

One Billion Rising:

Theorizing Bodies, Resistance, and Engagement in a Campus Stop Violence Against Women Movement

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“Walk out, dance, rise up, and demand an end to violence,” serves as a prompt for One Billion Rising, Eve Ensler’s Global V-Day: Stop Violence Against Women Movement. One Billion Rising asks women and those who love them to gather in dance, protest, and voice in a globally staged effort to demand an end to gender-based violence. This essay analyzes a One Billion Rising installation with particular focus on ways a campus community engages with and understands personal trauma as impacted by publicly staged trauma movements. Cvetkovich’s (2012) “public feelings” project and Berlant’s (2011) “cruel optimism” provide a theoretical framework to consider ways One Billion Rising constructs private bodies as representations of public opposition to violence and its aftermath. Closing thoughts consider how reproducers of civic engagement and resistance, and those most intimate with sexual violence and its trauma, interact with the One Billion Rising charge.

INTRODUCTION

Walk out, dance, rise up, and demand an end to violence. This sentence served as a prompt for *One Billion Rising* (OBR), marking February 14, 2013

as the fifteenth anniversary of Eve Ensler's V-Day: Stop Violence Against Women Movement. *One Billion Rising* asks women and those who love them to gather in dance, movement, protest, and voice in a globally staged effort to demand an end to gender-based violence. Conceptualized by author and feminist activist Eve Ensler, known widely as playwright of the *Vagina Monologues*, and choreographed as an arm to her well-established V-Day Stop Violence Against Women movement, *One Billion Rising* seeks to move the earth, leveraging women and men's collective strength, numbers, and solidarity across borders. V-Day asks: "What does one billion look like" (One Billion Rising, 2016)? On February 14, 2013, it was orchestrated to look like a revolution (One Billion Rising, 2016). But what does a revolution in dance, performed inside a relatively small, rural, academic community truly resemble? How are forms of identity and embodiment contested, negotiated, and/or transformed inside a campus uprising as part of a larger global register? And how do we, as promoters of civic engagement measures, and those intimate with sexual violence and its trauma, personify this *One Billion Rising* charge? Elation, power, and solidarity engendered the spirit of our *One Billion Rising* activities. Waking to our oppressed and unchanged realities, trauma and despair hijacked our post-*One Billion Rising* morning. One day. One movement. One ensuing finale: Gender-based violence lives on.

This essay maps a *One Billion Rising*, Stop Violence Against Women, flash-mob dance and open-mic poetry reading performed at a comprehensive, four year, public college situated in upstate New York. The paper highlights multiple points of encounters to this *One Billion Rising* project which bridges diverse disciplines and activist platforms to an installation of Ensler's transnational *One Billion Rising* initiative. While *One Billion Rising* is now on the backside of its fifth year, I focus this writing on Ensler's first, 2013 *One Billion Rising* prompt. This 2013 milestone marks the launching of the *One Billion Rising* campaign and a critical moment in time when this first *One Billion Rising* movement intersected our campus teaching-to-praxis work. Writings on feminism and popular culture (Douglas, 2010; Zeisler, 2008) help inform the piece, but I focus the gist of my scholarly analysis on trauma movements using Cvetkovich's (2012) "public feelings" project and Berlant's (2011) "cruel optimism" as theoretical lens. I turn to Cvetkovich's (2012) and Berlant's (2011) writings on personal and public feelings as a means to interrogate

ways activism in academia can construct and perform private bodies as representations to national resistance to public trauma that is staged in gender-based violence movements. I am interested in ways a campus community interacts with activism such as V-Day's *One Billion Rising* prompt and how we make meaning out of our performed roles a part of a larger stop gender-based violence register. Paper conclusions include implications for practice in engaging a *One Billion Rising* event as orchestrated across disciplines and divisions within higher education.

One compelling caveat to my *One Billion Rising* analysis and salient to using the 2013 rising as a focus for this writing: In early fall 2012, while most in our rural campus community unwittingly slept, a female freshman was murdered in her residence hall at the hands of her visiting boyfriend. This tragedy preceded and inescapably veiled our *One Billion Rising* motions. As we walked out, danced, and rose en-masse on February 14, 2013, we symbolically rose for all victims and survivors of gender and intimate partner violence, but we rose with purposeful resolve for an auspicious young life stolen at our doorstep. "*She is us, we are her*" reverberated in our campus classrooms and hallways, forever changing the institutional fabric and memory of where we live and work. In a political movement penetrated by its cause, this local trauma falls at the fulcrum of this *One Billion Rising* chronicle, and it largely informs and directs its scholarly reach. Bridging theory with praxis, I consider the body and its politics as a site of theoretical analysis and deploy a cross-discipline interpretation that bridges the intersections of feminist activism with trauma movements. Performing the feminist subject across disciplines, I examine how Ensler's *One Billion Rising* prompt functions as part of a violence against women campus engagement effort. How does a publicly performed dance resistance, smacking up against lived violence, both revel in and coopt women's bodies? And where does personal and campus trauma, raw in intensity, locate itself within a national and globally staged trauma movement? Speak. Write. Demand an end to violence. These are my words. I rise in voice for those who cannot, particularly, one young woman whose taken life now incites my work.

V-DAY ONE BILLION RISING AND VIOLENCE

September 2012. A fall semester. Promising. New. A female. A freshman. A swimmer. A death. While many on our campus were stunned by a student murder, a college woman killed at the hands of her boyfriend is an all too common tragedy. Around the globe, physical, sexual, and psychological abuse afflicted on women and girls cuts across income, class, and cultural lines (Ensler, 2010, 2007; United Nations, 2015; Valenti, 2012, 2008). While we know gender-based and intimate partner violence is not a female only phenomenon, data underscores women as most susceptible. One in six American women compared to one in thirty-three men will be victims of sexual assault (RAIN, 2016). College students are especially vulnerable. Women 18-24 who are enrolled in college are three times more likely than women in general to suffer from sexual violence (National Sexual Violence Resource Center, 2015). Historically, unequal power relations between women and men make systematic violence against women a universal phenomenon (Brownmiller, 1975; Freedman, 2013; Katz, 2006; Valenti, 2016, 2008). Violence against women is so widespread that experts couch it as a normal aspect of women's experiences (Bevacqua, 2000; Brownmiller, 1975; Buchwald, Fletcher and Roth, 1993; Katz, 2006; Levy, 2008; Levy, 2005; Valenti, 2016, 2008). This normalizing of violence institutionalizes societal practices that sustain what we know as rape culture (Buchwald, et.al., 1993; Katz, 2006; Levy, 2008; Valenti, 2016, 2008). Media outlets of television, music, and advertising, in sexualizing women and girls, further fuel their objectification, which serves to reproduce rape behaviors that make women increasingly vulnerable (Douglas, 2010, Levy, 2005; Zeisler, 2008). The World Health Organization (2016), in a purposeful review of the prevalence of violence against women, determined intimate partner sexual violence as persistently prominent. UN Women (2015) with the World Health Organization (2013, 2016) characterize violence against women as a global health problem of epidemic proportions that intersects all corners of the globe and that limits women's societal interaction. Higher education, as a ladder for social mobility and a tool for change, positions college communities as strategic in engaging with and disseminating knowledge that fights violence.

Eve Ensler, playwright and sexual assault survivor, is a well-known champion of the violence against women crisis. Using literature and performance, Ensler has helped raise awareness about gender-based violence, seeking to bring safety and freedom to women worldwide (Ensler, 2007; Regine, 2010). Beginning in the United States on Valentine's Day 1998, Ensler engineered the first V-Day event to demand an end to violence against women and girls. The most prominent and enduring project to Ensler's V-Day movement is *The Vagina Monologues*, a play Ensler wrote and choreographed that enacts answers to the question, *if your vagina could talk, what would it say?* (Kracov-Zinckgraf, 2013). Performed in staged monologues, and a frequent backdrop to college activism in raising awareness about gender-based-violence, the play has brought voice and visibility across a range of often cloaked issues spanning taboos around women's sexual pleasure to atrocities common to women and girl's sexual abuse (Ensler, 2007; Kracov-Zinckgraf, 2013). These powerful productions fused the pretext of performing the *Vagina Monologues* from a celebration of women's sexuality to a movement to stop sexual violence (Ensler, 2007; Kracov-Zinckgraf, 2013). V-Day, since its early inception, has cast a global reach and is a common fixture to campus and community based educational programming aimed at stopping gender-based violence. Each year, on or around February 14, women from around the world stage *Vagina Monologues* productions to generate intellectual and financial capital that goes toward stopping violence against women and girls (V-day, 2014). This often includes taking a public stand against rape, battery, incest, female genital mutilation, and sexual slavery (V-Day, 2014). It also means taking a stand against violence that frequently unravels behind closed doors of homes and college parties, concealed by outer markings of relationships that are seemingly stable and consensual. V-Day's February 14 target, a day the United States hallmarks by love and romance, is purposeful in staging alternate Valentine's Day celebrations that recognize and expose the pervasiveness of intimate partner violence

V-Day has spiraled into a global movement with many grassroots activists grabbing onto its center. College campuses have been strategic here, frequently translating the V-Day message into multiple student-life events that seek to break tacit silences shrouding relationship violence. Ensler (2007) explains, "V-Day provides a path to action

through benefit work...around the world to sustain an infrastructure that keeps the V-Day network of millions of activists linked, informed, and engaged across the globe” (p. 172). In February 2013, the V-Day movement, in conjunction with its 15th anniversary, launched *One Billion Rising*. The impetus behind *One Billion Rising* circles back to the reality that one in three women will be impacted by violence in their lifetime, which translates to over one billion women globally (One Billion Rising, 2016). Now on the heels of its fifth year, the *One Billion Rising* movement has introduced permutations in theme: *One Billion Rising for Justice* (2014), *One Billion Rising for Revolution* (2015 and 2016), and *Solidarity Against the Exploitation of Women* (2017), but violence against women and girls has only escalated in reach and proportion. The *One Billion Rising* movement continues to grow, yet sadly, so does its cause and its causalities. Unavoidably, both personal and public trauma seep out of the V-Day, *One Billion Rising* charge, placing gender-based violence and its ensuing trauma in a social and cultural frame.

TRAUMA: PUBLIC AND PERSONAL FEELINGS

Ann Cvetkovich (2012, 2003, 1992) uses the word trauma strategically; she argues that trauma, as named and inescapably located in social and political arenas, links emotion with politics. Cvetkovich (2012, 2003, 1992) similarly considers trauma, not only as a consequence directly experienced by trauma survivors, but importantly, as experienced by those who circulate around incidences of trauma, and who, in these potentially unforeseen but still vulnerable roles, are marked by trauma that spills into these peripheral spaces. I turn to Cvetkovich’s (2012, 2003, 1992) interpretation of trauma and its public feelings dimension because of explicit recognition of ways trauma bleeds into those who intersect trauma victims and survivors, our campus community experiencing the murder of a female freshman as example, and also, in ways that capture how personal and local responses to public trauma, our *One Billion Rising* campus movement as example, can better inform various public displays of activism as part of a larger trauma movement.

Both seen and unseen, trauma lies at the center of violence, suffusing movements that challenge its offense. Cvetkovich’s (2012, 2003, 1992) conceptualization of trauma helps crystalize the wave of

emotions overlaying much of our campus *One Billion Rising* activities. As we rose in dance on February 14, 2013, the conflating of personal and public emotion both lifted and oppressed our *One Billion Rising* work. The trauma of a student murdered on our campus in early September 2012 hovered in corners of our minds, and the reality of this trauma, still raw in its intensity, added a solemn tenor to our activities that day. Conversely, the *One Billion Rising* dance we would collectively perform was lively and full of symbolic promise as a cross-disciplinary civic engagement endeavor. These opposing feelings of loss and celebration complicated our staged activism: How do we solemnly mourn as corporeal beings but use our bodies to celebrate our activist efforts? Similarly, our emotional range, from joy to despair, complicated our activist response: Can we hold tightly to our emotive despair while we perform as enlivened dancers? Reading and living this campus emotional expanse, I sought a feminist framework that conceptualized this collective incongruence. “The personal is political,” coined in the 1970s and a frequently used adage common to feminist activism, resonated loudly in authenticating recurrent ways women’s subjugation is rooted in public spheres of social and political power (hooks, 1994; Fassin and Rechtman, 2009). But the phrase left me wanting in a theoretical reading of our campus *One Billion Rising* activities. There is implicit analogy to the personal is political and Cvetkovich’s (2012, 2003, 1992) trauma language. Both capture ways personal experience, violence as case, have social and political ramifications, and similarly, both claim foci that illustrate ways violence on bodies, as a point of corporeal and emotional impact, moves within and around structures in private and public locations. Extending the socio-historical ground to the personal is political, Cvetkovich’s (2012, 2003) theorization of trauma is means to harness ways feelings as personal and public can anchor the basis for what is political and social (Fassin and Rechtman, 2009). This theoretical scaffolding of sorts allows us to scale the matrix of person, place, and discipline that was our *One Billion Rising* undertaking, and to do so deploying a critically informed lens. In short, Cvetkovich’s (2012, 2003, 1992) conceptualization of public trauma movements and the ripple of trauma that seeps into and impacts victims and survivors of these casualties, operationalizes the personal is political of *One Billion Rising* in a theory-to-praxis approach.

STAGING: MIXED FEELINGS PERFORMED

Our 2013 *One Billion Rising* collaboration comprised diverse scholarly perspectives that cut across disciplines and college units, bridging divisions of academic and student life. Laying out the details of our *One Billion Rising* event helps illustrate some of the many nuances to this interdisciplinary collaboration, and with this, some of the ensuing challenges to its endurance as a campus engagement and activist model. Women and Gender Studies with Student Affairs, Theatre and Music Studies, Art, Dance, and English, each often isolated in their own corners of knowledge, and similarly, each protective of their hard-earned disciplinary ground, came together in body and mind to conceive of, assemble, and enact a day of dance and poetic activism as a stand against gender-based violence. Cvetkovich (1992) emphasizes the difficulty in transforming pain and suffering into sustainable political action, particularly across differences, because the impetus to unite may be transient or externally imposed. This thinking recognizes ways the interdisciplinary nature of our campus inspired *One Billion Rising* effort, while rooted in shared intent, was not easy to realize or necessarily organic to our otherwise separate academic work. Despite our collective grief as a campus and our common higher education mission, unique units and disciplines were performing as one in the mix of varied orientations and commitments. This disparity is important to bear in mind as we consider ways personal and local activism plays out as part of larger activist movements and ways our campus interacted with the *One Billion Rising* call. Three widely populated flash mobs, an early morning rendition with 35-40 dancers in the college library lobby, a noon staging with over 75 dancers in the Student Union food court, and an afternoon finale¹ with over 150 dancers in the Fine Arts atrium were emotionally commanding in movement and voice. A graduate student in the Department of Dance creatively choreographed our flash mob dance movements to the score of Aretha Franklin's (1967) "*Respect*," and each of the three flash mobs that we performed were energized and rousing while also solemn and profound in their *One Billion Rising* intent. The multidisciplinary lenses that engineered the day inspired unity in encounter: Rise in dance along with us and you rise in dance to stop violence against women. "[College Name] Breaks the Chain," our campus invented slogan, inscribed event posters, Facebook pages,

1 Video link to the afternoon flash mob finale <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dsPmtw4FLHg>

YouTube video, and thousands of small round pink stickers, printed and distributed broadly to all those who joined our “Rise in Dance” activist call.

Elation flowed out of and around each flash mob performance. Dozens of faculty and staff moved alongside hundreds of students, most strangers to each other in their ascribed campus roles as otherwise lived outside our *One Billion Rising* surge. Transgressing anonymity, a sense of camaraderie and excited chatter preceded each flash mob and the enthusiasm of moving with others in public performance created a theatrical dimension that was bursting in energy and verve. Coordinated into the flash mob planning, many dancers wore pink T-shirts, and this intentional sameness in dress projected external markers of collective solidarity. This sway of multiple pink torsos constructed a buoyant mood that matched the flush and flourish of sensationalized fanfare that performed the day. An evening open mic poetry reading closed the *One Billion Rising* event. Readers, musicians, and audience members gathered in an intimate campus coffee shop where several contributed affecting poems, evoking still raw memories of sexual assault and its aftermath. Violence and its associated trauma, confronted in Ensler’s *One Billion Rising* call, incited our movement, which captured a critical mass of “we can overcome” presumptions. But when the dancing, music, and poetry subsided, who and what had we moved? And what would become of the multidisciplinary points of encounter to our campus engagement efforts? In the iconic sensation of the day, creeping behind well-choreographed bodies united in a global campaign, came an unsettling sense of failure. That evening, on the backside of our *One Billion Rising*, our social media feeds broadcast several local and national accounts of rape and sexual assault, reminding us that violence was everywhere. Sadly, as darkness followed night, those of us intimate with lived violence and gender oppressions felt beaten by our cause. Despite our well populated and multidisciplinary surge of activism, where we moved a campus to rise up in dance as a stand against gender and intimate partner violence, we knew then that we hadn’t really changed the lay of the land.

Cvetkovich (2012) asks, “How can we, as intellectuals and activists, acknowledge our own political disappointments and failures in a way

that can be enabling? “Where might hope be possible” (p. 1)? This is a pivotal question for this *One Billion Rising* analysis, particularly, as diverse players in a campus movement staged as part of a larger fight against violence and gendered oppressions and with raw and subjective loss preceding and encapsulating our personal and civic engagement efforts. Hundreds of otherwise uninformed campus citizens dancing resistance to gender-based violence was impressive. But the transitory nature of this activism disillusioned us, and our disappointment in this temporality in the mix of mourning a student’s death, intensified in the monumental but fleeting passage of the *One Billion Rising* stage. This emotive despair juxtaposed against shiny representations of dancing for a cause captured an intriguing dimension for analysis. Perhaps we can locate hope in trauma, and that trauma itself, in this instance, trauma complicated by a sensationalized, public display of joyful dance in the face of tragedy, can motivate change (Fassin and Rechtman, 2009). Borrowing Cvetkovich’s (2012) thinking, we dig into the negative emotions that a student’s murder evoked and use this as a lens to examine the social and political complexities that grew out of our campus *One Billion Rising* interactions. As a Women and Gender Studies scholar, I am seemingly well-versed in paradigms that fight corporeal violence that power abuses place on bodies. Such is paramount to Women and Gender Studies activist arm. But in the escalating pervasiveness of such violence, we must also fight the violence that furtively creeps into our minds where empowered activism meets accumulating despair. And we must similarly consider ways multiple perspectives, here, diverse academic disciplines and campus life units with unique knowledge bases, coalesce to leverage an activism that is enduring in its local and global reach. *One Billion Rising* notwithstanding, we must cross-pollinate our academic and political work with representations that do justice to social meaning in enduring ways (Cvetkovich, 2012).

Strength can emerge from our disappointments. In this way, I locate hope and potential empowerment on the backside of a tentatively engaged campus *One Billion Rising* campaign. Cvetkovich’s (2012, 2003) trauma discourse is strategic here, where she connects the personal effect of feeling bad about sexual trauma to larger public expressions around trauma. But Cvetkovich (2003) affirms that trauma connected with sexual violence is often subverted in its public visibility and significance as compared to traumas society

recognizes in national tragedies of war or genocide. The gender divide in incidences of sexual assault, and the seemingly private sphere under which these crimes repeatedly occur, account for this slippage in public awareness and accountability (Cvetkovich, 2003). Still, possible agency growing out of our *One Billion Rising* activities is partly about lifting the unseen importance of fighting gender-based violence into larger and more prominent social and political frames. This rings true in facing the trauma of a student murder that brought our campus to the *One Billion Rising* register and in reconciling the post traumatic effect that the waning activism of a cross-disciplinary *One Billion Rising* campus installation actually produced. That Ensler introduced interactive dance as a permutation to the V-Day movement, leverages this more public engagement initiative, in essence, constructing a performance platform where despair in sexual trauma can hypothetically merge with joy in dance to produce a stage for enacting social justice (Dodd, 2011).

BODIES AND RESISTANCE

Jackson & Shapiro-Phim (2008) note how dance enables historically disparate fields multifaceted opportunity to intersect, and similarly, emphasize the significance of dance as a social movement device in confronting abuse and injustices. As we situate the public feelings dimension of Cvetkovich's (2012, 2003, 1992) trauma work alongside artistic expression in dance, we find ourselves in multidisciplinary ground that complicates our reach. Human rights and gender justice work, of which *One Billion Rising* is a part, provides a backdrop for the sociopolitical center that drives violence against women activism. But the personal and public pieces of this activism, particularly the challenge to transition a campus trauma into sustainable political action as part of a global movement to stop violence, also helps set up a working critique that informs our post *One Billion Rising* reflections. That we see and search for meaning in our disappointment while also recognizing campus potential to create community around loss is what brings pen to paper as we place our mixed experiences with *One Billion Rising* into a larger academic dialogue (Dodds, 2011; Fassin and Rechtman, 2009). This bears intersection with Berlant's (2011) writing on cruel optimism as located in a sociopolitical context, where she describes a latent hope-in-failure perspective engendered in crisis-response activities, *One Billion Rising Stop Violence Against*

Women, as example. Berlant (2011) theorizes this shifting hope-to-despair corollary as inventing a space of group sovereignty united by a cause that revitalizes political activism that is otherwise fleeting in its endurance, largely drowned out by the pervasive white noise of its public and at times stagnant repetition. In fighting violence against women, it is easy to be worn out by the reiteration of staged activism itself as we repeat the motions of resistance again and again only to face recurrent violations. And it does not escape us that those most vulnerable to sexual violence and its aftermath are largely the ones performing resistance motions. But as Cvetkovich (2003, 2009) argues, and Berlant (2011) affirms, if we move closer to this trauma, really perceive and experience its negative depth, then we can better know and arm ourselves against its offence. Seeing a campus struck by and acting up against violence only to retreat in subsequent commitment to the crusade is our *One Billion Rising* dance montage of hope meeting despair. This duality frames what Berlant's (2011) describes as "cruel optimism."

Both Cvetkovich's (2012, 2003, 1992) public feeling project and Berlant's (2011) cruel optimism thinking bridge the darkness that kindles resistance itself with the empowerment that grows out of mobilizing others around a cause. In this way, *One Billion Rising*, operating at both a campus and global level, provides a focused but multidisciplinary movement, which sheds light on ways art fuses into and reifies civic engagement and human rights activities (Berlant, 2011; Lengel and Warren, 2005). This allows us to see ways private experiences with trauma, violence on bodies as illustration, can translate into public displays of discontent, such as rising up in choreographed unison to stop violence. In our *One Billion Rising* flash mob example, which galvanized diverse campus constituents to move alone and assembled as a group, dance functioned as both political and civic and singular and communal, and these intersections helped cultivate these activist and disciplinary dualities (Lorber and Moore, 2006). Although powerful in import, this same bridge that united multiplicities of resistance in voice and movement can similarly appear discordant when read as a working utility to social change. This is true when campus activism slaps up against unchanged realities, as bodies that enact resistance movements remain vulnerable to the very oppressions they fight.

Cvetkovich (2012; 2003, 1992) argues that a political agenda, I use *One Billion Rising*, must align private and public spheres in ways where private or personal experiences as separate from public life are also understood as central to public life. Fundamental to this analysis are ways *One Billion Rising* both elevated our college community in an en-masse rising of dance—its public and political dimension — but as we acknowledged epidemic levels of violence and loss surrounding and following our *One Billion Rising* installation, it also depressed our ideologies—its personal and emotional dimension. But Cvetkovich (2012, 2003, 1992) reminds us that the personal is political precisely because it is constructed as not being political — that is —that bodies as apart from the political cannot be wished away by an act of consciousness raising that is political; they can only be altered by material and social transformations. In this way, practices designed to re-politicize the personal, such as *One Billion Rising*, remain only a symptom of the separation of public and private spheres versus the cure to gender-based violence. The impact and limitations of social movements and how this is accomplished on campuses is germane to this analysis.

The political and emotive dualities that trickled out of our *One Billion Rising*, illuminate a critique that is salient to campus-staged activism that seeks to promote civic engagement around a social justice cause. Popular culture has, in many ways, sensationalized the *One Billion Rising* prompt, and this branding of Ensler's V-Day movement trickles down into campus installation efforts. V-Day's global reach and its artistic, mass produced appeal, focused a spotlight on *One Billion Rising* and its stop violence against women movements. This prevalence in *One Billion Rising* is impressive, and its wide reach strategically bolsters and sustains an important global movement. But this pervasiveness, as public staged dance intersects common and routine spaces, hypothetically touches occupied corners that are inadvertent and uninformed (Washington, 2004). While these touch-points widen the scope of who and how we fight gender violence, it is critical to note that those who inadvertently join in public movements that are political do not necessarily assume political or public voice. Similarly, accidental participants jumping on board a public staging of activism do not necessarily understand or possess sensitivity to the political purpose pushing the activism forward (Washington, 2004). In effect, as students and faculty and a constellation of other campus identities

entered into spaces of performance framed by our campus *One Billion Rising* flash mobs, they entered along firmly established parameters in college positions and functions that eventually splintered back into compartments of difference. While we united around a campus trauma, absent of ways to unify and endure the cause, we propagate what is fleeting gain versus sustainable community engaged progress (Ginsberg, 2008; Washington, 2004).

Walk out, dance, rise up, and demand an end to violence built incredible momentum on my campus. But in a monolith of a single day, this surge of bodies played out as a series of multiple pink dots plotted on a larger map where each dot operated independent of the dots around them. The dots did join together with temporal unity, and they similarly intersected across disciplines and units of campus life. But this momentary harmony did not translate into lived praxis that sustains an appreciation of or commitment to the stop violence cause. As I circle back to our campus trauma, a college freshman murdered by a visiting boyfriend only a few weeks into the semester spurred a surge of civic engagement activities rooted in in a stop gender -based violence movement. As a mechanism to engage a campus traumatized by violence, the *One Billion Rising* prompt and its dancing center carry magnetic pull. But interaction with the *One Billion Rising* cause among campus constituents was short-lived, marking a measure of meaningful civic engagement that falls horribly short. In fact, many faculty, staff, and students who gathered and rose as part of our *One Billion Rising* flash mobs accrued a false sense of accomplishment, walking away from each flash mob with the sense that the rising itself, and participation as a dancer in the moment, altered the world. Perhaps it did on a small scale that held us all in brief solidarity. But arguably, those who carry the torch of the *One Billion Rising* movement did not find themselves better armed, and most who engaged in the rising returned to a largely under-informed campus space. Sadly, absent of the tragedy of murder at our feet, our 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017 *One Billion Risings* have progressively waned in spirit and numbers.

Turning back to February 14, 2013, on the morning following our large 2013 *One Billion Rising* events, national news headlines broadcast the death of 29 year old South African model, Reeva Steenkamp,

fatally shot by her athlete boyfriend, Oscar Pistorius. This tragedy on the tails of a movement rooted in stopping intimate partner violence is not the failings of *One Billion Rising*, nor the retreating endurance of its civic engagement outcome, but rather, symptomatic of the stark realities that a very pink, dressed-up, *One Billion Rising* performance potentially obscures among campus citizens, who rise in dance but remain unfamiliar with the movement's purpose and cause. Similar to 2013, tragic aftermaths paralleled our campus *One Billion Rising* flash mobs, both in 2015 and 2016, where women died at the hands of intimate male partners. Most recently, in a neighboring picturesque community, a boyfriend murdered his longtime girlfriend, a 38 year-old emergency room nurse and mother of three who also was the sister of one of our own campus administrators. Victims and survivors of violence are people who we know, although it is easy to stroll casually by or away from a campus staged *One Billion Rising* dance and think, this is not happening here, to me, in this space. In fact, as institutional memory goes, many campus members today are unaware of our September 2012 trauma, a freshman, a swimmer, a daughter, a friend, whose murder shook a college community into a multidisciplinary rally around a stop violence cause.

THEORY TO PRAXIS

What can we make of this *One Billion Rising* analysis and its scholarship contribution to ways community engagement influences our teaching and research practices in higher education? *One Billion Rising's* symbolic energy does engender reminders of how a campus community can rally behind a cause. And in *One Billion Rising* lay opportunities for multiple disciplines and areas of student life to challenge power structures that construct and deploy violence. These are important take-aways as we consider our roles as faculty and staff whose higher education work seeks to engage students in ways that promote individual freedom, democratic societies, and social justice causes (Cravey and Petit, 2012). Undeniably, this skillset is increasingly important to helping students develop competencies in areas of global navigation, and similarly, is salient to social justice concerns in support of human societies common to learners across geographies of person, place, and discipline.

Faced with the trauma of a student murdered at the hands of her visiting boyfriend, staging a campus-based *One Billion Rising* is a strategic maneuver in a civic engagement plan that seeks to fight intimate partner violence. But to make that engagement enduring needs more than a campus tragedy and its aftermath and more than a seductive “Stop Violence Against Women” campaign manufactured to mass appeal (Douglas, 2010; Zeisler, 2008). Some of the pitfalls here miss the mark on pedagogy by falling into the vortex of staging a global performance that relies on corporeality that merely presumes versus informs rationality (Collin, 2010; hooks, 1994). These are largely knee-jerk reactions that are transitory versus lasting. They do help us cope, but in the end, not really. This is true of our own campus efforts, where we often find ourselves broadly positioning civic engagement prompts preceding knowledge about the purpose and meaning of sustained engagement efforts. But I would argue that this reactive response and the urgency to leap-in are largely true on a more global scale. While well-intended, *One Billion Rising’s* ceremonial fanfare and its outer veneer, construct images of campus accord that imagine endurance beyond the wave of the day. The encroaching sensationalizing of *One Billion Rising* overtakes the injustices and remote remedies behind it. Without reading behind the slogans, outward *One Billion Rising* facade, despite its well-articulated atrocities, tends to hide the structural and systematic gender wrongs that transgress it. Similar to numerous fights for women’s equality, advocacy against gender wrongs presumes well-heeled outcomes to overturn them (Collins, 2010; May, 2015; Mohanty, 2003; Rupp, 1997). Analogous to Berlant’s (2011) hope meeting despair tenet, much educational work lay ahead to craft civic engagement efforts that intersect gender equality outcomes.

Our campus community’s waning response to *One Billion Rising* is emblematic of the difficulties feminist activists face in sustaining meaningful local-to-public civic engagement outcomes. And the reluctance in fighting gender-based violence here is in many ways a metaphor for the skepticism that overshadows the fight for gender equality on a larger scale (Launius and Hassel, 2015). Growing dispassion among a campus hit by violence underscores these contentions, yet missing in our 2013 and subsequent *One Billion Rising* events is formal assessment of the activism beyond our participant observation. We do not know, for example, if partaking in our *One*

Billion Rising flash mobs or poetry reading — as dancers, readers, or observers — increased awareness about sexual assault and intimate partner violence, or, if those who engaged in our call to action, even if tentatively, might be more apt to step up as future bystanders in defense of victims and survivors of sexual assault (Banyard, 2008). Those familiar with assessment work in higher education can appreciate the need for more systematic follow-up as we look to guide future programming efforts here and in a broader gender justice arena. Strategically, as we seek to stop violence and our repetitive need to act up against these crimes, focus groups and questionnaires that explore ensuing impact of a locally mounted *One Billion Rising* campaign would serve the campus and the larger movement well. Related, we must examine our own roles as college citizens as we study gender inequalities under which dating violence unravels, and we must examine our own roles as societal members as we seek to reconcile gender codes that applaud dominance and aggressiveness common to the hyper masculinities that spur violent behavior (Katz, 2006; Pascoe and Bridges, 2016). Standing at the fulcrum where a local campus shoulders a larger political movement, we must extend our reach beyond ourselves both without and despite the weight of our own trauma.

Broadening our private to public discourse on *One Billion Rising* sits at the nexus of a global epidemic where violence against women is rampant. But in our campus-situated introspections, we can easily eclipse this intersectional perspective. Feminist movements outside the United States hold critical insight. Many Western feminists have attempted to universalize women's rights and goals, often speaking without permission for citizens in other countries (Fernandes, 2013; May, 2015; Mohanty, 2003; Rupp, 1997). This casting of "one feminist" reproduces a cultural imperialism that distances versus bridges difference. V-Day and its *One Billion Rising* charge do make space for diversity of experience and expression while still establishing an accessible, common purpose where distinct women and men are able to form collective coalitions. And Ensler's V-Day and *One Billion Rising* campus implementation arm is sizable in engaging young voices in both local and global endeavors. But *One Billion Rising's* Westernization in bodies and form, despite its very visible iterations in global reach, is inescapable — and with this —potentially exclusionary and oppressive (Fernandes, 2013). Crenshaw (1997)

underscores that the power of a movement lies in the hands of those who create the activism under which they mobilize themselves and others. As we understand sexual violence and global movements to overcome personal and public trauma, an intersectional lens as a reach beyond our own corporality is paramount (Collins, 2010; hooks, 1994; May, 2015; Mohanty, 2003). Borrowing Crenshaw's (1997) thinking, "The struggle over incorporating difference is not a petty or superficial conflict about who gets to sit at the head of the table. In the context of violence, it is sometimes a deadly serious matter of who will survive and who will not" (p. 488). The 2013 slogan, "[Campus Name] Breaks the Chain" fractured a moment. But only for a moment.

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Sustaining civic engagement across a campus and erasing gender-based violence both locally and globally is too much to expect of one coordinated uprising. This is a given. But generating future engagement within and around a stop violence cause is not an unreasonable outcome for a multidisciplinary, cross-divisional campus undertaking that grows out of an annual and repeating V-Day *One Billion Rising* prompt. Crenshaw's (1997) ownership contention, that the power of a movement must be organic to the movers within it, rings true for higher education practice. The points of encounter between person, place, and discipline in orchestrating a campus-based gender-based violence movement needs an organic center to live beyond its own temporality. This becomes Berlant's (2011) cruel optimism and Cvetkovich's (2012) public feelings in practice where campus structures that instigate bodies to rise up against patriarchal oppressions, absent of intrinsic agency, subside in their activist and emotive impact. A publicly performed dance resistance, smacking up against lived violence, has both private and public dimension. As Cvetkovich (2012, 2003, 1992) argues, straddling feelings as personal and public can anchor the basis for what is political and social. Both capture ways our interdisciplinary and cross-divisional work must build stronger bridges across difference so that we are not just performing a day of duty as corporeal subjects, but rather, we are, in our corporeal performance, catalysts to a larger cause that pushes against tendencies to recoil back into our protected and partitioned corners of academic life. We must endure beyond ourselves and our

place. We must see into and reach behind the manufactured picture. We must.

A public four-year college. September 2012. A fall semester. Promising. New. A female. A freshman. A swimmer. A death. She is us. We are her. She or he or they tragically will be our tomorrow. Ensler's V-Day *One Billion Rising* movements do matter. I will champion a *One Billion Rising* campaign on my campus in 2018; it will be my sixth time around the bend. In the tenor of Berlant (2011), I likely will be empowered and disillusioned by this effort, but I unequivocally will not give up. Despite this resolute reduction in a pledge to carry on, we must be vigilant not to be seduced by promises of change in placards and bodies that merely perform resistance. Without intentionality and across college commitment, campus-staged *One Billion Risings* and movements like it confirm an iconic feminism that repeats itself in the face oppression while only temporarily disrupts the traumas that necessitate its activist call.

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