The Construction of Masculinity in Students' Talk on Rape in South Africa: A Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

The issue of the rape of women in South Africa has reached epidemic proportions, with the rape rate being higher in South Africa than any other country in the world not involved in war or civil conflict. Previous research on the topic has demonstrated that there is a strong link between the ideology of masculinity and rape proclivity in individuals. Since ideology is maintained through discourse, the current study sought to identify some of the discourses available to young South Africans in talk on rape. Two focus groups were held on the topic of why men in South Africa rape, one males-only group and one females-only group, each with 8 participants, all undergraduate psychology students from the University of Cape Town. The transcripts of these groups were analysed, drawing on Parker's (1992) method of discourse analysis. It was found that despite the array of constructions of rape and the rapist, the way in which masculinity was constructed and the nature of the dominant discourses used function to fundamentally remove the responsibility of rape from the individual rapist and normalise raping behaviour in men. Practical and ideological implications of these findings are discussed.

Keywords: rape, masculinity, discourse, discourse analysis.

The Construction of Masculinity in Students' Talk on Rape in South Africa: A Discourse Analysis

The issue of the rape of women in South Africa has reached epidemic proportions, with the occurrence of rape estimated to be higher than in any other country in the world not involved in war or civil conflict. Moffet (2006, p. 129) reveals the dire reality of this, which is that, "at least one in three South African women can expect to be raped in her lifetime". In South Africa the seriousness of this offence is intensified by the pandemic of HIV/AIDS. Globally, the topic of rape has been explored by psychologists for many decades, yet with the majority of the focus being on the pathology of the offenders and the trauma of the victim. In recent decades, however, spurred in large part by the ideas of the feminist Susan Brownmiller (1975) in the seminal text 'Against Our Will', focus has grown on the inherently gendered aspects of rape as a demonstration of the power relations between men and women in society. From this grew the conceptualisation of rape as related to the ideology of masculinity. Since ideology is perpetuated through discourse, it is likely that the ways in which masculinity is constructed play a role in the issue of rape in South Africa. In this study I therefore aimed to identify some of the discourses pertaining to masculinity available to young South Africans in the context of discussions on rape in South Africa.

Background

Different Conceptualisations of Gender

Important with regards to the concept of 'masculinity' are the different conceptualisations of gender, considering that these have consequences for how one conceptualises the notion of 'masculinity'. Two such conceptualisations are the essentialist and social constructionist accounts of gender.

The Essentialist View of Gender

Gender is and has been typically constructed through a discourse of difference, with men and women depicted as polarised entities with very different characteristics. Although the results of a recent meta-analysis on studies concerning gender differences found that most perceived gender differences have not been proven to actually exist (Shibley Hyde, 2007), the discourse that men and women are fundamentally different still appears to be almost universally accepted, and is also the view propagated by much of Western psychology (Gavey, 1997). This type of discourse has been labelled as 'essentialist', as it holds that

gender is a stable, internal trait (or 'essence') of an individual (Bohan, 1997). Some of the greatest support for the essentialist viewpoint comes from the discourse of biological determinism, which holds that one's gender is the natural result of one's biological structure (Nicholson, 1994).

The essentialist account is problematic in several ways. It strictly divides people into two categories, creating the idea that gender is a dichotomy- however, it is argued that even the "biological dichotomy between male and female is the product of the social construction of simplicity where complexity exists" (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007). It also serves to homogenize men and women into two distinct groups, making members of each group not possessing the prescribed group traits seem abnormal or lacking (Bohan, 1997). Shefer (2004, p. 190) further argues that the focus on difference has been used to "obscure the power inequality between men and women and to legitimate ideologically the continued reproduction of such difference (and inequality)".

Corresponding with the male-female dichotomy exists "the idea of masculinity and femininity as opposite and mutually exclusive poles on a continuum of personality" (Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1988, p. 459). Even in scales that claim to view 'masculine' and 'feminine' traits as different yet equal (such as Bem's (1976) scale, discussed later), in fact the masculine qualities included "are more highly valued and adaptive" (Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1988, p. 458). The essentialist view of gender enables this construction of masculinity as superior to femininity, as well as the construction of men as superior to women. Furthermore, since it posits that gender is an inherent trait, it sets up masculine traits as the desirable and 'normal' traits for those people who fit into the category of "men", which is in many ways problematic, such as in the case of the topic of this study.

The Social Construction of Gender, Masculinity Ideology, and 'Doing Gender'

Given that the dichotomized view of gender is not based on 'real', observed differences (Bohan, 1997; Shibley Hyde, 2007), an alternative view of gender has arisen, based on the theory of social constructionism. Within this paradigm it is argued that we have no way of reaching an 'absolute' truth, and that that which we have previously viewed as being knowledge is rather, "a construction, a best understanding, based upon and inextricably intertwined with the contexts within which it is created" (Bohan, 1997). Since from this

perspective "the 'real' nature of male and female cannot be determined" (Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1988, p. 456), the essentialist view of gender is regarded as a construction of reality, and it is argued that gender does not exist as a stable, internal trait of an individual, but rather "exists within those situations that are socially construed as gendered" (Bohan, 1997)[1]. Therefore gender is viewed as a construct that distinguishes certain ways of behaving considered appropriate for men or women. Based upon this view, masculinity can be viewed not as a trait of male individuals as such, but rather as a socially constructed prescription of ways of being for men in society. Masculinity ideology therefore "refers to individuals' degree of endorsement and internalization of cultural belief systems about masculinity and the masculine gender role" (Pleck, Sonestein, and Ku, 1993, as cited Good, Borst, & Wallace, 1994, p. 3).

Integrally linked to the idea of gender as socially constructed and of masculinity as ideology is the notion of 'doing gender' (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Masculinity ideology provides a set of traits and behaviours seen as appropriate for men, which is then perpetuated through discourse, yet it is up to individuals to take up their gendered roles in order for the effects of masculinity ideology to be manifested in behaviour. This idea of individuals taking up gendered roles and behaviour is very different from the essentialist view of gender, which would see gendered behaviour as manifesting from internal traits, and also has very different practical consequences for how one views the likelihood of being able to change certain behaviours. For example, in the context of the topic of this study, if masculinity is related to rape, from the essentialist account of gender this might mean rape is a result of man's inherent nature, whereas from a social constructionist perspective it may be considered as a result of the construction of masculinity in ways that make rape an acceptable form of behaviour for men. Consequently, we see that the way in which masculinity is constructed can be an important factor in accounting for the behaviour of men who rape.

Seminal and Explanatory Studies on the Relationship between Masculinity and Rape

There have been numerous studies pertaining to the issue of masculinity and rape, in the international literature and to a lesser extent in South African literature as well. This section

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[1] Although I acknowledge the socially constructed nature of the categories 'men' and 'women', I will not be using quotation marks around such terms in this thesis, particularly considering participants used these terms with their essentialist connotations.

aims to give an overview of the studies aimed at both finding and/or explaining this relationship.

Correlational Studies on Masculinity and Rape

An extensive literature documents the connection between masculinity and sexually aggressive behaviour in men (e.g. Anderson & Mosher, 1986; Jacupcak, Lisak, & Roemer, 2002; Malamuth & Thornhill, 1994; Tieger, 1981). One of the prominent methods of measuring these constructs has been through correlating the results of self-report measures (such as the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) (Bem, 1974) and the Hypermasculinity Inventory (Mosher & Anderson, 1986)) with measures aimed at revealing sexually aggressive behaviour or likelihood of raping (such as the Sexually Aggressive Behaviour (SA) scale (Kos & Oros, 1982) and attitudes towards rape vignettes). A seminal study by Quackenbush (1989) found that androgynous males were significantly less supportive of rape than were masculine sex-typed and undifferentiated males. Furthermore, Malamuth and Thornhill (1994, p. 185) found that the personality construct of "Hostile Masculinity" is "an important characteristic of men who commit acts of sexual and/or non-sexual aggression against women". Although several criticisms have been directed at the current scales of masculinity, Good et al. (1998) argue that despite possible weaknesses in the measurement tools, the current research on masculinity ideology does shed some light onto the potential relationships of this construct. Therefore, these studies seem to demonstrate that there is a positive association between an individual's adherence to masculinity ideology and his level of rape proclivity.

Explanatory Studies on Masculinity and Rape

The studies discussed above predominantly sought to demonstrate the relationship between masculinity ideology and rape, and the following sections will deal with how certain researchers have gone about explaining this relationship.

Rape as a Performance of Masculinity

One of the ways in which the relationship between rape and masculinity has been conceptualized has been through describing rape/sexual aggression as a performance of

masculinity (Jewkes, Penn-Kekana, & Rose-Junius, 2005). The notion of has been understood in several ways. One of these is as a reinforcement of self-esteem through the domination of another; Malamuth and Thornhill (1994, p. 192) posited that 'Hostile Masculinity' may be "more likely to emerge […] in men who have feelings of social subordination towards other male competitors". Further evidence for this comes from Messerschmidt's (2000) study, where the researcher found that rape perpetrators may use sexual violence as a means of overcoming their feelings of having inferior masculinity. This notion of reaffirming one's masculinity through rape is also highlighted through the construction of rape being a result of "the degradation of masculine pride" (Moffett, 2006, p. 134).

Rape has also been seen as a performance of masculinity in that it is a demonstration of power. This notion is reflected in feminist literature, in particular by Brownmiller (1975, as quoted in Rapaport & Burkhart, 1984, p. 216), who depicted rape as "an instrument of male dominance". In another study on child rape in South Africa and Namibia (Jewkes, Penn-Kekana & Rose-Junius, 2005), it was found that rape was used in order to demonstrate power over girl children. This demonstrates how rape can be used as a communication of powerfulness to women in order to maintain male dominance, both in terms of demonstrating women's position in society as well as their positions in more intimate social relationships. It is interesting to note that an important element of masculinity ideology is heterosexuality, which explains why even male-on-male rape (particularly as it occurs in prisons), which is also constructed as being a means of communicating one's masculinity, is often constructed by perpetrators as being heterosexual, as the victim is seen as being given the role of 'woman' (Gear, 2007).

Masculinity and the Dehumanization of Women

Another means by which masculinity may be considered to contribute to sexual aggression in men is by the dehumanizing effect it may have on women, namely, that by constructing masculinity as superior to femininity to an exaggerated extent, women may be considered worthless, and therefore rapeable. A discourse analysis in South Africa found the construction of masculinity to be superior to femininity (Kaminer & Dixon, 1995), and Bell et al. (1992, as cited in Truman, Tokar & Fischer, 1996, p. 559) suggest that "men's socialized beliefs about the inferior role of women condone the degradation of rape victims" (p. 559). Furthermore, Truman et al. (1996) report that much empirical data state that

"aggression is disinhibited by dehumanization of the victim", and therefore sexually aggressive behaviour may be viewed as an extension of the 'othering' of women. This type of argument relates to Brownmiller's point about the political message of rape, as it draws attention to the role of the broader structural inequalities between men and women.

Masculinity and Rape as an Extension of 'Normal' Heterosexual Sex

Another conceptualization of the rape/masculinity relationship is that of rape as the natural extension of "normal" heterosexual sexual encounters. South African studies have identified a discourse that posits that sexual aggression carried out by men is "normal" (Harris, Lea, and Foster, 1995, p. 180), and that there is an acceptance of the notion that men *need* sex (Jewkes et al., 2005; Shefer & Ruiters, 1998). Quackenbush (1989, p. 319)) notes that many writers perceive rape as "a logical extension of sex role socialization processes that support the objectification of women and legitimize coercive sexuality". Further support of this notion comes from Check and Malamuth (1983, as cited in Quackenbush, 1989), who argue that the stereotyped role into which men are socialized encourages them to persevere even when a woman demonstrates that she is unwilling to have sexual intercourse.

Additionally, studies have found that coercive sex on a date is not considered to be rape by many perpetrators *and* victims (Szymanski, Chrisler, Devlin & Vyse, 1993; Truman et al., 1996), and that acquaintance rape is not considered serious relative to stranger rape (Szymanski et al., 1993). These attitudes are likely to be a reflection of the notion that acquaintance and date rape might be considered to be examples of "normal" sexual relations between a man and woman. Furthermore, Boonzaier (2008, p. 198) found in a narrative study in South Africa on the construction of women abuse that, "For the woman (and her partner), being 'the wife' means being sexually available to her husband and having to comply with his sexual demands". Gavey (1989, as cited in Harris, Lea, & Foster, 1995, p. 177) comments on this phenomenon, noting that "women, particularly with a man they know, may almost become unrapeable". These studies provide support for the notion that rape is an extension of "normal" (hetero)sexual behaviour in males, indicating that masculinity ideology is constructed in such a way as to make rape, particularly date rape or partner rape, an acceptable behaviour.

Masculinity, Gender Role Conflict, and Rape

Another relationship between rape and masculinity ideology has been posited that emphasizes the negative impact masculinity ideology has on men. Jacupcak et al. (2002, p. 99) explored the relationship between masculinity ideology and men's perpetration of relationship violence, using the Gender-Role Conflict Scale (which attempts to measure "a man's degree of conflict in relation to restrictive codes of masculine behaviour") as well as measures of 'masculine ideology' and 'aggression and violence'. They found that at high levels of masculinity ideology, gender role stress "significantly predicted men's aggression and violence" (p. 104). A related study by Rando, Rogers and Brittan-Powell (1998) found that gender role conflict, defined by O'Neil et al. (1995, as cited in Brittan-Powell, Rando, & Rogers, 1998) as "a psychological state in which socialized gender roles result in negative consequences on the person or others" (p. 306), was related to "higher levels of rape myth acceptance, hostility toward women, and sex role stereotyping" (p. 364). This concept is further supported by research by Lisak, Hopper and Song (1996), who argue that the suppression of emotion related to adherence to masculinity ideology can lead to aggressive behaviour owing to the fact that anger is the only accepted form of expression in masculinity ideology. These studies therefore suggest that the gender conflict and emotional constriction caused by adherence to and/or difficulties with masculinity ideology can have negative psychological effects on men, perhaps making them more likely to rape.

Entitlement as a Mediator between Masculinity and Rape

Hill and Fischer (2001) argue that masculine entitlement is the mediator between masculinity variables and rape proclivity. Entitlement is seen as being a part of masculine ideology, with Stollenburg (1989, as quoted in Hill & Fischer, 2001, p. 40) stating that, as a man, "being superior by social definition, one can want whatever one wants and one can expect to get it". Others have theorized that "masculine entitlement may result from gender role socialization and that it is a part of men's power over women in a patriarchal society" (Funk, 1993; Gilbert, 1992; Kaschak, 1992; Pharr, 1988, as cited in Hill & Fischer, 2001, p. 40). Jewkes et al. (2005) noted that entitlement is connected to child rape particularly due to the idea of men's entitlement to control girl children in patriarchal society. Gilbert (1992, as cited in Truman et al., 1996) describes some men's sexual entitlement as encouraged by the fact that "Our culture allows men to make their sexual needs explicit because they appear as rights or entitlement divorced from emotional neediness" (p. 560). Truman et al. furthermore

concluded that when men feel entitlement in conjunction with a disconnection from emotion, there may be an increased likelihood that they find it acceptable to use sexually aggressive tactics to achieve gratification.

Potential Criticisms of this Body of Literature

Potential concerns related to the literature discussed are the validity of the scales used to measure masculinity and the limited demographic profile used in many studies (predominantly white, male college students) (Good et al., 1994). These factors potentially indicate a need to develop more valid scales of measurement of masculinity ideology, as well as the possibility of developing more demographically diverse research. Furthermore, the overwhelming majority of the studies are from the United States of America, indicating the need in this field to explore this relationship in other countries and cultures.

Another potential criticism of the literature is the focus of many of the studies on individuals and masculinity ideology adherence within these individuals. Although this has been clearly beneficial in finding a connection between rape and masculinity ideology, given that one in three South African women is likely to be raped in her lifetime, it is clear that there is a very large number of rapists in our country, and it therefore may be more pertinent at this stage to look at the 'bigger picture' (so to speak). Although individual pathology may in fact play a role in an individual being a rapist, what is more relevant at this stage are not those things which make these individuals *different* from the rest of the population, but rather what makes them *the same*. Therefore what might improve this body of literature are studies that demonstrate not how rapist are deviant, but rather by what means they have come to be '*normal'* in this country, which is part of what I aim to demonstrate in this study.

Design and Methodology

This study is qualitative in design. Qualitative research grew out of the belief that the quantitative or 'scientific' study of psychology ignores "the quintessential feature of being human, that is, the meaningful nature of our activity" (Durrheim, 1997, p. 175). It is appropriate here because this study aims to identify certain discourses, making it inherently qualitative in nature. Many of the previous studies on masculinity and rape have used quantitative designs, and although these studies have been valuable, they have also been limited because of this, as the meaning of the ideology of masculinity itself has been treated

as a static entity. Examining masculinity using a qualitative design is appropriate as it acknowledges the fluid, multi-faceted nature of the construct.

The participants used in this study were 16 undergraduate psychology students from the University of Cape Town (UCT), eight female and eight male (age range was 18-22). In terms of (self-identified) racial demographics, there were seven 'white', six 'black', two 'Indian' and one 'coloured' participant(s). Participants were recruited through the SRPP program at UCT, which requires undergraduate psychology students to participate in research projects of senior students as a requirement for their psychology courses (they are able to choose the studies in which they participate). Considering this research is qualitative, participants were not chosen for their representativeness of any particular group.

Two focus groups were used, one of male students and one of female students. Focus groups are appropriate for this study because they are one of the more natural ways of creating discussion in a research setting, to some extent avoiding decontextualisation and artificiality (Wilkinson, 1999). Focus groups are particularly useful for research within the social constructionist paradigm, owing to the view that "human experience is constructed within specific social contexts" wherein "collective sense is made" (Wilkinson, 1999, p. 224). Focus groups are also advantageous in that power is to a certain degree shifted from the researcher to the participants, which helps to prevent participant exploitation (Wilkinson, 1999). In these focus groups a semi-structured interview schedule was used, which consisted of four broad questions for discussion on the topic of why some men rape in South Africa (see Appendix A). Each focus group discussion was approximately 55 minutes and was audio-recorded. Recordings were then transcribed (see Appendices B and C), with punctuation in transcriptions used in an attempt to best represent pauses and emphases in the audio recordings. Participants are represented in these transcriptions by randomly assigned letters.

A discourse analysis was then performed on the data. A 'discourse' can be broadly described as "sets of statements which constitute an object" (Parker, 1992, p. 5). Discourse analysis is part of the wider movement of the "turn to language" in the discipline of psychology, in which attention is drawn "to the importance of meaning" (Parker, 1992, p. xii). It is closely related to social constructionism, and both can be linked to "dissatisfaction [with] the positivist model on which psychology has been traditionally based" (Kaminer,

1995, p. 170). Within this movement, focus has been placed on the relationship between meaning and power (Foucault, 1973; Jameson, 1981; as cited in Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1988), and discourse analysis is seen as providing "an ideal method for studying ideology in psychology" (Parker, 2005, p.88). Another important element of discourse is that it does not merely describe objects as representations of reality but actively constructs them, which has practical consequences in perpetuating power relations and influencing how people experience themselves and others (Parker, 1992).

There are multiple methods for doing discourse analysis. In this study I drew primarily on the ten steps for distinguishing discourses as set out by Parker (1992), but I was also informed by some of the steps of a Foucauldian discourse analysis as set out by Willig (2008). Parker's method was used because it provides steps for how discourses can be identified, making it a practical method for a novice at discourse analysis, and it also entails a focus on discourses' relations to ideology and power, allowing for the examination of some of the broader consequences of discourses.

Transcriptions of focus group discussions were read and reviewed multiple times and different constructions of various objects (e.g. rape, rapist, men) were recorded. These sets of constructions were then grouped into discourses, some of which were subsequently collapsed or expanded upon further reflection and examination of the text, until three discourses were chosen that seemed to best represent the discursive constructions within the text.

One of the limitations of this study might pertain to the effect my identity and other participants' identities had on the participants of the study in terms of their comfort in talking about certain issues, however, the diversity in groups allowed for a wider range of discursive constructions and therefore disagreement and discussion amongst participants, which greatly enriched the data. A mixed 'gender' group would therefore probably also have provided very interesting data. Another limitation is that due to space constraints certain constructions, as well as some instances where participants appear to challenge certain discourses, could unfortunately not be presented. The subjective nature of the analysis may also be considered a limitation, since I may not have included elements another researcher could have considered pertinent. Transcripts were therefore provided (see appendices B and C), to demonstrate the context of the extracts used, and also to allow for the opportunity for alternative interpretations of the texts.

Results/Discussion

The three discourses identified were labelled the 'Discourse of Diminished Responsibility', 'Man's Natural Rapaciousness' and the 'Brotherhood of Man'. In the following descriptions of the discourses, I attempt to demonstrate how they presented themselves in the text and the possible implications of their use. I will constantly be interpreting my findings with reference to the literature; hence the results and discussion sections have been collapsed.

The Discourse of Diminished Responsibility

The Discourse of Diminished Responsibility is characterized by its function to remove responsibility from the individual rapist, locating the blame in factors out of the rapist's control. These factors include situational variables (such as poverty and previous oppression), social factors (such as cultural beliefs and women's empowerment) and psychological problems. This section will discuss how this discourse was constructed and what their implications might be.

"Brutalizing Environments" and Psychological Problems

The term "brutalizing environments" comes from Bourke (2007, p. 119), in reference to the notion of a rapist's brutal environment as being the cause of his raping behaviour. In the conversations of participants in this study, certain situational variables were viewed as making a man feel powerless, angry and/or frustrated, which could lead him to rape, or alternatively could lead him to develop psychological problems that also lead him to rape. Examples of such situational variables were poverty, previous oppression, and living in a rural area. The following extract, which was a response to a statistic I gave about the level of rape in South Africa, demonstrates some of these constructions:

> J: I believe so as well in that, South Africa is such a highly populated country, I mean we live in a very commer- not *commercial* city, well known city, and there's a lot of um… other, populations that may not, we may not know *that* statistic and it, you know, could be due to poverty and um, you know, low income in the, all those other factors that… not *encourage* rape but, no, nothing can encourage rape but, but um, if it's those societies that could, *influence* it as well… Does that make, sense? […] (Appendix B**,** lines 47-52)

In this extract the participant is positioning rape as something that occurs mostly in poor, rural communities. This extract can also be seen as an example of the discourse "[reflecting] on its own way of speaking" (Parker, 1992, p. 14), when the speaker says "all those other factors that… not *encourage* rape but- no, nothing can encourage rape but, but um, if it's those societies that could, *influence* it as well…" Here a tension seems to arise from the participant being uncomfortable with taking blame away from the rapist (hence her use of "nothing can encourage rape"), yet at the same time the discourse she is using serves to do exactly that.

This relationship of rape to situational variables is often accounted for by referring to the frustration or psychological problems that might result from these. The following extract demonstrates this, and takes place in the context of speaking about whether rape and drug-use are related in poor communities:

B: maybe it's also, like, a frustration and like, power, in the sense of control, ja, because their lives are out of control, and they can't do anything about it, they will do something to dominate somebody else or something else to show that they're still powerful and still in control.

N: I think that it's from the psychological manner of thinking, like it's, I know that drugs can have an influence but they don't, like you know that, you can't blame raping on drugs is is, you know, the person did the action… you know, so I think, the way they think maybe because of their own problems and they're trying maybe to get… you know… (Appendix B, lines 181-188).

This extract locates the rapist's discontent with his situation, as well as his psychological problems, as being to blame for his raping behaviour. Psychological problems are also mentioned several times during both discussions without reference to situational variables, indicating that psychological problems whose origins are indeterminate may also be a cause of raping behaviour.

With reference to the point of "psychological problems", there are two issues worth highlighting. Firstly, both focus groups consisted entirely of psychology students, who were participating in the study in order to obtain credits for psychology courses, and were aware that the data was going to be used in my psychology Honours thesis. It is therefore unsurprising that the issue of "psychological problems" came up so often. Secondly, it is

important to note that references to psychological problems may be used to justify many other 'deviant' behaviours; drawing on a psychological discourse can therefore be used to alleviate individual culpability for many (if not all) human behaviours, not only rape.

Culture and patriarchy

Another external factor that is mentioned as contributing to rape is culture. One reason participants gave for this connection concerns cultural beliefs about rape's beneficial usages:

> A: Um I've heard like, well it's either like something, psychologically wrong… Or, like on a more cultural basis point of view, like some, it's mostly common in blacks, um like they have this cultural they go to, you know spirit mediums and [unclear] and all-sorts so… I've heard like, they might like something there's a problem… and he wants to get… rich or something like that, then there's… and use of like raping the child.

> L: Ja and also on that cultural point of view they… there have been like rumours that if if you if you if you sleep with a virgin, you can be healed from AIDS. Cultural- there's cultural something there. Then now, I think that also maybe the rate of raping children particularly increase.(Appendix C, lines 88-96).

Alternately, the problem was framed in terms of the embeddeness of the patriarchy within some cultures. Patriarchy was described as being a problem because it advocates men's superiority and dominance over women, in turn making men more likely to rape women:

> D: It's like Hitler and the Jews […] you believe that someone is like… inferior to you, to like such a… severe extent, you believe you can do anything to them. And it won't matter. (Appendix C, lines 405-406).

This theme is also demonstrated in the literature through the notions of men's entitlement (e.g. Hill & Fischer, 2001; Jewkes et al., 2005) and the dehumanisation of women (e.g. Truman et al., 1996).

Women's empowerment

Men's beliefs about their superiority to women is further constructed as being problematic in that men are seen as reacting to women's empowerment by 'resorting' to rape:

S: [Men] feel like they're being uh… dethroned, by this, by gender equality programs, they would want to still uh… remain uh… then they feel like their masculinity is being removed from them, you know they want to actually attain it, one way or the other, and rape could be one of the resorts that they- (interrupted by another participant). (Appendix C, lines 459-462).

In this extract the interaction of the discourse of women's empowerment with the ideology of masculinity is demonstrated. Masculinity is constructed as being related to having power over women, and the removal of this power due to women's empowerment is seen as causing men to "feel like their masculinity is being removed from them", and therefore they 'resort' to rape as a way to "attain" this masculinity. In this way women's empowerment is seen as influencing men to rape. This theme is described by Bourke (2007), who refers to it as the "Crisis of Masculinity":

"According to one influential theme of the 1970s onwards, the rapist was a young man whose identity had been threatened by the 'new women' who were usurping male social and economic standing within society. Frustrated by their inability to achieve the stereotypical image of what it meant to be a man, men were collectively going through an identity crisis. Was it any wonder (this argument went) that a subset of men sought mastery over their lives by forcibly compelling young women to have sex with them?" (p. 138).

Although the contexts Bourke is describing are the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Australia in the 1970's, one could argue that people perceive something similar to be occurring currently in South Africa (as was indicated in the discussions), thereby explaining the presence of a similar discourse here at this time.

Similarly, rape was also constructed as men's response to individual women challenging them. This theme was brought up in the discussions several times, the most notable example of which was:

L: […] Like, for me like the cause of rape is not because the guys, it's not because they… they were rapists, ne, there was more to that, maybe the girl or, I don't know when they greet, when they greeted her she didn't respond something like that, so now… they started ha- the thoughts started developing. Maybe firstly they wanted to just rob her, but someone just (unclear) this is something big 'no man, let's kill this girl' or 'let's rape her', because she thinks she's better and all this stuff. So it all comes- it all comes back to the cause now, maybe

the cause was the attitude of the girl, that caused them, to want to rape her. And then
eventually they decided to rape her (Appendix C, lines 208-215).

Here the "cause" for rape is clearly located outside the rapist, in "the attitude of the girl",
"because she thinks she's better and all this stuff". In this instance the speaker is going
beyond attributing blame to men's reaction to women's empowerment, as others did, and is
instead attributing the cause of rape to individual women acting 'empowered'.

Rape as a result of emotional constriction due to adherence to 'masculine' behaviour

Another point made in the men's focus group discussion, which linked to the findings of
Lisak, Hopper and Song (1996), was that it is men's suppression of their emotions because of
their adherence to the masculine role that in turn leads them to rape. This is demonstrated in
the following extract:

S: […] Ah men, ah basically, most men uh communicate with violence, in many forms of of
it. Like with sexual violence, because like uh, if you are a man you are told that 'tigers don't
cry', you can't cry even if something really hits you, you just bottle it inside, so I think most
of the time men bottle everything inside and they are waiting to explode, and I think they take
it out, on the, on the weaker sex, 'cause uh, in patriarchal society that's what they refer to, to
women so I think sexual violence can actually be on account of such things, men they just
bottle everything inside and now they just take it out on their, on the wrong person, in the
wrong way, I think (Appendix C, lines 121-128).

Another reason why this extract is interesting is that it alludes to the idea that, as for
women, there are certain socially proscribed behaviours for men. This notion can be seen as
relating to the discourse found in a study by Harris, Lea, and Foster (1995), which they
termed "Gender as social norm", where gender was constructed as being socially derived (p.
177). Although in the first part of this extract the participant draws on the essentialist view of
gender and the stereotypical construction of men as being violent ("most men ah
communicate with violence"), he also alludes to the fact that masculinity might be what "you
are told" to do. In this way, masculinity is depicted as a way of behaving to which men have
to adhere, even if it goes against what would come naturally to them ("you can't cry even if
something really hits you"). Therefore rape is seen as occurring because men are forced to

adhere to the rule that "tigers don't cry", which in turn results in them expressing their pent up emotions through sexual violence.

Some implications of this discourse

One of the functions of this discourse is fairly clear; that by making the rapist a victim of certain factors, it enables both rapists and others to explain and justify rape in terms of circumstances or problems beyond the rapist's control. Similarly, Shefer and Potgieter (2006, p. 115) describe how some authors are critical of how culture "may be used as a way of excusing problematic male behaviour and male power in sexual relationships", since this in turn serves to "rationalise and legitimise" certain undesirable practices.

Some of these constructions, in particular those pertaining to poverty, people living in rural areas and culture, also have ideological implications. By linking such situational variables to rape, it follows that the most likely perpetrators of rape are poor, 'black' men who live in rural areas and hold traditional cultural values. Although a reference to race is only made once in the extracts I used above, in the South African context references to poor, rural people and victims of oppression to a large extent imply this. Although the poor, 'black' man may benefit from this in one sense as he is seen as not being responsible for his actions, conversely he will be disadvantaged in that he will be viewed as more likely to be guilty if accused of rape. Furthermore, it constructs poor, 'black' men in general as being more likely to rape, which feeds into racist and classist discourses and serves to perpetuate unequal power relations. This idea is encompassed in Bourke's (2007, p. 123) description of some of the effects of the construction of rape as being caused by "brutalising environments":

> "Of course, the inclination to act in sexually aggressive ways distinguished the respectable from the unrespectable poor. It also distinguished the so-called civilized from the so-called savage. Environmental explanations for male sexual aggression were as racially vicious as their biological counterparts".

Alternatively, the construction of this category serves at the same time to depict men who do not fit into the category of having "brutalising environments" as being 1) less likely to be considered rapists, and 2) more likely to be considered to have purely psychological problems if they do rape someone. With regards to the first point, one of the practical consequences of this might be in criminal proceedings, where these men might be viewed as less likely to be

guilty if they are accused of rape. Furthermore, with regards to the second point, whereas a poor, 'black' rapist may be considered irredeemable in that his problems are located in structural problems that are seen as being unchangeable, a wealthy, 'white' rapist (for example) may be considered more likely to be helped by interventions (e.g. psychotherapy) to deal with the psychological issues that 'caused' his raping behaviour. Ultimately however, whether one fits into the category of having a brutalising environment or psychological problems, the implications are still in favour of diminished responsibility (or none at all).

Implications with regards to the construction of men's raping behaviour as a reaction to women's empowerment or individual women acting empowered may also have ideological consequences. This is because by problematising women's attempts to gain equal treatment, it is implied that in order to prevent rape women should accept their position of being subordinate. This creates the situation where the responsibility for rape is placed onto women, who are given the choice: either give up attempts to become empowered or accept the consequence that you may be raped.

The final construction described in this section, of rape being the product of a man's adherence to prescribed masculine behaviour, has quite different implications from those discussed above. It might serve to draw attention to the ways in which masculinity is constructed that are detrimental to men and their behaviour (such as the 'rule' that men are not allowed to express themselves emotionally). However, it is important to reiterate that this construction of masculinity occurred only once in the text, with the essentialist account of masculinity being by far the dominant way in which participants constructed it, to which I now direct my attention.

Man's Natural Rapaciousness

The name for this discourse was drawn from a phrase used by Bourke (2007), who describes it as "drawing on ideas developed within Darwinian theories of evolution, [which] identified Man's Natural Rapaciousness[2] with certain innate instincts" (p. 96). Within the focus group discussions, this discourse was characterised by the construction of men as

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[2] In this thesis this term is used as a synonym for the term 'rape proclivity', which is consistent with its use by Bourke.

having an inherent rape proclivity. When examining the Discourse of Diminished Responsibility, it becomes clear that a 'piece of the puzzle' is missing, considering that none of the factors are seen as leading to rape unless they are acting on a male subject. This is evidenced by the fact that women also experience many of these factors (e.g. poverty), yet this is not seen as leading them to rape. This demonstrates the intersection of this discourse with the discourse of Man's Natural Rapaciousness, as the Discourse of Diminished Responsibility relies on it for its coherence. Although these discourses overlap, they are still distinct in the sense that the Discourse of Diminished Responsibility locates the blame for rape in either external or internal problems, whereas the discourse of Man's Natural Rapaciousness locates this blame rather in the 'essence' of a man.

The male sexual drive

One of the important constructions within the discourse of Man's Natural Rapaciousness was that of the male sexual drive. Participants often drew on what Hollway (1989) termed the 'Discourse of Male Sexual Drive', the principal intimation of which is "that men are driven by the biological necessity to seek out (heterosexual) sex" (p. 54). This discourse is exemplified in the following extract:

L: Sometimes it's just self-control. Because we are looking at the rape thing a little bit deeper now, let's just go up again, like for an example you are stuck with a girl in your room, she could be your girlfriend, she doesn't want to have sex with you, but you just can't control your hormones you want you want, you want sex now, but she doesn't want to, you end up committing rape.

S: I think so ja, I think controlling your sexual urges, it's one thing that can actually contribute to rape, if you really can't control your sexual urges then… people are going to get hurt in the process.

A: Oh, G-d, it's [unclear].

[Loud laughter from group]

R: I do think females control their sexual urges better than males.

C: I think so.

S: Ja, because the thing is with with men, men got their needs only to see, once they see [Laughter from group][M: They must just close their eyes.] things start happening! But with women they need to be touched, you understand, so I think that's why the cases of rape are

more prevalent in men than in women… because I mean women even if they see, they can just

fantasize, and life goes on. But in men [unclear] aaayyyy…(Appendix C, lines 291-308).

At the start of this extract L seems in a way to dismiss the "deeper" reasons we discussed for why rape occurs, arguing that if "you just can't control your hormones […] you end up committing rape". Particularly in the men's group this strategy was employed several times, with participants indicating that they were perhaps indulging me and my questions by thinking of "deeper" reasons, when in actual fact "It boils down to the sexual point" (A, appendix C, line 635). This demonstrates the importance placed on this discourse in terms of its value in explaining rape.

In this extract, the male sexual drive is constructed as something biological that a man does not have complete control over ("you just can't control your hormones"). Furthermore, the act of rape is constructed as something that is caused by this male sexual drive, without the agency of the rapist, as demonstrated in the passive grammatical construction in "people are going to get hurt in the process". S also draws on the common epithet of 'men as visual beings', saying that they need "only to see" and that "once they see… things start happening". Once again this passive grammatical construction ("things start happening") quite clearly demonstrates that the man is not in control of what he does, and therefore cannot be held responsible. This extract also depicts men and women's sexual drives as being very different, with women being able to control themselves ("they can just fantasize"), but men not being able to. This difference was also articulated later in the text (see appendix C, lines 343-345), with both descriptions clearly differentiating the female sexual drive from the voracious male one.

Civilising the rapacious man

Despite the male sex drive being depicted as to a large extent uncontrollable, participants still stressed the need to "educate" and "civilise" men in order to prevent rape. Here is an example that demonstrates this:

S: I think the issue of civilization as well, you know, like in our country you have, people who

aren't as civilized, and people who are, civilized. So I don't think you'd necessarily need to

get rid of of of the cultures, you know, just civilize the people, to to understand, how things

work, you know, differently from their perspective you know (Appendix C, lines 470-473).

In this instance the participant is arguing against the claim that culture is responsible for influencing rape, but implicit in his construction is that men will be prone to raping if they are not subjected to a controlling influence. These constructions also serve to reinforce other constructions, discussed in the context of the Discourse of Diminished Responsibility, which depicts people in "poor areas" and "rural areas", as being likelier perpetrators of rape; since this population is also described as being "not educated", the 'natural' rapaciousness of its members will not have been curtailed by the civilising process of education.

This idea of Man's Natural Rapaciousness was further represented in the discussions by the construction of rape as something that men do if they are not constrained or controlled by anything:

> M: Um, I think one of the reasons why we have such um rape- high rates of rape in South
> Africa is that it's probably, um, maybe our legal system is not as tough as it's supposed to be,
> so if you are contemplating actually raping a person, I mean, the cost-benefit analysis is just,
> 'okay I might as well rape the woman I mean I can get away with' you, you know? You don't
> think deeply about it, of the consequences (Appendix C, lines 220-224)

There were several references to the failure of the legal system to punish rapists as being the cause for the epidemic of rape in both discussion groups, indicating that men need an incentive not to rape, because otherwise they think "I might as well". C used an analogy to describe this, saying "like if you see um, a sign saying 'don't walk on the grass', and there's no-one watching or whatever, a lot of people are just gonna walk across the grass anyway" (Appendix C, lines 232-234). Paradoxically, although these descriptions describe men as having inherent rape proclivity, unlike with constructions of the male sexual drive, here men are described as making rational decisions about raping (e.g. the reference to "the cost-benefit analysis").

Rape as a masculine behaviour

Another construction supporting the discourse of Man's Natural Rapaciousness is that of rape as a masculine behaviour. One of the ways in which this is demonstrated is that rape is described as something that requires bravery and toughness, stereotypically 'masculine' traits. This is demonstrated in the following extract, in talking about why rape might be an initiation for gangs:

R: I think it takes… yoh… It's a, like a-

M: Like being in a gang obviously takes guts, so killing someone or raping someone it shows that you're-

R: -You're ruthless.

C: It shows almost like you're seriously keen to the gang.

R: Ja.

S: Or you can fit, within the gangs, so you have to do *something*, that will show that you've got *guts*, and uh… you are *brave* enough to, do what they do (Appendix X, lines 53-61).

Other depictions of rape as masculine are also related to the idea discussed in the literature (e.g. Malamuth & Thornhill, 1994; Messerschmidt, 2000) of rape as an expression or a communication of one's masculinity:

M: Eish. I don't know it's just… 'cause not all men, like respond, or show their anger through fighting, or doing something -anything masculine. So that's probably, like a defence mechanism. […] (Appendix X, lines 161-163).

In this extract, it is shown that men who are not able to express their masculinity through other 'masculine' activities are able to do so through rape, indicating that rape is an alternative expression of masculinity. This notion of achieving masculinity through rape was demonstrated frequently in the literature (e.g. Messerschmidt, 2000; Jewkes et al., 2005; Moffet, 2006). It also relates to the construction of men using rape in response to their feelings of being emasculated by women's empowerment.

Some implications of this discourse

Constructions of Man's Natural Rapaciousness can be broadly summarised as follows: All men have inherently "rapacious bodies" (Bourke, 2007, p. 89), yet it is factors in their lives (such as poverty) that lead to the expression of this (dormant) rapist. (Here, intersection with the Discourse of Diminished Responsibility is cleared demonstrated). Conversely, methods of diverting a man from his 'natural' self (such as education or the threat of punishment) serve to suppress this inherent rapaciousness. Preventing rape is thereby linked to external methods of controlling men, such as education. However, what this discourse also does is construct rape as an inevitability, since controlling practices will only be effective to a certain extent when something as uncontrollable as the male sexual drive is contending. This also makes any efforts to eradicate rape in society seem largely futile.

Another effect this discourse has is to 'normalise' raping behaviour in men, thus making it more socially acceptable. In terms of subjectivity, Willig (2008, p. 117) argues that the Discourse of the Male Sexual Drive, "allows a man not only to publicly disclaim responsibility for an act of sexual aggression, but to actually *feel* less guilty about it", and I would argue that the discourse of Man's Natural Rapaciousness could have the same effect. Therefore, this discourse serves not only to allow one to view the rapist as less culpable, but for the rapist to experience *himself* as being less culpable for his behaviour.

'Brotherhood of Man'

A less represented yet distinct discourse that arose from the texts pertained to the relationships of men with each other. Men were described as sometimes being influenced or encouraged by a group of other men (such as a gang) to rape, and as being likely to protect other men accused of rape because of their shared gender. For this reason 'brotherhood' is an appropriate word, as it encompasses both the pressure and the protection men are constructed as giving each other in this discourse. Men were also depicted as using rape as a tool to maintain male dominance, which relates to Brownmiller's (1975) notion of the political nature of rape.

'Bad influences'

Some of the extracts I have used in earlier sections have already demonstrated the notion of a man needing to prove his masculinity to other men, and have indicated that a man might be either implicitly or explicitly influenced to rape by other men. S here describes how the process of men influencing each other might work in a situation of gang rape:

S: I think like also in the gang rape, I don't think we can just uh, all of us we can just start thinking about raping someone at the same time so someone has to start thinking about it, you know and, obviously influence the friends, or the gang other gang members. 'You know it's an idea that I have', it's… because it's, they are all members of the gang, they they believe that they support each other, they do, I think uh… others would be pressurised as well to… to… mm (Appendix C, lines 439-444).

Another interesting element of this extract is that it depicts men as planning rape (a scenario mentioned several times in the discussions), which contradicts the notion of men raping solely because of their uncontrollable sexual drives.

Rape as social control

The fact that rape in these instances is constructed as being a planned activity rather than an out-of-control reaction to one's sexual drive supports the idea of rapists as having other intentions besides sexual gratification, which relates to Brownmiller's (1975) concept of the political nature of rape. Similarly, Moffet (2006, p.140) argued that rape is sometimes seen as a "tool of social control" in which men believe they are "participating in a socially approved project to keep women within certain boundaries". An extract from the text that demonstrates this idea is a portion of a comment made by S:

> S: […] I once saw a case of gang rape in the newspaper, because this girl was a Christian, so these guys around her neighbourhood they always proposed to her and she refused, so they got this thing of 'she thinks she's better', so they one day waited for her when she comes is coming back from church, then they gang raped her. […] (Appendix C, lines 198-201).

Implicit in this extract is the notion of rapists taking on the responsibility of ensuring that women know their place in society. This place is below men, at least in the rapists' views, since they are reacting to their perception that "she thinks she's better". Another account that demonstrates this is L's hypothetical scenario of a man raping a child because of his issues with the mother of the child: "he feels like his masculinity is being threatened you know, like the woman is standing up to him now" (Appendix C, lines 279-284). This demonstrates the idea that men can use rape as 1) a means of ensuring women act appropriately subordinate, and 2) a punishment for when they do not. Wood (2004, p. 562) made similar findings in relation to men's explanations for violence towards their partners, where "By far the most prominent theme was that violence against a wife or girlfriend was a *legitimate response* to being disrespected as a man" (emphasis in original).

Men protecting other men

The notion of male solidarity was also demonstrated in the construction of men as a group protecting each other. This was referenced in particular to the police, as is demonstrated in the following extract:

B: […] also going to that women's role and men's role, men get away with a lot more than women really like, or, just because they like being to- because, for example the police might be a male-dominated profession, they're more likely to side with the man than the woman, just because of… cultural beliefs and stuff so or- not even that it's just this, unwritten rule sometimes that, it might, you know like as a girl , if my friend was being…attacked or, someone came up and said something horrible to her I'd obviously defend my friend, but I probably wouldn't, you know be as much about a guy friend because I think he can defend himself! […] (Appendix B, lines 249-258).

This extract clearly places men and women into two distinct groups, in which people within each group are seen as being more likely to protect other in-group members. Here (and in other similar accounts) reporting rape to a male police offer is regarded as being risky and perhaps even pointless, since he is "likely to side with the man" who is accused of rape. The implication of this might be that when reporting rape a woman should always try to do so to a female police officer, placing the responsibility of punishing rapists onto women, since men are viewed as being bound to the "unwritten rule" that they should protect other men.

Some implications of this discourse

One function of the discourse of the 'Brotherhood of Man' is to draw attention to the dangers of all-male groups, which were depicted as breeding grounds for raping behaviour. Another thing this discourse does is to homogenise the group "men" and clearly distinguish them from "women", both drawing from and supporting the essentialist discourse of gender. It also ignores the existence of men who are against rape, or male police officers that would sympathetic to victims of rape, thereby to some extent 'demonising' all men. Men as a group are seen as being collectively responsible for rape, consequently placing the responsibility onto women to ensure that rapists are punished.

Out of the three discourses examined in this study, this discourse comes the closest to assigning blame to the rapists. However, this blame is diffused within a group (or within the

category 'men'), and therefore paradoxically this discourse still functions to relieve the individual offender of responsibility for his crime.

Conclusion

In summary, the discourses used in the discussions function to diminish or alleviate responsibility from perpetrators of rape; support ideologies such as racism and classism and problematise women's empowerment (thereby serving to perpetuate unequal power relations); and essentialise gender differences. These discourses further depict rape as an inevitability that we have little hope of preventing, a situation which, given the statistics of rape in South Africa, would leave South African women in an extremely dire position.

Furthermore, the constructions of masculinity in this study depicted men as having inherent rape proclivity; as having uncontrollable sexual drives that cause them to rape; as being able to achieve a level of masculinity through rape; and as having a collective interest in the raping of women. Considering the importance of the ways in which masculinity is constructed in terms of influencing rape behaviour, these representations are clearly problematic, as they construct rape as a *masculine* behaviour, which in terms of the dominant essentialist discourse, implicitly constructs it as *something that men do*. Constructions therefore also served to normalise raping behaviour in men, and rape was regarded as something many (if not most) men would do if they were not constrained by society. If masculinity is seen as being a set of behaviours and ways of being acceptable for men in society, constructing raping proclivity as a 'normal' part of being a man is clearly dangerous.

Although the task of reconstructing masculinity would by no means be an easy one, if social constructionist theory is an accurate reflection of how masculinity ideology comes to affect individuals' behaviour, how masculinity is constructed is clearly having a very detrimental effect on both the men and (consequently) the women of this country. Certain attempts have been made at making more positive ways of being available to men in South Africa, such as those made by the 'Brothers For Life' organisation, and it is clear that such constructions might manifest in more desirable behaviour. However, most of these attempts are still working from within the discourse of gender difference, and will therefore ultimately still encounter the problems with essentialism discussed earlier in this thesis. What the optimal 'solution' appears to be is that public efforts are made towards countering the essentialist discourse, since if this discourse is abandoned in turn masculinity ideology will

lose much of its power. However, perhaps a demonstration of the strength of the essentialist discourse of gender, it is difficult to imagine how one would go about doing this. Therefore, although I have argued that accepting the essentialist account of gender is in part problematic because it constructs rape as an inevitability, even when accepting the social constructionist account, this task will clearly still be enormously challenging. However, it is clearly necessary if women in South Africa are ever to be truly empowered.

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