

My life was over, my life had just begun:  
rape recovery through survivor testimony,  
and trauma prevention with early  
humanist education.

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education

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#### Degree Type

Thesis

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Master of Arts

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English

#### First Advisor

Kathy K. Hickok

#### Abstract

This paper names the problem--rape--and attempts to determ

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current social theory on rape emphasizes what the woman can do to prevent an impending attack, that she must protect herself, never leaving her home. Theory focuses on treatment, helping the victim heal after the crime. The focus should shift onto prevention. But not via the victim. The only way to prevent it comes with a complete social restructuring. Raising our children to be resilient. Educating them in a more humanist fashion. Connecting them to their emotions. It doesn't emphasize competition with dominance as the ultimate goal.

History shows that ancient law treated the crime of rape as damage to property. So much of law throughout time has focused on the physical damage. The rhetoric behind the act. The emphasis has just shifted from 'property,' to the degree of damage--in terms of its physical damage. Lacerations, on the body as object. Neither addresses the psychological trauma that results from rape.

Most psychotherapists subscribe to talk therapy and the recovery process. Active involvement with fine arts. Studies show that both can be effective. Scholarship exists on the power of using the victim's voice--to actually change the hegemonic structure and reform and restructure it.

Rape affects everyone. When a victim remains silent, she suffers. She shares her story--through her writing or music or painting--and her pain may never disappear, and her recovery may never be complete. And she can help others heal, as well. And her story, her art, her voice can prevent rape from happening to someone else. This community of survivors. When so many voices combine, it becomes possible to break the silence that reverberates from the trauma of rape.

Primary texts include: *Lucky* by Alice Sebold, *Speak* by Laurie R. King, *Slips* by Linda Katherine Cutting. Other sources include: Susar and Laura Gray, Sandra Bloom, M.J. Clark, Wendy J. Glenn, Patricia Judith Lewis Herman, Marianne Hirsch and Valerie Smith, Carol Janet Marstine, Nancy A. Naples, James Pennebaker, Sara Shalaby.

Key words: Rape, literature, trauma, recovery, healing, therapy, rape law, rape theory, journal writing, poetry, painting, music, psychotherapy, Freud, incest, statistics, social change, human voice, victim, survivor.

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