

**GENDER AND RACIAL STEREOTYPING IN RAPE COVERAGE: AN ANALYSIS
OF RAPE COVERAGE IN *GROCOTT'S MAIL***

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of:

Masters of Arts in Political and International Studies

By

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February 2010

Rhodes University

ABSTRACT

This thesis analyzes rape coverage in a Grahamstown newspaper, *Grocott's Mail*. Critical discourse analysis is used to discuss and analyze articles about rape that appear in *Grocott's Mail* between October 14th 2008 and October 29th 2009. Drawing on existing literature on 'rape myths' in media coverage of rape, this thesis argues that *Grocott's Mail* perpetuates racial and gender stereotypes through the way in which it reports on rape. While not all of the articles included in the analysis use rape myths, most use one or more when discussing rape incidents. Specifically, *Grocott's Mail* tends to use rape myths that blame the victim for the rape and de-emphasize the role of the perpetrator in the rape. This is problematic as it sustains existing racial and gender inequalities.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisor, Sally Matthews, for her dedicated assistance, guidance and commitment to this thesis. I am also grateful to Louise Vincent for her interest in and assistance with my paper. Thank you to my friends and family who provided support from thousands of miles away. I appreciate my friends in Grahamstown for their encouragement and love throughout the year. Finally, I want to thank Drew for helping me in some way every day.

Chapter One: Introduction

In this thesis I examine and analyze rape coverage in a small South African newspaper, *Grocott's Mail*, by performing a critical discourse analysis on articles reporting incidents of rape. Since reports of rape regularly feature in *Grocott's Mail*, there are patterns that emerge in the way in which different incidents are covered. Additionally, there are marked differences in the way rape incidents are covered, suggesting that not all instances of rape are seen in the same way.

Rape is disturbingly common in South Africa (Britton 2006:145; Moffett 2006:129). However, only a small proportion of rapes are reported to the police (Britton 2006:145). For example, a survey by Van der Bijl and Rumney (2009:415) found that in 1999 only around 15% of women who had been raped reported it to the police. Out of the cases that are reported to the police, less than half are referred to court (Hirschowitz et al 2000:10; Yingwana 2007:1). Furthermore, only a small proportion of those that go to court result in convictions (Yingwana 2007:1). Successful rape convictions are made more difficult by the fact that many of the rape cases reported are withdrawn. For example, in 2000, 20% of rape cases were withdrawn by the complainant (Bourton et al 2004:127). With regard to media coverage of rape, it should be noted that only a small minority of rape cases are reported on in the media. Furthermore, there are discrepancies in the way in which different rape cases are covered in the media.

Context

When considering media coverage of rape in South Africa, it is important to understand the context in which news about rape is reported. The definition of rape has changed several times in South African law and legislation, moving from a narrow definition to a more general and inclusive one. For example, boys under the age of 14 were previously presumed unable to have sexual intercourse and therefore incapable of rape (Burchell 2006:701). This was removed by statute in 1987 as it was considered an archaic perception. In 1989, evidence referencing a woman's sexual history in court was allowed only with permission of the court, whereas previously, sexual history was often discussed despite its irrelevance to the rape incident that was on trial (Burchell 2006:702). In 1993, the rule that a husband could not be convicted of raping his wife was abolished through the Family Violence Act (Burchell 2006:701). While these revisions to the South African legal definition of rape were important, the definition of rape was still fairly narrow. Rape was defined as

‘intentional, unlawful, sexual intercourse with a woman without her consent’ (Burchell 2006:705). Critics argued that this definition only condemned one form of sexual assault and that it only considered women to be victims of rape (Burchell 2006:701).

The Sexual Offences and Related Matters Amendment Act 32 of 2007 has adopted a more comprehensive view of rape, making it more gender neutral and inclusive of more than simply penetration of a woman’s vagina by a man’s penis. The law now states that rape occurs when ‘Any person (‘A’) unlawfully and intentionally commits an act of sexual penetration with a complainant (‘B’), without the consent of B’ (Sexual Offences and Related Matters Amendment Act 32 2007:14-15). Thus, the Sexual Offences and Related Matters Amendment Act 32 of 2007 uses gender neutral language that allows for the rape of a man or rape perpetrated by a woman. Sexual penetration is no longer seen as only the penetration of a penis into a vagina, but rather more broadly as the penetration of any genital organ of a person or of an animal, or any object, into any genital organ of another person, the anus of another person, or the mouth of another person (Sexual Offences and Related Matters Amendment Act 32 2007:11). Additionally, South African law has been updated to include provisions for the rights of victims, such as medical testing of offenders, a national register for sex offenders, and an obligation to report sexual offences against children (Van Der Bijl & Rumney 2009:419).

As is the case throughout South Africa, rape is a common but under-reported phenomenon in Grahamstown. Grahamstown is a small town located in the Eastern Cape with an estimated population of between 76,500 and 124,700 (Statistics South Africa 2001; Thornton 2008:246). Rhodes University is located in Grahamstown and the presence of student life heavily influences the community. Grahamstown has a bi-weekly local community newspaper, *Grocott’s Mail*, which is the oldest independent newspaper in South Africa. This newspaper is written in English and has a readership of 40% English speakers, 37% Xhosa speakers, and 19% Afrikaans speakers (*Grocott’s Mail* Survey 2008). The remaining 4% of readers reported a different first language. In a recent *Grocott’s Mail* survey, 39% of its readers are described as black, 34% as white, 16% as coloured, 2% as Indian and 9% are reported not to have specified their race (*Grocott’s Mail* 2008). This same survey reports that there is an even number of readers across several age groups, as 21% of the newspaper’s readers are aged 21-30, 20% are 31-40, 24% are 41-50, 20% are 51-60 and 10% are 65 and older (*Grocott’s Mail* 2008)¹.

¹ These percentages only add up to 95% but the *Grocott’s Mail* survey does not specify whether or not the other 5% omitted their age group, or whether the other 5% are perhaps aged under 21.

Rape in South Africa

As mentioned above, rape is a disturbingly common phenomenon in South Africa. The literature on rape in South Africa is often linked to discussions of HIV/AIDS (Leclerc-Madlala 1997; Maman et al 2000; Outwater et al 2005; Wyatt et al 2002; Wojcicki & Malala; 2001). This is because one way in which HIV/AIDS is contracted is through rape. Furthermore, the rape of children and babies in South Africa has been linked to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the country through the myth of 'virgin cleansing' (Jewkes et al 2002:711; Richter 2003:393). The 'virgin cleansing myth' is the belief that an individual 'can be cured or protected from AIDS by exposure through intercourse to the bodily fluids of a virgin' (Richter 2003:393). It is believed that some people rape children because this is the easiest way of ensuring contact with a virgin (Richter 2003:397). Thus, some researchers argue that this myth has contributed to the extremely high number² of children and babies raped in South Africa. Others (Jewkes et al. 2002) dispute the degree to which the 'virgin cleansing myth' actually contributes to the rape of children and babies. Regardless of whether or not this myth plays a significant role in the incidence of child and baby rape, it is important to note that many children and babies are raped in South Africa.

Aside from the role of rape in the spread of HIV/AIDS and rape as a product of HIV/AIDS myths, Moffett (2006:134) suggests that many individuals link rape to South Africa's apartheid legacy by justifying or excusing rape as a reaction to poverty, unemployment, or disadvantaged social status. In this way, rape is seen as an extension of the conditions created by apartheid. This serves to excuse rape as well as to reinforce the idea that rapists are usually black men (Moffett 2006:134). Moffett (2006) argues that the issue of race has clouded what she believes to be the most important issue relating to rape in the country, patriarchy.

Due to the fact that the issue of rape in South Africa is often associated with race, Moffett (2006:132) argues that attempts aimed at acknowledging gender violence and gender inequality in the country have often been hindered by accusations of racism. One example of this was in 2004 when the president of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, stated that Charlene Smith, an anti-rape activist, was racist in her attempts to inform South Africans about the realities of rape (Moffett 2006:133). Many South Africans are sensitive about the stereotype of the 'black male rapist', often hindering attempts to talk about rape.

Additionally, rape in the country is often attributed to poor, unemployed men which, according to Maitse (1998:56) and Moffett (2006:136), is a part of the apartheid narrative. Sexual violence is often blamed on poverty and the associated male insecurity that exists

² Richter (2003:395) suggests that 10% of all rapes in South Africa are the rapes of children under three years old.

despite the political and social transition that South Africa has undertaken since 1994 (Bennett 2006:428; Maitse 1998:56). As a result, the fact that rich white men also rape is overlooked and the role of patriarchy in gender violence in South Africa is obscured (Moffett 2006:136). Furthermore, the assumption that poverty and unemployment cause sexual violence towards women serves to de-emphasise the role of the actual perpetrators of rape (Bennett 2006:428; Maitse 1998:56).

Another problem in South Africa pertaining to rape is that families, peers, the media and society often focus on the role of women in rape prevention (Van der Bijl & Rumney 2009:420) Women are taught to be careful, to avoid walking alone and to avoid getting drunk with strangers, while rape prevention in the country is not usually targeted at men (Van der Bijl & Rumney 2009:420). When rape prevention targets women instead of men it helps contribute to victim blaming by fostering the perception that if it is the woman's job to prevent rape, then she must be at least partly to blame if she is raped (Van de Bijl & Rumney 2009:420). It may be that rape prevention targets women due to the normalization of violence against women in the country (Britton 2006:148; Gabbidon 2009:221). Violence against women was normalized under apartheid and many argue that this continues today, making it difficult to combat sexual violence in the country (Gabbidon 2009:221).

As mentioned earlier, the law in South Africa has been reformed and currently has a more comprehensive view of rape. However, Van der Bijl & Rumney (2009:418) state that simply because a new law has been adopted does not mean that this law will be implemented, nor does it mean that social perceptions about rape in the country will change. The police, lawyers, and judges work in the context of not only the law but also of prevailing social perceptions. Coupled with corruption in the legal system, this can have terrible effects for rape victims and hinders the processing of rape claims in the country. Jewkes & Abrahams (2002:1232) found that the police deliberately lose some reports of rape. For example, it was recently found that police officers in Paarl, South Africa, were told to record rape incidents as 'inquiries' rather than to open rape cases (Underhill 2009:1). This was done in order to manipulate crime statistics so that it appeared that rape was happening less frequently than it actually was (Underhill 2009:1). In several instances, the police had been provided with the names and addresses of the alleged perpetrators, but arrests had not been made because proper rape cases had not been opened. Instead, only some rapes, hand-picked by police officers, were investigated as rape cases. Clearly, the success of the legal reform in the country depends on its proper implementation by the police, lawyers, and judges. However, these law enforcement officials tend to rely on socially constructed stereotypes of rape when performing their work duties (Van der Bijl & Rumney 2009:427).

Research Objectives and Justification for the Study

In this thesis I aim to examine the way in which rape is covered in *Grocott's Mail* by describing and interpreting discourse regarding rape in the newspaper. While 78 rapes were reported to the Grahamstown police between November 2008 and April 2009 (Blase 2009:14), not all of these received coverage in *Grocott's Mail* and of those that did receive coverage not all were covered in the same way. To begin with, I will discuss literature on rape in the media, looking especially at literature on 'rape myths' in media coverage of rape. Following this survey of the literature, I will analyze rape coverage in *Grocott's Mail* between October 14th 2008 and October 29th 2009. This thesis aims to identify and discuss themes that emerge in *Grocott's Mail's* coverage of rape and to determine whether or not these themes converge with or challenge 'rape myths' discussed in the literature on rape in the media.

According to Dorfman and Schiraldi (2001:4), the public depends on the media for its understanding and perceptions of crime. Their research found that in the United States, 'three quarters (76%) of the public say that they form their opinions about crime from what they see or read in the news' (Dorfman and Schiraldi 2001:4). Since the news media can shape public ideas and understanding of crime, including rape, it is important to analyze which perceptions the media perpetuates.

Media coverage and public opinions are mutually reinforcing. Media coverage of rape is shaped by power structures and corresponding social perceptions and attitudes. However, as mentioned above, the media also creates and sustains ideas and perceptions about rape. This mutually reinforcing relationship between the media and public perceptions will be further discussed in Chapter Two. Due to the fact that rape coverage in the media is shaped by social perceptions and that rape coverage in the media helps maintain perceptions about rape, it is important to analyze media coverage. Analysing the coverage of rape in South African newspapers may help uncover underlying perceptions of gender, race and class in South Africa. If these perceptions and stereotypes can be outlined and understood, we will be able to better explain power relations in society and their consequences. Though *Grocott's Mail's* reporting of rape incidents is only one small example of rape coverage in South Africa, analysing this coverage may offer valuable insight on rape coverage throughout the country.

Furthermore, Reddy & de Kadt (2006:417) suggest that language is fundamental in creating a "new" national identity based on celebrating differences and overcoming barriers' in post-apartheid South Africa. Gender and racial inequality are currently maintained through language and discourse (Reddy & de Kadt 2006:419). It is argued that language reflects the relationship between different groups in society and that it is linked to systems of power. Thus, language in South Africa constructs beliefs, ideas and opinions in the country and it is a 'fundamental part of representation' (Reddy & de Kadt 2006:419). By discussing issues

relating to language and discourse in South African society, we can begin to bring about change in these practices (Reddy & de Kadt 2006:422) Thus, performing a critical discourse analyses on rape coverage in a South African newspaper may help identify, as well as challenge, ways in which inequality is perpetuated through language and representation.

It should be noted at the outset that the focus of this thesis is limited to the rape of women by men. Even though men and women can both be victims and perpetrators of rape, the majority of victims of rape are women and the majority of perpetrators are men (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2007). Therefore, the literature review and the analysis of *Grocott's Mail* articles will focus on the rape of women by men.

Methodology

This thesis utilises discourse analysis in order to explore race and gender stereotyping in media coverage of rape, examining the way in which dominant discourses are linked to power in society. As mentioned above, articles about rape that appear in *Grocott's Mail* starting from October 14th 2008 and ending on October 29th 2009 are analysed here.

There are many ways to define the term 'discourse'. It is important to distinguish between how the term is used in discourse analysis and how it is used in other contexts. While the word 'discourse' can be used simply to refer to ordinary speech or conversation, in discourse analysis, the term 'discourse' refers to systems of statements and patterns of speaking that appear in speeches, texts and conversations, and not to the speeches, texts and conversations themselves (Terre Blanche et al 1999:328). Discourse can be thought of as a practice, belief, meaning, representation or knowledge that constructs a particular reality and is manifested in language (McCloskey 2008:24; Phillips & Jørgensen 2002:67). Discourse reflects cultural and social contexts which are often internalized by the speaker without his or her realizing it and provide a shared view of the world (McCloskey 2008:24; Reddy & Potgieter 2006:512; Terre Blanche et al 1999:331). By analysing discourse, we acknowledge that language is social and that social structures, institutions and interactions create and sustain social ideologies (McCloskey 2008:25).

Discourse analysis involves trying to demonstrate how certain discourses are used in order to produce specific effects in particular situations (Terre Blanche et al 1999:328). When doing discourse analysis, it is important to read and analyze language and texts in order to uncover their social significance (McCloskey 2008:25). Since discourses reflect cultural and social contexts, discourse analysis aims at understanding if and how cultural and social assumptions are present in a particular text through dissecting the language. In order to perform a discourse analysis, the researcher must be familiar with particular ways of speaking

in society so that he/she can recognize them in the texts being analysed (Terre Blanche et al 1999:330).

One of the aims of discourse analysis is to uncover unintended meanings in speech or writing. Often, certain discourses are internalized by people without them necessarily being aware of it. It is the goal of the researcher to uncover the discourses and the effects they produce in a text. Verifying the truth is of little importance in discourse analysis because the researcher is more interested in analysing what, how and why people say what they do, and in exploring the effects of what has been said, rather than in determining whether or not what they say is true (Terre Blanche et al 1999:334).

The term 'critical discourse analysis' refers to a kind of discourse analysis that is particularly interested in examining how dominant discourses are linked to power in society. Power can be explained in many different ways in the social sciences. However, Van Dijk (2008:9, 88) states that for critical discourse analysis purposes, power is often understood as control. This is to say that power is seen as the control of one group over others in society (Van Dijk 2008:88). Control can refer to the control of discourse and influence over those not in power (Van Dijk 2008:9). Control of discourse exists when only some are able to express their opinions, while the opinions of others are partially or entirely controlled by those in power (Van Dijk 2008:9). Powerful groups often have more access to public discourse and knowledge and can therefore control and shape that discourse (Van Dijk 2008:90). Since those in power control discourse they can perpetuate their own power through that discourse. Thus, for critical discourse analysis, social power is seen in terms of control.

Critical discourse analysis has links to critical social research as both try to locate the origins of social problems and analyze these problems in a way that will help transform society (Bloor & Bloor 2007:12) Those that use critical discourse analysis believe that language and discourses have ideological effects (Phillips and Jørgensen 2002:63). Discursive practices, or the process of text creation and consumption, are seen as integral to both constructing and reflecting the social world, including social relations and identities (Bloor & Bloor 2007:12; Phillips and Jørgensen 2002:61). Researchers using critical discourse analysis are committed to uncovering discourses that perpetuate existing inequalities and benefit dominant groups (Van Dijk 2008: 85). Thus, critical discourse analysis looks at the way in which social power, domination and inequality are created and sustained by texts and speech in daily life (Van Dijk 2008:85) Critical discourse analysis aims to uncover how language use and communication reflect and reproduce power, dominance and inequality in society (Phillips and Jørgensen 2002:61; Van Dijk 2008:85). It attempts to educate people about the ways in which texts maintain unequal power relations in society in order to bring about awareness of inequality and to initiate social change (Phillips and Jørgensen 2002:64). In this way, critical discourse analysts believe that language as discourse 'is both a form of action

through which people can change the world *and* a form of action which is socially and historically situated and in a dialectical relationship with other aspects of the social' (Phillips and Jørgensen 2002:62). Critical discourse analysis assumes that ideology can be used to explain the oppression of certain social groups to others in society, and that this ideology is reflected in textual and linguistic aspects of society.

Critical discourse analyses often focus on gender issues and attempt to demonstrate how discourse creates and sustains gender inequality and gender-based discrimination (Bloor & Bloor 2007:94; Van Dijk 2008:93). It is important to note that gender is a social construction which is created and maintained, in part, by discourse. Bloor and Bloor (2007:94) state that there are usually four types of critical discourse analysis studies relating to gender inequality. These four types examine 1) the way in which language itself is gendered, 2) the stereotypical ways in which women, men, boys and girls are portrayed in discourse, 3) the way in which women and men interact with one another in discourse and differences in speaking styles between men and women, and 4) the way in which men and women use language in specific contexts, such as in a professor-student relationship (Bloor & Bloor 2007:94). This thesis will look at the way in which women, girls, boys and men are stereotypically represented in newspaper articles about rape.

There is no single guide which explains exactly how to conduct a discourse analysis. There are many different ways to engage with a text in order to uncover what it is saying and what the effects of the text might be. In performing discourse analysis, looking for binary oppositions can be helpful (Salkie 1995:23; Terre Blanche et al 1999:331). Binary oppositions, such as love/hate, good/bad, happy/sad, dead/alive, intelligent/stupid can bring to light certain discourses within a text. These opposites are thought to be absolute opposites, or incompatible with one another (Salkie 1995:23). Frequently, only one side of the binary opposition is actually present within the text and the other half of the binary is silenced. However, this can tell the reader a lot about what the text is trying to achieve. For example, if a document outlines how a good worker should behave, it also implies how a bad worker behaves without actually stating it. Going even further, if a text speaks negatively about something being complicated, it also suggests that simplicity is preferable. Examining these binary oppositions can help locate what is important to the author or speaker, and also can help dissect what the effects of the text may be.

Discourse analysis aims at uncovering and describing patterns, metaphors, figures of speech, word choices, contradictions, inconsistencies, silences and gaps in the language used in a text. Recurring terms, metaphors and phrases are also important in discourse analysis (Gee 1999:93; Terre Blanche et al 1999:331). Gee (1999:93) argues that it is important to pick out how these different patterns, metaphors, words, silences, etc. are made relevant or irrelevant in the text. Each discourse has a particular way of speaking that is comprised of

both what is said and how it is said. For example, a discourse might aim to emphasize attributes of a good worker, but in doing so it also outlines the appropriate ways in which to speak about workers in general. Certain metaphors and clichés are commonly used in speech, and their meanings are widely known in society. Metaphors are forms of language that use words or phrases for specific meanings, often taking them out of their literal context (Kelly 2006:356). For example, the word ‘chick’ is often used to speak about a woman. However, the word ‘chick’ can refer to either a baby chicken or a woman depending on the context in which the word is used. Thus, the meaning of this metaphor is commonly understood, but the discourse analyst must look at why the text uses that particular word instead of saying ‘woman’ in its place. Similarly, Gee (1999:42) states that it is important to look at the ‘situated meanings’ of key words and phrases in a text. ‘Situated meanings’ refers to the idea that people recognize certain patterns through their experience with the world. For example, when a young girl says ‘I cannot play soccer today, I do not have any shoes’ the listener does not think that the girl does not own any shoes in general, but that she does not have the appropriate pair of shoes with her at the moment (Gee 1999:42). It is important to uncover what ‘social models’ are at work in these situated meanings, or in weaving situated meanings together. ‘Social and cultural models’ refer to the idea that there are storylines and theories connected to phrases, often reinforced through social practices, which help explain why there are different situated meanings (Gee 1999:44). The researcher may also ask questions about why this metaphor/phrase/situated meaning is used, how it came about, and what the meaning behind its use is. Looking at recurring terms, metaphors, phrases, silences, inconsistencies, word choices, and the situated meanings of certain words and phrases will help frame the text as well as help the researcher understand what the text is trying to achieve.

It is also important to consider the subjects that are referred to in the text (Terre Blanche et al 1999:331). Some subjects may be obvious, but hidden subjects may also be referred to. For example, if a text discusses a father and son relationship it would obviously be important to examine the way in which the text speaks about the father and the son. However, it would also be important to look at what the text suggests about other family members who are not explicitly discussed.

When performing discourse analysis it is necessary to take into account both the author and the intended audience of the text. The author is speaking in specific ways in order to reach a specific audience and this must be addressed (Mautner 2008:43; Terre Blanche et al 1999:331). The author and audience can be in agreement on a subject or the author might be trying to convince the audience of something. This relationship affects both the language used in the text as well as what that language is trying to achieve.

Mautner (2008:32) argues that when performing discourse analysis on media texts, as with other texts, one is looking to uncover or examine dominant discourses in society. It is

argued that while discourses are socially constructed, they simultaneously help perpetuate social norms (Phillips & Jørgensen 2002:61). Analysing print media can help explain this phenomenon.

Performing discourse analysis on print media comes with specific challenges. In analysing print media it is important to consider the context of the newspaper or magazine being studied. The context of the newspaper can also be examined by looking at the writing styles of the journalists, as they may use particular phrases and words more frequently than others. In news media in particular, it is important to consider factors that make events more 'newsworthy' (Mautner 2008:33). This is because there are selection processes involved with regard to which events are put into the newspaper and which events are not. Often, the types of stories reported in newspapers become standardized. The context of a newspaper is a contributing factor to this standardization. Eventually, it may seem 'natural' and 'normal' for certain events and incidents to be automatically included in newspaper reports. Newspapers report in certain ways, creating and sustaining a particular view of the world. Discourse analysis attempts to demonstrate how language is a crucial aspect in constructing this view, as well as attempts to challenge the view itself through deconstructing the language (Mautner 2008:33).

When performing a discourse analysis on newspaper texts, it is important to consider transitivity and modality. Transitivity refers to how events are described. In order to identify what the text is trying to achieve it is important to understand who does what to whom in the text, what happens to actors in the text and whether or not the passive or active voice is used to describe actions (Mautner 2008:41). For example, there is a difference in saying "the immigrant left", "the immigrant was deported" and "the immigration officials deported the immigrant" (Mautner 2008:41). Modality is the way that language can be used to express levels of commitment or certainty, as well as vagueness and uncertainty regarding events (Mautner 2008:41). It is important to look at words such as 'might', 'must', 'may', 'perhaps', 'certainly', 'definitely', 'allegedly', 'supposedly' and 'apparently' because these words reflect the opinion of the author and attempt to create specific meanings around the incident. Additionally, when analysing articles about rape it is important to look at words used to describe the victim (Franiuk et al 2008:797). A word that is often used to describe rape victims in newspapers is 'accuser'. Using the word 'accuser' instead of 'victim' can demonstrate the author's defence of the perpetrator and lack of sympathy for the victim (Franiuk et al 2008:797).

Lastly, Mautner (2008:43) argues that it is important to consider nonverbal messages such as photos used, page layout, font style, location in the newspaper, and frames. This will illuminate the message entrenched in the text, especially if similar events, such as rapes, are treated differently with respect to these non-verbal items.

When performing a discourse analysis on newspapers it is also important to consider the headlines of the articles (Bohner 2001:522). The headline is significant because it is usually the first thing a person will read in the article. Indeed, many individuals will read only the headlines of most articles, making the content of the headline extremely important (Franiuk et al 2008:792). The headline can set the tone of the article or can summarize an article in a particular way, and therefore it should be analysed. Additionally, the headline can mislead the reader as to what the article is actually about (Franiuk et al 2008:792). When looking at headlines involving crime it is important to look at 1) the acting person in the headline, whether this is the victim or the perpetrator, 2) the type of action mentioned, whether only the crime is mentioned or whether actions other than the crime are also mentioned, and 3) the grammatical voice used in the headline, either the active or the passive voice (Bohner 2001:522).

Throughout this thesis I will maintain an awareness of the various aspects of discourse analysis outlined above. I will begin my analysis by reading each article carefully and attentively as recommended by McCloskey (2008). Next I will dissect the articles through uncovering and describing patterns, dichotomies, reoccurring metaphors, figures of speech, specific word choices, contradictions, inconsistencies, silences and gaps in the language used in each article. I will consider the author of the articles and the intended audience of the articles, as this is how the text will best be understood (Mautner 2008:43; Terre Blanche et al 1999:331). With this understanding I will be able to look at transitivity and modality in the articles to understand the effects of the text (Mautner 2008:41). The thesis will also analyze the placement of articles about rape in *Grocott's Mail*, the page layout in the newspaper, any photographs that are placed in the articles and the headlines of the articles, as these things affect the way in which an article is understood. As I carefully read these articles I will uncover and identify different themes that emerge in the articles and will use these themes to guide my analysis.

When writing this kind of thesis it is important to be mindful of my own word use. The term 'rape survivor' is sometimes preferred to the term 'rape victim' when discussing rape. Individuals who use the term rape survivor agree that women who are raped are victims of sexual violence. However, they prefer to use the term 'survivor' as it allows the woman who has been raped to feel empowered and as it presents her as someone who plays an active role in her own survival (Placeo 2009; Surret 2009). The term 'rape survivor' is used mostly in rape activism and when discussing therapeutic tactics that will help women who have been raped by men. The distinction between being a victim and being a survivor is important for an understanding of the discourse surrounding rape. However, because most of the academic literature uses the term 'rape victim' when discussing rape, the term 'victim' will be used throughout this thesis.

Conclusion

This thesis discusses and analyses the way in which a South African newspaper, *Grocott's Mail*, covers incidents of rape. In order to do this adequately, it is necessary to explore the literature on rape coverage in the media with a particular focus on the media's use of 'rape myths'. A discussion of the literature on rape forms the second chapter in this thesis, following this introductory chapter. The third chapter focuses on *Grocott's Mail's* coverage of rape incidents in Grahamstown. Using the methodology described above, I examine 16 rape incident articles that appear in *Grocott's Mail* between October 14th 2008 and October 29th 2009. Throughout the analysis I remain mindful of the literature on 'rape myths' and use this literature as a guide when discussing the articles. Ultimately, this thesis employs critical discourse analysis to demonstrate the subtle ways in which language can be used to perpetuate 'rape myths' and consequently sustain gender and racial inequalities.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

In this chapter, literature on crime in the media, rape myths in the media, rape coverage in South Africa and the effects of rape coverage will be discussed. The literature suggests that there is a mutually reinforcing relationship between media portrayals of rape and public perceptions of rape. This demonstrates that media portrayals of rape are important because they have the potential to shape societal perceptions of rape. According to literature on rape in the media, 'rape myths' are used frequently in the media. Once prevalent in the media, these 'rape myths' create, reflect, and sustain stereotypical perceptions of rape. These stereotypical images are often internalized by the public, including police officers and legal professionals who are involved with rape cases. This can have negative effects of both undermining justice for rape survivors and discouraging rape victims from reporting rape.

Crime in the Media

The media is actively involved in converting individual private experiences with crime into public issues (Sacco 1995:141). Both victims and perpetrators of crime often have personal details about their lives receive public attention, and both are portrayed in the media in particular ways (Garofalo 1981: 323). Research has shown that the ways in which the media reports on crime influence public perceptions (see for example Bufkin & Eschholz 2000: 1318; Carll 2003:1601; Dorfman and Schiraldi 2001; Protess et al 1985: 34; and Sacco, 1995:141). Through the way in which the media reports on crime, the media can shape the public's social, political and economic priorities by demonstrating which problems are the most urgent (Bufkin & Eschholz 2000:1318; Protess, et al 1985:20; Sacco 1995: 141). This is because the media's portrayal of reality is selective, as some crimes are greatly publicized, while others receive little or no coverage (Berrington & Jones 2002:311; Soler & Garry 2009: 3). Prior studies have suggested that how the media reports on crime can influence levels of public fear relating to certain crimes (Korn & Efrat 2004). Other studies have found that media reports on crime help generate certain stereotypes relating to who is likely to be a victim or perpetrator and why (Sacco 1995:142). Thus, many researchers have suggested that the media can shape public opinion about crime; however they are not in agreement on the exact effects that the media has on the public.

It has also been found that the media can be affected by public perceptions, suggesting that the relationship between public perceptions and media portrayal is mutually reinforcing (Berrington & Jones 2002:311; Los & Chamard 1997:309; Molotch & Lester

1974:8). This is to say that on the one hand, public perceptions affect the way in which particular crimes are presented in the media and, on the other hand, the way the media presents particular crimes can influence public perceptions.

The literature also suggests that media coverage can affect public policy. News coverage brings issues into focus which can in turn shape public policy. For example, Carll (2003:1606) argues that the focus on date and acquaintance rape in the media in the United States played an important role in bringing about a bill aimed at allowing legal assistance to individuals who have experienced dating violence. Similarly, Soothill et al. (1990) state that newspaper reports have helped raise public concerns about rape. Los and Charmard's (1997) research on rape coverage in the media suggests that the relationship between media coverage and public policy is also mutually reinforcing. They examine media reports of rape before and after Canadian legislation was formulated in 1983 to be more inclusive of acquaintance rape. They found that after the legislation there was an increase in the number of cases of acquaintance rape reported in the news (Los & Chamard 1997:295). This shows support for the view that the media can shape public policy and that public policy can in turn influence the media.

Rape Myths in the Media

Research on rape in the media tends to focus on ways in which the media creates and sustains stereotypes of rape by reporting only certain rapes or by reporting on certain rapes in specific ways (Bufkin and Eschholz 2000:1321; Carll 1999:1602; Franiuk et al 2008). Only a small proportion of rape cases receive attention in the media and those cases that do receive coverage are often presented in ways that sustain what some theorists call 'rape myths' (Bufkin & Eschholz 2000:1325; Soothill et al 1990: 227).³ Rape myths are generalized and false ideas and beliefs about rape that trivialize a rape, suggest that a rape did not occur, or suggest that a rape can only occur in certain contexts (Franiuk et al 2008:790). These rape myths reflect and often perpetuate stereotypical images of the perpetrator and constructions of the victim according to his or her age, race, class and sex.

Rape myths are considered by some to reflect and perpetuate patriarchy (Berrington & Jones 2002:309; Bufkin & Eschholz 2000:1321; Carll 1999:1602; Worthington 2008:344). Patriarchy is best defined as a system of power which favours men and which is implemented at the individual, institutional and ideological levels of society (Walby 1989). Patriarchy

³ Franiuk et al (2008) state that rape myths are not only prevalent in news segments and newspaper articles, but also in newspaper headlines. Even though a headline is only a phrase or a sentence long, headlines covering rape articles often contain rape myths or try to portray a certain idea about the rape in the article. This is important because many individuals will only read the headline of most articles in a newspaper (Franiuk et al 2008:792).

serves to justify and perpetuate male power and consequently to oppress women. Male violence, especially rape, can function to maintain patriarchy (Berrington & Jones 2002:309). This is true because rape oppresses all women, as even those who are not raped are negatively affected by the fear of rape (Jimenez & Abreu 2003:252). Furthermore, media coverage of rape can also perpetuate patriarchy when the coverage helps sustain the existing social order by portraying rape in particular ways (Bufkin & Eschholz 2000:1321; Worthington 2008:344). For example, media coverage of rape can reinforce views that both deny and excuse male sexual violence against women (Franiuk et al 2008:798; Jimenez & Abreu 2003:252). It is important to note that writers and journalists might not use rape myths to purposefully support systems of power, nor do they necessarily use them for malicious reasons; however, the use of rape myths tend to be the default reaction of many when discussing or reporting on rape (Franiuk et al 2008:790).

The use of, and belief in, rape myths in society has harsh consequences for victims of rape. Rape myths allow for the maintenance of sexual violence in society because they make people less likely to label a rape as such even when it fits in with the legal definition of rape (Franiuk et al 2008:790-791). Rape myths in the media allow for the perpetuation of patriarchy because they reinforce rape myths in individuals who already hold them while simultaneously teaching rape myths to those who do not (Franiuk et al 2008:798).

Rape Myths Pertaining to the Victim

A significant portion of the research on rape myths focuses on how the media portrays female rape victims. This is important because social perceptions about women are created, reproduced, altered and publicized in the media (Hirsch 1994: 1027). Many theorists argue that there is a distorted view of women in the media (Carll 1999:1602; Hirsch 1994:1027). These distortions often depict female rape victims as ‘virgins’, ‘fallen angels’ or ‘whores’ (Benedict 1992; Hirsch 1994: 1029). These categorizations suggest that the innocence of the victim is assumed, but she must repeatedly defend this innocence in order to avoid being labelled the ‘whore’, in other words the girl that brought on a sexual assault through her behaviour, dress, sexual past or profession (Benedict 1992; Franiuk et al 2008:791; Hirsch 1994:1029; Kahlor & Morrison 2007:730; Korn & Efrat 2004:1059; Larsen and Long 1988:299; Vetten 1998:1; Worthington 2008: 344). Media coverage also suggests that women should avoid dressing in a certain way, having a promiscuous sexual past and being a prostitute if they want to avoid rape. When a woman does not avoid these things she is often depicted as the ‘whore’ (Benedict 1992). This suggests that she is to blame for the rape and serves to warn other women against these types of behaviours. At times, these behaviours are used to accuse the victim of lying about the rape (Patton & Snyder-Yuly

2007:877). A woman who has been a prostitute, has had sex with a number of men in her lifetime, or dresses in a certain way is seen as someone who would always consent to sex and is therefore incapable of being raped (Norton & Grant 2008:276). Thus, when the 'whore' says she has been raped, she must be lying. Even though it has been estimated that only about 2% of rape allegations are false, many rape myths help perpetuate the idea that women lie about being raped (Lonsway & Fitzgerald 1994).

A woman who avoids behaviours such as those described above is portrayed as the 'responsible woman' and when such a woman is raped, she is then typically depicted as a 'fallen angel'. The 'responsible woman' is extremely careful and takes all of the correct precautions in order to avoid rape, such as not walking alone at night, not being intoxicated around strangers, not trusting strange men, and not engaging in the other behaviours mentioned above (Berrington & Jones 2002:309). If a woman was not cautious or was going against even one of the precautions, such as walking alone at night, she is often portrayed as somewhat responsible for the rape or 'asking for it' even if she is not completely labelled the 'whore'.

The idea of the virgin/whore categorization is quite prevalent in studies of sexual assault and rape in the media. Research acknowledges that these two stereotypical categorizations of women appeal to audiences and help sell news media (Hirsch 1994: 1031). These labels are prevalent in reports of rape in the media and they often have serious consequences for women who are raped. Rape myths, once internalized by the public, tend to demoralize victims as well as shift the blame from the perpetrator to the victim (Kahlor & Morrison 2007:730). Rape survivors themselves often internalize these rape myths, and this may make them think that they are in some way responsible for what happened to them, or make them fearful of reporting rape because they think that others will either blame them for what happened or will not believe them at all (Vetten 1998:2).

Even when the presentation of women does not conform to the stereotypical virgin/whore dichotomy, some argue that other ways in which the media reports on rape also reinforce patriarchy (Bufkin & Eschholz 2000:1321; Meyers 1994:52). An example of this is when news articles underreport or do not report the use of self-defence by the victim (Bufkin & Eschholz 2000:1325). The rape victim may be portrayed as weak, powerless and completely subject to her attacker. Often a male/female dichotomy is evident where men are portrayed as violent, aggressive and unable to control their lust, while females are demonstrated as sexually passive, vulnerable and weak (Burr 2001:103; Hirsch 1024). This can be done by mentioning the weapons or forceful actions used by the attacker and by excluding details about the self-defence measures taken by the victim (Bufkin & Eschholz 2000:1325). Berrington & Jones (2002:312) suggest that such news reports reinforce patriarchy

by encouraging women to desire and seek out male protection which perpetuates their subordination.

Rape Myths Pertaining to the Perpetrator

Media coverage of rape not only stereotypes rape victims but also creates stereotypes about the perpetrators of rape. These stereotypes often relate to the race, gender and class background of the perpetrator (Bufkin & Schholz 2000:1325; Hirsch 1994:1038; Moffett 2006). Some studies in the United States and South Africa have shown that media portrayals of rape often suggest that rapists are typically non-white male members of the lower class (Bufkin & Schholz 2000:1325; Moffett 2006; Reddy & Potgieter 2006). Often black perpetrators of crime are overrepresented in the media, suggesting that black people are 'typical criminals' (Dorfman & Schiraldi 2001:13). A rape case involving a black perpetrator and a white victim is often presented as being 'typical' (Franiuk et al 2008:792; Patton & Snyder-Yuly 2007:862; South & Felson 1990; Varelas & Foley 1998:393), even though research shows that black men are not more likely to rape white women over black women, and that white women are not more likely to be raped by a black man over a white man (South & Felson 1990). The use of these stereotypes in media reports of rape supports the hierarchies of race and gender in society (Hirsch 1994:1031).

Dorfman and Schiraldi (2001) examined several studies on media portrayals and reports of crime and found that the reports of crime in the media are not a reflection of the rate of crime. They also found that violent crimes and crimes committed by certain racial groups are reported on more often than other crimes. In a study conducted on U.S. media coverage it was found that when black men are portrayed in the media they are usually associated with crime, violence and gangs (Patton & Snyder-Yuly 2007: 872).

One way in which these stereotypes are portrayed in the media is through the use of photographs in articles about rape. Photographs help give the reader a set of assumptions about the news report and the people in it, helping readers take sides (Los & Chamard 1997:309). This becomes even more important for rape cases because photographs are not usually used for rape articles. For example, in the US coverage of rapes that occurred at a Kenyan boarding school, two photos were shown; one of girls huddling together and one of boys yelling and shouting (Hirsch 1994:1035). These photos reflected the stereotype that women are helpless and also guided the reader to side with the female victims rather than the boys who were portrayed as barbaric. The photographs also demonstrated American stereotypes about Africa and to some extent about black people in general, as the boys were blamed outright for raping the girls at the school, suggesting that African boys are barbaric

and therefore capable of being rapists. Thus, this article portrayed very stereotypical ideas about rape though not explicitly in words, making it harder to detect.

Patriarchal, racial and other existing power structures can help explain the existence of stereotypical representations of individuals in the media with respect to rape coverage because the media is often used to perpetuate these structures (Hirsch 1994:1038).

Discussions and reports of rape often make reference to race and class, while downplaying gender (Moffett 2006:135). While these things may not be done intentionally by the producers of media, gender and racial stereotypes are often entrenched in society and reporters internalize and sustain these stereotypes.

Often news reports reinforce patriarchy through de-emphasising the role of the rapist. This is usually done when people perceive the rapist as ‘not the type that would rape’ (Franiuk et al 2008:791). This perception can be created through ‘humanizing’ the perpetrator by giving details about his life that suggest that he is a good person (Flanders 1991). For example, if the perpetrator is a good student or a good friend, this will be reported, thus drawing attention away from the alleged rape. Furthermore, the perpetrator can be de-emphasised in two other ways: through creating a linguistic separation between the perpetrator and the crime, and by attributing blame for the rape on something or someone other than the perpetrator (Berrington & Jones 2002:309-313; Bohner 2001; Hirsch 1994; Worthington 2008). Often statistics given in articles and in reports about rape use language which renders rapists invisible thereby de-emphasising the role of the perpetrator in the crime as well as ignoring the role of the patriarchal power system in creating certain perceptions about rape (Berrington & Jones 2002:308). For example, a statistic might say ‘one in three South African women will be raped in her lifetime’ rather than saying ‘one in three South African women will be raped by a man in her lifetime’. It can be seen that the latter phrasing does not separate men from rape, whereas the first phrasing de-emphasises the role of the perpetrator in the rape. Another example of this is shown through a study that focuses on the rapes and murders that occurred at a Kenyan boarding school in the 1990s (Hirsch 1994). Hirsch (1994) states that the Kenyan newspapers used language that did not directly state that the perpetrators had hurt, raped, or beaten the victims, but rather used indirect language stating that the ‘boys followed the girls’, or that ‘rape occurred’. Using the passive voice is a linguistic tool that allows for the separation between the rape and the rapist. This separation has the effect of shifting blame away from the perpetrator (Bohner 2001:516). These examples demonstrate the way that the media can shift focus away from the perpetrator, perhaps even reinforcing another common rape myth that the rape is somehow the fault of the victim.

The role of the perpetrators is also de-emphasised by placing blame on other factors, such as the way in which authorities respond to the rape, or the use of alcohol or drugs prior

to the rape. Worthington (2008) discusses how rapes on a college campus in the United States received attention in a news program because of the college administration's failure to properly deal with these rapes. The news program attempted to give a voice to the rape victims as well as to point to shortcomings relating to the college that had hindered proper punishment of the perpetrators. Worthington (2008) suggests that while this was a valiant attempt at trying to ensure that these rape victims received the attention they deserved, it diminished the responsibility of the rapists in the act through focusing on the faults of the college administration. She also states that this not only de-emphasises the role of the rapists in the crime, but also fails to address the importance of patriarchal structures involved in the college administration (Worthington 2008:364). In Hirsch's (1994) study on the rapes that occurred in Kenya, she argues that Kenyan newspapers stated that the education system in Kenya was leaving students frustrated and angry, and that the rapes occurred within this context. Thus the education system in the country was a source of blame for the rapes at the school, which again distances the boys who committed the rapes from the discussion.

Berrington & Jones (2002:313) state that when drugs or alcohol are present in a rape case, the media tends to focus on the role of the substance rather than the rapist. Substances are often discussed because they can impair the judgment of both the victim and the perpetrator of the rape, clouding the issue of consent. However, the focus on alcohol and drugs rather than the rapist de-emphasises the role of the rapist in the rape and even places blame on the victim (Van Der Bijl & Rumney 2009:422). Often, one of the only details included in the media about the victim is that she was intoxicated at the time of the rape (Flanders 1991). Not giving details about the victim serves to dehumanize her, while including the fact that the victim was intoxicated places blame on her (Flanders 1991).

Studies in the USA indicate that only about 25% of rape cases occur between strangers, meaning that most rape incidents occur between individuals who know one another (Varelas & Foley 1998:392). Rape statistics in South Africa also suggest that women are raped more often by men they know rather than men who are strangers to them (Hirschowitz et al 2000:2). In South Africa in 1998, only 24.4% of women who had been raped reported that they were raped by a stranger, while 34.6% reported that they were raped by a relative or a man they had been intimate with (Hirschowitz et al 2002:2). An additional 22.3% reported that they were raped by a male acquaintance (Hirschowitz et al 2000:2). Despite the fact that most rapes are acquaintance or date rapes, the way in which rape is covered in the media often suggests that most rapists are strangers to their victims (Los & Chamard 1997:309; Reddy & Potgieter 2006:514; Worthington 2008: 362). This myth suggests that women in society need only fear strangers when it comes to the issue of rape. Consequently it also suggests that women can trust the men they know and do not have to be suspicious of male acquaintances, neighbours, friends, lovers, ex-lovers, husbands etc. This suggests that date and acquaintance

rape are not prevalent in society and also falsely suggests that rape and sexual assault are rare in society as they are the result of an uncommon circumstance where a stranger is able to attack an individual (Worthington 2008:362). This rape myth is further perpetuated by the disproportionate media coverage of rapes that occur due to a woman being slipped a drug without her knowing it (Berrington & Jones 2002:307). Focusing on rapes that occur due to men drugging women without their knowledge further distorts the perception of what constitutes a 'normal rape'. This makes women fear only strangers that they meet in bars or clubs, and ignores the fact that most rapes occur between men and women that know one another. This rape myth often leads women to believe that rape perpetrated by a friend or a boyfriend may not be rape at all. Thus, many date or acquaintance rapes go unreported. Since this rape myth is commonly accepted in society, the victim of stranger rape is more likely to be believed than a victim of acquaintance rape, and the victim of acquaintance rape is often questioned, further perpetuating this myth and its consequences (Franiuk et al 2008:791).

'Atypical' Cases

Given that only a small proportion of rape cases are reported in the media and that the media often presents these cases in ways that create and sustain certain stereotypes, it is important to explore the filters through which the media chooses which cases to report and how it chooses to represent them (Soothill et al 1990:227). Sacco (1995:144) argues that there is 'dramatic value' in portraying crime stories, and that this value is increased when the perpetrator is 'a celebrity, when the incident is of a very serious nature, or when the circumstances of the offense are atypical'. Events that are seen as 'rare' or 'atypical' are seen as more shocking, and it is believed that more shocking stories will sell more newspapers (Berrington & Jones 2002:312). Thus, newspapers are inclined to cover what they believe their readers will see as atypical rapes or what they themselves perceive as atypical rapes (Bufkin and Eschholz 2000:1325; Franiuk et al 2008:792). By presenting some cases as atypical, the media perpetuates stereotypes about who is a 'typical' rapist or rape victim.

Cases that are perceived as atypical might receive coverage in different ways than cases that fit into stereotypical perceptions. This differential coverage leads to the media presenting certain rapes as 'normal' and others as 'atypical'. 'Atypical' cases of rape may shift based on a particular society's perceptions of rape victims, perpetrators and situations. Often cases are considered 'atypical' if they do not converge with the rape myths outlined above. For example, in the United States a white woman was assaulted while jogging in Central Park in 1989. She was brutally raped and beaten and her rape case was highly publicized in the media (Crenshaw 1995:368). Her story also prompted public outcry in the form of sympathy for the victim as well as demands for justice. Crenshaw (1995:368) notes

that there were twenty-eight other cases of rape reported in the city in the same week as the Central Park case. Many of these rape cases were just as brutal as the Central Park case, but they received little or no coverage in the media. Most of the victims in these cases were black (Crenshaw 1995:368). Even when the level of brutality was the same, the rapes of the black women did not receive similar coverage in the media to the Central Park case. Crenshaw (1995:368) suggests that the differential coverage of the 1989 rapes in New York demonstrates that black victims are not considered as important as white victims. This differential coverage might also suggest that white victims are seen as more 'newsworthy' (Patton & Snyder-Yuly 2007:875).

Rape Coverage in South Africa

There is not a large body of literature on rape in the South African media, making such studies necessary and important. In one of the few articles focusing on South African media coverage of rape, Vetten (1998:1) suggests that the media coverage of rape in the country is contradictory. She argues that newspapers in the country report on rapes differently and that the same rape can be covered differently in different newspapers. For example, the newspaper reports on the rape of Nombonisa Gasa on Robben Island varied from newspaper to newspaper (Vetten 1998:1). While some newspapers condemned the victim as a liar, others portrayed her as a courageous survivor. This could suggest that while some coverage of rape in South Africa perpetuates stereotypes about rape, other coverage challenges rape myths.

Moffett (2006) suggests that it is important to examine South Africa's apartheid history and its impact on rape coverage. As previously discussed, during apartheid many forms of sexual violence were not considered to be criminal offences, particularly those that involved incidents within the home (Maitse 1998:55). While the law in South Africa has been revised to include forced sex between a husband and wife in its definition of rape, spousal rape is something still not understood or recognized by many South Africans (Bourton et al 2004:126). In fact, Vetten (1998:1) argues that rape between acquaintances is often reported on in a way that questions the victim and speculates about whether or not the rape actually occurred. This has the negative effect of framing the victim as dishonest and presenting the perpetrator as the actual victim. Vetten (1998:1) states that this can discourage South African women from reporting acquaintance rape to the police.

Apartheid dictated a strict hierarchal society, and these views toward sexual violence reinforce that hierarchy. As such, South Africa's particular history relating to racism and segregation continues to affect the way in which rape is reported on today. Moffett (2006:135) argues that South Africans often assume that rapists are black men due to the fact that people have internalized apartheid narratives suggesting that this is the case. More

generally, Lemanski (2004:101) suggests that the fear of crime in South Africa perpetuates social divisions reminiscent of apartheid. Lemanski (2004:102) argues that the increased media coverage of crime encourages the fear of crime which in turn promotes social division along racial lines. When the media reports on crime, including rape, in particular ways, individuals fear particular people. With regards to rape, South African media coverage may make white women fear black men.

Other studies on rape coverage in South Africa focus on the Jacob Zuma rape trial. Reddy and Potgieter (2006:512) argue that the way in which the trial was covered reflected and contributed to the perpetuation of rape myths and gender inequality. One common rape myth is that rapists tend to be strangers to their victims. Reddy and Potgieter (2006:513) suggest that when this is not the case, rape trials and the media coverage of rape trials focus on the issue of consent. This means that the media, the courtroom, and the people following the case focus on the sexuality and sexual history of the female. During the court proceedings, the complainant, Khwezi's, sexual history became a public matter and was openly discussed by legal professionals, journalists and the general public. In contrast, Zuma's sexual history was hardly discussed or analysed throughout the trial (Reddy and Potgieter 2006:515). The fact that Khwezi's sexual history was discussed publically and at length might have been what led Zuma supporters to label her a 'whore' and a 'bitch'. Reddy and Potgieter (2006:513) argue that by focusing on portraying Zuma and Khwezi in a certain way rather than properly and fairly contextualizing the facts of the case, the media can also shape the way that the public views rape. Overall, Reddy and Potgieter (2006:519-520) argue that gender inequality is entrenched in discourses about rape in South Africa and that this encourages people to blame victims of rape for the crime and may result in the legal system working against victims of rape.

The Effects of Rape Coverage

Rape coverage in the media has many effects in society. It often shapes the way in which people think about rape, as well as how they perceive rape victims, rapists, and those accused of rape. These perceptions often have serious consequences for perpetrators and victims of rape alike.

Depending on how it reports on rape, the media is capable of trivializing rape and sexual violence towards women, helping sustain patriarchy through particular portrayals of rape, or, alternatively, increasing awareness about the issue of rape (Vetten 1998:1). Media reports that reinforce patriarchy by placing blame on the victim or by removing blame from the perpetrator, or that trivialize sexual violence towards women make women wary of reporting rape. If a woman thinks that she will not be believed or that she will be blamed for a

rape she may not want to report it, perhaps even blaming herself for the crime. On the other hand, media portrayals of rape that bring about awareness of the issue of rape and do not blame rape victims might encourage women to report incidents of rape. Thus, it is argued that media reports which reinforce patriarchal structures or trivializes sexual violence towards women ought to be challenged while media reports which increase awareness about the issue of rape ought to be encouraged (Vetten 1998:2).

Media portrayals of rape can also increase the fear of certain individuals in society (Dorfman & Schiraldi 2001:5). Soler & Garry (2009:3) argue that the disproportionate representation of black people in crime reports can have a large effect on the public's attitudes and perceptions of race and crime. Thus, if the media perpetuates the stereotype that most rapists are black men, then individuals may fear black men more than white men.

Another issue in rape coverage is anonymity. McBride (2002:9) argues that since rape is different from other crimes because it has a plethora of associated stigmas, many will not report a rape if they know their names will appear in the media. In addressing these concerns, England's Sexual Offences Act of 1976 aimed to limit details about rape cases in the media, including anonymity of both the victim and the non-convicted perpetrator (Soothill et al 1990:213). However, as a result many rape victims have felt that their voice has been lost from their stories, as they are not interviewed nor asked to report on the incident themselves due to the issue of anonymity (McBride 2002:10). Anonymity is a complicated issue when reporting on rape cases and it is important when considering media reports on rape.

It has also been shown that stereotypes portrayed in the media may become entrenched in the judicial system of a society (Carll 2003:1601; Landwehr et al 2002:668). Rape myths and rape coverage can have an impact on the way in which courts respond to rape. When judges and jurors are asked to examine and resolve rape cases they may rely on media portrayals of rape to do so, especially if they are not educated on the topic of rape (Bufkin & Eschholz 2000:1338). Thus, stereotypes surrounding rape may have legal consequences for both victims and alleged perpetrators.

Some studies have analysed media coverage of rape through examining coverage of rape trials. Through these studies it has been shown that judges often bring up rape myths in trials (Carll 2003:1605) Judges are not immune from the influence of the media and social perceptions of rape as their rulings often reflect personal biases (Van der Bijl & Rumney 2009:427). Many judges and jurors base their decision on the sexual past of the victim, or the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, even though these factors are not in the legal definitions of rape (Varelas & Foley 1998:393). These social perceptions are often influenced by the media and by others in society (Van der Bijl & Rumney 2009:4; Varelas & Foley 1998:393). The underlying racial and gender stereotypes about rape that are reflected in the media and internalized by the public have negative consequences for individuals in

society in general and especially when these views become a part of the legal process. Since rulings in trials often converge with rape myths presented in the media, women are often discouraged from reporting or pressing charges for rape (Carll 2003:1605).

In the courtroom, the use of rape myths by judges and jurors often leads to fewer rape convictions (Franiuk et al 2008:791). Bohner et al (1998) suggest that there is a correlation between a man's belief in rape myths and his likelihood to commit rape, and that this correlation becomes stronger if there are no potential repercussions. Due to the use of rape myths in the criminal justice system, some rapists are protected. This may encourage sexual violence due to the perception that perpetrators of rape will be less likely to face criminal charges (Franiuk et al 2008:791). Similarly, Malamuth and Check (1980) state that the acceptance of rape myths may bring about and even encourage rape.

The use of rape myths in the media deserves scrutiny because these myths reflect the distribution of power and the nature of power relations in everyday life. It is important to understand the underlying perceptions that guide media coverage, as these views are often internalized in society, reflected in public policy and entrenched in the legal system of a particular society.

Chapter Three: Results and Analysis

Introduction

This chapter examines rape articles in *Grocott's Mail* starting from October 14th 2008 and ending on October 29th 2009. There were 35 articles on the rape of women by men in *Grocott's Mail* during this time period. Of these, 16 reported and described an incident in which a woman was raped,⁴ 15 articles described and reported on legal proceedings of a rape case, three articles discussed rape activism and one article focused on the community's reaction to a rape. One of the articles describing legal proceedings covered a rape and murder that had occurred, and the rape was not the focus of the article. The legal proceedings articles often give updates on rape cases in court, discussing testimonies given in the court as well as judge's rulings. These articles sometimes follow rape cases that first appeared in rape incident articles. There were also three rape activism articles that will not be discussed in detail in this thesis. This thesis will focus on the rape incident articles because they report on the actual rape and the events surrounding the rape rather than on the trial. Also, the articles covering the rape court cases often cover the same rape incidents. For example, six out of the 15 court case articles follow the court case of a rape involving a paedophile. The rape incident articles do not repeat incidents of rape; none of these incidents were reported on in more than one article.

Rape myths are often perpetuated due to the fact that they are so ingrained in society. Journalists often use rape myths either because they believe the use of such myths will appeal to the public or because they themselves have internalized them. While journalists may not intentionally use rape myths in order to sustain gender and racial stereotypes, their use of these rape myths ultimately has the effect of perpetuating gender inequalities and patriarchy. Additionally, readers may interpret certain articles in ways that were not intended by the journalists. Though the specific and stereotypical way in which many journalists report on rape may be unintentional, the continued use of rape myths in these ways remains highly problematic. Ultimately, the use of rape myths in rape articles creates and sustains certain perceptions about rape in society which negatively affects rape victims.

This thesis analyses rape articles appearing in *Grocott's Mail* to see to what extent they contain the kinds of rape myths identified in other studies of media coverage of rape. While not every article on rape in *Grocott's Mail* contained rape myths, most did. This thesis seeks to expose and explore the presence of such rape myths. The following analysis is

⁴ There were two more rape incident articles in this time period that are not included in this thesis because the victims of these rapes were males. It is important to note that *Grocott's Mail* does include reports when men are victims of rape even though this was not the focus of this thesis.

organised around five themes that emerged in the articles: de-emphasis of the perpetrator, victim blaming, gender stereotyping, the perception of an atypical case, and the challenging of a rape myth.

De-emphasis of the Perpetrator

As discussed in the previous chapter, newspaper articles often reinforce patriarchy through de-emphasising the role of the rapist. By de-emphasising the role of the rapist, the perpetrator's responsibility for the rape is obscured. This analysis suggests that the way in which rape is reported in *Grocott's Mail* provides several examples of media coverage that obscures the role of the perpetrator thereby diminishing the readers' sense of his culpability.

De-emphasis through Word Choice

Perpetrators can be de-emphasised through the use of certain words as well as through the exclusion of certain words. One article which de-emphasised the perpetrator is an article entitled 'Two Women Raped on Saturday'⁵ which appears in the December 23rd 2008 edition of *Grocott's Mail*. This article is two paragraphs long and covers two unrelated rape incidents. The first paragraph covers one rape incident and the second paragraph discusses the other. The second paragraph states:

In another incident, a 20 year old woman who had attended a traditional ceremony at Phumlani Location "and lost track of time", woke up to find herself naked with a man unknown to her lying next to her in her house. Coetzer said "She found that she had suffered bruises and other marks".

This paragraph discusses a rape, yet there is no mention of the word 'rape' at all. The word 'rape' is mentioned in the headline, but not when describing this rape incident. This downplays the severity of what occurred as well as makes the reader question the victim. Details are given about the victim, but not about the perpetrator, nor about the rape incident. Instead of saying that she 'woke up to find herself naked with a man unknown to her lying next to her in her house' it could have stated that 'she woke up and realized that a man had raped her'. This sentence would have demonstrated that there was a rape and a rapist in this incident. This article de-emphasises the perpetrator by not including him in the report as well as by not using the word 'rape'. The article mentions the fact that the girl 'lost track of time' and implies that she did not really know what had happened to her. This coupled with the fact

⁵ See Appendix #4 for full article.

that the word rape is missing from the article makes the reader question whether or not this was a rape.

Similarly, the article titled ‘Women Raped in Joza’⁶ in the February 24th 2009 edition of *Grocott’s Mail* downplays the severity of the rapes that occurred. This article is seven sentences long. It covers multiple rapes as it describes an attack in which five men raped two women. Even though the article is reporting on multiple rapes, it treats these rapes as if they were one event and one rape. The article states that ‘Inspector Milanda Coetzer said that the incident took place at about 3am’. Here the rapes are referred to as ‘the incident’ and are treated as one rape. Similarly, the article also states ‘After the rape the suspects ran away’. Again, these rapes are described as one rape and one event, even though there were two women who were raped and there were five male rapists. Downplaying the severity of the situation only serves to make the perpetrators of rape appear less culpable. If these rapes were treated as multiple incidents, or spoken about as if they were multiple rapes, the severity of the situation would be more clearly demonstrated.

An article called ‘Sexual Assault’⁷ which appears in the October 20th 2009 edition of *Grocott’s Mail* also de-emphasises the role of the perpetrator. This article is four sentences long and describes an incident of acquaintance rape. The first line of the article states ‘A 38-year old woman laid a rape charge on Saturday’. This particular phrasing removes the perpetrator from the situation completely and focuses solely on the fact that a woman ‘laid a rape charge’. This phrasing takes focus away from the actions done to the rape victim and focuses on what she has done to the perpetrator. The central action being reported was not that a man raped a woman but that a woman accused someone of rape. Franiuk et al (2008:797) suggests that using terms such as ‘accuser’ or ‘the accused’ demonstrates a lack of sympathy for the rape victim. The phrasing ‘laid a rape charge’ suggests that she accused someone of rape, rather than that she was actually raped.

De-emphasis through the Use of the Passive Voice

The rapist can be de-emphasised in an article through the use of the passive voice. The passive voice serves to remove the actor from the action, separating the rapist from the rape. This places both the rapist and the rapist’s responsibility for the rape in the background. Thirteen out of the sixteen articles covering rape incidents used the passive voice when discussing and describing rape. Most of these articles used the passive voice in the headline or in first sentence of the article, meaning that these articles started off by de-emphasising the role of the perpetrator.

⁶ See Appendix #7 for full article.

⁷ See Appendix #14 for full article.

An article titled ‘Drunken Girl Raped’⁸ uses the passive voice in both the headline and throughout the article when discussing the rape. This article appears in the August 14th 2009 edition of *Grocott’s Mail* and is five sentences long. The first sentence states that ‘A 15 year old girl was raped in Extension 9 this past weekend’. Since the rapist is not present in this sentence, the rape is seen as something that just happened to the victim. In fact, the rapist is not mentioned in the same sentence as the rape at all. It is stated that ‘she and her friends had gone to one of the taverns looking for her brother when she was grabbed by a man who took her to Extension 9’. Thus, grabbing is the only action directly connected to the rapist in this article. Further, the active voice is used to describe other details in the article, such as that the girl ‘had been to several taverns before she was raped’. Thus, the active voice is not avoided altogether, but used only to describe certain actions, and not others, demonstrating how it can be used to de-emphasise the perpetrator. Furthermore, rather than focusing on the youth of the 15 year old victim or her victimization in general, this article is centred around the fact that she had been drinking and going to taverns.⁹

The article titled ‘Raped for a Cellphone’¹⁰ also uses the passive voice to de-emphasise the perpetrator. This article appears in the October 2nd 2009 edition of *Grocott’s Mail* and is six sentences long. The headline and the first sentence use the passive voice to describe the rape. The article states:

A woman was assaulted and raped near Samuel Ntsika Junior High School on Saturday. It is alleged that she was on her way home from a tavern when she was approached by an unknown male suspect who demanded that she hand over her cellphone. According to a police report the suspect assaulted the complainant who, while she was fighting back lost her balance and fell to the ground. The suspect then took advantage and raped her. As she screamed for help, the suspect took out a knife and stabbed her several times in her arm and in her chest. No arrests were made and the case is still under investigation.

The first sentence uses the passive voice and does not mention the fact that the victim was raped by a man. This use of the passive voice suggests that rape just happened to the victim. The rapist is removed both from the sentence and from the rape itself, de-emphasising his role in the sexual crime and avoiding placing blame on him directly. The active voice is used when describing the assault, demonstrating that responsibility for the crime is only obscured when discussing rape. Furthermore, when the active voice is used to describe the rape, it first states that ‘the suspect then took advantage’. This may suggest that it was not the perpetrator’s intention to rape the victim, but that he simply ‘took advantage’ of the fact that she ‘lost her balance and fell to the ground’. The headline corroborates this, as ‘Raped for a

⁸ See Appendix #12 for full article.

⁹ This will be discussed in more detail in the ‘Alcohol’ section.

¹⁰ The full article appears in the text but can also be found in Appendix #13.

Cellphone' suggests that this woman was raped because she would not relinquish her cellphone when all the rapist intended to do was to steal.

The Use of Labels

When the labels 'victim' or 'survivor' are not used for the victims of rape the role of the perpetrator can be de-emphasised and blame can be attributed to the victim. Fourteen out of the sixteen rape incident articles describe the rape victims as 'girls' or 'women'.¹¹ The term 'victim' is used once in one of the sixteen articles and the terms 'brave survivor' and 'victim' are each used once in another one of the sixteen articles when describing the rape victims. Other labels such as 'complainant', 'learner' and 'school-girl' are present in the articles, however the majority of the rape victims are described only as 'women' or 'girls'. Avoiding the label of 'victim' can demonstrate a lack of sympathy for the rape victim as well as express doubt that the woman was in fact a victim of rape (Franiuk et al 2008:797). When the label 'victim' is not used to describe a rape victim and the label perpetrator or rapist is not used to describe the rapist in the same article, the role of the perpetrator is further de-emphasised. If men are not labelled rapists it can be seen as an expression of sympathy for the perpetrator. If women are not labelled victims this can be seen as an expression of doubt and lack of sympathy for the victim. These two things together serve to shift sympathy from the victim to the perpetrator as well as shift focus away from the perpetrator.

The fact that the label 'victim' is not used in the rape incident articles is even more important when articles describing other crimes do use the term 'victim'. Often, victims of rape are called 'women' or 'girls' but victims of robbery are referred to as 'victims'. One example of this can be seen in the December 23rd 2008 edition of *Grocott's Mail*. There is an article covering two unrelated rape incidents titled 'Two Women Raped on Saturday',¹² and an article covering a robbery titled 'Robbery Concerns Police'.¹³ These articles are both located in the 'News in Brief' section and are about the same length. They are also written by the same journalist and the article covering the rapes is located directly above the article covering the robbery. In the article about the two rapes, the label 'woman' is used four times in total and the women are referred to as 'she' throughout the rest of the article. At no point are the women referred to as 'victims'. In contrast, in the article covering the robbery, the label 'victim' is used. Another example of this appears in the October 28th 2008 edition of *Grocott's Mail*. There are three articles¹⁴ in the 'News in Brief' section all written by the

¹¹ Since some articles cover more than one rape it is important to note that sixteen rape reports, in fourteen articles, used the term 'woman' or 'girl' to describe the rape victim.

¹² See Appendix #4 for full article.

¹³ See Appendix #19 for full article.

¹⁴ See Appendix #2, Appendix # 17, and Appendix #18 for full articles.

same journalist.¹⁵ These articles are about a stabbing, a mugging and a rape. The article about the stabbing states that ‘The culprit, a 16 year old learner, stabbed the victim in the upper chest and was later identified and arrested on a charge of attempted murder. The victim was rushed to Settlers Hospital’. This article used the term ‘victim’ twice when describing the victim of the stabbing. The article about the mugging states ‘One victim broke a glass he was carrying in an attempt to frighten them off, but this failed. The robbers grabbed the other victim’s handbag and ran away’. This article also uses the word ‘victim’ twice when describing victims of the mugging. However, in the last article called ‘Woman Raped Over Weekend’¹⁶ the woman who was raped is only described as a woman, never a victim. For example, this article states ‘A 20 year old woman was raped at 2am on Sunday morning. The woman, who was on her way home from Mandisa’s Tavern in Fingo Village was confronted by a man with a knife’. It seems from these examples that, within *Grocott’s Mail*, the term ‘victim’ is used more often in reference to theft and assault and less often in reference to incidents of rape.

However, in contrast, one of the rape articles does use the term ‘victim’ and also ‘brave survivor’ to describe the alleged rape victim. This article is called ‘O-Week Aftermath’¹⁷ and it appears in the February 17th edition of *Grocott’s Mail*. This article is two pages long and covers a rape incident that occurred at a local bar and restaurant, the Rat and Parrot. ‘O-Week Aftermath’ states that ‘The brave survivor managed to go to Rhodes Campus Protection Unit where she reported the incident and was assisted by the staff who called the police’.¹⁸ The label of ‘brave survivor’ suggests that she had suffered a traumatic experience, and also demonstrates sympathy for her. This is particularly interesting in light of the fact that the rape victims in the other articles are not even described as victims, let alone described as ‘brave survivors’. For example, in the same February 17th edition of *Grocott’s Mail*, there is an article that describes the rape of a six year old girl.¹⁹ In this article, the six year old victim is never labelled a victim and is only referred to as ‘the girl’. This suggests that it is the context of these rapes that explains why the labels are used or not used in these particular ways. All of the rapes in which the victim is not described as a victim occurred in the township²⁰ and the incident at the Rat and Parrot occurred in a pub that is not located in the township, meaning that the ‘victim’ is white and the ‘girls’ and ‘women’ are all black.

¹⁵ While no author is listed for all three articles, one journalist usually writes all of the ‘News in Brief’ articles per edition.

¹⁶ See Appendix #2 for full article.

¹⁷ See Appendix #5 for full article.

¹⁸ The actual quote, states ‘who called then police’ which is probably a grammatical or typographical error.

¹⁹ This article is titled ‘Six Year Old Girl Raped’ and the full article can be found in Appendix #6.

²⁰ In South Africa, ‘township’ refers to relatively underdeveloped areas that are located on the periphery of most towns and cities. During apartheid, black urban dwellers were forced to live in these townships and today the townships residents are still almost exclusively black.

This coverage in *Grocott's Mail* could be seen to suggest that the newspaper assumes that rape is normal when involving black people in the township and that it is not normal when involving white people outside of the township. This will be analysed further in the 'Atypical Case' section.

Similarly, the perpetrator can be de-emphasised and blame can be placed on the victim when the words 'perpetrator' or 'rapist' are not used to describe the rapist in an article. In the sixteen articles, eleven alleged rapists are only called 'men' or 'boys' in the report of the rape, five alleged rapists are referred to as 'suspects', two are called 'perpetrators', one is labelled 'the accused', one is labelled 'the assailant' and one is called a 'rapist'. There are more labels than articles because some articles cover multiple rape incidents and some alleged rapists are called both a 'suspect' and a 'perpetrator' in the same article.²¹ These specific labels are important in creating a certain idea concerning the rape. When the labels 'rapist' or 'perpetrator' are not used, doubt as to whether or not a rape occurred may be created. The terms 'alleged rapist' and 'alleged perpetrator' can be used in articles without potential legal repercussions, yet these terms were sometimes avoided in favour of 'men' or 'boys'.

Most of the articles simply label the alleged rapist as 'the man'. One example is the article titled 'Woman Raped over Weekend'.²² This article is one paragraph long and appears in the 'News in Brief' section of the October 28th 2008 edition of *Grocott's Mail*. This article is typical of how the rapist is discussed and labelled in rape incident articles. It states:

A 20 year old woman was raped at 2am on Sunday morning. The woman, who was on her way home from Mandisa's Tavern in Fingo Village, was confronted by a man with a knife. The man forced her to his house in Hlalani location where he raped her twice.

This article demonstrates that the word 'man' was used where the word 'rapist' or 'perpetrator' could have been used. When the labels 'perpetrator' or 'rapist' are avoided, attention is taken away from the role of the rapist in the rape.

It is important to examine the instances in which the perpetrator is indeed labelled as a rapist or a perpetrator. One of these instances is in an article titled 'Sexual Assault in Joza School'²³ that appears in the March 20th 2009 edition of *Grocott's Mail*. While this article reports on rape incidents for the first time, it reports on the incidents after the perpetrator was arrested and had appeared in court, perhaps leading to the journalist's use of the label 'perpetrator'. Also, there are two other articles regarding these same rape incidents. One

²¹ It is important to note that there were 11 articles in which the perpetrator is only referred to as a 'man' or a 'boy'.

²² See Appendix #2 for full article.

²³ See Appendix #8 for full article. Joza refers to one section in Grahamstown's 'township'.

article is called ‘Community Takes Action’.²⁴ The other is a legal proceedings article titled ‘Rape Accused in Court Today’²⁵ and it mentions that the rapes, which had occurred on the premises of a school, had shocked and upset the community. It states that:

The incident²⁶ shocked local parents and residents to an extent that an emergency meeting was called a few days later where parents, teachers, the police, and members of the community had a robust discussion about the school’s security among other things.

This quote and the article titled ‘Community Takes Action’ show that there was community uproar surrounding this rape, which might have affected the way in which the article covering the rapes was written. The community was angry about the rapes and sexual assaults that occurred at the school and the perpetrator had already been arrested and appeared in court. This might help explain why the label ‘perpetrator’ was used in this article and not in the others. Similarly, the other two articles that use the terms ‘rapist’ or ‘perpetrator’ cover rape incidents in which the perpetrator had been arrested.

Overall, this coverage in *Grocott’s Mail* may suggest that the journalists assume that rape is normal in the township and that it is not normal outside of the township. The use of general labels such as ‘man’ and ‘woman’ as opposed to the use of more specific labels such as ‘rapist’ or ‘perpetrator’ and ‘victim’ may also suggest that many men are capable of being rapists and many women are capable of being victims. When generic terms like ‘man’ and ‘woman’ are the only labels used in a rape article, it may suggest that rape is normal in that context – any man or woman may be affected. Furthermore, the absence of labels such as ‘victim’ and ‘perpetrator’ may suggest that there is a lack of sympathy for the rape victim as well as de-emphasise the perpetrator.

Victim Blaming

Victim blaming goes hand in hand with de-emphasising the perpetrator. The de-emphasis of the perpetrator in newspaper articles demonstrates a lack of sympathy for the victim. Additionally, when the perpetrator is not directly blamed individuals may associate blame with the victim. Therefore the use of specific labels not only de-emphasises the perpetrator but also contributes to victim blaming.

²⁴ See Appendix #20 for full article.

²⁵ See Appendix #21 for full article.

²⁶ As noted previously in the ‘De-emphasis through Word Choice’ Section it is problematic to refer to more than one rape as ‘the incident’ or ‘the rape’ as this downplays the severity of the crime.

Alcohol

Another way in which the victim is blamed is through focusing on the role of alcohol in the rape rather than focusing on the rapist (Berrington & Jones 2002:313). When rape articles focus on the fact that a victim was drinking, blame is shifted away from the perpetrator to the victim. Thus, when alcohol is mentioned, the perpetrator is de-emphasised and the victim is blamed in some way for her own rape as she is portrayed as having engaged in 'irresponsible' behaviour.

Eight out of the 16 rape incident articles mention alcohol, drinking, a tavern, or a bar when giving details regarding the rape. Most of the rape incident articles that discussed alcohol were one paragraph long, making the inclusion of the alcohol detail significant in discussing the rape coverage. Indeed, it seems that *Grocott's Mail* tends to focus on alcohol in its coverage of rape when the substance is present in a rape incident. To illustrate this, I will discuss three of the seven rape incident articles that mentioned alcohol or drinking.

One such article, titled 'Drunken Girl Raped',²⁷ has already been mentioned above. This article is short and will be included in full here; it states:

A 15-year old girl was raped in Extension 9 this past weekend. According to the police, the girl was intoxicated and had been to several taverns before she was raped. Police said that she and her friends had gone to one of the taverns, looking for her brother when she was grabbed by a man who took her to Extension 9. 'She was however not aware of what was happening to her for she was intoxicated, until the next morning when she woke up and found herself naked', stated the police report. No arrests have yet been made.

Three out of the five sentences in this article mention the fact that the rape victim was drunk or had been drinking. There are two instances where it is noted that the girl had been at a tavern and two instances where it is mentioned that the girl was intoxicated. Also, the fact that this girl was drunk was included in the title of the article. There are hardly any other details regarding the rape incident other than details about the victim's intoxication and her having been to several taverns. This article seems to report on the fact that the rape victim was drunk more than anything else. The focus on alcohol takes away from the fact that this girl was raped by a man. The perpetrator is further de-emphasised in this article as it is never directly stated that a man raped her. It is stated that 'the girl was intoxicated and had been to several taverns before she was raped' and that 'she and her friends had gone to one of the taverns, looking for her brother when she was grabbed by a man who took her to Extension 9' but

²⁷ The article appears in full in the text but can also be located in Appendix #12.

never explicitly that a 'man raped a 15 year old girl'. The word rape itself is only mentioned twice in the article, while words relating to drunkenness are mentioned four times. The only detail that the article seems to focus on is that the victim had been drinking. This coupled with the fact that there are no details about the rapist in the article further suggests that the rape was the victim's fault. This article basically suggests that the rape was a result of the girl being out late drinking at taverns. The focus on alcohol suggests that the victim was at least partially to blame because a careful and sensible woman (or in this case, young girl) would not be out late drinking.

The focus on alcohol in this article suggests to the reader that this girl is irresponsible and somehow to blame for what happened to her. This is done further by stating that 'she was not aware of what was happening to her for she was intoxicated'. Mentioning that the girl was 'not aware of what was happening to her' blurs the issue of consent and makes the reader question whether or not the girl had consented to sex the night before and did not remember in the morning and called it a rape. The focus on alcohol both places responsibility for the rape on the victim as well as questions whether or not the rape actually happened.

The next article to be discussed is called 'Women Raped in Joza'²⁸ and it appears in the February 24th 2009 edition of *Grocott's Mail*. It covers multiple rapes as it describes events in which five men raped two women. The article starts off by stating 'Two women were raped by five men in Joza in the early hours of Monday morning, police reported', and goes on to say:

The women were on their way home from a tavern in Joza when they were approached by five men. "The men threatened them with sticks and sharp instruments and then proceeded to rape them" said Coetzer. After the rape the suspects ran away. The two women told the police that they were under the influence of alcohol at the time, as they had been at the tavern. No arrests have yet been made.

In the seven sentence article the fact that the women had been at a tavern is mentioned twice, and that they were under the influence of alcohol is mentioned once. There are only a few details given about the rapes and the only detail given more than once is that the women had been at the tavern. This article does mention that the men threatened and raped the women. However, the last detail given about the rapes is that the women were 'under the influence of liquor at the time as they had been at the tavern'. This serves to leave the reader thinking about the alcohol and the drinking rather than the rapes. This information leads readers to conclude that alcohol played a role in the rape, taking away blame from the rapists and shifting it to the victims. This suggests that even though they were raped, they had been drinking and were therefore somewhat responsible for what had occurred. This also suggests

²⁸ This article appears in full in the text but can also be found in Appendix #7.

that responsible, careful women would not be out late drinking as such behaviour can lead to being raped.

It is important to note that other articles such as ‘Sexual Assault’²⁹ and ‘Young girl Raped by Friends’³⁰ simply state that the victim was ‘on her way home’ and do not specify where she was coming from. Articles that mention that the victim was at a tavern could leave out the detail about where the victims were coming from as is done in other articles. This would remove focus from the fact that the victim had been drinking and place focus on the perpetrator.

The next article to be discussed is titled ‘O-Week’³¹ Aftermath’³² and it appears in the February 17th 2009 edition of *Grocott’s Mail*. This article is two pages long and begins on the front page of the newspaper. This article mentions alcohol at length and situates an alleged rape that occurred at the Rat and Parrot pub in a discussion of student drinking culture. There is no mention of the rape in the title of the article, nor is there mention of the rape in the first paragraph of the article. The first paragraph states:

On the rainy night of Friday the 13th the weather didn’t stop the Rhodes students from attending the street bash on New Street in droves. The students danced the night away with DJ Clock and TJ Tira on the turntables outside the Rhodes Union. Unfortunately some students became victims of crimes and the fun ended on a sour note.

This paragraph sets a very specific scene; that students were drunk and then bad things happened, ultimately connecting the rape to drinking. The title of the article also situates the alleged rape in the student drinking culture, suggesting that the rape was a part of the ‘O-Week Aftermath’. This is further supported by the fact that the last eight paragraphs of the 18 paragraph article is about students who were drinking and their contact with the police officers. One paragraph states:

Many students were so inebriated that they couldn’t take note of the incidents happening around them. *Grocott’s* spoke to several students who were at the pub on the night in question, but said they were too drunk to remember anything.

This paragraph suggests that all of the students were too drunk to know what was going on, even too drunk to notice that a rape had occurred. The article goes on to state, ‘One student

²⁹ See Appendix #14 for full article.

³⁰ See Appendix #16 for full article.

³¹ ‘O-Week’ refers to ‘Orientation Week’ at Rhodes University. This is a week that is dedicated to first year students to help them get acquainted with the university facilities, to find out more about courses and subjects offered, and to meet other students. ‘O-Week’ takes place before classes start and when most students are back on campus. It has become known as a social week in which students engage in partying and drinking.

³² See Appendix #5 for full article. It is important to note that this article was written by Maria Sibiyi, the same journalist who wrote the article ‘Raped for a Cellphone’ which can be found in Appendix #13.

who does remember what happened told our reporter that he was harassed by security personnel who accused him of hiding alcohol'. The article then goes on to describe the student's experience with the security guard. In the previous paragraph it seemed as though *Grocott's Mail* was asking students about the alleged rape that occurred, but the students had been too drunk so they could not remember. However, when someone who could remember was questioned, the journalist reports not on what the individual knew of the rape, but rather on an alcohol-related experience. The rest of the article thereafter consists of descriptions and quotes from students regarding their night out that Friday and their experience with the police, with no mention of the alleged rape at all. This demonstrates that the focus of this article was not the alleged rape that occurred, but rather on the student drinking culture at Rhodes. This is further supported by some of the photos that appeared in this article. On page three there is a photo of the Rat and Parrot with the caption 'The annual Rhodes University O-Week street party before it turned nasty on New Street on Friday night' and a photo of broken bottles on the street with the caption 'Debris, broken bottles and dirty roads was all that was left after the eventful O-Week Street Party'. This photo focuses on the fact that the drunken students left a mess behind after their O-Week celebrations and it also suggests that the alleged rape is part of that mess. Thus, there seem to be two main things that emerge from the article: the fact it was the end of O-Week and students were drinking heavily and the fact that an alleged rape occurred.

It is important to note that this article does not de-emphasise the perpetrator in the same ways as other articles. This article actually pictures the alleged rapist on the front page, linking him with the rape rather than separating him from it. The article also reveals his name, age, hometown and potential sentences for the rape. The article also uses the active voice when describing the rape, for example it states 'The 21 year old Lidell from King William's Town allegedly raped an 18 year old student in a toilet of a local pub'. Thus, while this article does not de-emphasise the perpetrator the way in which other articles do, the many descriptions of student drinking culture offer the readers an explanation for the alleged rape. It hints that the perpetrator's behaviour is an extension of student drinking culture rather than placing direct blame on him. In this case, the focus on alcohol and student drinking culture is not only used to shift blame away from the perpetrator but also to explain how this rape occurred in this context.

Self-Defence of Victim not Reported

As discussed in Chapter Two, news reports on rape often underreport or do not report the use of self protection by the victim (Bufkin & Eschholz 2000:1325). Newspaper articles tend to include details about the threats, weapons, or use of force of the perpetrator while

excluding details about the self-defence measures that the victim took. In the sixteen articles that cover nineteen rape incidents, the self-defence of the victim is mentioned in only four of the articles. Additionally, other articles reporting crime do mention the self-defence of the victim. For example, the article titled ‘Mugging on Cawood Street’ that appears in the October 28th 2008 edition of *Grocott’s Mail* covers a mugging and states that ‘one victim broke a glass he was carrying in an attempt to frighten them off, but this failed’. Thus, self-defence is often reported in other criminal reports. Furthermore, many of the rape incident articles give explicit details about the threats, weapons and forceful actions that the perpetrator used against the victim while not mentioning the actions, reactions and self-defence measures of the victim.

The first article to be discussed in this section is called ‘Woman Raped in Zolani’³³ and it appears in the August 4th 2009 edition of *Grocott’s Mail*. This article is two paragraphs long and the second paragraph outlines the details leading to the rape itself. This paragraph states:

The man then followed her into her house, asked her why she was turning on the lights, then grabbed her shoulder and threw her on the bed, then on the floor and kicked her on her chest. He then put her on top of the bed and pulled down her underwear and started to rape her.

This statement outlines in detail what the alleged rapist did to the victim, but it does not mention any of her attempts to protect herself and fight back. It mentions the many different ways in which the perpetrator assaulted her, and there could have been details included about how she reacted to these assaults as presumably she did not simply comply. This statement seems to only explain one set of actions, making the victim seem passive and completely subject to her attacker.

The next article to be discussed in this section is titled ‘Young Girl Raped by Friends’³⁴ and it is located in the October 27th 2009 edition of *Grocott’s Mail*. This article states:

A 14 year old girl was allegedly raped at 8:45pm on Friday in Extension 7. While on her way home the girl was followed by a group of boys, some of whom she knew. The suspects overpowered the girl and raped her. Afterwards, they stole her cellphone and fled the scene. The matter is under investigation. No arrests have been made.

This article simply states that the ‘suspects overpowered the girl’ and it does not mention whether or not she tried to defend herself. Including details about how the victim tried to defend herself would demonstrate that she was not completely helpless in the situation.

³³ See Appendix #19 for full article. Zolani is a section of the ‘township’ in Grahamstown.

³⁴ This article appears in full in the text but it can also be located in Appendix #16.

Not mentioning the self-defence measures taken by victims of rape helps to support the myth that women are weak, powerless and passive (Bufkin & Eschholz 2000:1325). It suggests that women have no control over rape situations. It also supports the male/female dichotomy surrounding sex suggesting that men are active, aggressive and unstoppable, while women are passive and vulnerable.

An 'Atypical' Case

As discussed earlier, rape cases that are perceived as atypical are often reported on differently or highlighted more in the media due to their 'dramatic value' (Berrington & Jones 2002:312; Sacco 1995:144). During the period of study, one of the rape incidents reported on in *Grocott's Mail* received very different treatment to the other rapes. This incident appears in the article discussed above entitled 'O-Week Aftermath'³⁵ and covers the alleged rape that occurred at The Rat and Parrot on February 13th 2009. This alleged rape involved two Rhodes students. This incident was reported on in two separate articles³⁶ in the same issue of the newspaper and received front page coverage. This is in stark contrast to all the other articles covering rape incidents, all of which were between one and three paragraphs and all of which appeared in the 'News in Brief' section on page two of the newspaper. This article also pictured and named the alleged perpetrator before his trial, while the other articles usually refer to the perpetrator merely as 'the man' or 'the boy'. The coverage of this rape is also different from the others in terms of how the incident is described.

This article uses very different language than the others when discussing the context of the rape and the rape itself. The article contains a great deal of dramatization; the first sentence states 'On the rainy night of Friday the 13th, the weather didn't stop Rhodes students from attending the street bash on New Street in droves'.³⁷ Two paragraphs later the article states 'The brave survivor managed to go to Rhodes campus Protection Unit'. This language is much more intense than the language in the other articles. It attempts to set a very specific scene, rather than to deliver details. While the newspaper clearly associates the perpetrator with the alleged rape, and names and pictures him before his trial, it also seeks to explain how this incident came to happen. As mentioned earlier, it does this by explaining the rape as an extension of student drinking culture. The perception created by the way in which this incident is covered is that white male students do not typically rape. The way in which this

³⁵ See Appendix #5 for full article.

³⁶ One article covered the alleged rape incident and the other article covered the legal proceedings of the incident. This section will discuss the rape incident article, which was two pages long and began on the front page of *Grocott's Mail*.

³⁷ The first paragraph of this article uses dramatic language. Please refer to the first paragraph of Appendix #5.

incident was covered suggests that a white male student perpetrator of rape is newsworthy and thus in some way 'atypical'. The differential coverage of this incident in comparison to all the other incidents of rape reported on in *Grocott's Mail*, suggests that rape is normal in the township context and thus not worthy of appearing on the front page or being discussed in much detail.

The marked difference in the way in which this rape incident was covered suggests that the *Grocott's Mail* journalists regarded this rape as atypical and thus newsworthy. The fact that this rape was considered atypical supports gender and racial stereotypes. The alleged rape is considered atypical because of the background of the perpetrator, as well as because this rape occurred between two university students. A common rape myth and belief about rape is that non-poor, educated, white males are not often perpetrators of rape. Additionally, Rhodes is a respected university; a rape involving two students is perceived as a scandal and consequently more newsworthy. The article quotes the Dean of Students at Rhodes University stating it is a 'tragic reality that rape does occur at Rhodes and that both men and women are at risk'. This quote shows that this rape was considered a reminder that rape *can* occur in such a context, further demonstrating how this case was perceived as atypical. The other rape incident reports do not include quotes or reminders that rape is a 'tragic reality' in other contexts. For example, the article 'Sexual Assault in Joza School' reports on a rape incident that occurred in the toilets of a school and yet this was not described as a 'tragic reality'. As mentioned above, the other incidents of rape reported on by *Grocott's Mail*, most of which occurred in the township, are much shorter in length, appear only in the 'News in Brief' section³⁸, and often refrain from using the labels 'victim' and 'perpetrator'. The extreme differences in rape coverage, as highlighted by the 'O-Week Aftermath' article, clearly demonstrate how *Grocott's Mail* perpetuates beliefs about rape being 'normal' or unremarkable in certain contexts.

It is important to note that while none of the articles explicitly state the race of the perpetrators and the victims in the articles, details are often given about the location of the rape and, given the racially divided nature of Grahamstown, these details hint at the race of the victims and perpetrators. All of the brief rape articles which appeared in the 'News in Brief' section gave details about the location of the rape, letting the reader know that it occurred in the township and thus leading the reader to assume that those involved were black. The fact that the *Grocott's Mail* journalists choose to inform us that the rapes occurred in the township, suggests that this is seen as relevant in some way. The presence of location in the articles, coupled with the way in which rapes that occur in the township are covered, may

³⁸ The article titled 'Five women raped in weekend attacks' appearing in the October 14th 2008 edition of *Grocott's Mail* is an exception. It is three paragraphs long, but is located in the 'News' section rather than the 'News in Brief' section. This article does however cover more rapes than the other articles.

suggest that it is normal for black women to be rape victims and for black men to be rapists. The details about location and the differential coverage of the alleged rape reported on in ‘O-Week Aftermath’ serves to further perpetuate the myth that only certain people are victims and perpetrators and that rape only happens in certain contexts. The alleged rape that occurred at the Rat and Parrot was covered in a different way because journalists at *Grocott’s Mail* perceived this as an atypical case, suggesting that it is considered rare for a white student to commit rape.

Not all Rapists are Strangers to their Victims

While many of the rape myths discussed in other literature on media coverage of rape appeared in *Grocott’s Mail*, the newspaper did not seem to perpetuate the myth that rapists tend to be strangers to their victims. In the 16 rape incident articles that appeared during the period of study, there were 11 incidents of rape between strangers and eight that occurred between acquaintances. Again, some articles discuss more than one rape incident, which means that there are more rape reports than articles. While more incidents of stranger rape were reported than acquaintance rape, a fairly high proportion of the articles on rape did focus on acquaintance rape incidents. Also, when there is an acquaintance rape, the articles tend to point this out, often more than once in the article. For example, an article titled ‘Young Girl Raped by Friends’³⁹ that appears in the October 27th 2009 edition of *Grocott’s Mail* mentions the fact that the girl knew her rapists in both the headline and the article itself. The article states ‘A 14 year old girl was allegedly raped at 8:45pm on Friday in Extension 7. While on her way home, the girl was followed by a group of boys, some of whom she knew. The suspects overpowered the girl and raped her’. Similarly, an article titled ‘Girl Raped by a Friend’⁴⁰ also mentions the fact that the victim knew her rapist in the headline and the article itself. The article appears in the August 4th 2009 edition of *Grocott’s Mail* and states ‘A 17 year old girl was raped by her friend after he asked her to spend the night at his house’. In articles in which the rapist is unknown to the victim, the relationship between the two is pointed out in a similar way. It appears that the relationship between the victim and the rapist is a detail that is included in most of the articles on rape. Thus, *Grocott’s Mail* does not, unlike some news media, imply that women need only fear strangers when it comes to rape.

Conclusion

³⁹ See Appendix #7 for full article.

⁴⁰ See Appendix #16 for full article.

While it is important to note that *Grocott's Mail* does not perpetuate the rape myth that most rapists are strangers to their victims, other rape myths about both the victim and the perpetrator are present in the newspaper. The rape myths present in these articles de-emphasise the perpetrator, blame the victim, create and sustain stereotypical images of women as passive and weak, as well as suggest who tend to be 'typical' and 'atypical' victims and perpetrators of rape. These rape myths perpetuate the patriarchal system as well as the racist power structures in society. By not directly stating that the perpetrators committed rape, rapists are separated from the act of rape. The use of indirect language and the passive voice portrays a weak connection between the rapist and the rape. This not only separates the perpetrators from the rape, but also hints that they might not be the only ones to blame for the crime. Several rape myths serve to blame the victims for the rape. The de-emphasis of the perpetrator in these articles suggests that there might be other explanations for the rape. Thus, separating the perpetrator from the rape in the ways mentioned above serves to reinforce gender inequality by taking away blame from the male rapists and sometimes hinting that the women involved might also be at fault. When the focus of a rape article is on a substance, such as alcohol, rather than on the rape itself, blame is placed more directly on the victim. There is a perception that women who were walking home drunk or who are out late drinking were 'irresponsible' and somewhat to blame for their own rape. It is important to note that many of the articles use more than one of these separation techniques, making the separation of the perpetrator from the rape even stronger. By combining the use of indirect language and the passive voice, focusing on alcohol and drinking, and by avoiding the use of labels like 'victim' and 'rapist', the role of the rapist is severely diminished in newspaper coverage of rape incidents.

Furthermore, the differential coverage between the article 'O-Week Aftermath' and the other articles about rape in the newspaper suggest that some rapes are perceived as 'typical' while others are seen as 'atypical'. Crenshaw (1995:368) suggests that black rape victims are not seen to be as 'newsworthy' as white rape victims. In the United States, this idea is manifested by the lesser presence of black rape victims in newspapers. In this South African newspaper, it is manifested in differential coverage between black and white victims. This differential coverage also suggests to readers that it is 'typical' for black men to rape but 'atypical', and thus more newsworthy, for white students to rape. This is problematic because it creates and sustains stereotypes about race, particularly in relation to crime.

The fact that there are rape myths present in the *Grocott's Mail* reports of rape sits uncomfortably with the fact that the newspaper tries to promote rape activism in other articles. As mentioned above, between October 2008 and October 2009 three rape activism articles appeared in *Grocott's Mail*. These articles were between a half of a page and a full page long and suggested a commitment to promoting justice and support for rape victims as

well as demanding convictions for rapists. Thus, in some ways, *Grocott's Mail* is committed to opposing rape myths while simultaneously perpetuating them in reports of rape incidents. For example, an article titled 'Creating a Safe Space for Rape Survivors' that appears in the February 6th 2008 edition of *Grocott's Mail* states that it is problematic that many victims withdraw rape charges because they fear that people will blame them for the rape. However, the newspaper engages in victim blaming by placing so much emphasis on alcohol in rape incident reports. It also de-emphasises the role of the perpetrator in the articles, which takes away blame from the rapist. This indirectly places blame on the victim because the absence of the rapist and his actions in a rape incident report encourages individuals to focus on what the victim could have done to avoid being raped. This is enhanced when rape prevention is targeted solely at women (Van der Bijl & Rumney 2009:420). In South Africa, women are told to avoid walking alone at night and to be cautious of strangers (Van der Bijl & Rumney 2009:420). *Grocott's Mail* is no exception, as in the February 6th 2009 edition of the newspaper there is a rape activism article discussing how to create a support system for rape survivors. In addition to the article there is an information box titled 'how to avoid rape' where all of the tips are targeted at what women should do in order to prevent rape. Thus, in order to fully promote rape activism, *Grocott's Mail* needs to eliminate rape myths from their coverage of rape incidents. They should also try to target men in rape prevention articles. The implementation of these suggestions could help erode the persistence of racial and gender stereotypes about rape.

Chapter Four: Conclusion

Rape is extremely common in South Africa. Unfortunately, while rape is common, justice for rape survivors is not. Furthermore, relatively few rape cases are discussed in the media. Various studies have shown that the media has the potential to shape the way in which people think about rape (Bufkin & Eschholz 2000; Carll 2003; Dorfman and Schiraldi 2001; Protesse et al 1985; and Sacco 1995). It is therefore important to understand media coverage of rape because it has the potential to create, re-create and sustain perceptions about rape.

In addition to exploring literature on rape in the media, this thesis describes and interprets themes which have emerged in *Grocott's Mail's* coverage of rape. I performed a critical discourse analysis on 16 rape incident articles in order to see whether or not *Grocott's Mail's* articles contained or challenged 'rape myths' in their reports of rape. I also looked for other themes that emerged in *Grocott's Mail's* coverage of rape.

Addressing My Research Questions

The literature discussed in Chapter Two shows how what some authors call 'rape myths' serve to blame the victim, portray the victim as either a 'virgin' or a 'whore', and to portray women as passive and weak (Benedict 1992; Berrington & Jones 2002; Bufkin & Eschholz 2000; Burr 2001; Franiuk et al 2008; Hirsch 1024; Kahlor & Morrison 2007; Korn & Efrat 2004; Lonsway & Fitzgerald 1994; Meyers 1994; Norton & Grant 2008; Patton & Snyder-Yuly 2007; Vetten 1998; Worthington 2008). The *Grocott's Mail* rape articles made use of several of the rape myths discussed in the literature and in so doing shifted blame onto the victims of rape, often by focusing on the role of alcohol rather than the role of rapist in the rape. Blame was also shifted from the perpetrators to the victims in these articles when the labels 'perpetrator' and 'victim' were not used as well as when the perpetrator was de-emphasised in the articles in other ways. There was also little mention of the self-defence of the rape victims in the articles, suggesting that women are weak and are controlled by attackers. The use of these rape myths in *Grocott's Mail* could have negative consequences for victims of rape, because victims may fear reporting rape to the police if they think people, including but not limited to journalists, will blame them for not being careful by staying out late at a tavern.

Rape myths pertaining to the perpetrator tend to focus on the race, gender and class background of the perpetrator (Bufkin & Schholz 2000:1325; Hirsch 1994:1038; Moffett

2006). In the United States and South Africa, rapists are often thought of as poor black men (Bufkin & Schholz 2000:1325; Moffett 2006). The *Grocott's Mail* articles did not portray this directly, but indirectly through the differential coverage of rapes involving black men and women and the rape involving a white man and woman. The differential coverage between 'O-Week Aftermath' and the other rape articles suggests that black men are 'typical' rapists and white male students are 'atypical' rapists.

Media reports of rape often de-emphasise the role of the perpetrator which serves to reinforce patriarchal systems (Berrington & Jones 2002; Bohner 2001; Franiuk et al 2008; Hirsch 1994; Worthington 2008). This can be done by creating a linguistic separation between the perpetrator and the rape. The perpetrator can also be de-emphasised when an article focuses on details surrounding the rape other than the actions of the rapist. The perpetrators in *Grocott's Mail's* rape articles were de-emphasised in all of these ways. The perpetrators were de-emphasised through word choice, the use of the passive voice, the lack of the label 'perpetrator' or 'rapist', and through the focus on alcohol in the articles.

While the literature suggests that the media often perpetuates the rape myth that most rapists are strangers to their victims (Los & Chamard 1997; Reddy & Potgieter 2006; Varelas & Foley 1998; Worthington 2008), *Grocott's Mail* did not perpetuate this rape myth, as it reported both acquaintance rape and rape between strangers.

Further Research

Grocott's Mail is a local newspaper in a small town. While the results of this thesis are significant for understanding how gender and racial inequality are perpetuated in one newspaper, further research should investigate whether similar rape myths are present or challenged in larger South African newspapers. This would allow for a more complete understanding of the themes and trends in South African rape coverage.

This thesis focused on the rape of women by men. The Sexual Offences and Related Matters Amendment Act 32 of 2007 expanded the legal definition of rape in South Africa to include the rape of men. As mentioned earlier, there were two articles in *Grocott's Mail* during the time period of this thesis that reported on the rape of men by men. Further research should explore how the rape of men is reported on in the media and if the media reports are in keeping with The Sexual Offences and Related Matters Amendment Act 32. This would allow for a broader understanding of rape coverage in South Africa.

Final Remarks

The presence of rape myths in *Grocott's Mail* articles about rape may have negative effects for victims of rape, as they create and sustain fear in women about reporting rape to the police. Furthermore, the rape myths present in *Grocott's Mail* perpetuate sexist and racist stereotypes and in so doing uphold sexist and racist power systems. It is important to note that not every article contained rape myths, but the presence of some rape myths in *Grocott's Mail* is still problematic. This is especially true when *Grocott's Mail* attempts to promote rape activism while simultaneously perpetuating rape myths.

Appendix:

Grocott's Mail Articles on Rape, organised chronologically.

1) **Five women raped in weekend attacks:** Luvuyo Mjekula. October 14th 2008

Five women were raped in five separate incidents this past weekend, said Grahamstown Police spokesperson Inspector Milanda Coetzer. Three of the rapes took place on Saturday, while two were committed on Sunday. Among those raped on Saturday was a 14 year old girl. She told the police that she was raped by a man she had spoken to and had given her phone number to him. Coetzer said that when the man later suggested that they go to another man's house, the girl agreed but then changed her mind. He allegedly grabbed her and dragged her to the bushes at Douglas Dam where he raped her.

In another case, a 25 year old woman was attacked by unknown men in Extension 8 at 3am on Saturday. The woman was severely assaulted and when she regained consciousness, could not reveal what had happened. Forensic evidence was found on the scene.

Meanwhile, two men were arrested in connection with the rape of a 23 year old woman on Saturday night. The woman and her friend had just left a Tanty Tavern when they were assaulted by the men. After a chase one of the women tripped and fell. She was gang raped but managed to get help soon afterwards and the two men aged 17 and 23 were arrested. In two separate incidents on Sunday, two middle aged women were raped. One 52 year old woman was raped by a man who pretended to be a beggar on the Fort Beaufort Road. He has not been arrested. The other, a 47 year old was allegedly raped by her 16 year old nephew, who has been arrested. Anyone with information can contact Constable Macupe on 082 3741 060.

2) **Woman Raped Over Weekend :** Author's name not given. October 28th 2008

A 20 year old woman was raped at 2am on Sunday morning. The woman, who was on her way home from Mandisa's Tavern in Fingo Village, was confronted by a man with a knife. The man forced her to his house in Hlalani location where he raped her twice. A short time later, she indicated that she wanted to go to the toilet and when he did not follow her, she ran back to her home. The woman's mother took her to the police station where a case docket of rape was opened. An arrest is expected shortly.

3) **Extension 8 Granny Raped:** Tessa Trafford. December 19th 2008

Early on Wednesday morning a 67 year old Extension 8 woman was raped in her own bed. The woman says that she was woken by the sound of a window breaking and called out that she was asleep and wished to be left alone. When she heard nothing further she fell asleep again. She was woken a second time by the weight of a body on top of her. As she struggled the assailant assaulted, undressed and raped her. No arrests have been made and anyone with information is requested to contact Constable Mabandla on 082 3199 247.

4) **Two Women Raped on Saturday:** Luvuyo Mjekula. December 23rd 2008

A 21 year old woman was raped after leaving a Fingo Village tavern on Saturday night. According to police spokesperson Inspector Milanda Coetzer, the woman was leaving the tavern when she was “escorted” by a man she knew. Threatening her with a knife, he demanded to take her to his house. He then raped her and told her to leave. No arrests have been made, said Coetzer.

In another incident, a 20 year old woman who had attended a traditional ceremony at Phumlani Location “and lost track of time”, woke up to find herself naked with a man unknown to her lying next to her in her house. Coetzer said “She found that she had suffered bruises and other marks”.

5) **O-Week Aftermath:** Maria Sibiya. February 17th 2009

On the rainy night of Friday the 13th the weather didn’t stop the Rhodes students from attending the street bash on New Street in droves. The students danced the night away with DJ Clock and TJ Tira on the turntables outside the Rhodes Union. Unfortunately some students became victims of crimes and the fun ended on a sour note.

An 18 year old Rhodes first year student was allegedly raped while she was standing in line outside the upstairs toilet of the Rat & Parrot pub in New Street.

The young student does not believe that her drink was spiked in any way. She described the attack as a ‘random act of violence’.

According to a police report, the manager of Rat & Parrot ‘hearing a commotion, investigated and found the toilets in violent disarray’.

The brave survivor managed to go to Rhodes Campus Protection Unit where she reported the incident and was assisted by the staff who called then police.

Constable Newman Kuhlane apprehended a 21 year old suspect who was detained at Grahamstown’s police station until he appeared in court yesterday.

Dean of students at Rhodes University, Prof Vivian de Klerk said in a statement that the student who was reportedly raped is ‘receiving medical care and rape crisis counselling and is getting full support’.

She said that it is a ‘tragic reality that rape does occur at Rhodes and that both men and women are at risk’.

Noting the associated stigma that follows such an incident, De Klerk said that ‘Often survivors delay reporting the incident or seeking help because they are ashamed or fear retribution or complicated legal proceedings’.

Many students were so inebriated that they couldn’t take note of incidents happening around them. *Grocott’s* spoke to several students who were at the pub on the night in question, but said they were too drunk to remember anything.

One student who does remember what happened told our reported that he was harassed by security personnel who accused him of hiding alcohol.

Khanya Cabaca says he was changing his t-shirt because he was wearing it the wrong way round. While he was doing so, a security guard approached him and asked him if he had a bottle on him.

‘I told him [security] that I don’t have any bottle with me because I know it’s not allowed and he said I’ll be in trouble if I have it with me,’ said Cabaca.

‘I felt insulted and unfairly treated by security’, he says.

Cabaca adds that he was accompanied by his friend, Khanyi Ngoli who suggested that the security guard search him if they didn’t believe him.

In another incident, a Rhodes journalism student, Nina Bekink, was threatened by policemen who instructed her to stop taking pictures in front of the pubs in New Street.

She says she was approached by six police officers who surrounded her, pushed her camera way and prevented her from taking photos.

‘One of the cops said I must beware of my future and my life’, says Bekink.

Although the police were on duty and protecting the students, some of the students who were at the street bash were not happy with the treatment they received from police and security.

6) **Six Year Old Girl Raped:** Luvuyo Mjekula. February 17th 2009

A man has been arrested in connection with the rape of a six year old girl in Wakashe Street, Joza on Saturday. Inspector Milanda Coetzer said that the girl was playing on the street with friends when the suspect chased the friends away.

He then forced the girl inside a house and raped her. Coetzer said that the man used cooking oil as lubrication before raping her. He has appeared in court.

7) **Women Raped in Joza:** Luvuyo Mjekula. February 24th 2009

Two women were raped by five men in Joza in the early hours of Monday morning, police reported.

Inspector Milanda Coetzer said that the incident took place at about 3am. The women were on their way home from a tavern in Joza when they were approached by five men. "The men threatened them with sticks and sharp instruments and then proceeded to rape them," said Coetzer. After the rape the suspects ran away. The two women told the police that they were under the influence of liquor at the time, as they had been at the tavern. No arrests have yet been made.

8) **Sexual Assault in Joza School:** Luvuyo Mjekula. March 20th 2009

A Grahamstown youth appeared in the magistrate's court yesterday after he was arrested in connection with the rape and indecent assault of two schoolgirls earlier this week. *Grocott's Mail* learned that the incidents took place on Tuesday, in the school's toilet.

The 17 year old perpetrator apparently entered the school through a hole in the fence during school hours and accosted the girls aged seven and nine years old. He is allegedly from a high school in Grahamstown. *Grocott's Mail* will carry an in-depth report on the cases in Tuesday's edition.

9) **Woman Raped in Extension 9:** Luvuyo Mjekula. April 7th 2009

A young woman was raped in Extension 9 last week, allegedly by her boyfriend's friend. Police said that the woman left her boyfriend's house at about 10:30pm after they had an argument. On her way home, she was followed by the friend. He apparently told her the boyfriend had asked him to accompany her home to ensure that she was safe. Things turned ugly when he started pulling her in the direction of his house. Police said that when the woman resisted the friend "punched her in her left eye and started dragging her to his room which is in Ext. 9. He then raped her three times.

10) **Woman Raped in Zolani:** Nokulunga Ntantiso. August 4th 2009

A woman was raped by her neighbour in Zolani last week, police reported. The alleged rapist and his wife apparently called the woman into their house to enquire about their missing daughter. She told them she had not seen the girl and then left.

However, according to the police spokesperson, Captain Ndishavhelafhi Mamuthubi the man then followed her into her house, asked her why she was tuning on the lights, “then grabbed her shoulder and threw her on the bed, then on the floor and kicked her on the chest. He then put her on top of the bed and pulled down her underwear and started to rape her.” Mamuthubi said that after she was raped, the woman asked the man to go fetch a bucket outside so she could urinate so she got a chance to run to the neighbour’s house for help.

11) **Girl Raped by a Friend:** Nokulunga Ntantiso. August 4th 2009

A 17 year old girl was raped by her friend after he asked her to spend the night at his house. Police spokesperson Captain Ndishavhelafhi Mamuthubi said that the two young women visited the accused in Extension 7 and stayed at his house until late into the night. The friends shared the bed with the man who woke up in the middle of the night and raped the girl.

12) **Drunken Girl Raped:** Luvuyo Mjekula. August 12th 2009

A 15-year old girl was raped in Extension 9 this past weekend. According to the police, the girl was intoxicated and had been to several taverns before she was raped. Police said that she and her friends had gone to one of the taverns, looking for her brother when she was grabbed by a man who took her to Extension 9. ‘She was however not aware of what was happening to her for she was intoxicated, until the next morning when she woke up and found herself naked,’ stated the police report. No arrests have yet been made.

13) **Raped for a cellphone:** Maria Sibiya. October 2nd 2009

A woman was assaulted and raped near Samuel Ntsika Junior High School on Saturday. It is alleged that she was on her way home from a tavern when she was approached by an unknown male suspect who demanded that she hand over her cellphone. According to a police report the suspect assaulted the complainant who, while she was fighting back, lost her balance and fell to the ground. The suspect then took advantage and raped her. As she screamed for help the suspect took out a knife and stabbed her several times in her arm and in her chest. No arrests were made and the case is still under investigation.

14) **Sexual Assault:** Asanda Naketi. October 20th 2009

A 38 year old woman laid a rape charge on Saturday. On her way home she met a man known to her who called her to come closer but she refused. He then grabbed her and took her to his room in C street. He raped her and also assaulted her with an unknown weapon.

15) **Woman Raped at Friend’s House:** Author’s name not given. October 27th 2009

A woman was allegedly raped in N street at 8am on Saturday. The victim had been at Tsalanang Tavern with a friend and her friend’s boyfriend the night before.

The couple invited the woman to sleep in the spare bedroom of their house. At 8am on Saturday the suspect entered the woman’s room and told her to get undressed. He promised to kill her if she screamed. After she had undressed the suspect raped her. The perpetrator has been arrested.

16) **Young Girl Raped by Friends:** Author's name not given. October 27th 2009

A 14 year old girl was allegedly raped at 8:45pm on Friday in Extension 7. While on her way home, the girl was followed by a group of boys, some of whom she knew. The suspects overpowered the girl and raped her. Afterwards they stole her cellphone and fled the scene. The matter is under investigation. No arrests have been made
Other *Grocott's Mail* Articles mentioned in the text, organised chronologically.

17) **Boy Stabbed at School.** Author's name not given. October 28th 2008.

A 17 year old learner was stabbed at Mary Waters Senior Secondary School last Friday. The culprit, a 16 year old learner, stabbed the victim in the upper chest and was later identified and arrested on a charge of attempted murder. The victim was rushed to Settlers Hospital, but was later transferred to Provincial Hospital where he underwent emergency surgery. The 16 year old will appear in Grahamstown's Magistrate Court on Monday 27 October.

This incident follows a case reported to the Grahamstown police during the weekend of 17 October, when a group of youths from Xolani location and Tantiyi location were involved in a fight. Police are concerned that the lack of extra-curricular activities available to youth, as well as the lack of facilities available to them in Grahamstown, results in boredom and promotes a culture of drinking and fighting. The Grahamstown police are currently, by means of inter-departmental partnerships, attempting to identify activities that may deter youths from drinking, fighting and general crime.

18) **Mugging on Cawood Street:** Author's name not given. October 28th 2008.

Last Friday at 11:20pm, two friends were on their way to a friend's house in Spring Street when they noticed they were being followed by two men. The men followed them down from the Cathedral in High Street and towards Cawood Street. While walking along Cawood Street, the two were confronted by the men who were both carrying knives. One victim broke a glass he was carrying in an attempt to frighten them off, but this failed. The robbers grabbed the other victim's handbag and ran away. A patrolling police vehicle was drawn to the incident and gave chase, and a 16 year old boy was arrested and detained. Further investigation later on Saturday led to the arrest of an 18 year old boy. Both suspects were detained on a charge of robbery with aggravating circumstances and appeared in Grahamstown Magistrate's Court yesterday.

19) **Robbery Concerns Police:** Luvuyo Mjekula. December 23rd 2008.

Grahamstown police are extremely concerned regarding a robbery that took place over the weekend, Inspector Milanda Coetzer said. This was after a 33 year old man walking home to Vukani Location was knocked over the head by unknown assailants who then robbed him of his firearm, a 9mm Norinco short pistol with six rounds. At this stage, the victim is not able to identify his assailants, police said. Anyone with information that may lead to the arrest of the robbers and/or the recovery of the firearm is asked to contact Grahamstown SAPS on 046 603 9146 or 082 779 7199.

20) **Community Takes Action:** Maria Sibiya. March 27th 2009.

Disappointed parents and staff members, vented their anger during a meeting about safety and security at Makana Primary School in Joza on Monday. This comes after

two learners from Makana Primary were allegedly raped and sexually assaulted while they were in the school toilets last week. The suspect, who cannot be named as he is a minor, appeared in Grahamstown Magistrate's Court yesterday morning.

The magistrate said that he is innocent until proven guilty and further investigations will be conducted. The case was postponed until 9 April.

Fundiswa James a concerned resident who was at the court supporting the victims' parents, said that the accused should not get bail. Regina Peters, a passer-by agreed that he shouldn't get bail because he is dangerous.

At the meeting earlier this week, a teacher and a member of the School Governing Body (SGB), Ndumiso Shwempe, urged parents and staff members to share ideas about solving security problems at the school.

It is believed that the suspect entered through a hole in the school fence and went to the toilets where he found the two learners.

Parents and teachers reached an agreement that if anyone has fencing or any tools they should lend a hand in fixing the school's fence.

Mthethelei Kulati, principal of Makana Primary said that although the school has a SGB, a safety and security committee needs to be elected in order to assist the school for safety purposes.

Another security issue raised during the meeting was visitation hours. Staff members said if people just enter the school premises, without consulting with the office it might put the safety of learners at risk.

Gwen Mvula-Jamela, a staff member, encouraged youth to be involved in such meetings. "I'm glad that the youth is part of this because they are the future of the world," she said.

According to Kulati, the seven and nine year old learners, who were allegedly raped are receiving counselling every Thursday and return to school on Monday.

Staff members, family and learners gathered outside the magistrate court yesterday holding posters with messages such as "No Bail for a Ruthless Monster."

The victims' parents do not blame the school as one of the mother's said "I feel hurt and angry by what happened to my child, but the teachers can't teach and be guards at the same time."

The other victim's mother said "I don't care what happens to the accused, what he did to my child is unforgivable".

21) **Rape Accused in Court Today:** Luvuyo Mjekula. April 9th 2009.

The high school pupil accused of raping a primary school girl and sexually assaulting another, is due to appear in court today. The accused who apparently goes to a Joza high school, allegedly entered Makana primary school last month and attacked the two schoolgirls in the school's toilets. He is believed to have entered the school through a hole in the fence during school hours.

The incident shocked local parents and residents to an extent that an emergency meeting was called a few days later where parents, teachers, the police and members of the community had a robust discussion about the school's security, among other things. It was resolved that learners, teachers and parents would march to court and protest against granting the accused bail. During his previous court appearance the accused's age was disputed.

This was after the defence claimed that he was underage and therefore asked for the case to be heard in-camera. However, other sections of the community asserted that the accused was over 18. In the end, community members and family members of the girls were removed from the court. He is expected to make a brief appearance today.

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