

Using a Feminist Tongue:
Exploring the Speech Genre of Sexual Violence
Prevention within University Documents

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Declaration

I hereby declare that, except where it is otherwise acknowledged in the text, this thesis represents my own original work.

All versions of the submitted thesis (regardless of submission type) are identical.

Materials from two 4000-level courses have been recycled in this thesis. From the course *Sociology Honours Methods Seminar (SOCY4010)*, edited sections of *Assessment 2: Interview/Statistics/Document analysis* submitted under the title *HS_Statistics&Documents Analysis* have been included in the section titled *Assembling the Puzzle* and from *Assessment 3: Research Essay*, submitted under the title *HS_SOCY4010 Methods Essay* has been included in the sections titled *Assembling the Puzzle* and *The Politics of Documentation*. From the course *Contemporary Anthropological Theory (ANTH4011)*, edited sections of *Final Theory Paper*, submitted under the title *HS ANTH4011 Theory Paper* have been included in three sections: *Assembling the Puzzle*, *The Politics of Documentation* and *Speech Genres*.

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Abstract

As posited by the Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin, language has a “taste”. Words are imbued with the “taste” of characteristics and values from past voices and understandings. In this thesis, I introduce the concept of a feminist tongue to interrogate this dynamic nature of language. This feminist tongue works not only to uncover “taste” in words but to develop a linguistic repertoire to describe the taste. With this sense, I explore the “taste” of language in sexual violence prevention documents authored by the Australian National University (ANU). While the type of education and research that is valued by universities has been widely critiqued in the context of the neoliberal turn in higher education, less focus has been given to an institution’s equity work. Through an analysis of the ‘entrepreneurial self’, I come to question the intentions behind the use of certain language choices in these policy documents. And further, how these ways of talking and knowing have emerged and are actively sustained by the university. The results from *Change the Course: National Report on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment at Australian Universities* (2017) and the National Student Safety Survey (2021) have been transformative for the way Australian universities, in particular the ANU, have recently changed their response to sexual violence prevention. In 2019, the ANU released its first Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy. As such, performing “doing well” in this area, through the language and production of equity documents has become the leading concern under the “carelessness of the entrepreneurial university”. By analysing and comparing documents authored by ANU management and other campus groups, predominantly the ANU Women’s Department, I establish the development of an ANU speech genre within the framework of Bakhtinian understandings of dialogue. This entrepreneurial speech genre has implications for the way that sexual violence prevention is *allowed* to be conceived and acted upon within the institution. The method in this project has therefore been about “tasting”, and importantly, finding the taste in words that are presented as being without “taste”.

List of Abbreviations

Acronym	Description
ANU	Australian National University
WD	Women's Department
NSSS	National Student Safety Survey
AHRC	Australian Human Rights Commission
SVPS	Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy
SASH	Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment
AS	Athena SWAN
ANUSA	Australian National University Student Association

Introduction

“All words have the ‘taste’ of a profession, a genre, a tendency, a party, a particular work, a particular person, a generation, an age group, the day and hour. Each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life”
(Bakhtin, 1981:293)

Language is a social process. According to Bakhtin (1981:293) “There are no neutral words...” instead he posits that “all words... are populated by intentions.”. Language then, is not simply a neutral means of communication, but rather is a set of socially embedded practices. In this way, Bakhtin regards language as having a “taste”. Words are imbued with the “taste” of characteristics and values from past voices and understandings. Simultaneously, this “taste” then actively shapes the social world that consumes it, and which then continues to carve it into the future. In the opening quote above, Bakhtin illustrates how language, culture and social relations are thoroughly intertwined. His work has informed the practices of many disciplines including that of linguistic anthropology, which contends, that as these aspects are so interwoven they must be studied in relation to one another. Many linguistic anthropologists, therefore, have explored how certain discourses, or shared ways of knowing, that are viewed as common sense and which are taken for granted as a part of social realities, come to underpin language use. Language both presupposes and works to bring about ways of being in the world. This dynamic nature of language has been of interest to scholars across disciplines. How can we identify the ways that language becomes a tool with which to describe, evaluate and reproduce, and how might these processes in language contribute to ongoing structures of inequality?

A Feminist Tongue

In *Living a Feminist Life* (2017) and further expanded upon in her book *Complaint!* (2021), Sara Ahmed introduces the idea of applying a “feminist ear” in order to better perceive structural inequalities within an institution. “To hear with a feminist ear is to hear who is not heard” (Ahmed, 2021:3). In other words, a sense cultivated to better understand the ways that some voices are heard, some are ignored or some that are not spoken at all. Within my thesis, I extend Ahmed’s metaphor of a feminist sense of hearing, to include a feminist sense of taste, or a “feminist tongue”. A tongue that works

to “taste” the hidden socially charged aspects and life of language. In most scholarly works, the human senses are often judged comparatively (Mol, 2021). There is an ingrained mistrust of smell and taste, doubt about touch but praise for sight and hearing as sources for providing information about the outside world (Ibid). What then, as Mol (2021:3) questions, could we do “...if our theoretical repertoires were to take inspiration not from thinking but from eating?”. With a feminist tongue, therefore, I ask what might it mean to use taste to think about language. To be presented with a plate of words that are intended to be neutral and lacking in taste, but which have been cooked and created in the same kitchen as any other dish of words. You cannot escape taste. And that is the thing about taste: it is an individual sensation that must then be described to another. It is not something that can be seen directly or experienced exactly the same as another. And importantly, although you might not know what the flavour is, it will still influence your palate for future dishes. Most can taste but the right linguistic repertoire is needed in order to be attuned to distinguishing and describing the distinct and nuanced flavours. A feminist tongue is then not only a quest to uncover the taste but to articulate it. In the case of this thesis, the tastes of words concealed by the appearance of being ‘bland’ and neutral.

If we are taught to assume that what we read is objective and uncoloured by intentions – somehow escaped having “taste” – then to possess a feminist tongue is an achievement. In order to be able to see past an institution’s naturalised ways of talking and knowing, you must first identify the “tastes” of these words. A feminist tongue picks up on what is being said, the intentions that are blocked by how what is being said has come to be naturalised. To acquire a feminist tongue is to “taste” those intentions in words, ways of being, and ways of doing. In this way, like Ahmed’s feminist ear, a feminist tongue may then be understood as an institutional tactic. This tongue can also be used as a research method. My method in this project has therefore been about “tasting”. It was a feminist tongue that led me here by what I came to taste in the words of those whom it is assumed to be “taste-less”.

I was inspired to pursue my project in this way after reading the work of the Australian National University’s (ANU) 2021-2022 Women’s Department Officer. An autonomous department of the ANU Student Association (ANUSA), the Women’s Department’s

(WD) aim is to provide advocacy, support and representation to women, non-binary, transgender and gender-diverse students. In August of 2021, the WD and ANUSA released their *Broken Promises* report in which they detailed 28 “broken promises” made by the ANU in regard to the prevention of sexual assault and sexual harassment on the university’s campus. Ten months later, the ANU published its response to this report. This reply was met with frustration by the WD, with the Women’s Officer choosing to frame her response to the ANU letter from the position of a university lecturer “marking” an assignment submitted late. In this satirically charged piece of advocacy work, she highlighted sections of the ANU response, focusing on spelling mistakes and particular phrases and words, with comments in the margins. In this way, she used her feminist tongue. The Women’s Officer taking the time to interrogate the words of the ANU, demonstrated to me the importance of questioning how things are being said, what is not being said and what is *actually* being said in documents authored by institutions.

The fact that I was able to conduct this research by examining equity documents related to sexual violence prevention at the ANU in the first place, further added to my interest in interrogating the language within them. The existence of such documents is a recent development by the university. As an institution which I attend, one that professes itself as a community of innovation and the place that encouraged me to develop the very skills necessary to conduct this project, the question of *why only now* struck me very deeply. This project then follows a long history of individuals who have also come to inquire about the politics of documentation. In particular, the efforts of Sara Ahmed, whose work has been foundational for this thesis. As she has noted: “You can change policies without changing anything. You can change policies in order not to change anything” (Ahmed, 2016). The key focus of this thesis, therefore, has come to interrogate what is the language in these “changed policies”.

Thus, I turn to the central question of this thesis:

How can a feminist tongue sense the taste of language choices in equity documents responding to “sexual violence”, that reflect and replicate discourses of the university?

This thesis adds to a body of scholarship responding to matters of contention arising from the neoliberal turn in higher education. By implementing a linguistic anthropological approach, it intends to provide a novel examination of the effects of neoliberal ideologies, such as the ‘entrepreneurial self’, on the actions of universities by focusing on their equity work. And while this novel interrogation is in part the quest of this thesis, the project is primarily one about language. It is the language in these types of documents, however, that lends itself to a rich analysis of the “taste” of language. I come to question the intentions behind the use of certain language choices in these policy documents. And further, how these ways of talking and knowing have emerged and are actively sustained by the university. With these questions, I seek to navigate the socially charged life of language and understand the implications that this might have on the way that equity work is able to be conceived and acted upon in an institutional setting.

Chapter Outline

The argument of this thesis will follow in four chapters. As linguistic anthropology asserts that language must be understood in the social contexts in which it is used, the first chapter is intended as a foundation for which to understand the linguistic analysis of the ANU equity documents. The following three chapters then decipher the socially charged aspects of language; the tastes of individual lexical choices, the actions of documents and the development of speech genres. In each chapter, I use established theoretical understandings and my own textual analysis to illustrate how language is far more than a neutral means of communication.

In Chapter 1, I begin by assembling the puzzle of this thesis. I examine the advocacy and awareness of sexual assault and sexual harassment at the ANU, the recent attempts to understand and measure the prevalence of sexual violence at Australian universities, and the neoliberal turn in higher education. By doing so, I explore the question of *why now* and situate my linguistic analysis of ANU equity documents. In the process, I will establish why it is important to question the language within the policy works of institutions and why the ANU, in particular, is a useful ‘case study’ in which to examine the language of universities.

In Chapter 2, through conversation between Bakhtin's (1981) concepts of dialogue and Wierzbicka's (1997; 2006; 2010) theory of cultural keywords, I argue that the language used in the ANU *Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy 2019-2026 (SVPS)* reflects the institution's desire to enact the 'entrepreneurial self', guided by anglophone sensibilities towards empiricism and detached rationality. Drawing on Wierzbicka's (2010) analysis of *evidence* and *sense* as cultural keywords, I argue that without an interrogation of the "taste" of such words, it is hard to perceive how these words are not neutral and culture free analytical tools but instead used intentionally by institutions. From this understanding, I then examine the use of the lexical choices *drivers*, *evidence-based change*, *vision* and *build* that appear in the ANU *SVPS*.

Following this exploration of lexical choices, in Chapter 3 I argue for the need to expand document analysis from purely focusing on content, to also examine the actions of the document itself. The equity documents that contain these lexical choices are themselves intended to serve a performative function for the ANU. Through employing Blackmore's (2020) "Carelessness of the Entrepreneurial University" and Ahmed's (2007; 2021) analysis of the politics of documentation, I consider documents as 'things' that circulate within institutions which we must follow around. By discussing what is considered a 'good' document, I demonstrate how these equity documents come to 'act' for universities as a form of institutional performance and pride.

The content discussed in Chapter 2, and the social actions in Chapter 3, are then taken together in the final chapter within the framework of Bakhtin's concept of a speech genre. In continuing to draw upon Bakhtinian models of dialogue, I argue that a 'speech genre' embeds in its language usage particular social values, worldviews and intentionalities. In comparing documents written by not only the ANU but other interested parties, I argue that the different content, linguistic style, phraseology and compositional structure of documents come to represent a distinct *genre*. Drawing upon Eckert and McConnell-Ginet's (1992) theory of a 'community of practice', I then highlight that these speech genres and thus ways of talking and knowing are self-emergent through the use of language and social act of documentation.

Ultimately, this thesis explores the “taste” of language. By way of a gastronomic understanding of language choices, I will provide the linguistic repertoire to talk about their “tastes”, and further, show how these words are both reflective of particular flavours and actively shaping the future tastes of language. Importantly, what does a taste in language mean for ways of talking and knowing? With a feminist tongue, I draw attention to the implications that language and speech genre have on how sexual violence prevention is *allowed* to be conceived and acted upon within the university.

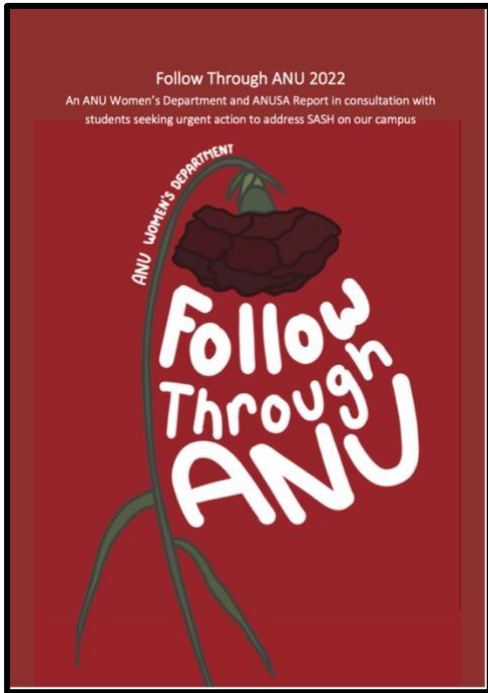


Image 1: The cover of Follow Through ANU, written by the ANU Women's Department featuring student art.

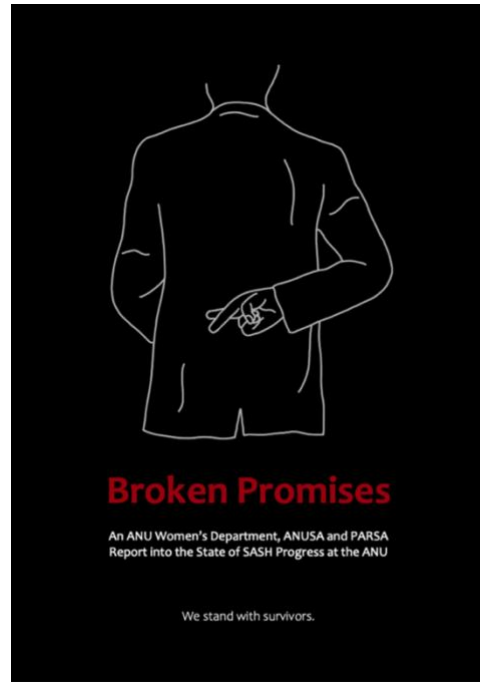


Image 2: The cover of the Broken Promises Report, written by the ANU Women's Department featuring student art

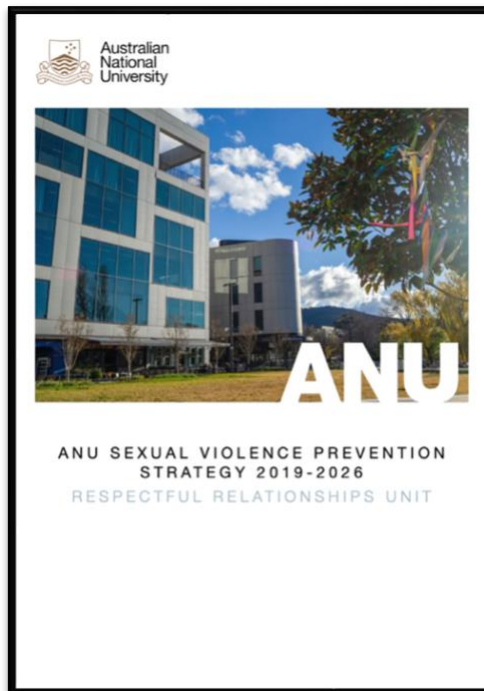


Image 3: The cover of the ANU Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy, written by the ANU Respectful Relationships Unit featuring an image of Marie Rey in the Kambri precinct

Chapter 1

Assembling the puzzle

This introductory chapter contextualises the linguistic analysis of ANU documents by examining the effects of the neoliberal turn in higher education on a university's equity work, the history of activism and awareness of sexual violence at the ANU and the recent efforts to measure the nature and prevalence of sexual assault and sexual harassment at Australian universities. This contextualisation raises the puzzle to be explored of *why now* and *how*. *Why* has the ANU only recently created its sexual violence prevention documents, and as such, *how* have the factors that have come into focus influenced the language choices in these documents? Why have these language choices been given higher prestige and come to be perceived as more suitable than other ways of thinking and knowing? In preparing to use a feminist tongue, this chapter considers what are the ingredients that give words the "taste" of neoliberalism. In using the term 'neoliberal', this thesis encompasses a broad range of orientations, beyond its standard theoretical assumptions of free market competition. The language within these documents has been created and contested through the universities favouring of neoliberal discourses, in particular the ideals associated with the 'entrepreneurial self'. Therefore, in order to address the puzzle of this thesis, this chapter establishes an arena within which to understand the dynamics and outcomes of the neoliberal university and the motivations behind the creation of its equity work.

1.1 Sexual assault and sexual harassment (SASH) at Australian universities

Sexual violence is a notoriously difficult crime to accurately measure (Lohr, 2019). The reluctance of survivors to report abuse, and the sensitive nature of question wording, make it challenging to gain a clear picture of the problem (Lohr, 2019). While a central feature of many anthropological feminist writings stress that rape has its basis in society and culture instead of natural biological functions, it is still often conceived of as a universal practice (Helliwell, 2000). "All women know the paralyzing fear of walking down a dark street at night" (Helliwell, 2000:790). Do they? Helliwell (2000) has argued, that while rape does occur widely throughout the world, it is by no means a human universal. Indeed, this assumption, highly prevalent within western understandings of

rape, plays a significant role in the “notoriously difficult” attempts to measure the nature and prevalence (Helliwell, 2000).

Despite the “complications” of how we currently understand and talk about sexual violence, what we do know about the problem in Australia indicates that 1 in 5 women and 1 in 16 men have experienced sexual violence since the age of 15 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021-22). Data has also shown that young adult Australian’s aged 18-24 are the group most likely to be represented amongst both victim/survivors and the perpetrators of sexual violence (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016). Young people, especially young women, are at an increased risk of experiencing sexual violence (Ibid). Given these aspects of the nature and prevalence of sexual violence, it would seem important to gain an understanding of this issue in the context of university settings.

However, while sexual violence is not a new issue at Australian universities, prior to 2017, no in-depth study into the nature and prevalence of sexual violence had been undertaken (Durbach, Grey, 2018; EROC, 2017). In 2014, an initial attempt by the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) to conduct research about sexual assault and sexual harassment at universities, was met with “quite a lot of resistance” by a number of institutions and ultimately “put in the too hard basket” (Stanton, 2014). Despite decades of student activism and advocacy, Australian universities broadly expressed hesitation to openly acknowledge the sexual assault and sexual harassment that occurred on their campuses (Durbach, Grey, 2018; EROC, 2017). Since at least the early 1970’s, however, students have advocated for improving policies, services and structures for reporting sexual violence with little success. An examination of articles from the ANU student led magazine *Woroni* over the last 60 years indicates both students’ awareness of, and action towards, the prevention of sexual violence on the ANU campus.

1. In a 1973 article in *Woroni*, the editors appealed to women at the ANU to share their stories of sexual assaults on or near campus so that activists could “press for greater security measures” (Woroni, 1973:6).
2. In a 1984 edition, one article detailed a number of cases of sexual harassment that occurred at the ANU and was written in the hope of communicating to readers

“the problem[s] of sexual harassment and to suggest ways of dealing with the problem” (Woroni, 1984:6).

3. In a 1996 *Woroni* article, the president of the Student Association wrote how during an internal investigation into the sexual harassment procedure at ANU “it was extremely difficult to explain to those in power that sexual harassment is an issue” (Bolding, 1996:17).
4. In a 2005 edition of *Woroni*, an article titled “DIY Undergraduate 10 Commandments” designated as number 8 “Thou shall not put yourself in danger of being raped” (Kolburg, 2005:22).
5. A 2007 article titled “Can’t say No-Week”, features the ANU Women's officer addressing how every year during O-week, the incidence of sexual assault perpetrated on women rises (Koleth, 2007:36).

A recent shift in all Australian university’s response towards an acknowledgement and prevention of sexual assault and sexual harassment, has been notable. However, as institutions of community and innovation and a place where many calls home, it would seem obvious that Australian universities, such as the ANU, should have had strong motivations to ensure that their campus was a safe space for all.

1.2 *Change the Course* and the National Student Safety Survey

The AHRC report *Change the Course: National Report on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment at Australian Universities (Change the Course)* released in 2017, was a turning point for sexual assault and sexual harassment prevention at universities all around Australia. *Change the Course* marked the first time a large scale and in-depth investigation into the nature and prevalence of sexual assault and harassment on Australian university campuses had been conducted¹. The results released from the survey showed that sexual assault and sexual harassment was present at all of the 39 universities who participated in the study with 21% of students sexually harassed and

¹ The report was published six years after the initial AHRC review into the treatment of women in the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA), which warned that sexual harassment and assault was “a problem across Australian universities” and that ADFA was “not alone in facing these challenges.” (AHRC, 2011:33)

1.6% sexually assaulted in 2016 (AHRC, 2017). This report was followed up in 2021 by the National Student Safety Survey (NSSS), organised by Universities Australia, in which similarly damning results concerning the prevalence of sexual violence was found with 16.1% sexually harassed and 4.5% sexually assaulted (Heywood, et al. 2022).

Both *Change the Course* and the NSSS exposed unacceptable rates of sexual assault and sexual harassment at all Australian universities, however, the ANU demonstrated significant levels of sexual violence compared to other universities. Both survey's provided information across a number of factors such as student's levels of knowledge and confidence in support and reporting mechanisms, demographics effected and incident locations. In regard to the prevalence of assault and harassment at individual institutions, the ANU ranked number 2 for sexual assault and number 1 for sexual harassment out of the 39 participating universities in both surveys (AHRC, 2017; Heywood, et al. 2022). As the ANU first ever Sexual Violence Prevention report was released in 2019, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the AHRC report was a catalyst for the noticeable shift in response. However, given the undeniable presence of sexual violence at Australian universities, the lack of visible policy and acknowledgment towards sexual violence prevention from the ANU prior to 2018, indicates that the motivations behind this response warrant a deeper analysis.

1.3 The image of the “Entrepreneurial University”

These motivations are cultivated and derive from the values and concerns of neoliberalism. The impact of neoliberalism as a political and social form of governing on Australian universities has been widely critiqued as the higher education sector has increasingly become an industry of its own (Howard, 2021). While neoliberalism takes on many different forms in practice and is not a single coherent philosophy, academics have largely described a transformation in institutions focus, quality of research and education produced, and the privileging of certain types of knowledge (Thornton, 2014). Particularly pronounced, is the way in which courses and departments that contain theory and critique are more likely to be downplayed, and in some cases discarded entirely, in favour of areas of applied knowledge (Thornton, 2014). The category of ‘applied knowledge’ is often given vaguely, but here is used to describe the way universities are

expected to demonstrate their ‘usefulness’ by producing “skill based” workers that “know how” instead of “know what” (Thornton, 2014:4).

More recently, academics have come to analyse how the neoliberal ethos of marketisation extends beyond an institution’s education and research to influence the equity work of universities. Yarrow and Johnston (2023) discuss how the gender-equity charter mark framework of Athena SWAN (AS), which was developed in the United Kingdom (UK), has been co-opted as a vehicle for contemporary neoliberal equality work at universities. Its aim has been to recognise and celebrate good practice in higher education and research institutions towards their advancement of gender equality. However, instead of this scheme contributing to any kind of transformational change, they argue that it has been utilised as a tool for institutional reputation gains, termed by them as “institutional peacocking” (Yarrow and Johnston, 2023). Universities “peacock” their AS awards in order to stand out from other institutions and exhibit the equality credentials for market and reputational gain (Ibid). Throughout their study, they continuously found that participants identified AS as a “tick the box exercise” with a large emphasis on data collection and measurement (Yarrow and Johnston, 2023). Yarrow and Johnston (2023), claim that there is an evident linkage between AS awards and funding which then alters the behaviour and attitudes to equality.

Similarly, in conducting her research related to making complaints at universities, Ahmed (2021), takes note of how many of her interviewees made specific reference to Athena SWAN. She recounts that many students expressed frustration to her about the fact that while their university was going for an equality award, they were simultaneously trying (unsuccessfully) to make a complaint. Ahmed argues that the problem present here is not only the denial of the problem but that when “equality is used to contradict the evidence of inequality, equality is inequality given a new face” (Ahmed, 2021:63).

Yarrow, Johnston and Ahmed have come to critique these new forms of institutional knowledge as running directly counter to feminist principles. Jill Blackmore (2020) describes these changes as developing within the framework of “the carelessness of the

entrepreneurial university”². Guided by concerns of increasing its global university ranking, student fees and market competition, Blackmore argues that “Australian universities [have] become careless of people and values as they have become corporatized” (Blackmore, 2020:1332). A disconnect has arisen between the values and aims of those within the institution management and the members of the university who come to enact the university. Importantly, the ANU is itself a community but it is also made up of different communities. Values of neoliberalism that have been taken up by the institution’s management are not readily as endorsed by all members of the university, however, they have been diffused as though they are.

As such, the “entrepreneurial university” is not necessarily an institution that has successfully embodied entrepreneurship but is one that has enthusiastically embraced the neoliberal ideals associated with the ‘entrepreneurial self’ (Scharff, 2016). Neoliberalism then, does not embody a coherent ideology or a particular set of traits, but rather, serves as an ‘attractor’ that draws actors towards it (Ibid). This then can provide a degree of stability and order; however, it also works to disappear or leave unacknowledged chaotic consequences that emerge from this ideal. Crucially, entrepreneurial rhetoric does not hold absolutely as universities draw on a range of discourses but that the management within the modern university (despite being a public institution) has a strong desire to emulate an image of themselves as ‘entrepreneurial’ (Scharff, 2016). Desirable aspects of this ‘entrepreneurial self’ are consciously emulated by the university, which then serves to legitimate certain values, behaviours and therefore language.

While the ANU response to sexual violence on campus has been condemned as slow and inattentive, they have committed more to institutional prevention of sexual assault and sexual harassment in the past 5 years than ever before. These recent changes include the facilitation of the NSSS, reworking support and reporting mechanisms and committing to developing prevention strategies. However, as Blackmore and Sachs (2003:143) argue, in the system of market-oriented education institutions, “it is important to ‘be seen to be doing something’”. In this framework, being seen to perform is therefore a critical aspect for the ANU in creating so called ‘market appeal’. Within the framework of the increasing

² Blackmore’s use of the word “carelessness” is intentional and reflects a long history of feminist critique surrounding how “care” has become a highly gendered concept

corporatisation of Australian universities, image management has then become a central function for higher education institutions to compete within education markets (Blackmore and Sachs, 2003). In particular, the ANU steady reduction of government funding and proximity to an Asian middle class, has strongly encouraged the university to embrace an entrepreneurial image (Blackmore, 2022). The university is conscious to situate itself prominently in a marketized environment as both international and domestic students prioritise rankings when choosing an academic institution (Ibid).

1.4 Rankings

In addition to concepts cultivated by the “entrepreneurial university” such as audit culture and “institutional peacocking”, this thesis argues that the concept of “rankings” has notably governed the response of Australian universities, in particular the ANU. Crucially, the concept of rankings has come to be highly salient to universities and a priority for the “entrepreneurial university”. The “entrepreneurial university” is deeply concerned with “rankings” in order to secure its survival in a market where education has come to be treated as a private good (Blackmore, 2020). Even small differences in university rankings have been shown to affect the number and quality of applications an institution receives (Espeland and Sauder, 2007). Not only in its comparison to competitors in the “market”, the concept of “rankings” further falls neatly under the notion of hierarchies, which have come to be deeply embedded into the functioning of universities (Blackmore and Sachs, 2003).

Through understanding the current salience of rankings to universities, the results from *Change the Course* and the NSSS can be viewed as motivating for the ANU in particular. Not just because they demonstrate the presence of sexual violence but because of the way that the prevalence of sexual violence on university campuses has been neatly packaged into statistics that can, and have, been *ranked*. It has been suggested that the ANU is “a unique campus environment... [with] the most residential environment in Australia” and is one that cultivates a culture where students are informed and encouraged to report sexual violence (Lansdown, 2022). This sentiment, has to a degree by some, been used to account for the ANU high rate of prevalence in comparison to other universities. Whether or not the ‘uniqueness’ of the ANU campus has contributed significantly to the

ANU “prevalence rate” and therefore the constitution of the ANU response, however, is irrelevant. Through the prism of entrepreneurship, it is the concern to lower their place in “prevalence rankings” rather than the presence of sexual violence, that is the leading concern for those within the institution.

And it is not just universities that are familiar and comfortable with the concept of rankings. As an organising principle, rankings intuitively come to be used in people’s day to day (Espeland and Sauder, 2007). The intention of rankings is meant to simplify more complicated pieces of information (Espeland and Sauder, 2007). It has further been observed that the more naturalized a social form becomes, the less visible and more “unreal” the things that are hard to express in that form become (Simmel, 1978). In this way, rankings can be viewed as “making real” a social problem that has been difficult to quantify. Rankings, therefore, can be both simple to read and easy to communicate, particularly in the media. Simply, it makes for a good headline. While news articles mentioned the many findings from the two reports, the prevalence rankings of Australian universities were often the main focus of the piece and certainly appeared as apart of eye-catching headlines. “ANU Triples National Average for Sexual Assaults at University”, “ANU, Bond at the top of sex shame ranking” and “A survey of university students in Australia has revealed the worst campuses for sexual harassment and assault” were just some of the headlines that appeared after the NSSS and AHRC results were released (Ralphs, 2022; Dodd, 2022; Chang, 2017). The ABC program, Hack, even produced an article titled “Which university is the safest?” that collated the individual results from each of the 39 participating universities in the NSSS and ranked them from the highest to lowest prevalence rate (McCormack, 2022).

Additionally, titles such as “Student crisis: One in five sexually harassed” and “Sexual assault campus crisis” began to circulate after the surveys (Baker and White, 2022; O’Brien and Jenkins, 2022). Roitman (2013), has discussed how the term crisis has come to be stabilised and therefore understood as a coherent object of analysis in social thought. In order to “be seen to be doing something” an attentive audience is required. The easily communicated and understood rankings constructed through the lens of crisis have helped to constitute the public’s response and thereby create an active audience for a university, particularly the ANU, to demonstrate a response i.e. perform. This constitution of crisis

and rankings together appears to have induced a change in how universities have come to respond to sexual assault and sexual harassment. As previously discussed, sexual violence on the ANU campus is not a new phenomenon. However, it was only after the outcomes of *Change the Course*, the NSSS and their subsequent circulation in the media, that universities began revisiting their prevention strategies and openly condemning such acts (Durbach and Grey, 2018). *Change the Course* can then be seen as a catalyst in the shift of behaviour for the “entrepreneurial university”.

Ultimately, the ideal of cultivating the “entrepreneurial university” does not then mean that institutions are forced into and incapable of making decisions outside of this framework. However, because these sensibilities are themselves endorsed and legitimised by the university, it then encourages them to view and respond to equity work in particular ways. The desire to be seen as a functioning entrepreneur through a utilisation of neoliberal ideologies, has therefore, permeated many aspects of a university including its equity work. What student (consumer) would want to purchase a product or experience that could be harmful to them? This perception leads to the creation of equity work by universities because they have been shown to increase their productivity and brand image, not because they are good things in their own right (Blackmore, 2020). Equity becomes an asset to improve ranking instead of a mandatory and ethical practice of care (Ibid). This thesis argues that equity work, such as the creation of sexual violence prevention documents, has become an asset for institutions in order to brand themselves as ‘caring’. Rather than as part of a clear obligation of care by universities, documentation as part of equity work has been utilised to perform “doing well”. Demonstrating the ability to “do well” has been a strong motivation for the ANU, in particular, given the universities place in the prevalence rankings. Thus, the clear enticement towards the ‘entrepreneurial self’ makes the ANU documents, and the language within, highly valuable sources of analysis in understanding the puzzle of this thesis.

1.5 It could have been otherwise

Finally, in considering why we should examine language as both an object of analysis and a tool for producing knowledge, it is useful to draw upon Susan Star’s (1989; 1999) concept of boundary objects. Star was interested in analysing the process behind the

production of knowledge, not just the end product i.e. the work behind the work. Understanding the language of your respondents, linking them with institutional patterns and commitments and importantly always having an awareness “that it could have been otherwise” (Star 1988:198). This appreciation towards the idea “that it could have been otherwise”, is a core element of this thesis and which allows for scientific epistemology to be studied as a social process.

The use of “object” in this theory is loose and employed to describe something that people act toward and with. These objects are simultaneously plastic enough to adapt to those who use them and the constraints of multiple interested parties’ employment of them, while being sturdy enough to maintain a common understanding across these sites. (Star and Griesemer 1989:393). Building from this, Star (1999) has examined how these classification systems and standards often blend in with the background infrastructure of institutions. She argues that while these tools may appear “boring”, they embed social realities and histories within lexical choices that then provide an often-invisible infrastructure for how *best* to do things. Bowker and Star (1999) raise the question of what happens when the categories and language of those in positions of power come to be taken for granted with their policy decisions layered into inaccessible technological structures. Crucially, they suggest that “We need to consistently explore what is left dark by our current classifications ...” (Bowker and Star 1999:320). Within this framework, “dull” classifications and infrastructure, or easy to overlook standards for some, have for this thesis, become objects of analysis. As the language within documents has implications for how sexual violence prevention can be conceived and enacted upon by those within the institution, it is vital not to take them for granted. The employment of the concept of boundary objects to study the language within equity documents is then not advocating to be against the use of standards or policies but to encourage the importance of recognising the danger of leaving these tools unexamined.

As the ideals of entrepreneurship within a university are perceived to be the most productive way to function, it is then easy to “unsee” the effect that these motivations have on an institution. Within the course of a mutual endeavour from within university management to realise its entrepreneurial self and cultivate the image of ‘doing well’, ways of doing, talking, values and power relations have emerged (Eckert and McConnell-

Ginet, 1992). Through utilising the tool of a “feminist tongue”, this thesis will argue that these particular “tastes” are imbued into the language that has emerged in the process of creating ANU equity documents. This feminist sense will work to give words to these “easy to unsee” motivations and effects. These “tastes” have implications for how sexual violence prevention is created and acted upon within the university.

Chapter 2

Tasting lexical choices in ANU equity documents

As language is more than a neutral medium for communication, what sort of *work* do the lexical choices in documents produced by the ANU do? How the ANU chooses to frame its actions linguistically, both influences and is influenced by the power dynamics of the community. Concerns guided by emulating the ‘entrepreneurial self’ and the privileging of scientific rationality that can supposedly be removed from emotion, are “epitomized” in the language of ANU equity documents including the *Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy 2019-2026 (SVPS)* (Wierzbicka, 1989:55). These lexical choices not only have the “taste” of discourses and values from the “entrepreneurial university”, but this taste allows them to be picked up and used in a document as tools for convenient and succinct storytelling. In this chapter, I will demonstrate how the language in ANU equity documents functions in these ways. The beginning of this chapter serves as a contextualisation for linguistic anthropological thought concerning the ways in which social contexts and language mutually constitute each other. Firstly, drawing upon Wierzbicka’s (1997; 2006; 2010) theory of cultural keywords with a particular focus on her analysis of the lexical choices of *evidence* and *sense*, I highlight how expressions in language are not simply neutral ways of thinking and knowing. Secondly, engaging with Bakhtin, I introduce how dialogue as a complex chain of interactions is then what gives utterances their flavour. These theories emphasise the ways that social context and language are interwoven and provides a foundation from which to engage with the dynamic nature of language. From these understandings, in the second half of this chapter I will take the time to focus on a number of recurrent lexical choices in the ANU *SVPS* in order to unpack the histories and current social uses to better understand the type of work that they do. With a feminist tongue in mind, I will provide a linguistic repertoire to describe their tastes. The intentions behind the use of these words in ANU documents, have come to form a shared way of thinking and knowing that is aligned with entrepreneurial discourse.

In a world where English has become the first ever global *lingua franca*, it is incredibly easy to forget that the concepts and values expressed in English are not necessarily naturalised ideas that exist cross-culturally but are equally as created and contested

through social contexts and histories as any other language. Wierzbicka (1989:55), suggests that “there are things which cannot be thought in another language”. Similar to Bakhtinian thought about the dynamic nature of language, Wierzbicka argues that different histories and social contexts are “epitomized in lexical differences” across cultures (Wierzbicka, 1989:55). However, while Bakhtin argues that there are “no neutral words”, Wierzbicka sees some words as being more reflective and transformative than others. Especially, words that have claimed the mantle of neutrality. The lexical choices that come to “epitomize” certain histories, discourses and values of a culture, therefore, have a particularly potent “taste”. Given how powerful the grip our native language can have on our thinking habits, serious problems can then arise if we fail to recognise this aspect of language.

Linguistic anthropologists have long deliberated on how one’s language use influences the way an individual perceives and understands the world around them. Wierzbicka and Goddard (2014) have argued that anglophone researchers will often unintentionally absolutise English words and treat them as though they are neutral ways of thinking and knowing i.e. “taste-less”. They have suggested that in every speech community, there are certain words that contain a wealth of culture in their meaning, and which are unique to one particular language (Wierzbicka and Goddard, 2014). This is not to argue that it is then impossible to think about things that we do not have words for but indicates that words suggest certain ways of thinking about reality and create shared conceptions for the speakers of that language (Ibid).

In her book “Understanding cultures through their key words: English, Russian, Polish, German, and Japanese”, Wierzbicka (1997), coined these types of words as cultural key words. She suggests that cultural key words are difficult to translate, semantically diverse and words around which whole discourses are organised. A common understanding and usage of these key words then binds speakers together into a community and shared mental world (Wierzbicka and Goddard, 2014). However, as native speakers will often

take these words for granted, Wierzbicka and Goddard argue that the influence of such words may then be “invisible”³ to the user.

Just as Wierzbicka suggests that words are created and contested through social contexts and histories, for Bakhtin, dialogue as a complex chain of social interactions is then what gives utterances their flavour. Bakhtin (1981; 1986) presents dialogue as the core of understanding the relationship between individuals and society. Dialogue as conceived by him, is not merely a verbal exchange between parties but rather that human action itself, in a broad sense, can be considered as a dialogue. A feminist tongue can work to reveal these aspects of language. Through the analysis of these “invisible” words, discussing their history and current uses in conversation and discourse patterns – in other words uncovering their “taste” – it is then possible to understand the extent to which cultural knowledge is handed down and embedded through the English language itself. Just as Star (1988), utilises boundary objects to question how “it could have been otherwise”, Wierzbicka argues that it is vital to denaturalise English. To do so, requires identifying and acknowledging the “cultural baggage” of English words so that they are no longer taken for granted as the voice of reason in of itself (Wierzbicka, 2006).

In “Experience, evidence, and sense: the hidden cultural legacy of English” Wierzbicka (2010) discusses in depth the word *evidence* as an example of an “invisible” English cultural keyword. Evidence, Wierzbicka suggests, is a ubiquitous English word which has come to form a central role in the way speakers of English think about the world. As the word is a very common and important part of English, Wierzbicka argues that it is often highly difficult to engage in serious discussions in English without drawing upon it (Wierzbicka, 2010). The word has a particularly rich day to day phraseology such as *overwhelming evidence, the evidence suggests, provides evidence for, not a shred of evidence, and evidenced-based*. Wierzbicka (2010) points to the cultural significance of the word by highlighting the fact that other European languages have no semantic

³ A suitably extensive discussion of Wierzbicka’s work in translatability and cultural keywords is unfortunately not possible here. Wierzbicka’s goal has been guided by a desire to move away from a Chomskyan study of linguistics that views language as free from culture and in particular, a modern-day assumption held by some that English has somehow “escaped” culture. Instead, her focus has been to study “English as a historically shaped semantic and cultural universe” (Wierzbicka, 2006:16). In order to understand the cultural underpinnings of English keywords and more, she has developed a well-grounded semantic theory called the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM). For more on her in depth investigations into cultural meanings embedded into Anglo-English please see Wierzbicka 1989; 1997; 2006; 2010 and Goddard and Wierzbicka, 2014.

equivalent for *evidence*⁴. She argues that this reflects the great prestige given to science within modern Anglo culture, with much confidence placed upon empirical knowledge that is arrived through the use of scientific methods (Wierzbicka, 2010). The concept of having and finding evidence has then been deeply entrenched into many aspects of life such as the law, science, research and journalism. The word's highly salient presence in English discourse, Wierzbicka argues, drives home the message that simply thinking is not enough to know and that something else is needed.

As it is not enough to merely think something, Wierzbicka then says that the “something else” that is needed in English comes from the human senses. If you can see, hear, or touch something then it must be real. Wierzbicka argues that *sense* is also an English cultural keyword that has no semantic equivalents in other languages and is seemingly indispensable in anglophone societies. The word reflects the extent to which empiricism has imbued itself into contemporary English, grounded in both a basic trust of the five senses and the capacity to think and act sensibly (Wierzbicka, 2010). Wierzbicka acknowledges that the phrase ‘British empiricism’ has often come to be dismissed as cliché. However, in her book *Experience, Evidence and Sense* she demonstrates how linguistic evidence shows that it actually carries a large amount of truth. Both of the phrases “to come to one’s senses” and “talk is cheap” epitomise the continuing role of *sense* and empirical *evidence* as the linchpin between the right way to think about and do things and someone possessing good powers of understanding and perception (Wierzbicka, 2010). It is not that the “evidence of the senses” is infallible and indeed may need to be corrected by one’s judgement, but that knowledge not grounded in the senses is not to be trusted (Ibid).

Exploring the theory of cultural keywords is not intended to dismiss the validity of these types of words and concepts or to argue that other languages are unable to express similar ways of thinking and knowing. Instead, the beginning of this chapter demonstrates the way that the discourse around these types of words and others, in particular that of

⁴ Wierzbicka (2010) argues that it is the empirical character of the concept that is then encoded into the word *evidence* which makes the English *evidence* and the French *évidence* false friends. She claims that while *évidence* focuses on the level of clarity and obviousness of whatever something is, the English *evidence* requires both more and less. It requires more as it demands some basis in empirical reality but also less because it does not have to command the minds immediate assent. For more discussion of semantic equivalencies of *evidence* please see Wierzbicka 2010.

evidence in English, can inform particular ways of thinking and knowing. Further, if the intentions and thus the “tastes” that are encoded into the use of this word (and others) is left unquestioned, it can allow the use of language by those in positions of authority to become naturalised and unquestioned. With this understanding, I now turn to an analysis of lexical choices within one of the ANU recent documents concerning sexual violence prevention.

2.1 Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy

Since the release of the *Change the Course* report in 2017, the ANU has published a number of documents detailing its response to sexual violence prevention on campus. These equity documents include the *Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy 2019-2026 (SVPS)*, the *2022 Student Safety and Wellbeing Plan*, the *Sexual Violence Prevention Toolkit* and the response to the *Broken Promises* report.

The ANU *SVPS* is the first report of its kind developed by the university and was released in the November of 2019. Following the recommendations from *Change the Course*, it details the universities strategy for addressing the “drivers” of sexual assault and sexual harassment (SASH), with the “vision to create an ANU free from violence” (ANU RRU, 2019:4). Given that this document is a foundational piece for the ANU work towards sexual violence prevention, interrogating what is said in the report is vital in understanding the universities response. An examination of recurrent lexical choices within the *SVPS* report provides a worthy ground for analysis. In particular, the consistent and prolific use of the lexical choice *drivers* and *vision* and the phrase *evidence-based change* often in conjunction with other words such as *build*. These words and phrases have been characterised as recurrent lexical choices because of the way they recur and that they have been chosen, above other words, to govern and give legitimacy to the ANU strategy.

2.1.1 Drivers

The lexical choice of *drivers* is used and discussed heavily throughout the *SVPS* report. Importantly, addressing these *drivers* has become the framework for the ANU strategy to prevent sexual violence. The report uses the word as an explanatory device for the

“underlying causes required to create the necessary conditions in which violence against women occurs” (ANU RRU, 2019:11). This lexical choice is at the core of the ANU strategy and seeks to encapsulate a number of factors that need to be addressed to reduce sexual violence. Given the importance placed upon the word *drivers*, this recurrent lexical choice has come to perform a lot of heavy lifting for the ANU prevention strategy.

The report mentions 4 drivers in the appendix as originally developed by Our Watch and outlined in its work *Change the story* (ANU RRU, 2019:12-13)

1. “Condoning of violence against women”
2. “Men’s control of decision-making and limits to women’s independence”
3. “Rigid gender roles and stereotypical constructions of masculinity and femininity”
4. “Male peer relations that emphasise aggression and disrespect towards women”

The report describes aspects of these *drivers* and how they might work with “reinforcing factors” that can exacerbate violence against women (ANU RRU, 2019:11). Violence against women is not inevitable and it certainly does not appear out of nowhere. Acknowledging the *drivers* mentioned in the report is an important part of understanding the nature of sexual violence. However, there is a danger that this lexical choice can be utilised as a tool to conceal the very inequalities, behaviours and factors that it was intended to reveal in the report. Do these *drivers* all have equal weight? Are these the only main factors to address? How might an individual staff or student work to address these?

In addition to these gaps, the word can lose its meaning when used outside of the report as an explanatory schema. Used on its own, the lexical choice can make vague the responsibilities and structures involved in perpetuating sexual assault and sexual harassment, as it seeks to encapsulate a myriad of factors, situations, and behaviours. As the word itself appears to be causally self-explanatory, it can then allow the user to seem conscious of these aspects of sexual violence while never having to overtly state them. If

pressed further, the user may then point to the *SVPS* as evidence of what underlies the word without necessarily committing to or acknowledging them.

The use of these *drivers* as a main source of focus for the university fits into common discourses of masculine aggression (Gutmann, 1997). In her book *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler (2006:71) argues “there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very ‘expressions’ that are said to be its results”. In this case the “results” being men’s desire for control and aggression. Here, gender is an act that brings into being what it names. “Gender is a kind of doing” that is constructed and constituted by language (Butler, 2004:1). Within this understanding, it is not an identity that “does” discourse or language, but rather the language and discourse that “do” gender. The problem with the use of these *drivers* is then not the critique of these behaviours. In recognising this, the task is not a refusal of these gendered constructions named by the *drivers* but a “critical genealogy” of them (Butler, 2006:44). Even for individuals who are consciously concerned with misrecognising the *being* with the *doing*, it is not hard to accept and believe these aspects as things that should be focused on. Indeed, how can we say they are not. But it is precisely how slippery the slope of observing and critiquing a behaviour is to then conflate what is being recognised as the problem itself. As Butler (2004:37) asserts, “we must follow a double path in politics”. We must use this language in order to talk about the conditions of life that form the constitutive role of gender in political life, but we must also subject those categories to critical scrutiny.

Anthropologists have long critiqued this misrecognising of the “being with the doing”, in particular, the ways that “women” come to exist as a category while “men” are far more rarely listed (Gutmann, 1997). And further, the ways that the “myth of male dominance” has come to be naturalised (Rogers, 1975). Masculinity is then often ignored or considered the norm to which the category of women should then orient. To number these *drivers* almost as a set of instincts that propel male behaviour is to allow the perception of this as naturalised behaviour to men. Indeed, in 2013 40% of young Australians believed that rape is a result of men being unable to control their need for sex (ERO, 2017). Here in lies a goal that is far beyond the reach of any one institution: the removal of the belief of inherent gendered behaviours. However, that these *drivers* are intended

as more than just observed behaviour – one that both names and naturalises aspects of masculine violence – and considered a key to “sexual violence prevention”, is essential to the university’s “strategy” and for their ability to enact upon its *evidence-based change* policies.

2.1.2 Evidence-Based Change

As previously discussed, Wierzbicka (2010) argues that the word *evidence* has the “taste” of elevated levels of confidence in empirical methods, and which plays an important part in legitimising discourse in English. Given the particularly potent taste of *evidence*, its history and the current social use of the word, analysing the use of this lexical choice in the context of sexual violence prevention and the ANU is revealing. As having *evidence* has become a crucial part of communicating a serious argument in English, the word appears consistently throughout the *SVPS*. In discussing how best to address the *drivers* of and prevent sexual violence from occurring, the report emphasises using evidence to guide their approach, such as the “building of evidence-based, innovative practice” and “ensuring that ... [policies] are evidence-based.” (ANU RRU, 2019:5, 8). Of course evidence of what works should be used to guide effective policy. However, the use of *evidence-based* in the report adds the appearance of something thoughtful and meaningful without actually developing any future action. Good practice relies on finding evidence of what works but it is also dependent on more than just its identification. If the environment, structure or culture of an institution is not receptive or capable of utilising said evidence, then progress will be hindered leaving *evidence-based* to become the end goal in and of itself.

The problem here is not the having or even the wanting of evidence, but that the word can be used as a mask. The ANU describes and purports itself as a “research-intensive university, with an outstanding international reputation... [providing] an environment that encourages collaborative and cutting-edge research” (ANU, 2023). Gathering evidence for what works to prevent sexual violence on the ANU campus should be the easy part. Populated, as it is, by researchers, the university is clearly not lacking in its ability to find evidence. Having evidence-based policy, however, should not be the end solution. Despite this, the use of this phrase in the report, can be easily communicated

and understood as though it is. This assumption can then work to conceal other important factors, such as the structure of the ANU hierarchy, bureaucratic policies and university culture that may be restricting change, and which further gives the impression of proactive development. These aspects of the university are of course also amenable to be examined through an evidence-based approach. The intention behind the use of *evidence* in the report, however, construes the problem of sexual violence almost as a technical issue to be solved through numbered drivers and that which easily confuses the means with the ends.

Problematizing the emphasis placed upon having the *right* evidence and the way that this taste is encoded into the lexical choice itself, reveals the difficulties of sexual violence prevention advocacy. If the only way to engage in serious discussions in English and enact change is through providing the right *evidence*, things that are challenging to provide evidence for i.e. that can be shown through the human senses, then allows these problems to be “legitimately” overlooked. *Evidence*, it seems, requires more than thinking and telling. It requires an empirical basis and empirical reality such as what people can see, hear or touch (Wierzbicka, 2010). It is this empirical “taste”, foundational to the concept of evidence, that has been encoded into the use of this word (Ibid). However, for survivors of sexual assault and harassment, providing the *right* evidence of their assault is often difficult if not impossible. For many survivors, they may *only* have their word as evidence. For instance, in her book *Complaint!*, Ahmed (2021) devotes a whole chapter to discussing a complaint collective she joined, begun by students at her university. This collective was created after an inquiry into sexual harassment “did not find sufficient evidence”, to take their complaint further (Ahmed, 2021:5). Here, Ahmed takes note to emphasise that the inquiry couldn’t find “evidence that took the right form” (Ibid:5).

This framework in part explains the ANU recent change in the reworking of prevention policies and acknowledgment of sexual violence on campus. Both *Change the Course* and the NSSS were able to provide empirical, and therefore acceptable evidence, in the form of statistics. Decades of advocacy from students, staff and the wider community – as can be seen in the contents of *Woroni* articles – and the reports of assaults on campus were unable to induce the same reaction as the outcomes from these two surveys. It is

unreasonable to suggest that English forces all of its speakers to only find truth in empirically based statements. However, the university is not a court room that requires a proof beyond reasonable doubt that this problem is occurring. If the structure of institutions is only able (or indeed willing) to take action if the *right* kind of evidence is provided, then the outlook for the future of sexual violence prevention appears very grim indeed.

2.1.3 *Vision*

The concept and ideas encoded into *vision* are linked to the lexical choices and cultural key words of *evidence* and *sense*. While in English discourse, a trust in all of the five senses is integral to empirical evidence, these senses are not all treated equally. Out of the five, sight has been granted particular command and prestige above the rest. In the section of their book “Denouncing the ocular tyranny”, Mildorf and Kinzel (2016) discuss how the eye has come to be the master trope of Western science, with a long history of overevaluation placed upon vision as the source of ultimate reality. As was raised at the beginning of this thesis by Mol (2021), how might these perceptions influence the way we think and know? The phenomenon is also noted by Wierzbicka (2010) in presenting her definition of the English *evidence*. She argues that while evidence has not been restricted to only the senses, sight has been given as a point of reference for certain and clear knowledge.

Importantly, the lexical choice of *vision* is used in the *SVPS* to describe a future state that the ANU aspires to reach with “the ultimate vision of the Strategy ... to create an ANU free from violence” (ANU RRU, 2019:3). The use of *vision* implies foresight and innovation. Used in this way, however, the word conceals how the problem of sexual violence on campus has received little attention from the ANU for years, with the university seemingly forced into action. This *vision* of a campus free from sexual violence has not been developed by the ANU on its own but has openly been at the core of advocacy work for decades. Yet, this declaration of a *vision* that opposes sexual violence, serves an incredibly important function for the ANU. Guided by the motivations of the “entrepreneurial university”, the *vision* in the *SVPS* works to accumulate value for the institution as a sign of its own commitment to the prevention of sexual assault and sexual

harassment. Despite this commitment, however, the use of the lexical choice in this way does not mean that sexual violence is necessarily recognised as an ongoing reality (Ahmed, 2007). It can instead be thought of by the institution like this; if the “vision” of the ANU says “we are committed to preventing sexual violence” (and we have said that we are) than how can we be perpetuating violence?

2.1.4 Build

The recurrent choice of *build* appears in the *SVPS* report often to support and describe the process behind the use of *drivers* and *evidence-based*. “As a priority, we will work with our world-class researchers and strategic partners to build a sound research and evidence base about how to prevent sexual violence” (ANU RRU, 2019:8). The consistent use of the lexical choice *build* throughout the report is interesting and merits particular focus. The word implies productive actions of creation and development; however, it also indicates a lack. These programs and procedures need to be “built” simply because they do not exist or are inadequate. The report even states that it hopes to “begin to (re) build trust” with the ANU community (ANU RRU, 2019:5). A notion around the lexical choice of *build* is further developed alongside words such as *infrastructure* and *foundation* with the report stating things such as the university will “focus on building a strong foundation for prevention” and to “build infrastructure and governance” (ANU RRU, 2019:3, 5). This type of language aims to emphasise images of strength and stability and alongside *evidence-based change*, is particularly reflective of tastes that value “rationality” as a suitable yardstick with which to evaluate productive development.

2.2 The tastes of lexical choices

It is then clear that motivations of the ‘entrepreneurial self’, have extended beyond the focus and quality of research and education produced by universities and into the creation and language of their equity documents. As stated in the *SVPS* “Prevention will become part of core business across the University” (ANU RRU 2019:5). Neoliberalism, however, has not automatically induced conduct that then takes an entrepreneurial form, rather, these types of regimes have encouraged the university to develop institutional practices for enacting this vision (Scharff, 2016). Through a desire to cultivate an entrepreneurial existence, the enterprising self is then bound by specific rules that

emphasise ambition, calculation and accountability (Scharff, 2016). These rules and behaviours that the ANU has adopted as a part of its *vision*, have then come to shape the way it conceives and creates its equity work.

In her article, a response to James Clifford justification of the absence of women anthropologists from the project of Writing Culture, Ruth Behar (1993) considers the ways that in order to establish credibility and gain acceptance, women and people of colour have been unable to deviate from accepted forms of writing and knowledge that fit into the (supposedly gender neutral) canon of what counts as important knowledge. Clifford's claim was based in his assumption that writings by women were excluded as they failed to meet the requirements of being both textually innovative and feminist. According to him, the women who had made textual innovations, had done so not on feminist grounds, while on the other hand women who, as feminists, were actively rewriting the masculinist canon, had not been able to produce unconventional forms of writing (Behar, 1993). Within this view, in order to be considered as writing experimentally, a woman "can't seem to be feminist enough" (Behar, 1993:309).

The writings of the ANU have come to take on a similar form. The recurrent appearance of language favoured by the corporate genre, reflects deeply ingrained neoliberal discourses of the 'entrepreneurial self'. Within the "entrepreneurial university" only language that fits into the goals of marketisation such as evidence, rankings and audit culture are endorsed, while other ways of thinking and knowing – which will be discussed in later chapters – are deemed less acceptable.

A feminist tongue has been the means in which I have been able to describe the tastes of these words and thus explore the ANU ways of thinking and knowing. These lexical choices make vague the responsibilities and structures involved, while allowing the user to appear conscious of these factors. In particular, the language used in the *SVPS* functions as a means to create the illusion of productivity and the presentation of objective, rigorously obtained facts, while making invisible other problems of responsibility and structural issues. The general emphasis on the use of such language, further displays strongly held assumptions towards the merits of scientifically obtained and presented information. What is intended to be perceived as rigorously obtained and objectively

presented evidence that is somehow separate from emotion, is then assumed to automatically nullify the messiness of human action. Emotion in and of itself, however, is not then automatically better than or even a completely separate “tool” than an evidence-based approach. However, the belief that objective language and emotional language are opposite ends of a spectrum appears as a naturalised sentiment in many spheres. The problem lies not in whether this separation is even possible but the fact that this intention behind language use is then considered to be the most appropriate for sexual violence prevention within the institution.

Importantly, the recurrent lexical choices discussed in this chapter, are reflective of what has been described by advocates as “proactive in cultivating the appearance of action” (ANU Women’s Department and ANUSA, 2021). In particular, *evidence-based* and *build* communicate the image of meaningful change while at the same time masking the long term insufficient structural problems at the ANU that have made addressing sexual violence difficult and which will continue to persist unless properly recognised. Here, the use of the concept in a limited and self-serving way is the problem, not the search for evidence in and of itself. While the word *drivers* endeavours to expose the numerous factors, behaviours and situations that enable sexual violence, the word can be abstracted and ultimately shield those who are responsible. Further, the *drivers* come to naturalise gendered behaviours, in particular, popular discourses of male aggression. Finally, these lexical choices, particularly *vision*, perform important functions for the “entrepreneurial university” in two keyways. The words address concerns related to marketisation by firstly, concealing the ANU past neglect and secondly as a means of currently performing “doing well” in the “SASH space”.

However, it is not just the language and lexical choices discussed in this chapter that are intended to communicate “doing well”. The documents that these words are in, have as a whole, been created for this purpose. Chapter 3, therefore, will continue by examining how the documents that these lexical choices are in, have come to be created and taken up by the institution and further, consider how they might come to ‘act’ for the university.

Chapter 3

The Politics of Documentation

Social scientists have long been interested in how documents might function not just simply as receptacles of content but as an influence on social interactions and the ways in which they might be used in an analysis of such interactions. Anthropologists in particular have been interested in an ethnographic treatment of documentation – their materiality, circulation and sociality – as a way forward from focusing on textual meaning (Riles, 2006). For instance, Heimer (2006) has observed how the bureaucratic uses of documents will often assume that those outside of the institution will have a different relation to the subjects of their documents. As such the documents come to anticipate and enable certain actions (Heimer, 2006). This project, therefore, aims to extend this type of document analysis to show how documents perform a dual role as both containers of information and as active agents (Prior, 2008). Prior (2003:60), suggests that documents are what shape or make organisations, not just from the information they contain, claiming that “the University is its documents rather than its buildings”. With this in mind, the issue of documentation cannot adequately be dealt with by purely focusing on document content, rather, the series of events that leads up to and follows its creation is equally deserving of study (Prior, 2008). This concept of documents as actors, rather than passive objects, is grounded in Actor-Network Theory (ANT) as originally proposed by Latour (1996) (Prior, 2008). According to Latour (2005:128), a good use of ANT is “a narrative ... where all the actors do something”. Narratives where both humans and nonhumans can appear as actors which are defined by their relationality and never act alone. In appreciating the insights of ANT, it is possible to see that while documents are indeed intended to guide human actors in an organisation, the process of creating such documents – its focus, intended audience and intended impact – are equally as influenced by the organisation.

An examination of a document’s purpose and intended function allows for expanded questions of how what they *actually do*, is related to what they *appear* to say. With the concept of a feminist tongue in mind, it is not just the taste of the words on the “plate”, but also the way the words have been presented that is equally as intentional and influences the flavour of the language. In other words, it is not only the language within

but the documents themselves that are designed to be “consumed” as evidence of performing well in the area of “sexual violence prevention”. This chapter will closely examine the increase in the creation of “sexual violence prevention” documents by the ANU within the context of it seeking to enact the entrepreneurial self, using the twin strategies of managerialisation and marketisation (Blackmore and Sachs, 2003). Ahmed’s (2007; 2021) discussion of the politics of documentation and Blackmore’s “carelessness of the entrepreneurial university” serve as useful approaches to consider the ways in which documents are intended to “act” for institutions. By following the creation of documents related to “sexual violence prevention”, this chapter will examine what actions they come to perform for the university. Under the “carelessness of the entrepreneurial university”, rather than as a part of their mandatory and ethical practices of care, equity design has instead been created to act as a measure of “doing well” (Blackmore, 2020).

3.1 Institutional Performance

Similar to other universities around Australia, the ANU has developed and committed more resources to the prevention of sexual assault and sexual harassment on its campus than ever before (Durbach and Grey, 2018). However, it is clear that pressure from advocates on campus has still been needed to push for these actions. Prior to 2017, analysing the language of the ANU strategy for “sexual violence prevention” would have been difficult, simply because there was very little to interrogate. The fact that there are currently multiple equity documents related to sexual violence prevention to now analyse, is worthy of question itself. Why have these documents been created now and how are they being circulated and used by the university? This chapter focuses on the *SVPS* as noteworthy for ANU equity documents relating to sexual violence, as it is the “foundation” of their prevention strategy. More recently produced documents (and most likely documents created in the future) consistently refer back to this particular piece of work. Current and future publications, therefore, can authorise a specific institutional policy pertaining to sexual assault and sexual harassment prevention by citing the *SVPS* (Ahmed, 2007). This effectively works to produce a chain of documents which point to one another as evidence with the *SVPS* as the source (Ibid).

On the most basic level, establishing a timeline of the release of ANU “sexual violence prevention” documents is highly revealing. From the publication of *Change the Course* in August 2017, it took the ANU almost two years to release the *SVPS*. Notably in 2019, ANUSA and PARSA wrote “One Step Forward, Two Steps Back” which criticised the lack of progress on major ANU projects in the “SASH space”. In particular, the failure to create and publish a sexual violence prevention strategy. By the end of 2019, the *SVPS* was then completed and published to the student body. It then took another three years for the release of the *Student Safety and Wellbeing Plan* and the *Sexual Violence Prevention Toolkit* which is intended as a “practical guide” for implementing the strategy. Much to the anger of many of the student body, the *Student Safety and Wellbeing Plan* was released on the 21st of March 2022, two days before the results from the National Student Safety Survey (NSSS) were announced. As a result, there is no mention of the context provided from the NSSS report in the new plan. In the university’s response to the ANU Women’s Department *Broken Promises*, they cite the *Student Safety and Wellbeing Plan* release date as the 23rd of March. This reply to the Women’s Department detailed report of ANU “failings”, took 10 months to be published and came only after the ‘Too Little, Too Late’ protest that took place in August of 2022.

In considering this sudden increase of equity documents from the ANU, this thesis questions the relationship between ‘doing the document’ and ‘doing the doing’. As part of a larger project in assessing the “turn to diversity” within higher education, Ahmed (2007) produced a piece titled “‘You end up doing the document rather than doing the doing’: Diversity, race equality and the politics of documentation”. Drawing upon interviews from university diversity officers, Ahmed examines how the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000) in the UK has shaped a new politics of documentation. For universities in the UK, these equity documents came to be circulated and taken up as signs of both doing and committing to doing “doing well”, while further describing an organisation as “being” diverse. Indeed, the documents acted as a form of institutional performance towards the universities image and ability to “do well”. Ultimately, when used in this way, Ahmed argues that these documents worked to mask the racism that they supposedly acknowledged.

Following this, in her most recent book *Complaint!*, by lending a “feminist ear” Ahmed (2021) explores the complaint process at universities. After resigning from her position as a Professor of Race and Cultural Studies in protest against the university’s failures to address sexual harassment, Ahmed began to collect people’s stories of complaints. By drawing upon these oral and written testimonies of complaint, in her book Ahmed argues that there is a gap between what is supposed to happen when a complaint is made and what actually happens. Here, she is using her “feminist ear”. She describes that the way university policies and procedures are designed, enforce misogynist and racist practices. For instance, a hostile work environment can be covered up by signs of diversity. Ahmed highlights how diversity as a promise to transform an institution, is commonly located in students and academics of colour who are often assumed to only be there as they “bring” the diversity with them. In one anecdote, a Black researcher explained to Ahmed how the university made use of her body and her research for evidence of its diversity, while at the same time undermining her work as a colleague, academic and human being. Complaints, Ahmed argues, can teach us about “the failure of policies to bring about what they name” (Ahmed, 2021:153–154).

It is not enough to assume that these types of equity documents produced by institutions will do what they say. We must also examine why they are created and how they circulate within institutions. As previously discussed, the results from *Change the Course* have come to be deeply motivating for Australian universities, in particular the ANU, and their entrepreneurial self. Blackmore and Sachs (2003) suggest that equity work within academic institutions, which has always been delicate, has been repositioned as efficiency discourses are emphasised over equity discourses in the framework of the “entrepreneurial university”. The creation of these sexual violence prevention policies has then become a valuable commodity for institutions, such as the ANU, to demonstrate that they are doing the “right thing” (Yarrow and Johnston, 2021). This performative aspect of universities is one that has come to focus on measurable and marketable customer (student) satisfaction with an increased aim towards performance outcomes rather than participation and process (Blackmore and Sachs, 2003). Within this framework, it seems that equity can only be addressed to the extent that it fits within entrepreneurial intentions and desires.

Therefore, in a desire to enact the “entrepreneurial university”, equity documents such as the *SVPS* come to be used as a form of institutional performance and even pride. It is then in these types of efforts, based primarily on how to change the way an issue is approached, that then allows the continuation of those problems to be obscured and remain unaddressed (Ahmed, 2021). In Ahmed’s (2007:598) interviews, one practitioner notes “I was aware that it wasn’t very difficult for me and some of the other people to write a wonderful aspirational document. I think we all have great writing skills and we can just do that, because we are good at it, that’s what we are expert at.”. As an institution, a university is highly placed in its ability to produce a good piece of writing “we are expert at [it]”. But herein can lie only “doing the document”. A crucial part of the university’s performance of ‘doing well’, however, is the wider judgement from those placed both in and out of the institution, on the ‘quality’ of these documents. When this orientation towards writing a ‘good document’ becomes the goal, the continual need for new documents as a result of new policy often means that ‘doing the document’ is then all that can be done.

If judgement towards a good document can be constructed as the end goal, it can create an assumption that enough is being done. A policy may then come to have a virtual life with its purpose to exist by sitting there on a website (Ahmed, 2021). Even when it is not being used, that a policy exists then still matters (Ibid). Just by “sitting there”, the policy is still doing something, *sitting*. On the 3rd of March 2022, under its “Strategic Planning”, the ANU launched a “Sexual violence prevention and response” webpage containing a collection of its documents and response to prevention since 2017. By pointing to their own documents and policies, institutions can respond to problems as if the presence of having a policy against something, then provides evidence that it no longer exists (Ahmed, 2021). The main goal and effort by the institution can then be conceived as a focus upon effectively showing that “we have changed how we address the issue”. This intention can be seen in the ANU use of *evidence-based change*. As previously discussed, by communicating the gathering of such evidence as the end goal in of itself, the use of this phrase can easily be used as a mask for proactive development. For the “entrepreneurial university”, having a good and well written “sexual violence prevention strategy” can then be easily translated into being good at prevention and gender equality.

Therefore, instead of cultivating action, these new procedures and policies can allow a university to perform to the public as having created a new culture; “a vision to create an ANU free from violence”. This cultivation of a new culture is particularly significant in the context of preventing sexual assault and sexual harassment. It is vital to keep in mind that complaints/reports of assault and harassment are often made behind closed doors and in places which are hidden from the public gaze (Ahmed, 2021). As argued, this is why only focusing on changing the appearance of how sexual violence prevention is conceived, can be how you do not actually change very much at all. Under the goals of the entrepreneurial self, however, it is the cultivation of ‘doing well’ that becomes the leading concern. The creation of a document can therefore construct the illusion of doing something without then actually doing anything. When such documents get taken up in this way as *evidence* of “doing well”, they create a fantasy image of the university that they apparently describe (Ahmed, 2007). Importantly, as discussed by Ahmed (2021), it is not just that these documents can be used for instrumental ends but that these policies can create a shared impression which is necessarily vague; that the problem has been addressed.

3.2 Doing Well

Aspects of this performance can be seen in the content of ANU equity documents. The SVPS report opens with an acknowledgments page that begins with the statement:

“The University has a proud history of ANU student and staff activism raising awareness of sexual assault and harassment on campus, lobbying for change and advocating for victim-survivors. The University would not be where it is today without their enduring passion, dedication and courage.” (ANU RRU, 2019:1)

This acknowledgement is then followed by a foreword written by the Vice Chancellor, Professor Brian Schmidt who discusses the results of the *Change the Course* report and the prevalence of sexual violence on campus. In it he says:

“For the first time, our community had to face the full extent of the sexual violence and sexual harassment occurring on our campus. The results showed the ugly truth about a toxic culture perpetrated by a few, but impacting many.”
(ANU RRU, 2019:2)

A definite tension arises between these two statements in the *SVPS*. Has the ANU with its “proud history” always been listening and responding to advocacy groups on campus, or have they just now been made aware of the “full extent... [of] the ugly truth”? It is difficult to conceive both of these statements as existing truthfully together, yet they are written as though they are.

Within the report, Professor Brian Schmidt further states that “The results from our university, your university, were distressing to read... These issues are not easy to solve quickly but we are making progress to make a safer campus and a better future for our community. This is something we must do together.” (ANU RRU, 2019:2). As the ANU rightly claims, it is not solely the responsibility of the institution to fix the national problems of sexual assault and sexual harassment. A whole of community approach is needed. However, what happens when something becomes everyone’s job but no one’s responsibility?

As “This is something we must do together” the *SVPS* states that it has been “built on consultations” with key advisory bodies, students and staff (ANU RRU, 2019:2). However, as discussed throughout this project, there is often a disconnect between what is on paper i.e. the policy and actual power to direct outcomes i.e. practice (Stolte, 2023). In her piece “*Consultation* is the new C-word”, Stolte (2023) argues that the neoliberal turn has had a significant impact on Australian universities. Stolte expresses these concerns toward the consultation process in the development of university policies and programs. She argues that while First Nation communities have long recognised the weaknesses behind this process, it is time to acknowledge the failures of a system based on consultations; one that causes damage, “while masquerading as beneficence” (Stolte, 2023:432). For Stolte (2023), consultation has been mobilised by universities in the development of their policies to reaffirm neoliberal practices. Her use of “*Consultation* is the new C-word” is not just as a provocative title, but a useful framework to understand why and how consultation is currently failing. While the “c-word” is arguably still a misogynistic term and is often a word used to hurt and harm, those at the end of the hurt are working to reclaim and reshape it. And like *cunt*, Stolte argues that *consultation* has become a word different from its original framework. However, unlike the overtly offensive nature of the “C-word”, consultation, in practice, causes hurt and harm to

communities that is “subtle and insidious” (Stolte, 2023:432). Stolte sees very little chance of reclaiming *consultation* in order to shape it into a process of enacting mutually beneficial change, and thus, *consultation* has become the new C-word.

The unequal relations in institutions are then as Stolte (2023:432) claims “cast in the language of consultation” in order to mask these power dynamics by constructing unilateral decision-making as a collective process. In analysing the weaknesses and harm of consultation practices, the central problem is that the feedback from those consulted can all be “genuinely considered” without then ever changing the original concept. Importantly, consultation should be defined by the members of the community who are affected by the policies to be consulted on (Stolte, 2023). While this might seem to be an obvious concept to point out, it is this ‘obviousness’ that is communicated through “the language of consultation” that then works to conceal the actual event of consultation. As discussed in a document published by the ANU Women’s Department titled *Follow Through ANU*, “lack of meaningful engagement and consultation with students is an ongoing problem” (ANU Women’s Department, 2022:4).

On the 26th of July 2022, the ANU released an update stating that: “[S]ince the release of the Student and Safety Wellbeing Plan in March, ANU has consulted with over 200 stakeholders, including students, to gather feedback and input for the full action plan” (ANU Women’s Department, 2022:4). However, in preparing the *Follow Through ANU* report, which contains statements from 45 students from a number of ANUSA departments and representatives from campus colleges, not a single one said they had been consulted by ANU management (ANU Women’s Department, 2022). Similar to the use of *evidence-based* as a mask, the use of consultation within the creation and implementation of policies, can be followed through to its conclusion and communicate meaningful development without necessarily having to implement the change. This framework fits neatly into such documents conceived as a means of “doing well”. The institution can easily position itself as having done well if it has found the right evidence, consulted the right people and produced a well-written document.

Thus, these equity documents can allow a university to curate a particular image of itself and perform “doing well” in the sexual violence prevention space (Ahmed, 2007). “Doing

well” can then be seen as a vital concern for the entrepreneurial self. In their discussion of Athena SWAN (AS) as mode of enacting neoliberal equity work, Yarrow and Johnson make use of Butlers conception of a “corporeal style”. Here “corporeal style” is an *act*, one which is intentional and performative (Butler, 2006). The collective agreement to perform, produce and sustain the entrepreneurial self as merely a neoliberal desire is obscured by the credibility of the productions towards it. The perceived necessity and naturalness of ‘entrepreneurial’ is then compelled through its own construction (Butler, 2006). Similar to AS at universities in the UK, having these types of sexual violence prevention strategies has become an integral facet of institutional level corporeal style for the ANU to enact its entrepreneurial self.

Unfortunately, unlike the work of Ahmed (2007; 2021), it has not been possible in this project to interview or include discussions about the creation and implementation of the ANU recent equity documents. As such it is not possible to include a comprehensive discussion of the ‘actions’ of these documents. However, even without anecdotal evidence, it is clear that these documents, like the humans who create them, are actors in their own right, who never act alone and come to be defined by their relationality.

3.3 Documentation as a plate for words

Following the release of *Change the Course*, like many Australian universities, the ANU produced its first sexual violence prevention strategy. Within this strategy through the use of *consultation* and *evidence-based change*, it made a commitment to “a vision to create an ANU free from violence”. With this commitment, the existence of documents such as the *SVPS* can then be pointed to and taken up as evidence by the ANU that the violence is being overcome. Further, this document has been used to inform the creation of subsequent documents by the ANU. However, as highlighted by Ahmed (2021:52), commitments can be utilised almost as “a rebuttal system” wherein they appear to contradict the evidence of a particular complaint or larger problem. This is not meant to suggest that these types of documents do not matter or that they can never do important work. They can and they do. Ahmed (2007) herself argues that such documents are useful as tools for researchers and advocates to demonstrate the gap between what organizations ‘do do’ and what they ‘say they do’.

In fact, examining the politics of documentation and positioning them as actors in their own right has been crucial for this project. At the outset, the act of documentation is not immediately recognisable as a form of social interaction. Documentation as a social act, however, is fundamental to how the language used in these documents is constantly being created and contested. Through understanding the social conditions in which they were created, their intended purpose and the way they have been circulated and taken up by a university, it is possible to better understand how these documents ‘act’. These equity documents come to ‘act’ for institutions, such as the ANU, in order to perform “doing well” and continue to construct its entrepreneurial self. Thus, just as equity documents can only be conceived to the extent in which it suits an institutions entrepreneurial desires, so too is the use of language. In other words, through the use of a feminist tongue, these “plates” have been created with the intention to make the dish of words taste of “doing well”. These “dishes” are then easily brought out and circulated to those who consume them and used by others who wish to make a similar plate of words. And so, having shown the ways that documents circulate and come to ‘act’, Chapter 4 will further explore how the social act of documentation within the ANU then facilitates the development of its language use.

Chapter 4

Speech genres

Most areas of human activity involve the use of language. Intuitively, the nature and forms of language used in these spheres vary just as much as the areas of human activity (Bakhtin, 1986). This thesis so far has shown the ways in which the tastes of individual words are reflective of discourses, values and histories and how they can be used to serve a performative function. It has also shown how the documents these words are written in have been created in an equally similar way. The essence of language, therefore, cannot be understood without reference to the social contexts in which it was used. Importantly, it is not only the ANU that has written policy and created works that discuss and address sexual violence on campus. Independent assessors, campus publications and campus groups, in particular the ANU Women's Department (WD), have also created documents concerned with this topic. At the outset, the purpose of these documents is a similar focus on the policies for the prevention of sexual assault and sexual harassment and on the improvement of reporting mechanisms at the ANU. Given an apparent alignment in purpose, why then is there a difference in the content, linguistic style, phraseology and compositional structure in documents produced by ANU management and members of the WD?

With the use of a feminist tongue in mind, this chapter explores this difference with the development of an ANU entrepreneurial speech genre and a WD advocate speech genre. Drawing upon Bakhtin's (1981; 1986) concept of speech genres, the first half of this chapter will analyse the content, linguistic style, phraseology and compositional structure of documents concerned with the prevention of sexual assault and sexual harassment from an array of authors to demonstrate that they have come to possess a distinct *genre*. Documents are by definition artefacts of a particular genre (Riles, 2006). By utilising genre as an analytical tool, I explore how ways of talking and knowing come to be suffused with a taste and come to influence future flavours. I examine how a difference in genre has implications for the ways these documents are constituted as more or less valuable ways of thinking and knowing about sexual violence prevention. Following this, by utilising Eckert and McConnell-Ginet's (1992) theory of a "community of practice", I argue that these genres and the categories that these groups identify, 'entrepreneurial' and

‘advocate’, are self-emergent through the mutual use of particular language choices and the social interaction of documentation. With these frameworks, the appearance or absence of certain words demonstrates how lexical choices are used intentionally and can reflect the specific social contexts and goals of the user. This chapter argues that language within both the ANU and the WD documents has been chosen in the context of “the carelessness of the entrepreneurial university” but with the differing goals of performing “doing well” and advocacy.

Before delving into an analysis of different speech genres, it is important to first define aspects of Bakhtin’s theory. According to Bakhtin (1986:60) “Language is realised in the form of individual concrete utterances (oral and written) by participants in the various areas of human activity”. By “utterance” Bakhtin is not referring to the traditional understanding of a spoken word, statement or vocal sound, but as a bounded piece that has a beginning and end, that is neither wholly a response or a statement directed to future readers, but both. All utterances are then dialogical, both responding to and anticipating other speakers and as such, in producing an “utterance”, a speaker or writer will invoke the language of others. This language shapes what the author can say, in that the writer can only produce this “utterance” through appropriating both the words and ways of speaking from others (Nakamura, 2021). An author is then not only in dialogue with current readers, but also with previous authors and unknown writers into the future. These “utterances”, therefore, come to reflect the specific conditions and goals of a particular area (Bakhtin, 1986). The content, linguistic style, grammar, phraseology and compositional structure within these “utterances” are all equally determined by the specific nature of the sphere of communication (Bakhtin, 1986). This dialogue and complex chain of interactions is what gives “utterances” their flavour. And so, while each separate “utterance” is itself individual, the language used in a particular sphere comes to develop its own relatively stable types of “utterances” (Ibid). The creation of a constellation of these “stable utterances” in a sphere is what Bakhtin refers to as speech genres.

With this understanding, it is not the sentences within or even a paragraph but a whole document itself that is an utterance. The documents discussed in this chapter, the *SVPS*, created by the ANU, *Broken Promises* and *Follow Through ANU* published by the WD

and the Independent Assessment commissioned by the ANU, are each their own individual utterances. The content, linguistic style, phraseology and compositional structure within them, has then been determined by their speech genre (Bakhtin, 1986). Bakhtin (1986) posits that there are some genres that are more conducive to reflecting the individuality of a speaker i.e. their individual style, than others. The most favourable being artistic literature and the least in speech genres that require a standard form, for example, business documents (Bakhtin, 1986). Due to this thesis' focus on the language of institutional documents, it may on the surface seem inappropriate to apply the theory of speech genres. But, since the goal of the thesis is to question how language choices become the standard form, it is a highly informative framework. In analysing these documents, the aim has not been to understand one individual's style (this project does not imagine some shadowy puppet master within ANU management) but how this style has come to be considered as the most appropriate standard amongst individuals within the institution.

4.1 Comparing Utterances

In considering the elements of a speech genre, linguistic style can refer to a range of language elements including pacing, pitch, volume and vocabulary. In the context of documentation, linguistic style is best observed in lexical choices. The phraseology within documents is then also closely linked to lexical choices. Examining the way in which these lexical choices have been used in context allows for this chapter to delve into a deeper analysis of taste and discussion of language.

The lexical choices of *drivers*, *evidence-based change*, *vision* and *build* that were unpacked and discussed in Chapter 2, are useful for an initial comparison of linguistic style within documents. While *drivers* is referenced 20 times in the *SVPS*, it does not appear at all in *Follow Through ANU* and while it is used twice in *Broken Promises*, it does so in reference to the *SVPS*. Similarly, *evidence* is used eight times in the *SVPS* while it only appears once in *Follow Through ANU* and four times in *Broken Promises*. *Vision* is used in neither *Broken Promises* or *Follow Through ANU* and although *build* appears 25 times in the *SVPS*, it is used only five times across both of the WD documents. While these comparisons are useful for furthering the argument set out in Chapter 2, a number

of other linguistic choice variations are particularly revealing of a difference in speech genre between the ANU and the WD. Namely in phrases and lexical choices that describe types of violence, references made to students and campus, and gender performativity.

4.1.1 Violence

Most obvious is the stark contrast in the appearance of the lexical choice *violence* between the *SVPS* and the two WD documents. *Violence* is used 177 times in the *SVPS* while only appearing 14 times in *Broken Promises* and 11 in *Follow Through ANU*. Instead, reference to *assault* and *harassment* is far more common in the WD documents appearing 83 times in comparison to 28 in the *SVPS*. This increased use of *violence* in the *SVPS* in comparison to *Broken Promises* and *Follow Through ANU* directly relates to the *SVPS* preference to use the phrase *sexual violence* while WD documents tend to favour the phrase *sexual assault and sexual harassment*, particularly in the form of the acronym *SASH*.

Both the use of *sexual violence* and *SASH* within the documents are intended as umbrella terms to encompass the type of acts that are occurring on campus. The stark contrast in the number of appearances of these phrases between the documents can be clearly linked to the difference in intended purpose and therefore its speech genre. As discussed in previous chapters, as a means of engaging with its entrepreneurial self, the ANU has come to enact a *vision* for the university. The increased use of *sexual violence* in the *SVPS* can then be easily connected by the reader of the broader *vision* to be “free from violence”. Crucially, it is far easier to position yourself against *violence* as a whole than *assault* or in particular, *harassment*. While it would be difficult to find someone who would say that assault or harassment is not a bad thing, what is defined as harassment is more contentious and does not fit as neatly under conceptions of violence. While experiences of sexual harassment are the most commonly reported acts in both surveys, an argument against wanting to be free of *violence*, is less likely to gain any traction. The reduced mention of *assault* and *harassment* in the *SVPS* in comparison to the WD documents, works to allow the ANU management to acknowledge problems on campus while simultaneously positioning the university in a ‘post harassment’ era.

While used less than in the *SVPS*, *violence* appears in the Independent Assessment 126 times. In contrast, an examination of the content of *Woroni* articles on Facebook shows that the use of the acronym *SASH* and the phrase *sexual assault and sexual harassment* are far more common than the use of *sexual violence*. The lexical choice *violence* is more likely to be used on its own in these articles, rather than in relation to discussions of *sexual violence* on campus. The increased appearance of *SASH* in documents by the WD, then appears related to an awareness of student language. Further, the use of *SASH* as a more sanitised way of talking about the problem, reflects advocate concerns of the WD to avoid overtly triggering language while communicating directly with ANU students.

4.1.2 Community

Another difference in lexical choice appears in references made towards *students*. While *student* appears 29 times in the *SVPS*, *student* is referenced 196 times across both WD documents. The limited use of the word *students* in the *SVPS* in comparison to *Broken Promises* and *Follow Through ANU* is perhaps due to the way it favours the phrases *our community* and *the ANU community*. Both of these phrases appear 58 times within the report while only appearing seven times in the WD documents. Instead, the phrases *students and staff* and *whole-of-community* are more common. The preference between referring explicitly to *students* or to the *ANU community* is also tied to the difference in intended document purpose. In using *ANU community*, the *SVPS* is cultivating its appearance of a culture shift as a part of its ‘entrepreneurial self’. That *Follow Through ANU* refers to *students* three times more than the *SVPS*, is directly linked to its intended function as a means of advocating for university students. As both of these words could be used interchangeably, the contrasting appearance of these lexical choices then suggests some interesting implications.

In the area of development, anthropologists have long cast a critical eye towards policy that employs the language of “community-driven” and “consultation” (Mosse, 2004; Mansuri and Rao, 2004; Youdelis, 2016; Stolte, 2023). Instead of rectifying areas of hegemony within the institution, such language can be used as an instrument to advance established interests while concealing the lack of agency of those brought into participate behind the rhetoric of “a community voice” (Mosse, 2004). As argued by Mosse

(2004:642), “policy discourse generates mobilizing metaphors” such as “participation,” “partnership,” “governance,” and “social capital”. The vagueness of this language is then required for its use to mask ideological differences, and further, to enhance the criteria of perceived success within a project (Ibid). Both *community* and *consultation*, as discussed in the previous chapter, fit nicely into Mosse’s understanding of language “mobilised” to achieve the objectives of those creating the policy. *Community* and *consultation*, therefore, can easily be employed to create the illusion of participation and consideration.

While this is an insight that has been readily applied within the anthropology of development, the critique has been significantly less applied in Western institutional settings such as universities. The notion of *community* is presented as an ideal within the SVPS and the WD documents and is viewed as an important part of reducing the prevalence of sexual assault and sexual harassment at the ANU. However, the egalitarian connotations of *community*, as critics have noted, reduces the ability to recognise the hierarchical relations of dependency that exist within the university. The framework of *community* then homogenises relational dynamics and cultivates an impression of joint and uniform ways of thinking and speaking. The WD’s preference for *staff and student* over *ANU community* indicates an intent to recognise these dynamics, as the existence of *students* is inherently hierarchically dependent. Further, while hierarchies appear almost everywhere, including in the WD, the WD actively views these uneven relations as a source of much of the deep dissatisfaction by students towards the university. The ANU, on the other hand, views the current mode of its hierarchy as crucial to the continued development towards entrepreneurship. Thus, openly addressing this aspect of the university in their language use goes against the purpose of their equity documents and thus the speech genre.

4.1.3 Describe me

The documents noticeably differ in the way that they refer to students who have experienced some form of sexual violence. The distinction between the lexical choices of *victim* or *survivor* is apparent. While the SVPS makes reference to both of these words a total of 17 times, the lexical choice of *victim* does not appear in either WD documents. Instead, *survivor* is utilised 47 times within both pieces. The word *victim* only appears

within the *SVPS* and indicates its preference to utilise the phrase *victim-survivor*. This phrase, which is utilised 29 times in the *SVPS*, does not appear in either of the WD documents.

Interestingly, in the WD documents there is no reference to *men*, *male* or *female*, with only 19 uses of *women* across both documents. The *SVPS* on the other hand, utilises all 4 descriptors with *men* appearing 31 times, *male* 19, *female* six and *women* 79 times. The increased appearance of direct references to men, women, male and female in the *SVPS* in comparison to *Broken Promises* and *Follow Through ANU*, relates to discussions in Chapter 2 of the lexical choice *drivers* and Butler's notion of gender performativity. In particular, *violence* is most often positioned as something that happens to women throughout the *SVPS*; "prevent sexual violence and violence against women" (ANU RRU, 2019:8). As with *drivers*, while real and observable behaviours, this discourse continues to organise understandings of violence against women as something assumed and expected.

The absence of the lexical choices *victim*, *men*, *female* and *male* in both WD documents reflects the WD understandings of inclusive language and awareness of victim blaming as a crucial part of student advocacy. The appearance of these words in the *SVPS*, however, does not mean that ANU management is unaware of these aspects. The glossary of the *SVPS* makes a distinction between an individual's sex and gender. In reference to the phrase *victim-survivor*, it further acknowledges that "not every person who has experienced or is experiencing sexual violence identifies with this term." (ANU RRU, 2019:11) However, the same concerns of the WD as 'advocate' are not the same as the ANU 'entrepreneurial self'. For the ANU speech genre, a concern to demonstrate knowledge of these aspects is an important part of performing 'doing well' but incorporating the understanding into the policy language is not valued or encouraged.

The documents produced by ANU managers and the students of the WD are markedly different in their speech genre as exhibited in their compositional structure. The main types of compositional structure are description, narration, exposition and argumentation. The *SVPS* utilises mainly expositional modes of writing while *Broken Promises* and *Follow Through ANU* involve a blend of all four with particular application of

argumentation and narrative modes. The expositional structure of the *SVPS*, one that seeks to set forth the facts and ideas, reflects its purpose to communicate ‘doing well’ by writing a ‘good’ document under the goals of entrepreneurship. The use of argumentative and narrative structures in *Broken Promises* and *Follow Through ANU*, suits the WD advocate speech genre that desires to address student dissatisfaction and communicate to both the ANU management and the student body.

4.2 Entrepreneurial and Advocate Speech Genres

The documents produced by the ANU management and the WD, ultimately all seek to address the high prevalence rate of sexual assault and sexual harassment at the ANU. They are all structured like a report with a contents page, preface and executive summary. However, in addition to specific lexical choices and phrases, there is a notable difference in the type of content they address. Firstly, is a difference in the main concern highlighted in their documents. The overarching concern of the *SVPS* is demonstrating a change in their policy that will lead to a cultural shift and reach the goal of their *vision*. Whereas, both *Broken Promises* and *Follow Through ANU* are concerned with the high levels of dissatisfaction and lack of confidence from students in reporting mechanisms at the ANU. This difference in leading concern has then dictated the content that appears in these documents. Most notable is the way that WD documents frequently incorporate direct quotes from students on campus⁵. *Broken Promises* has quotes from six different WD officers from 2017-2021 scattered throughout the report. The majority of *Follow Through ANU* is comprised of consultations with members from ANU such as the BIPOC, Disabilities, Indigenous, International Students and Queer departments, officers from ANUSA, Hall and College representatives and a number of students from online submissions. The *SVPS* contains no quotes from or consultations with staff or students on campus. The only section of the *SVPS* that is from an individual, is the forward written by Professor Brian Schmidt.

⁵ Both of the of the WD documents begin with an acknowledgement of country that makes specific reference to “the disproportionate impacts of sexual violence on Aboriginal women and the need for immediate culturally sensitive action in consultation with Indigenous communities.” This does not appear in the *SVPS*. All three reports open with an image on their first page. The front of the *SVPS* pictures a building in Kambri on its campus, while the WD reports open with student drawn graphic.

As discussed, a particular sphere of communication and purpose of a document, for example, scientific, commentarial or business, gives rise to a certain genre and the relatively stable structural, thematic, compositional and stylistic aspects within the utterance (Bakhtin, 1986). At the outset, the purpose of the *SVPS*, *Broken Promises*, and *Follow Through ANU* focus on the policies for the prevention of sexual assault and harassment and on the improvement of reporting mechanisms at the ANU. Therefore, at the start of this chapter I asked: given this apparent alignment in purpose, why then is there a difference in the content, linguistic style, phraseology and compositional structure in the documents produced by ANU management and members of the WD? With the use of a feminist tongue in the first half of this chapter I have identified these variations and discussed the socially charged tastes of these choices. As such, these variations indicate that the answer to this question is that there *is* a difference in intended function: one of ‘doing well’ and one of advocacy, developed within the context of “the carelessness of the entrepreneurial university”.

4.3 A Community of Practice

It has been important for this thesis not only to point out language usage and the self-categorisation of universities, but also, to argue that these have been created and contested through active engagement towards a mutual endeavour. Language is both a crucial symbolic and communicative resource, that is essential for cultivating the ways of knowing and doing that then give a community of practice its character (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 1992). In the case of the ANU, an endeavour towards entrepreneurship. Similar to Bakhtinian theories of dialogue, through adopting Lave and Wegner’s notion of a ‘community of practice’, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992) have shown how the categories that people apply are self-emergent through the use of language. Further, just as Bakhtin is interested in speech genres that are more conducive for representing individual style, the theory of a ‘community of practice’ has mainly focused on the spoken word, with little attention given to how this may influence formal documents. This thesis has used the framework of documentation – an area not often conceived as suitable for such types of analysis – in order to show that they are as dialogic and practice based as any other social interaction. Importantly, a ‘community of practice’ is defined simultaneously by its membership and by the practice in which that

membership engages (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 1992). Chapter 3 has demonstrated the ways in which ANU documents have been created and circulated to create lines of communication within the institution. As such, ways of talking, values, power relations and practices have emerged in the ANU management, and thus, the language used in their “sexual violence prevention” documents through engaging in this act of documentation.

While this thesis has highlighted the ways in which language is not simply a neutral means of communication, this is not meant to downplay the importance of the simple act of communication itself. Crucially, people develop and govern their own linguistic repertoire by interacting with language used by those whom they frequently communicate with (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 1992). Ahmed (2007:591) has noted that documents bring an organisation into existence and come to circulate within that institution, thus “creating vertical and horizontal lines of communication”. Membership within the ANU management and the practice of documentation, therefore, has come to form a ‘community of practice’. In particular, the documents concerned with “sexual violence prevention” have been developed and published in relation to one another with the mutual purpose to enact the universities aim of entrepreneurship. Through this enterprise certain ways of talking and knowing i.e. speech genres have then emerged.

A community of practice is not imminently a bad thing but a natural consequence of language communication and social interaction. A problem lies, however, in the way linguistic conventions come to be naturalised. As highlighted by Bakhtin, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992), also note that linguistic forms do not materialise permanently glued to meanings but are instead endowed with those meanings through the course of a social practice. In this community of practice at the ANU, there exists ways of talking and knowing that constitute the university’s actions as appearing to be uncoloured by intent i.e. without taste. This discourse then extends to a general assumption towards the language used within these documents as the norm to which any deviation then renders a work unsuitable. However, as noted by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992), while entrepreneurship perspectives can be viewed as having “infected” the language, the protection afforded to it, and therefore its naturalisation, by linguistic conventions is never complete. The history of linguistic and social practice constrains but does not determine what a speaker can mean. The language and speech genre must be continuously sustained

and reproduced through ongoing interactions, meaning that it is not possible to separate the semantic aspects of language from the interactive dynamics that this language is used in and for (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 1992). With this understanding, the “sexual violence prevention” documents come to form an echo chamber that reinforces these ways of talking and knowing.

The dominance of entrepreneurship is then sustained by the ANU management through privileging a particular perspective on language in this community of practice. One that obscures its status as just one among many perspectives with the intent of naturalising it as neutral or free from the cultural conditions in which it is used. Therefore, the ANU can come to assume its own position towards “sexual violence prevention” as the norm to which others should orient themselves. This then allows for the interpretive and evaluative authority that seems to require no explanation or justification (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 1992). It is then the differences in the WD’s speech genre as discussed such as the content, phraseology and compositional structure that make their documents viewed as less viable objects of scientific application within the institution and by ANU management.

Conclusion

This thesis has explored the dynamic nature of language by examining and comparing the equity documents of the ANU and the WD related to their sexual violence prevention strategies. Explorations of recurrent lexical choices, the documents these lexical choices are in, and the development of speech genres, demonstrate how language choices must be studied in relation to the historical, cultural and social relations in which they were chosen. These discussions have highlighted how the language choices in ANU documents are not the apolitical stance that the university believes it can achieve. A feminist tongue has found ways to articulate their taste. And in this case, the tastes concealed by the appearance of being ‘bland’.

Therefore, within this conclusion, I turn back to the initial premise of this thesis: *language is more than a neutral means of communication*. It has a “taste”. My aim for this thesis has not been to advocate for a removal of all language and thought that involves empirical evidence or emphasises the use of rational language expressions removed from emotion. The intent, with the use of feminist tongue, has been to explore and understand ways of knowing. The naturalisation of concepts and words in English is prevalent across all spheres of communication, not just in the equity documents of institutions. The universality of the phenomenon is why Bakhtin’s concept of language having a “taste” is so appealing as an understanding of language. And further, why employing feminist tongue, as a way to “taste” in language, is useful both as an institutional tactic and a research method. Thus, my goal has instead, been to explore how language and social contexts mutually constitute one another, in order to uncover the intentions and flavours behind the use of language that has come to be naturalised and considered to be the most appropriate.

By establishing the neoliberal turn in higher education and analysing the ANU response to sexual assault and sexual harassment, this project has demonstrated how neoliberal ideologies that are simultaneously favoured and treated as apolitical by ANU managerial leadership, in actuality work to privilege the financial position of the institution over the wellbeing of its students. The results from *Change the Course* and the NSSS have been transformative for the way Australian universities, in particular the ANU, have recently

changed their response to sexual violence prevention. As such, performing “doing well” in this area, through the language and production of equity documents has become the leading concern under the “carelessness of the entrepreneurial university”. The language used in these documents could only be chosen by those who write them through the lens of enacting the entrepreneurial self and thus the entrepreneurial speech genre. Neoliberalism has, therefore, become the landscape in which universities come to *do* diversity and equality work.

Combining Bakhtin’s dialogic understandings of language, with that of a feminist tongue, has been my method for uncovering and describing these tastes of lexical choices within the ANU *SVPS*. I began this project with an interest in what I could learn from individual words. I wanted to know what it might mean to change the way we understand language from hearing (or reading) and thinking to exploring what it might mean to take inspiration from eating, in particular, from “taste”. And from the taste of these words I have learned a lot. This language, which has come to be treated as an objective way of talking and knowing, instead reflects the favouring of neoliberal discourses by the university and which then works to enact its entrepreneurial self into the future.

While the use of *drivers* appears to be a thoughtful attempt to measure and understand the nature of sexual violence, the lexical choice reflects and reinforces common discourses of masculine aggression and can be manipulated as a uniform way to make vague the responsibilities and structures involved in perpetuating sexual assault and sexual harassment. The use of *drivers*, however, is a key element of enacting ANU managers’ *evidence-based* policy. The lexical choice of *evidence* is used in the *SVPS* as a mask for proactive development. Its “taste”, however, is the ANU requirement of the *right* kind of evidence. Further, the intention behind the use of *evidence* in these documents, is to construe the problem as a technical issue that can be solved simply by finding the right *evidence-based* policy. The appearance of *vision* in the *SVPS* is equally as important and works to construct the ANU commitment to reduce the prevalence of sexual violence on its campus. This commitment, then works to accumulate financial value for the institution by communicating “doing well”. Finally, the use of the lexical choice *build*, is used as a part of the ANU intention to communicate its productivity. Along with the other lexical choices, its use in particular, reflects the institution’s

definition of rationality as a strength in “doing well” and as a suitable yardstick with which to evaluate productive development. Importantly, this “dispassionate” language, allows the policy writers to conceive and talk about the strategy in a way that they can avoid engaging with moral or value judgements, while simultaneously performing the “doing well”.

It became clear to me that it was not enough to assume that these types of equity documents produced by institutions will do what they say. Importantly, these documents are as dialogic and practice based as the use of any word or social interaction. Similar to their choices in language, these equity documents have been created in the desire to enact the “entrepreneurial university” and are intended to perform for the institution. By being “written well”, “consulting the right people” and “sitting there” these documents can be pointed to by ANU leading officials and taken up as evidence of it “doing well”.

And so while uncovering the tastes of individual words has been enlightening, viewing documentation as a social act, with equity documents creating lines of communication within the institution, has been crucial for understanding the development of the ANU speech genre. By employing Bakhtinian concepts of dialogue, this thesis contends that a document such as the ANU *SVPS* is itself an utterance. As an utterance is determined by the specific nature of the sphere of communication, certain types of content, linguistic style, phraseology and compositional structure have emerged within this document, thus its speech genre. These ways of talking and knowing have been created and contested through active engagement towards a mutual endeavour. For the ANU management, an endeavour towards the ‘entrepreneurial self’. However, these linguistic forms do not materialise permanently glued to meanings. The naturalisation of such language and speech genre must be continuously sustained through ongoing interactions. The appearance or absence of certain words, therefore, demonstrates how lexical choices can be used intentionally and reflect the specific social contexts and goals of the user. These differences in ways of talking and knowing have led to, and are a part of, the different speech genres; entrepreneurial and advocate.

This discussion of language and equity documents may raise the question for some of a tension between the original intent behind an institution like the ANU developing “sexual

violence prevention strategies” and the actual outcomes of positive changes. It could be argued that if the outcome is positive then the initial intention behind this strategy is irrelevant (Yarrow and Johnston, 2021). It has been beyond the scope of this project to examine and measure the outcomes of recent sexual violence prevention policy by the ANU, however, it does argue that much can be learned from the creation of and language use in these documents. The goal of applying a feminist sense of taste has been to develop a linguistic repertoire to give existence to these flavours in language.

Crucially, for this project is the conclusion I arrived at in the final chapter. The management of the ANU says prevention cannot wholly be the “responsibility of the University” (ANU Women’s Department and ANUSA, 2021:23). The ANU Women’s Department enthusiastically agrees. The *Broken Promises* report and *Follow Through ANU*, which were briefly analysed in Chapter 4, are both documents created by the WD in which they have invested time and labour not only to communicate the opinions of the student body but also to provide actionable recommendations to the university. However, those within ANU management appear unwilling to utilise both the WD itself or the documents they produce as a resource in the creation or implementation of their prevention strategy. This thesis argues that speech genre plays a key role in this unwillingness. The language used within these documents by the ANU, that is both constituted by and reflective of the entrepreneurial speech genre, is treated as the norm to which any deviation then renders a work unsuitable. Thus, the WD’s speech genre, which deviates from the ANU, has made it so that even if individuals within management wish to enact WD documents, they are not viewed as useable through the lens of the entrepreneurial self.

What then might an institution look like if it was to allow other speech genres? A feminist tongue is an institutional tactic because it wants to give words to the tastes that are not intended to be tasted or believed to even exist. To do this requires an acknowledgement of multiple ways of thinking and knowing, and further, an understanding that it is not possible to “escape taste”. Personally, for an institution to explore and consider the use of alternate speech genres, I believe would require a large transformation. In its current state, it would not be a surprise if these types of documents in the future came to be outsourced to highly efficient and managerial consulting companies in an effort to

maintain their “objective and rigorous nature”. This outsourcing fits in neatly with goals of the “entrepreneurial university” as has been expounded upon throughout this thesis and which then would further the institutions performance of “doing well” with a “good document”.

In turning back to the quote that opened this thesis, this project has utilised an exploration of the language within university documents to demonstrate the tastes of the “socially charged life” of language “populated by intentions” (Bakhtin, 1981:293). In this thesis, I have used a feminist tongue as a tool; one that both endeavours to find taste and as a tool to provide the linguistic repertoire to describe taste. Without an interrogation of the language used by those in positions of authority, ways of thinking and knowing can easily come to be taken for granted as the only way to be. And in the words that I have explored in university documents, I have found not “taste-less” and bland words, but language suffused with the bitter taste of neoliberalism.

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