montraville and chooses to see him and be his mistress.

However, there is an alternative interpretation which fits with the idea that she was kidnapped and raped. At this point in her life, Charlotte is fully dependent on Montraville. In the

following passages the narrator, presumably Rowson herself, writes that the wife "has one solid pleasure within her own bosom, she can reflect that she has not deserved neglect…she knows that he cannot leave her to unite himself to another: *he cannot cast her out to poverty and contempt"* while the mistress "knows there is no tie but honour, and that, in a man who has been guilty of seduction, is but very feeble: *he may leave her in a moment to shame and want"* (51). Therefore, one can argue that Charlotte does not stay because of heartfelt emotions for Montraville, but recognizes that so few visits implies that he no longer cares to have her dependent on him and that he wishes to cast her aside. Her attachment to him when he does visit is her showing her joy that she has remained in his good graces long enough to continue living the life which he has bestowed upon her. This makes Charlotte's attachment to Montraville a sense of relief rather than feelings of love and choice.

Clearly, because of the genre that *Charlotte Temple* is categorized in seduction novels, there are many who would claim that Charlotte was seduced. Again, one must look at the definition of seduce. The Merriam-Webster dictionary gives three relevant definitions. The first is "to persuade to disobedience or disloyalty" the second is "to lead astray usually by persuasion or false promises" and the third is "entice to sexual intercourse." The first two definitions are easily addressed. Charlotte herself recognizes that neither her parents nor society would approve of her illicit actions with Montaville. When Charlotte receives the letter from her mother regarding her birthday party, she cries to herself "the irrevocable step is not yet taken: it is not too late to recede from the brink of a precipice, from which I can only behold the dark abyss of ruin, shame, and remorse!" (35). Charlotte recognizes the consequences of her poor choices and attempts to avoid Montraville.

This resolution leads the reader and Charlotte to the true seducer of the novel, Mademoiselle La Rue. Every instance in which Charlotte attempts to make the right choice, La Rue stands in the way and persuades her away from what Charlotte knows is right. La Rue preys on Charlotte's inner goodness and uses various tactics to influence Charlotte. When Charlotte is debating whether or not to read the letter that Montraville has given her, La Rue uses her words to make Charlotte feel guilty. She says to Charlotte,

> He is most probably going to America; and if ever you should hear any account of him, it may possibly be that he is killed; and though he loved you ever so fervently, though his last breath should be spent in a prayer for your happiness, it can be nothing to you: you can feel nothing for the fate of the man, whose letters you will not open, and whose sufferings you will not alleviate. (25)

La Rue knows that Charlotte cannot bear to have anyone feel uncared for and uses it to persuade Charlotte. This makes La Rue the seducer. Charlotte is not seduced into intercourse with Montreville. She is seduced into making poor choices and going to see Montraville. It is not Montraville who overrides Charlotte's decisions to no longer see him, but La Rue.

At this point, it should be fairly easy to see that Charlotte was not seduced by Montraville but rather seduced into seeing him. From there, she was kidnapped and then due to her circumstances, was forced into sexual relations with him. However, this is all by our modern terms of the words raped, kidnapped and seduced. When the novel was written and published in 1794, the meaning for each of the words was different than the meaning now. Was Charlotte raped by her own generation's definition? A definition closer to her time of the word rape is "The illicit carnal knowledge of a woman without her consent, effected by force, duress, intimidation or deception as to the nature of the act" (Webster). As proved earlier, once

kidnapped and taken away from her home land, Charlotte had no choice but to consent to the man who had taken her. She was in a state of duress and deception. Therefore, by standards from then and now, Charlotte was raped.

Now take a look at the definition of the second word that was defined, seduce. The definition of seduce in the eighteenth century was "to induce to evil; to corrupt: specifically to induce to surrender chastity; to debauch" (Webster). By this definition, Charlotte was also seduced into sexual relations with Montraville. She was induced by her situation to know Montraville. The term induced is a fairly vague term. By what terms was she induced? Was she induced because she could not override her own desires or was she induced because she was in a vulnerable position and completely dependent on someone else? The term induced is open ended and leaves room for interpretation. Therefore, in the eighteenth century, it is very possible that the terms seduce and rape were more synonymous than they were different.

However, the words should not have been synonymous then and they should not be synonymous now. But, they were and they are. Claiming that Charlotte was seduced implies some consent on Charlotte's part. Using the term seduced takes the blame off the man who kidnapped and raped her and puts some blame on the victim herself. This can still be seen today. Most rapes go unreported and one such reason is victim's fear getting blamed for the terrible things that happen to them. From Charlotte Temple, we see the history of victim blaming. It may be easy to believe that Charlotte was one isolated case, one specific incident in which the victim was forced to take partial blame for the crime committed against her.

However, in her article, "To Ravish and Carnally Know: Rape in Eighteenth-Century Massachusetts," Barbara Lindemann brings up a multitude of cases involving the accusation of rape. The first case she brings up is a woman named Rebaccah Tripp who accused her Native

American neighbor, Simon Tripp of raping her. Regardless of the fact that she changed her story multiple times, the jury convicted Simon. However, the guilty conviction may have amounted to the jury members being "reluctant to give the word of an Indian laborer more credit than the testimony of an English woman" (66). Lindermann then exemplifies men who were of equal social rank to the women they raped and were let free. The following passage shows a defendant who admits to raping a woman and is not convicted of rape:

> In Lynn on May 10, 1698, in the presence of four witnesses and her husband, Mary Hawthorne accused Moses Hudson, a husbandman, of abusing and forcibly lying with her ten days earlier. Hudson did not deny her charges, but assured her husband that he would not repeat the offense if the rape went unreported. When the case reached the Superior Court a year and a half later, six witnesses gave depositions. Ebenezer Hawthorne, present when the victim accused Hudson, testified that the defendant admitted that God had forsaken him, the devil had possessed him, and that "he did commit that sin with her." (66).

In this passage alone Hudson attempts to cover up his crime by assuring the victim's husband that the act would not happen again, blames God and the devil, one for forsaking him, the other for tempting him and finally admits that he committed sin with her, implying that he raped her. So why does Hudson go free? The grand jury had doubt on their minds for various reasons, among them being that the victim had invented the rape, had not done all she could to resist the rape, or did not believe the rape had actually occurred because penetration had never actually occurred (66-67).

So why would Charlotte Temple accuse Montraville of rape if she was indeed kidnapped and raped. The rules and laws of her time regarding rape were very narrow, so narrow in fact that

> The rules of evidence were such that a conviction was possible only when a victim could convince a male jury that the defendant was fully aware of her refusal and resistance. Any indication that the victim was willing to socialize alone with her attacker or that she put up little resistance could be taken as consent, even if she believed the contrary. In the absence of visible and serious injuries, two witnesses had to testify to the crime; if the victim had been unable to rouse help, witnesses were unlikely. (Lindermann 68)

Charlotte, or someone in Charlotte's position would not bring up the incident because the chances of her truly getting justice would be little to none. In fact, the case may be made that, although Charlotte died in the end, she was smart enough to know her chances of getting justice were slim. She instead chose the option which would at least give her a chance to saver herself and her unborn child, for remaining Montraville's mistress afforded a better life than by being cast aside when Montraville came away with a not guilty charge.

From Charlotte and others like her, it is easy to see why many women did not report their own rape cases. Instead of getting the help and justice they deserve, they instead are blamed for the crime committed against them. They are accused of leading the perpetrator on by previous interactions with him, or they are accused of not adequately doing enough to stop the incident. If the accused is smart enough not to leave any marks, then witnesses are needed to verify the woman's story. In the United States, we have an unfortunate history of victim blaming, which persists even today. In their article, "Stop Blaming the Victim: A Meta-Analysis on Rape Myths" Eliana Suarez and Tahany M. Gadalla write that "published statistics indicated that of 23,0000 sexual assault incidents… only six percent of these assaults were in fact reported" (2011).

So why is the reported percent of sexual assaults so ridiculously low? The answer is because we continue to have a culture of people who blame the victim instead of the people committing the actual crimes. We are being told the same excuses that women of Charlotte Temple's time were being told. People blame the victim because her dress was extremely short so she "had to be asking for it." Or maybe people think it's acceptable to blame the victim because she had too much alcohol and the details of her rape are fuzzy to her. Maybe her story changes because she cannot fully remember what happened. Maybe she is a stripper or a prostitute and it wasn't really rape because her job implies that she really doesn't care about her body. As a society, we continue to make excuses for the man who forces himself upon a woman, just as people made excuses in Charlotte's time for the men who committed extreme violence against women.

From Charlotte, we see our history concerning crimes against women. We see how our culture downplays the horrible situation of Charlotte Temple. We call the novel a seduction novel because Charlotte put herself in the position to be kidnapped and raped. We discredit the idea that Charlotte could have been raped because she was interested in Montraville. We put blame on Charlotte because she could have stopped seeing Montraville at any time. She could have said no to La Rue and discontinued all communication with Montraville. Charlotte put herself in the position to be taken by Montraville and thus we must claim that she was seduced and not raped. By claiming that Charlotte was seduced, we can continue our history of victim blaming.

However, Rowson did not write her novel to allow America to continue following the same path. Rowson wrote her novel to incite change in America. She wrote directly to young women to help them avoid putting themselves in the same position as Charlotte. She makes clear

and distinct "good guys" and "bad guys" to help the reader discern between the signs that characterize who in reality are the good people and the bad people. This distinction is noted when the narrator describes the character of La Rue as "designing, artful, and selfish" (45). But more than her personality, the reader sees the actions she takes against Charlotte. From La Rue, young women can clearly see the kind of people who will lead them down a rocky and dangerous path; they are the kind of people who continually make others second guess what they know is right at heart. They can be people in a position of power or of trust.

Charlotte's story hinges on one moment in the novel in which she leaves her home to be with Montraville. The wording at the important moment is very and open to various interpretations. However, there is a great deal of evidence which points to Charlotte being kidnapped and raped rather than being seduced and persuaded. Charlotte exemplifies what it means to be raped in the eighteenth century, but she also shows what it means to be raped in the twenty-first century. She is the result of a society that continues to blame the victim rather than fight for her justice. While this country has made great strides in how we treat our rape victims, there are still the same undertones as there were in Rowson's day and age. Rowson does her best to deal with a bad situation and attempts to warn young women about the dangers of the people around them. However, Rowson paired with her fictional Charlotte Temple, was not enough to eradicate victim blaming, now or then. In the end, society as a whole must change the way we view rape and women. As a society, we must stop blaming the victim and prosecute the rapist.

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