Sexual Violence Communications at the University of Cape Town: A Discourse Analysis

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COMMUNICATIONS REGARDING SEXUAL VIOLENCE AT UCT

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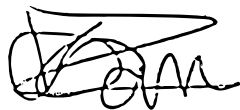

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Abstract

The present study is an archival document analysis, wherein public communications from the University of Cape Town (UCT) around the issue of sexual violence and rape were analysed using discourse analysis. The analysis centred on communications about rapes that occurred in the Rhodes Memorial Area and on campus at the end of 2015 and the beginning of 2016. The study found that the university largely ignored the systematic nature of rape and sexual violence in its communications by constructing these rapes as exceptional cases, and endorsing the idea of a single perpetrator. However, the university did attempt to be supportive of survivors of sexual violence by: (a) forming the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART), and (b) making information available to these survivors about where to reach out. The supportive attempts are nonetheless underpinned by a victimisation of women that occurs through (a) making sexual violence explicitly about women, and (b) making women responsible for avoiding sexual violence. The agency behind sexual violence is often ignored and as such sexual violence as posited as inevitable rather than contingent on the choices of perpetrators. The present study is useful in highlighting the ways in which UCT has positioned itself in relation to the issue of sexual violence. It also recommends that more research on institutional responses and communications to sexual violence is needed in order to further explore the belief systems around sexual violence present in these institutions and the ways in which their responses to sexual violence impact their communities.

Keywords: sexual violence, rape, institutional responses, discourse analysis

Communications Regarding Sexual Violence at UCT: A Discourse Analysis

Recently there has been much publicity around sexual violence at the University of Cape Town (UCT). The #PatriarchyMustFall movement, as well as rapes that have occurred around the Rhodes Memorial area near the campus have highlighted pervasive sexual violence and harassment experienced by UCT students. The present study is concerned with UCT's public communications with regard to sexual violence. Through an analysis of the literature which exists on sexual violence in South Africa, it will be argued that there is lack of research regarding sexual violence on University campuses. This exclusion of university spaces from sexual violence research implies that sexual violence does not occur in such spaces. It will be argued that this is not the case and that research into this phenomenon is needed.

Sexual Violence in South Africa

Sexual violence encompasses rape, intimate partner violence, and sexual harassment (Dunkle, Jewkes, Brown, Yoshihama et al., 2004, 2006; Kalichman et al., 2005). Approximately 240 incidents of rape and attempted rape per 100,000 women are reported to the South African Police Service each year . However, because there are many barriers to reporting sexual violence to the police and the actual incidence may be much higher. Therefore, while a specific statistic on the prevalence of sexual violence is potentially unattainable, it is generally accepted that incidence and prevalence of sexual violence in South Africa are exceptionally high (Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002). Thus the investigation of sexual violence is, and has been, an important agenda in South African Social research.

Bennett (2009) argues that while studies into sexual violence at universities were conducted in the 1990's after the end of Apartheid, not much work has been done subsequent to that period. A study done on sexual harassment at the University of KwaZulu-Natal found that students were dissatisfied with the University's responses to the pervasive sexual harassment on campus. This study found that 6% of the respondents had seen or experienced rape on campus. This percentage is assumed to be an under-report as many students did not respond to this question. In addition, 14% of students had seen or experienced sexual assault, 43% had seen or experienced intimidation or sexual pressure on campus, and 59%had seen or experienced unsolicited touching (Braine, Bless, & Fox, 1995). Following this study, one other empirical study by Gordon and Collins (2013) was done at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, which highlighted the restriction that black African women in residences felt because of the sexual violence on campus. Other than these two studies there has been little other

published research regarding sexual violence at universities in the literature of the 2000s, and a discernible shift toward a focus on the association between HIV and AIDS and sexual violence can be detected in South African research. which has illustrated that sexual violence constitutes a major contributing factor to risk for HIV and AIDS (Dunkle et al., 2004, 2006; Kalichman et al., 2005).

This link between sexual violence and HIV/AIDS has highlighted a sexual power dynamic between the genders, such that women have little power to negotiate condom use, and that the male partner's behaviour was found to be a determinant of women's risk for HIV and AIDS (Kalichman et al., 2005). Through the recognition of men as perpetrators of sexual violence, and the recognition of men's power in dictating both their own and women's risk for HIV, the research agenda appears to have shifted toward a focus on South African masculinities (Jewkes, & Abrahams, 2002; Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell, & Dunkle, 2011; Jewkes et al., 2011; Petersen, Bhana, & McKay, 2005; Wood & Jewkes,1997). There has been some research into the negotiation of masculinities in university spaces but little research is published in this regard (Everitt-Penhale, 2013).

Dunkle et al. (2004) conducted their study into HIV in antenatal clinics in Soweto and the majority of their participants were black. The Dunkle et al. (2006) study was conducted in rural Eastern Cape which also constituted of predominantly black participants. Kalichman et al., (2005) and Kalichman and Simbayi, (2004) conducted their studies into HIV and AIDS in townships in Cape Town, where the majority of their participants were coloured. This illustrates that many of the studies done into sexual violence and HIV and AIDS have been done on poor black communities. When we pay attention to the power involved in knowledge production, we recognise that such a focus on this demographic serves to contribute to a hyper-sexualised notion of black communities, since both perpetrators and victims of sexual violence are consistently found to be part of these communities, since these communities are the only ones that are researched (Jungar & Oinas, 2011). Furthermore, it suggests that sexual violence is not an issue that affects other, more privileged communities. Through this critical lens, the research trajectories sketched earlier would suggest that universities are seen as privileged spaces (separated from the societies in which they are located) into which issues of sexual violence do not pervade. However, recent protests at UCT (and other South African campuses) have highlighted the fact that students do experience sexual violence both on and off campus. Given the fact that sexual violence contributes to the spread of HIV and AIDS, and the fact that it constitutes a major human

rights violation, it is important that sexual violence on university campuses be investigated. Furthermore, such an investigation may shed light into the complexities of sexual violence as they interact with issues of gender, class, and race, and could provide insight into the role institutional power plays in creating an environment in which sexual violence continues to occur. Thus research into sexual violence on university campuses is needed in South Africa.

International Framing and Relevance in South Africa

While little work has been done in South Africa on sexual violence on university campuses, this is not the case internationally. As a researcher, I have had to critically consider whether I would want to contextualise my work within the broader international literature on institutional responses to sexual violence. The discipline of psychology faces a current struggle for social relevance in South Africa (Long, 2014). This is due in part to the fact that knowledge produced in developed or "first world" contexts is often found to be inapplicable to developing or "third world" contexts, yet it has tended to be applied uncritically (Hook, 2004). Because of this, I have decided to approach my research, largely uninformed by the international work on the topic. I attempted to use only South African theorising in my analysis so that I can produce research on South Africa for the sake of South Africa. After the process of analysis was complete, comparisons between international research and my own findings were drawn, but here I have focused primarily on the South African work that informed my analysis.

UCT and Institutional Responses to Sexual Violence

During the 1990s when there was a focus on sexual violence in university spaces, there was a move to develop policies that addressed the sexism, classism, and racism involved in sexual violence on and around the UCT campuses. Since then, little has been done in the way of assessing those policies and their effects on sexual violence on campuses (Bennett, 2009). Recently, in 2016, a review of the Discrimination and Harassment Office at UCT constitutes the first assessment of the application of UCT's policy and responses to sexual violence. The review highlighted the need for a transformational approach to sexual violence that takes into account the wider inequalities students face (UCT, 2016). While the resources available to students and the university's policies around sexual violence have been reviewed, little has been investigated with regard to UCT's public communications. It is useful to note that UCT has had to deal with many public cases of sexual violence over the last year. It is with regard to these cases, among other issues, that UCT has been charged by movements such as PatriarchyMustFall. This movement is a response to a patriarchal

institution whose responses, and lack thereof, have been dissatisfying to sexual violence survivors on campus. It is thus useful to analyse the message the university sends to its students. Such an analysis may make explicit the stance the university takes with regard to sexual violence: Does it endorse patriarchal notions of sexual violence, or does it engage with feminist notions of hegemonic masculinities, or does the university simply engage in victim blaming? How does the university represent itself and in representing itself in this way how does it exercise power? These are pertinent questions that may contribute to our understanding of what constitutes an environment that allows for sexual violence to continue to occur. Furthermore, it may serve to "call out" the university and make the university responsible for the position it takes toward sexual violence.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of this research was to explore the discourse in UCT's public communications with regard to sexual violence happening on and around its campuses. Specifically, this research was concerned with detailing how UCT is choosing to represent itself officially to the public with regard to its responses to sexual violence. The research aimed to make explicit the messages that the university is sending its students through these communications. The intention is that this information will constitute a useful start into the investigation of institutional responses to sexual violence in South Africa.

Research Questions

The primary research question for the current study is "what messages are the management of UCT sending its students, and the broader public, in its public communications around sexual violence?" This primary question can be divided into the following sub-questions:

1. How does UCT represent itself through language in its public communications regarding sexual violence at the institution?
2. How does UCT exercise its institutional power in its public communications regarding sexual violence at the institution?
3. What broader discourses do UCT's public communications around sexual violence buy into or resist?

Methodology

Theoretical Framework

This research used three overarching epistemological and theoretical approaches namely: (a) Social Constructionism, (b) Feminism, and (c)post-colonial theory.

Social constructionism holds that knowledge is a created through shared meaning and understandings. It suggests that human perception and context prevents us from obtaining the sort of objective knowledge science often attempts to obtain. Rather, social constructionism places an emphasis on how meaning is created through language (Sullivan, 2010). The present study was concerned predominantly with the use of language in public communications from UCT around issues of sexual violence on campus, and therefore critiqued how meaning was created through the use of language in these communications.

Feminist theory argues that women are oppressed in a male dominated patriarchal society (DeVoe, 1990). It is the social inequalities that arise from this oppression that manifest in the violence women experience (Herman, 2001). Thus any feminist analyses must take into account the context from which the data arise (DeVoe, 1990). The present study analysed to what extent public communications made by UCT with regard to sexual violence: (a) bought into patriarchal discourses, (b) bought into feminist discourses, (c) were male-dominated (i.e., who are the communications from). In addition, it analysed how these communications positioned: (a) the victims of sexual violence in relation to UCT and, (b) the perpetrators of sexual violence.

post-colonial theory has contributed to the motivation for the present study. Post-colonial theory is primarily concerned with critiquing those relations of power that arise from the inequalities created by a colonial history; this critique centres itself around issues of race and class and, while these are not central issues of this research study, further theorising has recently encompassed gender and sexuality into the post-colonial agenda (Hook, 2004). It is important to note that the reason such research is being directed at the institution of UCT, as opposed to survivors of sexual violence more generally, is due to the belief that my primary goal is to prevent sexual violence and to do so we need to look at those conditions that allow sexual violence to occur. This way of thinking is heavily influenced by post-colonial notions of resistance (Hook, 2004). Furthermore, the recognition that the literature around sexual violence is primarily done on poor black communities, and that this focus contributes to a colonial image of the black community as overly sexualised, violent, and consistently in need of help, is part of what has convinced me as a researcher to investigate sexual violence from another angle (Jungar, & Oinas, 2011). Post-colonial theory recognises the power that knowledge production exercises (Hook, 2004). With this in mind, I aimed to: (a) be critical of

the knowledge I produced and (b) avoid reproducing colonial discourses. It is thus in these ways that post colonial theory has influenced the knowledge produced in the present study.

Research Design

    Archival research. A document analysis of the 2015/2016 public communications (i.e., articles and emails) from UCT was conducted. This investigation attempted to illicit meaning through the interpretation and analysis of the text and images in the data. Such an analysis is useful and unique because the communications were formulated without the researcher's presence or involvement as mitigating factors (Bowen, 2009). As the study sought to understand what messages UCT was sending its students, and the broader public, through its public communications, this form of research was most applicable. Furthermore, document analysis has proved useful in illuminating questions for further research, by providing useful contextual information (Bowen, 2009). Thus the present study has the potential to be useful in positively directing future research into institutional responses to sexual violence. Document analysis can be useful in tracking changes in XXX over time (Bowen, 2009). Given that I analysed a number of documents pertaining to the same subject matter over a period of time, changes in the attitudes toward these issues could be tracked through this method of inquiry. The fact that there were individual communications about a number of different events meant that a lot of detail and time could be covered through this method of study (Bowen, 2009).

    Data collection tools and procedures. Document analysis is more efficient than other methods of research since it requires the selection of data as opposed to the collection of data which is more time consuming. It is cost effective and the data that were analysed were public, and thus easily accessible with little ethical implications (Bowen, 2009). The present study analysed messages concerning sexual violence which were sent out by UCT via email to all students between June 2015 and May 2016. These messages are also available to the general public on the UCT website. I analysed that period as those were the only months from which messages were accessible from online. This time period is also significant because it was the time during which issues of sexual violence came to the fore most visibly at UCT. Furthermore, it was also a time period during which the researcher attended UCT, and as such I have a contextualised understanding of these communications. A possible limitation may have been the irretrievability of some documentation. Since I was relying on online data bases, it was possible that some communications had been lost. This could have resulted in biased selectivity, which could have resulted in distorted knowledge production

(Bowen, 2009). To avoid this problem, I accessed UCT's public communicationx from the UCT website, which has an archive of all the public communications from UCT for this time period. Thus while the university is in control of this archive, it is that control which constitutes how UCT is portraying itself publically. Also if there was anything missing from this archive, I was able to check it against those emails in my email database as this archive should replicate those messages that were emailed to students. The two communication databases on which the present study is based are as follows:

Campus announcements. These are emailed to every student at the university. They are a means of informing students about important occurrences on and around the university as soon as possible. They include security alerts, information about protest action on campus, as well as information about accessing campus. In this way these communications permeate student's everyday experiences of the university.

From the VC/DVC's Desk. These are sent to all students and staff on campus, and sometimes parents and guardians. These serve as communications directly from UCT management around relevant issues on campus. They are more formal than campus announcements and tend to deal with macro-level issues while campus announcements involve everyday issues. In many ways these emails represent the relationship the average student has with UCT management. These communications carry a lot of weight considering they are sanctioned by the authority of UCT management and often the Vice-Chancellor himself.

The communications in the archive were scanned and read through for words and phrases such as "sexual violence", "rape", "sexual harassment", "#PatriarchyMustFall", "DISCHO" and "Rhodes incident". The communications that contained those words or phrases relating to sexual violence on and around campus were then analysed.

Data Analysis

I used discourse analysis to analyse the texts I selected. This analysis type was suitable given that discourse analysis as a methodology is grounded in social constructionism (Holt, 2011). Through this analysis I attempted to make explicit the implicit assumptions in UCT's communications with students and the public. I analysed the use of language in constructing reality and identity (Holt, 2011). Specifically, I used a Foucauldian discourse analysis (Willig, 2007). This kind of discourse analysis is concerned with the power relations and subject positions that exist in the context of the knowledge production, and how those power relations are constructed through the use of language (Holt, 2011). Subject positions

specifically refer to the social positioning that is created through language, and how this positioning mitigates power (Wiggins & Riley, 2010). My study assessed how the university used language in its public communications to position itself in relation to survivors of sexual violence. Furthermore, my study analysed how the university exercised its power over both survivors of sexual violence as well as the student body through its public communications.

Ethical Considerations

There were no participants in this study, thus there was no need for me to obtain ethical approval. Thus, in a formal sense, there are no ethical considerations. However, there was the need for ethical reflexivity, which is discussed below. In addition, the articles I analysed are publically available on the UCT website, mean that there was no concern of anonymity or sensitive information.

Limitations of the Study

It is important to recognise that we cannot treat the data, in this case emails, as hard evidence for the university's approach to sexual violence. Instead, such documents should be treated as social facts (i.e., representations of one of many social realities within the institution; Bowen, 2009). Thus my study was not able to draw finite conclusions about the university's stance toward sexual violence. Instead my study must locate its focus simply on how the university communicated about sexual violence, and the discursive world that this created. Furthermore, there are multiple interpretations of these communications, and as such different students may be receiving somewhat different messages from the university. Thus the findings of the study are not generalisable.

Ethical Reflexivity

Reflexivity often involves deep reflection about how the research process itself, which involves the presence of the researcher, may affect the participants and thus inadvertently mould the data that are collected (England, 1994). In document analysis, there are no participants and the documents themselves cannot change or be affected by the research process, thus there is no need for a reflexivity of this sort (Bowen, 2009). The researcher does nonetheless play major role in how the data is interpreted and what knowledge is produced from the research (England, 1994). Knowledge is powerful (Hook, 2004), and it is thus important that as a researcher I am aware of how the knowledge I produce can contribute to the discourses around sexual violence. I maintained this sort of ethical reflexivity throughout the research process by constantly assessing the implications of what I extrapolated from the data. It has already been stated that the feminist agenda involves research that is geared

toward empowerment, and that any knowledge produced must not worsen the disempowerment of women in the context in question (McRobbie, 1982). Thus the social justice agenda of the research is explicit.

Results and Discussion

The sexual violence that was communicated about in the period that was analysed were incidents of rape that occurred around Rhodes Memorial and on Campus at the end of 2015 and the beginning of 2016. It must be clear that Rhodes memorial is a ten minute walk from the university campus, and that many students park their cars there when they come to campus. Before this there were no available communications about rape. While the research was taking place, more cases of sexual violence were communicated by the Sexual Assault Response Team. These communications came too late for the researcher to include them in the study.

Discourses of Rape

I identified three dominant discourses around rape within UCT's communications between June 2015 and May 2016. The first of these was that of *rape as exceptional*. This discourse was used in the communications to construct the rape cases as anomalies, rather than as a part of a systemic, gendered issue. The second discourse was that of *female victimhood*. This discourse explored the ways in which women were identified and addressed as victims of sexual violence and how this allowed the university to place the burden of staying safe from rape on women. The final discourse was that of *rape as apolitical*. This discourse involved separating the occurrence of rape from the agency behind its perpetration which ultimately guided and limited the university's ability to address the perpetration of rape.

Rape as exceptional. This theme paints rape as a rare and shocking occurrence. Furthermore, this narrative of rape buys into the discourse of a rapist who is responsible for the problem of rape in the community.

In the communications, shock or a feeling of being disturbed by the information of the rape was often expressed. For example,

> It is deeply concerning that yesterday's incident brings to three the number of attacks
> on women in the Rhodes Memorial area (Campus Announcement, 26 January 2016)

In this communication the expression of concern is coupled with the numbering of the attacks as three. There is no allusion to the fact that these are potentially some of many, or part of a bigger problem. Instead the statement seems to isolate these incidents which makes them appear exceptional. The reader is lead to believe there have only ever been 3 rapes in the Rhodes Memorial area. The presence of such alien, and horrible incidents are what warrant the deep concern and need to alert the campus community. All the incidents of rape are made exceptional in this manner in these communications. For example:

> The University of Cape Town is devastated to confirm that yet another female UCT student was brutally attacked, assaulted and raped off campus on Tuesday evening, 8 March 2016. We were informed of this matter only late last night. Although we cannot be certain, all indications are that the attack has similarities to three previous recent attacks that occurred near Rhodes Memorial and that the assailant might be the same person involved in these other cases. (Campus Announcement, 10 March 2016)

In the announcement above, the devastation coupled with the jump to the idea that the rapes are by the same assailant suggest that rape is not the norm for UCT and that the university did not view it as a systematic problem on or near its campuses. Rather, it was seen as a problem directly related to a single perpetrator and was thus an act of deviance.

In South Africa, most men who have raped have done so multiple times and studies have shown that there is a high prevalence of men who admit to rape (Jewkes et al., 2006). In this way, it can be argued that a serial rapist is not deviant but is part of a broader culture of rape that is prevalent in South African society, which the university did not address. While the university appears to display deep empathy for survivors, the outrage at the injustice of these rapes seems incompatible with the context of a country where as many as 20% of women experience sexual violence (Dunkle et al., 2004). Furthermore, international research suggests university campuses are places where sexual violence occurs more often than in the general public (Banyard et al., 2009). Nonetheless UCT constructs itself as safe from rape, as is illustrated when it stated that:

> Rape is unacceptable and criminal no matter where it happens or whom it harms. But it is particularly shocking that it has occurred in what should be a place of safety: a student's room at a UCT residence. (From the DVC's desk, 15 April 2016)

> The university will work with all stakeholders to ensure that criminal activities are dealt
> with in the Rhodes Memorial area and that safety and security in the vicinity is restored.
> (Campus Announcement, 26 January 2016)

The first quotation refers to an incident that occurred on campus in a campus residence. The alleged perpetrator was a visitor in the residence. In these quotes we see how the university constructed its campus as a safe place, such that when rape happens in this space it is constructed as shocking. Rape is lumped into the broader category of "criminal activity" which describes everything from murder to theft. This alludes to the flat way in which the communications engage with rape. There is no attempt to engage with rape as a phenomenon that has causes and victims that are unique to other criminal activity Rape as a crime that centres itself on gendered power relations, it is primarily a violence that is enacted by the masculine on to the feminine and it has a history that is unique to other forms of crime(Gqola, 2015). The second half of the second statement implies that the Rhodes Memorial area was previously safe, and that the invasion of criminals can be 'dealt with' and safety thus '*restored*'. This again highlights the way in which these cases of rape were seen to be exceptional, rare and due to individuals who did not belong to the UCT community. The communications suggest that when the criminals were found there would no longer be a problem with rape in this area, and that it would return to its previously rape-free status.

In the communications, the distinction between broader society, in which rape is common, and UCT, in which rape does not occur, is exceptionally stark in certain communications, like the ones above. This allowed the university to construct itself as separate from the problem. Alongside this sort of discourse are constant reminders that the rapes occurred off campus. By ensuring that it is clear that the rapes were not on campus, the university attempted to absolve itself of responsibility and it maintained a sense of safety on campus. The distance between the university and the place of rape also contributed to the fact that the university did not communicate an internal search for a perpetrator. The fact that the perpetrator may have been a student was not acknowledged in any of the communications. By not being explicit about this, while being explicit about the fact that the survivors are students, the university constructed itself as an institution under attack by an outside individual and problem. The fact that UCT students were affected is the only link UCT allows between itself and rape.

Given South Africa's high rates of rape and other sexual violence, one might assume that these are not the first rapes to occur in the vicinity of the university (Dunkle et al., 2004;

Jewkes et al., 2006; Jewkes, Levin, Mbananga, & Bradshaw, 2002; Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002). International studies will support this assumption (Anderson, Beattie, & Spencer, 2001; Banyard et al., 2009; Hartmann, 2015; Streng & Kamimura, 2015). Thus we must question why these rapes in particular were given such attention, or even why these rapes reached the ears of management when others did not.

Almost all the rapes occurred such that the rapist was a stranger and the women were abducted from their usual daily activities, and raped violently, as described below:

> The student was running along the bicycle path in the area near the bridge of Princess Anne Drive in Newlands when a man attacked her, threatened her with a knife, assaulted her severely and forced her into the bushes and towards the Rhodes Memorial area. The man held her captive for some hours and raped her. The man later forced her to walk to a garage where she was able to break free from the attacker and was assisted by staff to phone the South African Police Services for help. She was admitted to hospital. UCT is assisting the student in a variety of ways and will continue to do so. (Campus Announcement, 10 March)

Such a script follows the rape narrative which is most believable (Anderson & Doherty, 2007; Gavey, 2005; Hartmann, 2015). Rape is a socially constructed concept and as such there are common beliefs about what constitutes rape. These beliefs function to make certain accounts of rape legitimate, while delegitimising other accounts and minimising their significance (Lea & Auburn, 2001). Rape which is violent and involves a stranger perpetrator, and where the woman is not acting provocatively or in a way deemed unacceptable by society constitutes the most believable form of rape (Hartmann, 2015). Those discourses that buy into this narrow definition of rape is replicated in other studies (Anderson et al., 2001; Lea & Auburn, 2001; Shefer, Strebel, & Foster, 2000). Thus it could be argued that since these rapes followed this script, they are legitimised in the eyes of the institution and thus worthy of attention (Hartmann, 2015). Unfortunately in South Africa, most rapists are known to their victims (Gqola, 2015). Thus rapes which follow the above script are not the most common, and it is important that attention is also drawn to other kinds of rape.

The complexity of what allows rape to occur is not delved into in the University communications, instead the focus was on how to stop the rapes was aimed at imprisoning the perpetrator, and protecting potential victims, as illustrated below:

> We also remain hopeful that a breakthrough and an arrest will be made and that the
> attacker will be brought to a court of justice to face the charges that will be levelled
> against him. (Campus Announcement, 10 March 2016)

By portraying the rapes as isolated incidents, the university placed the weight of the circumstances on the presence of a rapist. The complex issue of the perpetration of rape was simplified into a matter of security and arresting criminals. Furthermore, the university bought into a notion of a serial rapist, a single individual who embodied the problem of rape that was affecting the university:

> It's horrifying to be in a position where we know the person could attack yet again.
> (Campus Announcement, 10 March 2016)

> Police verify that this case appears to be the work of a serial criminal who most likely
> committed three other recent attacks on the mountain that were reported in December
> and January. They say the attacker has been described as a well-spoken man who
> engages in conversation with those he attacks. He is of slender build in his mid-20s.
> (Campus Announcement, 5 February, 2016)

As the cases progressed the communications notified students that the police suspected that a single perpetrator was responsible for all the cases reported. This suspicion was never confirmed. It also seems implausible because the perpetrator was described in the early communications as a young man "of slender build in his mid-20s', and the suspect who was later wanted in relation to the rapes was 44 years old, and the suspect who was eventually arrested was 35 years old:

> In a statement, police said there was a possibility that the same suspect "could be
> linked to similar cases in the area". The suspect has been named as Patrick Hlomane
> (44) also known as Mthunzi Makhamba. (Campus Announcement, 9 March 2016)

> UCT congratulates the South African Police Service for their dedicated efforts to
> catch a 35-year-old suspect believed to be involved in attacks and rapes in the Rhodes
> Memorial area. Whilst the suspect was arrested on suspicion of an alleged rape on
> 19 November 2015, SAPS is investigating the possibility that the same suspect could
> be linked to similar cases in the area. The suspect was arrested on the morning of
> Saturday, 12 March 2016, on Table Mountain. He appeared in Wynberg Court on
> Monday and the case was postponed until Friday, 18 March 2016. He remains in

> police custody... we are extremely relieved at this positive development. (Campus
> Announcement, 16 March 2016)

The university did not confirm that the suspect who was arrested was indeed connected to all the rapes, in fact, at that point, he was only going to court for one rape. Despite this, UCT was "extremely relieved at this positive development". The relief that was expressed points again to the way in which UCT saw the threat of rape being eliminated with the removal of a specific individual. After this there was no new information about whether this was indeed a serial rapist who was responsible for all the cases reported, or the outcome of the trial. By dealing with these rapes in this manner, the university was able to dismiss the threat of rape with the removal of a single individual.

In conclusion, by manufacturing the idea that the rapes were exceptional and by encouraging the notion of a single perpetrator, the university was able to focus its efforts on removing this individual, and advising students to attempt to avoid this individual rather than facing the much broader problem of sexual violence on its campuses and in society at large. In alignment with this, the engagement with rape was very shallow, there was little to no engagement with the deeper mechanisms that allow rape to occur, no engagement with why these specific women were targeted and no engagement with the possibility that a student may be the perpetrator. Without a deeper engagement with why rape happens and who the perpetrators are, the university could not successfully attempt to stop it (Gqola, 2015).

In South Africa, and internationally it is the case that most rapes are perpetrated by a person known to the victim (Gqola, 2015; Streng & Kamimura, 2015). Studies in the US have shown that university campuses are places conducive to rape, and places where rape often occurs, perpetrated by students (Banyard et al., 2009). Many of the rapes occurred in the Rhodes Memorial area, and thus were not on campus, this may be why the university did not conduct an internal search for a rapist. Nonetheless it was students who were raped, and thus if students could be raped in an area that is near campus but not on campus, it is equally likely that students could perpatrate rape in an area near but not on campus. This, in addition to South Africa's high incidence of rape, constitutes very good reason to act against perpetrators that are potentially located within UCT's community. Thus the fact that the university bought into a discourse of an external serial rapist, as opposed to multiple rapists located potentially internally is not in alignment with the reality of rape in South Africa.

Discourses of female victimhood. In this section, the ways in which the university posited sexual violence as a problem specific to women will be explored. By making this an

issue for women, the university focused on how women could be protected and how they could avoid rape, rather than focusing on the perpetration of rape.

The communications name all the victims as women (or "female"), as in the quotes throughout this analysis we see that all the incidents are strung together by having female victims.

> The University of Cape Town is devastated to confirm that yet another female UCT student was brutally attacked, assaulted and raped off campus on Tuesday evening, 8 March 2016. (Campus Announcement, 10 March 2016)

This emphasis on the identity of the victims as women is important to acknowledge as the university did not indicate the race or sexuality of any of the woman. Thus, that information is not seen as important enough to risk the anonymity of the survivor, where as the fact that the victim is a woman is perceived as important enough to share. It may be the case that the only thing in common between the victims was their gender, and for the reader this indeed seems to be the case, however the lack of other information about the identity of the rape survivor portrays a lack in understanding of the dynamics which can play out in rape. For example, we have no indication if this is an act of 'corrective rape' - a term describing rape of homosexual women due to the belief that something needs to be corrected in homosexual women.

In addition, the term "survivor" was used when speaking of a survivor/victim of rape. This buys into a discourse that attempts to empower women who are affected by rape rather than affirm their victimisation in referring to them. For example:

> UCT will make contact with the survivor of yesterday's attack, as we have done in previous related cases involving other students, to offer medical and counselling support. (Campus Announcement, 5 February 2016)

Despite this attempt at empowerment, the university's constant focus on the survivor of rape rather than the causes of rape, ultimately placed a spotlight on women as potential victims of sexual assault. This construction of women as victims, particularly of rape, has been found in analysis of the media (Hirsch, 1994). While there is much information communicated about whom to contact if you experience sexual violence,

We advise again of the establishment of the sexual assault response team [SART], a unit that aims to provide survivor-centred, compassionate and comprehensive services on campus (Campus Announcement, 16 March)

there was no communication about what the penalties are for students who are found to perpetrate sexual violence. This asymmetry contributes the "female fear factory' (Gqola, 2015 p.78) this means that it highlights the pervasiveness of rape while not making any attempt to discourage people from raping in the first place, which makes potential victims of rape aware of their vulnerability (Gqola, 2015). By not explicitly addressing perpetrators of sexual violence, or at least the fact that there may be perpetrators of sexual violence on campus, the university separated the problem of sexual violence from the agency behind its perpetration.

This separation of agency from perpetrators is congruent with many other international institutional, legal, and social responses to sexual violence (Anderson & Doherty, 2007). This leaves those systems which uphold rape in our society (e.g. misogyny, sexism, racism, and homophobia) out of the communications of rape. Similarly, when a perpetrator of sexual violence reads such communications, they do not seem relevant to them. In no way was the perpetrator addressed, threatened, or encouraged to stop their perpetration in these communications. In this way the perpetrator was left out of the communications about rape. Those who were most implicated in the communications were those survivors of sexual violence and those potential victims of sexual violence whom the university posits as women: "With such attacks in the area around our campus we feel deeply stressed for the safety of female students in particular" (Campus Announcement, 10 March 2016). "Whilst this is one incident, we know our society is one where rape, assault and murder of people (and particularly woman and children) is a common practice" (From the VC's desk, 17 November 2015). In this way the communications had the largest impact on women, who were explicitly addressed. There were no counter statements to these that communicated the fact that men may also have been at risk for sexual violence. Thus women were targeted by the communications and there was a silence around the role that men may play in these situations. The second quotation did acknowledge sexual violence as a larger societal problem, in contrast to many of the other communications that painted rape as exceptional.

The university adopted a strategy in relation to sexual violence that advised women on how they should behave, for example:

> We reiterate our reminder to all within our campus community to be vigilant around
> the Rhodes Memorial area in particular and if at all possible to avoid the area. The
> safety and security checklist can be viewed on the UCT website. (Campus
> Announcement, 26 January 2016)

> We firmly hold the view that every student and staff member should be able to move without restriction and go where they please. Society should be that safe. Yet, in the light of the fact that these assaults are happening and the violence of the assault seems to be increasing, we again ask all students and staff (and women in particular) to avoid walking or running alone at all cost. It is important to avoid areas where you may be isolated or vulnerable to attack. Please think about your daily route and make arrangements beforehand so that you are walking or running in groups, particularly in the late afternoon, early evening or after dark. (Campus Announcement, 10 March 2016)

By attempting to regulate women's behaviour, the university placed the burden on women to avoid rape by seeking safety in numbers and avoiding certain spaces. Discourse of women as victims who need to take defensive precautions is replicated in other studies on the way that women speak about rape (Boonzaier, 2008; Shefer et al., 2000). Rather than asking why people feel that they can rape in these spaces and areas, the university was saying that because rape happens in these areas they must be avoided. Therefore, if another student was raped in these areas, the discourse could easily slip into victim blaming since the student had been warned about that area (Anderson, Beattie, & Spencer, 2001). Furthermore, when the university told women to avoid certain public spaces it rendered these spaces as *not for women,* and what was once a public space now became a space where if women trespassed they may be raped (Anderson & Doherty, 2007).

 That discourse which says women who walk alone, at night are making themselves vulnerable to rape is replicated in how rapists justify their attack (Gavey, 2005; Lea & Auburn, 2001). Rape, however, is not a function of places, it is a function of people. The agency behind rape is ignored by responses like those from UCT. Those narratives which tell women to avoid certain public spaces and certain times are effectively policing women's behaviour (Gqola, 2015). In this way the university deferred responsibility to students in a way that is in direct alignment with the sexist underpinnings of gender-based violence. Thus the way in which the university attempted to respond to rape upholds the very culture which allows rape to occur in the first place.

However, it would be unfair to say that the university took no responsibility for stopping the perpetuation of sexual violence, It did take some responsibility through implementing security mechanisms.

> UCT took steps last month to place additional security at the bridge over the M3, a thoroughfare for students walking to upper campus. We continue to seek new ways to work together with the police, South African National Parks and other stakeholders to respond to this kind of criminal activity, and to create a safer space for everyone to move around. (Campus Announcement, 5 February 2016)

While this indicates that the university did feel some sense of responsibility for the prevention of sexual violence on and around campus, it again indicates the flat way in which the university engaged with sexual violence. In a country where the police have been accused of sexually violating citizens many times (News24, 2016), it seems odd that the university does not engage with the idea that armed individuals on campus may add to the problem, rather than end it. Furthermore, rape does not only happen in public spaces where security can be of use (Hartmann, 2015). There are no indications whether this security comprised of men or women, or of cameras for that matter. Once again, rape was being treated in the same manner as all other forms of crime and no attention was being paid to the systematic nature of rape.

In response to the sexual offenses that occurred in the Rhodes memorial area, and the criticism of UCT that followed these incidences in which students complained that the university was not responding to sexual violence effectively, the university set up a Sexual Assault Response Team (SART).

> SART comprises a multidisciplinary team of professionals who will work collaboratively to respond to those members of the campus community affected by sexual violence. SART's aim is to provide survivor-centred, compassionate and comprehensive services on campus and will be headed up by the faculty of health sciences Associate Professor Sinegugu Duma. (From the DVC's desk, 24 February 2016)

The above communication, alongside the many numbers given to call if one was in distress emphasises the universities attempt to be supportive of survivors and students in need. This rapid development, as well as the availability of information regarding who to contact must be commended, as it made reporting easier and more accessible, which research indicates, is lacking in university policy (Streng & Kamimura, 2015).

The SART forms the basis for the response to the issue of sexual violence. The communications suggest that it primarily involves survivor-centred care. Empirical studies argue that in order to prevent rape, community culture needs to be addressed so that

bystanders act with resistance to rape and sexism (Banyard et al., 2009). While the prevention of sexual violence as well as the addressing the culture which promotes sexual violence were less prevalent in the communications about the SART, they were not all together absent.

> This is one of the reasons why UCT has established the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART): a multidisciplinary team of professionals who will work together to address the culture of rape, sexual assault and gender discrimination that is so prevalent in South African society. In particular, they will identify and address ways that these types of criminal behaviour affect UCT and how we as a campus community can help prevent them. SART will also seek to provide survivor-centred, compassionate and comprehensive services on campus. The team is headed by Associate Professor Sinegugu Duma of the Faculty of Health Sciences. She will coordinate the participation of colleagues from Student Wellness Service, CPS and DISCHO, as well as professionals from outside UCT. (From the DVC's desk, 15 April 2016)

The above quotation, was one of few instances where the SART was mentioned in relation to the systemic issues around rape and the prevention of rape. This constitutes a recognition of the need to address rape as a complex phenomenon, separate from other crime. This recognition was mostly lacking in other communications as highlighted earlier. Findings in international research on university policy differs from this, in that policies usually focus more on prevention, to the detriment of post-attack support for survivors (Streng, 2014; Streng & Kamimura, 2015). The prosecution of perpetrators remained unmentioned and this contributed to way in which survivors and potential victims of sexual violence were emphasised in the communications, while perpetrators remained unaddressed. There was no transparency about the perspective from which the SART operated, for example, whether it took a feminist perspective of sexual violence.

In many ways the university highlighted the vulnerability of women to the threat of sexual violence, but there was no engagement with why this is the case. They ignored the role of perpetrators and what allows perpetration to occur in the South African context. By focusing on women as victims and remaining silent of perpetration, the university bought into a 'female fear factory' discourse (Gqola, 2015). In this way their silence could be argued to support the very culture which allows rape to occur on and around campuses. They policed the movements of women and deferred responsibility to women to avoid sexual violence. By referencing security as the primary means of prevention against rape the university failed to

deal with the complexities of sexual violence as a crime that is different from others in the South African context. While the university attempted to support women through survivor-centred care and by trying to protect them in providing security and asking them to avoid certain areas, their responses ultimately collapsed into the same rape culture which polices women through fear of sexual violence. Their silence on the matter of perpetration prevented issues such as sexism, patriarchy, and gender roles from being addressed by the university. In this important way, the university failed to support women with regard to sexual violence. Nonetheless, the university did communicate support for survivors of sexual violence and responded quickly to the need for this through the formation of the SART, and this should be acknowledged as a positive development.

   Discourses of rape as apolitical. Throughout the communications there was mention of sexual violence in ways that did not acknowledge the perpetration of sexual violence. In doing this the university separated the agency behind the act of rape from the occurrence of rape itself. This ultimately creates a sense of rape as inevitable.

> So it is deeply concerning that a UCT student was alleged to have been raped or sexually assaulted in Avenue Hall early Monday morning. It reminds us that even in a space where there is heightened sensitivity and understanding about these matters, the scourge of violence and abuse happens. (From the VC's Desk, 17 November 2016)

In this statement, which referred to a rape that occurred on university property, the use of the word "happens" is illuminating. It suggests a lack of control and a randomness. Coupled with the early "even in a space where..." this posits the "abuse" as inevitable and unavoidable. This is in alignment with quotes from earlier in this document, where women were told to avoid areas where rape happens, not acknowledging that people are causes of rape and they are mobile. Once again, it was the understanding of sexual violence as devoid of agency, that limited the ability of the university to address perpetration.

   The discourse of distancing of the occurrence of rape from the perpetration of rape and the active agency involved therein has been replicated in other media coverage of rape incidents in Kenya (Hirsch, 1994). Such an acceptance of rape is often a consequence of a belief system that says men cannot control their sex drive, and thus cannot be stopped, or else that men can do as they please, a boys will be boys mentality, and we should not attempt to change this (Anderson & Doherty, 2007; Weiss, 2009). The university thus did little to prevent or interrogate this perpetration. We must recognise that these communications had the potential to explicitly address perpetrators of sexual violence who could have been

threatened with punishment, instead the university chose to only address survivors and potential victims providing them with support. In making this choice, the university fostered a safe space for survivors, but also for perpetrators of sexual violence.

The University recognised the need to address the culture and environment on campus in relation to sexual violence:

> There is no doubt that we must work even harder to change the environment and culture on campus so that survivors feel less afraid and more supported and enabled to tell their stories, to seek action against perpetrators and to reach out for help and support from staff and fellow students. (From the VC's Desk, 23 May 2016)

While it is important that survivors feel safe on campus, it is perhaps just as important that perpetrators of sexual violence feel unsafe on campus. In this quotation, culture on campus is seen to be related to how survivors feel rather than related to how the perpetration of sexual violence is supported by this culture. Again we see an acceptance of the perpetration of sexual violence by the silence on the matter and how it can be changed.

The university suggested that awareness and education are important parts of the fight against sexual violence.

> We must expose such offensive and criminal behaviour, express our intolerance of it, educate our youth at university about its evils, and ensure our environment supports the survivors and others affected by such trauma. (From the VC's Desk, 17 November 2015)

This statement was strategic as it posited itself in support of survivors of sexual violence and against sexual violence. This is a good thing, but beyond the exposure and expression of intolerance, nothing specific was aimed at the perpetrator. Furthermore, there was notion of educating the community which was carried through the communications. What this education would do, or entail, was not explained. Would the education involve telling women how to avoid sexual violence – in alignment with most of the communications? Or would the education involve providing a depth of understanding of how sexual violence functions in South African society? In short, what position was the university taking in relation to sexual violence, besides that of being theoretically against it? In the above statement there was reference to "intolerance" of sexual violence, yet the university did not communicate about how this intolerance manifests. In these ways the university was so vague that it essentially took no stance ON?. The emails reached a wide audience. They constituted an opportunity for the very education which is mentioned, yet the lack of a firm stance or links to

information, or even a definition of what sexual violence or rape is, constituted a failure to provide that education.

Research has shown that rape is more likely to perpetrated by individuals who endorse rape myths (Banyard et al., 2009). By simply being explicit about the stance the university will take toward education, and what effect the education was intended to have, and providing some basic information on what rape constitutes, the university would have done much more in the direction of their agenda.

Summary and Conclusion

Through having constructed the Rhodes Memorial rapes as exceptional, and endorsing the idea of a single perpetrator as having been responsible for the problem of rape at UCT, the university oversimplified the issue of sexual violence on and around its campuses. Before the formation of the SART, the university had no obligation to report on sexual violence at the university, and this previous silence around other instances of sexual violence allowed the university to portray these new instances as exceptional. In contrast to the portrayal of the rapes as exceptional, was the acceptance of rape perpetration that the university endorsed through the way it consistently ignored the agency behind rape. This resulted in the university policing women's behaviour by placing the responsibility on them to avoid certain areas and take certain precautions. The primary means of addressing rape was to increase security measures. The university only admitted to having students who were victims of sexual violence and did not entertain the idea that students may also have been perpetrators of sexual violence. There was silence on the issue of the perpetration of rape which meant that, through these communications, the university ultimately fostered a safe space for perpetrators of sexual violence. It also successfully absolved the university of responsibility for dealing with the perpetration of sexual violence.

All the survivors of sexual violence were named as women. Women were specifically asked to be cautious. Thus the university constructed rape as an issue for women. This, alongside the silence on men and the perpetration of rape, resulted in an asymmetry which contributed to female fear while mystifying perpetration and the role men play in rape and rape culture.

While the university explicitly stated its position as against sexual violence, it did little more than this. It failed to provide information on what constitutes sexual violence or rape as well as what the consequences would be for a student who is found to have

perpetrated sexual violence. In this way the university missed an opportunity to educate its community on rape.

Finally, the university set up a much needed SART and provided students with information as to how to get help if they experienced any form of sexual violence. This was a positive development that constitutes a movement toward a better understanding of rap, and thus better responses to rape.

In conclusion, the current study is perhaps the only one of its kind in South Africa. Thus, further research into institutional communications around sexual violence is necessary. Empirical research into the impact of communications on student's perceptions of sexual violence at university would also be useful in formulating new communications. Further research into how other institutions, such as the police force, the court, and schools, construct themselves in relation to sexual violence, may contribute significantly to our understanding of the ways in which sexual violence is both confronted and ignored in the South African context. Current research suggests that perpetration of rape is significantly related to the endorsement of rape mythology (Hartmann, 2015). It is thus suggested that institutions start providing their communities with accurate information about sexual violence via communications around the issue. Students should have a clear idea of what it means to perpetrate sexual violence and what the consequences are of such behaviour. Perpetrators of sexual violence should be made to feel unwelcome and unsafe through public communications. The present study illuminated how the agency behind the perpetration was ignored in UCT's communications and how these communications made sexual violence a problem for women. Thus it is suggested that future communications take an approach to sexual violence which acknowledges its intentionality, its effects, and that sexual violence is an issue that involves both men and women in important ways.

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