

Rape Proclivity Among Males

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This article integrates the findings of a series of studies that empirically address contentions that many "normal" men possess a proclivity to rape. In these studies, an attempt was made to identify individuals with such a proclivity by asking male college students how likely they personally would be to rape if they could be assured of not being caught. On the average, about 35% indicated some likelihood of raping. To assess the validity of such reports as indicators of a proclivity to rape, the following three steps were taken: First, the literature was reviewed to identify responses that distinguished convicted rapists from the general population. The responses found to characterize rapists were greater acceptance of rape myths and relatively high sexual arousal to rape depictions. Second, the relationships between reported likelihood of raping and the responses found to characterize rapists were analyzed. The data clearly showed that in comparison with men who reported lower likelihood of raping, men who indicated higher likelihood were more similar to convicted rapists both in beliefs in rape myths and in sexual arousal to rape depictions. Third, the relationship between likelihood of raping reports and aggressive behavior was examined. It was found that higher reported likelihood of raping was associated with greater aggression against women within a laboratory

Portions of this paper were presented at the Annual Meetings of the American Psychological Association, Los Angeles, August, 1981. The author would like to express his appreciation to James V. P. Check for his valuable help in gathering information and to Jacqueline D. Goodchilds and Zipora Malamuth for their comments on earlier drafts. Much of the research reported was supported by grant #410-78-0607-R1 and grant #410-78-0607-R2 from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Major portions of this article were written while the author was a Visiting Scholar at UCLA.

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setting. The overall pattern of the data is interpreted as supporting the validity of likelihood of raping ratings and consistent with contentions that many men have a proclivity to rape. Possible causes of such a propensity and directions for future research are discussed.

One of the ideas most frequently reiterated in feminists' writings on the subject of rape is that there are many men in the general population with a propensity to rape (e.g., Brownmiller, 1975; Clark & Lewis, 1977; Griffin, 1975, 1979; Medea & Thompson, 1974; Russell, 1975, 1980). To some degree, this perspective is at variance with the position traditionally adopted by psychotherapists that rape is "a form of sexual psychopathy" (Groth & Burgess, 1977 p. 406). However, many feminists also consider rape to be a "diagnosable, treatable, illness" (Clark & Lewis, 1977, p. 1980). The difference appears to be one of emphasis. Psychotherapists have generally focused attention exclusively on treating the pathology of individual rapists. While feminists recognize the need to treat such individuals, they contend that the fundamental underlying causes for most rapes are rooted in traditional sex roles and misogynous forces within society. Such societal factors, according to feminists, cause many men to be inclined to aggress sexually against women, although only relatively few men may actually be convicted for the crime of rape.

To address, empirically, the contention that many men have a propensity to rape requires a more rigorous definition of the concept of "rape proclivity" than is currently available in the feminist literature. It is not readily apparent how one could test empirically the argument that all men are ". . . real or potential rapists" (Clark & Lewis, 1977, p. 140). People have the potential to engage in virtually any behavior. From a scientific perspective, it is more meaningful to consider the relative probabilities for different individuals of engaging in certain acts. Thus for purposes of the present article, the degree of a person's "proclivity to rape" will be defined according to the *relative* likelihood for men to rape under various conditions that may or may not actually occur (e.g., wartime).

In this paper, I will describe and integrate data concerning the hypothesis that many men, relative to others, possess a proclivity to rape. To begin with, a measure intended to identify men with such a proclivity will be described. Then, research pertaining to the validity of this measure will be presented. Finally, an attempt will be made to lay the foundation for a theory of rape proclivity in the hope that such a theory may increase under-

standing of and ability to prevent rape and other crimes of sexual aggression.

IDENTIFYING INDIVIDUALS WITH A PROPENSITY TO RAPE

Self-Reported Likelihood of Raping

In an attempt to identify individuals who may possess a relative propensity to rape (but who have not necessarily actually raped), males were asked in a series of studies (Malamuth, 1981; Malamuth & Check, 1980a; Malamuth, Haber & Feshbach, 1980; Tieger, 1981; Malamuth, Reisin & Spinner, Note 1; Malamuth & Check, Note 2) to indicate the likelihood that they personally would rape if they could be assured of not being caught and punished (i.e., the LR report). These men, mostly college students, came from varied parts of North America including the Los Angeles and Stanford areas in California and the Winnipeg area in Canada. Typically, they were asked to indicate their responses on a five point scale ranging from (1) not at all likely to (5) very likely. This question was asked under a variety of conditions, such as following the viewing of a videotaped interview with an actual rape victim, following the reading of a pornographic description of rape, and without any prior "exposure treatment" at all. While, as might be expected, there was some variability in the distribution of responses across studies, in general there was a great deal of consistency in that a sizeable percentage of the respondents indicated some likelihood of raping. Across these varied studies, an average of about 35% of males indicated any likelihood at all of raping (i.e., a 2 or above on the scale) and an average of about 20% indicated higher likelihoods (i.e., a 3 or above).

Validity of Reported Likelihood of Raping

Without additional data, the hypothetical nature of this question (i.e., if you could be assured of not being caught) makes it difficult to judge whether it reveals any socially meaningful information. One way to begin to assess its construct validity (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955) as a measure of rape proclivity is to determine whether LR reports are associated with other responses in a theoretically expected manner.

In order to specify the responses that LR reports should theoretically be associated with, it is necessary to identify responses that distinguish known rapists from the general population. If such responses can be identified reliably, then it can be determined empirically whether those who report a greater likelihood

to rape are more similar to rapists than those who indicate less (or no) likelihood of raping. If LR reports were found to predict responses known to be associated with rapists, this would provide some empirical support for the possibility that LR reports may reflect a propensity to rape.

Ideally, research that compared the responses of known rapists to those of non-rapists would have access to similar representative populations from both groups. Samples of rapists, however, can generally be obtained only from jails or mental institutions. Since the percentage of rapes that are reported and convicted is very small and since those rapists that are actually convicted differ markedly from those who are not apprehended (Clark & Lewis, 1977; Rada, 1978), rapist samples are probably quite unrepresentative.

This conclusion is supported by a rather unusual attempt to study the responses of rapists who have not come to the attention of the law. Smithyman (1978) placed ads in Los Angeles newspapers asking, "Are you a rapist? If so, call me". He interviewed anonymously 50 of the callers and found that they differed considerably from samples of convicted rapists (e.g., 50% of these "undetected" rapists were college educated).

The present paper presents analyses of whether men who indicated greater likelihoods of raping are more similar to actual rapists (on responses found to characterize rapists) than men who indicated lower likelihoods of raping. As a function of the variables that led certain rapists to be caught and convicted (e.g., low socioeconomic level, particularly brutal act, and so on), the unrepresentativeness of rapist samples is far more likely to obscure rather than accentuate similarities that may exist between men with relatively high LR ratings and rapists. If the data nonetheless showed similarities on pertinent dimensions between men who indicated a likelihood to rape and convicted rapists, then it would be likely that even greater similarities would have been found in comparisons with representative samples of rapists.

IDENTIFYING RESPONSES THAT CHARACTERIZE RAPISTS

Investigators have attempted to identify differences between convicted rapists and control groups on a variety of general measures. For example, comparisons have been made on the Rorschach Inkblot Test (e.g., Perdue & Lester, 1972), the MMPI (e.g., Carroll & Fuller, 1971), the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule (Fisher & Rivlin, 1971), the Buss-Durkee Hostility In-

ventory (Buss & Durkee, 1957; Rada, Laws & Kellner, 1976) and intelligence scales (Rada, 1978). As discussed by Rada (1978), these studies have failed to provide reliable differences between rapists and nonrapists.

There have been, however, two types of responses that appear to discriminate between rapists and the general population. Not surprisingly, these responses seem to be more directly linked to acts of rape. It has been found that rapists are more likely than other males 1) to hold callous attitudes about rape and to believe in rape myths, and 2) to show relatively high levels of sexual arousal to depictions of rape. The following discussion will elaborate on these data by comparing the responses of a) convicted rapists, b) the general population as a whole and c) men divided according to their LR reports on measures of beliefs in rape myths and of sexual responsiveness to rape.

ACCEPTANCE OF RAPE MYTHS

Rapists and Rape Myths

Burt (1980) defines rape myths as prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims and rapists (e.g., "women ask for it"). While rape myths are accepted to a surprising degree by individuals from varied walks of life (Barber, 1974; Barnett & Feild, 1977; Burt, 1978, 1980; Feild, 1978a, 1978b; Malamuth et al., 1980a), there is some indication that beliefs in rape myths are more likely to be held by rapists than by males in the general population (Clark & Lewis, 1977; Feild, 1978a; Gager & Schurr, 1976) and that such beliefs may contribute to the commission of their crimes (Burt, 1978, 1980).

There are many clinical reports that rapists frequently hold callous attitudes about rape and believe in rape myths (e.g., Clark & Lewis, 1977; Gager & Schurr, 1976). For instance, Gager & Schurr (1976), state that "probably the single most used cry of rapist to victim is: "You bitch . . . slut . . . you know you want it. You *all* want it" and afterward, "There now, you really enjoyed it, didn't you?"

Data from more systematic studies of rapists' attitudes tend to collaborate the clinical reports. Wolfe and Baker (1980) studied the beliefs and attitudes of 86 convicted rapists and reported that virtually all, despite much evidence to the contrary, believed that their actions did not constitute rape or were justified by the circumstances. Unfortunately, these investigators did not provide data regarding general endorsement of rape myths as contrasted

with beliefs specifically related to these rapists' own crimes. Feild (1978b) found that rapists were more likely than rape crisis counselors to endorse various views that may be labelled as "rape myths" such as "victims are likely to precipitate rape through their appearances or behavior" (p. 169). However, patrol police officers and citizens from the general population were found to be more similar to the rapists than to the rape counselors in their views of rape. Burt (1978) found more acceptance of rape myths among the general public and least among social workers, with rapists in between the two groups. Burt pointed out, however, that the rapists in her sample had been in treatment programs for a long period of time, programs that placed "heavy emphasis on changing stereotyped attitudes which the rapists originally held when they entered the programs" (p. 286). Thus, it is clear that researchers and practitioners working with rapists frequently report that rapists typically believe in rape myths (at least, before treatment), but there is need for additional systematic data to collaborate those reports.

Burt (1978, 1980) argues that beliefs in rape myths play an important role in causing rape. She hypothesizes that such beliefs may be used by rapists to justify their behavior and as "psychological releasers or neutralizers, allowing potential rapists to turn off social prohibitions against injuring or using others when they want to commit an assault." (1978, p. 282). Moreover, she argues that similar beliefs held by the family and friends of assailants may also contribute indirectly to such assaults because by blaming the victim or downgrading any serious injury to her, excuses are created for the assailants' actions.

Non-deviants and Rape Myths

Rape myths seem to be widely held by members of the general population. For example, Burt (1980) found that over half of her representative sample of 598 Minnesota residents agreed with statements such as "In the majority of rapes, the victim was promiscuous or had a bad reputation." Similarly, over half of her sample thought that 50% or more of rapes are reported as rapes only because "the woman was trying to get back at the man she was angry with or was trying to cover up an illegitimate pregnancy." In an important theoretical contribution to the understanding of rape myths, Burt (1980) has shown that rape myth acceptance forms part of a larger and interrelated attitude structure that includes acceptance of interpersonal violence (primarily against women), the belief that sexual relationships are adversar-

ial in nature, and sex role stereotyping. Recently, Malamuth & Check (Note 2) replicated these findings in a study of the attitudinal structure of 271 Canadian university students.

LR and Rape Myths

It has been very consistently found that individuals with higher LR reports have more callous attitudes towards rape and believe in rape myths to a greater degree than those with lower LR scores (Malamuth et al., 1980a; Malamuth & Check, 1980a; Tieger, 1981; Malamuth et al., Note 1). For example, higher LR scores have been consistently shown to be positively and significantly related to the belief that other men would rape if they knew they could avoid being caught, to identification with rapists in depictions of rape, to perceptions that rape victims cause and derive pleasure from such assaults (in fictionalized portrayals and in an actual interview with a rape victim), and with the belief that women in general secretly desire and enjoy such victimization. Tieger (1981) reported that a discriminant functions analysis based on attitudes towards rape achieved an 83% success rate in predicting subjects' group membership as being High vs. Low Likelihood of Raping. Using Burt's (1980) scales, Ceniti and Malamuth (Note 3) found that Rape Myth Acceptance (RMA) and Acceptance of Interpersonal Violence (AIV) were both highly correlated with LR scores, $r(67) = .60, p < .001$ and $r(67) = .54, p < .001$ respectively. These relationships were found both when measures were administered concurrently and when they were administered several weeks apart. Thus, there is much support for the conclusion that LR scores are strongly associated with callous attitudes towards rape and with beliefs in rape myths.

In somewhat similar research, Oros, Buk & Koss (Note 4) administered a Sexual Experiences Survey to undergraduate male students. This questionnaire included items such as "Have you ever obtained sexual intercourse with a woman who didn't want to by using some degree of physical force (twisting her arm, holding her down, etc.)?" On the basis of this questionnaire, subjects were classified according to their degree of sexual aggressiveness. In a later session, these individuals were presented with the identical scenario of an interaction between a man and a woman that resulted in the use of force. Subjects were asked to indicate their perceptions of the events in this scenario. These perceptions were found to be strongly related to the classification based on sexual aggression, with, for example, subjects higher on sexual aggressiveness being more likely to believe that the female

knew the man would use force and less likely to believe that his actions would result in a rape conviction.

SEXUAL AROUSAL

In this section, research will be described that examines the responses of rapists, of the general population as a whole, and of men divided on the basis of LR ratings, on measures of sexual arousal to depictions of rape and of consenting scenes.

Rapists and Sexual Arousal

Gene Abel and his associates (Abel, Barlow, Blanchard & Guild, 1977; Abel, Blanchard & Becker, 1976, 1978; Abel, Blanchard, Becker & Djenderedjian, 1978; Abel, Becker & Skinner, 1980) report that rapists show high and about equal levels of penile tumescence to audio-taped portrayals of both rape and consenting sexual acts. This finding has been replicated by other investigators (Barbaree, Marshall & Lanthier, 1979; Quinsey, Chaplin & Varney, 1981). While there is some indication that the more violent rapists are more sexually aroused by rape than by consenting scenes (Abel et al., 1977), the conclusion about rapists as a group is that they are about equally aroused by rape as by mutually-consenting depictions.

On the basis of these data (and the findings discussed below for non-deviants) Abel et al., (1977) developed the "rape index" which is a ratio of sexual arousal to rape divided by arousal to consenting portrayals. They argue (see also Abel, Blanchard & Becker, 1976, 1978) that this measure serves as an objective index of a proclivity to rape. Using this index, an individual whose sexual arousal to rape depictions is similar to or greater than his arousal to consenting depictions would be considered as having rapist tendencies. These investigators and others have been using this measure in the diagnosis and treatment of rapists and have recently extended it to the identification and treatment of child molesters (Quinsey, Chaplin & Carrigan, 1980; Abel, Becker, Murphy & Flanagan, Note 5) by contrasting sexual arousal to child molestation with arousal to adult consenting depictions. Quinsey et al., (1980) provided some support for the validity of this assessment technique by showing that it successfully predicted recidivism following discharge from a psychiatric institution.

Non-Rapists and Sexual Arousal

The studies reported above (e.g., Abel et al., 1977; Barbaree et al., 1979) found that, in contrast to rapists, non-rapists showed

relatively little sexual arousal to rape as compared with consenting themes. However, other studies show that rape stimuli are as sexually arousing as consenting depictions to non-rapists (Farkas, 1979; Malamuth, 1981; Malamuth & Check, 1980a; Schmidt, 1975). The following discussion presents data concerning mediating conditions that appear to reconcile the seemingly conflicting data in the literature. Most of the subjects in these experiments were undergraduate males.

Victim's Responses and Sexual Arousal. There are substantial data showing that manipulating the reactions of the victim within rape portrayals affects very considerably the sexual arousal of both male and female college students. If the victim is portrayed, from the rapist's perceptions, as becoming involuntarily sexually aroused by the assault, subjects have been found to be as sexually aroused (both on self-reports and penile tumescence measures) as by mutually-consenting depictions (Malamuth & Check, 1980a, 1980b; Malamuth, Heim & Feshback, 1980). (It should be noted that research that includes depictions of victim arousal also presents, as part of the research debriefing, very explicit statements concerning the falsity of such rape myths. Recent data show that such debriefings are effective in dispelling beliefs in rape myths, i.e., Donnerstein & Berkowitz, in press; Malamuth & Check, Note 6; Check & Malamuth, Note 7). Rape portrayals in which the victim continuously abhors the assault, on the other hand, result in significantly less sexual arousal than consenting scenes (Malamuth et al., 1980b; Malamuth & Check, 1980a, 1980b). These data may help account for the conflicting findings discussed above since the studies reporting that non-rapists showed relatively little sexual arousal to rape used depictions emphasizing the victim's abhorrence (e.g., Abel et al., 1977), whereas studies reporting relatively high arousal to rape used depictions describing or implying victim arousal (e.g., Farkas, 1979).

LR and Sexual Arousal. LR ratings have been found to be positively correlated with sexual arousal to rape but not with arousal to consenting depictions (Malamuth et al., 1980b; Malamuth & Check, 1980b). This has been particularly true of self-reported sexual arousal, although similar results have been obtained with tumescence measures. The findings in this area are well illustrated in a recent study by Malamuth & Check (Note 2).

These investigators first held a preliminary session in which subjects were given a questionnaire that included the LR item. On the basis of this item, 62 subjects were classified as Low LR (a rating of 1 = "not at all likely" on the 5-point scale). Forty-two

subjects were classified as High LR (a rating of 2 or higher). This distribution is similar to that of earlier studies (Malamuth et al., 1980a; Malamuth & Check, in press; Tieger, 1981).

Several days later, subjects were randomly assigned to listen to one of several tapes that included: 1) a rape depiction wherein the victim continuously abhors the assault (i.e., Rape Victim Abhorrence), 2) a rape portrayal in which the rapist perceives that the victim becomes involuntarily sexually aroused (i.e., Rape Victim Arousal), and 3) a mutually-consenting depiction with a willing sexually aroused partner (i.e., Consenting). These depictions were otherwise equated in terms of sexual content, length, and the like.

Penile tumescence and self-reported sexual arousal to each of these portrayals as a function of subjects' LR classification are presented in Figure 1. Low LR subjects were more sexually stimulated by the mutually-consenting than the rape-abhorrence depictions, whereas High LR subjects showed the opposite tendency on the penile tumescence measure but reported the same levels of arousal to the Rape Abhorrence and Consenting depictions. The data of the High LR subjects to the Rape Abhorrence and Consenting depictions parallel very closely the responses of the rapists studied by Abel et al. (1977), who had only used these two types of depictions. With respect to the Rape Victim Arousal portrayal (a type of depiction not used by Abel et al.), Low LR subjects showed about the same levels of arousal to them as to the consenting depiction, whereas High LR subjects showed the highest levels of arousal to this portrayal.

LR AND AGGRESSION

The data reviewed above indicate that LR scores are associated with rape myth acceptance, acceptance of interpersonal violence against women, and sexual arousal in a theoretically expected manner. However, it remains to be demonstrated that LR reports can predict aggressive acts. Obviously, it is impossible to examine rape within an experimental setting. An alternative is to determine whether LR ratings predict acts of aggression that can be studied within an experimental context. While it is not suggested that such aggressive acts constitute an actual analogue to the crime of rape, it is suggested that rape is an act of violence related to other acts of aggression against women (Burt, 1980; Clark & Lewis, 1977). Therefore, measures that assess rape propensity should predict other acts of aggression against women.

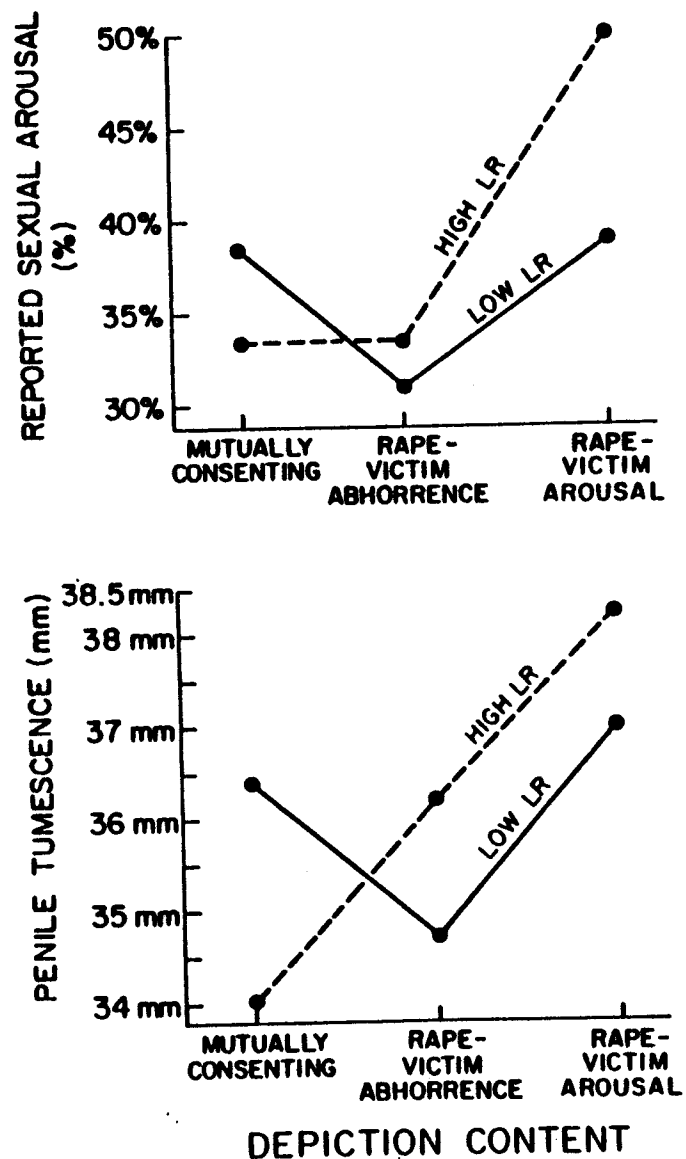


FIGURE 1

Sexual arousal as a function of depiction content and subjects' Likelihood of Raping (LR) classification.

Within the context of research designed to determine whether certain measures predict aggressive behavior against a woman (Malamuth, Note 8), 42 male college students were asked how likely they would be to rape if they could not be caught (i.e., the LR). Days later, the same subjects participated in what was ostensibly a totally different experiment; it was actually the second phase of the research. Post-experimental questionnaires verified that subjects were unaware of the relationship between the two phases, but believed that they were participating in two completely unrelated experiments. In this second phase of the research, subjects were mildly rejected and insulted by a woman (a confederate of the experimenter). The study used a "Buss paradigm." Subjects were allowed to choose among different levels of aversive noise (i.e., the measure of behavioral aggression), that they would (ostensibly) administer to the confederate as punishment for incorrect responses. In addition, subjects reported how angry they felt toward the woman and to what extent they had wanted to hurt her. LR reports were correlated with anger, $r(40) = 0.36, p < .02$, behavioral aggression, $r(40) = 0.32, p < .05$, and a reported desire to hurt the woman, $r(40) = 0.37, p < .02$. These data suggest that LR reports are related to male aggression against women.

CAUSES OF RAPE PROCLIVITY

The data presented heretofore show that a substantial percentage of male college students report some likelihood that they would rape if they could be assured of not being caught. These LR reports were found to be associated with attitudes, sexual arousal and aggressive behavior in a theoretically predicted pattern based on rapists' attitudinal and arousal patterns and on the conceptualization of rape as an act of aggression linked to other aggressive acts against women. Taken as a whole, these data suggest that LR reports have some validity as indicators of a proclivity to rape.

In the following discussion, I will attempt to lay the foundation for the theoretical understanding of such a proclivity by examining some of the factors that may lead men to report some likelihood of raping. These factors consist of men's perceptions of rape, sexual arousal to violence, and aggressive behavior.

Perceptions of Rape

One of the factors that may influence LR reports are perceptions of what is involved in committing rape and what are its

consequences. Unfortunately, many people continue to perceive rape as a relatively innocuous act. Such an attitude is reflected in the comments made by actor James Caan after viewing the depressing conditions in an Ohio prison. He said, "I'm not going to do anything wrong anymore, except maybe for an occasional rape." (*Newsweek*, September 15, 1975; p. 48).

As noted earlier, higher LR reports have been consistently found to be associated with a more callous attitude towards rape and with greater acceptance of rape myths. These data may be summarized as follows: men with a higher LR self-rating are more inclined to perceive rape as a sexual act which women desire and enjoy whereas those with lower LR reports perceive rape more in terms of an act of violence with serious consequences to the victim (Malamuth & Check, 1980a; Malamuth et al., 1980b; Tieger, 1981; Malamuth et al., Note 1). Such differences in perceptions of rape may be partially responsible for differences in beliefs about one's own likelihood of committing such an act. As Burt (1980) has suggested, beliefs in rape myths may similarly contribute to the actual commission of rape.

One of the variables that may influence perceptions of rape and its consequences is the way such assaults are presented in the mass media. The media are probably the major source of information about rape for most men. Feminist writers (e.g., Brownmiller, 1975; Clark, 1980; Russell, 1980) have forcefully argued that the mass media play an important role in shaping people's perceptions of and attitudes towards rape, an assertion that has recently received considerable empirical support (Bart & Jozsa, 1980; Malamuth et al., 1980a; Malamuth & Check, 1980a, Malamuth & Donnerstein, in press). To the extent that the mass media may affect perceptions of the meaning and consequences of rape, they may also influence men's perceptions of their own likely behavior as reflected in the LR reports.

Tieger (Note 9) recently conducted a study to determine whether LR reports are affected by the nature of the description of rape within the mass media. Eighty male subjects from a community college were given simulated newspaper accounts of rape. Half of the subjects were randomly assigned to read a description that did not contain explicit mention of the violent consequences to the victim whereas the other half read a description that contained such explicit description (i.e., "She was beaten badly about the face and body and threatened with her life if she didn't do what she was told"). Subjects were then asked to rate their own likelihood of committing a rape as in the account they had read

if they could be certain of not being caught. It was found that the explicit mention of violent consequences did significantly affect the LR response, with 35% of the subjects indicating some likelihood of raping after reading the non-violent version and 10% similarly responding after the violent version.

These findings, however, are open to two interpretations. One interpretation is that the description of the violent consequences may have led subjects to be more inclined to perceive rape as a horrendous act, thus making them less likely to believe that they personally are capable of raping. On the other hand, these data may show that fewer subjects believe that they are capable of committing a rape with serious violent consequences, but the newspaper description may not have altered their perceptions of rape in general or their assessment of the likelihood that they might engage in a relatively non-violent rape. To address these two interpretations properly it would have been necessary to ask subjects to indicate their likelihood of raping in general, in addition to inquiring whether they might behave as the rapist in any particular depiction.

Sexual Arousal to Violence

Bem's (1972) self-perception theory may help explain the development of LR reports. To briefly summarize this theory, it suggests that we often infer our own internal states (e.g., attitudes, emotions, behavioral tendencies) from observing our overt responses, just as we infer other people's internal states from observing their behavior. The possible role of such a process is illustrated in the following description by one of the rapists interviewed by Goldstein & Kant (1973) regarding how he first learned that he was attracted to violence:

"The book *Marquis de Sade* stands out most in my recent memory—the brutality made it stand out so clearly. One scene in particular stands out when a guy had this girl hanging with a noose around her neck and screwing her at the same time; then when he finished, he kicked the basket out from under her. I learned that I got turned on by brutality" (p. 99).

To the extent that people perceive that they are sexually aroused by violence, they may infer that they are capable of and would be sexually aroused by rape. For many individuals, this inference may be based on their experiences with violent pornography rather than any actual behavior they have personally engaged in. Their reactions to pornography may lead them to believe (probably erroneously) that they would similarly be sex-

ually aroused by actually engaging in rape.

The possibility that LR reports may be based on perceptions that rape is sexually arousing is consistent with the findings (as noted earlier) that higher LR reports are associated with greater sexual arousal to rape but not to mutually consenting depictions (Malamuth et al., 1980a; Malamuth & Check, 1980a; Malamuth & Check, Note 2; Ceniti & Malamuth, Note 3; Check & Malamuth, Note 10). To test this possibility more directly, Malamuth and Ceniti (Note 11) and Malamuth, Check and Briere (Note 12) asked subjects how sexually arousing they thought they would find various acts if they actually were to engage in them. In both of these studies, LR reports were found to be very strongly associated with the belief that rape would be a sexually arousing experience.

Aggressive Behavior

For some men, LR reports may be based on their aggressive behavior. Various sources of data suggest that sexually aggressive acts that might or might not have been defined as rape had they come to the attention of the law occur with considerable frequency among college and high school students. For example, Kanin and his associates (Kanin, 1957, 1965, 1967; Kanin & Parcell, 1977) found that over half of the female college students interviewed reported experiencing offensive male sexual aggression during the previous year. Giarusso, Johnson, Goodchilds & Zellman (Note 13) similarly report that over 50% of the male high school students they interviewed believed that it was acceptable ". . . for a guy to hold a girl down and force her to have sexual intercourse" in various situations, such as when "she gets him sexually excited" or "she says she's going to have sex with him and then changes her mind." Recent data by Koss & Oros (Note 14) indicate that such attitudes are frequently reflected in college students' behavior. In order to identify hidden cases of rape, these investigators administered an anonymous self-report "Sexual Experience Survey" to a random sample of 3,862 college students. They found that 23% of the males reported being in a situation in which they became so sexually aroused that they could not stop themselves from having sexual intercourse even though the woman didn't want to. Eight per cent of the women and about 3% of the males reported physical force such as arm twisting being used in coercing someone or being coerced to have sexual intercourse. The findings that men who committed such acts of aggression typically rationalize their acts and see them in a pos-

itive light (Aronson, Olah & Koss, Note 15), suggests that they may be inclined to believe that they would rape if they could be assured of not being punished. In fact, a significant correlation has been found between LR ratings and subjects' reports that they personally have used force against females in sexual relations and may do so again in the future (Malamuth & Check, Note 2; Malamuth & Ceniti, Note 11; Malamuth, Check & Briere, Note 12).

DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings that a substantial percentage of males believe that there is some likelihood that they would rape if they could be assured that they would not be punished and the findings that provide some support for the validity of such a measure as indicative of a propensity to rape point to the need for further research on the antecedents and meaning of LR reports. In order to better understand the basis for such reports, subjects should be interviewed (preferably anonymously) regarding their reasons for indicating a particular response to the LR question. The hypothesized influence of factors such as perceptions of rape and observations of one's own sexual arousal and/or aggressive behavior may be fruitful areas for inquiry in such interviews.

A related issue to examine concerns the consequences of these LR self-perceptions, an area where there is likely to be considerable individual variability. For example, one person who infers on the basis of his own sexual arousal to rape depictions that he may be capable of raping may become more inhibited in varied sexual encounters for fear of the "hidden forces" that he believes lurk within him. Another individual may actually seek out situations to engage in sexual aggression after learning that he is sexually aroused by rape depictions.

An additional area for research is the modification of some of the factors associated with LR reports (e.g., rape myth acceptance) and assessment of the extent to which such changes affect these LR reports. For instance, there is a need to develop programs designed to present a more realistic view of rape than is commonly held by people or presented within the mass media. Preliminary work in this area (Donnerstein & Berkowitz, in press; Malamuth & Check, Note 6; Check & Malamuth, Note 7) suggests that programs designed to change beliefs in rape myths are likely to be successful. LR reports may help identify those men who are most in need of such programs.

Finally, further work is needed to identify some of the back-

ground differences that may be related to LR responses. These might include such factors as familial experiences with violence and male-female power relations, hostility towards women, sex role stereotyping, sexual attitudes and experiences, sensitivity to rejection, social perceptions (or misperceptions) and the like. Some early work of this nature has been conducted by Kanin (1965) in connection with sexually aggressive males and by Burt (1980) in examining the antecedents of rape myth acceptance. Such research may prove useful in the further development of testable theories concerning the causes of sexual aggression and of rape. To the extent that many of the same dynamics that for some men underlie LR reports for others underlie the actual commission of rape, a better understanding of those men who indicate some propensity to rape may enable elucidation of the social and personal factors that cause rape, and that, in turn, might help find ways to reduce or eliminate these factors.

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