

**THE DIGITAL RHETORIC OF ADDRESSING RAPE CULTURE:
‘OFFICIAL’ AND ‘UNOFFICIAL’ ARGUMENTS AT RHODES UNIVERSITY**

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN PSYCHOLOGY
at
RHODES UNIVERSITY

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April 2019

Abstract

South Africa is overwhelmed with high levels of sexual violence and institutions of higher education in South Africa are not exempt from this. How higher education stakeholders have responded to the call to address rape culture on campuses has been at the centre of much attention, especially publicly on online communicative spaces. Drawing on contemporary rhetorical theories, informed by a feminist poststructuralist perspective, this study sought to explore how constituents at Rhodes University were discussing how rape culture should (and should not be) addressed on campus. Using a rhetorical analysis, this study collected and analysed online public data from ‘official’ (institutionally sanctioned) and ‘unofficial’ (institutionally independent) communication platforms, following the 2016 rape culture student-led protest at Rhodes University. In analysing and interpreting the data from the ‘official’ sites, four major themes of discussion were evident. These rhetors argued that rape culture is a societal issue, requiring collective responsibility and effort in countering it, and that any approach to do so must abide by the bounds of the law. The University’s commitment, and continued investment to address rape culture on campus were repeatedly stated; as well as, the use of external ‘supportive’ messages that bolstered the reputation, efforts, and actions of the institution. On the ‘unofficial’ sites six broad patterns of discussion were evident. These ‘unofficial’ rhetors embodied the rape culture on campus, perceiving its effects as threatening to the physical body, which led to the adoption of the argument that rape culture needs to be ‘fought’ through physical action and support. Narrow law and order approaches were contested, and the need for a victim-centred approaches were prioritised. Additionally, doubt and suspicion were cast onto the institutional management/leadership, and the University (management/leadership body) were perceived as having ‘failed’ to address rape culture adequately. Considering this ‘failure’, a divisive rhetoric argued that the ‘fight’ against rape culture should continue, despite, and separate from, the institutional body. These findings revealed how the divisive positions these various stakeholders took created a volatile climate between University management/leadership, staff, and student. I argue that such division will continue to undermine any meaningful efforts to counter rape culture on the University campus; underscoring the difficulty, and ambiguity, that comes with attempting to address rape culture on higher education campuses. This necessitates how important it will be for scholars to research, and continue researching, the ways in which a rape culture, and the various approaches which attempt to counter it, are understood.

Acknowledgments

Firstly, the financial assistance of the National Research Foundation (NRF) towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed, and conclusions arrived at, are those of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the NRF.

Importantly, I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to my supervisors Professor Catriona Macleod and Dr Malvern Chiweshe for their invaluable supervision, guidance and contribution to this project.

Thank you to my friends and colleagues for the reassurance and advice given to me along the way. Thank you as well to my family who supported me throughout this process and kept on reminding me of my capabilities. Particularly a thanks to my partner, who showed me encouragement and patience when the research was all encompassing at times.

Lastly, I would like to dedicate this project to my study companion of seven years, Buddy, who is not around anymore, but was by my side through most of this journey and kept me company through many long nights.

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Glossary of terms

WORD	MEANING
CHAPTER 2.12	Student-led campaign at Rhodes University, named after the section of the Constitution which guarantees freedom and security of persons, to suggest rape culture on campus is unconstitutional.
HI-TEC	Private security company.
KODZWA	In isiXhosa: ‘but’.
OPPIDAN	Rhodes University students living in private residence off-campus.
#BLACKLIVESMATTER	International social media activist movement, originating in the African-American community, campaigning against violence and systemic racism towards black people.
#FEESMUSTFALL	South African student-led protest movement to stop increases in student fees at universities as well as to increase government funding of them.
MAKHANDA	The city of Grahamstown changed its name to Makhandla in 2018.
#METOO	International social media movement against sexual harassment/assault.
#RAPEMUSTFALL	Hashtag used during the #RUPreferenceList.
#RHODESWAR	Hashtag representing the response to Rhodes University’s decision to exclude students who were prominent in the #RUPreferenceList.
#RUPREFERENCELIST	South African student-led protest movement at Rhodes University against rape culture and sexual violence on campus.

#TRIGGERWARNING/TW	Precautionary textual device used at the beginning of a message to warn readers about potentially distressing material.
UTATA	In isiXhosa: ‘our’ father.
WENU	In isiXhosa: ‘your’.
WOMXN	Intersectional term designed to refer more inclusively to of all kinds of women, including trans women.

List of acronyms

ACRONYM	MEANING
CPU	Campus Patrol Unit
DH	Dining Hall
CSSR	Critical Studies in Sexualities and Reproduction
CSVR	Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation
GBV	Gender-based violence
MRC	Medical Research Council
NRF	National Research Foundation
ONS’/SNS’	Online networking sites/social networking sites
RPERC	Rhodes Psychology Ethics Review Committee
SAPS	South African Police Services
SRC	Student Representative Council
SVTT	Sexual Violence Task Team
UCKAR	University currently known as Rhodes
UCT	University of Cape Town
UKZN	University of Kwazulu Natal
UWC	University of the Western Cape
VC	Vice-chancellor
WHO	World Health Organisation

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

1. Introduction

Sexual violence is common worldwide. Prevalence rates across countries have shown the vast extent of sexual violence. A World Health Organisation (WHO) (2013) report, using evidence from a comprehensive systematic review of global population data, estimated that globally over a third (35.6%) of women¹ had experienced either intimate partner sexual violence and/or non-partner sexual violence. In particular, South Africa is considered to have a ‘rape crisis’, with some of the highest rates of rape in the world². Africa Check (2019) reports that during the 2017/18 period 40,035 rapes were reported in South Africa³. However, these statistics are considered to be inaccurate due to difficulties in collating data, because of problematic police reporting, unclear definitions of rape, and high levels of unreported rapes (Vetten, 2014).

A study conducted in Gauteng by the Medical Research Council (MRC) and Gender Links found that only 1 in 13 rapes committed by a non-partner and only 1 in 25 rapes committed by a partner are reported (Vetten, 2014). These numbers further illustrate that victims who were familiar with their rapist were less likely to report. This, coupled with the ambiguous way rape may be experienced in intimate relationships, creates high levels of unreported rape rates. This is made more significant by the fact that various studies internationally, as well as in South Africa (Buck Doude, 2008; Dartnall & Jewkes, 2013; Fisher, Cullen, & Daigle, 2005; Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987; Vetten, 2014) have shown that the majority of rape perpetrators are known to their victims. On the other hand, rape victims who define and acknowledge their sexual violence experience as rape may be reluctant to report these incidences for other reasons. The barriers that contribute to the under-reporting of rape include fear the: perpetrator will retaliate; of not being believed; of the stigma attached to rape; and of secondary victimisation by police/social workers (Vetten, 2014).

¹ Sexual violence is not an act solely committed against women. However, as discussed later in **Chapter 2**, the literature review, studies estimate that it affects women more significantly than men.

² While rape incidence is extremely high in South Africa, the notion that South Africa has the ‘highest’ rape rates is somewhat disputable. Firstly, this is because the statistics in South Africa are often compared to developed countries (i.e. UK, US, Canada, New Zealand) where rape prevalence is reported as being lower (See: Sigworth, 2009). Secondly, there is contestation around whether the reported rape rates from other developing countries (e.g. Kenya, India) which appear to be lower are in fact lower, or if rape in these countries is just overwhelmingly underreported. This makes it impossible to compare rape statistics across countries, and makes those in the field of sexual violence in South Africa “cautiously optimistic about the increasing rape statistics as it often shows, more than anything else, that more women are feeling empowered and supported enough to report their experience of sexual violence” (Sigworth, 2009, p. 12).

³ South African population 2018 = 57 million.

Another issue that surrounds the rape crisis in South Africa is the low level of conviction rates in reported rape cases. Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell, and Dunkle (2010) revealed that over a quarter (27.6%) of the men in their study had raped someone, and only 1 in 8 of these men had experienced imprisonment as a consequence. The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR), MRC and Tshwaranang Legal Advocacy Centre (Vetten et al., 2008), found that only 4.1% of cases reported as rape resulted in a conviction for rape. It becomes clear, especially when taking into account the frequency of under-reporting, that the overwhelming majority of rape perpetrators in South Africa are not being held accountable for their crimes, and that the criminal justice system is working far “too infrequently and inconsistently for it to be an effective deterrent to sexual violence” (Vetten, 2014, p. 6).

Misconceptions around sexual violence also contribute to the high levels of rape in South Africa. CIETAfrica (2004) conducted a national cross-sectional study on views on sexual violence in South Africa, where they found that their respondents held misconceptions around sexual violence, and believed in rape myths such as: sex with a virgin cures AIDS (12.7% of respondents); sex is proof of love (28%); women/girls cannot refuse sex with a boyfriend/intimate partner (30%); it is not sexual violence/rape to force sex with someone you know (58%); women/girls enjoy being raped (26.5%); when women say no they mean yes (48.5%); women/girls like sexually violent guys (17%); and women/girls who are raped ask for it (10.5%). The study also found that South African men were more likely to have misconceptions about sexual violence than South African women, and that there was a direct link between these misconceptions and self-reports of having had forced sex with another individual.

South African researchers (Moffett, 2008) argue, echoing the WHO report, that the one out of three women in South Africa will be raped in their lifetime. This high prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence (GBV), coupled with inadequate systems of response, have created a ‘culture of fear’ among women where the threat of this type of violence maintains existing unequal power relations (Gordon & Collins, 2013). Shortcomings in the South African justice system, patriarchal notions of men’s entitlement to sex, the sexual objectification of women, problematic masculinities and femininities, the country’s politically violent and unequal past, and the associations between unequal relations of race, socio-economic class and rape have

been linked to the current culture of rape (Buiten & Naidoo, 2016). This is what is known as a ‘rape culture’.

2. Defining ‘rape culture’

The term ‘rape culture’ was first introduced in the 1970’s during the second-wave feminist movement in the United States (US). Buchwald, Fletcher, and Roth (2005, p. xi) define the term as “a complex set of beliefs that encourages male sexual aggression and supports violence against women”. The Sexual Violence Task Team (SVTT) (2016, p. 29) at Rhodes University defines rape culture as “the metaphors, narratives, discourses, power relations, everyday practices, and institutional arrangements that foster particular kinds of gendered, racialized, sexualised, and class-based power relations in which sexual violence is, at best, minimised in importance and at worst, normalised”. Thus a ‘rape culture’ is one in which sexual violence and rape are considered to be both prevalent and normalised in a society.

At the centre of rape culture is how people speak about rapists, rape victims, and sexual violence. Contemporary feminist scholars contend that a ‘rape culture’ exists when members of a society learn ‘scripts’ of male⁴ sexual aggression (dominance) and female passivity (subordination) that encourage sexual assault of women (Chasteen, 2001). This fosters widespread gendered violence against ‘women’ (the subordinate) by ‘men’ (the dominant) who “are from every strata of society, sharing only the desire to dominate and control women through violence” (Chasteen, 2001, p. 107). Rape, aptly stated by Kimmel (2011, p. 400), “is a crime that combines sex and violence, that makes sex the weapon in an act of violence”. Rape may be used by men as a means to exact revenge and/or retaliate against (or compensate for) feelings of powerlessness, especially when men feel they have a right to be sexually entitled to women’s bodies (Kimmel, 2011). A rape culture has been shown to be perpetuated by rape myths, victim blaming, and negative attitudes towards gender and sexuality.

3. Context surrounding sexual violence and rape culture on higher educational institutions

South Africa is overwhelmed with high levels of sexual violence and institutions of higher education in South Africa are not exempt from this. Research (de Klerk, Klazinga, & McNeill,

⁴ Male equalling masculinity and not assigned sex at birth; and female equalling femininity and not assigned sex at birth. See a full explanation of this on p. 9-10.

2007; Dosekun, 2007; Gordon & Collins, 2013; Sass, 2005; Singh, Mudaly, & Singh-Pillay, 2015) suggests, as discussed in the literature review chapter, that sexual violence is in fact an abidingly serious problem in the university contexts. Several studies (Banyard et al., 2005; Clowes et al., 2009; Macleod, Böhmke, Mavuso, Barker, & Chiweshe, 2018) have related this issue to various broader societal issues, and the intersection of these with the contextual particulars of higher education contexts. These contextual factors are thought to exacerbate the high levels of sexual violence on campuses. Furthermore, other studies (Dosekun, 2007; Gordon & Collins, 2013; Shefer, Strebel, Ngabaza, & Clowes, 2017) at South Africa higher education campuses with high levels of sexual violence have examined the discursive constructions used by students in order to protect/cope/avoid their own vulnerability to rape, and how normalised the expectation to tolerate/manage this is.

Literature has also shown that high levels of distrust and dissatisfaction exist amongst students/staff in relation to many institutional responses to sexual violence and rape culture on campuses in various higher education institutions (de Klerk et al., 2007; Dosekun, 2007; Gordon & Collins, 2013). A study by de Klerk et al. (2007), revealed that Rhodes University has had a long history of dealing with the problem of sexual violence and rape at the institution. More recently, the Commission of Gender Equality reported that Rhodes University is ‘lagging’ on transforming the rape culture climate, and its gender/power dynamics that perpetuate sexual violence (Meth, 2017). This, according to Meth (2017) in a CSVr report on various social movements at South African universities nationwide, acted as a precursor to the distrust and dissatisfaction of university responses, services, and procedures that were reported during the rape culture social movement that took place at Rhodes University in 2016 (#RURReferenceList protest).

The challenge facing higher education institutions is their ability to adequately set up policies/services, carry out procedures, and respond to rape and rape culture on their campuses. This is despite the fact that universities are uniquely situated in their potential to respond to and transform rape culture, as rape occurs within a “social and institutional framework that offers profound possibilities for the mobilization of social change” (Brenner, 2013, p. 2). Perceived failure to transform rape culture on university campuses has created an environment where some students/staff resort to protest action as a means to call for transformation.

4. Rationale for this study

In April 2016, at Rhodes University in Grahamstown (Makhanda⁵), South Africa, a social movement protest, known as the #RUPreferenceList, led by some students and staff raised the issue of rape culture on campus. A list of eleven individuals' names followed by 'et al' (meaning and others) was circulated on a social networking site. Although there were no direct allegations made on the list, it was soon understood that the list of names referred to alleged rapists at the University. This followed a campaign, known as Chapter 2.12⁶, that had been in operation the week leading up to the publication of the list which had placed posters around campus. Among other quotes, these posters contained statements allegedly made by the University management and prosecutors in response to reported cases of rape on campus. These posters were initially removed by members of the Campus Protection Unit (CPU), under alleged instruction from the University management, but were later replaced by management. Following the publication of this list, which became known as 'reference list', students mobilised to protest the University's sexual violence policies and procedures, as well as the rape culture on the University campus.

The protest continued to escalate, resulting in a full academic shutdown at the University. Some of the student/staff protesters perceived the University management's responses to the #RUPreferenceList protest as failing to confront/transform the rape culture on campus (Meth, 2017). These interventions by the institution included: removing those on the 'reference list' from campus in attempts to safeguard them from the protesters, inviting police officials onto campus, and obtaining a court interdict⁷, interdicting disruptive protest activity by students and those associated with them (naming some specific University constituents). This was interpreted by some protesters as a means to 'silence' the social movement, which led to one of the official slogans of the social movement - 'we will not be silenced'⁸ (Meth, 2017). Moreover, it was perceived by some that the institution was protecting the alleged perpetrators, raising questions around the balance of protecting the individual rights of the accused versus the individual rights of the victims (Meth, 2017). As a result of the rape culture protests, a task

⁵ The city, formerly known as Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape region of South Africa, has recently (2018) changed its name to Makhanda. For the purposes of this thesis, due to the data being collected prior to this name change, I will refer to Makhanda as Grahamstown.

⁶ Refers to **Chapter 2**, Section 12 of the Constitution, which guarantees the safety and security of persons under individual rights.

⁷ This interdict, which has been anonymised, can be found under **Appendix 1: Interdict**.

⁸ This slogan later became the title of Sexual Violence Task Team's report of recommendations.

team (SVTT) was “set up through a participatory process to explore ways in which a counter-culture to rape culture may be addressed at the University and more broadly” (Sexual Violence Task Team, 2016, p. 23). The SVTT produced a report with over 90 recommendations⁹, in six broad arenas, on how to address (counter) rape culture within the institution.

Throughout the #RUniversityReferenceList protest, the topic of rape and rape culture received a great deal of media attention¹⁰. Rape as a media topic is often one that flares up from time to time, particularly with regards to specific rape cases (e.g. the Jacob Zuma trial in 2006). During the #RUniversityReferenceList protests, the media sites publicised the tension surrounding the differing positions to addressing rape culture on campus, between the broadly constituted groups of institutional management/leadership, and that of the social movement group (including both students and staff). In recognising the various conflicting arguments, between the social movement and the institution, that were brought to attention to the public through these various media forums, this research seeks to provide insight into how these arguments were discursively constructed by these collective groups on official institutional communication sites and social media.

This is because much work has looked at the experiences of individuals who have experienced rape, general understandings of rape in the media, and about particular publicised rape cases. Which, according to Dosekun (2013, p. 519), has left a dearth in the literature where “there are few studies of how rape is constructed as a social issue or crisis in South Africa” outside of the afore mentioned instances. Thus, this research seeks to gain insight into how differing online platforms enabled certain collective groups at the University to facilitate discussions that centre around how rape as a social issue should be addressed within the institution. Exploring how rape, and rape culture, are spoken about in the media and through ‘everyday talk’ is important to understand how it is discursively constructed as a social issue/crisis in the South African context (Dosekun, 2013).

⁹ This report of recommendations can be accessed online under the reference of: Sexual Violence Task Team (2016). “We will not be silenced”: A three-pronged justice approach to sexual offences and rape culture at Rhodes University/UCKAR. Grahamstown, South Africa: Critical Studies in Sexualities and Reproduction. URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321728505_We_will_not_be_silenced_A_three-pronged_justice_approach_to_sexual_offences_and_rape_culture_at_Rhodes_UniversityUCKAR

¹⁰ See for example: <http://www.thedailyvox.co.za/rhodes-university-rape-problem-rureferencelist/>; <https://mg.co.za/article/2017-04-25-00-challenging-the-culture-of-rape-at-rhodes>; <https://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/5-arrested-in-rhodes-university-anti-rape-protest-20160420>; <http://www.thejournalist.org.za/spotlight/violence-nakedness-and-the-discourse-of-rureferencelist>

Furthermore, Dosekun (2013) contends that one of the challenges for feminist scholars in South Africa is to contextualise (and oppose) the sometimes reductive, and distorted, ways the national rape crisis/culture is discursively constructed. Dosekun (2013, p. 533) writes that it is “by now a feminist truism that the very manner in which rape is put into discourse is political”. This meant that a feminist theoretical lens, which can place the arguments of how to address rape culture at Rhodes University within a broader context of surrounding literature, was crucial to incorporate. How these various arguments either contested or perpetuated a rape culture, and what these discursive constructions revealed in terms of social power dynamics, were the focus in this research.

Bennett (2009, p. 11) contends that exploring climates of gender inequality, and tackling sexual violence, are powerful routes into analyses of institutional culture at higher education institutions and such research “can illuminate the axes of power” that may exist within these institutions. Thus, examining the current climate of rape culture, its perpetuating discourses and attitudes, and the power inequalities that they maintain at higher education institutions can afford insight into possibilities to transform such institutions.

5. Fusing rhetorical analysis with feminist poststructuralist theory

In order to understand the discursive constructions around addressing rape culture, I use a rhetorical theoretical approach alongside feminist post-structuralist understandings of language and power. I begin this theoretical approach from the basic tenets of social constructionism, which include four principles: 1) an anti-essentialist view of the social world; 2) that knowledge is socially relative; 3) that language creates/sustains social meanings/knowledge; and lastly 4) that social meanings/knowledge that guide social action are integrally tied to power relations (Burr, 2003). These underpin post-structuralist understandings that the world is fundamentally constituted in language, as language is action-orientated, and constitutive. Poststructuralist feminism takes the tenets and principles of poststructuralism as a starting point and incorporates gender issues as its focal point (Arslanian-Engoren, 2002). There are three main tenets of poststructuralist feminism: language, subjectivity and power. This research concentrates predominantly on the use of language and power. I introduce some important concepts and outline the theoretical perspectives used briefly here (see further discussion in **Chapter 3**).

I use a rhetorical analysis for looking at the data I collected. A rhetorical analysis can be viewed as an attempt to understand “how people within specific social situations attempt to influence others through language” (Selzer, 2004, p. 281). It can be thought of as a critical reading of text, as it attempts to uncover the socially constructed values, beliefs and attitudes that are conveyed through speech (Selzer, 2004). It is also a tool to see how discursive resources are drawn upon to convey, and persuade others, on certain claims or positions related to a topic. ‘Rhetoric’ can refer to: the study of rhetoric as an academic discipline, the art of using rhetoric in writing or speech, and/or the *use* of language designed to create, exert, or redefine social meanings, and address/influence an audience (Jasinski, 2001; Winton, 2013). It is this final definition, the strategic/functional use of language, which I adopt in this research.

The term ‘discourse’ has come to mean very different things in the contrasting theoretical and disciplinary fields that use ‘discourse analyses’ (Potter, Wetherell, Gill, & Edwards, 1990). This ranges from the use of discourse as meaning actual instances of talking/writing and how they function linguistically, to more ideological definitions of discourse which view discourse as a practice which shapes and creates systems of meaning. Within post-structuralism, discourse refers to “ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledges and relations between them” (Weedon, 1997, p. 105). Thus, a discourse is not a language but a socially, historically, and institutionally specific structure of beliefs, terms, and categories (St. Pierre, 2000).

It is the latter view that is taken in this research. If individuals are conceptualised as discursive subjects, and discourse is a symbolic form of action, then the conditions and opportunities that allow subjects to reproduce/resist social, institutional and discursive practices need to be examined (Herndl & Licona, 2007). The term ‘discursive practices’ refers to the range of possibilities from which an agent of rhetoric may choose in a rhetorical situation (Fahnestock, 2011). There are, however, limitations that influence the choices of discursive practices available to a rhetor; this foregrounds the notion of viewing not only the rhetor as an ‘agent’ or source of discursive practice, but also how discourse conventions in the language system themselves can ‘author’ texts (Fahnestock, 2011).

In this research, I look at discursive practices about a social phenomenon (rape culture) in a higher education context, which included communication from institutional sources and social

movement sources; and how these collective groups discursively construct/convey collective identities, memories, and forms of social action, and how these tied into social power relations. This is because rhetorical discursive practices can establish, reinforce, or reject certain rhetorical ‘cultures’ among a collective, which can resist or reinforce broader social ‘discourses’ – such as those that exist in a ‘rape culture’ (Hauser, 2002).

6. Notes on terminology

In keeping with a tradition of qualitative, social constructionist, feminist research, I make references to myself in first person terminology. By doing this, I am locating myself within the research process of knowledge production as opposed to seeing myself (e.g. the researcher) as ‘objectively’ external to this process. In the same manner, I also refer to myself as the ‘author’ of this thesis.

There is debate surrounding how to describe an individual who has experienced sexual assault and/or rape. The terms ‘victim’ and/or ‘survivor’ are most frequently in academic and political/activist arenas, while the term ‘complainant’ is most frequently used among legal/justice system arenas (Sexual Violence Task Team, 2016). I have chosen to use the term ‘victim’ when it comes to discussing people who have experienced rape and sexual assault for the purposes of this research. I acknowledge the inadequacy of using such a singular term in recognising the vast complexities that surround a particular individual’s response to sexual assault and rape, and recognise that this term may denote certain meanings concerning an individual’s response to the sexual violence. The choice I made with regards to using the term ‘victim’ is that ‘survivor’ is often aligned with particular activist/political discourses (such as in the media), and is often a conscious personal choice to reconstitute one’s identity by using the term ‘survivor’ after a sexual assault experience. The term ‘complainant’ makes use of legal jargon which does not align with this research in any way. ‘Victim’ too, more than often not, was used within much of the literature that is drawn upon in this research. Thus, I adopt the term ‘victim’ (and the term ‘rapist/perpetrator’) to denote these individuals as I believe it is more fitting to this research within the academic field.

I use the terms ‘male/men’ and ‘female/women’ within this thesis when discussing rape culture. This is because much of the literature that I draw on uses these terms when discussing the understandings and effects of rape culture. However, when using these terms, I refer more

broadly to the gendered performances of masculine (i.e. ‘male’/ ‘man’) and feminine (i.e. ‘female’/ ‘woman’), and not strictly to the categories of sex assigned at birth. This is because rape is an act of masculine power against feminine subordination. Therefore, it should not be taken out of context that only ‘females’ (sex assigned at birth) are the only rape victims, and ‘males’ (sex assigned at birth) are the only rapists – but rather, an illustration of the imbalance of power between the masculine (any individual who can access this form of power) and feminine (any individual that is deemed as subordinate to ‘masculine’ power). It is also acknowledged that there are not only two binary gender categories, but a variety of gendered performances and identities that exist on a spectrum, and are not, and should not, be limited to any one category. Rape, and sexual violence, as discussed in the next chapter has been considered to be a ‘gendered’ social issue, with statistics showing that ‘females’ (sex assigned at birth) are more often rape victims than ‘males’ (sex assigned at birth) – this notion (and its potential problematics are discussed in more detail later). For the sake of readability I do not continue to make this distinction within text, but it should be implied through the signifiers of ‘female/male’ (sex assigned at birth) and ‘woman/man¹¹’ (gender) that I imply these categories.

7. Overview of chapters

The following chapter (**Chapter 2**) is a review on the literature of sexual violence and rape as a societal issue, with a particular focus on the South African context. I also look at the understandings around rape culture and its rape myths. Importantly, I look at how and why higher education institutions, worldwide as well as in South Africa, are experiencing a climate of rape culture. I then look at research around how universities have responded to the sexual violence and rape culture at the institutions, and how these responses been perceived as inadequate among university constituents, resulting in high levels of distrust and dissatisfaction. This ultimately forms a background to the 2016 rape culture protests at Rhodes University.

The third chapter (**Chapter 3**) is a discussion of the theoretical frameworks and perspectives used to inform my research process. Starting broadly from social constructionist theory, I move on to delineate important concepts under feminist post-structuralist theory. I draw on Weedon’s (1997) work to understand the relationship between language, social institutions, and social power. I then discuss rhetorical theory as a framework in understanding how ‘symbol use’

¹¹ Although ‘male’ power is used as a term to mean gendered power, as ‘men’ power is grammatically incorrect.

(language) is understood as a pervasive feature in how individuals construct and convey meanings, how these communicative ‘arguments’ explicitly or implicitly persuade others, and how this persuasion can be functional through inciting social action, or by constituting identities. Additionally, interpreting how culture and context need to be taken into account when understanding communication is necessitated – a move toward a more ‘contemporary’ rhetorical theory. I then discuss the fundamental principles of rhetoric, in that it is ‘action orientated’, ‘functional’, ‘contextual’, tied to ‘social power’, and a ‘strategic action’. I then narrow the focus of the chapter to understandings around public rhetorical theory (public discourse, public spheres, and public ‘problems’) and its enactment in social movements, counter publics, and institutions; and then on the nuances and considerations digital delivery methods and public rhetoric.

In **Chapter 4**, the methodology chapter, I delineate the process of how the data was sampled, collected and sorted. The method for the interpretation and analysis of these data is then explained. Lastly, I consider some of the ethical concerns of this research project, as well as reflect on the research process and the various decisions I made which inevitably shaped the end product. My analysis of the data is divided over two chapters.

In the first of the two (**Chapter 5**) I interpret and analyse data that were collected from ‘official’ Rhodes University communication sites. This analysis centres around four major themes of discussion. These were: that rape culture is a societal issue that requires a collective effort to address it; that rape culture must be addressed within the bounds of the law; the University’s commitment, and its continued investment, to addressing rape culture on campus; and, the use of external ‘supportive’ messages that bolstered the reputation, efforts, and actions of the institution and its leadership/management.

In **Chapter 6**, the second analysis chapter, I analyse and interpret data collected from two online social networking forums that some students and staff members of the University have created to discuss topics such as rape culture. This analysis chapter includes six broad patterns of discussion. These include: how the ‘physical’ body was threatened or embodied within a rape culture; the contestation of a ‘law and order’ approach to addressing rape culture; the idea that a ‘conspiracy’ was at hand with regards to the University ‘addressing’ rape culture; how efforts to address rape culture have and will continue to fail unless other systemic issues are

addressed too; the argument for approaches that are more victim focused – and less victimising; and lastly, the collective (and segregating) rhetoric: in light of ‘failed’ attempts to address rape culture on campus, that it is now ‘our’ responsibility (‘it’s on us’) to address rape culture moving forward.

In the last chapter, **Chapter 7**, I revisit the research questions I sought to answer and provide a brief overview of the research process. I then discuss the research findings in terms of a compound rhetorical situation, weaving in critical feminist theory and literature to understand, and situate some of these. Finally, I conclude this thesis by looking at some of the project’s limitations, and providing suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

1. Introduction

‘Rape culture’ is a social issue that is perpetuated and sustained by particular discourses and practices, and these social actions carry certain meanings. I start the chapter by providing an overview of the characteristics of sexual violence and rape, moving from how this is a prevalent issue worldwide, to concentrating on the ‘rape crisis’ in South Africa. Next, I review literature that examines how a rape culture, and its ‘rape myths’, are largely operationalised through communicative signifiers which have very real physical consequences. I then explore how sexual violence and rape culture is shown to be an issue among higher education institutions worldwide, as well as in South Africa. Here, research is drawn on which examine the various unique contextual factors that are thought to contribute to the high levels of sexual violence and rape culture on campuses. The chapter then moves on to focus on studies which show how university constituents (predominantly students) are experiencing and reacting to rape cultures on campuses. This chapter then reviews work that examines how higher educational institutions have responded to sexual violence and rape culture, and what the perceptions of university constituents are to this. Lastly, I look at how these institutional responses, and the subsequent perceptions/reaction to them, create an environment where many students feel disappointed, distrustful, and ‘silenced’ in these spaces.

2. Characteristics of sexual violence and rape

Sexual violence refers to any sexual act, attempts to obtain sexual acts, or acts of trafficking for sexual purposes, directed against any person through the use of coercion, harassment, or violence, by any person, in any setting (Dartnall & Jewkes, 2013). Sexually violent acts encompass a range of different sexual acts, victim-perpetrator relationships, contexts, and forms. These include: rape by spouse/partner/acquaintance, rape by stranger; rape with multiple perpetrators; sexual violence by people in powerful/trusted positions (e.g. teachers/doctors); sexual contact through deception/coercion/blackmail; sexual abuse of minors and mentally/physically differently-abled individuals; demanding sex for favours/goods/work; sexual exploitation through human trafficking; unwanted sexual touching; unwanted exposure to pornography; prison rape; acts against sexual integrity; and, sexual contact of an intoxicated/inebriated person who does not have the ability to consent (Dartnall & Jewkes, 2013). The commonalities that arise between such diverse acts are that they all form sexual

acts which are directed at an individual's sexuality, in circumstances where consent, in some form or another, is not given freely or at all (Dartnall & Jewkes, 2013).

The legal definition of the scope of rape varies from country to country. For example, many countries (127 countries in 2012, including India, Nigeria, Afghanistan, and Saudi Arabia) have failed to criminalise marital rape as yet, despite being a crime under international crime (Dartnall & Jewkes, 2013; Kimmel, 2011; Turquet et al., 2012). These countries prohibit prosecution on the grounds that women have no legal right to say no to sex with their husbands. In South Africa, the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act, No. 32, defines rape as a non-gender specific unlawful and intentional act between two parties, involving any form of penetration, where consent was not given by one party. The Act then goes on to include compelled rape between two non-consenting parties by a third party, as well as sexual assault which includes the unlawful and intentional sexual violation of a complainant or inspiring the belief in a complainant that she/he will be sexually violated.

Whilst the law provides clear-cut definitions of rape, the public discourse concerning what constitutes rape is more unclear (Dartnall & Jewkes, 2013). Research has shown that the interpretation of a rape by the public may depend on various factors, contexts, and social norms of a society. This is exemplified in studies where the more familiar the perpetrator was to the rape victim, or the more culturally normalised a rape scenario was to the participants, the less likely they were to regard this scenario as sexual assault or 'real' rape (Deming, Covan, Swan, & Billings, 2013; Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 2000). Jewkes and Abrahams (2002, p. 1232) state that the differences between the legal and public notions of rape have "important implications for women who have experienced particular sexual experiences, for how they interpret these themselves and to others, and clearly have important implications for attempts to gain an understanding of the magnitude of the problem of non-consensual sex".

Any person, of any gender, of any sex assigned at birth category, of any age, of any race, of any socio-economic class, of any mental or physical ability, can be both a victim or perpetrator of sexual violence. However, studies (Black et al., 2011; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998) continuously reveal that sexual violence affects women more significantly than men. For example, the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey conducted in the United

States¹², found that nearly 1 in 5 women, and 1 in 71 men had been raped at some time in their lives (Black et al., 2011). This suggests that sexual violence is gendered in nature. Indeed, South African feminists (Gqola, 2015; Moffett, 2008) understand rape and sexual violence as arising from a context of gendered power relations and patriarchal norms, which normalise violence as a male resource.

This conclusion may be slightly problematic in light of who is considered to be victims, due to the inaccuracy of rape statistics, and the stigma that surrounds male rape which may detrimentally affect the extent to which it is reported. Nevertheless, the CIETAfrica (2004) report study showed that rape perpetrators (and perpetrators of other violent crimes) were overwhelmingly more likely to be male than female. The report also found that no less than 66% of males and 71% of females who had abused someone else had themselves been forced to have sex. This suggests that a high proportion of sex assigned at birth males are in fact rape victims.

Nonetheless, violence against ‘women’ (sex category) differs from the violence ‘men’ (sex category) experience, in that it is rooted in sex inequality (Watts & Zimmerman, 2002). This contributes to a larger background of unequal ‘gendered’ practices, making gendered violence not a new phenomenon. A report by the World Health Organisation (WHO), London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and South African Medical Research Council (2013) states that what is new, is the recognition that the acts of violence against women are not isolated events, but form a larger pattern of behaviours which incur mental, physical, and reproductive health consequences, that negatively affect an estimated one-third of women worldwide. These forms of violence maintain unequal power relations, through the subordination of women (sex category), both as an explicitly conscious mechanism or as an implicit consequence to an action (Watts & Zimmerman, 2002). The term ‘violence against women’ encompasses numerous forms of violence, which include: domestic violence, intimate partner violence, dowry deaths, honour killings, trafficking, and rape/sexual assault and other forms of sexual violence (Watts & Zimmerman, 2002; World Health Organization, 2013).

¹² I could not find comparable South African statistics for the rates of reported rape for ‘females’ versus ‘males’, from police statistics or national reports sexual violence.

Studies (although inaccurate) show that sexual violence in South Africa is widespread (as discussed in the context chapter), and that victims are more often, than not, familiar with their perpetrators which leads to high levels of unreported rapes. This low level of reporting (due to familiar perpetrators) has been linked to the ambiguous manner in which some women may experience rape by someone known to them, as it does not fit into the cultural 'rape script' which attributes rape to specific criteria. Examples of these include: by a stranger, at night and alone in a dark area (Deming et al., 2013). This subjective experience creates difficulty for women to acknowledge or report their own rape experience as 'rape'.

Gordon and Collins (2013) also suggest that the social invalidation that women receive when disclosing instances of GBV and rape, may lead to a cycle of underreporting, sending the message that women's experiences and identities are not valued. Consequently, women are perceived as 'less human' raising the question of women's status of 'citizenship' in South Africa; as women's fear and the resultant restriction of activities "compromises their sense of embodied agency and infringes upon their full rights as South African citizens" (Dosekun, 2007, p. 91). An example of this is illustrated in Dosekun's (2007) study, by a participant who proposes that the fear of rape is so prevalent in South Africa that it enters the very meaning of being a South African citizen. This is linked to what is known as a 'rape culture'.

3. Understanding the operation of rape culture

As mentioned in the introduction, rape culture is defined as "the metaphors, narratives, discourses, power relations, everyday practices, and institutional arrangements that foster particular kinds of gendered, racialized, sexualised, and class-based power relations in which sexual violence is, at best, minimised in importance and at worst, normalised" (Sexual Violence Task Team, 2016, p. 29). A rape culture entails complex sets of beliefs which normalise, condone, and encourage, violence against women (Buchwald, Fletcher, & Roth, 2005). It is embedded in social understandings, and thereby everyday actions which affect the reality of individual lives. These constitutive elements of a rape culture comprise of the everyday exposure to: images, language, jokes, media, advertising, and laws, that passively or blatantly make sexual violence an inevitable "fact of life" (Buchwald et al., 2005, p. xi). Therefore, the demonstrations of a rape culture range on a continuum from inappropriate sexual remarks/jokes to unacceptable sexual touching, to sexually violent acts (e.g. rape).

In this vein, Rentschler (2014) argues that a rape culture can be identified through various communicative signifiers. This is because discourses extend further than the individual, as social meanings are produced within social institutions and practices, which often serve the interests of the prevailing hegemony (Weedon, 1997). Brownmiller (1975, p. 256) argues that rapists “operate within an institutionalized setting that works to their advantage and in which a victim has little chance to redress her grievances”. This can be seen in how rape extends further than a purely physical act, as the threat of rape is “an exercise in power”, which controls women by reminding them of their own vulnerability to rape, that they are not safe/exempt from rape, and that their bodies are not entirely theirs (Gqola, 2015, p. 79). This is operationalised in many forms, from indirect acts such as unwanted gazes, gestures, ‘catcalling’ and scripts of street harassment to direct vocalisations threatening rape itself (Dosekun, 2007; Rentschler, 2014). All of these communicate ‘male’ power by reminding ‘women’ of their gendered subordination and their own vulnerability to rape (Gqola, 2015).

The use of fear in reminding women of their vulnerability to sexual violence plays a large role in maintaining rape culture’s patriarchal regime. South African feminists (Dosekun, 2007; Gqola, 2015; Moffett, 2006) argue that the pervasive fear of sexual violence acts as a means to keep women within certain boundaries, constraining their daily activities and behaviours. This form of social control is used as a mechanism against subordinated groups by those in power. According to Moffett (2006), sexual violence is particularly effective as a form of social control as it threatens physical violence, coupled with self-blame and shame on the victim’s part, which in turn leads to self-punitive and self-monitoring behavioural changes by the victim. Buchwald et al. (2005, p. 219) writes that a rape culture is “a culture of intimidation that keeps women afraid of being attacked and so it confines women in the range of their behaviour”.

An example of women restricting their behaviours is illustrated in Dosekun’s (2007) research with female students (discussed further below) at the University of Cape Town (UCT), where students mapped their fear of the danger of rape. The participants reported restricting their daily activities, managing their behaviours and self-presentation in public, and avoiding certain areas or uses of space (e.g. public transport at night), as they felt this lessened the danger of being sexually assaulted. However, Dosekun (2007) points out that it is important to understand that the fear of sexual violence and rape does not strip all ‘women’ of their agency (which can riskily liken fearfulness as an essential feminine ‘quality’). Rather, some ‘women’ may resist

and/or manage/negotiate their fear of sexual violence through the expression of their agency to do as they wish in their daily lives despite their fear (Dosekun, 2007).

At the heart of reinforcing rape culture's beliefs lie rape myths (Gqola, 2015). Rape myths are widely held inaccurate beliefs about how and why rape happens. Burt (1980, p. 217) first defined rape myths as "prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists - in creating a climate hostile to rape victims". They can be defined as socially/culturally situated and socially learned ideologies that excuse 'male' sexual aggression/violence (masculine power) against women (feminine vulnerability) while advocating that victims are at blame for their sexual victimisation (Deming et al., 2013; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). Two interlocking patterns are identified as creating the conditions of possibility for sexual violence, and perpetuating a rape culture: 1) victim-blaming and other discourses that minimise and excuse rape; and 2) taken-for-granted features of everyday heterosexuality that normalise and naturalise male sexual aggression and female sexual passivity (Sills et al., 2016).

Rape myths that stem from social/cultural ideologies that frame rape as a sexual act normalise rape (Gavey, 1989). Myths such as these enable a rape culture to thrive, allow secondary victimisation of sexual violence victims to occur, and create a climate of fear amongst women (Gqola, 2015). While rape myths may vary slightly across societies and cultures, in general they all tend to cast doubt or disbelieve rape claims, allocate the blame for rape onto the victim, find ways to excuse/exonerate the rapist, and suggest that only certain types of women and men (and others) can be victims and perpetrators (Burt, 1980; Grubb & Turner, 2012; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). Feminist scholars (Brownmiller, 1975; Burt, 1980; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994) suggest that rape myths serve to oppress and socially control 'women' (and other subordinate genders) in a patriarchal society. This has been demonstrated in studies where individuals report constraining their actions and behaviours in a defensive protective strategy against the fear of rape (Dosekun, 2007; Gordon & Collins, 2013; Ngabaza, Bojarczuk, Masuku, & Roelfse, 2015).

Furthermore, rape myths function to protect individuals, and society, from confronting the extent and reality of sexual violence by concealing and dismissing it (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). This is exemplified when rape myths are used to dismiss instances of rape from the category of 'real' rape, which denies the reality of many rapes (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994).

Inherent in the ‘real’ rape constructions are the idea that: if the victim knew the rapist then the rape was consensual; physical injury (e.g. from fighting back) is needed to prove that the rape was not consensual (i.e. violent); and, women’s bodies naturally ‘consent’ to penetration which means that rape for women is not traumatic (e.g. that it is normal) (Kosloski, Diamond-Welch, & Mann, 2018).

Examples of common rape myths include: women enjoy rape/women have an unconscious desire to be raped; women ‘ask’ to be raped; women routinely lie about rape/falsely report rape; husbands cannot rape their wives; only certain women can be raped; only certain men rape; it is not rape unless it is physically violent/there is a weapon; and all healthy women can resist rape should they really want to (Burt, 1980; K. Edwards, Turchik, Dardis, Reynolds, & Gidycz, 2011; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). However, various studies on the characteristics of rape have largely dispelled rape myths. These are discussed below.

Research worldwide has shown that the majority of perpetrators are familiar to their victims (e.g. intimate partners, family members, acquaintances) (Buck Doude, 2008; Fisher et al., 2005; Koss et al., 1987), that these rapes occur in private spaces (e.g. home of the victim/perpetrator) (Vetten et al., 2008), and, that the majority of rape occurs intra-racially rather than inter-racially (Suarez & Gadalla, 2010). This dispels myths that position only certain types of men as rapists, often portraying these men as violent, psychopathic, sexually-compulsive, and (usually) black ‘strangers’ (Wells & Elliott, 2001).

Research conducted by Koss et al., (1987), in American higher education institutions, found that the number of times that men admitted to perpetrating sexually violent acts was directly proportionate to the number of times women reported experiencing such acts. This dispels myths that suggest that a small number of sexually deviant men are responsible for the rapes of a large number of women. Furthermore, emphasis on the ‘sexually-compulsive’ aspect is extended in other rape myths, such as that rape is a form of ‘inappropriate sex’, arising from a ‘male’ need (arousal) to have sex. However, contemporary feminists posit that rape is not about sex or arousal, but an expression of male (masculine) power directed at the construction of femininity, and female vulnerability (Gqola, 2015).

Studies have shown that some men, and women (significantly less so than men), believe that women have a secret desire to be raped (K. Edwards et al., 2011). Research with US college students (149 men and women) revealed, that 1% of the female participants believed that women ‘secretly desire to be raped’, whilst 15% of the male participants believed this myth (Johnson, Kuck, & Schander, 1997). The myth that ‘women really want to be raped’ maintains that: 1) women can resist rape should they really wish to (Burnett, Mattern, Herakova, Jr, & Bornsen, 2009; Burt, 1980), and 2) ‘no really means yes’ as sometimes women play ‘hard-to-get’ in a mutually understood heterosexual game of courtship, by turning down sexual advances, to which they ‘will’ eventually consent (Gqola, 2015). This can lead to men ‘accidentally’ raping women as they ‘misunderstood’ that the women really meant no (Gqola, 2015).

Studies highlight the myth that victims of rape in one way or another, ‘asked for it’ (K. Edwards et al., 2011). Often these myths position certain behaviours (e.g. being intoxicated/walking alone at night) and certain attires (tight fitting/scantily clad) as inviting and/or deserving of rape (K. Edwards et al., 2011; Gqola, 2015). For example, in a study examining rape myth acceptance among 237 US college students, 41% of the sample believed that if a women is raped while she is under the influence of alcohol, then the victim is partly responsible (Aronowitz, Lambert, & Davidoff, 2012). Furthermore, the myth that victims ask to be raped seems to play a role in the justifications of rape perpetrators. For example, in Coopoo’s (2017, p. 63) research on the discourses used by rape perpetrators, the rapists implicated their victim’s behaviour and attire as an excuse for the rape (e.g. ‘well you shouldn’t have worn that’), which thereby implies that the victim was in part responsible. Feminist theories posit that the underlying belief attached to this myth is the widespread notion that women are obligated to monitor, police, restrict, and even hinder their movements in an attempt to ensure the safety of their bodies (Cahill, 2000; K. Edwards et al., 2011). Therefore, women who are sexually assaulted and victimised are seen as culpable. However, as Gqola (2015, p. 149) advocates there “is no correlation between how a women dresses and her ability to escape rape”.

Studies examining rape statistical categories have shown that false rape claims make up the minority of reported rapes (Lisak, Gardinier, Nicksa, & Cote, 2010). Lisak et al. (2010) determine that only 5.9% of the rape reports were false in their US based study, which examined rape report cases over a period of ten years. This matches the results of other studies

(Kelly & Lovett, 2005) which place the prevalence of false reports at between 2.1% – 10.9%. However, rape myth studies have also found that there are a significant portion of individuals who believe that the majority of rape accusations/reports are falsified. In the research conducted by Burt (1980), men and women believed that around 50% of rape accusations were false. More recently, Kahlor and Morrison (2007) found that American undergraduate college students (sample = 96 participants) believed that on average 19% of reports are false.

Edwards et al. (2010, as cited in Edwards et al., 2011) found that among men at an American college, 22% of the participants agreed that ‘women lie about rape to get back at men’, and 13% agreed that ‘a lot of women lead men on and then cry rape’. This leads to the myth that women may falsely claim or report instances of rape out of anger, fury or revenge, or in an attempt to uphold their (chaste) reputations and cover-up their ‘deviant’ sexual behaviours (Burnett et al., 2009; Burt, 1980; K. Edwards et al., 2011). In a similar vein, there is a belief that victims of ‘real’ rape report and lay charges through the criminal justice system, as they have nothing to hide (Gqola, 2015). This suggests that victims who do not report rape to the police are not ‘real’ victims, and are lying about being raped. However, as previously discussed, research (Gqola, 2015; Vetten, 2014) has shown that the decisions underlying not reporting a rape are vast and complex, and may result in a variety of negative consequences. Rape myths often position certain types of individuals as ‘rapeable’. For example, studies find that there exists a belief that: ‘husbands cannot rape their wives’ (K. Edwards et al., 2011). A study by Kirkwood and Cecil (2001) showed that 26% of their sample of 469 American college students (men and women) believed that sexual intercourse without consent in a heterosexual couple did not constitute as rape. Furthermore, 7% of their sample stated that the use of force in order to have penetrative sexual intercourse with one’s wife does not equal rape.

Additionally, in the CIETafrica (2004) study in South Africa (referred to in the introduction/context chapter), it was reported that 30% of participants believed that women/girls cannot refuse sex with a boyfriend/intimate partner, and 58% believed that it is not sexual violence/rape to force sex with someone you know. However, studies worldwide (World Health Organization, 2013), as well as in South African literature (Dartnall & Jewkes, 2013; Vetten, 2014), routinely show high prevalence levels¹³ of intimate partner rape. Martin, Taft, and Resick (2007) suggest, of the available research has been conducted in the United

¹³ See **Chapter 1** for statistics on intimate partner rape prevalence rates.

States, that between 10-14% of women are raped by their husbands in their life, and these numbers increase drastically (40-50%) in marriages with histories of domestic abuse.

‘Rapeable’ victims are typically depicted as sexually promiscuous, or socially disadvantaged women (Burnett et al., 2009; Burt, 1980; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). These myths obscure and deny that *all* women are vulnerable to rape by suggesting that only *other* women are vulnerable to rape (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). In addition, this silences/restricts other types of women from acknowledging/reporting their rape. Another example is how sex industry workers are seen as ‘unrape-able’ as they sell sexual deeds; however, anybody can be raped as everybody has the capacity of not consenting to sex (Gqola, 2015). In addition, male rape myths narrowly position male rape victims as gay, and/or seemingly feminine men, or prison inmates (Kassing, Beesley, & Frey, 2005; Sleath & Bull, 2010) silencing male rape victims not fitting into these categories.

The majority of feminist rape literature focuses on women as victims of male rape, due to the disproportionately high rate of male perpetrators and female victims (see Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). However, men are victims of rape too, and are likewise subjected to rape myths that place the responsibility and blame on the victim (Sleath & Bull, 2010). Studies have shown that male rape myths have been shown to be a strong predictor of male rape victim blaming, which means that acceptance of these myths contributes to further victimisation (Sleath & Bull, 2010). Kassing et al., (2005) list six broad examples of male rape myths that: (1) men are too strong to be overpowered/forced to have sex, (2) men initiate/control sexual activity and are not targets of sexual assault, (3) men who are raped lose their manhood, (4) male sexual assault is rare, (5) male victims should be able to tough it out or cope with the experience, and lastly, (6) male rape does not happen outside of prison.

Additionally, male rape myths suggest that women cannot be perpetrators of sexual assault (Kassing et al., 2005; Turchik & Edwards, 2012). The myths include the belief that if a male responds physically to rape he must have enjoyed it (Turchik & Edwards, 2012), and that victims of male on male rape are gay (or may appear so) (Sleath & Bull, 2010). The myth that victims are gay, or appear so, is a result of male rape victims being feminised and emasculated

by societal gendered notions, due to their ‘failure/ineffectiveness’ as a hegemonic¹⁴ male (Doherty & Anderson, 2004). Male rape myths in general are thought to stem from traditional masculine notions, which dictate that men should be strong, assertive, dominant and heterosexual (Sleath & Bull, 2010). For example, the myth that victims ‘can resist rape should they really wish to’ has been shown to be prominent in male rape myths, due to the emphasis traditional notions of masculinity place on male physical strength, which positions ‘real men’ as ‘too strong to be overpowered’ (Doherty & Anderson, 2004). For example, participants (male and female) in Doherty and Anderson’s (2004) study reported that male rape victims differ from female rape victims in that they are less ‘socially acceptable’ victims, where society (and the male victims themselves) will judge these victims as emasculated men, who were unable to stick up for themselves, and thus, fail in their effectiveness as a ‘real’ man.

Rape myths function in a multiplicity of ways. Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994) identify three broad functionalities of rape myths: firstly, rape myths serve to deny the reality or extent of sexual assault/rape; secondly, they serve to provide confirmation that the world is an ‘inherently’ good place, in which bad things only happen to those who deserve them (‘just world belief’); and lastly, they contribute to the oppression and social control of women. Furthermore, studies have suggested that rape myths may serve different purposes for men and women (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1995). For example, men make use of myths in order to justify the use of sexual domination against women, and women use them to mitigate fear and feelings of their own vulnerability (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1995).

Particular functions are deemed to be especially important as they perpetuate more harmful results (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). Of particular salience is the denial, minimisation, and trivialisation of victim injury, which shifts the blame of rape onto the victim for their own victimisation (Boakye, 2009; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). In addition, this functions to justify and excuse male sexual aggression towards women (Boakye, 2009). This is illustrated in

¹⁴ The concept of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ encapsulates the nature, form, and dynamics of male power (Morrell, Jewkes, & Lindegger, 2012). It was conceptualised originally by Connell (2000), and uses relations of power/hierarchy to understand how various masculinities intersect and how they complement, sustain, or maintain one another. Hegemonic masculinity is a position of cultural/societal leadership, and this type of masculinity does not merely seek to gain order over other performances of masculinity, but to the gender order as a whole (Connell, 1996). This views gender power relations in conjunction with the differentiation between groups of men who hold different relations to one another and more or less power in relation to a dominant group (Morrell et al., 2012). It is a term widely used in gender research in South Africa, as it takes into context the colonial/apartheid historical background of South Africa, that created extensive divisions across the political and economic landscape, and along lines of race and socio-economic class.

Coopoo's (2017) research, where perpetrators drew on various discourses (e.g. punishment/discipline of 'bad' women, uncontrollable male sexual desire/drive, miscommunication, women's 'secret' sexual desires) that blamed their victims for their victimisation, and/or excused or minimised the perpetrator's actions. Consequentially, this silences victims of sexual violence (adding to underreporting), which conceals and perpetuates rape by allowing perpetrators to believe rape is acceptable or has no consequences (Boakye, 2009; Burnett et al., 2009). This ultimately obscures the reality, extent and nature of sexual violence from society (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994).

Another phenomenon that is closely linked with stigmatisation and responsabilisation of rape victims is the 'just world belief'. The 'just world belief' derives from the theory that people ultimately get what they deserve and deserve what they get (e.g. bad people get bad fates), in a belief that the world is a just and safe place (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; Sakallı-Uğurlu, Yalçın, & Glick, 2007). People attribute responsibility by focusing on the victim's behaviour as an explanation of the scenario; if no responsibility can be assigned in this way then a focus on the victim's character as a source of responsibility is attributed (Sleath & Bull, 2010). Women may use discourses that place the responsibility of rape/GBV on victims in an attempt to protect themselves from perceiving their own vulnerability to rape, by positioning particular behaviours and actions as deserving; thus investment in these discourses provides women with a false sense of security (Burt, 1980; Gordon & Collins, 2013).

This is demonstrated in the research by Gordon and Collins (2013), where female university students in South Africa, generated a set of rape myth accepting 'rules' or practices to follow/adhere as a precautionary measure against GBV and rape. Additionally, 'just world' discourses which successively reinforce victim-blaming, silence instances of sexual violence by creating an environment where women are unable to speak out, freeing and/or excusing men of their responsibility (Gordon & Collins, 2013). This, in turn, disables both men and women from seeing GBV and rape as a systemic social problem arising from unequal gender power relations. As Gordon and Collins (2013, p. 100) maintain that "the widespread availability of and investment in these discourses conceal the gender inequalities and social power relations that contribute to the continuation of gender-based violence".

3.1. Rape myth acceptance implications

Rape myth beliefs do not exist in a vacuum of their own, but are interconnected with other widely held pervasive beliefs and attitudes in societies (Burt, 1980). The widespread acceptance of rape myths is argued to be a key feature in the existence of rape cultures (Burt, 1980). Several studies (Boakye, 2009; Burt, 1980; Chiroro, Bohner, Viki, & Jarvis, 2004; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010) have examined rape supportive attitudes and rape myth acceptance, their contribution to negative attitudes towards rape and rape victims, and their correlation to high levels of rape perpetration/rape proclivity in societies. Burt's (1980) research into attitudinal behaviour predictors found that sex role stereotyping (appropriateness of work, family and social roles based on sex), acceptance of interpersonal violence use (belief that violence is necessary/appropriate at times in relationships), and adversarial sexual beliefs (belief that male-female relationships are naturally competitive/conflicting) were positively correlated with higher levels of rape myth acceptance. In a study by Glick et al. (2000), attitudes of benevolent sexism¹⁵ and hostile sexism¹⁶ were measured with over 15 000 participants across nineteen countries worldwide, including South Africa. The authors found that overall men endorsed hostile sexism more than women, and that women endorsed benevolent sexism equally to men in roughly half of the countries (Glick et al., 2000). In addition, the higher the level of sexist beliefs held by men in a particular country, the higher the level of gender inequality and low status of women in that country was. Furthermore, the higher men's sexism scores were, the higher women's acceptance of sexist ideologies were, suggesting/supporting the notion that "disadvantaged groups adopt the system-justifying beliefs of dominant groups" (Glick et al., 2000, p. 772).

This has implications in cultures, for example like South Africa, where women may adhere to dominant societal rules, in this case 'being a good woman', as a coping strategy in order to protect them from male violence (e.g. rape) (Glick & Fiske, 2001; Shefer et al., 2008). South Africa was in the top four countries which held the highest overall 'sexism' score means, with both men and women scoring extremely high in both 'hostile' and 'benevolent' sexism scales

¹⁵ Benevolent sexism emphasizes that women are pure, 'special' beings to be cherished and protected by men; they are often characterised as fulfilling domestic/reproductive duties, that men 'depend on', and as such a women's love will make a man 'whole'. It is measured by items such as: 'A good woman should be set on a pedestal by her man'.

¹⁶ Hostile sexism involves the beliefs that women are inferior, cold, selfish, aggressive beings and that they are threatening to take over men's 'rightful' (dominant) place. It is measured by items such as: 'Women seek to gain power by getting control over men.'

(Glick et al., 2000). These complementary forms of sexism work together to sustain a patriarchal society by rewarding women who accept and fit into (hetero) normative gender roles and power relations, and by punishing women who 'challenge' this status quo (Shefer et al., 2008).

Research (Burt, 1980; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1995) has predominantly focused on hostile sexism (adversarial sexual beliefs) as an underlying account for the stigmatisation of rape. However, more recent literature (Glick & Fiske, 2001; Sakalli-Uğurlu et al., 2007; Yamawaki, 2007) shows that benevolent sexism also plays a major role in stigmatising/blaming rape victims, despite its subjective positivity toward women. Not only do sexist attitudes further perpetuate rape culture, but Yamawaki's (2007) research has shown that observer attitudes and perceptions also play a serious role in treatment and recovery for rape victims. For example, rape myth accepting/sexist attitudes produce unsympathetic, suspicious, disbelieving, judgemental, and inappropriate responses to victims in society, as well as in the criminal justice system processes (Vetten, 2014).

In examining the motivations that underlie the link between rape myth acceptance and rape proclivity, Chiroro et al. (2004) found that a high level of rape myth acceptances coincides with very high levels of rape. Furthermore, the reported motivation of 'enjoyment of sexual dominance' mediates the connection between rape myth acceptance and self-reported rape proclivity. Similarly, Wegner, Abbey, Pierce, Pegram, and Woerner's (2015) study found that the most endorsed justification for sexual aggression/assault was related to sexual entitlement, and that rape supportive attitudes in sexual violence perpetrators were positively correlated to such post-assault justifications. This supports the argument by feminist scholars that rape myths/beliefs are used to justify, deny, and trivialise sexual aggression and assault (Burt, 1980; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; Wegner et al., 2015).

Likewise, in a South African study, Jewkes et al. (2010) discovered that over two-thirds of the participants (sample of men) who had indicated they had committed sexually violent acts, reported motivations stemming from a sense of sexual entitlement. Rape as a form of anger or punishment were also found to be common motivations, especially in intimate partner rape (Jewkes et al., 2010). Men who had raped young girls (under 15 years of age), or had participated in a gang rape mostly reported peer pressure to do so, demonstrating that

socialisation into harmful social norms and practices contributes to high levels of rape prevalence (Jewkes et al., 2010). The findings of these studies support feminist notions (Brownmiller, 1975) that sexual violence and rape perpetration can be understood to stem from a demonstration of gendered power, where men use/view rape as a legitimate expression and exertion of power (and thus dominance) to ‘prove’ their superiority in the gendered hierarchy. This undermines the evolutionary perspective premise (e.g. Thornhill & Palmer, 2000) that rape stems from a sexual ‘need’ (arousal) to obtain sex.

3.2. Rape culture online

“Rape culture operates in most of the world”, thus, it is no surprise that it is evident and embedded in the online realm, such as social media (Mendes, 2015, p. 9). Social media has undoubtedly been implicated in the perpetuation of rape culture, including: sexually objectifying/harassing women on social media, victim-blaming responses to rape cases/stories, and sharing of jokes online that trivialise rape (Rentschler, 2014; Sills et al., 2016). However, as Rentschler (2014) argues, social media sites have become important spaces, for young people in particular, to learn about rape culture and challenge it. Feminist media study scholarship have recently been identifying social media spaces as important contemporary public spheres for feminist activist participation, where individuals can simultaneously learn about, and intervene on, rape culture (Mendes, Ringrose, & Keller, 2018; Rentschler, 2014; Sills et al., 2016).

Studies have found that rape culture is pervasive in existing ‘online’ as well as in everyday offline lives. In interviewing young people in New Zealand on their online exposure to rape culture, and responses to it, Sills et al. (2016) revealed that these participants experienced the elements of a rape culture as normalising and celebrating male sexual conquests, shaming and demeaning sexual expressions/representations of women, using rape jokes, victim-blaming sexual assault victims, and situating rape victims within a broader matrix of sexism. All of these were thought to fuel and reinforce a rape culture. However, while these participants described this material as distressing, they also described how online spaces, such as social media sites, offered inspiration, education, and solidarity that legitimated their discomfort with rape culture (Sills et al., 2016). These sites provided safe spaces which served to buffer against the negative effects of rape culture, and allowed them to participate in a feminist ‘counter public’ that directly contested rape culture online (Sills et al., 2016).

Similarly in the study by Mendes, Ringrose, and Keller (2018), who researched the experiences of individuals who participate in digital feminist activism (Twitter users) against rape culture on social media sites, the idea of safe spaces to feel comfortable sharing, and connecting with like-minded people on social media, was described as particularly important for learning, awareness, and consciousness raising. In addition, their participants (self-defined digital feminist activists) felt strongly that digital ‘calling out’¹⁷ practices were a critical part of instigating social change online, as well as raising the visibility of feminism and enabling the voice of marginalised groups (Mendes et al., 2018). Furthermore, the participants understood these forms of online activism to be easier than discussing their feminist views in ‘real’ life. This, the authors state “illustrates how important digital platforms are in providing spaces to develop both individual and collective feminist consciousness, and to find and maintain support for feminist views” (Mendes et al., 2018, p. 240).

4. Sexual violence and rape culture on higher education campuses

University campuses are often expected to be spaces that are safe, protected, and where there is an institutional responsibility to provide and maintain a secure environment for all who work and study therein (Singh et al., 2015). However, findings from several studies in South Africa as well as in the United States (Clowes et al., 2009; de Klerk et al., 2007; Dosekun, 2007; Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000; Gordon & Collins, 2013; Koss et al., 1987; Shefer et al., 2017; Singh et al., 2015) reveal that the fear and reality of sexual assault is widespread, especially amongst female students. Studies have highlighted that various contextual factors, such as age demographics of students, risky alcohol use, sexual relationship styles, rape myth acceptance, and male peer norms, may exacerbate sexual violence on higher education campuses (Banyard, Plante, & Moynihan, 2004; Franklin, 2010; Sexual Violence Task Team, 2016).

The US Bureau of Justice Statistics indicated that women college students between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four face the highest risk of sexual victimisation (Hart, 2003). Humphrey and Kahn (2000) state that women in this age range report experiencing rape at four times higher than the assault rate of all women. Findings from a South African study by Abrahams et al. (2008) found that the mean age at which rape occurred in a women’s lifetime was 20 years old. Coincidentally, a South African study by Jewkes et al. (2010) conveyed that the majority of male participants, who had self-reported perpetrating rape, were between the ages

¹⁷ This practice refers to ‘calling out’ instances of rape culture (e.g. misogynistic comments/jokes).

of 18 and 20. According to the authors, this suggests that most men who rape do so for the first time as teenagers, and that almost all men that rape do so by their mid-twenties. This makes higher education institutions a particularly prominent zone for rapes to occur, as the majority of the student population are within this age range.

A qualitative study by Deming et al. (2013), explored rape myth acceptance amongst American female college students, using vignettes portraying real-life rape scenarios in college settings, with varying degrees of consent, alcohol usage, and perpetrators familiar to the victims. They found that the female college students believed/accepted several rape myths. For example, perception of higher levels of alcohol usage in the victim led to more responsibility being placed upon the victim. While these participants did not explicitly blame the victims (women) for the rape, they did excuse the perpetrators (men) (Deming et al., 2013). Older participants in this context (fourth years) expressed greater sanctions regarding women's behaviour, and thus blame. This was attributed to the older participants having been longer in this culture, thereby having already learnt to monitor their behaviours, in contrast to the first year students who were new to the culture (Deming et al., 2013). In addition, the more common/familiar the scenario was to the participants, the less inclined they were to label the assault as rape and the more they were reluctant to report it. This suggests that the cultural normalisation of sexual violence plays a role in how students perceive and react to it.

Students with higher rape myth or rape supportive beliefs are more likely to perceive sexual violence experiences as normal or ordinary experiences, which in turn contributes to the lack of reporting (Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 2000). A lack of reporting sexual violence instances affects the information university members receive about sexual violence, creating a discrepancy between research findings of the prevalence of sexual violence and numbers reported by institutions (Argiero, Dyrdaahl, Fernandez, Whitney, & Woodring, 2010). Furthermore, studies (Chiroro et al., 2004; Jewkes et al., 2010; Wegner et al., 2015) on rape myth acceptance and rape proclivity (discussed above) have shown that high level of rape myth acceptance (in men particularly) coincides with very high levels of rape proclivity.

While alcohol consumption is not a casual factor of sexual violence, it can be viewed as an exacerbating one, in that it forms the backdrop against which specific gender and sexual socialisation practices occur in many university contexts (Sexual Violence Task Team, 2016).

A ‘drinking culture’ or ‘party culture’ has been shown to operate at universities (Franklin, 2010), for example in South Africa at Rhodes University (Young & De Klerk, 2009). Risky alcohol usage, coupled with problematic views about gendered identities and sexuality (heterosexuality in particular) that normalise aggressive, competitive, and conquest-oriented modes of sexual interaction and adversarial sexual beliefs, have been argued to contribute to the high levels of sexual violence on higher education campuses (Banyard et al., 2005, 2004; Sexual Violence Task Team, 2016).

A study at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) by Clowes et al. (2009) disclosed that heterosexual relationships, characterised by traditional gendered sexual roles in which double standards regarding sexuality prevail, were commonplace at the University. This made women (in particular) vulnerable to instances of violent, unsafe and abusive sexual practices (Clowes et al., 2009). Furthermore, the students used discourses which highlighted how gender inequality and coercion within these heterosexual practices cannot be understood outside normative gender roles (Clowes et al., 2009). Other studies (Shefer, Clowes, & Vergnani, 2012) at South African universities note additional exacerbating risk factors for sexual violence. These are linked to the socio-economic vulnerabilities of women, such as transactional sex for commodities, which contributes to unsafe and abusive sexual practices. Clowes et al. (2009, p. 29) state that it is “within this context of multiple, competing and mutually constitutive inequalities built around gender, class, age, sexuality and culture that younger female students are located in very particular positions of vulnerability on campus”.

4.1. Effects/responses to rape culture climates on campuses

South African studies (Dosekun, 2007; Gordon & Collins, 2013) have shown that students, particularly female students, adopt various strategies of ‘protection’ or coping mechanisms when living within a rape culture on higher education campuses. These include: making use of rape myth accepting, or just world belief, discourses to distance the perceptions of self-vulnerability to sexual violence; and restricting and monitoring their behaviours and self-presentations in an attempt to minimise their risk of being targeted as victims. Students perceptions, constructions of, and reactions to the fear and nature of sexual assault and violence on campuses are crucial to examine as they provide an insight into how a rape culture may affect student populations.

One discursive strategy used by students in the studies mentioned above, was to distance themselves from the feeling, and reality, of their own vulnerability to instances of sexual violence and rape. For example, Gordon and Collins (2013) conducted research at a South African university in Kwa-zulu Natal on how female students experienced and understood GBV. Major findings illustrated that these women lived in fear of the surrounding GBV at the university, in so far in that they used various strategies to ‘protect’ themselves against becoming victims thereof. These strategies made use of positioning themselves in particular discourses, such as a victim blaming discourse of women’s responsibility, that appeared to help them ‘defend’ themselves against the fear of sexual violence (Gordon & Collins, 2013). This echoes Dosekun’s (2007) research at the University of Cape Town (UCT), which showed that female students made use of rape myths that distanced and othered perpetrators (such as that all rapists are strangers and that rape happens in public spaces), and implicitly referenced myths that position the expression of female sexuality and certain attires as provoking men to rape. The use of these discourses, however, paradoxically reinforce gender inequalities and power relations, thereby creating a society supportive of gender-based and sexual violence.

Another strategy of safety and protection to avoid sexual assault results in the phenomenon of restricting and monitoring behaviours. This is exemplified in the above-mentioned study at the University in Kwazulu-Natal, where female students generated a set of rape myth accepting ‘rules’ to abide by/adhere to. These were employed as a ‘precautionary’ measure against the threat of gender/sexual violence. They also served to position victims of violence as partly responsible, under the assumption they had broken these ‘rules’ (Gordon & Collins, 2013). Both strategies produced a false veil of security - that rape will not happen to them should they monitor their behaviour and actions, and that victims were deserving of their fate.

The phenomenon of restricting and monitoring behaviours in an attempt to avoid sexual assault has been shown to operate in other South African universities. For example, female UCT students revealed that they restricted daily behaviours, managed self-presentation in public, and avoided strange men: all these behaviours and rules were used to lessen the danger or ‘invitation’ of rape (Dosekun, 2007). Similarly, Ngabaza et al., (2015) at a university in the Western Cape found that women students were restricting, monitoring, and regulating their behaviours and whereabouts, solely due to the fear of male violence, on the basis that they were women. This speaks to the way in which women may associate ‘femaleness’ with extreme

levels of vulnerability in their construction of safety (Ngabaza et al., 2015). The sense of inevitably stems from the resignation to the fear of male violence that shapes experiences and practice (Shefer et al., 2017).

The construction of women as ‘inevitable victims’ who are fundamentally vulnerable to violence has been shown to operate in other studies (Dosekun, 2007; Gordon & Collins, 2013; Shefer et al., 2017) at South African higher education institutions. For example, by Shefer et al. (2017) found that female students felt and were perceived (by male and female students) as being more unsafe on the university campus than male students. Female participants expressed that they viewed their female bodies as putting them at particular risk to threats, such as sexual violence (and that male bodies were not vulnerable to these threats). This attribution relies on the stereotypical notion that men are physically stronger than women. Furthermore, in Gordon and Collins (2013, p. 97) findings the fear and perception of inevitability of gender-based and sexual violence, was so central to the identity of the female student participants, that they reported expecting to experience violence (at some point in their lives) in a “waiting game”. This illuminates the extent to which gender-based/sexual violence are perceived as an always present threat, and how individuals in this context are expected to tolerate and manage this threat (and fear thereof). As a result, this normalises a ‘culture’ of fear among the aforementioned students (Gordon & Collins, 2013).

Byron (2017) conducted research into student requests for trigger warnings and safe spaces on American higher education campuses. Trigger warnings, and safe spaces, are two discursive practices that occur online when talking about sexual violence and rape culture (among other sensitive topics). Trigger warnings occur in written text and include using “TW” or “Trigger Warning” as precursory label to a following text. These warn victims about potentially ‘triggering’ content (although these ‘protection’ strategies, as discussed in the next chapter, are debated in feminist circles). Safe spaces are characterised both by the physical location and by the community that gathers there (Byron, 2017). These provide collective groups a ‘safe’ space, and opportunity, to come together to discuss shared lived-experiences or problems. Both of these terms are central in the online rhetoric on sexual violence.

By requesting the use of trigger warnings and safe spaces within academic environments, the participants created new collective forms of relationality and responsibility, and ‘queered’¹⁸ expectations around trauma, healing, and educational spaces (Byron, 2017). These requests by students sought to bring trauma into the public sphere and create spaces in academic settings for students to exist without expectations that they are fully healed (Byron, 2017). Trauma victims were also able to assert their place in the University, demand acknowledgment of their experiences, and express their desire to fully participate in academic settings. Furthermore, participants emphasised the need for more ‘honest’ communicatory safe (but not necessarily ‘comfortable’) spaces in the education environment so that viewpoints/perspectives, such as those on rape culture, could be openly discussed and challenged (Byron, 2017). This provides an account for understanding the nature of public trauma and collective vulnerability, with regard to sexual violence, on university campuses.

4.2. Higher education responses to rape culture

Multiple studies (de Klerk et al., 2007; Gordon & Collins, 2013; Sass, 2005; Singh, Mabaso, Mudaly, & Singh-Pillay, 2016; Singh et al., 2015) have highlighted the importance of responses from higher education institutions with regard to sexual violence. These responses can occur through sexual assault policies and procedures, a focus on rape prevention interventions, official communication forums by management staff, grievance procedures and how university employees may treat complainants and perpetrators.

Analysing institutional responses and policies to sexual violence/rape on university campuses is critical when examining students fear of the threat of rape (Singh et al., 2015). Unfortunately however, studies at South African universities (Bennett et al., 2005; Gouws, Kritzing, & Wenhold, 2005; Hames, Beja, & Kgosiimmele, 2005; Sass, 2005; Singh et al., 2016; Tidimane & Mosarwe, 2005) have found that students perceive sexual assault policies to be inadequate as a form of protection as they are poorly enforced, have poor reporting mechanisms/procedures, and are difficult to access both in availability and language. Moreover, a widespread ignorance to, and unfamiliarity with, existing policies by both staff and students was found across these studies. Trends of underreporting sexual violence, ‘muteness’ on behalf of the students, and institutional silence on the matter of sexual assault were also evident across these studies.

¹⁸ ‘Queering’ something offers a destabilisation of seemingly fixed concepts and power relations (Byron, 2017).

Singh et al. (2016), in examining students' perceptions of sexual assault policies at the University of Kwa-zulu Natal (UKZN), state that the high level of ignorance regarding sexual assault protocols that their study found indicates a need for more effective ways to engage with students about the policy's content, purpose and where to access it. Likewise, research conducted at UWC illustrates the unawareness and unfamiliarity of sexual assault protocols amongst both staff and students, as well as the inaccessibility of these protocols (Sass, 2005). Sass (2005) suggests that this is indicative of sexual assault/rape protocols being more of a formality in higher education institutions, where the dissemination of protocol information to the student body has not been viewed as particularly relevant.

Similarly, in a report by Bennett et al. (2005), researching the implementation of policies against sexual harassment in Southern African Higher Education and the impact and/or challenges of these at higher education campuses (University of Botswana, Stellenbosch University, and UWC), there were issues related to the inaccessibility of both the policy document and the language¹⁹ used in the documents. Orr (2006), who reviewed this report, argues that this inaccessibility of language: creates a barrier for rape victims to 'language' their experiences and confusion among students in defining and labelling sexual assault; and allows perpetrators to find words that normalise their behaviour. Furthermore, the noticeable thread of individual and institutional silence which was apparent across the reviews, "narrows the range of what people are prepared to commit to words (either spoken or written)" (Orr, 2006, p. 103).

Gouws et al. (2005) suggest that the silence that appears to surround sexual assault seems to condone gender-based violence, but could also indicate a lack of safe spaces for victims to come forward and report. Additionally, campus grievance procedures often are adversarial as they place responsibility on the victim to file a complaint against the perpetrator and pursue these charges, and to provide 'evidence' or testimony in formal hearings (Brenner, 2013). This, in turn, may lead to a culture of underreporting sexual assault instances, and has led university management to "believe that sexual harassment is not a problem and that the policy and grievance procedure are dealing with problems effectively" (Gouws et al., 2005, p. 107). In a

¹⁹ Language was inaccessible to some students/staff due to its legalistic (legal and policy jargon) nature, but also because many of the policies were written in a singular language (e.g. English in most cases) and not translated into other languages (e.g. isiXhosa; Afrikaans; isiZulu etc.) which made it hard for students/staff, who were not first language speakers/readers (to the policy), to understand.

similar vein, Sass (2005, p. 116) enquiry at UWC found that the silence or ‘muteness’ among students about the occurrence of sexual assault on campus, despite their awareness to it, was “endorsed by the university’s overall lack of voice regarding it”.

Students on campuses also seem to not trust University spaces when reporting rape incidences. A study by Steenkamp (2010) at Stellenbosch University revealed that students report incidences of sexual assault/harassment most commonly to friends, followed by family, and under-utilised campus security/health workers/campus resources (including student counselling centres) and SAPS as help-resources. Steenkamp (2010, p. 127) remarks that the reasons for low levels of the utilisation of campus health workers and psychological services are unclear, and suggests that “surely, a lack of faith in the efficiency and/or competency of on-campus healthcare workers cannot be the issue”. This suggestion is contrary to the findings of other studies (mostly qualitative) at South African universities (de Klerk et al., 2007; Gordon & Collins, 2013; Sass, 2005; Singh et al., 2016, 2015) which indicate that students expressed a level of distrust, or a lack of faith, in higher education policies, procedures, security, and services; which may (in part) account for why Steenkamp’s (2010) quantitative research exhibited that they were underutilised.

In addition, Gordon and Collins’ (2013) study found that women felt their voices were not being heard in the university space. This silenced, marginalised and disempowered them, thereby constraining them in speaking up or reporting instances of sexual violence, due to a perceived lack of support and distrust in the university services. Likewise, at Rhodes University, de Klerk et al., (2007) found that there was a pattern of underreporting instances of rape and GBV as a result of distrust in university responses, services and procedures by students in relation to sexual violence. Extending this argument, Dosekun’s (2007) findings displayed that university students reported distrusting broader institutional services and procedures (e.g. police services/criminal justice procedures) in South Africa, which may indicate how widespread and extensive this distrust is. Dosekun (2007, p. 97) remarks that “the crisis of trust extends to the state because it has thus far proven unable or unwilling to protect women citizens from rape”.

Responses to sexual violence from higher education institutions may also take the form of rape prevention programs, how university staff treat sexual violence complainants/perpetrators, and

how management approaches official statements on sexual violence via various communication mediums to students. For example, de Klerk et al. (2007) demonstrate how Rhodes University has responded to rape, gender inequality, sexism and sexual harassment complaints over the years. Their findings illustrate that problematic responses included: interventions that placed the responsibility of rape prevention on women, disregarding or not taking seriously sexual violence complainants, and continuously placing a focus on alcohol usage in sexual violence incidents which implicitly blame the victim. Furthermore, de Klerk et al. (2007, p. 115) state that official institutional responses (predominantly male) tended to be “reactive, resistant and aiming to preserve the habitus of 100 years”. These responses, the authors state, aim to preserve the culture of ‘machoism’ which objectifies, sexualises and dehumanises women, thereby perpetuating sexism, GBV and enabling rape, within a larger context of gender inequality and patriarchal power relations (de Klerk et al., 2007).

A direct example of victim blaming was evident in a response from management (student advisor in 2000), where women were said to be “often at fault, because sometimes when they say no, they mean yes” (de Klerk et al., 2007, p. 120). This aligns with international literature, such as Grubb and Turner’s (2012) research, that examines how rape victims are often blamed for their role in the rape, to the extent that they are often held responsible. Responsibilising women for fate could be seen as the attempt to control the prevalence of rape on the University campus, which enforced restrictive controls of freedom through curfews at female residences, ignoring male residences (de Klerk et al., 2007). This causes the perception that women’s issues are not being addressed seriously, often with the responsibility for rape being placed solely on the victim (de Klerk et al., 2007). Such higher education institutional responses, according to de Klerk et al. (2007), cause universities to develop cultures which undervalue women.

Additionally, sexual assault policies in place at South African universities, have been critiqued for having a reactive approach, addressing sexual assault and rape after they have occurred rather deterring sexual assault on campus in a proactive manner (Bashonga & Khuzwayo, 2017). Furthermore, there is public perception that South African university sexual assault policies do not pay enough attention to ensuring that the legal rights of both parties are equally protected, as the rights of alleged perpetrators are perceived as being given priority over the rights of the alleged victim (Bashonga & Khuzwayo, 2017). These perceptions were illustrated in the research by Bashonga and Khuzwayo (2017), which analysed public opinions (on a social

media site) of sexual violence/rape culture on South African university campuses, as well as, the sexual assault policies that were in place, at the time, at these universities (specifically the ones at UCT, Witwatersrand University and Rhodes University).

4.3. Social media and rape culture on higher education campuses

According to Bashonga and Khuzwayo (2017, p. 35), “public protests and social media are important platforms on which the issues of South Africa’s rape culture and university policies on sexual violence are being interrogated”. These authors argue that social media plays a pivotal role in the mobilisation of student protestors, campaigning, and facilitating national discourse on topics such as rape culture. In their (Bashonga & Khuzwayo, 2017) analysis of social media messages regarding sexual violence and rape culture on university campuses it was revealed that there was dissatisfaction with university policies on sexual assault which were perceived as outdated and ineffective. Additionally, they found that rape culture (at universities) was viewed as a symptom of broader patriarchy in society (perpetuated by both men and women).

Furthermore, these social media narratives centred on themes which spoke to: the vulnerability of female bodies in a rape culture; ‘triggers’²⁰, trauma and fear experienced as a result of hearing about the violent experiences of others (during protests in particular); how social issues (e.g. decolonisation efforts at universities - which are viewed as also affecting men) get placed at forefront of socio-political protest agendas at the expense of women’s issues (e.g. rape culture); men at universities ‘shying’ away from actively engaging in addressing rape culture; ‘calls to action’ to discuss rape culture and devise a way forward; and lastly displays of solidarity across campuses which indicated the willingness to protest using any method to ensure that universities are held accountable in addressing sexual violence against female students. The ‘call to action’ narrative which seeks to mobilise collective action from an audience, is exemplified in other research such as Armstrong and Mahone’s (2017), which looked at the role social media plays when addressing rape culture. Collective action refers to any activity undertaken with the intent to achieve a shared goal. This is discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

²⁰ Triggers, as previously explained, are occurrences or stimuli that could cause survivors of sexual assault to relive a painful memory (Byron, 2017).

5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed the characteristics of sexual violence, the vast number of acts, contexts, and victim/perpetrator relationships this encompasses, and the conflicting legal and public notions of what constitutes as rape. This drew on literature which illustrated the complex nature and extent of sexual violence and rape, from an international perspective to the ‘rape crisis’ within South Africa. As such, the various issues thought to complicate the rape crisis in South Africa were discussed.

Feminist scholars link the climate in South Africa to a ‘rape culture’. Rape culture, its definitions, embedded understandings, and constitutive elements and demonstrations were then outlined. This section then demonstrated how rape culture extends beyond the physical act of rape, but to a communicative tool using threat and pervasive fear, maintaining women’s subordinated status in society by the prevailing hegemony (patriarchies) (Buiten & Naidoo, 2016; Dosekun, 2013; Gqola, 2007; Moffett, 2006). Subsequently, research has identified that ‘rape myths’, are instrumental in the perpetuation and reinforcement of a rape culture (Gqola, 2015). These false cultural ideologies, which generally blame victims, excuse rapists, typify/stereotype victims and perpetrators, and dislike victims, have been widely dispelled by numerous studies (e.g. Burt, 1980; Coopoo, 2017; Edwards et al., 2011; Grubb & Turner, 2012; Kahlor & Morrison, 2007; Koss et al., 1987; Lisak et al., 2010; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010; Wells & Elliott, 2001).

Rape myth beliefs are interconnected with other widely held pervasive ideologies. Adversarial sexual beliefs, the endorsement of interpersonal violence, and sex role stereotyping are all beliefs correlated with higher levels of rape myth acceptance (Burt, 1980). Rape myth acceptance, and these connected sexist beliefs, were further linked to high levels of gender inequality within countries: sustaining patriarchal societies, and perpetuating rape culture (Glick & Fiske, 2001; Sakallı-Uğurlu et al., 2007; Yamawaki, 2007). Moreover, these ideologies have been found to coincide with high levels of rape proclivity (Jewkes et al., 2010; Wegner et al., 2015).

The chapter then narrowed its focus to the current climate of sexual violence on higher education institution campuses. Findings from multiple studies (Clowes et al., 2009; de Klerk et al., 2007; Dosekun, 2007; Fisher et al., 2000; Gordon & Collins, 2013; Koss et al., 1987;

Shefer et al., 2017) have shown that reality of sexual assault, and the fear thereof, is widespread amongst students, particularly female students. The various contextual factors that many studies (Banyard et al., 2005; Clowes et al., 2009; Deming et al., 2013; Franklin, 2010; Hart, 2003; Sexual Violence Task Team, 2016) believe contribute to the high incidence of sexual violence, and rape culture, existing distinctively on higher education campuses is then discussed. Macleod et al. (2018, p. 3) write that what appears to be illuminated from such research “is that sexual violence in the university context is an abidingly serious problem, seemingly related to the particularities of university life as a specific social context, but also as a result of the intersection of the circumstances within the university context and those of broader society.”

Next, studies were used to exemplify how students perceive, react and construct the fear and nature of sexual assault on campuses. South African research has suggested that students use strategies, in a defensive manner, within these rape culture climates such as: using discourses that distances their own vulnerability to sexual violence, and managing self-presentation and restricting/monitoring behaviours and whereabouts, that are deemed to be at risk of ‘inviting’ rape (Dosekun, 2007; Gordon & Collins, 2013; Ngabaza et al., 2015). Both of these make use of rape myth accepting ideologies. In addition, Ngabaza et al., (2015) and Shefer et al. (2017), found that female students were perceived as more unsafe than male students on South African university campuses (particularly due to their gender), and constructed them as ‘inevitable victims’. Participants reported ‘expecting’ or ‘waiting’ for rape to happen to them, which demonstrated the extent to which rape culture has been normalised.

University responses to sexual violence, and rape culture on higher education campuses were then discussed. These responses included: sexual assault policies and procedures, rape prevention interventions, official communication forums, grievance procedures, and staff responses to complainants and perpetrators. Inquiries at South African universities have found that students/staff perceive sexual violence policies as: ineffective, inaccessible, poorly enforced, and an inadequate form of protection; additionally, an unawareness of these policies/procedures were evident, raising concerns about the importance that institutions place on disseminating policies in accessible manners (Bennett et al., 2005; Gouws et al., 2005; Hames et al., 2005; Sass, 2005; Singh et al., 2016; Tidimane & Mosarwe, 2005).

Furthermore, there were themes of silence on behalf of the universities with regard to sexual violence on campus which are thought to add to higher levels of underreporting. This leads institutions to believe that sexual violence is not as extensive as it is, which results in the perception that the institutions are not taking sexual violence seriously, and thereby that they are implicitly condoning or endorsing it (Gouws et al., 2005; Sass, 2005). Studies have exhibited that these perceptions by students are exceedingly detrimental (as students feel silenced/unheard in these spaces) which results in distrust and dissatisfaction (de Klerk et al., 2007; Dosekun, 2007; Gordon & Collins, 2013). I then linked this to the work by de Klerk et al. (2007), which examined the way that Rhodes University problematically responded to sexual violence and rape for over two decades, and ties into understanding the current climate at the University (discussed in the context chapter), where distrust and dissatisfaction was exhibited in the 2016 rape culture protests.

Lastly, rape culture on South African higher education campuses and how it is being discussed on social media platforms was given focus. Bashonga and Khuzwayo's (2017) research revealed, similar to the above studies, that: students were dissatisfied with university policies on sexual assault, that rape culture (at universities) was perceived as a symptom of a broader patriarchal society, the vulnerability of the female body, women's issues being side-lined to other social issues, and 'triggers', trauma, and fear during social movement protests. Social media sites give individuals the opportunities to display solidarity to rape victims, mobilise collective calls to action, and hold institutional bodies accountable for rape culture (on University campuses and elsewhere) (Armstrong & Mahone, 2017; Bashonga & Khuzwayo, 2017).

In the following chapter I discuss the theoretical framework that provided a lens for this research.

CHAPTER 3: Theoretical Framework

1. Introduction

The discursive constructions around addressing rape culture form the central problematic of this research. As such, I use a rhetorical theoretical approach alongside feminist post-structuralist understandings of language and power. This chapter contains three broad sections: social constructionism; feminist poststructuralist theory; and, rhetorical theory. To begin, I discuss the basic tenets of social constructionism as the over-arching theoretical perspective of this research. These centre on four broad principles as outlined by Burr (2003): 1) social constructionism's anti-essentialist stance to the social world; 2) that all knowledge is historically and culturally relative; 3) social (knowledge) meanings are created and sustained by social processes; and 4) socially/culturally specific creations of knowledge determine or exclude social actions which are integrally tied to power relations.

Feminist poststructuralist theory is then outlined as a theoretical perspective deriving from the assumptions of social constructionism. Feminist poststructuralism "uses poststructuralist theories of language, subjectivity, social processes and institutions to understand existing power relations" (Weedon, 1997, p. 40). This provides a more nuanced approach to gender and power, and how women's subordination, and resistance, are seen as located in, and products of, discourse and discursive practices. For the purposes relevant to this research, I focus on language and power as the two central components in this theory.

Lastly, rhetorical theory is explored: first, by defining the shift from traditional to contemporary rhetorical approaches, and then by unpacking the integrations that contemporary theory contributes. The fundamental principles of rhetorical communication are outlined, such as how rhetoric can be: action orientated, functional, contextual, tied to social power, and strategic. The section then moves to rhetorical theories of public discourse (Cox & Foust, 2009; Fraser, 1990; Hauser, 2002; K. Wilson & Eberly, 2008) as a means to understand how public problems (such as rape culture) are constructed rhetorically. These discursive spaces (public spheres) are also explained in how they form collective groups, and how these collectives (and the social identities therein) may be tied to forms of social power, as well as the counter collectives (counter publics) that emerge in resistance to dominant/exclusionary public collectives. Focus is also given to how these types of collectives (dominant/institutional and resistant/counter public) are constituted by and collectively create, social meanings/values/norms through

discursive practices. Counter publics and their significance to social movements (such as protest action) are then discussed. Green Jr and Li's (2011) theory of rhetorical institutionalism is then discussed. This looks at the role of language (symbolic action) in the functioning of institutions (such as universities), institutional agency, and the unique context of higher education institutions. To conclude, I draw on Gurak and Antonijivec (2008), and Porter (2009), and their theories of digital delivery systems (internet based) of rhetorical communication to understand in particular this study's digital contexts from where data were collected (public social media pages, non-collaborative institutionally owned news forums, and institutional email list servers).

2. Social constructionism

As an initial departure, I draw on Burr's (2003) summary of four social constructionism tenets to discuss the broad underpinnings of this theoretical chapter. The first tenet of social constructionism perspectives is that they all take a critical stance with regard to taken-for-granted assumptions of the world, such as the idea that knowledge derives from objective observations/perceptions of the world (Burr, 2003). Instead, social constructionism is anti-essentialist, maintaining that the social world, as well as individuals in it, are constructed by and through social processes, and that there are no determined natures or pre-given 'essences' of individuals or the world (Burr, 2003).

The second precept of social constructionism is that 'knowledge' is culturally and historically relative (Burr, 2003). Meanings and understandings of the world are products of a specific culture and period of history, which depend upon the prevailing socio-economic climate (Burr, 2003). 'Truth' is then problematised within social constructionism, as an individual's, or a culture's, perception of reality (i.e. truth) may differ drastically from another's perspective. Troubling 'truth' and 'reality' is particularly pertinent in post-structuralist approaches with regard to language deconstruction analyses. This is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Social constructionism, thirdly, maintains that the human (social) world is fundamentally constituted in language (Terre Blanche, Kelly, Durrheim, & Painter, 2006). This principle of social constructionism suggests that knowledge is sustained and produced by social processes (such as language) (Burr, 2003). In other words, people construct (and reproduce) meanings

and understandings (e.g. knowledge) through the use of language. Individuals are born into societies where conceptual frameworks and categories exist already, the meanings these frameworks then carry are reproduced, and learnt, through language (Burr, 2003). Therefore, language is in fact seen as a precondition to thought, as the “way a person thinks, the very categories and concepts that provide a framework of meaning for them, are provided by the language they use” (Burr, 2003, p. 8). Thus, the way in which individuals use language, and the broad patterns of social meanings that are encoded within language, becomes a core feature of inquiry within social constructionism, particularly that of post-structuralist work. Additionally, due to the practical consequences that the use of language can create, language can be thought of as a ‘performative’ form of action (that it is constitutive in nature) (Burr, 2003). A demonstration of this can be seen in the perpetuation of rape myths within a rape culture climate, which are thought to have practical negative consequences such as normalising, condoning, and encouraging sexual violence against women (Buchwald et al., 2005).

The fourth tenet of social constructionism is that social action and knowledge are linked (Burr, 2003). This is because understandings and meanings are constructed and negotiated, and hence can take on many possible forms of understanding the world. Representations of reality, practices, and physical arrangements are structured; and like language they construct specific accounts/versions of the world by providing frameworks through which we understand objects, practices, and ourselves in relation to these systems (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). Thus, how an individual engages with the world is constructed by these social structures (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). Every social meaning and understanding (e.g. form of ‘knowledge’) can either sustain or exclude various social actions. These have implications for what forms of social interactions/actions are permissible, or not, for different groups of people (Burr, 2003). Thus, an individual’s engagement is often limited by these constructions. Furthermore, what socially constructed meanings and understandings permit or sanction are integrally tied to power relations (Burr, 2003).

Lastly, social constructionism approaches focus not on the ‘nature’ of a phenomenon, but rather on how certain phenomena or forms of knowledge are achieved through interaction; knowledge is seen as an action, something people *do*, rather than something they are able to attain (Burr, 2003). This research, for example, is concerned with the way in which individuals talk *about*

addressing/countering rape culture, and the rhetorical and discursive structures that influence these discourses, which may affect how a rape culture takes shape.

In this section I drew on social constructionist theory as a broad theoretical orientation that underpins a variety of critical social theoretical approaches. In the next section I discuss feminist poststructuralist theory, specifically in relation to language and power, as a nuanced theory under the social constructionist umbrella.

3. Feminist poststructuralism

While variation exists amongst different forms of poststructuralism, they all share fundamental assumptions about language, meaning, and subjectivity (Weedon, 1997). Weedon (1997) offers a particular rendition of poststructuralism, which is termed ‘feminist poststructuralism’. Poststructuralism from a feminist standpoint offers “a way of conceptualizing the relationship between language, social institutions and individual consciousness which focuses on how power is exercised and on the possibilities of change” (Weedon, 1997, p. 91).

In other words, a feminist angle to poststructuralism allows the ability to address questions of how social power is exercised and exists in relation to gender, class, and race, and how this power might be transformed or resisted. It takes the tenets and principles of poststructuralism as a starting point and incorporates gender issues as its focal point (Arslanian-Engoren, 2002). What makes it distinctive is that it draws on the notions of language, subjectivity, and discourse in order to understand how power relations exist which disadvantage women and other historically suppressed groups (Fischer & Bristor, 1994). It reveals ways in which dominant discourses can trap us in ‘conventional’ meanings and constructed modes of being (Barrett, 2005). Furthermore, it examines the ways the social inscribes itself on the individual, and calls into question the construction of the individual in essentialising terms, which illuminates how power works not just to shape us as particular kinds of being, but also to make those ways of being desirable that we actively take them up as our own (Davies & Gannon, 2005). For the purposes of this research I will focus on language, its discursive nature, and its link to social power.

3.1. Language

Poststructuralism “troubles the idea that language mirrors the world” (St. Pierre, 2000, p. 481). Language can be thought of as an abstract system, which uses signs (sound/written image) and signifiers (meaning/concept); signs were thought to have no intrinsic meaning, and rather a sign is given meaning in relation to its ‘difference’ from all the other signs in the language chain (Weedon, 1997). Poststructuralism takes this concept, as developed by De Saussure, and extends it, conceptualising that a signifier (meaning/concept) is never fixed, but rather is subject to a constant process of deferral (St. Pierre, 2000). This concept (termed ‘différance’), from the work of Derrida, maintains that meaning is constructed through the dual strategies of difference and deferral, which theorises that language is constantly shifting based on the current social and cultural contexts (St. Pierre, 2000; Weedon, 1997). This indicates that representation is always transient, because social meanings and knowledge can always be dispelled, reread, and reinterpreted.

The absence of a ‘true’ meaning/identity behind signs, and rather a relational difference, leads to the critical practice of Derrida known as ‘deconstruction’. Deconstruction foregrounds the idea that language does not point to pre-existing objects and ideas (naturalness or truths), but constructs these and the world through language, which is always implicated with cultural and social practice (St. Pierre, 2000). Deconstruction analyses work to dismantle rhetorical structures in order to see how they are working (St. Pierre, 2000). This means that if language constructs meanings, and nothing exists outside of social practice, then we can examine how structures/meanings have been constructed, what holds them together, and what they produce. Weedon’s (1997) account of feminist poststructuralist theory posits the notion, like Foucauldian theory, that language is a system that is always located in discourse. Discourse refers to “ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledges and relations between them” (Weedon, 1997, p. 105). Language can reflect the dominant discourses which are further replicated by individuals in society (Cassidy, Goldberg, & Aston, 2016). It is in this way that language becomes a discursive process. Poststructuralist analyses are focused on discursive and regulatory practices (Davies & Gannon, 2005). Thus, a discourse is not a language but a socially, historically, and institutionally specific structure of beliefs, terms, and categories (St. Pierre, 2000).

Social structures and processes are organised through institutions and institutional practices (e.g. familial, educational, legal, political, religious, and media), each of which is structured by, and located within, a certain discursive field which attributes meaning to the social world (Weedon, 1997). These social institutions, and the values and norms that they promote, which individuals enter in to, pre-exist them (Weedon, 1997). In addition, all discourses do not carry even weight or power, but may be marginalised or legitimised by hegemonic systems of meaning (e.g. widely held beliefs) (Weedon, 1997). Dominant assumptions become naturalised or normalised discourses, which are subjected to socially constructed rules and regularities (St. Pierre, 2000). They become ways of thinking and acting within the world, as the realms of possibility. These are constructed and maintained by essentialising the dominant binary through inscriptions of rationality, naturalness, and normality, which in turn demarcates the subordinate group as lacking, other and not rational (Davies & Gannon, 2005).

This is exemplified in a rape culture, which through a wide range of discursive fields, endorse the view of male sexuality as active, and female sexuality as passive. This viewpoint maintains that rape results from a ‘natural’ and ‘uncontrollable’ male sexual drive, and positions women deviating from the sexually passive/chaste construction as responsible when sexually assaulted, as they ‘asked for it’ through their movements, behaviour and/or self-presentation (Weedon, 1997). Weedon (1997) demonstrates this point in the educational discursive field with regard to university responses to the threat of rape on campus, whereby female students are forewarned to avoid ‘unreasonable’ provocation of men, and to not go out after dark and ‘lock’ themselves up. This echoes some of the responses by Rhodes University in the study by de Klerk et al. (2007), as previously discussed, to the female residence students on campus.

Feminist poststructuralism draws attention to the social, cultural, and institutional contexts that inscribe social meanings, as it is within these processes that power relations exist, play out, either serving or challenging hegemonic (dominant) interests. Language can reveal how socially constructed meanings, through textual/social processes, have emerged, changed, and are acquired, and how other meanings may be eclipsed, or silenced, in specific contexts and communities; these process reveal how social power is constituted and how it operates (St. Pierre, 2000).

3.2. Power relations

Poststructuralist theories do not see power as a totalising concept (St. Pierre, 2000). Rather, power is seen as relational (power relations) (Foucault, Faubion, & Rabinow, 2000). Power is also not seen as solely belonging to an individual or any one group, but rather as existing in 'relations' between individuals or groups (Cahill, 2000; Cassidy et al., 2016). Therefore, power has no one sole source, but is distributed throughout social/institutional structures. For power relations to exist there must also be a certain degree of freedom, and as such there is a possibility of resistance on either side of a 'relation' (St. Pierre, 2000). As Foucault et al., (2000, p. 342) write "the power relationship and freedom's refusal to submit cannot therefore be separated". What this means is that individuals and collective subjects have a range of possibilities to react/behaviour available in any setting (Foucault et al., 2000).

From this perspective, the dynamics and structures of power produce social bodies and realities by creating various possible social discourses which constitute subjects who take up these discourses (Cahill, 2000). The option that an individual or collective subject chooses from this discursive field either reinforces, or resists, the dominant norms of a society. As Gavey (1989) points out, individuals are not passive subjects but engage, within the constraints of the particular social circumstances, in an active role - choosing their positioning in relation to various discourses. Either they can choose to conform to dominant discursive constructions (e.g. femininity and masculinity), or by challenge/resist/reject them (to an extent).

Additionally, St Pierre (2000, p. 486) suggests that even though discourse "is productive and works in a very material way through social institutions to construct realities that control both the actions and bodies of people, it can be contested". In this sense, subjectivity (our sense of identity in relation to the world) is viewed as unfixed and having the ability to change (Cassidy et al., 2016). This relates to the concept of 'agency', which contends that individuals can use their agency to create resistant discursive practices (values/meanings) to the dominant discursive fields (Cassidy et al., 2016). Agency from a feminist poststructuralist approach is "contingent on the discourses at play and on our positioning within them" (Davies & Gannon, 2005, p. 313). Agency is linked to power, in that it is a product of power that allows us to act within discursively constructed social and public environments (St. Pierre, 2000).

However, individuals are not born free, but “born into relations of power from which we [they] cannot escape” (St. Pierre, 2000, p. 492). Not only are individuals constituted through multiple and contradictory discourses, but how various discursive positionings are read opens up, or closes down, the possibility of agency (Davies & Gannon, 2005). This means that certain individuals and groups of people, due to socially, culturally and historically constructed hierarchies, possess easier access to agency and freedom (St. Pierre, 2000). van Dijk (1996, p. 86) states, that “the very access to discourse and communicative events” discursively reproduces social power. This occurs through many avenues, such as the: use of language; topics spoken about; schemata (e.g. headlines, quotes); style of rhetoric; and, control of textual communicative events (van Dijk, 1996).

If discourse is viewed as a “structuring principle of society, in social institutions, modes of thought and individual subjectivity” (Weedon, 1997, p. 41), a feminist poststructuralist approach can through this concept understand power as working on behalf of specific interests, and explore the opportunities that exist in resistance to it. Cox and Foust (2009, p. 621) suggest that behind the notion of the resistance “lies the possibility of understanding the relationships among discursive acts, power, and the sources of social and political transformation”. For example, if discourses and practices in patriarchal societies can be located, named and understood in relation to the subordination of women, then women can begin to refuse, resist and reconfigure these (St. Pierre, 2000).

The term ‘patriarchal’ refers to the way women’s interests are subordinated to men’s interests. However, it is important to note that patriarchal power is not monolithic as it is integrally tied into racial and class-based oppressions (Weedon, 1997). Patriarchal relations are structural, existing in society through social practices and social institutions (Weedon, 1997). This means that men are discursively positioned as superior to, and given more power through social practices, meanings and institutions than, women are in a society. Power relations between men and women can take on many forms “from the sexual division of labour and the social organization of procreation to the internalized forms of femininity” (Weedon, 1997, p. 2). Feminist poststructuralist theories understand rape as by-product of a patriarchal male-dominated society, whereby rape harms women as a group in order to maintain their gendered subordination (Whisnant, 2009), meaning that male violence is a structural feature of patriarchy (Dosekun, 2007; Whisnant, 2009). As such, rape is understood as collective, and not as

individualistic, in nature whereby “all men keep all women in a state of fear” through ‘conscious’ intimidation (Cahill, 2001, p. 16). Feminist poststructuralism does not deny that individuals cannot be agents of oppression, but rather attempts to provide a theory that can account for why people oppress one another – the relationship between the individual and the social (Weedon, 1997).

In this section I drew on feminist poststructuralist theory to outline and discuss the way in which language, among other things, constitute social structures and processes. This can affect the lived experiences of individuals, depending on the social meanings constituted/formed through discursive practices which are integrally tied up with relations of power. In the next section, I will take these concepts of language and power, and draw on rhetorical theory to further discuss this form of communication.

4. Rhetorical theory

Rhetoric, from the conceptions of Aristotle and Plato, was traditionally thought of as the art of persuasion (K. Foss, 2009). It centred on five divisions/canons of rhetoric, which were thought to be used by a rhetor when persuading an audience (Billig, 1996; K. Foss, 2009; Lambert & Landau, 2015). These were: invention (appeals to: logos - logic, ethos – speaker’s authority/credibility/trustworthiness, and pathos - emotive); organization (speech organization and its effect on the audience); style (speaker use of language); memory (framing cultural memories); and, delivery (dissemination of content). The study of language, and its functions, became increasingly popular in the twentieth century. Philosophers in Europe and Britain, such as Foucault and Habermas, began to take up rhetorical issues with the belief that language functions to both convey and construct meaning in the social world, and that language can be used to understand systems of discourse that implicitly structure society (K. Foss, 2009). As such, contemporary rhetorical theories began emerging. As such, this contemporary movement evolved it began to generally understand rhetoric as a broad concept of human symbol use (K. Foss, 2009), which concerns itself with how an individual engages another (or others) using symbols, such as language, to accomplish a goal (Hauser, 2002).

Contemporary rhetorical theories contend that ‘rhetoric’ is every instance of human symbol use in all contexts. This suggests that rhetorical ‘communication’ is not just limited to

language²¹ but includes a variety of human symbol use, such as architecture, art, images, music, and physical bodies (K. Foss, 2009; Hauser, 2002). From this standpoint, all human ‘communication’ can be looked at through a rhetorical lens. Furthermore, contemporary rhetoric is thought to exist in all contexts (i.e. interpersonal, intrapersonal, public discourse, social movements and so on), while traditional rhetoric was thought to exist in mainly political or judicial contexts (K. Foss, 2009). Contemporary theories address ideas on what makes a ‘public’ or ‘collective’ (discussed below), how these are tied to social movements, and how social contexts (such as the Internet and its websites) can be rhetorical artefacts (K. Foss, 2009). It too focuses on the potentially unintended ways that language may be epistemic (i.e. constitutive), in shaping identities, motives, and the interests of both rhetors and audiences (Green & Li, 2011).

Contemporary rhetorical theories have incorporated additional features not evident in traditional rhetorical ones. The first is the movement away from a strict focus of obviously persuasive speech/text. Traditional rhetorical theories focused on persuasion as influence, whereas contemporary rhetorical theories are concerned with a vast range of ‘communication’ and its potential persuasive elements (Green & Li, 2011). These contemporary movements instead account for ‘all’ the reasons for how individual may create, and utilise, rhetorical discursive practices (K. Foss, 2009). However, some contemporary rhetoricians, such as Billig (1996), argue that any and all human symbol use is persuasive. Which means that rhetoric should not be confined to obviously persuasive or argumentative speech, but rather, should be understood as a pervasive feature in how individuals construct, interact, and arrive at meanings. Therefore, whether intended or not, the *use* of symbols, to arrive at shared meanings, by an individual/group inherently always affects another individual/group (K. Foss, 2009). Rhetorical communication, whether explicitly or implicitly, then always attempts to coordinate a form of social action through influencing human choices on a specific topic that require attention (Hauser, 2002). The link between persuasion and its possibilities, and the relationship between rhetoric and social change have been an on-going field of interest within rhetorical theory (K. Foss, 2009).

The second shift from traditional to contemporary rhetorical understandings relates to how culture and cultural context have been considered more seriously than before. Stemming from

²¹ However, for the purposes of this research I will concentrate on language predominantly.

social constructionist theoretical underpinnings, cultural relativism is an important factor when interpreting rhetoric within a culture. What may be considered to be ‘persuading’ or ‘conforming’ within one culture/society (e.g. Western) may differ dramatically to another culture/society (e.g. African or Eastern), and nuances thereof are thus crucial (K. Foss, 2009). This is based on the social meanings that have been collectively constructed within a culture or society.

The last factor further accounted for are the various identity characteristics by which individuals are constructed. Contemporary rhetorical theorists believe that these characteristics integrally create different ‘rhetorics’ among a group/collective (K. Foss, 2009). Through a social constructionist viewpoint, individuals are fundamentally constructed by, and subject to, social processes. In this way, individuals can never be separate from their social contexts, or their identities, which are given specific meanings, particularly in relation to power dynamics. For example, as exemplified in the study by Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1995), women and men in a rape culture may use very different rhetorics, based on their gendered social identity: men make use of rape myth discourses in order to justify the use of sexual domination against women, and women may use other rape myth discourses to mitigate fear or susceptibility. That is not to imply that the communication difference between men and women are different due to ‘essential’ biological determinants, but rather as Foss, Griffin, and Foss (1997) suggest, that communication practices are attributable to socialisation practices which construct, and give power to, men and women differently in society. In fact, one concern within traditional rhetorical theory was the failure to consider gender directly, as “rhetoric, as both theory and oratorical practice, was developed within conditions of patriarchy” (Billig, 1996, p. 23).

Foss et al. (1997) call for a feminist reconstruction of rhetorical theory, which gives focus to communicative practices and perspectives held by women and other marginalised groups who lack access, owing to socialisation practices, to traditional (dominant) forms of power, and who, through these experiences of oppression/subordination may communicate differently. These accounts can be drawn on to develop different explanations of the social world that the privileged mainstream does not provide. Contemporary rhetorical theory thus incorporates gender, and other axes of differentiation, when accounting for the different rhetorics in the social world. As K. Foss (2009, p. 856) states, rhetorical theory “cannot be divorced from

questions about human agency, the role of symbols in the creation of the human world, and the power of audiences to co-construct that world”.

Rhetorical analysis shares the interests of discourse analysis in the role of language in structuring social action but is distinguishable by its specific focus on persuasive/influential and meaning-making discursive strategies. It seeks to identify genres or recurrent patterns of interests, goals, and/or shared assumptions that become embedded within a form of communication (e.g. digital text) (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005). Contemporary rhetorical theory emphasises further how rhetoric is an epistemic mode of discourse and symbolic practice as it encodes meaning in an attempt to reflect, discover, and understand reality (Green & Li, 2011). Rhetorical analysis, simply put, can be understood as an effort to understand how a rhetor (or rhetors) in a specific social context use language in an attempt to influence, persuade, or form social meaning/understanding/knowledge with their audience (Selzer, 2004). It is furthermore distinguished from discourse analysis in its focus on the use of language to incite, or as a response to, social change/action (e.g. social movements). According to Suddaby and Greenwood (2005, p. 40), a contemporary rhetorical analysis “assumes that opposing actors in a context of social change adopt genres of speech and writing that subconsciously reflect and deliberately manipulate the values and ideologies of a particular discourse community”. It is therefore based on the assumption that there is a dynamic or direct relationship between rhetorical structures of speech or argument and the cognition and action of actors/rhetors (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005).

4.1. Fundamental rhetorical principles

Rhetorical communication can be thought of as action orientated, as rhetoric is a type of communication that *does* something as a result of choice (vs. naturally proceeding events) (Hauser, 2002). Hauser (2002) outlines six types of actions which provide a conceptual framework for understanding the functions of rhetoric: 1) *situated action*: a specific use of language, at a specific time, in a specific context (linked to *kairos*²²); 2) *symbolic action*: using symbols (language) to convey and reflect meaning/attitudes; 3) *transaction*: the interactive element between rhetor and audience; 4) *strategic action*: framing messages to achieve a particular goal through various strategies (e.g. reason/logic); 5) *social action*: using symbols

²² Kairos, as discussed in more detail further below, refers to the ‘timeliness’, and subsequent ‘appropriateness’, of a rhetorical communication in a rhetorical situation.

(and collective memory – discussed later) to influence the perceptions others have of their situations and to coordinate their subsequent responses in acts of cooperation; and 6) *constitutive action*: actions which construct situational truths that give meaning to social behaviour.

Discursive ‘actions’ become rhetorical in nature when *only* the use of language (speaking or writing) can confront or resolve a particular problem. Individuals act, and react, on the basis of how they define a particular situation, and these definitions are based on the meanings that individuals ascribe to them (Hauser, 2002). Once a situation has been defined through an emergent meaning relative to the individuals involved, and discourse has been appropriated as the mode of human action, then the situations become rhetorical (Hauser, 2002). Rhetorical situations are uniquely suited to the instrumental uses of language because they draw on the functional use of discourse to persuade or influence others or change a situation (Hauser, 2002). According to Hauser (2002, p. 45) “when we define a situation as rhetorical, we are not merely saying that it is a situation in which discourse can be of some consequence; we are saying also that it calls for a deliberate communicative response”. In this way, the use of rhetoric also carries an element of agency.

If we conceive individuals as discursive subjects, and discourse as a symbolic action (event), then the conditions and opportunities that allow subjects to act to change or reproduce social, institutional, and discursive practices need to be examined (Herndl & Licona, 2007). Agency is then thought of as a combination of a set of social and subjective relations that constitute the possibility of an action (rhetorical performance) (Herndl & Licona, 2007). Additionally, the same subject can occupy both different, and contradictory identities and spaces, dependent on agency, authority, and the specific context (Herndl & Licona, 2007). Authority that validates the individual’s right to speak in a specific context can then either provide the resources to enact agency or constrain them. These resources can change or further entrench dominant social practices and social power.

This is related to the idea that social power is a form of control, whereby one group holds it over another group (in relational and not discreet terms), through privileged access to socially valuable resources (van Dijk, 1993). Powerful groups can resort to physical force to control another group (e.g. male violence over women), while modern (and more effective forms) of

power involve the use of discursive (and rhetorical) strategies to persuade, dissimulate, and manipulate others (van Dijk, 1993). This can be exemplified in the use of rape culture discourses which use fear and intimidation to collectively subordinate women to men. Gqola (2015) terms this the phenomenon as the ‘female fear factory’, which is produced through the effective transfer of meaning (through discourse), using the threat of rape or bodily harm as a communicative exercise of power by men (the dominant) to keep women (and the feminine – the subordinate) ‘in check’.

As rhetoric starts to be understood as a relation between agency and power, individuals who ‘favour’ any social position/claim (dominant or subordinate discourse), are then also in a ‘stance’ against a paralleled counter-position/claim (Billig, 1996). Context becomes important too, as words, phrases and sentences carry different meanings when applied to different contexts (through discursive resources and discursive subject positions). A contextual approach to rhetorical theory is important when coming from a social constructionist perspective, because social meanings, and communication, are not seen as self-contained, but bound to social circumstances that call rhetorical events into being (Selzer, 2004). The rhetorical model of meaning must pay particular attention to the situated process or context wherein symbols acquire meaning and, thereby, induce forms of social action (Hauser, 2002). Billig (1996, p. 121) writes “to understand the meaning of a sentence or whole discourse in an argumentative context, one should not examine merely the words within that discourse”; because one should also “consider the positions which are being criticized, or against which a justification is being mounted”. It is within the tension between criticism and justification where ‘deeper’ (i.e. implicit) meanings are located, which an individual indirectly carries when deploying rhetoric within a specific context (Billig, 1996).

Rhetoric can also be used, and analysed, as a strategic action. This means that any form of a rhetorical message always contains a strategic approach to the problem posed by a rhetorical situation (Hauser, 2002). As Burke (as cited in Hauser, 2002, p. 251) writes “strategies size up the situations, name their structure and outstanding ingredients, and name them in a way that contains an attitude towards them”. Strategies can be used in a multitude of ways, such as to resist, subvert, reinforce, or reflect the discourses and discursive practices through which individuals and meanings are constituted (Davies & Gannon, 2005). According to Suddaby and Greenwood (2005), a rhetorical strategy is the use of persuasive language in order to legitimate,

or resist, a claim by constructing congruence, or incongruence, among attributes of the claim, dominant institutional logics, and broader templates of institutional change. Thus a rhetorical strategy is a significant tool by which shifts in dominant meanings/claims can be achieved (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005). Whether conscious or not, strategies are present in all the structural features of rhetoric (Hauser, 2002).

4.2. Public rhetorical theory and public discourse

Rape culture is a public problem. Public problems are problems that affect a community and are open to public attention and discussion in the arenas of public action by everyone with an interest in it, in an attempt to find a public solution (Hauser, 2002). It is in this way that they differ from private problems. Public problems are “not problems in and of themselves but are deemed so within our cultural system of symbols by which we constitute and convey meaning” (Hauser, 2002, p. 76). Thus, every culture of public problems is rhetorically constructed.

Ethos (credibility of a rhetor) plays a role in public problem debates, as some individuals or groups may carry more power (e.g. authority or expertise) in an arena. This is described by Hauser (2002) as ownership, as rhetors who have more power are able to accrue authority which can influence the public sphere and change public definitions. However, rhetors may also use the technique of dis-ownership in order to distance themselves from a public problem, hide aspects of social structures, and resist claims that a phenomenon is their problem too (Hauser, 2002). This can be demonstrated to exist in a rape culture, where women may use rhetorical strategies in an defensive/protective way to distance themselves from their own vulnerability to sexual violence, and deny sexual violence as a pervasive cultural problem (as discussed in the previous chapter) (Burt, 1980; Gordon & Collins, 2013; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1995).

Responsibility is another factor within public problems. Causal responsibility is the shared belief about who (or what) is responsible for a particular public problem. Once this is determined, political responsibility is determined for who should fix the concern (Hauser, 2002). Once a sense of public consciousness is raised with regard to a particular problem, public performances (e.g. protests) may take place which call attention to a problem, define its issues, and utilise rhetorical strategies that identify that a problem is serious and that it is being ignored or undermined (Hauser, 2002). Hauser (2002) identifies the process of identifying

problems, their causes, who is responsible for fixing them, the consequent struggles over ownership and dis-ownership, and the performance of the citizens as rhetorical constructions. These rhetorical constructions can then be identified as a form of public discourse.

Public discourse refers to the “rhetorical process and products articulated, circulated or performed, deliberated, and rearticulated in the public sphere by private people coming together as publics or movements” (K. Wilson & Eberly, 2008, p. 425). Public spheres can be understood as discursive spaces where individuals and groups discuss mutual interests, attempt to reach consensus or common judgements through rhetorical exchanges (Hauser, 2002; K. Wilson & Eberly, 2008). It is where, if possible, rhetorically salient meanings emerge. A single public provides meaning to its members through collaborative and intersubjective rhetorics that involve individuals but extend past the identity of individuals (K. Wilson & Eberly, 2008). It is necessary to establish how ‘rhetoricians’ (rhetorical theorists) define the term ‘public’. According to Hauser (2002, p. 85) a public is the “portion of the populace engaged in evolving shared opinion on a particular issue, with the intent of influencing its resolution”. Therefore, publics are not fixed constructs, but rather are active emergences that arise out of a rhetorical experience. Additionally, multiple arenas of publics may exist at any one time. These publics express different interests, competing claims, and diverse rhetorical cultures (K. Wilson & Eberly, 2008). In this way, public spheres are organised and categorised through their discursive habits.

Public spheres can range from informal to formal spaces, and can centre around very specific to more general topics (Hauser, 2002). Depending on the spaces and topics, normative standards provide the conditions for a certain public sphere (Hauser, 2002). For example, institutional forums have restrictive rules on speaking privileges and are subject to agents of power, while pre-institutional forums, such as ongoing public discussions of the social world, are wider and easier to access (Hauser, 2002). Lastly, not all public spheres are equally inclusionary and allowing for diverse viewpoints. They may also be exclusionary, with restrictive access, acknowledging a limited range of viewpoints and problems. As a result, this may create what is termed a ‘counter public’, where those with restricted access, form their own discursive arena (Hauser, 2002).

4.3. Counter publics and social movements

Counter publics may emerge as a response to exclusions within dominant public spheres, and, as a result, widen the discursive field (Fraser, 1990). According to Fraser (1990, p. 67), counter publics are “parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter-discourses, which in turn permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs”. Social groups that consciously challenge the basic assumptions and traditional ways of talking about identity in societies have called attention to inconsistencies between the cultural value of ‘inclusiveness’ (Hauser, 2002). By defining themselves as different from and put upon by ‘the system’, their rhetorics examine these taken-for-granted assumptions, and use strategies which urge the redefinition and reconsideration of an ‘identity’ (Hauser, 2002).

Through analysis of counter publics, and engaging in the discourses of those challenging dominant norms and institutions, the study of social movements has widened the rhetoric of public discourse scholarship (Cox & Foust, 2009). Social movements are a permanent feature of any society. They depend on the society from which they arise with regard to the values or organisational forms they adopt (Castells, 2007). They can be understood as “purposive collective actions aimed at changing the values and interests institutionalized in society” (Castells, 2007, pp. 248–249). Oppositional rhetorics (used by counter publics) are often utilised in collective social movements not only in confronting formal institutions, and reforming laws, but also in challenging discursive norms that sustain dominance (Cox & Foust, 2009). In this way they are tied to power relations, as they resist or challenge institutionalised power relations in a society (e.g. patriarchal power); and, through the use of discursive practices of ‘counter-power’ they attempt to modify/change these power relations (Castells, 2007).

An example of this is the feminist movement that arose as a result of women being subordinated to male dominated public spheres. Theories that couple feminism with rhetorical theory are resourceful in understanding the contributions of women, and other marginalised social groups, to public life, specifically public discourse (Dow, 1995). Rhetoric and feminism according to Dow (1995, p. 106) “are natural comrades; rhetoricians long to study the dynamics of social movement discourse, and feminism is one of the longest, most ideologically diverse, and most discursive social movements in history”. Creating their own public sphere, feminist women were/are able to create and use language (discursive constitutions) that describes their own

social realities, with concepts such as sexism, sexual harassment and marital/acquaintance rape (Fraser, 1990). Rape culture, and its umbrella of terms that describe it, are such uses of language where women (and men) can resist and recast their social identities and experiences. This enables alternative expressions that may challenge the norms of the dominant and exclusionary publics that subordinate them.

4.4. Institutional rhetoric

As discussed above, the use of rhetoric can challenge, influence, or promote change in institutional structures. Approaches to understanding the rhetoric of institutions, and institutional responses, can yield beneficial insights into the dynamics between the language used and the interests of the rhetor (Suddaby, 2010). The rhetor, their interests, and the targeted audience are all understood as connected within rhetorical institutional theory. As such, the role of language, as a symbolic action, in the operation and functioning of institutions becomes a pivotal point (Green & Li, 2011).

The integration of rhetoric with institutional theories with a focus on language, in order to explain agency and institutional processes, is known as ‘rhetorical institutionalism’. Rhetorical institutionalism, as termed by Green and Li (2011, p. 1666), is the use of “rhetorical insights in particular to explain how the strategic use of symbolic practices enable and constrain agency”. From this perspective, actors in an institution are also rhetors; and therefore, they are strategic agents who use rhetoric to construct and shape knowledge and institutional ‘life’ (Alvesson, 1993; Green & Li, 2011). Both agency and structure are interlinked: structure can shape agency by producing taken-for-granted meanings in which actors in the institution (rhetors) reproduce these unconsciously; and agency can in turn shape structure as actors/rhetors can use language to deconstruct taken-for-granted meanings and create new meanings (Green & Li, 2011). Through the use of rhetoric, institutional/organisational actors can either reinforce dominant institutional structures, and practices, reproducing these as the institutional order, or they can create new definitions and understandings which can lead to institutional change (Green & Li, 2011). Some rhetorical scholars, in fact, believe that the purposeful and strategic use of rhetoric is the primary avenue through which organisational change is indeed accomplished (Alvesson, 1993; Green & Li, 2011).

This research is specifically concentrated on the rhetoric of the higher education institution called Rhodes University, and its institutional communications and responses. According to Waggoner and Goldman (2005), the institutional communication that circulates within, and from, universities come in multitude of types and forms, in order to best serve a variety of rhetorical functions. These are reflected in institutional domains such as mission statements, in-house communications, advertising campaigns, official online statements, and recruiting efforts. These forms of communication use rhetorical strategies which give “expression to organizational aspirations, ideologies, myths and values” (Waggoner & Goldman, 2005, p. 87). This provides insight into how an institution positions and defines itself within a larger institutional environment. Universities have an inter-dependent relationship with their students, as students are bound to the university to achieve their educational goals, while the livelihood and status of the university depends on the success, and retention, of students (Waggoner & Goldman, 2005). It therefore becomes important for universities and their survival as institutions to maintain a positive relationship with their environment of current and prospective students, in retaining a student body as well as gaining new students. As Waggoner and Goldman (2005) contend, this relationship provides university institutions with a distinct focus and rhetoric for shaping institutional ideology.

4.5. Digital delivery of rhetoric

The development of new communication technologies and ‘routes of power’ have extended the public sphere into the online realm, which has given individuals/groups new means to voice their public or counter-public discourses (Cox & Foust, 2009). These have created new sites for analysis in this type of research. One such major development has been the era of digital communication networks (Porter, 2009). Internet-based communications are, however, not monolithic; they include: social networking sites, online forums, proprietary owned webpages, news outlets, email lists, academic journals, and so forth. This vast range of medias and technologies each carry considerable differences in their rhetorical avenues, discourse genres, and distribution mechanisms (Porter, 2009). For the purposes of this research, I concentrate on social media networking sites (e.g. Facebook groups), and institutionally owned proprietary webpages and email lists (e.g. RU News Page and Toplist messages).

I draw from Gurak and Antonijevic’s (2008) concepts of digital rhetoric and public discourse to understand social media sites in particular. These concepts use traditional rhetorical

constructs (such as the rhetorical canons²³) but incorporate the unique and contemporary factors that lie at the core of ‘screen’ rhetorical criticism. The first canon of digital rhetoric is speed. The internet, and its social media platforms, allow people to deliver messages instantaneously and simultaneously. Gurak and Antonijevic (2008) suggest that this separates digital rhetoric from the traditional delivery canon of rhetoric as people may: spend less time constructing arguments due to the rapid manner of online conversation, use casual tones and styles of speech, and use blended mediums to construct a message (e.g. images, videos, text and sound).

Alongside speed is the canon of reach. Audiences to these messages can range from singular individuals (e.g. a private Facebook message or email) to unimaginably wide audiences (e.g. a message on a public forum or website). The spiderlike and non-hierarchical distribution that social networks provide allows rhetors to reach thousands to millions of people at one time. Thus, rhetors may focus not on persuading specific audiences through careful argumentation and logical flow, but rather place impetus on sheer quantity to achieve the widest reach possible (Gurak & Antonijevic, 2008). This element within digital rhetorical theory talks to the lack of control that exists with regard to gatekeeping information which allows rhetors to reach a level of ‘globalness’ (Gurak & Antonijevic, 2008).

The third canon is anonymity. An online environment allows for an individual to take on multiple ‘identities’, each conveying different social meanings, that are unavoidable in face-to-face communication (Gurak & Antonijevic, 2008). This is because authors/rhetors may have the opportunity to ‘hide’ behind a screen, either by becoming completely anonymous by posting in anonymous forums or creating fake profiles, or choosing to only partially conceal specific information such as: age, social class, gender, nationality and so on. What this allows people to do is to abide by a ‘lack of social rules’ such as linguistic and rhetorical norms (e.g. politeness), for more aggressive and abrupt styles (Gurak & Antonijevic, 2008).

The next canon is interactivity. Unlike one-way forms of media, such as television or radio, interactive websites allow (expects) people to communicate in an active two-way manner. The traditional canon of ethos is prominent here, not just as the credibility of one speaker, but the

²³ Rhetorical canons are how language is designed and used by a rhetor to influence an audience. The ‘traditional’ canons of invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery are discussed in the next chapter.

ethos of a message in its entirety (Gurak & Antonijevic, 2008). What is key here is not just the author but “the power of the visuals, the sound and style of the text, the speed with which it was delivered, the people to which it was sent, the connection it may have to others who have credible online reputations” (Gurak & Antonijevic, 2008, p. 501).

The fifth canon, and lesser known traditional canon of rhetoric, is called ‘kairos’. Kairos refers to an appropriate, right, or opportune time (e.g. the right place and the right time) (Longaker & Walker, 2011). Digital opportune moments provide a powerful resource in mobilising and organising issues (Gurak & Antonijevic, 2008). These topical creations of interest can be intentionally, or inadvertently, created which may bring about communication that argues for, or against, a topic (Gurak & Antonijevic, 2008). For example, social movements (such as protests) may use the canon of kairos to mobilise and organise themselves in a reactionary opportunity of resistance.

The last canon is that of collaboration and community. Social media sites grant forms of access to users into social public spheres which expand across countries, cultures and time-zones. This ‘global’ public sphere has been enriched and widened by this freedom of access which makes this type of interaction one that is only possible through online technologies (Gurak & Antonijevic, 2008). Gurak and Antonijevic’s (2008) model of digital rhetorical theory speaks to digital rhetoric on social media or collaborative websites where participatory interaction occurs. Digital forms of rhetoric will seemingly differ on proprietary owned (private or institutional) websites, where participation/interaction has been restricted or closed, and messages are conveyed as information rather than as conversations. While these sites are still subject to the digital canons such as reach and kairos, they are not anonymous, collaborative or interactive, or free from gatekeepers.

As such, I draw on Porter’s (2009) theoretical framework on digital delivery and rhetorical production, to understand such digital avenues, and how these may differ from social media/collaborative sites. When a rhetor decides to produce a discourse, they initially must make rhetorical decisions about the mode and avenue in which they will present their message in an online rhetorical situation (Porter, 2009). The decision of distribution requires taking into consideration the relationship between the message, its possible audiences, and the impact thereof. Depending on the rhetor’s desired outcome, a rhetor will base the decision of a delivery

avenue further on how broadly circulated they seek the message to be, how accessible they intend it to be to the public, and to what level they want the audience to engage (Porter, 2009). The level of engagement that various types of digital interfaces enable, or limit, is the most significant difference between sites that allow active (audiences contributing/participating/co-creating) versus passive (audiences simply reading/viewing/listening) interactivity (Porter, 2009).

Another factor that may differ significantly between individuals/social groups and institutions (private or public) is the motivation behind producing rhetorical messages. Termed as the 'economics of rhetoric', Porter (2009) discusses the different purposes that motivate the production and distribution of messages, specifically in relation to particular gain. The economics of rhetoric do not refer to specifically monetary or commercial gain but also to the social, or cultural, capitals from which an individual, or institution, can gain (Porter, 2009).

In addition, institutions such as universities, while not individualised, have a distinct identity (the online presence they construct) in how they position and define themselves within a larger institutional environment (Porter, 2009). Agents speaking on behalf of an institution, unlike individuals, are never 'anonymous' (or individualised) as they represent, or contribute to, a larger institutional rhetorical body. This may influence the type of rhetoric, and the motivations thereof, institutional agents are faced with when choosing to reproduce, or change, institutional sanctioned practices and organisational positions (Porter, 2009). This was further discussed above with regard to agency in institutional members. Lastly, the messages on non-collaborative/interactive institutional websites may go through institutional representatives (gatekeepers), unlike individuals on social media sites, before a message can be sanctioned to be distributed and circulated online.

4.6. Social media, publics, and rape culture

Salter (2013, p. 223) argues that the Internet, and social media in particular, have provided unparalleled opportunities for individuals, women in particular, to form and participate in counter publics where sexual violence can be discussed and acted upon "in ways contrary to established social and legal norms". Social media refers to a heterogeneous range of internet-based platforms that allow the creation and exchange of 'user generated content' which enables, and shapes, specific forms of online sociality (Sills et al., 2016; van Dijck, 2013).

As previously discussed, counter publics are collective groups of individuals who form in resistance/opposition to the dominant, and sometimes restrictive/inaccessible, 'public'. Fraser (1990) suggests that the 'public sphere', in which issues are debated and deliberated upon, has never been a truly open forum that is accessible for all people to participate in on equal terms. Social media provides counter publics a forum for subverted 'voices' (historically such as women's voices) to invent and circulate counter discourses, but also an avenue for online activists to seek new forms of accountability outside of the legal/criminal justice system (Sills et al., 2016).

Sills et al. (2016, p. 937) contend that these kinds of alternative discursive spaces are flourishing, in various forms, on the internet, particularly on social media, "where rape culture has been a prominent target of feminist activism". This activism, they state, documents what rape culture is and critiques it, satirises victim-blaming, provides fora for testimonials, and gives support and advice to those who have experienced sexual violence. Similarly, Rentschler (2014) argues, social media provides supportive spaces where women and girls can share understandings of, and mobilise against, sexual violence and rape culture. This creates a network where the capacity to construct a collective response to rape culture is possible. Of course, these online spaces are still restrictive as not all people have access to internet activity, or to electronic devices (smart phone, laptop/computer, tablet etc.) that can support internet activity.

The rape culture protest (i.e. #RUReferenceList) at Rhodes University made use of digital activism that used hashtags. Multiple hashtags were created and used as the social movement evolved. Two examples were: #RhodesWar and #RapeMustFall. These hashtags used a collective 'trope' to symbolise particular narratives about the on-goings of the social movement. This is known as 'hashtag activism'. 'Hashtag' activism refers to the use of digital discursive activism/protest on social media forums (Yang, 2016). Digital activism takes place when large numbers of messages (posts/tweets) and comments, and the re-sharing of these, appear on social media in response to a hash-tagged word, phrase, or sentence (e.g. #MeToo²⁴) (Yang, 2016). Hashtags work as both a method of indexing information (e.g. filing information

²⁴ The #MeToo movement was as an online social media movement which used the hashtag #MeToo in an attempt to demonstrate the widespread prevalence of sexual assault and harassment by sharing personal stories of sexual violence, or resharing others' experiences in solidarity.

of a particular event) for quick retrieval, and as a way to shape a conversation by providing a frame of reference around it (e.g. they can indicate a meaning that might not be otherwise apparent) (Bonilla & Rosa, 2015).

Yang (2016) advises that social movement hashtags differentiate themselves from ‘everyday’ hashtags (e.g. #friends or #goals), as they often contain multiple words which begin with a crisis, conflict or event, and include verbs of action or strong force (e.g. #+Rape+Must+Fall). Thus, they can perform discursive functions which demand, resist, protest or object, as well as incite a form of action or change. Additionally, they may encourage audience participation, as audiences can read, reshare, comment on others posts, or use the hashtag to create their own post with their own opinion or story (a good example of this is the ‘#MeToo’ social movement which encouraged victims to share their stories of sexual assault). This process of interaction ultimately creates a collective narrative of a social movement (Yang, 2016).

Trigger warnings, as discussed in the preceding chapter, are another discursive practice that are often used online when discussing sexual assault and rape related content. Trigger warnings give victims of violence, such as sexual violence, the option to assess whether they would like to read potentially ‘triggering’ material (Byron, 2017). Through their censorship and ‘protectory’ nature, trigger warnings have been contested amongst some feminist circles. For example, they may provide a false illusion of protection where none exists, imply that some narratives/experiences are too ‘traumatic’ for open public discussion, and ‘shield’ uncomfortable discourses which consequentially allow people to dismiss challenging ideas (Byron, 2017). However, in contrast, trigger warnings, as discussed by Rentschler (2014), follow a ‘politics of care’ that illustrate an online community’s support and solidarity with victims of sexual assault/rape. Byron (2017, p. 118) writes that trigger warnings “at their best, seem to provide some hope for protecting survivors of violence from the shock of reading material that causes them to relive their traumatic experiences and, at worst, imply that those traumatic experiences are too traumatizing to be discussed in public”.

5. Conclusion

This chapter served to provide the theoretical framework that I will use in this research. First, I briefly discussed the basic tenets of social constructionism as a broad underpinning theoretical perspective. These included the four broad principles as outlined by Burr (2003). Feminist

poststructuralist theory was then outlined. Here I drew from Weedon's (1997) poststructuralism from a feminist standpoint theory, and how it is understand the relations between language, social institutions, subjectivity, and power. For the purposes relevant to this research, I focused on language, its discursive nature, and power as the two central components within this theory. Language was looked at in how it constructs social meanings, which produce and are produced by social processes, practices, and structures, how these are held together, and what material and social effects they manufacture (St. Pierre, 2000). This leads into the notion that all discourses do not carry equal power but are marginalised, or legitimised, by hegemonic systems of meaning (Weedon, 1997).

Moving from this perspective, I then discussed power, or relations of power, as a concept which is seen as relational between individuals, and is perpetuated through social/institutional structures in society (Cahill, 2000; Foucault et al., 2000). Thus, power is seen as relational and not being owned or having a sole source. This opens up the possibility of resistance, and freedom (subject to the social identities by which individuals are constituted which enable, or limit, this possibility of agency) for individuals to choose whether to reinforce, or resist, dominant discursive norms (Davies & Gannon, 2005). Furthermore, in examining notions of resistance and power lies the possibility for understanding the opportunities for transformation (Weedon, 1997).

In the next section, I outlined and discussed the rhetorical theories that I drew upon in the research. Rhetorical theory, and the shift from traditional theoretical perspectives to contemporary ones were first discussed. Turning away from the notion that rhetorical communication is restricted to obviously persuasive language in specific contexts, contemporary rhetorical theories incorporate the notions that rhetorical communication should be include a myriad of human symbol use when communicating (K. Foss, 2009; Green & Li, 2011; Hauser, 2002). Contemporary theories also take cognisant of the cultural/social contexts from which rhetorical communication derives, and the social identity differences among rhetors, which need to be accounted for when examining instances of communication.

Following, rhetorical theory was discussed in its relation to public spheres, public discourses, and rhetorically constructed public problems. Public spheres can be understood as discursive spaces where individuals/groups can, through public rhetorical discourse, discuss collective

public problems, (Hauser, 2002). However, public spaces/spheres are not equally inclusionary and may privilege or exclude specific social identities/groups. As such, counter publics may emerge from subordinate/excluded social groups in a response to dominant public spheres. These standpoints widen the discursive field of public discourses (Fraser, 1990). One way in which these counter publics are seen to be enacted is within social movements, where individuals come together as a collective. Institutions, such as universities, also carry specific rhetorical standpoints as a 'group'. The use of lenses such as 'rhetorical institutionalism' and institutional theory, were looked at to shed light on the role of language, as a symbolic action, in the operation and functioning of institutions (Alvesson, 1993; Green & Li, 2011).

I drew on both Gurak and Antonijevic (2008) and Porter (2009) to understand the unique factors that influence the delivery of rhetoric in the digital world. These approaches take into consideration the nuances that exist between active (social media/collaborative online sites) and passive (read/view only online sites) digital realms, as well as how individuals/social groups and organisations/institutions may be distinct from one another in online presences and making decisions to rhetorically produce messages.

To conclude, I looked at contemporary studies (Rentschler, 2014; Salter, 2013; Sills et al., 2016) which have looked at the role of social media in perpetuating, and countering, rape culture; and how online platforms have created spaces for collective groups to create, exchange, and share understandings of sexual violence and rape culture, as well as, importantly mobilise against it. Additionally, the online discursive practices of 'hashtag' activism (Bonilla & Rosa, 2015; Yang, 2016), and 'trigger warnings' (Byron, 2017; Rentschler, 2014) were discussed. In the next chapter I discuss the methodological approach that guided this study. I also include a section on the ethical considerations relevant to this study and a section on reflexivity.

CHAPTER 4: Methodology

1. Introduction

In this study I used online communication spaces for collecting data. In the following I explicate the research aims, sampling methods, data collection techniques, data analysis processes, and the ethical considerations of this study. To begin, I explain what this study's aims were when approaching the data. Next, I discuss the method used to identify the data sites and define the different online sites and how (and for what purpose) they are communicated on. I then describe what processes I used to sample, collect, and 'clean' these data.

In the section that follows, I detail the procedure followed in the rhetorical analysis that I used in the interpretation of the data collected. A rhetorical analysis involves the "study of the ways in which we attempt to persuade or influence in our discursive and textual practices" (R. Edwards, Nicoll, Solomon, & Usher, 2004, p. 3). This provides a method for identifying how arguments are constructed to persuade audiences to accept and support particular constructions of reality, truth, and courses of action. Here, I draw on guidelines by rhetorical theorists in how to go about conducting a rhetorical analysis. This is presented in a 'step-by-step' fashion, which guided how I went about the analytical data process. As such, I then explain the analysis process, and how some additional aspects were given attention in order to answer this study's research aims.

Next in this chapter I look at the various ethical concerns and precautions that were identified and considered in this study. This included gatekeeping procedures, mitigating risk precautions used on the different online sites, the privacy, anonymity and confidentiality of the 'participants' and the data, and lastly the external crosschecking that was adopted for the analysis chapters. Following on from this, the 'trustworthiness' of this work is discussed through the qualitative concepts, as outlined by Schwandt, Lincoln, and Guba (2007) and Shenton (2004), of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the project. Lastly reflexivity is discussed.

2. Research questions

The aim of this study was to explore how 'official' and 'unofficial' online communication sites, and the rhetors thereon, addressed the topic of 'rape culture' at Rhodes University from the occurrence of the rape culture social protest movement, at the University, in April 2016 until

August 2018 (i.e. just under 2 ½ years). In order to do so, the following sub-questions were used as a guide:

- i. How do the rhetors, on these sites, rhetorically construct arguments to advance particular positions/claims on how to address rape culture on campus (and more broadly)?
- ii. What power relations do these positions/claims shore up or undermine?

3. Method

In the following section I describe the online the sites from which the data were collected. I then discuss how the data were sampled, collected, and the inclusion and exclusion criteria that refined the collected dataset.

3.1. Sites

This research used ‘digital’ communication spaces from which to collect data. Online messages and discussions are ideal for rhetorical analyses as they are ‘found’ and ‘natural’ sources of language use whereby the researcher has not produced any sort of interaction such as conducting an interview (Leach, 2000). In order to perform a rhetorical analysis of the various standpoints of university constituents on the issue of rape culture at Rhodes University it was necessary to collect data from multiple sources. After looking at the online sites available as public forums the following sites (described below) were identified as best capturing the varied groups of university constituents and the types of talk these groups elicited. These consisted of two broad categories: 1) public online Rhodes University ‘official’ communications, and 2) online social media site (Facebook public groups).

3.1.1. Rhodes University ‘official’ communication sites

Two online forums were used to collect ‘official’ communications from rhetors within the University: Rhodes News page; Toplist archives. These sites are used to inform Rhodes University constituents, as well as the public in the case of the Rhodes News webpage, about ongoing University related information. The Rhodes News page is an online webpage on the University’s official website, where the University can publish official communications and updates. It is located online at: <https://www.ru.ac.za/latestnews/>. Toplist is a ‘Rhodes University Official Notices’ mailing service. Official email communications are distributed daily, weekly and/or monthly to subscribed student and staff email addresses. An archive of

these communications is available to the public online at this address:
<https://lists.ru.ac.za/pipermail/toplist/>.

In 2017, Rhodes University reported that there were just over 8100 students registered, with a 14:1²⁵ student to staff ratio. A count for the number of employed staff personnel for that year could not be found. The most recent number of staff employees, according to the Digest of Statistics (Rhodes University, 2013), was in 2012 when there were 1334 employed staff (all staff grades) and 7395 students registered. I quote these numbers to illustrate the potential number of audience members who are University constituents. However, I anticipate that because of the wider reach (and more public nature) of the Rhodes News page, the rhetors thereon may have a much larger audience.

3.1.2. *Online social media sites*

Two Facebook groups were used to collect ‘unofficial’ communications from rhetors within the University: UCKAR²⁶ Student Body Page; UCKAR Concerned Staff page. Facebook groups are created with a specific purpose, and audience, in mind. These set both the norms, and expectations, of conduct within a group. Below I describe the two groups from which that data were collected, in their own terms to give some background.

The ‘UCKAR Student Body Page’, according to its current group administrators, is a public group that was created for “students of the University currently known as Rhodes who refused to be silenced²⁷”, due to “events which occurred in 2015²⁸, where posts were not being approved on to the official SRC²⁹ page which then lead [sic] students to open their own page by the students for the students”. This public group is located online at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/561869313975166/>.

The ‘UCKAR Concerned Staff’ page is Facebook group, described as one that was “set up by the ‘concerned staff’ group at the university currently known as Rhodes (UCKAR)”. This

²⁵ This is assumed to mean academic staff (e.g. lecturers etc.), as a 14:1 ratio would equal 578 staff members, which seems too low compared to the 2012 statistics (see further on).

²⁶ UCKAR refers to ‘University Currently Known as Rhodes’. See later discussion on this term.

²⁷ ‘Silenced’ was a term used by the protesters in the #Feesmustfall and #RUreferencelist movements to signify how they felt their voices were not heard/taken into consideration by the University.

²⁸ 2015 was the year that the #Feesmustfall movements took place.

²⁹ Student Representative Council.

group describes themselves as “interested in such things as academic freedom, disruptive pedagogy, agitation, managing conflict in higher education, transformation, decolonisation, changing power relations, but mostly we're interested in students”. This public group is located online at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/723464114460613/> .

Online social networks/social networking sites (OSNs/SNS), such as Facebook, can be thought of as “an ongoing database of social activity with information being added in real time” (R. Wilson, Gosling, & Graham, 2012, p. 204). This provides researchers insight into social processes within contemporary contexts. Facebook is one of the most popular SNS/OSN’s. As of the second quarter of 2018, Facebook had 2.23 billion monthly active users (Statista, 2018). The following table (**Table 1**) indicates the number of group/page members and followers of the sites (captured from Facebook in August 2018).

Table 1: Number of Facebook group members:

<i>Facebook group/page</i>	<i>Number of members/followers</i>
<u>UCKAR Student Body</u>	14987
<u>UCKAR Concerned Staff</u>	339

[Table 1: Number of Facebook group members]

This highlights the number of audience members on these groups, although non-members/followers can also view and comment on the rhetors messages (posts).

3.2. Data collection

Varying methods of collecting data were used on the different online mediums. In the case of the Rhodes News webpage, each news article that was broadly relevant to the research topic posted during the outlined time period (April 2016 – August 2018) was chronologically read through, copied and ‘pasted’ (saved) in a Microsoft (MS) Word document. Similarly, the Toplist email communication archives were read in a chronological fashion, and relevant communications were copied and saved in MS Word documents. The articles were then compiled into a MS Excel document for easy review of all the saved articles. With regard to the Rhodes News webpage, the ‘Latest News’ articles only went back to September 2016 and the archives for 2016 were missing online. Therefore, the Rhodes Communications and Media

department was contacted, and the requested missing news articles were sent to myself and uploaded (subsequently) online.

The Facebook groups were ‘searchable’. This meant that I could specifically collect communications (posts, comments and replies – see below definitions), within the stated time period, that contained the word ‘rape’ + ‘culture’. I collected the entire ‘conversation’ where this term occurred (i.e. if it occurred in a post then all the comments were collected regardless if the comments mentioned ‘rape culture’; and vice versa: if a comment/reply mentioned rape culture then the post to which it was in response, and the other comments/replies, were collected). These posts, comments and replies were copied and saved into MS Word documents. Each ‘site’ was saved in a chronological order.

The below table illustrates the initial number of messages collected per site. See **Table 2** below.

Table 2: Total number of messages collected per site:

<i>Site</i>	<i>Number messages collected</i>
<u>Toplist archives</u>	63
<u>Rhodes News webpage</u>	30
<u>UCKAR Student Body page</u>	124
<u>UCKAR Concerned Staff page</u>	29

[Table 2: Total number of messages collected per site]

3.3. Inclusion/exclusion criterion

Initial ‘noise’ was first cleaned from the datasets. This meant compiling and editing³⁰ the documents to have the same font type, font size and spacing for uniformity to determine the size of the datasets, as well as for easy reading. As with online data the unnecessary online links, and textual online site information were cleaned up (removed). Irrelevant communications were removed from the datasets. This required slightly different methods for each ‘type’ of site (e.g. Facebook group versus email communications versus online news articles). This is discussed below. Pictures or emojis/emoticons were excluded as this research is primarily focused on the use of discursive (language based) practices. The entire datasets were then read in intimate detail by myself to eliminate messages not entirely ‘rhetorical’ or if

³⁰ Edited to: Calibre light, size 10, single line spacing.

they were unethical to use (e.g. personal stories of sexual assault and rape). Additionally, messages that were duplicates across the sites (e.g. the same messages shared on: Rhodes News page and Toplist; or UCKAR Student Body page and UCKAR Concerned Staff page) were marked and only one copy of the message retained in the dataset. Lastly, all personal identifying information, such as names, profile pictures, and email addresses were deleted, and/or redacted. In some cases, positions in the University (e.g. managerial or leadership titles), could not be redacted as deleting these would compromise being able to understand the text. Ethical concerns and considerations are discussed later in this chapter. Raw copies of the datasets were kept in safe storage in case removed information was needed.

3.3.1. Facebook group exclusion criteria

Facebook posts, comments, and replies have a particular structure. This is explained, with examples, in **Table 3** below.

Table 3: The structure of Facebook groups:

Post (1st tier)	Comment (2nd tier)	Reply (3rd tier)
<u>The post or shared content on a group/page.</u>	<u>The comment directly to the post (1st tier).</u>	<u>The reply to a comment (2nd tier) on a post (1st tier).</u>
Example: User A (posts) a written 'message' or picture. OR User A (shares) a third parties' 'message' or picture.	Example: User B (comments) on User A's post with a 'message', 'emoji' ³¹ , 'picture, or 'tags another'.	Example: User C (replies) to User B with a 'message', 'emoji', 'picture, or 'tags another'.

[Table 3: The structure of Facebook groups]

As previously discussed, a Facebook search application, of the term 'rape culture' was used on the Facebook group sites, and all the data 'surrounding' where the term rape culture occurred

³¹ A small digital image or icon used to express an idea or emotion.

were collected. This resulted in a lot of text that was not relevant to this research. Thus, as an initial cleaning of the data, the following criteria were used to exclude irrelevant posts. See **Table 4** below.

Table 4: Criteria to exclude irrelevant Facebook posts:

<i>Type of post excluded</i>	<i>Example</i>
<u>Posts that invited, reminded, or updated others to events.</u> <u>Posts that were omitted merely outlined the details, and had no relevant comments.</u>	<i>E.g. "Meeting taking place at venue 1 tonight at 7pm to discuss the rape culture on campus. Please be there."</i>
<u>Posts that were shared by group/page members containing statements from parties outside of Rhodes University.</u> <u>Posts that were excluded had no message from the 'Sharer', and/or had no relevant comments.</u>	<i>E.g. User X (shares) a statement from/written by 'Political Party A' on rape culture.</i>
<u>Double shared posts.</u> <u>In the case that two or more members shared the same post by a third party with no commentary were excluded.</u>	<i>E.g. User X (shares) 'third party statement'</i> AND <i>User Y (shares the same) 'third party statement'</i> THEN the post with no relevant commentary was excluded.

[Table 4: Criteria to exclude irrelevant Facebook posts]

The following criteria in were used to exclude Facebook comments and replies. See **Table 5** below.

Table 5: Criteria to exclude irrelevant Facebook comments/replies:

<i>Type of comment/reply excluded</i>	<i>Example</i>
<u>Tagging of 'friends' in comments on a relevant post.</u> This included purely tagging others (example 1), as well as tagging others with wording	<i>E.g. 1: User X (tags) 'friend' or multiple 'friends'</i> <i>E.g. 2: User X (tags) 'friend' or multiple 'friends' with words/phrases such as 'come see</i>

related to why they were tagged (example 2).	<i>here', 'look at this' or 'what I told you about'.</i>
<u>Comments that referred to events/meeting logistics.</u> Comments such as: requiring clarity (example 1), tagging others to go (example 2), or confirming attendance (example 3).	<i>E.g. 1: 'Where is this taking place?'</i> <i>E.g. 2.: User X (tags) 'friend' with words such as 'let's go'</i> <i>E.g.3: 'I'll be there'</i>
<u>Replies to comments that deviated from the post.</u> These excluded replies and comments that did not add to the discussion of the post or did not refer/discuss the topic of rape culture.	<i>E.g.: User X (tags) User Y AND THEN User X and User Y begin replying to one another on an unrelated topic.</i>
<u>Comments or replies that merely respond by confirming or agreeing.</u> These types of comments/replies that were excluded did not add significant rhetorical contributions to the ongoing conversation.	<i>E.g.: User Y (comments/replies) to User X with words/phrases such as 'yes', 'okay', 'sure', 'indeed', 'exactly', or 'I couldn't say it better myself'.</i>
<u>Emojis and images/memes³².</u> This research is not concerned with non-language responses.	<i>E.g.: User X (comments/replies) with a 'emoji(s) or 'image/meme' e.g.:</i>  OR 

[Table 5: Criteria to exclude irrelevant Facebook comments/replies]

'Likes' and the other reactions ('Haha', 'Sad', 'Love' and 'Angry') that a Facebook user can click on to react to a post or comment were not included in the dataset.

³² An image, video, piece of text, etc., typically humorous in nature, that is copied and spread rapidly by Internet users, often with slight variations.

3.3.2. Rhodes University official communication criteria

As previously discussed, I read and collected email communications and news articles on the two sites which talked to, or addressed, rape culture. Not to dismiss any communication that spoke to this study's research questions I collected all messages that broadly spoke to rape culture and sexual violence with the institution. Some of these messages did not specifically mention 'rape culture' but spoke to it on the University campus (e.g. as a 'pernicious scourge' – as discussed in the first analysis chapter). Likewise, some communications used the term 'rape culture' in a message, but did so just in passing, or in reference to an event of the University campus. A search for the term's 'rape' + 'culture' was run on the texts to identify particular instances when this term was used. Each article was then read by myself and communications were eliminated which did not specifically address rape culture, and how it: does (or does not) take effect on campus, is something that does (or does not) need to be addressed at the University; and how this is spoken about.

3.3.3. Total number of messages

After the exclusion criteria were applied the below number of posts were used for this study's analysis. See **Table 6** below.

Table 6: Total number of messages used per site:

<i>Site</i>	<i>Number message used</i>
<u>Toplist archives</u>	8
<u>Rhodes News webpage</u>	8
<u>UCKAR Student Body page</u>	30
<u>UCKAR Concerned Staff page</u>	4

[Table 6: Total number of messages used per site]

4. Data analysis and interpretation

In this section, I describe the procedure followed in the analysis and interpretation of the data collected online. Rhetorical analyses study how textual and discursive practices are used by a rhetor when making an argument, and how these are constructed, in order to persuade an audience to accept, and /or support, a particular construction of social meaning, plan of action, or claim about the social world (R. Edwards et al., 2004; Winton, 2013). A rhetorical method of analysis can be used in conjunction with many theoretical frameworks, such as a feminist

poststructuralist lens, and methodologies, but the fundamental attitude that rhetoric suggests comes from its tradition of being an art, not a science (Leach, 2000).

As such, Leach (2000, p. 225) argues that a “rhetorical analysis tends to resist codification and every analysis differs just as every text differs”. However, they do provide general guidelines to conducting a rhetorical analysis, all of which should be adjusted and reflexively used to fit the text of a particular analysis. In this section, I work from this process outlined by Leach (2000), and supplement this with the integration of rhetorical theories (Bazerman, 1988; Fahnestock & Secor, 1990; Grant-Davie, 1997; Gurak & Antonijevic, 2008; Selzer, 2004) which fit this particular study.

The first step as outlined by Leach (2000, p. 225) is establishing the “rhetorical situation for the discourse to be analysed”. To begin, a rhetorical analysis, that can say something meaningful about the discourses being analysed, one must situate these discourses within a context (Leach, 2000). This adopts the premise that rhetoric responds to an ‘exigence’. Exigence as defined by Bitzer (1968, p. 6) refers to “an imperfection marked by urge defect, an obstacle, something waiting to be done”. An exigence becomes ‘rhetorical’ when a situation both calls for, and can only be modified/resolved by, discourse (Bitzer, 1968; Fahnestock & Secor, 1990). As such, the exigence (rhetorical situation) from which the rhetorical discourse emerged must first be defined. In this study, the texts being analysed emerged from the context of the rape culture protests, and the various responses to it, at Rhodes University. Here, rhetors identify the need to change a situation, and identify that this change can be effected through use of rhetorical communication (Grant-Davie, 1997). Furthermore, exigence may result not from something that has already happened, but from something that is about to, or might, happen (if proposed action is not taken) (Grant-Davie, 1997). In this work, the rhetors argue about how rape culture should be addressed, and countered, within the institution.

This echoes what Selzer (2004) defines as a ‘contextual’ approach to a rhetorical analysis. Here, two forms of rhetorical analysis – contextual and textual – are identified. The second and third steps created by Leach (2000) align more closely with the ‘textual’ analysis approach. These steps are described below. Contextual and textual analyses are, however, not mutually exclusive. In fact, rhetorical analyses can utilise both methods as they work to complement each other “simultaneously and recursively to get a fuller appreciation of the interplay between

text and context” (Selzer, 2004, p. 302). This allows for an analysis to both consider the details of the text and how it is used persuasively, as well as tend to the particulars of the social circumstances/practices that call rhetorical events into being, and reflect on the attitudes and values of the communities that sustain them (Selzer, 2004). This was done in this research by connecting the textual discursive practices, on the online sites, to the context of the rape culture protests that called this rhetoric into being. Thus, first determining a rhetorical situation is important, as the situation invites and largely determines the form of the rhetorical response it elicits (Grant-Davie, 1997; Hauser, 2002).

While rhetorical situations invite rhetorical responses, this research takes the theoretical stance that the rhetorical situation is not merely ‘discovered’ by a rhetor, but rather that the rhetor creates the situation in as much as they may rhetorically respond to one (Grant-Davie, 1997). In other words, rhetors not only respond to a question/situation, but also ask/create it. Additionally, the need to recognize that rhetors, as well as audiences and exigences, may be plural is pertinent. According to Grant-Davie (1997, p. 266) rhetorical situations may consist of “several rhetors, including groups of people or institutions, and the discourse may address or encounter several audiences with various purposes for reading”. In this study, this is important as the institutional body, and in some instances non-institutional bodies (i.e. student/staff led groups), who disseminate messages on the online data sites form a ‘collection’ of rhetors.

Each rhetorical situation can also be contextualised/situated further by looking at the concepts of ‘kairos’ and ‘phronesis’. ‘Kairos’ refers to the ‘timeliness’ (i.e. right time) of a rhetorical response, and ‘phronesis’ refers to the appropriateness (as perceived by an audience) of a response (i.e. right ‘place’) to an exigence (Leach, 2000). For example, in the analysis chapters to follow, it is possible to see this in the choice of ‘delivery’ (discussed below) of a message on a site (i.e. should the messages written on these sites be chosen to be written on another site, the rhetor would run the risk of the audience not understanding the message therefore rendering it ‘inappropriate’). These two concepts begin to highlight the importance of paying attention to the ‘audience’ in a rhetorical analysis.

Audience, according to Selzer (2004), is a term used to denote one of three concepts: 1) the actual readers of a rhetorical text, 2) the perception of the anticipated ‘reader’ in the rhetor’s

mind when developing an argument, and/or 3) the ‘presence’ of an audience (i.e. identity construction) within the text itself. A central insight of rhetoric, emerging from classical Aristotelian theory, is that the rhetor/author (speaker/writer) and their addressees (audience) can be represented in language (Fahnestock, 2011). While one cannot always clearly identify the audience within texts, especially those similar to this study’s, which are disseminated on online public platforms, it is possible to “see in texts ways of positioning readers, or ‘creating’ audiences” (Leach, 2000, p. 212). This is a form of ‘constitutive’ rhetoric, which functions to shape the identity of its addressees, which opens up, or limits, certain possibilities for a specific identity (or subject position) for that/those audience member(s) (Jasinski, 2001).

Rhetoric, therefore, is “both responsive to existing networks and at the same time attempts to mobilize such networks” as “rhetoric and audience are co-emergent” (R. Edwards et al., 2004, p. 18). As such, the audience’s identity is both selected and shaped by the rhetor’s language, which can be used as a potentially persuasive resource (Fahnestock, 2011). This can, for example, be used to help create an argument with which the audience may already agree in order to create a sense ‘cohesiveness’ (familiarity) between the implied author and the implied audience (Leach, 2000). In other words, the text rhetorically positions its audience in ways that can be discerned through analysis, which asks the analytical question of ‘who’ is this communication addressing, and what identity is the rhetor constituting them by.

A third constituent factor of all rhetorical situations is its salient constraints (Grant-Davie, 1997; Hauser, 2002). These are both the limitations and the opportunities which are present that may bear on what may or may not be said in a rhetorical situation. Constraints take on many ‘forms’, such as ones that are: physical/material, psychological, or of principle/rule/law or fact (Hauser, 2002). Grant-Davie (1997, p. 272) refers to these “as all factors in the situation, aside from the rhetor and the audience, that may lead the audience to be either more or less sympathetic to the discourse, and that may therefore influence the rhetor’s response to the situation”. This is a broad definition, but ‘constraints’ defy anything tighter – which is why a good understanding of the context from whence rhetorical talk emerges is necessary. One way this was addressed in this study was by conducting a thorough review of literature on previous higher education institutional responses to sexual violence (and rape culture), how university constituents perceive these, as well as how they perceive (and react to) rape culture on campuses, and how this is spoken about on social media platforms (discussed in **Chapter 2**).

This gave me an understanding of similar contexts to my study, and how these may predispose some ‘constraints’.

The last constituent factor of a rhetorical situation is the implied identity of the rhetor/author of the text. While this may seem obvious to analyse, this, according to Grant-Davie (1997), is largely missing from some theories on rhetorical situations. However, rhetors are as much constituents of their rhetorical situations as are their audience, and how rhetors may infer or construct their identity in relation to the audience should be looked at (Grant-Davie, 1997). In the analysis chapters to follow, how a rhetor implies, or defines, their identity (often through the use of ‘ethos’) as well as the audiences is given attention, particularly by how they use pronouns (which can convey power and agency).

The second step in a rhetorical analysis involves identifying the types of persuasive discourse being used (Leach, 2000). Rhetorical theorists (Eberly, 2004; Fahnestock & Secor, 1990; Grant-Davie, 1997; Leach, 2000) suggest the use of stasis theory in rhetorical analyses which provides a way to classify the kinds of arguments or persuasions that can be made. Persuasive texts can be categorised into three broad types of discourse (forensic, deliberative and epideictic) all of which may overlap with each other (Bitzer, 1968; Fahnestock & Secor, 1990; Leach, 2000; Selzer, 2004; Winton, 2013). Forensic arguments seek to establish the nature, cause, truth or falsity of allegations of past events, and the rightness of judgments about these (which concern actions in the past); deliberative arguments speculate courses of conduct for future events, seek to convince others to do something and/or accept particular viewpoints (these concern future course of action); and epideictic arguments seek to establish whether certain individuals or events deserve praise/honour, blame or censure, as well as define acceptable/unacceptable social acts in order to strengthen an audience’s commitment/inclination to these values (these concern current affairs) (Bitzer, 1968; Fahnestock & Secor, 1990; Leach, 2000; Selzer, 2004; Winton, 2013). These three types of discourse were used as a guide when organising the data into broadly ‘themed’ categories – these were further organised by the canons which are described below.

Using stasis theory, Grant-Davie (1997) suggests asking the following questions in the following sequence to determine the ‘stases’ which characterise the different forms of persuasive discourse. The first question asks what the discourse is about. This asks the question

of the first two stases, of fact and definition, by asking what the discourse concerns. This can be answered either on a concrete level (e.g. the most apparent topic conveyed) to more abstract levels (e.g. what larger underlying values/issues are represented in this argument) (Grant-Davie, 1997). Thus, this question involves identifying the subject matter or topic at the most obvious level, but also determining the issues that underlie it. The second question asks why the discourse is needed. This involves the third and fourth stases of cause and value, by questioning what has prompted this discourse, and the ‘kairos’ of it (e.g. why now is the right time for it to be delivered) (Grant-Davie, 1997). It also addresses the value by asking why the issues that this discourse are important or matter, and why there is a need to rhetorically engage in the questions that it raises (Grant-Davie, 1997). For example, exigence may relate to not only past events that happened, but to events that may happen if action is not taken. The third question asks what this discourse accomplishes. This questions the stasis of policy and procedure, and asks what the goals of a particular discourse are (Grant-Davie, 1997). Furthermore, it considers how an audience should react to such a discourse. Grant-Davie (1997) suggests that these objectives are powerful motivations when a rhetor presents an argument, and that the rhetor’s agenda may include primary and secondary objectives not stated in the discourse.

This sequence, delineated by Fahnestock and Secor (1988, as cited in Grant-Davie, 1997), proceeds from questions of fact and definition (establishing that the subject exists and characterising it) through questions of cause and effect (identifying the source of the subject and its consequences) and questions of value (examining its importance or quality) to questions of policy or procedure (considering what should be done about it). This sequence was used in this study when reading the collected data to help with an initial coding process.

The third step involves the application of the five canons (invention, arrangement/disposition, style, memory and delivery) of rhetorical theory (Leach, 2000). Rhetorical communication can be thought of as action orientated³³, and as such, is a type of communication that ‘does’ something (Hauser, 2002). These five canons described below can be employed by a rhetor when creating functional discourse/communication. Analysis of these canons provided the bulk of how data were interpreted in this research (after deriving the particulars of the rhetorical situation and categorising the texts through stasis theory).

³³ As previously discussed in the Theory chapter.

The first canon is invention. Invention is always in relation to the purpose of a rhetoric, how orators 'invent' arguments in relation to particular purposes (Leach, 2000). The key questions that are invoked by a rhetorical analysis in this canon are those that address where arguments come from, and this is identified by looking at the form of persuasive arguments, through their use of ethos, pathos and/or logos (Leach, 2000; Selzer, 2004). Ethos, pathos and logos help the initial stages of a rhetorical analysis by exploring the forms of argument that appear in different types of persuasive discourses, as introductory forms from which persuasive arguments are developed/invented (Leach, 2000). Ethos refers to a persuasive argument that relies on the establishment of trustworthiness or credibility of the rhetor. While the identity of the rhetor does not make an argument any less or more valid, subtle forms of persuasion can play out in power relationships that are set up in texts (Leach, 2000). Pathos is a form of persuasion that relies on appealing to the emotion of an audience. Selzer (2004, p. 284) elaborates this understanding by saying this form of persuasive reasoning in an argument accounts for features of text that “derive from a community's mostly deeply and fervently held values”. Logos most simply refers to ‘logic’. These types of persuasive arguments try to convince us of their validity through reasoned logic (Leach, 2000). It is important to note that these three forms of reasoning are not as clearly separated as it appears, and that rhetors can draw on more than one of these in making a persuasive argument. Cheng (2008) illustrates this between ethos and logos, by maintaining that in some arguments that use logical reasoning, audiences who judge a rhetor’s reasoning to be good reasoning may also base this judgement alongside the character (ethos) of the rhetor.

The second canon is disposition which is also known as arrangement. Disposition/arrangement refers to the physical organisation of the discourse and the arguments/claims it advances (Leach, 2000). This involves how a rhetor constructs their message (introduces, narrates, proves/confirms, concludes the argument), and is concerned with how the discourse is organized for rhetorical effect (Winton, 2013). Rhetor usually derive “principles of arrangement from the genres their discourse community values and expects from speakers and writers within it” (Covino & Jolliffe, 2014, p. 341). The structure or form of an argument organises the way the audience experiences the information being represented (Longaker & Walker, 2011). This construction can be persuasive by either making certain parts of the

message seem more or less important than another by the order in which it is arranged (Leach, 2000).

The third canon is style. Style refers to how a text is stylised, specifically in the context it occurs and the conventions that this context may carry (Leach, 2000). Considering style “as an intrinsic part of discourse, as a complex part of the relationship between form and content” (Leach, 2000, p. 215), is important in a rhetorical analysis as discourses are frequently persuasive based on their use of style. This canon involves numerous stylistic manoeuvres and expressions (e.g. tropes, figures of thought, schemes, antithesis, irony, metaphor, hyperbole etc.) that are drawn on in rhetorical discourse, and examination into these can help a rhetorical analysis understand better the tactics visible in these specific instances of rhetoric (Selzer, 2004). Leach (2000) considers the two most commonly used and persuasive categories of these: 1) metaphor and analogy (metaphors create an analogy of meaning from one concept to another as an aid understand and describe something – uses of metaphor can range from blatant to extremely subtle and complex), and 2) metonymy and synecdoche (these are figures of speech where the part stands for the whole by shifting attributes and characteristics from one thing to another – this use of appeal is complex and can for example draw on cultural memory to invoke emotional appeals). Contemporary rhetorical analysts see style as the process of ‘giving presence’ to ideas which rhetors want their audiences to attend (Covino & Jolliffe, 2014).

The fourth canon is memory. Memory in rhetorical theory refers the rhetors own access to the content they share (Leach, 2000). This definition has changed over time, as the definition of rhetoric has as well. I draw on framings of contemporary ‘rhetorical memory’, specifically that of cultural and public memory, to expand on this. These theorisations of memory do not see memory as a fixed or singular version of the past, but rather “societies are both constituted by their memories and, in their daily interactions, rituals, and exchanges, constitute these memories” (Phillips, 2004, p. 3). This research understands rhetorical memory as a cultural aspect of memory, which refers to how rhetors may draw on shared cultural ‘memory’ or meanings that are shared with their intended audience (Leach, 2000). Cultural actions, such as everyday practices, and use of discourse and language are laden with cultural memories which give meaning and purpose to these actions (Phillips, 2004). This means that memories are not stable but open to contestation, revision, and rejection. According to Phillips (2004), the way

in which memories attain their meaning, persuade others to accept them, and are themselves subject to contestation is in itself a rhetorical process.

In the previous chapter I discussed public rhetorical theory and public discourse, and how ‘publics’ and ‘counter publics’ use rhetorical discursive practices to establish, reinforce, or reject their own rhetorical cultures (Fraser, 1990; Hauser, 2002; K. Wilson & Eberly, 2008). In a similar manner, memories can be collective among a ‘public’. This has been thought to extend to the point in which public memories actually serve as a horizon within which a public defends, constitutes, and deliberates itself and its own existence (Casey, 2004). Secondly, “memories that both constitute our sense of collectivity and are constituted by our togetherness are thus deeply implicated in our persuasive activities and in the underlying assumptions and experiences upon which we build meanings and reasons” (Phillips, 2004, p. 3). Lastly, social power is prevalent in contestations and/or subversions of memory, in who holds the authority/means to authorise or reject forms of public memory (Phillips, 2004; Wilson & Eberly, 2008). Thus, a use of the rhetorical canon of memory within textual analysis may be to look for assertions and contestations of memory, and how these are tied to social power, and resistance to it.

The final canon is delivery, which explores the dissemination of an argument. Classical theories of rhetoric associate delivery almost exclusively with oral speech, and examine the facets related to the orator’s voice (e.g. voice tone) and physical body (e.g. gestures) presentations. It is clear that this cannot be strictly applied to textual data. Rhetorical theorists and scholars have revised this to apply to textual data. For example, an application of delivery to text can be to identify the differences between types of dissemination patterns and styles of address (Leach, 2000). Furthermore, the ‘digital age’ of internet-based communication has extended these understandings of delivery in textual rhetoric. As Gurak and Antonijevic (2008, p. 502) assert “delivery does not disappear in cyberspace but rather changes form”.

This research draws on the work³⁴ by Porter (2009) and Gurak and Antonijevic (2008) who have re-theorised the rhetorical canon of delivery specifically to apply to ‘digital delivery’. How rhetors construct/perform themselves digitally, how they choose to distribute their message in a digital space, what this type of distribution means in terms of access/accessibility,

³⁴ These theories are discussed in detail in the Theoretical Framework chapter: ‘Digital delivery’.

as well as audience interaction/interactivity, and the potential motivations behind production and distribution of messages as such, can all be analysed under this canon. This study uses data from already pre-defined sites and groups which carry their own set of norms and characteristics. Therefore, the rhetors in this study would have all had to have made a choice (to a degree) to use a particular group/site in order to deliver a particular message. This chosen dissemination method, and what it may signify in relation to the message delivered, can thus be taken into consideration during the analysis.

In this section, I discussed the ways in which rhetorical analyses are beneficial in critiquing the how rhetors construct, use and perform messages in persuasive ways to their audiences. This research adopted these steps as guidelines when coding, categorising, and ‘theming’ the datasets. In the next section, I describe this analytic process, and integrate some additional steps which further helps situate and understand the data by identifying the discursive resources and practices that were drawn on in the arguments that were made.

4.1. The analytic process

In the analysis, I used the format of identifying the rhetorical situation, types of persuasive discourse, and the five rhetorical canons. Leach (2000) suggests these be taken as ‘steps’ to an analysis, although these should be fitted reflexively to each text. This meant incorporating a reflexive approach to how I analysed each text. This helps mitigate, what Leach (2000) describes as, one of the greatest weaknesses of a rhetorical analysis - its ‘formalisms’. For example, the notion that there are ‘five’ canons with yet more sub-categories for analysis related to them which “gives the impression of an elaborate edifice that must be applied at every turn” (Leach, 2000, p. 218). An analysis as such, the author argues, would be overly complicated, unwieldy and tedious, and as such a rhetorical analysis should rather be left to the analyst as an interpretive art (Leach, 2000). This interpretive and flexible approach to application, Leach (2000) suggests, is arguably rhetorical analyses greatest strength. Thus, while I used the ‘steps’, their elements and their subcomponents, as the initial categories and subcategories to guide my analytic framework, I applied these with a certain degree of flexibility.

As I began the analysis, I looked for how the rhetorical situation, and its constituents, were being addressed. Rather than attempting to focus on types of rhetoric used by differing authors

in the University the focus of the analysis was on the types of rhetoric in the different digital online spaces. This meant that instead of focusing on each individual rhetor, I analysed what ‘groups’ (not necessarily cohesive) of them were doing on the sites, when arguing under similar premises (see discussion below). As I grew more familiar with these compound categories and subcategories, I could begin to identify and organise the rhetorical data in a way which interpreted the specificities of what was happening in each text. Through multiple readings of each text I also identified new ideas and reviewed these categories and subcategories.

Identifying limitations is important when considering appropriately applicable methodologies. A limitation of rhetorical analyses, as with other qualitative studies, is that it is not possible to generalise findings to other texts and contexts (Leach, 2000). However, according to Leach (2000), a good rhetorical analysis should make normative statements about the analysis at hand, and offer suggestions or critiques on why and how a text is effectively or ineffectively attempting to persuade its intended audience. As such, during the rhetorical analytic process, three concerns, as derived from this research’s theoretical stance, were given attention.

The first was to identify discursive patterns (discursive resources) within, and across, the various arguments. This, through a thorough reading and rereading of the data, was conducted to identify patterns or themes of similar, as well as dissimilar, forms of rhetorical ‘discourse’ within the messages. This was done under the reasoning that while each and every ‘claim’ has its own unique features, some patterns of rhetoric are likely to emerge in a ‘compound rhetorical situation’. Grant-Davie (1997) conceives a compound rhetorical situation as characterised by a discussion, or debate of, a topic made up of a group of closely related individual ‘rhetorical situations’ over an extended period of time. Analysing a compound situation involves examining common constituencies throughout a discussion/debate, as well as those specific only to one or two specific arguments within the discussion/debate (Grant-Davie, 1997). These common factors may lie in finding resolution, agreement, or compromise on a topic; or there may be a fundamental conflict of values in a divisive debate among the contributors. The analysis chapters were themed using common threads of debate among the rhetors on the two (‘official’ and ‘unofficial’) online spaces. Tensions and conflicts to these were also discussed. In order to see what these two separate analysis chapters were saying in relation to one another, I discuss these findings in the last chapter (**Chapter 7**) under the constituents of a compound rhetorical situation (rhetor, audience, exigence, constraints). This

helped to provide a larger picture of the compound rhetorical discussion of addressing rape culture at Rhodes University, which helped to see where similar, or different, arguments were taking place.

The second consideration, was to locate the discursive resources within the particular context where they occurred, as rhetorical talk does not exist in a social/historical vacuum (Best, 1987; Hauser, 2002; Leach, 2000). Rather, it emerges at particular moments within particular social and cultural contexts as a response. In this study, the context of the rape culture protest at the University, the media attention that this received, as well as a consideration of the history in South Africa of rape culture climates on campus, student protest action, and higher education institutional response (as derived from the literature) were used to inform how the messages were understood. This involved looking at how rhetors, in being persuasive, made rhetorical decisions such as: what available arguments did they choose to use, what audience was chosen to be addressed and why, and how were some arguments/identities given particular emphasis (Best, 1987). These decisions and choices a rhetor partakes in to make their 'claim' are, nevertheless, always informed by a larger social context which can limit or allow certain types of arguments/communications from certain identities (Best, 1987). Hence, the choices made by the rhetors depended upon the nature of the claim, who made it, and who was addressed.

This segues to the last point that was given attention, which talks to how authors position themselves and others, and are in turn positioned by others. This positioning was further located in terms of social power relations, and discussed against the backdrop of literature and theory, in this study, which contends that rape culture is created, and maintained, due to unequal power dynamics. Thus, the rhetoric used to talk about social problems and social movements, such as rape culture and the #RUPreferenceList social movement at Rhodes University, reflect both the nature of the interaction between particular rhetors and their audience, how these identities are positioned, as well as the larger social/cultural context within which this emerges.

5. Ethical considerations, concerns and precautions

In the following section, privacy, anonymity and confidentiality of the data, the process of obtaining permission from the necessary gatekeepers, and the efforts to mitigate risks on the sites used, is discussed.

5.1. Gatekeepers

Ethical clearance (See **Appendix 2: Ethical clearance**) was approved (PSY2017/56) from the Rhodes University, Psychology departmental 'Research Projects and Ethics Review Committee' (RPERC) during the research proposal process. Permission was sought from the Registrar of Rhodes University for the Rhodes News Page and Toplist messages to be used. The Registrar gave permission to conduct this research (see **Appendix 3: Registrar permission to collect data**), and this letter was forwarded to RPERC who granted final permission to conduct the research as per their conditions.

As part of the ethical considerations around using public social media (SNS/OSN) data, two methods of obtaining permission/consent to use the Facebook data were used. The first consisted of contacting the group/page administrators through private messaging on Facebook, (see template of this in **Appendix 4: Facebook group administrators' message (template)**) which outlined who the researcher was, what the study was about, and how the site would be used for data collection, what data would be collected, and how the data would be used. It further included the steps the researcher would take to mitigate any risks associated as far as possible and included an attached template of the message (see **Appendix 5: Facebook group post (template)**) that would be posted on their group which would notify group members that the site being used as a data collection site. This outlined the details of the study, data collection and data usage, how to withdraw from the study and steps to how they could choose to omit their data being used. Additionally, it addressed the most prominent ethical concerns as outlined in Wilson et al., (2012) (discussed below) who review literature on Facebook as a data collection site. Furthermore, the RPERC ethics permission letter that was granted for the study by the Psychology Department at Rhodes University was attached to this.

The group administrators gave their permissions for the researcher to use the group as a data collection site, and to post a message to the group members. The UCKAR Student Body group gave unrestricted permission, but did ask that the research be of no intended harm to any of the group members. There was some negotiation required with UCKAR Concerned Staff group, as they were concerned that their data could be potentially used out of context to support arguments in the research in which they themselves do not align with. After discussion with this study's supervisors, I then offered to run the parts of analysis that use this groups data via the group administrators to check this consistency before the final findings of the study were

completed. A pre-final draft of the analysis chapter was then sent to these group administrators, and I offered them an opportunity (within a timeframe of one week) to contact me if they had any concerns over how I used the group data. They did not contact me with any concerns (within this week, or after the stated timeframe).

5.2. Ethics for social media data sites

The following precautions, as outlined by Wilson et al. (2012), were taken in an attempt to minimise the risks associated with Facebook as a data collection site. This began with prioritising the notion that researchers should (despite the public nature of information), “explain to users what information is being collected and how the information will be used and then design protocols that protect the information” (R. Wilson et al., 2012, p. 213). As mentioned above, this was done by posting a message on each Facebook pages/groups. Only public information on the public group/page was collected, and no information from user’s private profiles was gathered. Data were anonymised by retracting authors of posts/comments names and identifying information to protect them from being identified. Additionally, links to ‘Facebook’s Data Policy’, and their page that helps users’ control what they share publicly through adjusting privacy settings, were posted in the message. This addressed the concern that Facebook users may not be aware of how their information is being used, and the privacy risks associated with this, when joining and using Facebook (R. Wilson et al., 2012). Following this the group/page member was given a time period of one week to delete or make any of their data private. And lastly, they were given the researchers private email address to enable them to contact me, in order to request that their data retracted from the research, or to voice any concerns over the project. The information and countermeasures that were provided, sought to give the data ‘participants’ the opportunity to make informed decisions about the information they share publicly.

5.3. Ethics for University communication sites

As mentioned above, the Registrar of Rhodes University was contacted for her permission to use the University’s official communications. Additionally, the Director of the Communications and Advancement department at Rhodes University was contacted via email to alert them that these sites were being used for data collection. The authors, and senders of emails were also anonymised. However, due to the nature and structural make-up of the

University there is some risk of the authors of messages being identified. This was addressed when applying for ethical clearance for the research (see **Appendix 6: Ethics protocol**).

5.4. Privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality of data

In order to protect the study's participants privacy and anonymity, no profile information (e.g. name and profile photo) or identifying particulars (e.g. names of residences) was used in the data analysis. These were deleted from the edited datasets as well. Concerning the accessibility of the data, other researchers involved in the Critical Studies in Sexualities and Reproduction (CSSR) research programme, which this research is a part of, will have access to this study's data. The electronic copies will be stored in password protected files on the research programmes database, and hard copies will be locked away in the CSSR research unit's main building.

5.5. External crosschecking of data interpretations

The final ethical concern for this study was in regard to an accurate interpretation of the data. Researchers always bring their own theoretical positions and assumptions which cannot be separated from interpretation – this is discussed in detail later in the chapter under Reflexivity. The concern, here, was due to the research supervisors' positionings and roles during the rape culture social movement, and the Sexual Violence Task Team that came as a result of it, and how this may implicate how I may interpret the data. For example, that was a danger that I might give some arguments more or less attention, in ways that may correlate specifically with the stance of the supervisors. The relationship between a supervisor and a researcher can carry its own dimensions of power differentials. Thus, the data analysis chapters, and the datasets, were given to an external third party to crosscheck that the interpretation was not skewed in any one way. The external reader wrote a brief report on their findings (**Appendix 7: External reader's report**) indicating that they found the interpretations and sampling of the data to be fair.

6. Trustworthiness

According to a number of scholars (Schwandt et al., 2007; Shenton, 2004), the criteria for establishing quality in quantitative research, such as validity, reliability, generalisability and objectivity, are not appropriate for qualitative research. Instead, researchers (Schwandt et al., 2007; Shenton, 2004) have suggested concepts such as credibility (in preference to internal

validity), transferability (in preference to external validity/generalisability), dependability (in preference to reliability) and) confirmability (in preference to objectivity).

Lincoln and Guba (1985, as cited in Shenton, 2004) argue that ensuring credibility is one of most important factors in establishing trustworthiness. One method that can ensure this is that of cross-checking the findings. Triangulation ensures credibility by cross-checking the data, and interpretation thereof, by using different sources or different investigators (Schwandt et al., 2007). An external reading of the two analysis chapters (discussed above), plus the datasets used therein, was one way that this research ensured that ‘triangulation’ of the data. This type of credibility checks also involved reaching a consensus with my supervisors (skilled stakeholders in this research) regarding the interpretation of the rhetorical devices/strategies, and discursive practices, identified from the datasets. In addition to the outside scrutiny discussed above, a reflective commentary by the author of the research may also be used (Shenton, 2004). As explained below, reflexivity refers to the researcher’s transparency with regard to the researcher’s influence on the research. It is anticipated that my use of reflexivity in some way aided in ensuring the trustworthiness of the research undertaken.

In positivist work, “the concern often lies in demonstrating that the results of the work at hand can be applied to a wider population” and since the findings of a qualitative project “are specific to a small number of particular environments and individuals, it is impossible to demonstrate that the findings and conclusions are applicable to other situations and populations” (Shenton, 2004, p. 69). In qualitative research, transferability is then concentrated on instead. Transferability, according to Schwandt et al. (2007, p. 19) involves the use of describing the data and context in great detail, so that “judgments about the degree of fit or similarity may be made by others who may wish to apply all or part of the findings elsewhere”. This refers to the applicability of the research beyond the specific context within which the data were generated. To achieve this, I make an effort throughout all of the chapters, where possible, to describe in as much detail how literature, theoretical tools and analytic methods are relevant to, and shape, this research in particular.

Lastly, dependability and confirmability, “examines the process results in a dependability judgment, while that part concerned with the product (data and reconstructions) results in a confirmability judgment” (Schwandt et al., 2007, p. 19). This ensures that the processes within

the study, should they be reported in detail, enable a future researcher to repeat the work, if not necessarily to gain the same results (Shenton, 2004). This involved writing up how I conducted the study, what methods I used, any pitfalls incurred, and suggestions for similar future studies. Shenton (2004) argues that here steps must be taken to help ensure as far as possible that the study's findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the participants/informants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher. Thus, in the analysis chapters to follow, I use direct quotes and extracts from the dataset so that the rhetors' own 'voices' can be seen, which provides readers the opportunity to have a proper understanding of the data and my interpretation of it.

7. Reflexivity

As Kiguwa (2019, p. 227) states "feminist research seeks to be reflexive in nature and practice". When analysing data an author brings their own theoretical frameworks and assumptions into the interpretation. Thus, reflexivity in qualitative social psychology research, especially that from a critical feminist perspective, has becoming increasingly important and encouraged (Parker, 1994). At its most basic, 'reflexivity' may be considered as a disciplined self-reflection between the 'researcher' and the research process (S. Wilkinson, 1988). Macleod (2002, p. 20) warns that "reflexivity should address the interactional, relational and power dynamics of the research at hand, rather than focussing on a confession of emotional or discursive positionings of the individual researcher". Finlay (2002) suggests that reflexive processes, despite its ambiguous and difficult nature, are valuable tools which can increase the integrity of a research study.

The process of reflexivity in which I engaged in focuses on how I, in the research process had to position myself within a sea of feminist theories in order to understand and interpret this study. This process involved choosing how I understood feminist theory, and myself in relation to it in order to examining my own assumptions and biases of aspects of it, in relation to what the theory, literature, and data used in this study were saying. Furthermore, conducting a rhetorical analysis, by its nature, is itself a discursive practice. Thus it is advised that the author of a rhetorical analysis, particularly in critical social sciences, be cognisant of their own production of discourse (Leach, 2000). Bazerman (1988) and Leach (2000) offer the following suggestions for policing one's own analytic discourse, using the following reflexive guidelines. The first is for the analyst to consider the field of study they are working within, and the

assumptions and boundaries that these assume, and how their own study matches what is represented in this field (Leach, 2000).

Sexual violence and rape, and where/what they are thought to ‘stem’ from, can be understood in vastly different ways (e.g. as a result of biology; as a result of a patriarchal society). In addition, through the research process, I have come to see why and how rape myths (in a rape culture), which often serve to distance one’s own vulnerability to rape, work equally so well for ‘women’ as they do for rape perpetrators, who use them to justify their actions. As a self-identified woman in South Africa, my own vulnerability and fear of sexual violence was often brought to the fore when engaging in the literature/theory on this. This process required me to look at the ways in which I was situated and an agent in a rape culture, and to acknowledge the power differentials that formed these ways of being. Thus, partly because of the non-interactive research process with any one particular ‘participant’ (e.g. interviews), I had to consider the relations and intricacies of power that exist not between myself and my ‘participants’, but rather the relations of power that exist between myself and a rape culture (field of study).

Secondly, the research should consider and familiarise itself with the current literature and climate within the field of inquiry, and respond by adequately integrating its findings within these positionings (Bazerman, 1988; Leach, 2000). This was done by reviewing the literature in the field before conducting the data analysis, as well as during and after the data analysis. This ensures consistency between the established literature and how my own research relates to it. This is discussed in the last chapter. Another advised guideline, makes use of reflecting on the investigative and symbolic tools that were used in the study (Bazerman, 1988; Leach, 2000). In the last chapter of this research, I show how critical feminist, and rhetorical theories, are beneficial in investigating and making meaningful claims about this particular research area. I also acknowledge, in this last chapter, where this study was limited so that future research can take heed from such insights.

All authors/rhetors draw on rhetorical devices in their writing, which makes this research and my writing about it, no exception to this notion. This research which interprets the various rhetorical ways messages were constructed to ‘talk’ about rape culture. I do not mean, as Winton (2013) posits, to imply that any one rhetorical strategy/device, or any one argument for, or against, is more or less appropriate than another. Rather, I sought to identify how rhetors

in particular online spaces argued, and attempted to persuade an audience on, through rhetorical discursive devices/strategies. This required a process of reading, and rereading, the data while being self-aware of how, and why, I was potentially being persuaded by the various rhetors (as a type of audience member) and their arguments.

As such, note taking on how each message ‘imprinted’ on me (i.e. the main concept I left holding on to after reading the message) helped me to identify how I was interpreting the rhetor’s persuasive arguments, and where/what I was being persuaded on. These notes helped me identify and examine my own biases towards the different arguments, allowing me to consider the potential effects and unintended consequences these may have on the research findings, and how I go forward in arguing these findings. This speaks to how one should consider their own knowledge production, and what processes guide these, when considering the final product (Bazerman, 1988). This was done by considering the form of the write up, report, and discussion of findings of this study, as well as anticipating how this may be received in the larger field of inquiry. This aids in constructing the boundaries of what can and cannot be said (Leach, 2000).

8. Conclusion

This chapter began with outlining the research aims of this study. Following, I discussed the method of the research which described the sites that data were sampled from, how the data were collected, and the different methods of excluding/including data once collected. The procedure followed in the analysis and interpretation of these data were next covered. This discussed guidelines to conducting a rhetorical analysis (Leach, 2000), despite rhetorical analyses resistant attitude to codification models. These guidelines were supplemented by additional rhetorical theorists (Bazerman, 1988; Fahnestock, 2011; Fahnestock & Secor, 1990; Fraser, 1990; Grant-Davie, 1997; Gurak & Antonijevic, 2008; Hauser, 2002; Jasinski, 2001; Phillips, 2004; Porter, 2009; Selzer, 2004; K. Wilson & Eberly, 2008) and their various insights into textual interpretation of rhetorical communication.

I first discussed the necessity of identifying a ‘rhetorical situation’. This aids in identifying why the rhetoric is needed and what it is trying to accomplish (exigence), who the rhetoric is made by and what does this ‘identify’ infer to a reader (the author/rhetor), who is it that the rhetoric addresses and how are they positioned (audience), and lastly, how does the context, where the

communication is situated in, either support, or hinder an argument and how does the rhetor address this (constraints) (Grant-Davie, 1997). Broadly, rhetorical communication can then be divided into three types of 'discourse': epideictic, forensic, and deliberative (Leach, 2000). Rhetorical text is further analysed based on what 'canons' they draw on, which include: invention, disposition, style, memory, and delivery. These canons, deriving from old rhetorical theory, are still used in contemporary models of rhetoric, although their meanings and relevance have changed over time (Winton, 2013).

The chapter then moved to the ethical considerations of the study, and the identified concerns and precautionary measure to mitigate associated risks. Here, how permissions from gatekeepers were sought and obtained is described, as well as the precautionary concerns, as discussed by Wilson et al. (2012), that were taken as an effort to mitigate these risks when using online sites. In order to protect the study's 'informants', and their privacy, all personal identifying information was redacted/deleted from the data. The confidentiality of the data, and how it will be stored for future use, and potentially by whom, was next talked to. To ensure accurate representation of the data, this research went through an external reader, and the need for this step is then explained. Lastly, I describe the trustworthiness of this work as a qualitative study, as well as the reflexive processes engaged in by myself throughout the research progression. Using the analytic processes described above, I divide the data sites into two analysis chapters. The first, and next chapter, concentrates on the 'official' institutional communication spaces.

CHAPTER 5: Interpretation of ‘official’ online communications

1. Introduction

This chapter (the first of two devoted to analysis and interpretation of the data) concentrates on the rhetorical make-up of ‘official’ institutionally sanctioned messages. Two sites of data collection are used to illustrate ‘official’ communications. These are the Rhodes News webpage and the ‘Toplist’ email archives (an official University mailing service). This chapter will investigate the commonalities in, and tensions within, the ‘official’ rhetors in how they discursively frame addressing rape culture. This includes institutional rhetors, such as management and leadership, as well as rhetors who were granted access to disseminate messages on these sites – such as the Sexual Violence Task Team. Additionally, this chapter includes rhetors (such as students) who usually are not granted access to these delivery sites, but in this case their messages were forwarded by the University management/leadership on these online spaces. In **Chapter 6**, the ‘unofficial’ communication spaces are discussed in terms of their discursive rhetorical framing of rape culture at the institution. **Chapter 7** compares the findings of these two spaces and their types of rhetoric.

2. Analysis

Four broad patterns of rhetorical discourse were identified within the dataset: rape culture is a social issue that requires a collective effort to address; rape culture must be addressed within the bounds of the law and constitution; the University is committed, and has always been invested, in addressing rape culture on campus; and that non-management/leadership constituents support (and bolster) the institution’s overall position on dealing with rape culture (messages forwarded on by the management of the institution).

2.1. Rape culture is all of our problem and responsibility: “Together we must bring the abuse and violence against women to an end”

Throughout the messages that spoke about addressing rape culture at the University, there was a thread of discourse that presented rape culture as a societally entrenched issue. It used a rhetorical ‘self-defence’ strategy of ‘transcendence’ (Jasinski, 2001), which framed the problematic of rape culture by placing it into a broader context. By framing rape culture as ‘societal’, the rhetors portrayed rape culture as ‘our’ problem that ‘we’ must fix, and thus, that we are all responsible for it.

Persuasion was affected through arguing that rape culture is unacceptable and rape a ‘scourge’, with future actions involving shared responsibility for overcoming the problem. Thus, the exigence of this theme is the overcoming of entrenched rape culture through collective action. This pattern of discourse used the power of ethos to make these ‘calls’ to enjoin the audience in addressing rape culture, and strong verbs were used stylistically to emphasise the points made. The audience was, in general, non-specified, although exceptions were made concerning who was included in *reasonable* collective action (see later discussion).

An illustration of how rape culture was framed as societal can be seen in the extract below from RNM³⁵ #1:

Rhodes University condemns rape and sexual violence, and is committed to upholding the Constitution of South Africa, the Supreme Law of the Land. We acknowledge that while we are a microcosm of society in which sexual violence and rape are pervasive, our University does not and cannot tolerate this culture. Rape culture which refers to cultural practices and norms that uphold patriarchy and tolerate gender-based violence as a norm is endemic in our society. [RNM#1]

The rhetor, or implied author, in this text does not identify themselves as any one person or group of persons within the institution, but does imply that they are able to make official statements from an authoritative position as ‘Rhodes University’. Fahnestock (2011) argues that in every text, there is an implicit ‘I’ or ‘we’ as a source and an implicit ‘you’ addressed, which makes the explicit use of such pronouns a persuasive choice. For example, ‘our’ (e.g. “*our University does not and cannot tolerate*”) and ‘we’ (e.g. “*We acknowledge*”) are used by the rhetor above, which persuades the reader that they have access to the power to make these statements. This establishes the ethos (credibility) of the author(s), and draws attention to their authority within the institutional context. The style of language communicates the authority of the rhetor through the choice of strong persuasive action words (such as “*condemns*” and “*acknowledges*”, “*does not and cannot tolerate*”). All of these illustrate the rhetor’s access and agency in choosing what the institution can condemn as illegitimate, or acknowledge as legitimate, within the institutional environment.

Rape culture is constructed in the text as a societal issue, with the University being a ‘microcosm’ of such a society. The audience is invited to agree that sexual violence is pervasive, and that the University context simply reflects this dilemma. While sexual violence

³⁵ ‘RNM’ is used to refer to an extract used from a message from the Rhodes News webpage.

and rape are indeed crimes that do not only exist at Rhodes University, referring to rape culture as a pervasive societal problem allows the institutional rhetor to highlight a logical reason why the institution is affected by sexual violence and rape. Billig (1996) states that when attempting to understand a justification, the criticism which the speaker is seeking to deflect must be searched for. If rape culture is being depicted as endemic to society, then perhaps the criticism that the rhetor is attempting to avoid is that the University is accountable for the occurrence of rape culture and sexual violence on campus. In other words, rape culture is framed as ‘transcending’ Rhodes University, by placing rape culture in a broader contextual (societal) environment.

Claims such as these, which argue that a specific social problem extends throughout society serve an important rhetorical function. According to Best (1987), these types of rhetoric are evident in the use of words (metaphors) that describe a social problem as epidemic (outbreaking/spreading) or endemic (persistent). These terms suggest that the social problem of rape culture indiscriminately affects people throughout society. By arguing that a social problem, such as rape culture, affects everyone and anyone the rhetor can incite the reader/audience to feel like they have a vested interest in the problem’s solution (Best, 1987). This is produced through an appeal to particular affects, as illustrated in RNM#2:

Together we must bring the abuse and violence against women to an end. In this regard, we as the University continue to engage with our staff and students as to how we can permanently rid our campus of this pernicious scourge. The time has come for all of us to end the cycles of abuse and violence against women and children that have become so endemic in our communities. [RNM#2]

In this extract, the rhetor acknowledges the threat of rape culture (“*pernicious scourge*”), disapproves of its effects in society, and creates a sense of urgency (“*The time has come*”) which calls the audience to common action (“*Together we must*”). However, a slippage appears in the collective ‘we’ rhetoric. “*We as the University*” (subject of the sentence) is differentiated from “*our staff and students*”. This slippage hints at cracks in the ‘we are in it together’ rhetoric, a crack that appeared in other messages as well (evidenced later).

The acknowledgement that rape culture exists as a problem at Rhodes University was not, however, unified amongst all the ‘official’ rhetors. In TM#2, below, the University Council refers the rape culture on campus as alleged:

The Vice-Chancellor gave a detailed account of the events prior to and during the student protests against the alleged 'rape culture' at Rhodes University. [TM#2]

Referring to rape culture as alleged was critiqued among the 'unofficial' rhetors as perpetuating a rape culture (this is discussed further in **Chapter 7**).

In the different messages, there were variances in pronoun use. Below is an example of a rhetor using singular pronouns. Texts that use self-referencing can anchor the speaker's value of judgment in the object/action itself and foreground claims made from a position of authority (ethos) (Fahnestock, 2011). The rhetor in this extract of TM³⁶#1 is no longer using plural pronouns to talk about addressing rape culture, but singular ones through the use of self-referencing:

I am in full support of students as they raise awareness around the rape culture that persists in our society, there is absolutely no place for this at our University. [TM#1]

According to Baecker (1998) the rhetor ('I') exists within a social structure in relation to others with whom and for whom the rhetor has certain moral responsibilities. Self-referencing appeals primarily to ethos, and relies on the rhetor's trustworthiness. Whilst first person plural pronouns (we, ourselves, and our) imply that the audience and the author are part of the same community, and in this case a community of 'moral' individuals (Winton, 2013), as seen in the excerpts above, this communication sets the rhetor in a position of authority from which to judge the actions of students (*"I am in full support"*).

The combination of first person single and plural pronouns in the following excerpt allows for the ethos of the rhetor to be combined with enlisting the reader/audience to be invested in the solution to this social problem. The text RNM#3 demonstrates this:

In my circular last week, I provided an update about the work that we are doing to strengthen a counter culture to rape and sexual/gender-based violence in our institution ... Second, I enjoined us all to strengthen the compact to rid our University of the pernicious scourge of sexual and gender-based violence. I invited all our students and staff to commit to this objective. I want to thank everyone for their committed support and involvement in this regard, our students and staff, and to note their welcome contribution ... Adequate awareness and sensitivity, education, support, action, input and participation are critical to the success of the programme to develop a counter culture. I am happy with the ongoing work in this regard since the start of the academic year. [RNM#3]

³⁶ 'TM' refers to an extract used from a 'Toplist' email message.

In this extract, the pronoun ‘I’ is used repeatedly. These are predominantly followed by speech act verbs which are used by the rhetor to direct a reader through the text. As such, the rhetor indicates that they “*provided*”, “*enjoined*”, and “*invited*”, drawing attention to this rhetor’s attempts to enjoin this community to come together (a function of epideictic rhetoric). Jasinski (2001) suggests that even a simple discursive practice of ‘thanking’ (“*I want to thank everyone*”), from a university leader to the university community, can maintain a community’s sense of ‘togetherness’. This form of epideictic discourse discursively creates and shares desirable social values, which helps rhetors to reinforce adherence to these as a group and maintain a sense of collective identity (Jasinski, 2001).

Towards the end of the extract the rhetor remarks “*I am happy with*”, which displays the rhetor’s judgement of an action/object through self-reference. This implies a form of ethos; for this judgement to be of any significance to an audience the rhetor must hold some form of approved social power. According to Fahnestock (2011, p. 279), a rhetor’s self-reference “personalizes the evaluation”, and can turn directly into a recommendation when the audience/reader is also specifically addressed. Recommendations as such can be seen in this extract as well, where ‘I’ is followed by an instruction of action that is incited from the audience, for example “*I enjoined us all to strengthen the compact*”. Despite this separation (the rhetor from the collective), the appeal to act collectively is still invoked repeatedly (“*we are doing*”, “*us all*”, “*all our students and staff*”).

However, in the repeated appeals attempting to maintain the collective, instances of excluding certain groups or actions from the institutional ‘community’ fighting against rape culture were apparent. These messages most often premised the condemnation of these groups of individuals on the basis of their actions. See for example RNM#4:

Our University condemns in the strongest terms the unacceptable behaviour of this small group of students and staff, who displayed contempt, disregard and disrespect for a process that could have resulted in a meaningful and constructive plan of action for change. They were clearly not interested in any serious and meaningful engagement to find solutions to the scourge of sexual and gender-based violence in our institutions of higher education ... The unacceptable conduct of this small group of students does not in any way reflect the wishes of the majority in our university and society at large who would like to see sexual and gender-based violence addressed and completely eradicated. An overwhelming majority of Rhodes University students and staff identify with and support the cause to rid our University and society of sexual and gender-based violence. They

however cannot associate themselves with the intolerance, violence and anarchic behaviour of a small group of students and their supporters. [RNM#4]

Fissures within the ‘collective’ rhetoric are exposed but minimalised in this extract. The rhetor distances a group of individuals by contrasting the two groups – those who are, and who are not, interested in ‘meaningful’ engagement in eradicating rape culture on campus. A disparity in size (small versus large) is used to align the institution with the ‘majority’. This implies a democratic sense of ‘majority rule’ which suggests to the audience that the institution is correct in its stance – as the ‘majority’ are as well. The small minority are deprecated (e.g. they showed “contempt, disregard and disrespect”, “intolerance, violence and anarchic behaviour”), in juxtaposition of “the meaningful and constructive plan of action” presumably supported by the reasonable majority. This sought to persuade the audience that the University is correct in its approaches against rape culture, and puts a group of the protesters (‘anarchists’), and anyone that supports them, in the wrong.

2.2. The University is governed by the law: “In our fight, everything that we, as the university can do, is determined by the constitution and the law”

In this line of rhetoric, the South African law, Constitution, and human rights, are framed as virtuous and unimpeachable, and are appealed to in order to support the University’s stance on how rape culture should (and should not) be addressed on campus. The rhetors persuade the audience on this by describing the institution’s stance as one that is aligned with, and therefore ‘subject’ to, the Constitution. Decisions, ‘rulings’, and courses of future action were often weighed up against the background of human rights, which took on a type of universalist legal ethical reasoning. Discourse that concerns the legal/moral/ethical judgement, nature and value of things is most often forensic in nature (Leach, 2000; Winton, 2013).

Rhetoric that appeals to an audience's sense of what is right or wrong, is an example of an ‘ethical’ appeal (Fahnestock & Secor, 1990). This strategy of an ethical appeal is demonstrated in extract RNM#3:

In our fight, everything that we, as the university can do, is determined by the constitution and the law. From time to time we need to review our approaches and where necessary adjust them to the changing circumstances. Every intervention, adjustment and change to our approach must be informed by the constitution, law and our values as an institution. Chief among these values is human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms, and the creation of a non-racist and non-sexist society. Any conduct which deviates from what the

constitution and the law enjoin us to do is therefore at odds with what we are seeking to build. We must avoid any form of engagement which could fall foul of the law, violates the rights of others and undermines legitimate structures and established systems. This would imperil everything we are seeking to achieve in establishing a counter culture to rape culture. [RNM#3]

An appeal to an external higher authority, such as the Constitution, automatically reminds the audience of shared criteria, evaluation or value (Fahnestock & Secor, 1990). This relies on the basic assumption of appealing to the ‘self-evident’ standard of what is moral, ethical, lawful and/or of consequence. This may imply to a reader that if they are to disagree with such a statement, that they are therefore also in opposition with the assumed shared value/standard, in this case the Constitution. Arguing from external grounds, as the above rhetor does, persuasively encourages an audience to judge as we do (Fahnestock & Secor, 1990). Appeals to the ‘self’ (internal ethos) were also used by this rhetor. This is exemplified in the authority to establish the sanctioned forms of conduct endorsed by the University. For example, *“this would imperil everything we are seeking to achieve”*.

In rhetorical theory, the use of ‘we’ is a particularly obscure persuasive pronoun. For example, the use of ‘we’ and the implied ‘they’ normalises and prioritises the values of the author, and suggests that there is then a hierarchical relationship between the author and those who do not share the same point of view as them (Winton, 2013). This hierarchy creates a division between the University and what they are *“seeking to build”* (*“non-racist and non-sexist society”*), and approaches/collectives which fall *“foul of the law”*. Whom these ‘unlawful’ parties are, is not explicitly referred to, however, in the context of the other messages it can be assumed that this refers to certain protesters and their actions on the campus. Additionally, the rhetor states *“in our fight, everything that we, as the university can do...”*; this statement is persuasive, as it not only implies that the rhetor is part of the institution, but that the rhetor forms part of the collective audience addressed, and that the audience is as much part of the University as they are. The form of ‘we’ (as the institution) and ‘our’ (as belonging to the institution) are used throughout many of the messages in the dataset. This automatically brings the reader in as an included identity to the *“fight”* against rape culture (and assigns this responsibility), but then through the division drawn, the reader is asked to pick a side.

References to the South African Constitution appear repeatedly in the University’s official communications. Another example is evident in the below extract of RNM#1, where the rhetors

support their position by iterating that they act in accordance with the South Africa Constitution:

The University agrees with students on all the issues that they have raised. The one area where we have not been able to find each other with our students is in respect of the action that has to be taken against individuals whose [sic] are accused. The University must accord all students the right to a fair trial in line with Section 35³⁷ of our Constitution. [RNM#1]

This statement contains a paradox, in that the University cannot agree with “*all*” the issues if they disagree with “*the one area*”. By using the phrase “*the one area where we have not been able to find each other*”, the rhetor evokes a sense of ‘reasonableness’ in their judgement of this disagreement.

This message appears on the University News website, therefore the rhetor cannot be exactly sure of the audience they are addressing, making it impossible for them to anticipate what their audience will or will not agree with, and thus be persuaded by. The author then anticipates a ‘universal’ audience (i.e. a nonspecific or demographically identifiable audience) (Fahnestock, 2011). In this case, rhetors can choose rhetorics that are both what they deem to be believable, as well as the most closely aligned with standards of conversational ‘politeness’ for conveying information to almost anyone (Fahnestock, 2011). For example, in TM#3, in a similar communiqué to the University staff community this comment is articulated slightly differently because the rhetor can anticipate the audience:

The University is unequivocal in its support for a strong stance against sexual violence and rape. Amongst the concerns raised by the protesters in their memorandum, there is only one aspect that the University could not support, that an accused is summarily dealt with without due process. However, we do not condone the methods that the protesters have chosen at times to raise their concerns. [TM#3]

Here stronger phrases such as “*the University could not support*” and “*we do not condone*” are used, which illustrates the minor alterations in tone with regard to the different audiences being addressed. In this case, the rhetor may be more comfortable to use stronger/harsher language and display a more explicit form of ethos (power), because the hierarchal relationship between student/staff and academic management/leadership has already been established within the

³⁷ Section 35: the rights of arrested, detained and accused people, including the right to silence, protection against self-incrimination, the right to counsel and legal aid, the right to a fair trial, the presumption of innocence and the prohibition of double jeopardy and ex post facto crimes.

University space. While on the public online space, the rhetor may be trying, in an universal manner, to appear polite in order to maintain a desirable public image.

In order to support the argument for the disagreement illustrated above, ‘due process’ and Section 35 of the Constitution are referenced. The rhetor here weighs this ‘value’ (a human right) above others in an ethical argument. According to Fahnestock and Secor (1990), ethical arguments involve making very fine discriminations, ordering values in a hierarchy, making possible the judgment of an action. This may happen when the rhetor and the audience agree on a certain set of values, but they may not necessarily order those values in the same hierarchy. Evaluating values in this way is a matter of appealing to higher values or to consequences (Fahnestock & Secor, 1990). Consequence, through causal association is exemplified in the extracts below, which references to what is, and is not, protected under the law, and by the University. In RNM#6 and RNM#5, both positive and negative consequence to the values prioritised are illustrated by the rhetors:

At Rhodes University, everyone has the right to freedom of expression, the right, peacefully and unarmed, to assemble, to demonstrate, to picket and to present petitions as afforded in sections 16³⁸ and 17³⁹ of the Constitution ... Our institution will protect these rights for everyone. What we cannot protect and what the law does not protect, however, is unlawful conduct and the undermining of the rights and liberties of others. It is extremely unfortunate when illegality is committed in the name of a necessary and important campaign against gender-based violence. [RNM#6]

Protest action is a constitutionally entrenched right, which is respected and indeed supported by the University, so long as it is exercised lawfully. Rhodes will protect these rights for everyone. What the University cannot protect and what the law does not protect, however, is unlawful conduct and the undermining of the rights and liberties of others. It is extremely unfortunate when illegality is committed in the name of a necessary and important campaign against gender-based violence. [RNM#5]

Here, a hierarchy is created between “*peacefully*”, “*unarmed*” and “*lawful*” protesting action, and protests that are “*unlawful*” or “*undermining of the rights and liberties of others*”. The

³⁸ Section 16, states that:

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of expression, which includes: a) freedom of the press and other media; (b) freedom to receive or impart information or ideas; (c) freedom of artistic creativity; and (d) academic freedom and freedom of scientific research.

(2) The right in subsection (1) does not extend to: (a) propaganda for war; (b) incitement of imminent violence; or (c) advocacy of hatred that is based on race, ethnicity, gender or religion, and that constitutes incitement to cause harm.

³⁹ Section 17 guarantees that: Everyone has the right, peacefully and unarmed, to assemble, to demonstrate, to picket and to present petitions.

rhetors weigh up the consequence of infringing upon certain individual rights against the degree to which other individual rights are allowed to be exercised (e.g. “*exercised lawfully*”). The rhetors underlying position on the matter is evident through their definitions of consequence. This is because behind every demonstration of consequence stands an ethical evaluation, a judgment, that the consequence is either bad or good (Fahnestock & Secor, 1990). In this case, the consequence of not abiding by the University’s definition of protest (as supported by the Constitution, according to the rhetor) is that the institution’s (and their legal) protection will be withheld. Subtly, it is furthermore implied that should a student contravene the University’s definition of protest, that they in this case can (and should - in line with the Constitution) take legal action against these individuals (see below statement from the University Council – TM#2).

Throughout the messages certain individual rights are specifically mentioned in relation to sexual violence, rape culture, and the protest actions from the social movement members on campus. Institutions regularly advance a language of ‘rights’, particularly in policy-making and practice. However, feminist activists and scholars suggest that the reality of a rights-based approach is often precariously positioned in relation to ‘equality’ for women (e.g. the reality of the right to bodily integrity) and marginalised groups in South Africa (Cornwall & Molyneux, 2006; Hames, 2008).

The rights specifically spoken about were the: 1) right to protest (mentioned above); 2) the right to a fair trial; 3) the right to bodily integrity; and 4) the right to freedom of expression. See TM#4 and RNM#1:

As we engage each other on the future of our University, it is important that we do so respectfully and within the prescripts of our Constitution. We must always defend the right to freedom of expression and the unfettered exchange of ideas. [TM#4]

Every person has a right to their bodily integrity⁴⁰. One rape, is one too many ... The University must accord all students the right to a fair trial in line with Section 35 of our Constitution. [RNM#1]

These rights are spoken to in an abstract way as the rhetors make little reference to the contexts to which they apply and the power relations that may either enable, or hinder, one to exercise

⁴⁰ This refers to section 12 of the Constitution, part 2, which guarantees that: everyone has the right to bodily and psychological integrity, which includes the right: (a) to make decisions concerning reproduction; (b) to security in and control over their body; and (c) not to be subjected to medical or scientific experiments without their informed consent.

these rights. In addition, this rhetor positions the University as being responsible for keeping (“*The University must accord*”; “*we must always defend*”) the line drawn between fair/unfair, legal/illegal, respectful/disrespectful, ways of engagement within the University space. This also assigns this institutional collective the power to choose where these lines are drawn.

In TM#2, below, the University Council makes a statement in support of upholding these particular rights. It is made explicit that should these rights be infringed upon in protesting against rape culture that the University leadership will, and should, take legal action against such “*unlawful conduct*”:

It is the duty of Council to ensure that lawful protest action, however robust, is allowed and protected. Such robust engagement however should not propagate or result in violence, racial hatred or undermine individual dignity or the protections each of us have a right to in respect of, amongst others, freedom of expression, academic freedom, religion, culture, creed, and sexual orientation ... It just cannot, and will not, be allowed that the dignity of protest actions with legitimate demands for addressing sexual violence, transformation, lack of food for some oppidan⁴¹ students or securing access to quality education for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, to mention but a few, should be undermined by unlawful conduct. The University’s leadership is expected to take lawful action against those who may believe they have license to break the law and violate the constitutionally protected rights of others, and is not at liberty to simply look away and allow a culture of impunity to take root. [TM#2]

The authority (ethos) of the above rhetor is established at the outset, as they write on behalf of ‘Council’. The Council has statutory duties to the University, this authority enables the use of strong action verbs, such as: “*it just cannot and will not be allowed*”. Again, a hierarchy, echoing the above rhetors’ strategy, is created between ‘dignified’ and ‘legitimate’ protests versus protests that “*believe they have license to break the law*”. The consequence here is that the institutional management will be instructed by Council to take “*lawful action*” – otherwise a “*culture of impunity*” will “*take root*”. This potentially responsabilises a small group of individuals for an impending ‘culture’ (as an entrenched societal issue – that is not easy to change), and persuades the reader on the stance that action *must* be taken now, so that the “*root*” of this be cut before it grows (i.e. before it is too late). This is an ‘if-then’ (slippery slope) causal statement, which appeals to the audience’s understanding of causal relations by constructing a type of ‘chain reaction’ such that once one thing happens, or once a certain threshold is crossed, it sets off a causal process that produces other, usually, undesirable consequences (Fahnestock, 2011; Jasinski, 2001). The rhetor also uses the discursive rhetorical

⁴¹ Oppidan refers to students who live off-campus in private residence.

strategy of ‘presence’ (Jasinski, 2001), which makes the advocated for problem (exigence) at hand appear more ‘vivid’ (present) to the reader by showing the ‘urgency’ (“*take root*”), ‘magnitude’ (“*culture of*”), and ‘severity’ (“*impunity*”) thereof. This persuades the reader on the rhetor’s proposed, or enacted, solution to the problem.

The hierarchy spoken to above rests on isolating and pointing to a small group of protesters. These protesters are accused of ‘hijacking’ a legitimate protest, and using the cover of the protest to commit ‘acts of criminality’. See the two extracts below from TM#2 and RNM#5 respectively:

Universities should not have to turn to the courts due to violations of others’ rights by anarchists and agent provocateurs who hijack legitimate protest to instigate and participate in violence and damage to the University’s and others’ property. [TM#2]

The University distinguishes between the necessary vigorous pursuit of a common objective to eliminate sexual and gender-based violence on the one hand, and abusing such a noble cause as a cover to commit acts of criminality, which serve to undermine the noble struggle. [RNM#5]

Both these extracts condemn the actions of particular protesters on the basis of their violation of other’s individual rights and the law. Here, the ‘common’ objective of countering rape culture is being positioned as in threat of “*anarchists and agent provocateurs*” who will “*hijack*”, “*damage*” and “*undermine*” this “*noble*” cause/struggle. Both extracts imply that these acts had explicit (obvious) intentions (e.g. “*to instigate*” and “*as a cover*”) to commit criminal acts. This line of argument uses a layered strategy of ‘identification’. This identifies a shared value/interest (i.e. the common objective of countering rape culture) with the audience, uses ‘identification through antithesis’ which focuses on uniting in the face of a shared enemy (the “*anarchists and agent provocateurs*”), and thereby creates a ‘transcendent’ collective group identity (‘we’) (Cheney, 1983; Jasinski, 2001). These types of appeals, according to Cheney (1983), often suggest conscious ‘intentionality’ from another individual/group which fails to incorporate (and constitute) ‘unconscious’ intentions. This can be seen above.

Referring to the protesters as ‘violating’ others’ rights, ‘abusive’, ‘violent’, ‘damaging’ and ‘criminal’ parallels terminology/discourse that society uses to speak about sexual violence perpetrators. By indirectly framing the protesters this way, the rhetor may be attempting to elicit a response from the reader/audience that is in support of the actions that the University

was ‘forced’ to (and “*should not have to*”) take against them. The below extract from RNM#6 states why the University sought an interdict:

The interdict followed involvement and participation by the students in protests against gender-based violence in April and May of that year which the court found had “made serious inroads into the rights and liberties of others.” The protests led in some instances to unlawful conduct that included the kidnapping and assault of two male students who were suspected of rape or sexual assault, the disruption of classes at the University, damage to and destruction of University property, and the erection of barricades at the entrance to the University, the High Court had found. [RNM#6]

Within this communication, among several others in the dataset, the authors use direct quotations of the words of higher authorities or experts. According to Atkins and Finlayson (2016, p. 164) “quotations are not only a source of authority, but a way of claiming authorisation”. In the above message, the High Court Judge is quoted in order to support/validate the University’s decision for applying for the interdict, and their right to do so. This type of text is known as a bureaucratic style of rhetoric. Text styles are a source of identification and power, and can establish different cultures of power (Hauser, 2002). This style, according to Hauser (2002, p. 260), organises a significant portion of institutional communication, where “rational *procedures* are set forth as *rules* drawn from the research and recommendations of *experts* and given objective status in the *documents* of the bureaucracy”. These messages are not primarily addressed to sway opinions, but rather to codify/clarify procedures and policies, establish jurisdiction, and formulate the rules of equality (Hauser, 2002). The institution’s decision to apply for this interdict was a contested topic as I illustrate and discuss further in the following analysis chapter (**Chapter 6**).

Within the ‘official’ dataset, messages reiterated that adherence to the law and constitution was to be considered first, and foremost, in any of the actions the University body takes. Secondly, the condemnation of sexual and gender-based violence was stated repeatedly. Some ‘official’ rhetors did however, in very few circumstances, acknowledge that the ‘systems’ which are meant to ensure individual rights for rape victims are in fact flawed. See the extract below from RNM#1:

We acknowledge that there are flaws within the systems that are meant to ensure justice when one’s rights have been violated. And so, our students have a right to be angry. Society fails survivors of rape daily as they are often not believed and securing a conviction is excruciatingly difficult and presents a significant barrier to reporting cases of rape. We need to debunk the ‘stranger danger’ myth, as more often than not rape is not reported because these assaults take place within intimate

relationships. Rhodes University has committed to address our policies and protocols to ensure that we rid our institution of the pernicious scourge of sexual violence and rape and provide a safe, secure and supportive space for survivors of rape and sexual violence. [RNM#1]

The rhetor of this extract acknowledges that there are structures/systems that are flawed in responding to deal with sexual violence and rape, and the rhetor reveals this to the reader/audience. Although the rhetor does not specifically name what structures/systems are flawed (e.g. institutional ones or broader societal ones), the message then follows on to say that the University is committed to fixing identified flawed systems/structures in the institution. Between these two premises the author speaks to how ‘society’ (and not the institution) fails rape victims due to inadequate responses to victims’ reports and poor conviction systems. These, as discussed in the literature review (**Chapter 2**), are well-known issues for rape victims in South Africa. Additionally, the rhetor calls for the need to debunk the ‘stranger danger’ rape myth, which negates the reality that sexual assault takes place as often, or more (see Buck Doude, 2008; Fisher et al., 2005; Koss et al., 1987), within intimate relationships⁴². As such, ‘blame’ is purposively allocated to: ‘society’; the justice/legal system; and prominent rape ‘myths’ which have negative effects/consequences for sexual assault victims. While these are all true, the rhetor is not addressing the institution’s ‘flaws’ in this matter (e.g. the need to address policies and protocols to provide a better space for rape victims on campus).

Furthermore, a contradictory argument to the overall rhetoric, which advocates strongly for following ‘due process’ and abiding by the law, is evident where the institution acknowledges the justice/legal system for failing survivors of rape. This failure and the institution’s inconsistency in argument, may give insight into why the students were so ‘angry’ and, as I discuss in **Chapter 7**, seemingly displeased with the University adopting a legalistic framework to understanding and addressing rape culture.

2.3. Rhodes University has always been committed to addressing rape culture: “we remain firmly committed”

This section explores a thread of discourse that identified the University as being committed to, and striving to be at forefront of, addressing rape culture on campuses in South Africa. In addition, these messages attempted to show the audience/reader that this is not a new stance towards rape culture, but rather one that the institution has always upheld. This type of

⁴² See the Literature Review chapter for details on this.

rhetorical strategy (differentiation) is often in response to some form of criticism, and it attempts to separate an individual/institution from the criticism, while concomitantly, redefining an objective/position that can be carried forward (Ware & Linkugel, 1973).

Certain events, such as accusations of wrongdoing or discrimination, that pose threats to an institution's public image usually require some form of apology (apologia) from the institution as a response to minimise/mitigate any potential damage (Jasinski, 2001). Public identities/images are important to maintain for institutions/businesses, such as those in higher education sectors, as they have a 'reputation' to uphold (Harsha & Shah, 2011). Harsha and Shah (2011) note, in this regard, that consistency in the rhetoric of higher education institutional identities (in what a University 'stands' for) is key if they are to maintain desirable public images. This is demonstrated repeatedly (in the form of what the University commits to) in the texts gathered from the official communication spaces of Rhodes University.

As exemplified below, this rhetor repeatedly states that the University is, but more importantly has always been, 'committed' to addressing sexual violence and rape culture within the institution. See TM#8:

As a University, we remain firmly committed to ensuring that we provide timely, empathetic and caring support for any of our students and staff who may fall victim to such a traumatic experience. We are also committed to following due legal process against any person who perpetrates sexual or gender-based violence on another person, as soon as such a charge is laid. This is a commitment we make and one, which we have consistently demonstrated a commitment to keep. [TM#8]

The word 'committed/commitment' is used four times in this extract. Fahnestock (2011) argues that the continual reassertion of the same term or phrase has an undoubted rhetorical force as it fulfils the rhetorical goal of giving presence to certain notions of import.

Repetitive form occurs when a rhetor consistently maintains a principle by presenting it in different ways (Hauser, 2002). They restate the same idea in a new guise. This supports and sustains an existing position and maintains the 'self' of the institution. Rhetorical communication can reflect, evoke, destroy or maintain a 'self' (individual/group identities) (Hauser, 2002). This rhetorical framing, according to Hauser (2002, p. 71), advocates a position "that both legitimates and motivates actions" and proclaims (or reclaims) a public identity. Public identities develop as a result of the interaction between groups formed within social movements and their media or public presences (van Zoonen, 1992). Public identities, among

other traits, determine what is being opposed, what is of value, and the degrees of legitimate modes of conduct (van Zoonen, 1992). In this case the public identity being put forward is of an institution that does (is committed to) the ‘right’ (and morally/legally virtuous) thing.

In RNM#1 the rhetor denotes what the University is ‘committed’ to (in the short term) address, in regard to the rape culture on campus:

In the short term, we have committed to:

- (a) Increasing the capacity of our Harassment Office so that survivors of rape and sexual violence are attended to without delay;
 - (b) strengthening and expanding the existing sensitivity training provided to staff and students so that they can deal empathetically and in a caring manner towards survivors of sexual violence and rape;
 - (c) Using external prosecutors for rape cases;
 - (d) A task team will be established to review the Rhodes University Sexual Assault Protocol. This Task team will feed into the work of the one chaired by [retracted], in the interim.
 - (e) Any student who is accused of any offence will always be treated in line with Section 35 of the Constitution.
 - (f) All students found guilty of misconduct including rape will have their transcript endorsed.
- [RNM#1].

Without being able to fully take into account what it is that the rhetors are responding to, the text repetitively conveys to the reader that they are “increasing”, “enhancing”, “improving” and “expanding” on systems/policies and procedures and so on, but also that these are already “existing”, “current” and “in place”. Synonyms, such as these, are often used for a persuasive effect of emphasising a point (Fahnestock, 2011). This emphasis continually ensures that the reader knows that these systems/policies and procedures are not new but just getting upgraded. This may seek to deflect the criticism that the University has never attempted to address/respond to sexual violence and rape on the campus. However, this plan of action seems inconsistent with the proceeding statement (in the below extract) which states that ridding the University of rape culture will take not just “*tinkering around the margins*”.

The reason behind improving these domains is not specifically outlined (for example, if these were issues highlighted by protesting students). Instead, the hoped-for outcome is illustrated: i.e. that ‘survivors’ of rape/sexual violence are attended to without delay and that sensitivity training equips the staff/students to deal with ‘survivors’ empathetically and in a caring manner. The reason for this may potentially be to address criticism levelled at the University

(e.g. delays, and unempathetic/uncaring students/staff). In a similar manner, point c) notes the new use of external prosecutors for reported rape cases. While no hoped-for outcome is given, and no reason is provided, it can be assumed that the University had received criticism on its internal prosecutors. Point d) suggests the establishment of a new task team to review the sexual assault protocol at the University. Points e) and f) do not follow the pattern of making changes/additions to structures/initiatives/procedures, but rather state how students will be treated should they be accused of any offence, and if found guilty how they will be penalised. These perhaps exist to remind students/staff that throughout all this the law (as seen in the above theme) and due process are a commitment the University will keep.

Throughout several texts, as illustrated below in RNM#1, rape culture (sexual violence and rape) on campus is referred to as a ‘pernicious scourge’, and one that is necessary to be ‘rid’ of, albeit a ‘challenge’. To this challenge the rhetor(s) offer their solution: the establishment of the Sexual Violence Task Team⁴³:

The challenge of ridding our University of the pernicious scourge of sexual violence and rape calls for a big, bold and imaginative response and not just tinkering around the margins. To that end, an intermin [sic] committee has been established to draw up the terms of reference for a task team...[RNM#1]

Exigence in apologia rhetorical situations is often double-binded in nature. The first problematic event that requires a rhetorical response is the criticism/accusation itself, and the way in which the institution responds (e.g. an inadequate response) to the first event can turn into a separate point of exigence, which shapes this compound rhetorical situation (Jasinski, 2001). This is illustrated in responses to the criticism/scepticism of ‘what has/is the University done/doing about rape culture’, where rhetors indicated that the University had set up the Sexual Violence Task Team (SVTT) to deal with the rape culture. On several occasions across the dataset, some ‘official’ rhetors refer to this task team as one that the University set up (therefore taking ownership of its formation). See RNM#5 and TM#5 respectively:

Since the protest in 2016 a Sexual Violence Task Team which the University set up to investigate and make recommendations in respect of a counter-culture to rape at the University...[RNM#5]

⁴³ The Sexual Violence Task Team was set up as a result of the #RURReferenceList protest. It was tasked with providing a list of recommendations to the University, on how they may go about looking into ways to creating a counter culture to rape culture in campus. The details of the Task Team are explained in more detail in **Chapter 1**.

As you may be aware, the University set up a Task Team in April 2016 to explore how a counter culture to rape and gender-based violence may be implemented in our institution...[TM#5]

These in turn elicited responses from the task team. The SVTT, finding the University's claims/responses to the public deceptive, then responded to the new exigence created to mitigate claims against them that they believe could damage their public image/identity (e.g. as associated with institutional management). Thus, they circulate a 'statement of autonomy' on the 'official' and 'unofficial' online delivery sites. See the below extract from TM#6:

The members of what is currently known as the "task team to address issues of sexual violence" write this statement to uphold the values on which it is founded: transparency and active participation. This is to ensure that honest channels of communication remain open between those who are genuinely trying to engage with rape culture on our campus and in our community, and to invite more members of our community to engage in the process of working to further the mandate set out by concerned students and staff in the original terms of reference handed over to this team during the protest. Importantly, we intend this as a firm declaration of autonomy—we assert our independence from the formal structures of the university, who are in no way responsible either for our formation or for our work, and to explain on our own terms, and in our own words, who we are. This team emerged from the student responses to issues of sexual violence at this university. It was from that response that the university structures initiated the process of establishing this team. This team acknowledges that it is rooted in the space that it emerged from: it is rooted in the student movement. But, being initiated by the university structures, it makes recommendations on how the university itself can better serve the entire university and wider community to eliminate sexual violence, rape culture and the patriarchal systems affecting the lives of us all. **It is not a part of any university structure, but rather is an autonomous body that works within the entire university community. As such it cannot be spoken for by any other body – within the university or otherwise.** [TM#6]

This statement communicates that "*university structures initiated*" the establishment of the task team, but that it is not part of any "*university structure*". It also acknowledges that the space it emerged from was "*rooted in the student movement*" (i.e. the #RURferenceList). It declares itself, its formation and work, as an "*autonomous body*", working within, but not part of any university community. This makes it unable to "*be spoken for by any other body*". A need for such explicitness, as stated in the extract above, emerged from the institution's responses, and subsequent public perception, that the task team was an institutional structure and therefore, under the 'control' of institutional management. Making the last statement of the text bolder than the rest ensures that the reader leaves knowing this point.

The rhetors' attempt to declare independence by making this statement, and use a rhetorical tactic of dissociating themselves from the institutional management, or any 'body', that claims they can speak for the team. According to Jasinski (2001) dissociative rhetorical arguments not only divide but also redefine or reconstruct. Thus, the task team reconstructs their position, and identity, and defines (reiterates) their understanding of rape culture (and how to address it within the institution). The task team reconstructs their identity within the institution carefully, so that both parties (institutional management and the social movement body) are acknowledged and not left ignored. By creating a public identity independent from either party, the task team attempts to be in a 'neutral' position, 'serving' the interests of both sides. This seeks to establish credibility, connection to, and 'trust' from both sides, by disassociating the task team's position as more aligned with any one side. However, in doing so, paradoxically, the SVTT rhetors risk losing their credibility and trust to either side, by distancing themselves from both sides. Although these rhetors labour to create a separated identity from the University, their rhetoric, similarly to the rhetors above, creates a divide between "*those who are genuinely trying to engage in rape culture*", and those who therefore are implicitly not. Therefore, they 'disinvite' (exclude) any individuals to join their collective who do not specifically align with the SVTT's values and processes. This may carry implications for the "*honest*" and "*open*" channels of communication that they seek going forward.

The precarious position of juggling the public identity, and its associations, is further evident in a different message from the task team TM#7, below, which invites the University's students and staff to form part of the team and its work:

It is important to note that the formation of a task team is ONE OF the responses that the University is putting in place, and that the current co-ordinator is NOT a member of management. In addition, it was established that students EXPECT the presence of the staff members at any protest. Some academics expressed their concern about their presence being unwelcomed. From this meeting onwards, staff members are requested by students to show their solidarity in physical appearance.

[TM#7]

In the above extract, the task team is purposefully addressing the internal University community. It again, declares that the SVTT is not aligned with institutional management, but further defines that academic staff are 'welcome' (both in the SVTT and in the rape culture protest action). This suggests that (some) academic staff are not being viewed by the task team as aligned (necessarily) with institutional management; and that the staff are potentially (incorrectly) perceiving the task team as part of institutional management. This may signify

that the task team's credibility (as an autonomous body), and its trustworthiness to be serving the 'correct' interests, are perceived as jumbled in the public sphere. It may also show where the different parties (staff, students, and management) and their solidarity may lie (i.e. with whom do they align themselves), which forces the task team to adopt a middle ground – although ambiguously perceived (thus requiring the above statements). This may be, as discussed later, an insight into how some the students (and some staff) did not want to work with, or trust, the institutional management (and in some cases the task team).

2.4. Bolstering appeals: “Her message to fellow students? ... the University backs you”.

Within the collected data-set there were several texts that were identifiably not written by the usual 'official' rhetors (e.g. University leadership/management, the SVTT, academic/support staff etc.). These appealed heavily to pathos, compared to the use of appeals to ethos and logos which the other 'official' rhetors often used. The messages were delivered on the public Rhodes News website, which only the University management/leadership can access (unlike the Toplist emailing server, which academic/support staff can send messages on). Arguably, the University management/leadership, by choosing to forward these messages, implies that they support this rhetoric/position as an official representation of the institution. Disseminating these messages via the official University delivery systems is thus intriguing, in the sense that these messages and the positions that they advance are sanctioned as congruent to the overarching position put forth by the University.

In these messages, the rhetors attempt to reform the public image of the institution, specifically that of the Vice-chancellor, through bolstering as a rhetorical strategy. In situations where an individual or institution is under attack, bolstering can enhance the image of this person/institution by linking and associating them with values (abstract or objects) that are favourably viewed by the audience (or at least deemed to be) (Jasinski, 2001; Ware & Linkugel, 1973). The institution is 'bolstered' through a process of providing an alternative account or perspective on aspects of the institution under attack (e.g. the Vice Chancellor's actions/responses in the rape culture protests, and the institution's policies and procedures to instances of sexual violence and rape).

Moreover, the use of 'external' voices can support and strengthen the institution's overall argument/position without having to take a too heavy of a personal stake in the persuasion.

Rhetors make commitments when engaging in rhetorical communication as the positions and discourse that they adopt carry inherent risk, and thus personal stakes (Hauser, 2002). By using another voice, individuals or institutions are thus able to carry less risk/personal stake should the audience argue against it. This is similar to how a rhetor may use quotes from certain individuals or institutions to support the claims they are making.

See the below extracts from RNM#7 which is written by a student of the University about the rape culture protests of 2016:

This year, Rhodes University students had had enough about a rape culture. These protests are not happening because of the current vice-chancellor. They have a good cause. Not to protest and to sweep issues under the carpet will ruin the future and mean we ignore our responsibility as the youth. The 1976 youth played their role and it is up to us whether we continue or sell out the struggle. [RNM#7]

The author of this message supports the logic that ‘rape culture’ is a ‘good’ reason for a social movement, such as the #RUMReferenceList student protest, and brings in the notion that “*not to protest*” would be irresponsible as ‘the youth’ of South Africa. This argument the rhetors bases on the ‘1976 youth struggle’, and persuades the audience that it is up to ‘us’ (and ‘our’ actions/behaviour) whether the struggle shall continue or be sold out. This is an example of appealing to collective/cultural/public memory, and how a rhetor can build upon a pre-existing discourse (constraint). As discussed previously, this type of memory recall shares, an intended audience, a particular meaning which gives a context/purpose to an action or situation (Phillips, 2004). For many the words 1976 + youth⁴⁴ in the context of a ‘struggle’ may not be meaningful, and more information would need to be given for a connection to be made. However, in this circumstance the rhetor has identified their audience to be part of the same collective ‘identity’, which carries a collective memory of political history of protesting students in South Africa. Critical rhetorical theorists have suggested that individuals and groups are ‘interpellated’ (which refers to the way in which discourses ‘hail’ subjects) “in and through public discourse and is ‘constitutive’ of national identity” (Bruner, 2005, p. 311). Bruner (2005) explains that in the same way as one would recognise and respond when ones name is called, a ‘call’ on public memory/identity may invoke individuals to ‘recognise themselves’ in the offered subject positions and respond accordingly. This nod to nationalism generates and reproduces an ‘us’

⁴⁴ In 1976, the 16th of June, a protest led by students took place in Soweto, South Africa. This became known as the ‘Soweto uprising’, and many causal factors have been linked to the origin of the protest. See Ndlovu (2006) for a discussion of these.

identity. Thus, how texts offer subject positions that individuals are invited to take on is how rhetoric can be ‘constitutive’ in nature. In this example, the rhetor compels the reader to either take up a subject position (and correlating behaviour) that will continue a ‘good cause’ in a responsible manner, or one that will ‘sell out’ the cause which will, as the rhetor states, ‘ruin the future’.

The author of RNM#7 then goes on to say:

But [Vice-chancellor at the time] has never said there was no such a problem as a rape culture. He has been advocating for the rule of law. He has repeatedly said the law must take its course. Rhodes University is lucky to have [Vice-chancellor at the time] as vice-chancellor. [extracted] his leadership should not be distorted. [RNM#7]

This provides a second cause for the ‘responsible’ subject position that the rhetor has previously offered up. The institution’s Vice-chancellor is defended here, throughout the text, against being perceived as culpable, or blameable, in the rape culture protests. This occurs through a rhetorical process of acquittal, where the purported ‘action’ of the Vice Chancellor (that he said there was no rape culture) is directly denied. Similar to the above pattern of discourse, the ‘rule of law’ is advocated for, which protects against possible negative perceptions of action taken by the University. Protesters are directly blamed for breaking this rule of law in the below extract (RNM#7):

From last year’s protest to this year I have realised that the rule of law is being ignored on campus ... It is an undeniable fact that when protests take place university property is damaged. Benches are used as barricades, among other things. While people have a right to protest, does this override the right people have to be respected? [RNM#7]

The balance between what rights should be upheld in place of others, is again evident here where the rhetor questions which right ought to override another. This is a theme apparent throughout the two ‘official’ and ‘unofficial’ datasets. This is further discussed in the next chapter.

The rhetor, in the following extract of RNM#7, uses a tactic of quoting an external individual which the rhetor assumes will carry significance to the reader:

This month I spoke to a graduate from Rhodes University. In our conversation he said “You [students] disappointed me with the latest protest of yours and you embarrassed [Vice-chancellor at the time]. “Why did you not protest to the police? When I watched TV I was really disappointed. Why were you [students] so disrespectful towards [Vice-chancellor at the time]?”. He asked if it

was because [Vice-chancellor at the time] was African. I could not answer that. I concur, [Vice-chancellor at the time] is having a tough time. But that should not cast any shadow on his leadership.
[RNM#7]

Using direct quotations brings the exact words of another individual, from their original context of written or spoken utterance, into an entirely new context (Fahnestock, 2011). Direct quotations are mostly attributed to a source, but can be misrepresentative or ‘out of place’ with regard to the original rhetor’s premise (Fahnestock, 2011). From a rhetorical perspective, a quotation only works “to the extent that it, or its source, is recognised and approved of by the audience that is to be persuaded by it” (Atkins & Finlayson, 2016, p. 167). Quotations can help a rhetor to improve logical or rational claims by providing evidence, intensify emotionally driven claims by enabling sentimentality/humour or ‘elevated’ language, or ‘ethos’ by establishing connections to the audience through affirming/creating shared cultural references (Atkins & Finlayson, 2016).

In this example, the rhetor is relying on the ethos of the quoted individual, by establishing shared cultural identification of this person to the identified audience – a graduate from the University speaking to the current students of the University. In the same way, one could argue that in choosing to share this message on official communication platforms, the institution is indirectly ‘quoting’ a message which relies on the ethos of this particular student to put forward a message to other students who share cultural sameness. Additionally, the quote in the above message intensifies the emotional appeal (pathos) to reasonableness, as it uses a deemed legitimate reference to enable feelings of disapproval regarding students’ actions in relation to the Vice-chancellor.

Furthermore, the impression that the Vice-chancellor’s identity as ‘African’ may have been a causal factor for the ‘disrespectful’ treatment received from protesters was questioned and not ruled out. This carries significance, as the rhetor is implying that perhaps some other systemic issue is responsible for this fate. According to Best (1987) rhetoric which negates a ‘victim’s’ complicity in their fate, and ultimately presents them as ‘innocent’ and ‘blameless’, offers rhetorical advantages that these claims will be ratified by a reader/audience. In this case the Vice Chancellor has not done wrong but is blamed because he is African. This implies a racist sentiment from the public, perhaps drawing again on a cultural/public collective memory, of South Africa’s unequal political (apartheid) past.

While the above rhetor predominately seeks to support the institution's stance on sanctioning/condemning particular narratives and modes of social conduct, in the next message the rhetor rather seeks to credit the University's policies and protocols that are in place for supporting sexual assault victims. In RNM#8 an article is written interviewing a student of the University who is sexual assault victim (purportedly at their request). These details their experience of the University's aid in reporting and seeking a conviction:

"Everyone was massively supportive. They really went above and beyond. [University prosecutor] was available all day and night. You do not really expect that from any University. I started realising that jeez! There is a lot more going on here. These guys are amazing." "I came forward and reported the case. I wasn't even sure of myself. Their investigation was thorough. They prepared and presented a solid, water-tight case and through their effort, care and support, the little bugger is now gone." Bettie feels "victorious" with the permanent exclusion from the University of her abuser. We cannot have boys running around with a sense of entitlement. It is good to let them know that actually you are going to get caught, you are going to get nailed and you are going to be out, she says confidently. [RNM#8]

This extract recognises the support, and outstanding efforts, that this individual received from the University, when reporting, and getting a conviction for, a rape incident. Like RNM#7, quotes are used to carry another's 'voice' into a context. This notion is known as an 'embedded' voice, and allows the author to give the audience a better sense of representation of the unique speech pattern of another person (Fahnestock, 2005). Simply telling the reader/public that another individual had had a positive experience of the University would have had a less persuasive effect on them than directly quoting this experience, which gives a personalised sense of the experience. It may also stand to work against potential disbelief of this claim, as the rhetor is using the direct words of the interviewee. Studies at South African Universities (de Klerk et al., 2007; Gordon & Collins, 2013; Singh et al., 2015) have shown high levels of distrust and lack of faith in higher education policies, procedures, security, and services, which may in turn lead the phenomenon of underreporting rape formally to the universities. These direct quotes serve to counter this negativity.

Quotes also give an interactive dimension to the article, as the author can then move between what the interviewee said and how the author experienced it subjectively. For example, see the below extract of subjective experience:

I have never come face to face with a rape survivor before. The woman in front of me could not possibly have been violated in this way. She is far too strong, too warm, and too human. ... It didn't

take long to realise that the young woman in front of me is an out-of-the-frame, positive human being clearly made of sterner stuff. [RNM#8]

Versus the direct quotations used in the extract below, from the same text, which address the audience directly:

Her message to fellow students? “Well”, she says, “I have three simple things to say. One, the University backs you. [University prosecutor] and her team went out of their way and even unearthed evidence I never thought was possible. Two, a hard lesson has been learned. I was naïve. You never think that such a thing could happen to you. Thirdly, never think you are invincible. While women must be free to live life as they choose, please look after yourself. If you are going to drink, get a trusted friend to walk you home”. [RNM#8]

The overall message is positive, encouraging students to report matters of sexual violence which can aid in destigmatising sexual assault, for example the interviewee says this will: “*raise awareness and ... inspire women to stand up to gender-based violence and to report abuse*”. The interviewer also puts in effort to engage with their own perceptions of sexual violence victims. However, some sentiments therein may unfortunately perpetuate certain notions of rape myths which ultimately sustain a rape culture. These relate to the idea, among others, that naivety and/or feeling ‘invincible’ play a role in whether someone is susceptible to sexual assault. This falls into the premise that if certain strategies/behaviours are taken that one can ‘avoid’ or protect oneself from sexual violence. Studies (see Dosekun, 2007; Gordon & Collins, 2013) have shown that students adopt such discursive strategies of ‘protection’ or coping mechanisms when living within a rape culture on higher education campuses.

Furthermore, the idea that going drinking (alcohol) and needing to call a friend to assist you home otherwise you are more likely to be raped is problematic. While alcohol consumption can be viewed as an exacerbating factor with regard to sexual violence, in that it forms the backdrop against which specific gender and sexual socialisation practices occur in many university contexts, it is not a causal one (Sexual Violence Task Team, 2016). Deming et. al’s. (2013) research, as discussed in the literature review, found that perceptions around alcohol use as a causal factor of rape place responsibility on the victim and their actions for their own victimhood. This puts emphasis on the alcohol and victim, and implicitly excuses rapists for perpetrating the assault. This plays into the notion “that women are expected to monitor, police, restrict, and even hinder their movements in an attempt to ensure the safety of their bodies” which “underscores the widespread belief that women are responsible for preventing bodily

violations and that women who are sexually victimized are culpable” (K. Edwards et al., 2011, p. 767).

Lastly, the primary rhetor mentions that the rape victim being interviewed seems “*far too strong, too warm, and too human*”. This sustains certain ideas about who is socially acceptable as a victim, as well as how a rape victim should act after an assault. Both of which are constructions that obscure and deny that all people are vulnerable to rape (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994), and that can silence/restrict different narratives/identities that fit into these constructions (an example of a ‘rape script’ – discussed in **Chapter 2**). Thus, while the rhetor’s intention is to depict the University’s response as rigorous, thorough and supportive, they inadvertently draw on a number of rape myths that undermine their argument.

3. Conclusion

In the ‘official’ communication sites I identified four broad patterns of rhetoric that rhetors engaged in when arguing how to address rape culture on campus. The first theme identified the issue of ‘rape culture’ as a societal one. This located it as an entrenched social problem existing in a much broader context, than merely a problem that is specific to Rhodes University. By framing it this way, the rhetors’ sought to create a sense of collective responsibility amongst their audience: enjoining the collective (“*together we must*”) to take action (“*the time has come*”) in eradicating rape culture at the University. Additionally, by positioning the institution as a “*microcosm of society in which sexual violence and rape is pervasive*”, the rhetors could negate any criticism, and accountability, that rape culture is the University’s problem.

In the second theme, the rhetors argued that in order to address rape culture, at the institution, the bounds of the law must be obeyed. This line of argument followed a form of ‘ethical’ reasoning, and in a forensic manner established the nature and value of certain actions and made ‘reasoned’ judgements of these. A hierarchy between acceptable ways (e.g. lawful protest), and unacceptable methods (e.g. unlawful protest) to address rape culture on campus, was created to appeal to consequence of action. This served to argue for why past legal actions taken by the institution, such as the court interdict, were necessary and ‘fair’. Even though the University’s policies, structures, and systems to deal with sexual violence were argued to be ‘in place’ (although these would be upgraded), the rhetors’ did acknowledge the “*flaws within the system*” (especially those which secure justice for rape victims) which “*fails survivors of rape*”. This created a tension between the argument for a legalistic avenue of addressing rape

culture, as it is the very legal/justice system that fails to adequately deal with sexual violence and rape.

The third theme explored the rhetoric that argued that Rhodes University has, and will always, be committed and “*at the forefront*” of addressing rape culture on campus. The need for this type of communication attempted to bolster the institution’s reputation and maintain a desirable public identity. The rhetors’ conveyed all the ‘improvements’ that they were, and would be, doing to systems/structures/policies at the institution, and outlined these plans of action to create the sense that everything was under control at the institution (following negative public media response). One such innovation was the reported creation of the SVTT. However, in communications on these ‘official’ sites, the SVTT declared an independent identity distanced from the institutional management/leadership, as well as the student body. This sought to create a neutral, and therefore ‘trustworthy’, identity which could serve both parties (institutional management versus student/staff body). However, by distancing themselves from both bodies, in an attempt to be favourable by both bodies, the SVTT may paradoxically have risked losing credibility from both parties.

The last theme focused on messages that demonstrated ‘support’ for the University. These messages made use of ‘external’ rhetor’s voices, through direct quotes, which bolstered the public identity of the institution by providing alternative perspectives (to the ones which publicly attacked the University) of how the institution was dealing with rape culture on campus. Direct quotations can help rhetors to prove evidential claims, intensify emotional appeals (pathos), and establish connection to the reader (although the degree to which these quotes work relies on the audience’s approval or recognisability of the source cited) (Atkins & Finlayson, 2016). Similarly, collective/public memories were drawn on, and national identities were constituted. One individualised identity/public image which was defended was that of the Vice-chancellor at the University (at the time). In the next analysis chapter, it will become apparent how the exigence of this rhetorical situation came to be, as the rhetors’ on the ‘unofficial’ sites often scapegoated and criticised this individual (although this was contested within). Overall, the messages in this theme sought to counter negativity and provide a positive rhetoric in the hopes that this would benefit the image of the institution, as well as to encourage rape victims that the institution will “*back you*” (thereby enabling reporting and destigmatising sexual violence). However, while intending to be supportive the rhetors (and their sources)

inadvertently drew on a number of rape myths which undermined their argument. In the next chapter, the second analysis chapter, the ‘unofficial’ sites and the themes of discourse that the rhetors’ thereon used will be discussed.

CHAPTER 6: Interpretation of ‘unofficial’ online communications

1. Introduction

The focus of this chapter (the second of two devoted to analysis and interpretation of the data) is the rhetorical make-up of non-institutionally sanctioned messages on ‘non-official’ University online spaces. The data for these spaces were collected from two Facebook sites: UCKAR Student Body and UCKAR Concerned Staff. UCKAR stands for ‘University currently known as Rhodes’ and emerged from a social movement prior to the rape culture protests, where groups of student and staff called for a change of the name of the University as part of a decolonisation process. For more on social protest movements and decolonisation at ‘UCKAR’ see Halloran (2016). As such, the term ‘UCKAR’ is discursively constitutive, and the groups on these sites thus position themselves within this group identity.

According to Armstrong and Mahone (2017, p. 98), in their study on social media activism regarding rape culture, the “rise of digital culture and online activism has required new consideration for how individual activities online may be accounted for within social movement research”. For example, due to the nature of social media sites, as discussed in previous chapters, rhetors on these sites devise alternative methods to establish ethos (credibility and trustworthiness) than those on the ‘official’ university platforms. ‘Minority’ groups, such as social movements, because of their limited social and economic power, often lack the usual forms of organised media access, such as press pages, releases and public relations departments (van Dijk, 1996). This makes social media platforms a space where these groups/movements (e.g. ‘counter publics’) can come together to create/negotiate collective group identities, discuss collective problems/threats, and invoke collective action as a group.

2. Analysis

Throughout the dataset I identified six discourses that were rhetorically argued for in similar strategies. These included: how the ‘physical’ body was threatened or embodied within a rape culture; the contestation of a ‘law and order’ approach to addressing rape culture; the idea the a ‘conspiracy’ was at hand with regards to the University ‘addressing’ rape culture; how efforts to address rape culture have and will continue to fail unless other systemic issues are addressed too; the argument for approaches that are more victim focused – and less victimising; and lastly, the collective (and segregating) rhetoric, in light of ‘failed’ attempts to address rape culture on campus, that it is now ‘our’ responsibility (‘it’s on us’) to address rape culture moving forward.

2.1. Rape culture and the physical body: “*people are literally DYING*”

In this theme of discourse, the rhetors attempt to define and set values for how the ‘group’ should (and should not) address rape culture based upon how it involves or affects the body. Within it they also identified some threats to the body and the social movement. This spoke about how the physical body and space were implicated (and threatened) on campus.

The effects that rape and rape culture have on the internal/subjective spectrum (mental/emotional) were linked to the manifestation of the external/physical deaths of bodies. This was linked to an argument for better physical/structural protection and security on campus, in order to render the bodies therein safe from the physical threat of sexual violence and rape. The need of physical ‘bodies’ to protest against rape culture was also outlined. This was evident in the argument against individuals who didn’t physically/visibly ‘fight’ rape culture; for example, individuals who took part in online/digital activism. Likewise, the danger of traitors to the social movement, particularly those playing “*political games*”, were regarded as a threat which sought to delegitimise the fight against rape culture.

In the below extract USB⁴⁵#1, the physical bodies are remembered as being ‘used’ as tools (“*on the line*”) in a physical location (“*the streets*”) to physically address (“*fight*”) rape culture at the institution:

The month of April is symbolic to the 2016 #RURReferencelist protests at UCKAR. We remember those who took to the streets and put their bodies on the line to fight the rampant Rape Culture at the university ... For those affected by today; please remember to breathe. [USB#1]

The rhetor, using forensic persuasive discourse, suggests that people should ‘remember’ the collective public action of the protest. Using the language of liberation (“*took to the streets*”, “*put their bodies on the line*”), the rhetor implies that these past events are to be remembered as noble. No particular person is singled out for praise, instead it praises the generic bodies that took to the streets. The physicality and spacialisation of these memories are accompanied by an instruction for anyone affected by the memory that they must engage in the physical activity: “*breathe*”. This suggestion provides a physical remedy/reaction to an internal/subjective experience (e.g. like drawing on a memory).

⁴⁵ ‘USB’ refers to Uckar Student Body – this code refers to the particular message this extract was taken from. Similarly, in this analysis chapter ‘UCS’ will refer to an extract from a particular message from the Uckar Concerned Staff page.

The negative effects of a rape culture were frequently spoken about in terms of its physicality. Below, in USB#2, USB#3, USB#4 and USB#5, the internal subjective experience of a rape culture, spoken of as causing “*suffering*” and “*depression*”, are linked to the manifestation of the physical death of the body:

We can't deny that the university has a huge rape culture, and because of that students are suffering from depression and committing suicide. [USB#2]

This institution cannot continue to function our sisters are dying. The rape culture in this institution must be confronted. #Rhodes shutdown we cannot continue like everything is perfect ... many students are suffering inside everyday. [USB#3]

Also this rape culture that exists in this institution must be dealt with. the management wont [sic] do anything and we are dying. [USB#4]

This is a serious, urgent and immediate issue cause people are literally DYING, NOT coping and unsafe. [USB#5]

In these extracts, immediacy and urgency, as well as the pathos of solidarity and familiarity (“*our sister*”) are appealed to, noting the consequence of suicide/death if the rape culture on campus is not addressed. Persuasive expressions (“*we can't deny*”, “*must be dealt with*”, and “*the institution cannot continue*”) are used to emphasise the point.

This rhetoric narrates how a rape culture affects the bodies of others, and how these bodies are not safe from sexual violence in the institution. This segues into a recurrent demand to address rape culture through arguing that better structural/physical security is needed on the institutional campus to keep these bodies safe. The existing security features are deemed inadequate to keep students safe from sexual violence. The institutional management is allocated a degree of blame for creating/sustaining this unsafe environment. See extract USB#6:

Rhodes is not shy in their friendship with the police when students protest fees or rape incidents, because their space was made uncomfortable and their lives disrupted. So why do they hold back when we have potential kidnappers/traffickers lingering on campus, targeting female students, causing us to look over our shoulder an extra few times? ... Can we please let these violent individuals know that they cannot come onto campus and ruin our lives? ... This is not simply a matter of basic safety; it's a matter of our lives being ruined at the blink of an eye. Members of the university need to relieve themselves from the comfort of their fancy office chairs and recognise us as women who are afraid. [USB#6]

Commentary on this included:

The problem with this university is they refuse to listen to students concerns. Women are scared? Nah don't be, with the dark streets and out-of-sight security personnel. Oh, and we have SOS buttons. Yay us. Management is dismissive. The communications department is dismissive. They are so far removed from how students think and feel they can be nothing other than dismissive. [Comment 1: USB#6]

Like, it really bugs me. Instead of ACTUAL PEOPLE helping us, we must resort to SOS buttons and blue routes that do nothing that present a facade of safety. Management are scared of being as scared as we are, so they ignore us instead. [Comment 2: USB#6]

The blue route is basically pitch black. It's the stupidest excuse for security. A student was mugged outside the fricken AMM. They don't even send out proper communication over email. The comms dept. here has and continues to be one of the weakest points of this university. [Comment 3: USB#6]

The exigence in these statements is persuading management to do more than they are currently doing. Many of the rhetors (students/staff of the University) agreed that the campus was unsafe and remarked on how the security features in place were poor/ineffective. To make their point, the pathos of fear was invoked (there are “*kidnappers/traffickers lingering on campus*”; lives are ruined; routes are “*pitch black*”). Epideictically, the institution’s management was singled out as responsible as they ‘responded’ (or did not respond) in a dismissive manner (one rhetor mimics this dismissiveness through the use of irony). The logical reason that was seen to be behind this dismissiveness, was the University management was unable to recognise their student’s concerns. This rhetoric centred around the idea that management, living in the ‘comfort of their fancy office chairs’, was ‘removed’ from the real-life experiences of students on campus.

A thread of messages in the dataset pertained to an alleged rape incident at the University, where there was a reported delay in response from the institution’s campus patrol unit (CPU) to arrive at the scene. The institutional management was again argued to be the cause of this problem. This is exemplified in extract USB#7 below:

The reports of the late response from CPU is totally unacceptable. Notwithstanding [sic] their reduced capacity by management of the university. We are extremely disgusted by the gradual and consistent failure of management and their security cluster. After meeting the CPU to receive reports regarding the matter. We have drawn to the conclusion that this is a general and collective responsibility of management [sic] and the security cluster's failure and therefore they must take

full responsibility in putting inadequate measures that have led to this unfortunate and barbaric incident. We therefore demand:

- 1) Increment of security personnels of CPU and Hi-Tec and their capacity to keep the campus safe.
- 2) The management must call upon SAPS to regularly patrol the campus at all minutes. The university has increased SAPS visibility during the times of Fees Must Fall campaign- they must equally do the same for the safety of students not for the terrorising of students.
- 3) Create a Toll Free Call system of CPU for a rapid response to the calls of students that need safety and security measures.
- 4) University Management must ensure that appropriate and severe measures are taken to the culprit.
- 5) The victim must receive all the necessary support from the university.

These demands must unequivocally be addressed and implemented by the university management within 24 hours. The response of management will be a reflection of how seriously management [sic] takes issues of rape on this campus. Students are fearing for their lives and the university is busy maximising profit at the expense of our safety. We remain disgusted by the incident. [USB#7]

Pathos, in the reference to emotion (disgust), helps this rhetor advocate for the need of a more radical plan of action going forward. Hyde and Smith (1993, as cited in Jasinski, 2001, p. 428) suggest that emotional appeals not only warrant specific courses of action (instrumental function) but also “help create and sustain the tissue of relations that is the basis of a community or a public”. This suggests that emotional appeals can produce rhetorical effects which serve an instrumental (to propose/generate a plan of action), as well as a constitutive (to create, shape and structure an identity) functions.

The rhetor’s plan of action in the above extract demands that the University management implement/address the security on campus as per the points stated. It ‘gives’ the institutional management an opportunity to respond to these demands and suggests that the response (or non-response) to the message will reflect the ‘true’ position of the University’s stance against rape culture. These demands establish the legitimacy of the rhetor (ethos) and implies that the rhetor is in a position to make such demands. The rhetorical strategy of logic is used to persuade readers that the institution can financially afford to increase external uses of security (e.g. police), because institutional management uses security measures for their own protection when necessary, and not financing such measures for the sake of students allow the University to “*profit*” at the student’s “*expense*”. How the University leadership/management utilises the institutional resources for their own benefit is illustrated again in USB#6:

Rhodes is not shy in their friendship with the police when students protest fees or rape incidents, because their space was made uncomfortable and their lives disrupted. [USB#6]

Moving on from the argument for better physical/structural forms of protection, to reduce the threat of physical harm (e.g. sexual violence and rape) to physical bodies, there was a thread of rhetoric that argued that rape culture was best ‘fought’ through physical presence (e.g. physical protest). This was illustrated in the argument against those who did not “pitch” to public displays of physical presence, as well as those who resorted to solely being active in their activism online. See the extract from USB#8:

Some of yall [sic] wake up with so much strength and energy to "drag" people and cyber bully people kodwa [but] when it comes to being on the streets you guys don't [sic] pitch up. When a student body consensus is made to meet at purple square in the AMs to protests y'all agree but STILL dont [sic] pitch.. when we're shot at some of y'all arent [sic] there but STILL have big mouths on social media. [USB#8]

To this message, there is a reply that colloquially terms those who do not protest physically (“*on the ground*” and “*on the streets*”) and resort to online routes of ‘protesting’ rape culture (deemed as ineffective) as “*keyboard warriors*”:

typical rhodes politics. be keyboard warriors, but nowhere to be found on the ground. [Comment 1: USB#8]

This notion of ‘keyboard warriors’ is illustrative of what is termed ‘slacktivism’ (i.e. slacker + activist). Slacktivism, the practice of supporting a social cause by means such as social media has been critiqued as having little to no real impact on social change and as even ‘hurting’ future civic actions (Lee & Hsieh, 2013). According to Lee and Hsieh (2013, p. 1) ‘slacktivism’ can be defined as a “low-risk, low-cost activity via social media whose purpose is to raise awareness, produce change, or grant satisfaction to the person engaged in the activity”. However, as discussed previously, digital activism (particularly digital feminist activism) on social media sites is proving to be a modality that individuals can use to question, interrupt, counter, and transform a rape culture (Mendes et al., 2018; Rentschler, 2014). Further, as will be discussed in the next chapter, there may be implications for social movements which demand that (gendered) physical bodies be ‘used’ in specific manners in order to be doing activism ‘correctly’.

In these extracts, the student body is no longer seen as homogenous; students shame and ridicule others for not doing enough with their physical bodies. Here, the rhetors attempt to define and set values for how the ‘group’ should (and should not) address rape culture, based upon how it involves or affects the body. This type of discourse is epideictic and allows

‘communities’ discursively create and share societal values, reinforce adherence and disposition to these as a group, which ultimately helps maintain a sense of common collective identity (Jasinski, 2001).

In USB#9 below, the extract illustrates how online activism is argued to fail in holding the ‘responsible’ parties ‘accountable’, which in turn fails to transform a rape culture:

It’s also extremely disheartening to know that MY former institution enjoys online activism.. yet fail time and time again to hold the bodies that exist ACCOUNTABLE for their ineffectiveness and to actually INSTIGATE change.. politically Rhodes Student Body is dormant! [USB#9]

Here a former student creates an implicit bifurcation between the current student body (which is ineffectual) and previous ones (presumably when the person was at university). The rhetoric of ‘political dormancy’ and lack of physical visibility in addressing rape culture is supported through an appeal to pathos (“*disheartened*”), and through clear emphasis on robust action words (“ACCOUNTABLE”; “INSTIGATE”).

Further fractures in the student body is noted in the SRC being considered, on numerous occasions by multiple rhetors throughout the dataset, as not supportive enough of the rape culture protest, and taking the ‘side’ of institutional management. This ‘side’ they also argued silenced students and protected alleged rapists (see discussion later in this chapter) through their use of an interdict. See the extract from USB#10:

The support given by the SRC has been very questionable throughout the protests with poor visibility, and to close it off they declared business as usual as per wishes of the management which has been silencing students by taking down posters, serving the student body with an interdict and many other actions. [USB#10]

Here, the SRC as a body is also depicted as not being visible enough during the protests. As such, they are critiqued to be acting to the “*wishes of the management*”.

The suggestion that the use of physical bodies as the only effective means to protest was countered by some, see the extract from USB#11:

I marched and stood on the front line with those womxn in the historic protest last year.” ... “I’ve been the confidant for survivors, and marched on their behalf. ... I have spread the word about rape culture and #RhodesWar, in person, until I am blue in the face. As womxn, we’re not safe when we physically protest (and its been banned here), and we’re challenged when we don’t [sic]. We have the right to protest in whatever way we are able, mentally/physically/socially to. For me, in this

time, my protest was in choosing to make it publically [sic] known what happened to [extracted]. So that, just maybe, someone of influence & the heart & guts to seek justice, might be able to help [extract] in the way that I cant [sic.] ... I only ask that you sensitize yourself to the multiple ways in which people protest. [USB#11]

The above rhetor creates an argument against this idea that physical protest/activism is the only ‘real’ way to address rape culture. Here, an argument against protesting in a physical manner is presented as being unsafe for ‘womxn’⁴⁶, as well as “*banned*” by the institution. Rather, the rhetor argues for the idea that protesting and activism can occur “*mentally*” or “*socially*”, such as the utilisation of social media to seek justice. Although interestingly, the author establishes credibility to make this statement initially by outlining how they did “*stand on the front line*” until they were physically “*blue in the face*”.

The seriousness of threat and harm of a rape culture against the ‘bodies’ it renders vulnerable is exemplified in the commentaries on a post where an individual apologised publicly for falsely accusing another student of rape. Thousands of comments and replies to this post and several separate posts were made in relation to this. Of these, a discourse could be seen which publicly denounced this individual and assigned them blame for contributing to the harm of bodies affected by a rape culture. Thus, stepping outside of the ‘all bodies on the line’ narrative was met with strong disapproval. See, for example, several comments on the post of USB#12, where the apology took place, below:

Thank you for seriously setting back the efforts of the RUreferencelist protests. In the face a movement desperately trying to dispel the counter arguement [sic] that rape allegations are usually malicious attacks to discredit reputations this has proven the exception not the rule and will now continue to be used as ammunition to discredit survivors. This is not a political game to be played for petty points- it is literally people's lives. [Comment1: USB#12]

I don't accept this apology nor this statement. Students have been protesting putting their bodies in the line and been so utterly fucked over by the system over the last few months and now you want to take an issue as serious as that and falsely excuse someone? Do you understand how far back you have set the work that we've all been trying to do for the last few months. [Comment2: USB#12]

[tags post author] did you ever take a moment and think of what is rape what is abuse?? Do you know how many people you just de-legitimised their truths at the spur of anger why take advantage

⁴⁶ Womxn is a intersectional term designed to refer more inclusively to of all kinds of women, including trans women.

of people stories who actually live rape now society will take an accusation of rape just as serious as shoplifting. You were at the front lines with survivors of all kinds of abuse and then you take an accusation like this lightly to satisfy your devious petty politics in the name of fighting for women, you making us look bad and pathetic ??? [Comment3: USB#12]

From these comments, it is possible to see how the audience is not being convinced or persuaded by the rhetor. Of all the comments/replies to this post, there were none that I read to be in support of, or persuaded by, this apology. Instead the readers remark on how falsely accusing someone of rape will not only perpetuate a rape culture which supports rape perpetrators and disbelieves rape victims, but also delegitimises/discredits the rape culture protest that seeks to protect these bodies. Through a series of rhetorical questions, the authors in the above posts contrast the heinous actions of the confessor with the noble practice of “*putting your body in the line*”, which is posed against the background of being “*fucked*” by the “*system*”.

The rhetoric that decries individuals under a ‘false guise’ (“*a political game to be played for petty points*”, “*devious petty politics*”) risks of delegitimising countering rape culture, is similar to the rhetoric used by the University management as shown in the previous chapter (this will be discussed further in the discussion chapter).

Rhetorical tropes added to the way in which the effect of addressing rape culture on campus was figuratively emphasised as embodied and spatialised. This included metaphorical language that emphasised the body (e.g. “*heart & guts to seek justice*”, “*blue in the face*”, “*disheartening*” etc.) which gave consequences of, and actions toward, a rape culture a tangible (physical) effect. Rape is a physical assault on the body, albeit one that extends beyond the physical. Rape culture (and its ‘normative’ behavioural rules) have also been argued to be assumed as ‘bodily’ (McCaughey, 1998). This may be why these individuals are using metaphorical language that portrays this experience. It may also be why there seems to be an investment in ‘fighting’ rape culture ‘physically’ through producing physical bodies at physical spaces (“*on the line*” and in “*the streets*”), and why concerns over inadequate physical and structural security systems (“*dark streets and out-of-sight security personnel*”) on the campus are viewed in terms of threats (“*kidnappers/traffickers*” and “*violent individuals*”) to the body (“*unsafe*”).

2.2. Contesting legal frameworks when addressing rape culture: “A narrow ‘law and order’ approach is not appropriate”

According to Jasinski (2001) social movements usually begin from a point of exigence that is in opposition to established institutions and/or their practices. For most movements to continue, they must sustain and develop their own ‘institutional’ meanings/practices through rhetorical action (Jasinski, 2001). In this theme of discourse, the social movement members rhetors deliberate on the legislative courses of action (such as the interdict) that the institution took in response to the protest. Such rhetoric is deliberative, and this discourse is often concerned with determining whether a course of action or policy was useful or harmful (Jasinski, 2001). The rhetors in these extracts, with some contestations, determine that the legal approach of the university is narrow and that this approach (as used by the institution) is not useful to addressing rape culture.

The University’s authority to enact these courses of legal action were also deliberated. See extracts from USB#13 below:

“We acknowledge that there are flaws within the systems that are meant to ensure justice when one’s rights have been violated”. One year ago, those words were uttered by UCKAR VC [extracted] The #ReferenceList Protests highlighted a national crisis - a war against women - and pushed all of us on campus to reflect on just how flawed the systems of justice are ... the university argues that they [those excluded on the basis of the interdict] led a vigilante and held hostage students who had been accused of rape. The university claims these are common-law offences and appointed itself a court of law, declaring that the two women had broken the law and must be punished. It is questionable whether a university can act in such a manner. The Constitution of South Africa is very clear that the judiciary Is the only competent body to declare conduct unlawful. Beyond the question of legality, the decision further exposes the backward, anti-humanist, racist and patriarchal nature of the people in charge at UCKAR. [USB#13]

Here, the legal and political authority of the University to enforce and impose these punishments is questioned. The questioning is neither an assertion masquerading as a question nor a question that the rhetor will answer, rather it expresses a doubt, or seeks to plant suspicion. This is known as an ‘aporia’ form of questioning (Fahnestock, 2011). In this example, the questioning ultimately seeks to express a doubt or suspicion that ultimately undermines the authoritative body of the institution. The rhetor establishes their credibility to highlight the questionable status of managements actions through their knowledge of the Constitution, an institution trotted out by management as well.

Similarly, in USB#14 below, a series of questions is rhetorically arranged to voice aloud doubts/suspicions on actions that the University took, and in doing so magnifies the rhetor's appraisal (belief) of the situation:

SASCO⁴⁷ Rhodes University has noted with shock and disappointment the mischievous victimisation of two female social activists who have been handed down the sentence of "exclusion for life" by the university. We note the statement by Communicational and Advancement Divisions which stated that, "The issues were ventilated in processes in the High Court, the Supreme Court of Appeals and the Constitutional Court The sanction against the two female students who were excluded from the University last month, which is consistent with the findings by the three courts, was meted out by an Independent Panel and is NOT related to them participating in protest action. We condemn this reactionary behaviour with the strongest possible terms at our disposal and wish to register that we are not yet aware of who pressed the charges?, on what basis? and what arguments were tabled before the "three" courts. We are convinced and believe that this sentence is a tool of precedence for victimisation of any student who wishes to choose the path social activism and social justice. [USB#14]

Social movements inevitably encounter setbacks and frustrations (e.g., court injunctions prohibiting rallies/marches, the arrest of key movement leaders, or lack of money) which may threaten the continued existence of the movement to work towards its larger goal (Jasinski, 2001). Therefore, rhetorical strategies can be seen as tactics that a movement employs to negate or lessen the potential consequences or severity of the setbacks. In this extract, credibility (ethos) is established through the statement being made by an official body; the actions of management are depicted as "*mischievous*", "*reactionary*" and non-transparent (forensic persuasive discourse); shock and disappointment are established as the correct emotions (pathos) in this situation.

The 'narrow law and order' approach taken by the University, as exemplified by the interdict that was taken out by the University, was argued to interfere with the rights of protesters. See USB#15/UCS#1:

We oppose the interdict in the interests of the constitutional right to protest and academic freedom. We believe that alternative, internal, mechanisms for dealing with conflict were not exhausted before resorting to the option of an interdict. The interdict obtained by the university's management is so broad as to interfere with the Constitutional rights to protest, to picket and to express oneself freely. [USB#15/UCS#1]

⁴⁷ South African Students Congress.

In this extract, the rhetor establishes credibility through appeal to the Constitution, and appeals to the logic of resolving matter internally prior to external intervention.

The interdict was further opposed and contested on the basis that criminalised legal actions, escalated ‘violence’, and inappropriately narrowed the ways that rape culture could be addressed/protested on campus. See the extract from USB#15/UCS#1:

Over the last months police have been invited onto our campus and some students have been arrested for offenses that are not criminal but are prohibited by the interdict. Protest has been criminalised and dissent demonised and, we believe, the space for disruptive, peaceful protest, has been narrowed. In place of dialogue, we have seen the escalation of violence accompanied by increasing surveillance (including cameras in lecture venues), securitisation and the hardening of positions. Our safety does not appear to be of concern to the university’s management: both staff and students have been shot with rubber bullets and complaints are being laid against the police for the use of excessive force. A narrow ‘law and order’ approach is not appropriate for dealing with protest on campus and has escalated rather than quelled violence. [USB#15/UCS#1]

Here the rhetor juxtaposes positions: peaceful (albeit disruptive) protest and dialogue versus criminalisation, surveillance, securitisation and excessive force. The style of writing (e.g. the alliteration of “*dissent demonised*”; the “*isation*” of security) lend expressive weight to the argument.

In USB#2 the legality of a document that students were required to sign to be able to register at the institution is spoken to:

Excluding anti rape activists for life says a lot about what the university is doing about the issue affecting young womxn on that campus. I understand that students are afraid to speak out because of what they were made to sign during registration, however students of UCKAR I want to assure you that thing you were forced to sign is illegal. [USB#2]

This “*illegal*” document that students were “*forced*” to sign is argued to be the reason behind why “*students are afraid to speak out*”. Additionally, the exclusion of particular student protesters by the institution (which as previously discussed – the institution argued as being undeniably necessary, and legal, based on the grounds that these students were ‘criminals’) is contended to “*say[s] a lot*” about how the University is (really) doing with regard to addressing rape culture on campus. This introduces the notion that the institutional management is not only acting ‘illegally’ despites its ‘lawful’ rhetoric, but that they have and are taking actions which disempower anti- rape culture efforts.

Similarly, in the following extract of USB#16, a rhetor uses a sequence of rhetorical questions to make a number of claims which suggest that the institutional management, through their ‘lawful’ approaches, have made students/staff “*afraid to speak out*”. Rhetorical questions are a strategy for making indirect claims or assertions, by undermining the veracity of any answer other than the one implied by the advocate (Jasinski, 2001). The rhetor directs these questions to indirectly put forward that the institution, and the interdict, are creating a silencing and fearful environment for the staff and students, and that this reveals “*deeper underlying power imbalances*”:

Secondly, is the university negotiating the difficult balance between different stakeholders and between the freedoms of expression and protest on the one hand, and maintaining law and order on the other? Or, as its critics maintain, are the university’s responses creating a silencing environment that exacerbates the deeper underlying power imbalances? Do academics and students at the university feel free to raise and discuss issues? Or is an environment being created where people are afraid to speak out against a disciplinary and corporatized university, given what seems to be an ‘undercover’ witch-hunt for ‘dissenters’? [USB#16]

The rhetor’s initial question (law and order versus freedoms of expression and protest) is followed by a series of further rhetorical questions that essentially answer the first. Additionally, questioning, and proposing, the notion that the University is “*undercover*” and “*corporatized*”, and conducting “*witch-hunts for dissenters*”, is a form of relying on a conspiracy appeal as a way of explaining the presence of setbacks of the social movement. This is taken forward in the next section.

In UCS#2, below, audience members converse in relation to an article⁴⁸ that considers the role of journalists in reporting on sexual assault in South Africa (higher education contexts in particular). Again, an argument is made which regards the ‘law’ approach as inadequate in addressing sexual violence, and this approach is said to ‘favour’ those in power.

1. It struck me how the “rules” of good journalism - like the law - are constructed with good intentions but are utterly inadequate to deal with sexual assault. And - like the law - end up favoring the powerful. [Comment 1: UCS#2]

2. Also I find it sad that our own administration feel under attack when we try to change the culture. It is a universal problem, arising from how society is structured. Great that [extracted] is not giving

⁴⁸ Article can be found online at: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2018-05-24-reporting-on-sexual-abuse-the-most-difficult-journalism-of-all/>

up and still pushing for Senate to do something real with the Task Team report. That was such a huge lost opportunity – it would have put us in from of the #MeToo movement for a start. [Comment 2: UCS#2]

Another rhetor, in reply to this argument, agrees with this statement and implicitly links this ‘lawful’ approach to the University administration (“*also...our own administration*”), which is perceived as feeling “*under attack*” when others “*try to change the culture*”. This ‘feeling’ is ruled out as incorrect, based on the rhetorical argument that rape culture is societal and a bigger consequence of ‘losing’ out (“*put us in front of the #MeToo movement*”) as a larger collective (e.g. ‘us’ as Rhodes University) is connected to this. This form of communication, in dismissing an ‘oppositions’ judgement/approach on a matter, also helps to give one’s own collective, or aligned collective (in this case the SVTT), appraisal on its approach/course of action.

Opposition to the ‘narrow law and order’ approach was not seamless however. In USB#17, an audience member argues against some of the protest tactics of individuals in the social movement:

The fight for Free Higher Education for the Poor is entirely legitimate, as is the fight against Rape Culture, but if you engage in illegal activity you are violating the law. There are mechanisms in place such as; voting for a change in leadership and peaceful protest within the bounds of the law, to deal with these issues. I personally disagree with the tactics of management regarding the interdict and violent silencing of student voices that has occurred in regards to peaceful protests, but I also disagree wholeheartedly with "radical" approaches that only serve to inflame the situation and make it worse. [USB#17]

Whenever there is a disagreement in a movement, a tension exists between self/group maintenance and change (Hauser, 2002). According to Hauser (2002), these types of tensions are generally found in struggles or disagreements within group identities where the factions of the movement attempt to define, shape, and influence the course of its actions or policies. Here tensions exist between how the approach to fighting rape culture has been taken up (labelled as “*radical*” by the rhetor) and legality, which the rhetor clearly favours (“*violating the law*”; “*within the bounds of the law*”).

Moving from the question of legality, conspiracy appeals, as discussed in the next section, were used to bolster arguments by ‘uncovering’ sinister conspiracies, which often scapegoated specific individuals.

2.3. Conspiracy appeals: “we were not going to be fooled”

Jasinski (2001, p. 104) states that “like all discursive forms, conspiracy arguments and appeals are attractive because they give voice to, or express the feelings and experiences of, members in a culture”. These forms of appeal often use generalisations, or hyperbolic exaggerations, to invest significance in one particular event as uncovering an ‘insidious’ pattern of unseen forces of power exerting control (Jasinski, 2001). Additionally, conspiracy appeals often make use of ‘personification’, which identifies a specific individual (or small group of them) as behind this scheme. This is evident in regard to the Vice-chancellor of the University, who is on a number of occasions regarded as solely responsible for the responses of the University. See USB#18 and USB#19:

So the VC went on to national television to say he "supports" the RUReferenceList movement yet here we are 4months down the line, still eating in DHs [dining halls] with rapists, still attending lectures with rapists, still working under the supervision of rapists, oh and not forgetting the interdict that WE (Task Team students) STUDENTS, are opposing because the VC and his entourage got a little mad when women had to bare THEIR bodies on the line to be heard, when students were shot at UNLAWFULLY and UNARMED.. when the VC said to a students face "you are abusing me" when HE and his team are ones perpetuating violence by not wanting to do ANYTHING about #RuReferenceList rapists. [USB#18]

It was very clear from then that management was not interested in listening to us. It was very clear that they wanted to assert their power in close doors so that no one could see. And it was very clear that they wanted to further delegitimise us and our struggle as the VC has continuously done in the media. But we were not going to be fooled, so we decided to withdraw the terms of the meeting that had been agreed upon, and returned to our initial terms. [USB#19]

Both the above extracts (and the one below) pinpoint the Vice-chancellor as an ‘enemy’ to the social movement and transforming rape culture: he and “*his entourage*” have been ineffective, uninterested in the plight of the students, and insufficiently robust (“*got a little mad*”); they have perpetuated violence and asserted their power. The construction of enemies is a common rhetorical strategy in social movements (Hauser, 2002; Jasinski, 2001). The discursive practice of constituting enemies aids collective groups in maintaining and defining their identities, as well as reinforcing why a social movement, and its agenda, must continue, as there is a threat/enemy that is working against them.

According to Stewart, Smith, and Denton (1989, as cited in Jasinski, 2001) social movements frequently employ this type of appeal which vilifies or demonises one or more identifiable

enemies, and use them to heap ‘abuse’ (e.g. name-calling, negatively associate, ridicule etc.) upon. See the below extract of USB#20, where the Vice-chancellor, and the institutional management, are portrayed as “*thugs in suits*” and “*saviors [sic] of patriarchy and misogyny*”:

To protectors of thugs in suits and saviors [sic] of patriarchy and misogyny, I would highly appreciate it if my name was never to be mentioned in the same breathe [sic] as the Vice Chancellor’s. uTata⁴⁹ wenu [your father] that you so highly praise, is the very same man who refused to protect survivors of rape and sexual assault when we came crying to his administration for help. Instead, uTata wenu got an interdict on a student body, [extracted], got police to shoot at an unarmed student body, women, survivors, all in the aim of silencing our cries. [USB#20]

The rhetor above directly refers ‘to’ whom they are addressing. This is known as portioning an audience, and it is an interactive choice of delivery which seeks to cast a particular identity, role and responsibility onto a particular person or group (Fahnestock, 2011). In this example, it helps the rhetor differentiate the ‘them’ who are being publicly shamed/blamed and attempts to get the ‘us’ to take the side of the rhetor. Furthermore, the dishonourable institutional management (“*thugs in suits and saviors of patriarchy and misogyny*”), and specifically the Vice-chancellor of the University, are identified as covertly (“*undercover*”) spearheading (“*witch-hunt*”) agendas under the guise of a law and order approach which worked against the collective social movement (“*dissenters*”).

However, commentary on this post shows the tensions and subdivisions within the student body on these unofficial spaces and how they view the Vice-chancellor’s enmity to the social movement:

1. Can we acknowledge that this post not only insulted a man who stood in front of the rubber bullets that were being shot, but also just ostracised 90% of this campus by creating an us and them scenario. I mean she blatantly speaks to two different groups of people instead of the whole student body. [Comment 1: USB#20]
2. Thank you [extracted]. The manner in which some people address and speak about the VC lacks so much respect. Yet they demand that their own dignity be considered, how? This is why respect is reciprocal. [Comment 2: USB#20]
3. if only she knew that the respect we have for [the Vice-chancellor] a does not allow for us to call her in the same breathe [sic] as him hey. its [sic] just too much to be tainted by such blatant disrespect (or should i [sic] call it radicalism). [Comment 3: USB#20]

⁴⁹ uTata refers to ‘father’ in isiXhosa.

In the first comment above, the rhetor points out the failure of the initial post to create and ‘us and them’ scenario. Instead, ‘us’ is divided, which undermines the social movement. In the second and third extracts, the notion of respect is invoked to suggest common humanity, and to undermine the ‘us and them’ approach.

The authors in these types of message also relate the University’s response and form of governance as patriarchal and silencing. For example, the rhetor in USB#12 uses the phrases: “saviors [sic] of patriarchy”, “uTata” (‘our father’) who went and got an interdict “*in the aim of silencing our cries*”. This leads to the next theme, which looks at how the rhetors on these ‘unofficial’ spaces often spoke to patriarchal and racist social systems as part of sustaining rape culture.

2.4. Rape culture is systemic: “Rhodes has tried, but failed to address sexual violence, because it has failed to understand the systemic part of it”

In this pattern of discourse, the rhetors argue that several efforts, particularly those by the institutional management, to address the communal issue of rape culture on campus have failed. This perceived failure was tied to systemic social issues (such as patriarchy, racism, and colonialism) and the failure to address those as well.

Rhetorical talk about a collective problem, such as rape culture, is known as a ‘communal exigence’. A communal exigence is a ‘community’ problem that is not directly resolvable through any clear resolution (Jasinski, 2001). One form of responding to a communal exigence can take place when a seemingly inexplicable or unexplainable ‘event’ (or social problem) occurs, causing a re-examination and redefinition of how this event/problem is understood within a particular framework (Jasinski, 2001). The exigence in this theme is how rape culture has been ‘misunderstood’. The response thus reconstructs the meaning and understanding of this event/problem and persuades the audience to accept this new framework within which the event/problem can be understood.

While efforts in addressing rape culture, are not a new problem or ‘event’, it is one that came into the public eye (and discourse) of the University community through the rape culture protests at Rhodes University in 2016. The rhetors in this theme of discourse argue that attempts to address rape culture by the institution have failed because their framework for

understanding rape culture is flawed. Within these messages, the rhetors attempt to redefine how rape culture should be addressed. This is discussed in how a rape culture is part of, and adds to, other systemic issues. Failure to address these other systemic issues were thought to affect efforts against rape culture, and thus, they were deemed as equally necessary to deal with when attempting to transform the problematic institutional culture. See the below extract from UCS#3:

The University Currently Known As Rhodes has tried, but failed to address sexual violence, because it has failed to understand the systemic part of it. It has failed to address patriarchal, racist and colonial frameworks that can only ever privilege some at the expense of others. [UCS#3]

The rhetor in this post creates distance between themselves and the University through using its unofficial name. This distance enables a judgement on the failure of the University, to consider rape culture on university campus as a symptom of a broader systemic problem that needs to be understood within a framework that takes into account patriarchy, colonialism and racism.

Another deliberation, made by the ‘unofficial’ rhetors, was that the notion of referring to rape culture as alleged (as evident by the ‘official’ rhetors in the previous chapter) was in fact a marker of perpetuating a rape culture. See USB#31 below:

Referring to rape culture as "alleged" (as if it's a figment of our collective imagination, as if we all just happen to be having the exact same hallucination) IS rape culture. [USB#31]

This further exemplifies the general consensus that the University is failing to address rape culture, because it is failing to understand how a rape culture operates.

Rape as a symptom of patriarchy is defined below in USB#21:

Patriarchy is a system of power relations characterised by a deep hierarchy in which maleness is an overwhelming advantage. Rape is fundamentally a crime of patriarchy, particularly when it happens on a systemic scale and the cultural factors that enable it are out in the open and tolerated over a long period. The style of university leadership that labels dissent as “naughty” and which operates as a strict hierarchy exemplifies patriarchy. Opposing rape culture protests in this framework has the unfortunate effect of placing the leadership on the wrong side of the issue no matter how good their intentions are. None of this is an attack on any individual; I merely point out the structure of the problem. Understand the structure of the problem and you can start to fix it. [USB#21]

The rhetor above further claims that the “*style of university leadership*” exemplifies patriarchy. This stands in contrast to the vilification of the Vice-chancellor. This leadership style is argued to be why the institutional management (in an “*unfortunate*” way) is, in an unfavourable

(“*wrong*”) manner, failing to address rape culture. Words/phrases are used which negate some culpability/intention on the institution’s behalf.

This rhetoric of ‘good intentions’ is similarly used below in UCS#3, where the SVTT is also deemed to run the risk of failing to address rape culture – despite their “*well intended*” attitude:

This is despite holding the biggest anti-rape student protest annually, the Silent Protest, which enables survivors and rapists to march together in so-called solidarity on this issue. Prompted by the urgency and anger of survivors and allies who found solidarity through the protests, UCKAR has ‘committed funds to provide administrative, logistical and research support for the important work of the task team’ (Toplist message, 19 May 2016). If UCKAR is committed to seeing all of these processes through to conclusion, it must recognise that it means undermining some very powerful traditions and practices. It might mean making some changes that frighten some leaders of the institution. Unless this is recognised, the task team runs the risk of becoming a well intentioned but futile process that is subject to unequal power configurations that continue to silence. [UCS#3]

The rhetor argues in this extract that anti-rape efforts will mean undermining “*some very powerful traditions and practices*” in which “*some leaders*” are invested. They warn against any future action that does not make such fundamental change (they will be “*futile*”).

Suggestions for how the institution should proceed in the future (e.g. “*develop a new idea of ‘The ‘University’*”, foster “*a commitment to addressing the systemic issues*” and “*dismantle patriarchy*”), if it is in fact ‘well’ intended, is outlined by the rhetor in USB#15/UCS#1 below:

In place of an interdict, we hope that UCKAR enhances alternative means for building a community based on critical thinking and political and intellectual heterodoxy and that fosters a commitment to addressing the systemic issues related to racial and class inequalities and patriarchy. We need to develop a new idea of ‘The University’ if we seek to dismantle patriarchy, decommodify and decolonise education in South Africa. [USB#15/UCS#1]

The rhetors in this pattern of discourse often ask very real-world questions about problems that the University community faces, as well as how these need to be understood and resolved. This is a form of deliberative discourse. Deliberative rhetoric is also often future-orientated, and this is evident among several of the extracts where the rhetors speculate why and how one should proceed from this point (Jasinski, 2001).

See the extract from USB#22, below, which argues that in order to address rape culture at the University, the scope must be broadened to take into account societal issues which affects (“*plagues*”) the entire higher education system in South Africa:

We know that such structural issues are not exclusive to Rhodes and the #RhodesWar campaign, but rather a depiction of a much broader societal issue that plagues the South African Higher Education landscape. [USB#22]

Broadening the scope of how far addressing rape culture must extend (“*societal*”), and using terminology like “*plagues*” a “*landscape*” (like a disease – endemic/epidemic) is similar to a rhetoric (discussed in the previous chapter) that the University employed when speaking about rape culture. This rhetoric both enjoins the audience to take responsibility and collective action in addressing rape culture, as well as mitigating any ‘exclusivity’ to efforts attempting to counter rape culture. Additionally, this rhetor references the #RhodesWar campaign, which segues to the next theme, where ‘unofficial’ rhetors argue that in order to effectively address rape culture on campus, institutional approaches must make victims the priority – and the victimising of certain students/protesters must be stopped.

2.5. Victim-centred approaches to rape culture: “*Victims should be the priority*”:

In this overarching pattern of discourse, the rhetor’s argue for a more victim-centred approach to sexual assault and rape culture on campus. This included the adoption of precautionary language systems, such as ‘trigger warnings’, which sought to convey a victim-centred rhetoric, allowing victims agency to choose when to engage in potential triggering content online. Furthermore, there was a pattern of talking about the students (and in some cases staff members) as ‘victimised’ by the institution. One spoken about example to this, was how the institution had sought an interdict against, and subsequently had excluded, particular students who had been part of the #RUPreferenceList protest.

The very nature of rape culture itself is argued to be why ‘victims’ need to be made a priority (exigence). This was evident in arguments which juxtaposed how a rape culture prioritises perpetrators. For example, see the extract below from USB#9:

The fight against rape and gender based violence has been a continuous one throughout all universities and the country. However the system continues to persecute the victims/survivors while perpetrators still roam freely. It is important to call for justice against Rape and Gender based violence and call out Rhodes University for their actions in firstly excluding Black Womxn and secondly in failing to implement recommendations set up by a task team following the RUPreference list. [USB#9]

In this extract, the failure to support victims is depicted as general (“*throughout all universities*”), thereby partially letting the University off the hook. But this is then retracted as the victimisation of “*Black Womxn*” is highlighted.

The ‘victims’ were further spoken of in terms of their other intersections of oppression (e.g. their gender and race), as well as previous sexual assault experience. Scholars such as Crenshaw (1989) indicate that multiple forces of oppression may intersect to impact the experiences of one individual. By drawing attention to marginal identities which exist in a hierarchal continuum of oppression, the rhetor situates the victimisation of these individuals in a context where they are seen to already exist as a ‘victims’ of a society. This attempts to persuade the audience that the consequence of this victimisation is even further unfair/unjust. This is similar to the strategy used by the rhetor in USB#23/UCS#4, which evaluates the treatment by the institution (“*psychological, physical and legal violence by our university*”) of some of the protesters as inappropriate on the basis that many of the protesters were already victims of sexual violence (“*survivors*”):

I was deeply shocked by the use of police violence against our unarmed young students and workers: pepper spray, tear gas, and rubber bullets. I have spoken to many of my own students who are survivors and who were caught up in this brutality, they are very shaken and damaged by this experience ... This police violence was followed by an interdict on the very same day: which named, and held personally responsible for the actions of all student protesters, three young women, in a top-list email sent to over 7000 people in the university, without any explanation, without any warning to their wardens, without any concern for their well-being. They were terrified, they were publicly exposed, they were held accountable for the actions of fellow students ... Many of the young women student protestors, many of whom are survivors, have now been harmed repeatedly: with psychological, physical and legal violence by our university. This makes me deeply sad and ashamed. If you feel that these decisions by our university comprise the very best response to the protestors' demands, in a context of virtual immunity for sexual perpetrators on campus and in our society, then I am going to have to disagree with you ... Rape survivors are being asked to trust a university disciplinary system that many in senior management and within the university do not, in fact, even trust themselves. [USB#23/UCS#4]

By highlighting the replication of victimisation in this scenario, this thread of discourse likens victimisation in a rape culture to the victimisation of these institutional responses. The use of self-referencing pronouns (e.g. “*I was deeply shocked*”; “*this makes me deeply sad*”), followed by emotive language helps to give this appraisal of the situation a basis of personal testimony (Fahnestock, 2011). In addition, while a critic can refute ‘facts’ or ‘logic’ it is much harder to

refute another's experience of emotion in relation to a situation (students were "*shaken and damaged*", "*terrified*", "*publicly exposed*", "*harmed*").

The rhetor in this extract also refers directly to a 'you'. Fahnestock (2011, p. 282) suggests that "a salient you in a painful scene, or a you of direct address accompanied by a negative characterization of the addressee, can be a risky choice". This creates a degree of discomfort for the reader who must pick which side/identity they are to take on from the text. Anyone who 'disagrees' with the rhetor above, is portrayed as supporting the climate of "*virtual immunity*" (which protects rapists). Therefore, the reader is likely to be persuaded to pick the 'side' of the rhetor (against the institution) which seeks to advocate for rape victims in this context.

Similar demonstrations of outrage to how the University responded to the alleged rapists (those names on the 'reference list'), which was seen as protecting perpetrators over victims, can be seen below in USB#22 and USB#16:

#RhodesWar is an ongoing political campaign which speaks against the systematic exclusion of Anti-rape activists at the University currently known as Rhodes. The very same activists who played an active role in fighting rape culture and sexual violence at the university. Instead of the university heeding the call to eradicate rape culture and protect the students on their campus, they have chosen to expel those who stood up and exposed the university for being complicit while students are raped and assaulted on campus. This is clearly a move to silence anti-rape activism at Rhodes which in turn silences victims and survivors of Rape. [USB#22]

The primary issue at stake in the #RhodesWar protest is the severity of the punishment meted out against the two women student activists, particularly when compared to the lesser punishments given to some sexual offenders, and the question of whether the university actually had the *prima facie*⁵⁰ evidence against these students for the alleged acts—particularly when one of these students was unable to be present at the hearings. The university is also being accused of a wider pattern of victimising protestors, of a tepid response to sexual violence, and of more generally lacking the appetite for transformation. [USB#16]

The rhetors argue that the 'abusive' response to the protesters ("*a move to silence anti-rape activism*") that sustains a rape culture climate is further evident in the institution's idle ("*tepid*" and "*lacking the appetite*") attitude to effect any transformation of the rape culture on

⁵⁰ *Prima facie* is a Latin expression meaning on its first encounter or at first sight/ based on the first impression; accepted as correct until proved otherwise.

campus. The positioning of protesters as victims is reinforced through the juxtaposition with responses to alleged perpetrators of sexual violence.

Another example where the University is called upon as accountable for not doing enough to overturn this culture on campus, can be seen the extract below from USB#24:

One year later, and we are still facing the same problems. Rhodes University's systems, policies and procedures, are inadequate and slow in dealing with the sexual assault crisis on campus. There is not enough being done to challenge the norms and attitudes around rape culture, and to eliminate sexual assault on a systemic level. The university needs to implement systems that prioritizes victims and survivors, rather than perpetrators and the institution's reputation. [USB#24]

Prioritising victims (and not “*perpetrators and the institution's reputation*”) is argued to be a way (“*challenge the norms and attitudes around rape culture*”) in which sexual violence and rape culture can be countered within the institution.

In, USB#25, the threat to bodily integrity (“*female bodies in our institute of education aren't safe*”) in this space is again highlighted as an issue that adds to victims being at the bottom of the hierarchy (non-prioritised):

The female bodies in our institute of education aren't safe. The campus is not safe. A cruel reality that we take for granted. We're desensitized to such issues. We've normalized these events. And again, the trash that is men has inflicted more pain. Empathy is required. Victims should be the priority. [USB#25]

Here a gendered bifurcation is created between men, who are “*the trash*”, and rape victims (assumed to be female). The pathos of “*pain*”, cruelty, and fear (“*not safe*”) are juxtaposed with “*empathy*” and prioritising victims’ needs.

Extending from this victim-centred view, precautionary language systems, such as ‘trigger warnings’, are used in some cases to further minimise the risk of causing harm to rape victims, allowing them agency to choose to read/not read these messages, which ultimately acknowledges these victim’s trauma and lived experiences. In doing so, the online ‘unofficial’ rhetors attempt to differentiate themselves from those who are not perceived as putting the needs of victims first. ‘Warnings’ are placed at the beginning of a message as a heading (e.g. ‘TRIGGER WARNING’... or ‘TW’...). See an example below in USB#26 of this discursive practice:

TW: Rape, Rape Culture, Sexual Assault ... For all those posting about the incident: We ask that you please make use of trigger warnings as this is a very sensitive subject to some and to please respect the survivor as we cannot give their identity because this is not our story to tell, it is theirs. [USB#26]

The term ‘trigger warning’ informs victims of material that might cause them to ‘relive’ their trauma. Byron (2017, p. 117) describes a trigger warning as “an opt-in system, granting agency to traumatized individuals by allowing them to know what they might encounter and attend to their trauma as they see fit”. While ‘trigger warnings’ have been criticised as excuses to designate certain kinds of content or ideas as too harmful to be discussed or give traumatised students an excuse to avoid engaging with material of which they disapprove, they can also effectively bring trauma into the public sphere (Byron, 2017). This creates a space which normalises trauma and allows survivors to visibly exist without shame, as well as the opportunity to change collective notions of trauma and healing, and acknowledge trauma survivors’ lived experiences (Byron, 2017). The agency of victims is further emphasised by rhetors through their refusal to tell victims stories (“*it is theirs*”).

In the extract below, USB#25, the rhetor begins their message with a trigger warning, and a further statement that asks the audience to protect rape victims from any blaming/unhelpful comments:

TW: Rape. If you have any comments, that victim blame, don't help with the victim, past victims of such a heinous incident or the witnesses of the recent events, or even finding the culprit. Keep them to yourself. [USB#25]

‘Victimhood’ discourse is rhetorical discursive resource thought to have a variety of psychological functions and motivations for collective groups (McNeill, Pehrson, & Stevenson, 2017). Noor (2012, as cited in McNeill et al., 2017), propose that a victimhood rhetoric can discursively function to: increase ingroup cohesiveness, justify violence, deny responsibility, avoid negative group emotions, and request compensation/recruitment of support (e.g. moral/material) from external parties. Within these extracts, the rhetors use a ‘victimhood’ rhetoric to advocate for avoiding certain discourses (e.g. “*comments, that victim blame*”; “*don't help with the victim*”) which could negatively impact victims, and request supportive practices (e.g. “*make use of trigger warnings*”) that could aid in protecting victims.

In the below extract, USB#27, being ‘triggered’ as a victim by rape culture discourses is spoken about:

I see enough rape culture on my news feed, we know what it looks like because it is everywhere, I don't need to be triggered by it again on your page. I don't care if you're being 'critical' or 'exposing rape culture' you're still giving these bigots a platform to spread and perpetuate these very harmful discourses. [USB#27]

This provides insight into how “*triggering*” discourses not only cause victims negative harm, but also how such talk operates in contradictory ways – provides “*bigots*” the opportunity to perpetuate a rape culture as well as “*critical*” spaces to “*expos[e] rape culture*”.

In the extract below, USB#28, the author argues that despite being ‘triggered’ by perpetrators or institutional responses, they/we (“*US -THE VICTIMS*”) will continue (“*we won’t [sic] stop*”) to fight for a system that prioritises victims (“*the type of justice that seeks to be in favor[sic] for the VICTIM*”):

Anyways, management puts the well-being of alleged perpetrators in this university above of those that are being violated, US - THE VICTIMS.. does our well-being not count? does me (the Me's in this institution) being triggered on campus every time I see a perpetrator not mean anything to anyone? People need to understand that, we won’t [sic] stop, and will not stop till we get justice.”
... “the type of justice that seeks to be in favor [sic] for the VICTIM, one that we will win! [USB#28]

The use of capitalised and bolded letters is a commonly used vernacular practice across various social media sites to showcase emotion and affect (Mendes, 2015). In this case, the stylised form of communication was used to emphasises not only how ‘victims’ (who the rhetor persuasively collectivises as ‘us’) should be prioritised, but also to showcase the emotive anger (pathos) that ‘victims’ (‘us’) have not been prioritised by the institution’s management.

This rallying discourse of ‘we won’t stop until we win’ leads to the next pattern of rhetoric, which argues that because of perceived institutional failures, it is ‘on’ the social movement to carry forward the fight against rape culture.

2.6. Addressing rape culture will require collective action: “*Let the responsibility fall on our shoulders*”

In this thread of discourse the rhetors call upon community members, and external ones, to mobilise, reclaim, and engage in the process of addressing rape culture. Social networking sites, such as Facebook groups/pages, providing the contemporary routes of opportunity for people to recruit and mobilise others to participate in social movements (Armstrong & Mahone, 2017). Armstrong and Mahone (2017, p. 100) write that social media has “the potential to enhance

both the identity and knowledge of sexual assault as motivators for participation in collective action against sexual assault by increasing the ease through which information may be shared”. The purpose of these messages was in response to the reported perception that the University was failing to adequately address rape culture on campus (as discussed above), and sought to mobilise collective action from the audience moving forward.

Through epideictic discourse (by singling out individuals for praise or blame) the rhetors sought to define and strengthen the collective member’s inclination/commitment to norms of acceptable/sanctioned methods of behaviour/action when addressing rape culture. This subsequently distanced the efforts of the social movement from the institutional management in proceeding forward. As such, this created a ‘it’s on us’ rhetoric, and a call to action: ‘we’ will/must continue despite ‘them’.

See the extract from UCS#3 below, which outlines why the rhetors suggests that it is on ‘us’ to reclaim the process of addressing rape culture, from the University management:

Despite the labour of some individuals and groups to provide the kinds of support that are necessary to survivors, it has become clear that the university’s reporting and disciplinary processes that deal with rape are inadequate, and that survivors have become reluctant to report their rapes as a consequence. UCKAR has not, through its reporting and disciplinary processes, stood in solidarity with all rape survivors and done its best to protect them (as claimed in the Toplist message, 19 May 2016) ... **For those who are genuinely interested in shifting and transforming rape culture in our institution, it is for us to reclaim and reconfigure this process to do just that with honesty, collective wisdom, empathy and courage.** [UCS#3]

Here the University structures and management/leadership are blamed for their inadequate responses to sexual violence on campus, which the rhetor suggests make victims “*reluctant*” to use the institutional mechanisms. Evidently, by not taking efforts to adjust these institutional reporting and disciplinary processes, the University is argued to not be protecting sexual assault victims.

Values such as “*honesty, collective wisdom, empathy and courage*” are advanced, all of which appeal to the emotive (pathos) aspect of rhetorical argument, and which position ‘us’ as worthy of praise. These juxtapositions let the collective know that positive responses such as honesty and courage will be prerequisites of the social movement advancing forward. This sets

boundaries and standards for the members of the collective's behaviour, which subsequently sets future rules for potential exclusion of a member should they not behave accordingly.

In the extract below, from USB#29, the rhetor argues that because the institution has 'failed', the responsibility of addressing rape culture has fallen (again embodied metaphorically) "*on our shoulders*":

Soooo.....No one is going to talk about how this institution is still trash with protecting its students????? How they will find some nonsensical excuse to defend the trashy current systems they have in place?2017. A year that came after #RURetentionList and dealing with extensive topics surrounding rape culture, sexual assault, male privilege and consent....we are back to thrusting the onus of sole responsibility on girls for their safety????!!! You know what? It's fine. Let the responsibility fall on our shoulders because seeing the system fails to protect us CONSTANTLY means that we have to take care of our damn selves. It seems that we shouldn't have sent a patriarchal system in to do a woman's job. [USB#29]

The institution's responses and systems are again argued to be ineffective ("*trashy*"), "*patriarchal*", and idle in action ("*a year...after*"). The 'responsibility' to tackle sexual violence is argued in a way that highlights how women in a rape culture ("*patriarchal system*") are expected to ("*a woman's job*") 'protect' themselves from the threat of violence ("*take care of our own damn selves*"). There is an enjoining aspect to this rhetoric, which assigns a collective group of women within the student body with this responsibility.

The constitutive rhetoric of 'we' as an identity, and what the 'we' stand for, is a form of epideictic discourse that creates a communal identity for a particular community or group. This often happens in an exclusionary process, whereby a group constitutes themselves as 'good'/'right' in opposition to the 'wrong'/'bad', in a purpose to illuminate the communal identity's values/virtues (Jasinski, 2001). In other words, 'we' know who 'we' are in opposition to 'them', and therefore 'we' are not like 'them'. By establishing a 'them', the rhetor divides a group into opposing camps. This division strategy helps make it easier for rhetors to define a situation as one that is threatening (Hauser, 2002). The use of the pronoun 'we', which indicates a form of solidarity and collectiveness, also incites action from the audience that it addresses. See the below extract from USB#30:

We can no longer put our bodies on the line just to be heard by an institution that refuses to listen to us. We have tried over and over again to plead with management. Unfortunately we have reached a point where our efforts have become futile. Therefore, we will no longer engage with

management. WE WILL ENGAGE WITH THE ENTIRE COUNTRY. WE WILL ENGAGE WITH THE WORLD WHO IS LISTENING TO US. Management will NEVER silence us.
[USB#30]

This last extract draws the audience in as collective, and instructs them that no longer will ‘they’ (‘we’) engage with the institutional management. Rather, the collective group is instructed (and called to action) to engage with outside communities (“*the world*”) who will support/listen to “US” – unlike the institutional management. A rhetoric of unalterableness (“*we can no longer*” and “*we have reached a point*”) signifies to the audience that there is no other option, but this one, for the social movement to go on. This exclusively isolates the social movement from the institutional management going forward. The rhetor also persuades the reader that there is no ‘fence’ to be on – that the ‘available’ positions to take as an audience member is one of ‘us’ or ‘them’ – but also that ‘we’ will continue despite ‘them’ (“*Management will NEVER silence us*”), and is so be it, ‘you’ as well.

3. Conclusion

In this second analysis chapter, two ‘unofficial’ online sites of communication were used as data. In referring to the social media groups as ‘UCKAR’ the constituents that communicated on these groups took/accepted a particular collective identity. Six major discourses were identified across the dataset.

The first theme centred around the way that rape culture was being experienced as ‘physical’ (and embodied) by rhetors, which affected the way in which they argued for it to be addressed. Rhetorical tropes added to the way in which the effect of addressing rape culture on campus was figuratively emphasised as embodied and spatialised. The physical effects of a rape culture were spoken about in a subjective manner (e.g. “*suffering inside*”) which was linked to the manifestation of the physical deaths of bodies (“*people are literally DYING*”, “*suffering from depression and committing suicide*”). This linked to an argument that better physical protection and security (i.e. “*ACTUAL PEOPLE*”), at the University would help to render these bodies safe (instead of: “*lives being ruined*”). In addition, the need of physical ‘bodies’ to protest against rape culture was made evident in the argument against individuals (e.g. “*keyboard warriors*”) who didn’t physically/visibly use their bodies (“*on the line*”; “*in the streets*”) to “*fight the rampant rape culture*” (though there was contestation to this line of rhetoric among the audience). The danger of traitors to the social movement protest, under the guise of

“political games”, were also talked about as *“literally affecting people’s lives”* in *“the name of fighting for women”*.

In the second section, a *“narrow law and order approach”* to addressing rape culture was argued against. The rhetors, through deliberative discourse, regarded the legislative courses of action (such as the interdict) taken by Rhodes University during the protest, as not useful, and harmful, to addressing rape culture on campus. By casting doubt and suspicion, the ‘legality’ of the institutional management’s approach was questioned. These rhetors sought to maintain collective group unity to lessen the potential consequences or severity of any setbacks to the social movement. Opposition to the ‘narrow law and order’ approach was not seamless, however, and there was disagreement about how *“radical”* approaches to addressing rape culture would *“only serve to inflame the situation and make it worse”*.

The rhetors in the third pattern of rhetoric extended the contestation of how the University responded to the social movement, and to the rape culture on campus, by appealing to a larger ‘conspiracy’. These appeals identified, and scapegoated, specific individuals (or small groups of them) as behind these undercover/insidious (*“they wanted to assert their power in close [sic] doors”*) schemes. This strategy, which constitutes enemies, and vilifies or demonises one or more of them, aids social movement groups to maintain, define, and reinforce their collective identities, as well as reinforce why the movement, and its agenda, must continue (Hauser, 2002; Jasinski, 2001). However, contestations to this from the audience highlighted the tensions and subdivisions within the student body/social movement body.

In the next and fourth theme, the rhetors argued that several efforts (particularly those by the University) to address rape culture on campus had been futile because of not taking into account its systemic nature, linking this to other social issues (e.g. *“it has failed to address patriarchal, racist and colonial frameworks”*). The current *“style of university leadership”* was criticised, and speculative suggestions (through deliberative discourse) were made for how the institution should proceed in the future (i.e. *“develop a new idea of ‘The ‘University’”*). However, these suggestions for an anti-rape future (by *“dismantl[ing] patriarchy”*) were warned against, as these the rhetors suggested may disrupt deeper underlying power relations (therefore undermining *“some very powerful traditions and practices”* in which *“some leaders”* were invested).

Next, the rhetors on the ‘unofficial’ spaces argued that rape culture should be addressed by using a victim-centred approach. This contended that ‘victims’ should be viewed in terms of multiple intersections of oppression, linking this to how some protesting students (particularly “*young women student protestors, many of whom are survivors*”) were being further victimised by the University (“*have now been harmed repeatedly*”). This was juxtaposed to how the alleged perpetrators had been perceived to be treated by the institution (e.g. “*the system continues to persecute the victims/survivors while perpetrators still roam freely*”), creating a gendered bifurcation between perpetrators (assumed to be men) and victims (who were assumed to be women). Furthermore, the rhetors also used discursive textual practices, such as ‘trigger warnings’, which sought to ‘protect’ and respect the lived-experiences of rape victims (“*please make use of trigger warnings ... please respect the survivor*”) from further victimisation. Lastly, extracts, which exemplified how being ‘triggered’ is experienced, is shown in this theme.

Last of all in this chapter, the rhetoric of ‘it’s on us’ to “*take care of our own damn selves*” and mobilise to eradicate rape culture on campus, was shown. Here, the rhetors called upon the audience, as well as “*THE WORLD*”, to mobilise, engage in, the process of addressing rape culture at Rhodes University. This rhetoric was argued for because of the perception that the institution was “*still trash with protecting*” its students from sexual violence and rape. Through a use of epideictic discourse, it sought to strengthen and gain inclination to the collectively defined norms of acceptable behaviour and action. This discourse, in turn, isolated the social movement from the institutional management and prompted the audience to take a side (one that is collectively ‘with’ us, or ‘against’ us’); however, it was made clear that ‘we’ will continue despite ‘them’ (and if necessary ‘you’ too).

In the next chapter, the two analysis chapters, and how these play off one another are discussed.

CHAPTER 7: Concluding Discussion

1. Introduction

As a way of concluding, I now revisit the research questions I sought to answer. The main questions for the study were: 1) How do the rhetors, on these sites, rhetorically construct arguments to advance particular positions/claims on how to address rape culture on campus (and more broadly)? 2) What power relations do these particular positions/claims shore up or undermine? As shown in the literature review rape culture is perpetuated by social media and how people talk about it. The same social media spaces are also seen as being spaces to fight rape culture.

In the following I provide an overview of the study. I then explore the findings presented in the two analysis chapters in terms of a compound rhetorical situation. This provides a tool to see how the rhetors, audience, and exigence of addressing rape culture on campus were similar or contrasting on the different online spaces. In addition, the possible constraints that enabled, or hindered, certain rhetors to create some of the arguments evident in this study are discussed. These I discuss against a backdrop of previous studies and their findings to better understand how some lines of argument came to be. Furthermore, what these findings reveal in terms of a feminist perspective are noted. Lastly, I discuss the limitations of this study, and provide possible suggestions for future research.

2. Overview of study

Within this research, a rhetorical approach, deriving from social constructionist and feminist poststructuralist underpinnings, was used to explore how collectives of rhetors on public ‘official’ and ‘unofficial’ online spaces, addressed the topic of ‘rape culture’ on Rhodes University campus following the #RUMReferenceList protest in 2016. Data analysis used rhetorical theory from a number of scholars (Grant-Davie, 1997; Hauser, 2002; Leach, 2000) who provide contemporary understandings of ‘rhetoric’ and offer guidelines for how to approach a rhetorical analysis. This incorporated understandings (Gurak & Antonijevic, 2008; K. Wilson & Eberly, 2008) of how traditional notions of rhetorical theory, such as the ‘canons’ may be used in analysing digital textual forms of communication. Additionally, theories on ‘publics’, ‘counter publics’, and notions of ‘public’ discourse and how these are understood in rhetorical theory (Cox & Foust, 2009; Fraser, 1990; K. Wilson & Eberly, 2008) were drawn on for this study, as well as understandings of ‘institutional’ (specifically higher education

institutions) rhetorical practices (Green & Li, 2011; Porter, Sullivan, Blythe, Grabill, & Miles, 2000).

This study looked at the exigence of addressing rape culture on campus, and how rhetors employed different discourses on the different online spaces, and how these were argued for in similar, and dissimilar, approaches. The analysis explored two distinct, yet related, avenues of inquiry: i) arguments by rhetors on ‘official’ (institutionally sanctioned) communication spaces; and ii) arguments by rhetors on ‘unofficial’ (social media pages used by some University constituents) communication spaces. These findings are discussed below.

3. Compound rhetorical situation

In both of the analysis chapters, I looked at how the rhetors attempted to argue various positions on the topic of ‘rape culture’ through the use of rhetorical discourse. In this section, I discuss the commonalities and differences/contestations of the two broad groups of rhetors and their arguments. These rhetors, constituted by their respective online/public identities, created groups or ‘collectives’ through their use of similar/dissimilar arguments, which formed what I have previously described as being a ‘compound rhetorical situation’ (pattern of related arguments on one topic by various individuals/groups of them) (Grant-Davie, 1997). Within a compound rhetorical situation, each rhetor carries a different perspective and enters the debate at a different time, so each rhetor addresses a slightly different rhetorical situation but these situations interlace and overlap extensively with those addressed by other rhetors in the discussion (Grant-Davie, 1997).

Bazerman (1997, p. 301) argues that “people's activities are embedded within traditions of activities, texts, institutions, and organizations”, which create some commonalities of experiences among social groups. These commonalities influence the range and types of discursive resources that may be drawn on within these groups. While it is useful to look at commonalities of communicative speech among similar groups, another intriguing point of inquiry exists in analysing the differences in the discursive resources drawn on between different social groups. These differences, as Bazerman (1997, p. 301) puts it, can infer what “exists between the individuals and groups - that is, the communications and communicative systems”. Below, I discuss these discursive commonalities and differences found in this study, in terms of a compound rhetorical situation: rhetors, audience, exigence, and constraints.

Further, what some of these arguments may tell us about group/individual identity construction, and power relations, is noted.

3.1. Rhetors

In this section, I discuss how rhetors most generally developed their arguments by using certain rhetorical canons. This helps to reveal how the identities behind these arguments are using access to certain discursive resources in order to best support their claims.

The ‘official’ rhetors often used appeals to ethos to give their arguments a sense of trustworthiness and authority. This was at times explicit, such as direct communications from named powerful institutional bodies or people (e.g. the University Council; Vice-chancellor), and at other times it was more implicit, such as the references to an ‘us’ or ‘we’ as the University. In addition to ethos, rhetors often appealed to logos, by using and quoting the law and Constitution in order to support an argument and convince the audience on the claims made. Pathos was appealed to, although this more often than not, was outsourced to others (last theme of the first analysis chapter), and personal testimony was used sparingly except in these outsourced cases. Almost all of these communications were stylistically presented in a formal manner, with few spelling or grammatical errors, and having a pattern of 1) introductory claim, 2) evidence to support, and 3) concluding perspective. Collective memories were drawn on; however, again this was often outsourced to the external ‘pathos’ rhetoric, which sought to emotionally engage the audience by using a ‘familiar’ (similar) individual to the intended audience in order to bolster the institution’s public image.

The ‘unofficial’ rhetors often appealed to pathos, and this was used to invoke a solidarity/togetherness with the audience, as well as to express fear and outrage (through personal testimony). The ‘unofficial’ sites used direct references to ethos on occasion (e.g. SASCO), but rhetors often had to labour to establish their credibility and trustworthiness. One example of this was referencing their previous ‘experience’, like participating ‘physically’ in protests. This personal testimony allowed these rhetors to gain support from the audience, on what they were claiming, by being a sort of ‘veteran’ in this context. The ‘unofficial’ rhetors messages were also often deliberative (what ought to be done) and hyperbolic. Collective/public memories specific to the intended audience were drawn on heavily, and these often-formed support/evidence as to why collective action was necessitated. Stylistically, these

messages differed a lot, but generally I found that the UCKAR Student Body page contained more informally (chaotic at times) presented messages, used vernacular slang/jargon, and had grammatical errors, while the UCKAR Concerned Staff group had a more 'formal' presentation to their messages – similar to the 'official' rhetors.

3.2. Audience

Audience within rhetorical theories are complex entities to consider, but broadly audience can be analysed with two broad meanings in mind: 1) the addressed audience (the actual people who read the text); and 2) the audience invoked (the audience the rhetor has in mind, and the roles suggested by the discourse itself) (Grant-Davie, 1997). This section will look at how the rhetors invoked their audience (how the discourses defined and created a context for the readers), by using rhetorical strategies which constructed particular identity positions between the rhetors and the audience, or other external parties.

Across both domains, there were constructions of an 'us' and a 'we'. At times this was assumed to include all in the University space (e.g. 'official' sites' first theme), and at other times an 'us' and 'them' situation was described. In the latter, the bifurcation was sometimes unclear and at other times emerged in contradictory and complex ways (in both of the domains). The rhetors often sought (epideictically) to strengthen the audience's inclination to a set of sanctioned social behaviours and actions. This also distanced certain sectors of the audience by defining what were unsanctioned, or unacceptable, behaviours and actions. The 'unofficial' rhetors distanced themselves at times from other student/staff members (e.g. ones who either disagreed with 'the plan' going forward or were 'traitors' to the social movement), and at other times from the institutional management/leadership groups. The 'official' rhetors distanced students/staff who were: unwilling to engage in 'reasonable' efforts to counter rape culture on campus; in contravention of the institutional code of conduct (e.g. illegal protest action); or perceived as infringing on the Constitutional rights of others. This othering, bifurcatory, process may rely on the assumption that the excluded 'other' (i.e. 'them') are characteristically uniform groups, who therefore, are not seen in terms of their non-othered individual characteristics (e.g. the whole versus parts of the whole). This runs the risk that the 'other' can never be seen as being suitable (in addressing rape culture), because it does not form part of 'us' (e.g. we are good/correct so they must be bad/wrong). It is through this process of division, where both parties may be failing to see each other in inclusionary, non-binary terms, which

disallows the opportunities to see where each collective may hold different, but beneficial, ideas on how to address rape culture.

Within the analysis I highlighted where contestations existed to particular arguments within the collectives. This illustrated how audience members “who begin the discourse in one role may find themselves persuaded to adopt a new role, or they may refuse the roles suggested by the discourse” (Grant-Davie, 1997, p. 271). Within the ‘unofficial’ sites this was easier to see owing to the delivery method, as posting to social media allowed for bilateral communicatory opportunities which enabled the audience to directly respond to the rhetor. One such refusal of identity construction on the ‘unofficial’ sites was disagreement on how physical protest was the only effective form of activism for the collective identity to partake in. This is discussed further below. On the ‘official’ sites, the unilateral method of communication delivery made it more unclear about how the audience felt about the roles that were suggested by the discourses. However, the second analysis chapter helped to define direct, and indirect, ways in which some positions and roles were refused by some students/staff. Within the ‘official’ sites there was one very clear disagreement from a section of audience: this was where the SVTT made a declaration of autonomy and resisted the identity constituted of them that was made by other ‘official’ institutional rhetors (e.g. that the University spoke for the SVTT).

3.3. Exigence

Communications that address the issue of ‘rape culture’ on campus are, in themselves, inherently a rhetorical situation with an ‘exigence’, as discourse in this situation is needed in an attempt to both understand and solve this problem. Bitzer (1968, p. 7) writes that “an exigence is rhetorical when it is capable of positive modification and when positive modification requires discourse or is assisted by discourse”. In reviewing the analysis chapters and the themes of rhetoric therein four questions that were attempting to be resolved through the various rhetors’ dissimilar/similar arguments for addressing rape culture were apparent: does rape culture exist at Rhodes University, and why?; whose responsibility is it to address rape culture on campus?; how should rape culture at Rhodes University be addressed (i.e. in what way)?; and, why are these efforts to address rape culture working, or not working? These questions are discussed below.

3.3.1. Does rape culture exist at Rhodes University, and why?

Across both communicative spaces there was a general consensus that rape culture does exist at Rhodes University. This was despite one occasion where, within the ‘official’ dataset, rape culture was referred to as ‘alleged’. The post that called rape culture ‘alleged’ was countered by rhetors on the ‘unofficial’ dataset, who argued that referring to it as ‘alleged’ was in fact perpetuating ‘rape culture’. Regardless of this instance, there was an argument from rhetors on both the ‘official’ and ‘unofficial’ sites that rape culture was a societal issue, particularly one that stemmed from a patriarchal society.

Both groups of rhetors generally agreed that rape culture was a ‘collective’ social issue that needed to be addressed, suggesting that the need for such communication was in response to this communal exigence and the understanding that rape culture was societal (on the ‘unofficial’ site there were discrepancies to this line of argument, which is discussed further below). Rhetors attempted to redefine ‘rape culture’ as an issue which is located, and understood, within a larger social/cultural framework. This both enabled a judgement to be made (use of forensic discourse), by the ‘unofficial’ rhetors, on how the University was addressing rape culture (inadequately), and enabled the ‘official’ rhetors to argue back (defensively) why they were not, and could not, be (solely) responsible for addressing rape culture on campus. Thus, while the sentiment of the arguments was similar (rape culture is societal), the use of this rhetoric functioned for different purposes for the respective collectives. On one hand, it criticised and blamed (e.g. the institution has addressed rape culture incorrectly), and on the other hand, it sought to negate blame, responsibility and culpability (e.g. rape culture is not completely our issue to address).

3.3.2. Whose responsibility is it to address rape culture on campus?

In asking the question, who are the different rhetors positioning as responsible for addressing rape culture, two prominent arguments stood out. The first, from the ‘official’ rhetors, is related to the discussion above, which argued that rape culture was societal. Carrying on from this line of argument, these rhetors sought to expand ‘who’ was responsible for addressing rape culture on the University campus. Instead of taking a position of ‘we/I’ (as the University management) are/am responsible and will address it, the ‘official’ rhetors argued that a collective ‘us/we’ (i.e. everyone) should, and is responsible for addressing it. There were admissions from these rhetors that more could be done, and a commitment was made to revise certain policies and

protocols, but this stopped short of the radical overhaul demanded by some of the ‘unofficial’ rhetors.

While the ‘unofficial’ rhetors had also argued that rape culture was a patriarchal societal issue, they did on many occasions position the University as being, in part, responsible for addressing rape culture. This line of argument contradicted the ‘rape culture is societal’ one, although some ‘unofficial’ rhetors did on occasion attempt to mitigate some of the responsibility that was placed on the institution. Furthermore, there was a perceived ‘failure’ on the institution’s behalf to address rape culture because they had failed to consider rape culture to be a symptom of a broader systemic problem and to understand it within a framework that takes into account patriarchy. This enabled some ‘unofficial’ rhetors to take on this ‘responsibility’ to ‘fight’ rape culture - which led to the adoption of the rhetoric of ‘it’s on us’ (evidenced in the last theme of **Chapter 6**). The institutional leadership/management itself was also argued by the ‘unofficial’ rhetors to be patriarchal in its leadership style, creating powerful hierarchies through institutional power - this is discussed further below.

3.3.3. *How should rape culture at Rhodes University be addressed (i.e. in what way)?*

Two major approaches to how rape culture should be addressed on campus arose from the analyses. The first was a ‘legalistic’ framework to addressing rape culture. The ‘official’ rhetors strongly advocated for this, by arguing that rape culture had to be addressed through ‘legal’ avenues which followed due process. One ‘legal’ avenue that was argued for, by the ‘official’ sites’ rhetors, was the need for the University to have obtained a court interdict against certain University constituents who had acted ‘unlawfully’ in their actions/behaviours on the institution’s campus. Some studies have noted that the trend of South African universities’ obtaining court interdicts against campus protest action. Authors argue that this, as a fair and legal solution, can be contested on the basis that in some of these cases interdicts infringe on the rights of the protesters (Karim & Kruyer, 2017). This, as discussed in the previous chapter, was evident in the ‘unofficial’ rhetors arguments (“*The interdict obtained by the university’s management is so broad as to interfere with the Constitutional rights to protest, to picket and to express oneself freely*”). As such, this provides a paradoxical position in the ‘official’ rhetor’s ‘legalistic’ argument in this study as the ‘official’ rhetors (as shown in the first analysis chapter) argue for addressing rape culture in ways which do not undermine the rights of others. In fact, the undermining or infringing on the rights of others, was argued by the ‘official’ rhetors

to be an unacceptable criminal act of behaviour to which the University is (as stated by the University Council) required to take action against. However, by obtaining the interdict, the ‘official’ rhetors and the institutional body, ironically, were perceived as not only undermining their ‘lawful’ position, but paradoxically excusing (and negating consequence) for their own collective’s members infringement on others’ rights.

On the ‘unofficial’ spaces the ‘legal’ and ‘due process’ of addressing rape culture and sexual assault on the University campus was contested by these rhetors (although there were tensions between these ‘unofficial’ rhetors on this). This ‘legal’ framework, advocated for by the ‘official’ rhetors, was perceived by the ‘unofficial’ rhetors as upholding the rights of alleged perpetrators (innocent until proven guilty) over the rights of victims (right to bodily integrity; freedom and security of persons). Instead, how rape culture should be addressed was often argued to be in need of a more victim-favourable approach. As such, demonstrations in favour of such an approach adopted the use of discursive practices such as trigger warnings. This line of argument was underpinned by the belief that the current frameworks (legal/institutional) favour and protect alleged perpetrators, over victims and protesters.

Brenner (2013) argues that both legal proposals to addressing sexual violence on higher education campuses, as well as some feminist approaches may be limiting approaches to transforming a rape culture through adopting dichotomous ways of thinking of rape victims versus perpetrators,. Rather, more intersectional approaches to sexual violence, such as the emerging practice of restorative justice, could provide meaningful alternatives to transforming rape culture (Brenner, 2013). These types of approaches, according to Brenner (2013, p. 2), “draw attention to the ways that the construction and performance of identities can contribute to dehumanization and seeks solutions that help to re-humanize both victims and perpetrators”. It is worthy to note that the Rhodes University SVTT (2016) in their report, did recommend a ‘three-pronged’ approach to sexual violence at the University which included restorative, alongside retributive, and reparative justice. My own suggestion, is that this type of approach to sexual violence and rape culture on campus be further explored as it may provide a type of middle-ground between the two above arguments.

In addition, in many of the ‘unofficial’ rhetors arguments, there were also calls to protest rape culture in a physical manner, and forms of non-physical protest such as digital activism were

at times critiqued as ineffective (the constraint from which this argument may stem is further discussed below). These arguments sought to disrupt rape culture by putting “*bodies on the line*”. This is what O’Keefe (2014, p. 4) calls a ‘gendered body protest’ where gendered bodies call attention to issues that pertain to (women’s) bodies and are “used to manipulate, challenge and seize the power that seeks to confine and define it”. However, from a critical feminist perspective the rhetoric that failed to acknowledge the benefit of other routes of activism, may disregard structural and intersectional power relations that restrict some bodies. As such, this line of rhetoric problematically either assumes that all bodies have equal access to agency and choice, or chooses to disregard women’s freedom to choose how they use their gendered body, demanding that these bodies be used in a certain manner. This problematically exemplifies “how women’s bodies continue to be a battleground” in a patriarchal society, which makes arguments which rely on these types of body politics dangerous “as they hide the structural and intersectional nature of women’s oppression” (O’Keefe, 2014, pp. 15–16).

3.3.4. *Why are these efforts to address rape culture working, or not working?*

Across both analysis chapters there was a pattern of rhetoric that argued that ‘traitors’, often portrayed as under a ‘false guise’ (e.g. with hidden motives), were threatening the efforts that sought to counter rape culture at the University. The rhetors on the ‘official’ communication spaces most often identified these individuals as ‘criminals’ who ‘delegitimised’ a ‘legitimate’ protest through criminal behaviours. The rhetors on the ‘unofficial’ spaces most often identified these individuals as ones who were misaligned with the social movement’s aims and used the protest as a cover for other ‘political’ objectives. These ‘enemies’ were further argued to not only be responsible for hindering efforts against rape culture at the University, but also to be responsible for perpetuating and sustaining the current rape culture. Rhetorics such as these, however, played into bifurcating (othering) language processes which were discussed above, in more detail.

As such, ‘the enemy’ was a similar rhetoric between the collectives. Often these arguments used an ‘identification’ (through antithesis) process, which personified specific individuals or types/groups as an enemy. This rhetorical strategy of identification helped the rhetors to identify a shared enemy in order to unite against it, which helped to form a unified ‘we’ identity within each collective (Cheney, 1983; Jasinski, 2001). By identifying and constructing an ‘enemy’, through which evil traits, intentions, or actions were attributed, a process of ‘division’

also took place which functioned to further craft group unity through difference to opposing groups (Jasinski, 2001). Additionally, this discursive strategy functioned to seek external demonstrations of support for attitudes/efforts/actions against the identified enemies. For example, the rhetors on the ‘official’ spaces argued for why they needed to get a court interdict; and the rhetors on the ‘unofficial’ spaces argued that institutionally associated individuals (e.g. the Vice-chancellor; the SRC) could not, and should not, be trusted.

This showed a similar use of rhetorical strategies between the ‘official’ and ‘unofficial’ rhetors, which pivoted on the need to identify and personify ‘traitors’ (as well as scapegoats) in order to help define a collective stance in ‘opposition’ to those deemed complicit in a rape culture. This took form through defining each other (e.g. institutional management versus the protesting students) as ‘enemies’ to the larger cause (countering rape culture), and allowing the disparate groups to create solidarity, security and collectivity in their own group identities. This may ultimately seek to mitigate each party’s own surrounding uncertainty, and the fragility/tensions therein, that seems to exist in rhetorically arguing for how to counter a rape culture. What is perhaps apparent here is that opportunities which allow a group to take an oppositional stance against identified ‘bad’ groups, individuals, or actions, are helping collectives to form a united sense that the way their group is doing something (in this case addressing rape culture) is the correct or right way. This may be especially emphasised when there is no certain or clear way to address something as complex as rape culture leading to an unwanted sense of fragility and ambiguity within a collective, which, in itself, could threaten to destabilise a collective group.

3.4. Constraints

In order to look at some of the constraints that each domain of rhetors may have encountered, I will look at how some of this research’s findings could be understood in the context of previous bodies of literature.

3.4.1. Distrust surrounding institutional responses

A finding from much literature on student perceptions of University management/leadership, and their institutional responses to sexual violence on campus, was that students were distrustful/dissatisfied of these responses. Studies (de Klerk et al., 2007; Gordon & Collins, 2013; Sass, 2005; Singh et al., 2016, 2015) have indicated that students at South African

universities distrust, are dissatisfied with, or lack faith in institutional responses to sexual violence on higher education campuses.

In this study, it seemed that on the ‘unofficial’ sites, the rhetors thereon often ‘demanded’ some form of action from institutional management. This was often backdropped against perceived inaction, or inadequate action from the University - despite the rhetoric from the ‘official’ institutional rhetors that they were, and had always been, committed to addressing rape culture on campus. Perhaps, what can be perceived here is that due to existing climates of dissatisfaction/distrust from university constituents, as evidenced in Meth (2017) and de Klerk et al.’s (2007) studies at Rhodes University, is that there is a level of predisposed distrust/dissatisfaction. This may create an ‘always wary’ context, which is evident in the conspiracy appeals used (e.g. “*we won’t be fooled*”). I do not mean to imply that Rhodes University is or is not adequate in their response to sexual violence and rape culture, but merely that between the: “*we are committed*” rhetoric’ and the “*Rhodes has tried, but failed*” rhetoric, there is a large disconnect.

According to Grant-Davie (1997, p. 276), “exigence and constraints can be closely related”. For the rhetors in this study, the exigence of rape culture on campus motivated certain students and staff to protest about it. This required the University to respond to protesters, but because of the constraint of student dissatisfaction and distrust to previous institutional responses and actions, this gave the protesters (audience) reason to believe that the University would respond inadequately again. I suggest, that this constraint enabled ‘unofficial’ rhetorics to strengthen their critiques about any perceived wrongdoing from the institution’s management/leadership (e.g. they’ve done it again – see, we can’t trust them), as well as to argue for why the fight against rape culture should, and must, proceed as a distant institutional body (as the University has previously, and will going forward, fail to address rape culture adequately). The same constraint, I suggest, created labour for how the institutional management/leadership could publicly respond, which often defensively bolstered a favourable public image and reiterated previous achievements/actions against rape culture on the campus. Furthermore, this constraint influenced how the audience to the ‘official’ rhetors texts were predisposed to support, or in this case distrust, what was being said. This constraint, unless worked out between the parties in some manner, will continue to hinder objectives which seek to address rape culture at the University in a collective manner. To investigate how these parties’ surmise that they could

overcome this, and work alongside one another in a meaningful way, may be a suggestion for future qualitative research.

3.4.2. Protecting the threatened physical body

This study's analysis found that rhetors on the 'unofficial' sites were arguing heavily for the 'use' of the physical body when protesting against rape culture, as well as the protection of the physical body (through increased physical security). These arguments can be better understood if one is to take into context previous findings from studies (as discussed in the literature review) at higher education campuses in South Africa, which have noted that students perceive rape culture and sexual violence to be a consequential threat to the body.

For example, within this body of work, studies (Gordon & Collins, 2013; Shefer et al., 2017) have found that the fear of sexual violence in a rape culture, and the perceived inevitability of risk to it, was perceived by students as based upon the physical body (female bodies in particular). This suggests that sexual violence, in a rape culture, is experienced as being an 'always present danger' for women, who are experiencing their body and its physical safety as at risk (a risk they must manage) based solely of its 'femaleness' (Gordon & Collins, 2013; Ngabaza et al., 2015; Shefer et al., 2017). This fear then becomes discursively embodied, which in turn enables rhetorics which argue that: rape culture must be fought physically as it is a physical threat to the physical body, and that physical protection (on campuses) is needed to protect the physical body.

The argument, by some rhetors in this study, for more physical protection (e.g. campus patrol security personnel, well-lit walking routes, panic buttons etc.), corresponds to Shefer et al.'s (2017) study, where students reported that the campus was unsafe due to poor physical infrastructure. As these authors discuss, the physical layout of a campus cannot alone prevent rape/sexual violence (as this is rooted in broader social/structural power relations), but what is of importance is that student's perceptions of dangerous spaces are acknowledged by institutional management, and that adequate considerations (physical infrastructure/hiring of security persons) be made to allow students to move more freely on campus (Shefer et al., 2017).

Not addressing such concerns can be seen as a form of ‘structural violence’. Structural violence can be understood as a “kind of violence that is not direct but is present in institutional practice and ways, and which can become embodied” (Sass, 2005, p. 53). Within this study, perceived structural violence (e.g. through the lack of security and safe spaces at the University) backdropped the ways in which rape culture was argued, by the ‘unofficial’ rhetors, to threaten the physical body. The physical threat to the physical body, as an embodiment of rape culture, was then used (as a constraint) to underpin the arguments which called for more physical protection/security on campus. Current findings also suggested that rape culture on campus has negative psychological effects (e.g. depression, emotional suffering, and living in fear), and were argued by the ‘unofficial’ rhetors to be linked to negative physical implications (such as the death of the physical body, e.g. through suicide).

The way in which rape culture can have an embodied effect which threatens physical bodies was noticeably missing from the ‘official’ rhetors arguments on addressing rape culture. According to Dosekun (2007, p. 98), subjective embodied experiences of a rape culture suggest that the “imagination and fear, not just the threat and actuality of rape, may deny women their full exercise of freedom in the post-apartheid nation”. Denying women their rights to freedom and restricting their behaviours, because of how rape culture is being experienced as embodied, is a troubling concern from a feminist perspective. Here, I make the suggestion that taking the experienced embodiment of rape culture under serious concern from the side of the University may help in putting the opposing collectives of rhetors on the same page.

3.4.3. Patriarchy as the root cause

This study found, across both ‘official’ and ‘unofficial’ arguments, that ‘patriarchy’ was argued to be the root cause of a rape culture. This rhetoric supports many feminist theories which understand rape to be a symptom (by-product) of a patriarchal society, whereby rape harms ‘women’ as a collective group in order to maintain their gendered subordination (Whisnant, 2009). As such, rape culture is understood to be a collective societal, and not individualistic, problem. Patriarchal gendered power relations and norms have also all been understood by feminist scholars as perpetuating the existing rape culture in South Africa (Buiten & Naidoo, 2016; Gqola, 2015; Moffett, 2008).

Framing rape as a symptom of patriarchy on campus, is similar to the findings by Bashonga and Khuzwayo's (2017) study on student social media narratives, where rape culture (at universities) was discursively discussed by students online as being a symptom of a broader patriarchal problem in South Africa. Interestingly, the institution's management/leadership style was also argued by the 'unofficial' rhetors in this study to be 'patriarchal'. Perhaps what is starting to happen, from the constraint that patriarchy is the root cause for rape culture, is that rhetors are starting to question the structural power relations that can exist in institutional structures (beyond individual practices of patriarchy). This, plus the distrustful climate towards institutional agents, may be enabling the rhetoric that students/staff must proceed by themselves, and distance themselves from any efforts that could collude with patriarchy. As such, this could gain support for rhetorics which contest other institutional process, such as the law and justice systems, and propose 'anti-patriarchal' approaches to addressing sexual violence (which put women and victims at the fore).

Such an approach, from a critical feminist perspective, may be seeking to counterbalance powerful patriarchal structures which favour the dominant hegemony (e.g. men and rape perpetrators). However, in this study, these 'radical' approaches often had the unfortunate effect of making an adversary of particular individual institutional management/leadership agents, rather than the patriarchal structures themselves – although some 'unofficial' rhetors did negate some responsibility on behalf of the individual University persons under attack by pointing this out.

While understanding rape culture to be an effect of a problematic patriarchal society is a step in the right direction, I propose that it will be important to take into account from a feminist poststructuralist viewpoint that patriarchal power relations exist in institutions and social practices, and therefore cannot be explained solely in the intentions of individual agents. Taking on this viewpoint, I suggest, could potentially help the opposing collectives, particularly the 'unofficial' side, to stop attempting to find one sole responsible party for the rape culture at Rhodes University (which inevitably makes these institutional agents feel personally under attack) and rather work collaboratively to transform the system as a whole.

4. Limitations

One of the limitations of this study revolves around the data that were collected. Firstly, the study is limited regarding the online sites used. Initially, the aim had been to use numerous Facebook public groups that were created by, and for, Rhodes University constituents. These included the: SRC page, RUReferenceList page, and Rhodes Confessions page. Permissions were sought to use these groups, and data were collected from them. However, upon the data ‘cleaning’ and sorting processes, these sites were eliminated from the study. This was simply because there was too much data to analyse. Thus, I decided to concentrate on the two pages with the term ‘UCKAR’ (i.e. UCKAR Student Body and UCKAR Concerned Staff). By using these two pages I was able to give the second analysis chapter an element of coherence and capture communications that emerged under the collective ‘identity’ that the term ‘UCKAR’ constitutes. However, by eliminating the other groups, I was unable to capture the potentially different rhetorics that may exist on these alternative online spaces.

With regard to the ‘official’ data sites, the Rhodes News page and Toplist (staff-specific) emailing list archives were sought permissions for and used in the study. Upon later thought I realised that I had excluded using the communications from the student-specific emailing list. I considered gaining further ethical permissions to use this site, but it was decided that this was unnecessary after a brief review of the communications thereon. This was because, in most cases these messages were repeats of the posts on the Toplist or News pages, and the students were therefore not being addressed as a distinctly different audience. Communications on the student emailing list server were, however, distinctly different with regard to messages that spoke to student specific related content (e.g. residences, student societies, class timetables etc.) but of the messages that spoke to addressing rape culture, the vast majority of these were exact replicas of the messages posted to the Toplist/Rhodes News pages.

Secondly, the exclusion of emoji’s/memes/pictures in the data analysis may serve as a limitation. These were excluded, as justified in the methodology chapter, due to the specific focus on discursive language practices. One can argue that these image-based symbols are themselves signifiers of language, but due to the scope of this project it was not possible to include these. Additionally, only the ‘unofficial’ sites had these image-based signifiers and not the ‘official sites. Thus, including them in one analysis chapter and not the other would have created tension for the comparative work done earlier in this discussion chapter. Further studies

could take this limitation into account when selecting data sources and deciding how to analyse them.

Lastly, within the literature on research that uses SNS/OSN's (e.g. Facebook data), there is the consideration that a disconnect may exist between the 'real life' actions/behaviours of people, and their self-reported (hypothetical) actions and behaviours (Wilson et al., 2012). While this disconnect may exist, there is also the argument that individuals' 'online' and 'offline' lives are at least partially integrated (Wilson et al., 2012). I acknowledge that the discursive practices that rhetors engage in may differ between 'online' and 'offline' spaces. However, this study is not attempting to compare the rhetorical strategies that are used in online/offline communications that talk to rape culture. Rather, this study sought to focus on how very specific online spaces facilitated types of rhetoric that exist in the digital realm. This is because a significant deal of the rape culture protest, as well as institutional/non-institutional responses to it, including vast attention from public media, were communicated on online spaces. Thus, this research seeks to build upon knowledge of digital (online) uses of social movement and institutional (higher education) discursive practices in rhetorical textual communication, when specifically talking about rape culture at Rhodes University.

5. Suggestions for future research

Firstly, future research could make improvements, based on the limitations described above, to incorporate more data. In doing so, this would allow for more groups of rhetors, and as such would provide more insight into their collective rhetorics, thereby increasing the richness of the data and allowing for the social issue/context to be understood in more depth. In addition, I have made suggestions above to how the findings of this study may be understood in carrying implications for addressing rape culture in a collaborative manner between the collectives. Future research could be aimed at further understanding these implications and assessing ways in which these could be amended.

Secondly, as evidenced in research findings, there is value in being able to contrast differing groups (collectives) of rhetors when researching communications on publicly shared social issues such as rape culture. Such research cannot only gain insight into how one collective group creates, negotiates and shares social meanings and understandings, but also how these relate to other collectives – and where agreements, contrasts, and tensions may lie between

these. Further research should consider inquiring how more than one collective, in a compound rhetorical situation, communicates on one shared topic. This, especially in regard to complex social issues, may provide fascinating insight into not only how different identities rhetorically/discursively construct specific arguments, but also how these identities construct and play-off one another, which may perpetuate or counter deeper underlying power structures (in the context of the complex social issue). Moreover, future studies could warrant further attention to how the qualities and features of digital technologies, which may constrain or enable different positionalities for rhetors, affect the way in which some identities (in terms of race, sex, sexuality, ability, class etc.) are privileged, subordinated, or at risk within the context of rape culture discussions.

Finally, this study, in itself, is one of the first in South Africa to utilise a rhetorical approach to digital data platforms which are used by University constituents when discussing a collective problem such as rape culture. Furthermore, because of the importance of context-specificity within rhetorical and qualitative approaches to data, this study cannot generalise its findings to other contexts. Hence, it can serve as a template for future research which seeks to explore how pervasive social problems are discussed from various standpoints within similar institutional frameworks.

This research underscores the complexity that comes with attempting to address a rape culture, highlighting how insidiously embedded it is, which only necessitates how important it will be for scholars to research, and continue researching, the ways in which a rape culture, and the various approaches which attempt to counter it, are understood. Countering rape culture on higher education campuses will require reimagined, sustained, and collective efforts – *little by little, and bit by bit*.

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Appendix 1: Interdict

IN THE HIGH COURT OF SOUTH AFRICA
EASTERN CAPE, GRAHAMSTOWN
BEFORE THE HONOURABLE [REDACTED]
20th APRIL 2016

CASE NO.: 1937/2016

In the matter between:

RHODES UNIVERSITY

APPLICANT

AND

STUDENTS REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL
OF RHODES UNIVERSITY

1ST RESPONDENT

STUDENTS OF RHODES UNIVERSITY
ENGAGING IN UNLAWFUL ACTIVITIES
ON THE APPLICANT'S CAMPUS

2ND RESPONDENT

THOSE PERSONS ENGAGING IN OR
ASSOCIATING THEMSELVES WITH
UNLAWFUL ACTIVITIES ON
THE APPLICANT'S CAMPUS

3RD RESPONDENT

[REDACTED]
STUDENT NO.: [REDACTED]

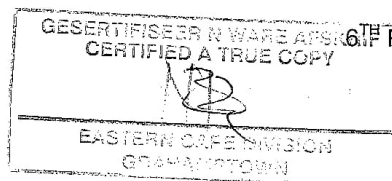
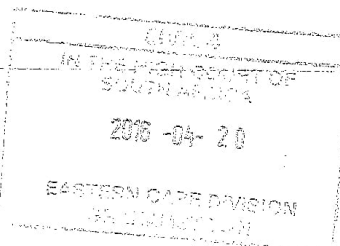
4TH RESPONDENT

[REDACTED]
STUDENT NO.: [REDACTED]

5TH RESPONDENT

[REDACTED]
STUDENT NO.: [REDACTED]

6TH RESPONDENT



[REDACTED]
Snr. Registrar Clerk
Eastern Cape
Division, Grahamstown

ORDER

Having heard Adv. Smuts (S.C.), Counsel for the Applicant and having read the papers filed of record and after having heard the oral evidence of Vice Chancellor, ~~P. M. M. M.~~, Registrar, ~~P. M. M. M.~~, the Executive Director of Infrastructure, Dr. ~~P. M. M. M.~~, The Campus Protection Unit Manager, ~~P. M. M. M.~~ and the House Warden, ~~P. M. M. M.~~. And further with due regard to the sensitive nature of the incidents that gave rise to the discord at the University.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:

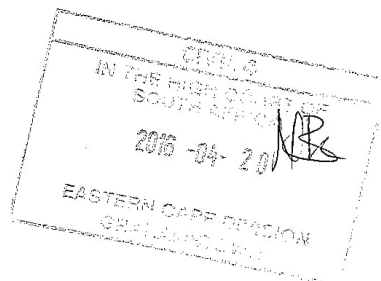
1. Dispensing with the forms and time limits for service prescribed by the Rules of Court and ordering that this matter be heard as a matter of urgency in terms of Rule 6(12) of the Rules of Court.
2. That a Rule Nisi do issue calling upon the Respondents to show cause, if any, on Tuesday the 17th of May 2016 why a final order in the following terms should not be made:
 - 2.1 Restraining the Respondents from participating in encouraging, facilitating and/or promoting any unlawful activities on the campus of the Applicant which activities shall include, but not be limited to:
 - 2.1.1 Access to, egress from and the free movement on the Applicant's campus of all members of the Rhodes University community and all others who have lawful reason to move on to, off and upon the said campus;
 - 2.1.2 Kidnapping, assaulting, threatening, intimidating or otherwise interfering in any manner with the free movement, bodily integrity and psychological and mental wellbeing of any members of the Rhodes University community on the Applicant's campus;

- 2.1.3 Disrupting, obstructing or in any other manner interfering with the academic process of the Applicant, which shall include but not be limited to lectures, tutorials, practicals tests and use of the Applicant's library facilities and laboratory;
 - 2.1.4 In any manner interfering with the academic and/or administrative staff of the Applicant while on the Applicant's campus;
 - 2.1.5 Disrupting, obstructing or in any other manner interfering with the ordinary function of the Applicant's residents system;
 - 2.1.6 Causing any damages to the Applicants property;
 - 2.1.7 That the Respondents be ordered to pay the costs of this Application.
- 3. That the Order set out in prayers 2.1 operate as a temporary interdict, depending on the return date.
 - 4. That the Order be served on the Respondents by way of:
 - 4.1 Service by placing a copy of this Notice of Motion and Order of Court on the Rhodes University Student Zone Website;
 - 4.2 Emailing a copy of the application directly to the first to First Respondent;
 - 4.3 Affixing copies of this application to various notice boards at the main entrances to the applicant's campus;
 - 4.4 By the South African Police Services upon various members participating in unlawful activities as set out in paragraph 2.1.

ORDER OF COURT




COURT REGISTRAR
HUXTABLE ATTORNEYS



Appendix 2: Ethical clearance



RHODES UNIVERSITY

Grahamstown • 6140 • South Africa

PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT • Tel: (046) 603 8500 / 85001 • Fax: (046) 622 4032 • e-mail: psychology@ru.ac.za

RESEARCH PROPOSAL AND ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

23 April 2018

Magaera Jones
Psychology Department
Rhodes University
Grahamstown
6139

Dear Magaera,

ETHICS APPLICATION: PSY2017/56

This letter confirms your ethical protocol with tracking number PSY2017/56 and title, 'A rhetorical analysis of rape culture talk at Rhodes University', was reviewed by the Research Projects and Ethics Review Committee (RPERC) of the Psychology Department of Rhodes University on 16 August 2017. The committee decision was APPROVED WITH STIPULATIONS. These stipulations are that the research cannot proceed without gatekeeper permission which must be forwarded to the committee.

Please ensure that the RPERC is notified should any substantive change(s) be made, for whatever reason, during the research process. This includes changes in investigators. This clearance is valid for 12 months.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Zay'.

CHAIRPERSON OF THE RPERC

Tel: (046) 603 8500/8501 e-mail: psychology@ru.ac.za

Appendix 3: Registrar's permission to collect data



RHODES UNIVERSITY

Grahamstown • 6140 • South Africa

OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR
P O Box 94, Grahamstown, 6140
E-mail: registrar@ru.ac.za
Tel: +27 (0)46 603 8101
Fax: +27 (0)46 603 8127

Ms Megaera Jones
G15J8656
Department of Psychology

21 June 2018

Dear Ms Jones

Name of research proposal: A rhetorical analysis of rape culture talk at Rhodes University.

This serves to confirm that you have been granted permission to conduct your proposed research at Rhodes University as requested.

Conditional approval will be granted by the Ethics Committee(s). Once Dr Moodly grants permission as the gatekeeper, the ethics committee will then issue final approval.

Yours sincerely

Dr Adèle Moodly
REGISTRAR

Appendix 4: Facebook group administrators' message (template)

Dear Group Administrators of (insert group name),

My name is Megaera Jones and I am a Master's student (G15J8656) at the Critical Studies in Sexualities and Reproduction research unit (within the Psychology Department). I am currently conducting research on rape culture talk (and countering it) within the University. The project is being supervised by Dr Malvern Chiweshe and Professor Catriona Macleod. The study aims to examine, through a rhetorical discursive approach, the various rhetorical discursive strategies used by staff and students when talking about rape culture, from the occurrence of the #RUPreferenceList protest (April 2016) to present (August 2018). This study has been passed through the Psychology Research Ethics Committee, as well as the Higher Degrees Committee (PSY2017/58) – please see attached letter. By conducting this research and understanding how rape and rape culture are spoken about, we hope to benefit the students, as well as the University as a whole. This is because universities are uniquely positioned to respond to, challenge, and transform rape culture, as rape culture occurs within institutional and social frameworks that can offer opportunities for change.

I wish to collect data (posts and comments) from this public page on Facebook, that speak about, and counter, rape culture in light of the #RUPreferenceList protest. According to Facebook (2018) "Facebook Pages and public groups are considered public spaces", and "anyone who can see the Page or group can see your post or comment". Furthermore, "when you choose to share something with Public (ex: when you select Public from the audience selector), it's considered public information" (Facebook, 2018). Public information is generally regarded by researchers in the social sciences as public domain, and thus accessible as data (R. Wilson et al., 2012). However, we would like to inform you first and foremost as the group administrator about this research and the measures we will take.

To mitigate risks associated with Facebook as a data collection site, I will take the following precautions as Wilson et al. (R. Wilson et al., 2012) discuss in their study. Firstly, I will prioritise the notion that researchers should (despite the public nature of information), "explain to users what information is being collected and how the information will be used and then design protocols that protect the information" (R. Wilson et al., 2012). This I will do by posting a message on the Facebook group stating I will be collecting data from this site, what data I will collect, how I will use the data, the precautions I will take, and how users can omit their data being collected/used (please see attached template of the message I will post). Secondly, I will only collect public information on the public group/page and not any information from user's private profiles. I will also anonymise authors of posts/comments names, and any identifying information about them. Lastly, I will post

a link to Facebook's Data Policy: <https://www.facebook.com/about/privacy/update>, as well as a link to how group users can 'Control Who Can See What You Share': https://www.facebook.com/help/1297502253597210/?helpref=hc_fnav – which outlines what 'public information' means, what can be associated with them (if searched for), and how to adjust privacy settings. This is to address the concern that Facebook users may not be aware of how their information can be seen or used, and the privacy risks associated with this when joining and using Facebook. By better understanding the threats to privacy, I hope to provide these countermeasures to mitigate any associated risks by giving individual users the opportunity to take informed steps toward protecting any information they do not want used. I will also allow a time period (1 week) for users to delete or make their information private before I begin data collection, to serve as a type of informed consent to using their data.

Please could you indicate if you have any concerns of my use of this Facebook page as a data collection site? I will wait until the end of the week before posting the group message to allow us time to negotiate any concerns/questions you may have. Should you have further queries or would like more information about the research please feel free to contact me on g15j8656@campus.ru.ac.za.

Thank you.

Appendix 5: Facebook group page message (template)

Hi (insert group name) members,

My name is Megaera Jones, and I am a Master's student (G15J8656) at the Critical Studies in Sexualities and Reproduction (CSSR) research unit (within the Psychology Department). I am currently conducting research on rape culture talk (and countering it) within the University. The project is being supervised by Dr Malvern Chiweshe and Professor Catriona Macleod.

The study aims to examine, through a rhetorical approach, the various rhetorical strategies used by staff and students when talking about rape culture, from the occurrence of the #RUMReferenceList protest (April 2016) to present (August 2018). This study has been passed through the Psychology Research Ethics Committee, as well as the Higher Degrees Committee (PSY2017/56). By conducting this research and understanding how rape and rape culture are spoken about, we hope to benefit the students, as well as the University as a whole. This is because universities are uniquely positioned to respond to, challenge, and transform rape culture, as rape culture occurs within institutional and social frameworks that can offer opportunities for change.

I am collecting posts and comments made by the page and page members which talk to, and counter, rape culture, and/or the #RUMReferenceList protest (I have contacted the group administrators for this public Facebook group in this regard too).

To mitigate any privacy risks associated with Facebook as a data collection site, I am taking the following precautions:

How are these data being used?: I will use these data in my Master's research to understand the overarching rhetorical and discursive strategies used by different social groups within the University. I am also using the University's official institutional communications in this project. Please feel free to request a summary of my research for more information. Publications and conference paper presentations may result from the Master's research.

What information will be collected?: I am collecting posts and comments made by group members in this group which talk to, and counter, rape culture, and/or the #RUMReferenceList/RhodesWar movements. I will only collect public information on this public group and not any information from any user's private profiles. I will also anonymise authors of posts/comments names, and any identifying information they contain.

When are the data being collected?: I will begin collecting data from the 13th of September 2018. This post serves as a forewarning that I will use this public page as a data collection site from this date. This serves as informed consent, and any information past this date will be considered as giving consent to be used.

How do I withdraw my posts/comments being used?: You are free to delete any posts/comments you made within the above stated timeframe. If you missed this timeframe and would like to withdraw your information, then you may contact me on g15J8656@campus.ru.ac.za and I will withdraw any data collected from you from the dataset (remember I am only collecting posts specific to my research).

What is public information?: According to Facebook (2018) "Facebook Pages and public groups are considered public spaces", and "anyone who can see the Page or group can see your post or comment". Furthermore, "when you choose to share something with Public (ex: when you select Public from the audience selector), it's considered public information" (Facebook, 2018). Public information is generally regarded by researchers in the social sciences as public domain, and thus accessible as data.

How do I control what is public and how it is used?: I am posting Facebook's Data Policy link here: <https://www.facebook.com/about/privacy/update>, as well as a link to how group/page users can

'Control Who Can See What You Share':

https://www.facebook.com/help/1297502253597210/?helpref=hc_fnav – which outlines what 'public information' means, what can be associated with you (if searched online for), and how to adjust privacy settings. By better understanding how your information can be seen or used, and the privacy risks associated with this when joining and using Facebook, I hope to provide you the opportunity to take informed steps toward protecting any information you do not want used.

Please feel free to contact me on g15J8656@campus.ru.ac.za if you have further concerns.

Thank you!

Appendix 6: Ethics protocol

TRACKING NO: _____

RHODES UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY ETHICAL STANDARDS: RESEARCH PROTOCOL

ANY MBT, PhD OR STAFF PROJECT IN WHICH HUMANS OR ANIMALS ARE THE SUBJECT OF RESEARCH REQUIRES COMPLETION OF THIS FORM AND SUBMISSION, FOR APPROVAL, TO THE PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT'S RESEARCH PROJECTS AND ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE (RPERC) OR, WHERE SUCH COMMITTEE DOES NOT EXIST OR CANNOT UNANIMOUSLY APPROVE THE RESEARCH PROTOCOL, TO THE RHODES UNIVERSITY ETHICAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE.

SUBMITTED BY	Megaera Jones
CONTACT DETAILS	PHONE: 079 522 4980
	EMAIL: MEGAERA23@LIVE.CO.UK
TITLE OF RESEARCH	A rhetorical analysis of rape culture talk at Rhodes University.

PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT RESEARCH PROJECTS & ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE (RPERC)	DAY MONTH YEAR			
	SUBMITTED			
	APPROVED			
	AUTHORIZED BY:	(Chairperson: Psychology Department's RPERC)		
RHODES UNIVERSITY ETHICAL STANDARDS REVIEW COMMITTEE	DAY MONTH YEAR			
	SUBMITTED			
	APPROVED			
	AUTHORIZED BY:	(Chairperson: Ethical Standards Committee)		

1 GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE RESEARCH**1.1 RESEARCHER'S NAME AND PROJECT'S AFFILIATIONS**

This section must make clear how lines of origin, authority and accountability work in a project or study through its affiliations, partnerships and supervision, and must provide clear and up-to-date contact details.

PRINCIPAL INTERNATIONAL RESEARCHER	
UNIVERSITY DIVISION/FACULTY AND DEPARTMENT	
POSITION	
OFFICE TELEPHONE	
EMAIL ADDRESS	
SIGNATURE	
PRINCIPAL NATIONAL RESEARCHER— MEGAERA JONES	
UNIVERSITY DIVISION/FACULTY AND DEPARTMENT	Humanities/ Psychology Department/ Critical Studies in Sexuality and Reproduction
POSITION	Student
OFFICE TELEPHONE	n/a
EMAIL ADDRESS	<u>Megaera23@live.co.uk</u> ; <u>megaera23@gmail.com</u>
SIGNATURE	<i>[Signature]</i>
RU RESEARCHER (STAFF OR STUDENT) MOST INVOLVED IN THIS PROJECT, IF NOT THE PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER	
UNIVERSITY DIVISION/FACULTY AND DEPARTMENT	
POSITION	
OFFICE TELEPHONE	
EMAIL ADDRESS	
SIGNATURE	
SUPERVISORS (IF APPLICABLE) — DR MALVERN CHIWESHE AND PROF. CATRIONA MACLEOD	
UNIVERSITY DIVISION/FACULTY AND DEPARTMENT	Humanities/ Psychology Department/ Critical Studies in Sexuality and Reproduction
POSITION	Research Associate and SARChI Chair
OFFICE TELEPHONE	046 603 7329
EMAIL ADDRESS	<u>malrummy@gmail.com</u> ; <u>c.macleod@ru.ac.za</u>
SIGNATURE	<i>[Signature]</i> <i>[Signature]</i>
CO-INVESTIGATOR OR ASSISTANT RESEARCHER	
UNIVERSITY DIVISION/FACULTY AND DEPARTMENT	
POSITION	
OFFICE TELEPHONE	
EMAIL ADDRESS	
SIGNATURE	

TRACKING No: _____

1.2 TYPE OF RESEARCH

MULTINATIONAL		NATIONAL		LOCAL	☒
STAFF RESEARCH		STUDENT RESEARCH	☒		
UNDERGRAD		HONOURS		MASTERS	☒
DOCTORAL					
PRACTICAL					
OTHER					
Specify other:					
If medical:	THERAPEUTIC		NON-THERAPEUTIC		

1.3 FUNDING

This section must specify sources and amounts of funding that enable the project or study to get off the ground

CONTRACT RESEARCH / EXTERNAL GRANT		RHODES RESEARCH GRANT		PRIVATELY FUNDED		NOT SPECIFICALLY FUNDED	☒
No funding.							

2 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH

Please write brief statements about purpose and methodology here (keep to word limits), and append your research proposal to the ESRP.

2.1 WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH? (100 words)

This research seeks to understand the rhetorical strategies that are employed by members (staff & students) at Rhodes University when speaking about rape culture, and the implications such rhetorical strategies have for institutional discursive and social practices in challenging rape culture.

2.2 BRIEFLY STATE THE METHODOLOGY AND THE PROCEDURES IN WHICH PARTICIPANTS WILL BE ASKED TO PARTICIPATE (150 words)

Data will be collected by:

1. Online data sampling from social media sites such as public Facebook Pages/Groups (e.g. UCKAR) and Twitter.
2. Toplist messages circulated to the University at the time of the protest regarding rape culture and the protest.

The above will have various selection criterion and timeframes to identify relevant material. Posts will be collected from when the protest began (April 2016) to current, and must speak to rape culture at Rhodes University.

3 RECRUITMENT OF AND INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS

3.1 RECRUITMENT

WILL ANY FORM OF PUBLIC ADVERTISEMENT BE USED TO RECRUIT PARTICIPANTS FOR THE RESEARCH?	YES	No
NO PARTICIPANTS WILL BE RECRUITED.		
HAS PERMISSION BEEN SOUGHT FROM RELEVANT AUTHORITIES TO CONDUCT OR PLACE RECRUITMENT ADVERTISEMENTS IN THIS PUBLIC OR INSTITUTIONAL SPACE?	YES	No
NO RECRUITMENT IS TAKING PLACE.		

3.2 LEVELS OF INFORMATION PROVIDED

WHAT INFORMATION WILL BE AFFORDED TO PARTICIPANTS <u>BEFORE</u> THEY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE (AS PER 2.2.)?		
NO PARTICIPANTS WILL BE ASKED TO PARTICIPATE.		
WHO WILL PROVIDE THIS INFORMATION?		
NO PARTICIPANTS WILL BE ASKED TO PARTICIPATE.		
WILL THE INFORMATION PROVIDED BE COMPLETE AND ACCURATE?	YES	No
NO PARTICIPANTS WILL BE ASKED TO PARTICIPATE.		

4 PARTICIPANT GROUP (SAMPLE) & GATEKEEPERS

This section explores how sampling would be done (and why), and whether gatekeepers will be involved. The sampling design identifies any potential risks for harm, offence or distress and other ethical issues around samples from various institutional populations and/or potentially vulnerable groups (see Section 5). Potential risks require justification of methodology, attention to extraordinary precautionary measures, and (legally) multiple layers of consent-negotiation (see Section 6).

EXPLAIN SAMPLE'S CHARACTERISTICS, IDENTIFY THE GROUP/S, SCHOOL/S OR INSTITUTIONS, AND PROVIDE A DETAILED MOTIVATION IN THE SPACE PROVIDED HERE (OR IN AN APPENDIX). IT IS INSUFFICIENT TO SIMPLY SAY "YES" (OR "NO") WITHOUT PROVIDING A DETAILED ENGAGEMENT WITH IMPLICATED ISSUES. ALSO APPEND LETTER(S) OF PERMISSION FROM RELEVANT AUTHORITIES (AS GATEKEEPERS) TO GAIN ACCESS TO SITES OR SPECIAL SAMPLES.

TRACKING No: _____

ARE PARTICULAR CHARACTERISTICS OF ANY KIND REQUIRED IN THE PARTICIPANT GROUP (AGE, CULTURAL DERIVATION, BACKGROUND OR EXPERIENCE, PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS, DISEASE STATES, ETC.)?	Yes	No
EXPLAIN: YES, THAT THEY ARE /OR WERE MEMBERS OF RHODES UNIVERSITY AT THE TIME OF THE PROTEST (STAFF AND STUDENT).		
ARE PARTICIPANTS DRAWN FROM RU STUDENTS (OR STAFF) AT LARGE?	Yes	No
EXPLAIN: THE RESEARCH AIMS TO UNDERSTAND THE RHETORICAL STRATEGIES THAT ARE USED WHEN VARIOUS MEMBERS OF RHODES UNIVERSITY TALK ABOUT RAPE CULTURE. THIS WILL BE DONE BY LOOKING AT ONLINE SOCIAL MEDIA SITES AND TOPLIST MESSAGES FROM UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT. THUS, ALTHOUGH NO PARTICIPANTS WILL BE RECRUITED, THE DATA WILL DRAW ON 'TALK' MADE BY RHODES UNIVERSITY STAFF AND STUDENTS.		
ARE PARTICIPANTS DRAWN FROM SPECIFIC GROUPS OF RU STUDENTS (OR STAFF)?	Yes	No
EXPLAIN: NO, HOWEVER, THE POSITIONS OF THE VARIOUS AUTHORS WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY AND THEIR RELATION TO THE #RUREREFERENCIALIST PROTEST WILL BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION WHEN DOING THE ANALYSIS. THIS IS IN ORDER TO IDENTIFY COMMONALITIES/DISSIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE RHETORICAL STRATEGIES USED AND THE DIFFERING UNIVERSITY POSITION OF THE 'PARTICIPANTS'.		
ARE PARTICIPANTS DRAWN FROM A SCHOOL POPULATION?	Yes	No
EXPLAIN: NO, THE DATA WILL LOOK AT TALK BY UNIVERSITY STAFF AND STUDENTS.		
ARE PARTICIPANTS DRAWN FROM AN INSTITUTIONAL POPULATION? (E.G. HOSPITAL, PRISON, MENTAL INSTITUTION)	Yes	No
EXPLAIN: NO, DATA COLLECTED WILL BE FROM UNIVERSITY MEMBERS. THE MATERIAL COLLECTED IS AVAILABLE THROUGH PUBLIC DOMAIN (SOCIAL MEDIA SITES & TOPLIST MESSAGES). PLEASE SEE SECTION 6 FOR INFORMATION THAT PERTAINS TO THIS.		
WILL ANY RECORDS BE CONSULTED FOR INFORMATION?	Yes	No
EXPLAIN: ONLINE 'RECORDS' WILL BE CONSULTED.		
WILL INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANTS KNOW THEIR RECORDS ARE BEING CONSULTED?	Yes	No
EXPLAIN: No. SOCIAL MEDIA SITES ARE PUBLIC DOMAIN AND MEMBERS ARE AWARE THAT THEIR POSTS ARE VIEWED BY THE PUBLIC, AS THEY POST WITH THE INTENTION OF COMMENTARY. THE TOPLIST MESSAGES ARE CIRCULATED UNIVERSITY WIDE (PUBLICLY) AND MAY BE USED (HOWEVER, PERMISSION SHALL BE SOUGHT FROM THE REGISTRAR – SEE SECTION 6).		
ARE ALL PARTICIPANTS OVER 18 YEARS OF AGE? <i>N.B. Research with minors (children) requires parental/guardian consent.</i>	Yes	No
EXPLAIN: UNIVERSITY AGE POPULATION.		
WILL ANY PART OF THE PROJECT BE CONDUCTED ON PRIVATE PROPERTY (E.G. PARTICIPANTS HOMES, SHOPPING CENTRES)?	Yes	No

TRACKING No: _____

EXPLAIN: N/A		
STATE THE MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS NEEDED	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM
	-	-
JUSTIFY THE NUMBERS IN TERMS OF THE METHODOLOGY CHOSEN AND PROPOSED DATA ANALYSIS REQUIREMENTS (100 words). NO PARTICIPANTS WILL BE ASKED TO PARTICIPATE, THUS THERE IS NO MINIMUM OR MAXIMUM.		

5 RISKS AND BENEFITS OF PROJECT

5.1 ASSESSMENT OF OVERALL LEVEL OF RISK IMPLIED BY STUDY'S DESIGN

The assessment of the level of risk implied by a study's design has implications for the nature/extent of ethical procedures required to protect samples from vulnerable groups. Broadly classify the study's sample(s) in terms of their vulnerability at ONE of the following levels:

- ☐ **YELLOW** – ARCHIVAL, TEXTUAL, DOCUMENTARY ANALYSES THAT DO NOT DIRECTLY SAMPLE HUMAN SUBJECTS AND PRESENT LITTLE RISK OF HARM;
- ☐ **ORANGE** – PROJECTS INVOLVING STANDARD SOCIAL AND/OR PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDIES OF INDIVIDUAL OR GROUPS OF HUMAN SUBJECTS NOT CONSIDERED “VULNERABLE” OR WITH POTENTIAL TO CAUSE DISTRESS, EMBARRASSMENT OF OFFENCE. IN SUCH STUDIES, FAIRLY STANDARD ETHICAL PROCEDURES MIGHT CONTAIN MILD RISKS.
- ☐ **RED** – PROJECTS INVOLVE INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS FROM VULNERABLE OR DANGEROUS POPULATIONS, OF CHILDREN, OR DESIGNS USING DECEPTION, PUBLIC RECRUITMENT OF ‘SENSITIVE’ EXPERIENCES, ETC. THERE IS A HIGH RISK OF INADVERTENT HARM TO HUMAN PARTICIPANTS OR RESEARCHERS DUE TO UNPREDICTABLE CONSEQUENCES OF PSYCHO-SOCIAL LINES OF INQUIRY, RESEARCH INTERVENTION OR PRIOR ADVERSE CIRCUMSTANCES. N.B. SUCH STUDIES REQUIRE SPECIAL PRECAUTIONARY PROCEDURES TO BE CAREFULLY MOTIVATED AND PRACTICALLY SET UP TO PROTECT PARTICIPANTS AND RESEARCHERS IN THE SHORT, MEDIUM AND LONG TERM.

5.2 MOTIVATIONS FOR RISKS AND RISK-PRECAUTIONS

IN THE APPROPRIATE SPACE(S) PROVIDED OR AN ATTACHED APPENDIX, EXPLAIN ANY ETHICAL ISSUES THAT MAY ARISE, AND CAREFULLY DETAIL PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES THAT WILL BE TAKEN. IT IS NOT SUFFICIENT TO SIMPLY SAY “YES” OR “NO” WITHOUT PROVIDING DETAILED MOTIVATIONS.		
IS THERE ANY RISK OF HARM, EMBARRASSMENT OR OFFENCE, HOWEVER SLIGHT OR TEMPORARY, TO THE PARTICIPANT, TO THIRD PARTIES, OR TO THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE?	Yes	No
EXPLAIN: THERE IS A SOME RISK THAT USING ONLINE MATERIAL (E.G. TOPLIST/ SOCIAL MEDIA) WILL CAUSE THE AUTHOR TO BE IDENTIFIABLE. HOWEVER, ALL PRECAUTIONS TO MAKE NAMES AND IDENTIFYING FEATURES UNIDENTIFIABLE WILL BE TAKEN (E.G. NAMES WILL BE BLOCKED OUT). THERE IS ALSO SLIGHT REPUTATIONAL RISK TO RHODES UNIVERSITY SHOULD THE RESEARCH BE PUBLISHED. HOWEVER, THE RESEARCHER WILL STRIVE TO BE SENSITIVE TO THIS RISK AS FAR AS POSSIBLE.		
ARE ALL RISKS REVERSIBLE?	Yes	No
EXPLAIN: RISKS ARE DEEMED TO BE SLIGHT, AND IN THE CASE ANY EMBARRASSMENT OR DISTRESS IS CAUSED THESE ARE SEEN TO BE REVERSIBLE.		

TRACKING No: _____

ARE REMEDIAL MEASURES AVAILABLE, IF RISKS ARE NOT REVERSIBLE?	YES	No
EXPLAIN: NOT APPLICABLE – AS DATA IS PUBLIC DOMAIN.		
ARE ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES AVAILABLE?	YES	No
EXPLAIN: THE AIM OF THIS RESEARCH IS TO UNDERSTAND THE RHETORICAL STRATEGIES USED BY MEMBERS OF RHODES UNIVERSITY WHEN SPEAKING ABOUT RAPE CULTURE, AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF THESE FOR INSTITUTIONAL DISCURSIVE AND SOCIAL PRACTICES IN CHALLENGING RAPE CULTURE. AS A RESULT OF THIS, THE RESEARCH MUST CONSULT THE CURRENT DISCURSIVE TEXT AVAILABLE THROUGH THE VARIOUS MODALITIES MENTIONED ABOVE.		
HAS THE PERSON ADMINISTERING THE PROJECT PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH THE PARTICULAR RISK FACTORS INVOLVED?	YES	No
EXPLAIN: HOWEVER, BOTH SUPERVISORS HAVE EXTENSIVE KNOWLEDGE IN RESEARCH ON SIMILAR TOPICS. THEY ARE AWARE OF THE RISKS INVOLVED, AND HOW TO OVERCOME THESE.		
ARE ANY BENEFITS EXPECTED TO ACCRUE TO THE PARTICIPANT PERSONALLY? (E.G. IMPROVED HEALTH, MENTAL STATE, FINANCIAL, ETC.)	YES	No
EXPLAIN: NO, NOT PERSONALLY, AS THERE ARE NO RECRUITED PARTICIPANTS. HOWEVER, THE RESEARCH RESULTS HOPE TO BE BENEFICIAL TO RHODES UNIVERSITY AND ALL ITS MEMBERS.		
WILL YOU BE USING EQUIPMENT (OR MEASURING INSTRUMENTS) OF ANY SORT?	YES	No
EXPLAIN: NO, AS ALL DATA SOURCES ARE ALREADY IN ELECTRONIC FORM.		
WILL ANY ARTICLE OF PROPERTY, PERSONAL OR CULTURAL, BE COLLECTED IN THE COURSE OF THIS PROJECT?	YES	No
EXPLAIN: NO, IT SHALL NOT.		

6 CONSENT OF PARTICIPANTS

The negotiation of consent of samples of human subjects is often a complex, ongoing process involving multiple layers of consent-negotiation, permission and giving information – particularly so in various institutional and/or potentially vulnerable populations. For example: University samples might require consent from inter alia: the Registrar, the HR Director (if participants are staff members), the Dean of Students, Heads of Departments concerned, wardens of residences concerned, course coordinators and students themselves. School samples might require consent from inter alia: the Department of Education, the Principal or Governing Board, teachers concerned, parents of learners, and learners themselves. Permission from gatekeepers was covered in Section 4. This section focuses on informed consent processes with participants themselves.

IN THE APPROPRIATE SPACE(S) PROVIDED, OR AN ATTACHED APPENDIX, EXPLAIN ETHICAL ISSUES IN DETAIL AND CAREFULLY MOTIVATE THE PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES TO BE TAKEN AND HOW CONSENT WOULD BE NEGOTIATED. IT IS INSUFFICIENT TO SIMPLY ANSWER “YES” TO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS – PROVIDE DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS AND EXPLANATIONS. ALSO APPEND ANY/ALL CONSENT FORMS.		
IS CONSENT TO BE GIVEN IN WRITING?	YES	No
EXPLAIN: TOPLIST MESSAGES ARE CIRCULATED THROUGHOUT THE RHODES UNIVERSITY POPULATION VIA EMAIL, THUS THEY ARE PUBLIC DOMAIN AND CAN BE USED WITHOUT CONSENT. HOWEVER, THE REGISTRAR WILL BE CONTACTED FOR HIS PERMISSION TO USE THESE (SEE APPENDIX 1: LETTER TO THE REGISTRAR FOR TOPLIST MESSAGE USAGE PERMISSION) THE AUTHORS OF ONLINE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS HAVE DONE SO ON PUBLIC DOMAIN, WHICH THEY HAVE ALREADY CONSENTED TO. WHEN SUBSCRIBING TO JOIN SOCIAL MEDIA SITES SUCH AS TWITTER AND FACEBOOK, YOU AGREE TO THE SITES TERMS OF SERVICE. PLEASE SEE ATTACHED APPENDICES: APPENDIX 2: TERMS OF SERVICE FOR FACEBOOK (SEE POINT 4 UNDER HEADING 2: SHARING YOUR CONTENT AND		

TRACKING NO: _____

INFORMATION). FACEBOOK STIPULATES (POINT 7 UNDER HEADING 5) THAT YOU LET IT BE KNOWN TO USERS YOU ARE COLLECTING INFORMATION FROM THEM AND THAT YOU AND NOT FACEBOOK ARE COLLECTING IT, AND FOR WHAT PURPOSES. AS THIS RESEARCH WILL COLLECTING DATA UNDER FACEBOOK GROUPS CREATED FOR RHODES STUDENTS, THE RESEARCHER WILL CONTACT THE ADMINISTRATOR OF EACH GROUP, INFORM THEM OF THE RESEARCH AND REQUEST PERMISSION TO USE THE INFORMATION ON THE GROUPS. THE RESEARCHER WILL THEN MAKE A PUBLIC POST ON THE GROUP, INFORMING GROUP MEMBER THAT INFORMATION FROM THEM MAY BE COLLECTED. THIS GIVES THE OPPORTUNITY FOR MEMBERS TO DELETE ANY POSTS THAT THEY WOULD FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE WITH THE RESEARCHER USING. APPENDIX 3: TWITTER TERMS OF SERVICE (SEE YOUR RIGHTS UNDER POINT 3: CONTENT ON THE SERVICES).		
DO ANY PARTICIPANTS SUFFER FROM A LEGAL DISABILITY PREVENTING THEM FROM GIVING EFFECTIVE INFORMED CONSENT (E.G. UNDER 18 YEARS, DECLARED INSANE BY A COURT OF LAW, UNCONSCIOUS, ETC.)	YES	No
EXPLAIN: NO, THEY ARE ALL UNIVERSITY MEMBERS.		
DO ANY PARTICIPANTS OPERATE IN AN INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT WHICH MAY CAST DOUBT ON THE VOLUNTARY ASPECT OF CONSENT?	YES	No
EXPLAIN: NO, THEY ARE ALL UNIVERSITY MEMBERS.		
WILL PARTICIPANTS RECEIVE REMUNERATION FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION?	YES	No
EXPLAIN: N/A.		

7 PRIVACY, ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY OF DATA

IN THE APPROPRIATE SPACE/S PROVIDED, OR AN ATTACHED APPENDIX, CAREFULLY SPECIFY ASPECTS RELATED TO THE STUDY'S DESIGN THAT MIGHT COMPROMISE PARTICIPANTS' RIGHTS TO PRIVACY AND MOTIVATE FOR PARTICULAR PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES TO BE TAKEN. IT IS INSUFFICIENT TO SIMPLY ANSWER "YES" OR "NO" TO THESE QUESTIONS – PROVIDE A DETAILED MOTIVATION. N.B. THESE ISSUES AND PRECAUTIONS SHOULD BE REFLECTED IN INFORMED CONSENT FORMS.		
ARE PROVISIONS MADE TO PROTECT PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS TO PRIVACY AND ANONYMITY AND TO PRESERVE CONFIDENTIALITY WITH RESPECT TO DATA?	Yes	No
EXPLAIN: ANONYMITY, CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY WILL BE MAINTAINED TO THE BEST OF THE RESEARCHERS' ABILITY. THE COLLECTION OF DATA FROM SOCIAL MEDIA WILL NOT CONTAIN ANY IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PARTICIPANTS – ALL NAMES OR IDENTIFYING FEATURES WILL BE BLOCKED OUT. THE SAME IN THE CASE OF THE TOPLIST MESSAGE POSTS – HOWEVER AS THESE EMAILS ARE DISTRIBUTED UNIVERSITY WIDE, THE AUTHOR OF THESE MESSAGES MAY BE ABLE TO BE IDENTIFIED.		
WILL MECHANICAL METHODS OF OBSERVATION BE USED? (E.G. ONE-WAY MIRRORS, TAPE-RECORDINGS, VIDEOS, WRITING TASKS, ETC.)	Yes	No
EXPLAIN: NO METHODS OF OBSERVATION WILL BE USED.		
WILL PARTICIPANTS' CONSENT TO SUCH MECHANICAL METHODS OF OBSERVATION, RECORDING AND ACTIVITY BE OBTAINED?	Yes	No
EXPLAIN: N/A		
WILL DATA COLLECTED BE STORED IN ANY WAY?	Yes	No
EXPLAIN: ALL DATA WILL BE KEPT BY THE RESEARCHER AND CSSR, IN PASSWORD PROTECTED ELECTRONIC FORM AND IN HARD COPY FORM IN A LOCKED CABINET.		
WILL STORED DATA BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR RE-USE IN ANOTHER RESEARCH STUDY OR PUBLICATION?	Yes	No
EXPLAIN: DATA MIGHT BE USED BY OTHER CSSR RESEARCHERS LATER ON.		

8 FEEDBACK

IN THE APPROPRIATE SPACE/S PROVIDED, OR AN ATTACHED APPENDIX, CAREFULLY EXPLAIN WHAT/WHETHER FEEDBACK (OR DEBRIEFING) WILL BE OFFERED, WHERE, HOW AND WHEN. YOUR ANSWERS SHOULD SPECIFY ASPECTS OF THE DESIGN THAT MIGHT COMPROMISE PARTICIPANTS' RIGHTS TO PRIVACY AND MOTIVATE FOR PARTICULAR PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES TO BE TAKEN. IT IS INSUFFICIENT TO SIMPLY ANSWER "YES" OR "NO" TO THESE QUESTIONS – PROVIDE A DETAILED MOTIVATION. N.B. THESE ISSUES AND PRECAUTIONS SHOULD BE REFLECTED IN INFORMED CONSENT FORMS.		
WILL FEEDBACK BE GIVEN TO PARTICIPANTS?	Yes	No
EXPLAIN: AS THERE ARE NO PARTICIPANTS TO BE RECRUITED, FEEDBACK WILL NOT BEEN GIVEN. HOWEVER A REPORT WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY.		
IF YOU ARE WORKING IN A SCHOOL OR OTHER INSTITUTIONAL SETTING, WILL YOU BE PROVIDING MANAGERS, TEACHERS, PARENTS, SCHOOL AUTHORITIES OR EQUIVALENT A COPY OF YOUR RESULTS AND/OR REPORT?	Yes	No
EXPLAIN: THE REPORT WILL BE MADE WIDELY AVAILABLE TO THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY.		

TRACKING NO: _____

DECLARATION

IF ANY CHANGES ARE MADE TO THE ABOVE ARRANGEMENTS OR PROCEDURES, WE WILL BRING THESE TO THE ATTENTION OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT'S RPERC OR RU ETHICAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE.

THE UNDERSIGNED DECLARE THEMSELVES ACCOUNTABLE TO THE RPERC OR ETHICAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE FOR CONDUCTING THIS RESEARCH PROJECT IN THE MANNER HEREIN DESCRIBED AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE ETHICAL GUIDELINES OF RHODES UNIVERSITY. WE UNDERTAKE TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY TO ADVISE THE RPERC OR ETHICAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE PROMPTLY OF ANY DEVIATIONS, WAIVERS, IRREGULARITIES OR HARM OCCURRING DURING THE CONDUCT OF THIS RESEARCH PROJECT.

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR/RESEARCHER:



SIGNATURES OF OTHER RESEARCHERS INVOLVED IN THIS PROJECT:

SIGNATURE(S) OF PROJECT SUPERVISOR(S):



DATE: 28/07/17

Appendix 1:

LETTER TO THE REGISTRAR FOR TOPLIST MESSAGE USAGE PERMISSION

Professor Adele Moodley

Rhodes University

P.O. Box 94

Grahamstown

6140

RE: PERMISSION TO USE TOPLIST MESSAGES FOR RESEARCH DATA

I am a Master's student at the Critical Studies in Sexuality and Reproduction research unit, working on a project titled: **A rhetorical analysis of rape culture talk at Rhodes University**. The project is being supervised by Dr Malvern Chiweshe and Professor Catriona Macleod. The study aims to examine, through a rhetorical approach, the various rhetorical strategies used by staff and students when talking about rape culture, from the occurrence of the #RUGeneralList protest to present. The research will collect data from social media sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, and would like to make use of Toplist messages that circulated through the University that spoke to the protest, as well as rape culture. Authors of Toplist messages will be anonymised, and no identifying features will be used. However, as these messages get circulated university wide there is a risk that authors of messages may be identifiable.

By conducting this research, and understanding how rape and rape culture are spoken about, it hopes to benefit not only the students, but the University as a whole. This is because universities are uniquely positioned to respond to, challenge, and transform rape culture; as rape culture occurs within institutional and social frameworks that can offer opportunities for change.

Should you be willing to support this research, please would you sign below to indicate your approval and return it to me at megaera23@gmail.com. Please note that this research is being conducted with a view to publish it.

Yours sincerely,

Megaera Jones

G15J8656

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Appendix 2 – Facebook Terms of Service

6/15/2017

Terms of Service

Search Facebook



Megaera Home Find Friends

This agreement was written in English (US). To the extent any translated version of this agreement conflicts with the English version, the English version controls. Please note that Section 16 contains certain changes to the general terms for users outside the United States.

Date of Last Revision: January 30, 2015

Statement of Rights and Responsibilities

This Statement of Rights and Responsibilities ("Statement," "Terms," or "SRR") derives from the Facebook Principles, and is our terms of service that governs our relationship with users and others who interact with Facebook, as well as Facebook brands, products and services, which we call the "Facebook Services" or "Services". By using or accessing the Facebook Services, you agree to this Statement, as updated from time to time in accordance with Section 13 below. Additionally, you will find resources at the end of this document that help you understand how Facebook works.

Because Facebook provides a wide range of Services, we may ask you to review and accept supplemental terms that apply to your interaction with a specific app, product, or service. To the extent those supplemental terms conflict with this SRR, the supplemental terms associated with the app, product, or service govern with respect to your use of such app, product or service to the extent of the conflict.

1. Privacy

Your privacy is very important to us. We designed our Data Policy to make important disclosures about how you can use Facebook to share with others and how we collect and can use your content and information. We encourage you to read the Data Policy, and to use it to help you make informed decisions.

2. Sharing Your Content and Information

You own all of the content and information you post on Facebook, and you can control how it is shared through your privacy and application settings. In addition:

1. For content that is covered by intellectual property rights, like photos and videos (IP content), you specifically give us the following permission, subject to your privacy and application settings: you grant us a non-exclusive, transferable, sub-licensable, royalty-free, worldwide license to use any IP content that you post on or in connection with Facebook (IP License). This IP License ends when you delete your IP content or your account unless your content has been shared with others, and they have not deleted it.
2. When you delete IP content, it is deleted in a manner similar to emptying the recycle bin on a computer. However, you understand that removed content may persist in backup copies for a reasonable period of time (but will not be available to others).
3. When you use an application, the application may ask for your permission to access your content and information as well as content and information that others have shared with you. We require applications to respect your privacy, and your agreement with that application will control how the application can use, store, and transfer that content and information. (To learn more about Platform, including how you can control what information other people may share with applications, read our Data Policy and Platform Page.)
4. When you publish content or information using the Public setting, it means that you are allowing everyone, including people off of Facebook, to access and use that information, and to associate it with you (i.e., your name and profile picture).
5. We always appreciate your feedback or other suggestions about Facebook, but you understand that we may use your feedback or suggestions without any obligation to compensate you for them (just as you have no obligation to offer them).

3. Safety

We do our best to keep Facebook safe, but we cannot guarantee it. We need your help to keep Facebook safe, which includes the following commitments by you:

1. You will not post unauthorized commercial communications (such as spam) on Facebook.
2. You will not collect users' content or information, or otherwise access Facebook, using automated means (such as harvesting bots, robots, spiders, or scrapers) without our prior permission.
3. You will not engage in unlawful multi-level marketing, such as a pyramid scheme, on Facebook.
4. You will not upload viruses or other malicious code.
5. You will not solicit login information or access an account belonging to someone else.
6. You will not bully, intimidate, or harass any user.
7. You will not post content that is hate speech, threatening, or pornographic; incites violence; or contains nudity or graphic or gratuitous violence.
8. You will not develop or operate a third-party application containing alcohol-related, dating or other mature content (including advertisements) without appropriate age-based restrictions.
9. You will not use Facebook to do anything unlawful, misleading, malicious, or discriminatory.
10. You will not do anything that could disable, overburden, or impair the proper working or appearance of Facebook, such as a denial of service attack or interference with page rendering or other Facebook functionality.
11. You will not facilitate or encourage any violations of this Statement or our policies.

4. Registration and Account Security

Facebook users provide their real names and information, and we need your help to keep it that way. Here are some commitments you make to us relating to registering and maintaining the security of your account:

1. You will not provide any false personal information on Facebook, or create an account for anyone other than yourself without permission.
2. You will not create more than one personal account.
3. If we disable your account, you will not create another one without our permission.
4. You will not use your personal timeline primarily for your own commercial gain, and will use a Facebook Page for such purposes.
5. You will not use Facebook if you are under 13.
6. You will not use Facebook if you are a convicted sex offender.
7. You will keep your contact information accurate and up-to-date.
8. You will not share your password (or in the case of developers, your secret key), let anyone else access your account, or do anything else that might jeopardize the security of your account.
9. You will not transfer your account (including any Page or application you administer) to anyone without first getting our written permission.
10. If you select a username or similar identifier for your account or Page, we reserve the right to remove or reclaim it if we believe it is appropriate (such as when a trademark owner complains about a username that does not closely relate to a user's actual name).

5. Protecting Other People's Rights

We respect other people's rights, and expect you to do the same.

1. You will not post content or take any action on Facebook that infringes or violates someone else's rights or otherwise violates the law.
2. We can remove any content or information you post on Facebook if we believe that it violates this Statement or our policies.
3. We provide you with tools to help you protect your intellectual property rights. To learn more, visit our How to Report page.
4. If we remove your content for infringing someone else's copyright, and you believe we removed it by mistake, we will

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<https://www.facebook.com/legal/terms>

1/3

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7. If you collect information from users, you will: obtain their consent, make it clear you (and not Facebook) are the one collecting their information, and post a privacy policy explaining what information you collect and how you will use it.
8. You will not post anyone's identification documents or sensitive financial information on Facebook.
9. You will not tag users or send email invitations to non-users without their consent. Facebook offers social reporting tools to enable users to provide feedback about tagging.

6. Mobile and Other Devices

1. We currently provide our mobile services for free, but please be aware that your carrier's normal rates and fees, such as text messaging and data charges, will still apply.
2. In the event you change or deactivate your mobile telephone number, you will update your account information on Facebook within 48 hours to ensure that your messages are not sent to the person who acquires your old number.
3. You provide consent and all rights necessary to enable users to sync (including through an application) their devices with any information that is visible to them on Facebook.

7. Payments

If you make a payment on Facebook, you agree to our [Payments Terms](#) unless it is stated that other terms apply.

8. Special Provisions Applicable to Developers/Operators of Applications and Websites

If you are a developer or operator of a Platform application or website or if you use Social Plugins, you must comply with the [Facebook Platform Policy](#).

9. About Advertisements and Other Commercial Content Served or Enhanced by Facebook

- Our goal is to deliver advertising and other commercial or sponsored content that is valuable to our users and advertisers. In order to help us do that, you agree to the following:
1. You give us permission to use your name, profile picture, content, and information in connection with commercial, sponsored, or related content (such as a brand you like) served or enhanced by us. This means, for example, that you permit a business or other entity to pay us to display your name and/or profile picture with your content or information, without any compensation to you. If you have selected a specific audience for your content or information, we will respect your choice when we use it.
 2. We do not give your content or information to advertisers without your consent.
 3. You understand that we may not always identify paid services and communications as such.

10. Special Provisions Applicable to Advertisers

If you use our self-service advertising creation interfaces for creation, submission and/or delivery of any advertising or other commercial or sponsored activity or content (collectively, the "Self-Serve Ad Interfaces"), you agree to our [Self-Serve Ad Terms](#). In addition, your advertising or other commercial or sponsored activity or content placed on Facebook or our publisher network will comply with our [Advertising Policies](#).

11. Special Provisions Applicable to Pages

If you create or administer a Page on Facebook, or run a promotion or an offer from your Page, you agree to our [Pages Terms](#).

12. Special Provisions Applicable to Software

1. If you download or use our software, such as a stand-alone software product, an app, or a browser plugin, you agree that from time to time, the software may download and install upgrades, updates and additional features from us in order to improve, enhance, and further develop the software.
2. You will not modify, create derivative works of, decompile, or otherwise attempt to extract source code from us, unless you are expressly permitted to do so under an open source license, or we give you express written permission.

13. Amendments

1. We'll notify you before we make changes to these terms and give you the opportunity to review and comment on the revised terms before continuing to use our Services.
2. If we make changes to policies, guidelines or other terms referenced in or incorporated by this Statement, we may provide notice on the [Site Governance Page](#).
3. Your continued use of the Facebook Services, following notice of the changes to our terms, policies or guidelines, constitutes your acceptance of our amended terms, policies or guidelines.

14. Termination

If you violate the letter or spirit of this Statement, or otherwise create risk or possible legal exposure for us, we can stop providing all or part of Facebook to you. We will notify you by email or at the next time you attempt to access your account. You may also delete your account or disable your application at any time. In all such cases, this Statement shall terminate, but the following provisions will still apply: 2.2, 2.4, 3-5, 9.3, and 14-18.

15. Disputes

1. You will resolve any claim, cause of action or dispute (claim) you have with us arising out of or relating to this Statement or Facebook exclusively in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California or a state court located in San Mateo County, and you agree to submit to the personal jurisdiction of such courts for the purpose of litigating all such claims. The laws of the State of California will govern this Statement, as well as any claim that might arise between you and us, without regard to conflict of law provisions.
2. If anyone brings a claim against us related to your actions, content or information on Facebook, you will indemnify and hold us harmless from and against all damages, losses, and expenses of any kind (including reasonable legal fees and costs) related to such claim. Although we provide rules for user conduct, we do not control or direct users' actions on Facebook and are not responsible for the content or information users transmit or share on Facebook. We are not responsible for any offensive, inappropriate, obscene, unlawful or otherwise objectionable content or information you may encounter on Facebook. We are not responsible for the conduct, whether online or offline, of any user of Facebook.
3. WE TRY TO KEEP FACEBOOK UP, BUG-FREE, AND SAFE, BUT YOU USE IT AT YOUR OWN RISK. WE ARE PROVIDING FACEBOOK AS IS WITHOUT ANY EXPRESS OR IMPLIED WARRANTIES INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, IMPLIED WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE, AND NON-INFRINGEMENT. WE DO NOT GUARANTEE THAT FACEBOOK WILL ALWAYS BE SAFE, SECURE OR ERROR-FREE OR THAT FACEBOOK WILL ALWAYS FUNCTION WITHOUT DISRUPTIONS, DELAYS OR IMPERFECTIONS. FACEBOOK IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACTIONS, CONTENT, INFORMATION, OR DATA OF THIRD PARTIES, AND YOU RELEASE US, OUR DIRECTORS, OFFICERS, EMPLOYEES, AND AGENTS FROM ANY CLAIMS AND DAMAGES, KNOWN AND UNKNOWN, ARISING OUT OF OR IN ANY WAY CONNECTED WITH ANY CLAIM YOU

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PROFITS OR OTHER CONSEQUENTIAL, SPECIAL, INDIRECT, OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES ARISING OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THIS STATEMENT OR FACEBOOK, EVEN IF WE HAVE BEEN ADVISED OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGES. OUR AGGREGATE LIABILITY ARISING OUT OF THIS STATEMENT OR FACEBOOK WILL NOT EXCEED THE GREATER OF ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$100) OR THE AMOUNT YOU HAVE PAID US IN THE PAST TWELVE MONTHS. APPLICABLE LAW MAY NOT ALLOW THE LIMITATION OR EXCLUSION OF LIABILITY OR INCIDENTAL OR CONSEQUENTIAL DAMAGES, SO THE ABOVE LIMITATION OR EXCLUSION MAY NOT APPLY TO YOU. IN SUCH CASES, FACEBOOK'S LIABILITY WILL BE LIMITED TO THE FULLEST EXTENT PERMITTED BY APPLICABLE LAW.

16. Special Provisions Applicable to Users Outside the United States

We strive to create a global community with consistent standards for everyone, but we also strive to respect local laws. The following provisions apply to users and non-users who interact with Facebook outside the United States:

1. You consent to having your personal data transferred to and processed in the United States.
2. If you are located in a country embargoed by the United States, or are on the U.S. Treasury Department's list of Specially Designated Nationals you will not engage in commercial activities on Facebook (such as advertising or payments) or operate a Platform application or website. You will not use Facebook if you are prohibited from receiving products, services, or software originating from the United States.
3. Certain specific terms that apply only for German users are available [here](#).

17. Definitions

1. By "Facebook" or "Facebook Services" we mean the features and services we make available, including through (a) our website at www.facebook.com and any other Facebook branded or co-branded websites (including sub-domains, international versions, widgets, and mobile versions); (b) our Platform; (c) social plugins such as the Like button, the Share button and other similar offerings; and (d) other media, brands, products, services, software (such as a toolbar), devices, or networks now existing or later developed. Facebook reserves the right to designate, in its sole discretion, that certain of our brands, products, or services are governed by separate terms and not this SRR.
2. By "Platform" we mean a set of APIs and services (such as content) that enable others, including application developers and website operators, to retrieve data from Facebook or provide data to us.
3. By "information" we mean facts and other information about you, including actions taken by users and non-users who interact with Facebook.
4. By "content" we mean anything you or other users post, provide or share using Facebook Services.
5. By "data" or "user data" or "user's data" we mean any data, including a user's content or information that you or third parties can retrieve from Facebook or provide to Facebook through Platform.
6. By "post" we mean post on Facebook or otherwise make available by using Facebook.
7. By "use" we mean use, run, copy, publicly perform or display, distribute, modify, translate, and create derivative works of.
8. By "application" we mean any application or website that uses or accesses Platform, as well as anything else that receives or has received data from us. If you no longer access Platform but have not deleted all data from us, the term application will apply until you delete the data.
9. By "Trademarks" we mean the list of trademarks provided [here](#).

18. Other

1. If you are a resident of or have your principal place of business in the US or Canada, this Statement is an agreement between you and Facebook, Inc. Otherwise, this Statement is an agreement between you and Facebook Ireland Limited. References to "us," "we," and "our" mean either Facebook, Inc. or Facebook Ireland Limited, as appropriate.
2. This Statement makes up the entire agreement between the parties regarding Facebook, and supersedes any prior agreements.
3. If any portion of this Statement is found to be unenforceable, the remaining portion will remain in full force and effect.
4. If we fail to enforce any of this Statement, it will not be considered a waiver.
5. Any amendment to or waiver of this Statement must be made in writing and signed by us.
6. You will not transfer any of your rights or obligations under this Statement to anyone else without our consent.
7. All of our rights and obligations under this Statement are freely assignable by us in connection with a merger, acquisition, or sale of assets, or by operation of law or otherwise.
8. Nothing in this Statement shall prevent us from complying with the law.
9. This Statement does not confer any third party beneficiary rights.
10. We reserve all rights not expressly granted to you.
11. You will comply with all applicable laws when using or accessing Facebook.

By using or accessing Facebook Services, you agree that we can collect and use such content and information in accordance with the [Data Policy](#) as amended from time to time. You may also want to review the following documents, which provide additional information about your use of Facebook:

- [Payment Terms](#): These additional terms apply to all payments made on or through Facebook, unless it is stated that other terms apply.
- [Platform Page](#): This page helps you better understand what happens when you add a third-party application or use Facebook Connect, including how they may access and use your data.
- [Facebook Platform Policies](#): These guidelines outline the policies that apply to applications, including Connect sites.
- [Advertising Policies](#): These guidelines outline the policies that apply to advertisements placed on Facebook.
- [Self-Serve Ad Terms](#): These terms apply when you use the Self-Serve Ad interfaces to create, submit, or deliver any advertising or other commercial or sponsored activity or content.
- [Promotions Guidelines](#): These guidelines outline the policies that apply if you offer contests, sweepstakes, and other types of promotions on Facebook.
- [Facebook Brand Resources](#): These guidelines outline the policies that apply to use of Facebook trademarks, logos and screenshots.
- [How to Report Claims of Intellectual Property Infringement](#)
- [Pages Terms](#): These guidelines apply to your use of Facebook Pages.
- [Community Standards](#): These guidelines outline our expectations regarding the content you post to Facebook and your activity on Facebook.

To access the Statement of Rights and Responsibilities in several different languages, change the language setting for your Facebook session by clicking on the language link in the left corner of most pages. If the Statement is not available in the language you select, we will default to the English version.

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Appendix 3 – Twitter Terms of Service

6/16/2017

Terms of Service | Twitter



Language: English ▼ Sign in

2. Privacy

3. Content on the Services

4. Using the Services

5. Disclaimers and Limitations of Liability

6. General

1. Who May Use the Services

You may use the Services only if you agree to form a binding contract with Twitter and are not a person barred from receiving services under the laws of the applicable jurisdiction. If you are accepting these Terms and using the Services on behalf of a company, organization, government, or other legal entity, you represent and warrant that you are authorized to do so.

2. Privacy

Our Privacy Policy (<https://www.twitter.com/privacy>) describes how we handle the information you provide to us when you use our Services. You understand that through your use of the Services you consent to the collection and use (as set forth in the Privacy Policy) of this information, including the transfer of this information to the United States, Ireland, and/or other countries for storage, processing and use by Twitter and its affiliates.

3. Content on the Services

You are responsible for your use of the Services and for any Content you provide, including compliance with applicable laws, rules, and regulations. You should only provide Content that you are comfortable sharing with others.

Any use or reliance on any Content or materials posted via the Services or obtained by you through the Services is at your own risk. We do not endorse, support, represent or guarantee the completeness, truthfulness, accuracy, or reliability of any Content or communications posted via the Services or endorse any opinions expressed via the Services. You understand that by using the Services, you may be exposed to Content that might be offensive, harmful, inaccurate or otherwise inappropriate, or in some cases, postings that have been mislabeled or are otherwise deceptive. All Content is the sole responsibility of the person who originated such Content. We may not monitor or control the Content posted via the Services and, we cannot take responsibility for such Content.

Twitter respects the intellectual property rights of others and expects users of the Services to do the same. We reserve the right to remove Content alleged to be infringing without prior notice, at our sole



(<https://support.twitter.com/articles/15795>). If you believe that your Content has been copied in a way that constitutes copyright infringement, please report this by visiting our Copyright reporting form (<https://support.twitter.com/forms/dmca>) or contacting our designated copyright agent at:

Twitter, Inc.
Attn: Copyright Agent
1355 Market Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94103
Reports: <https://support.twitter.com/forms/dmca>
Email: copyright@twitter.com

Your Rights

You retain your rights to any Content you submit, post or display on or through the Services. What's yours is yours — you own your Content (and your photos and videos are part of the Content).

By submitting, posting or displaying Content on or through the Services, you grant us a worldwide, non-exclusive, royalty-free license (with the right to sublicense) to use, copy, reproduce, process, adapt, modify, publish, transmit, display and distribute such Content in any and all media or distribution methods (now known or later developed). This license authorizes us to make your Content available to the rest of the world and to let others do the same. You agree that this license includes the right for Twitter to provide, promote, and improve the Services and to make Content submitted to or through the Services available to other companies, organizations or individuals for the syndication, broadcast, distribution, promotion or publication of such Content on other media and services, subject to our terms and conditions for such Content use. Such additional uses by Twitter, or other companies, organizations or individuals, may be made with no compensation paid to you with respect to the Content that you submit, post, transmit or otherwise make available through the Services.

Twitter has an evolving set of rules for how ecosystem partners can interact with your Content on the Services. These rules exist to enable an open ecosystem with your rights in mind. You understand that we may modify or adapt your Content as it is distributed, syndicated, published, or broadcast by us and our partners and/or make changes to your Content in order to adapt the Content to different media. You represent and warrant that you have all the rights, power and authority necessary to grant the rights granted herein to any Content that you submit.

4. Using the Services

Please review the Twitter Rules, which are part of the User Agreement and outline what is prohibited on the Services. You may use the Services only in compliance with these Terms and all applicable laws, rules and regulations.

Our Services evolve constantly. As such, the Services may change from time to time, at our discretion. We may stop (permanently or temporarily) providing the Services or any features within the Services to you or to users generally. We also retain the right to create limits on use and storage at our sole discretion at



In consideration for Twitter granting you access to and use of the Services, you agree that Twitter and its third-party providers and partners may place advertising on the Services or in connection with the display of Content or information from the Services whether submitted by you or others. You also agree not to misuse our Services, for example, by interfering with them or accessing them using a method other than the interface and the instructions that we provide. You may not do any of the following while accessing or using the Services: (i) access, tamper with, or use non-public areas of the Services, Twitter's computer systems, or the technical delivery systems of Twitter's providers; (ii) probe, scan, or test the vulnerability of any system or network or breach or circumvent any security or authentication measures; (iii) access or search or attempt to access or search the Services by any means (automated or otherwise) other than through our currently available, published interfaces that are provided by Twitter (and only pursuant to the applicable terms and conditions), unless you have been specifically allowed to do so in a separate agreement with Twitter (NOTE: crawling the Services is permissible if done in accordance with the provisions of the robots.txt file, however, scraping the Services without the prior consent of Twitter is expressly prohibited); (iv) forge any TCP/IP packet header or any part of the header information in any email or posting, or in any way use the Services to send altered, deceptive or false source-identifying information; or (v) interfere with, or disrupt, (or attempt to do so), the access of any user, host or network, including, without limitation, sending a virus, overloading, flooding, spamming, mail-bombing the Services, or by scripting the creation of Content in such a manner as to interfere with or create an undue burden on the Services. We also reserve the right to access, read, preserve, and disclose any information as we reasonably believe is necessary to (i) satisfy any applicable law, regulation, legal process or governmental request, (ii) enforce the Terms, including investigation of potential violations hereof, (iii) detect, prevent, or otherwise address fraud, security or technical issues, (iv) respond to user support requests, or (v) protect the rights, property or safety of Twitter, its users and the public. Twitter does not disclose personally-identifying information to third parties except in accordance with our Privacy Policy.

If you use developer features of the Services, including but not limited to Twitter for Websites (<https://dev.twitter.com/web/overview>), Twitter Cards (<https://dev.twitter.com/cards/overview>), Public API (<https://dev.twitter.com/streaming/public>), or Sign in with Twitter (<https://dev.twitter.com/web/sign-in>), you agree to our Developer Agreement (<https://dev.twitter.com/overview/terms/agreement>) and Developer Policy (<https://dev.twitter.com/overview/terms/policy>). If you want to reproduce, modify, create derivative works, distribute, sell, transfer, publicly display, publicly perform, transmit, or otherwise use the Services or Content on the Services, you must use the interfaces and instructions we provide, except as permitted through the Twitter Services, these Terms, or the terms provided on dev.twitter.com.

If you use advertising features of the Services, you must agree to our Twitter Master Services Agreement (<https://ads.twitter.com/terms>).

If you use commerce features of the Services that require credit or debit card information, such as our Buy Now feature, you agree to our Twitter Commerce Terms (<https://support.twitter.com/articles/20171943>).

Your Account



for any loss or damage arising from your failure to comply with the above.

You can control most communications from the Services. We may need to provide you with certain communications, such as service announcements and administrative messages. These communications are considered part of the Services and your account, and you may not be able to opt-out from receiving them. If you added your phone number to your account and you later change or deactivate that phone number, you must update your account information to help prevent us from communicating with anyone who acquires your old number.

Your License to Use the Services

Twitter gives you a personal, worldwide, royalty-free, non-assignable and non-exclusive license to use the software provided to you as part of the Services. This license has the sole purpose of enabling you to use and enjoy the benefit of the Services as provided by Twitter, in the manner permitted by these Terms.

The Services are protected by copyright, trademark, and other laws of both the United States and foreign countries. Nothing in the Terms gives you a right to use the Twitter name or any of the Twitter trademarks, logos, domain names, and other distinctive brand features. All right, title, and interest in and to the Services (excluding Content provided by users) are and will remain the exclusive property of Twitter and its licensors. Any feedback, comments, or suggestions you may provide regarding Twitter, or the Services is entirely voluntary and we will be free to use such feedback, comments or suggestions as we see fit and without any obligation to you.

Ending These Terms

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We may revise these Terms from time to time. The changes will not be retroactive, and the most current version of the Terms, which will always be at twitter.com/tos, will govern our relationship with you. We will try to notify you of material revisions, for example via a service notification or an email to the email associated with your account. By continuing to access or use the Services after those revisions become effective, you agree to be bound by the revised Terms.

In the event that any provision of these Terms is held to be invalid or unenforceable, then that provision will be limited or eliminated to the minimum extent necessary, and the remaining provisions of these Terms will remain in full force and effect. Twitter's failure to enforce any right or provision of these Terms will not be deemed a waiver of such right or provision.

These Terms are an agreement between you and Twitter International Company, an Irish company with its registered office at The Academy, 42 Pearse Street, Dublin 2, Ireland. If you have any questions about these Terms, please contact us.

Appendix 7: External reader's report

Reading:

ADDRESSING RAPE CULTURE AT RHODES UNIVERSITY: A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS

by: Megaera Jones

Report:

After reading the body of text carefully, and also briefly consulting the appendices, I have no hesitation in declaring the research by Miss M. Jones balanced and fair to all parties involved. The research shows no prejudice against either side (protestors or institution) and is balanced in the attention given to arguments from both sides. The sampling of data was also comprehensive, ultimately being representative of the larger corpus of texts (appendices). Conclusions arrived at appeared logically derived from the data.

Thank you

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