

The Effects of Viewing R-rated Movie Scenes That Objectify Women on Perceptions of Date Rape

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Author: Michael A. Milburn, Roxanne Mather, Sheree D. Conrad

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The contribution of sexualized images of women in the media to rape and beliefs that support rape has been the subject of considerable research. The present study tested the effects of viewing scenes from R-rated popular films on perceptions of female responsibility for and enjoyment of either a date rape or a stranger rape, using a sample of participants that was both ethnically and socioeconomically diverse. Participants viewed either nonviolent scenes that objectified and degraded women sexually or scenes from an animation festival. In a supposedly unrelated second experiment, participants then read a fictitious magazine account of a date rape or a stranger rape. Results indicated a significant three-way interaction among gender, video condition, and rape scenario on perceptions of the rape, such that males who viewed the sexually objectifying video felt that the victim in the date-rape condition experienced pleasure and "got what she wanted."

INTRODUCTION

Rape continues to be a major social problem in the United States. Notwithstanding the popular image of the dangerous stranger, the majority of rapes are actually committed by a person known to the victim. In 1987, the Department of Health Education released statistics estimating that 84% of all rapes are perpetrated by an acquaintance of the victim. Frequently, the perpetrator is the victim's date (Russell, 1984). Nonetheless, there continues to be resistance in this culture to seeing sexual assault by an acquaintance as "rape." For example, it is difficult to persuade jurors in criminal cases that date rape has occurred (Warshaw, 1988).

Various scholars have argued that gender-role socialization influences rape as an extension of normative sexual mores, learned through masculine and feminine roles incorporated into our culture's expectations of sexual behavior (e.g., Jackson, 1995). Feminists emphasizing the impact of gender roles on rape posit the existence of "rape myths" (Brownmiller, 1975; Burt, 1980; Griffin, 1986), a set of culturally inculcated ideas about the nature of heterosexual relations that minimize or deny rape.

In accordance with our culture's perverse sexual scripts, the female's resistance to a sexual encounter is not viewed by the male as genuine protest, for it is merely part of her role in the script. According to such sexual scripts, some feminist theorists have argued that "date rape" is not considered by many people to really be rape (Brownmiller, 1975; Griffin, 1986). For, if a woman has consented to a situation where sexual relations could occur (i.e., a date), then she has implicitly consented to sexual relations because it is only

at the initial stage, when solicitation of a date occurs, that a woman may legitimately refuse.

Because some sexual scripts actually inculcate rape myths, involving such ambiguities as "a woman doesn't really mean it when she says 'No,'" their application can lead to tragic misperceptions in the dating situation. Hence, gender-role socialization processes are more likely to dictate behavior in a date-rape context as opposed to a stranger-rape context because sexual scripts, a subtype of gender-roles, are highly applicable to a date. Herein lies the reason, feminists contend, why such a heavy burden of proof is carried by victims of rape, particularly date/acquaintance rape, in a court of law (Griffin, 1986; Lebowitz & Roth, 1994). Furthermore, such gender-role socialization processes reveal a culture in which coercive sexuality is normal and legitimized behavior, that is, a rape-supportive culture. Indeed, these ideas and beliefs have been demonstrated as pervading our cultural institutions such as law and the media (Griffin, 1986).

A considerable amount of research supports the hypothesis that rape is an extension of the traditional sexual scripts emerging from gender-role socialization. Koss (1985), for example, found that women who had been raped by an acquaintance as opposed to a stranger were less likely to define the event as "rape."

Burt (1980) has demonstrated widespread acceptance of rape myths. This research is particularly disturbing when coupled with evidence that men who subscribe to rape-supportive attitudes are more likely to report a past history of sexual aggression against women (Koss, Leonard, Beezley, & Oros, 1985) and are more likely to say that they would rape a woman if they were certain they would not get caught (Malamuth, 1981). There are conflicting results with regard to gender differences in endorsement of rape myths. Some research supports that men are more likely than women to subscribe to rape myths whereas other studies report no gender differences with respect to these variables (Burt, 1980).

Further support for the importance of gender roles comes from research indicating a high incidence of victim blaming in the case of acquaintance rape as opposed to stranger rape. In fact, both men and women attribute more blame to the victim of a date rape than to the victim of rape by a stranger (Bell, Kuriloff, & Lottes, 1994). Similarly, Bridges and McGrail (1989) found that participants attributed more responsibility to rapists in a stranger-rape condition compared to a date-rape condition. Burt (1980) found that over half of her sample of 598 participants agreed with rape myth statements, for example, that "in the majority of rapes, the victim was promiscuous or had a bad reputation." Additionally, the greater the degree of gender-role stereotyping, the greater respondents' acceptance of rape myths. Check and Malamuth (1983) replicated this study with virtually identical results. Bridges (1991) and Willis (1992) found that participants higher in gender-role stereotyped beliefs had less favorable attitudes toward victims of date rape, and Check and Malamuth (1983) found that participants scoring high on the gender-role stereotyping questionnaires demonstrated high levels of arousal to rape, especially to acquaintance rape.

PORNOGRAPHY AND RAPE

Pornography has been and continues to be a controversial social topic in all areas of society. There is considerable disagreement with respect to how pornography ought to be defined. Our society generally defines pornography as material that is highly sexually explicit in content. Films and videos are designated "pornographic" by a rating of X, XX, or XXX; as a rule, the line of demarcation between rated X and rated R or NC-17 material is penile penetration or actual depictions of fellatio or both. The feminist definition of pornography, however, does not deal with the sexual explicitness of the material per se. In Brownmiller's treatise (Brownmiller, 1975), she defines pornography as sexual material that is demeaning, degrading, dehumanizing, and exploitative of women.

Longino (1980) defines pornography "as verbal or pictorial explicit representations of sexual behavior that... have as a distinguishing characteristic the degrading and demeaning portrayal of the role and status of the human female... as a mere sexual object to be exploited and manipulated sexually" (p. 42). In pornographic media, women's sexual pleasure is not represented as an end in itself but, rather, is subordinated to the sexual pleasure of men. From the feminist standpoint, the sexual objectification of women prevails in all pornography; the role of the female character is to service the sexual desires of men (Brownmiller, 1975; Longino, 1980; MacKinnon, 1992).

Some feminists distinguish between pornography and erotica (e.g., MacKinnon, 1992), arguing that this distinction is very important in understanding the sexism and misogyny inherent in pornography. Specifically, while pornography is material that depicts unequal power in the sexual relations between men and women, erotica portrays men and women in mutually consenting sexual relations of equal power. Pornography is distinct from erotica in its degrading and objectifying images of women (MacKinnon, 1992).

Considerable research supports the feminist argument that pornography is defined by its sexually objectifying and degrading images of women and is related to rape. Exposure to pornography (X-rated material) has been shown to correlate highly with sexual aggression among men, including rape and child molestation (Baron & Strauss, 1984; Marshall, 1988). Further, even nonviolent pornography has been shown to cause (a) increased acceptance of rape myths, (b) aggressive reactions toward women in a laboratory setting, (c) an increased likelihood of committing rape, and (d) a diminished perception of the suffering of rape victims (Zillmann, 1984). Nonviolent pornography has been shown to increase the perception of rape victims as worthless, facilitate male callousness toward women, increase the trivialization of rape, and diminish support for the women's liberation movement (Zillmann & Bryant, 1982). In a careful experimental test of the effects of viewing sexually explicit materials that contain scenes that degrade women on men's perceptions of women, Jansma, Linz, Mulac, and Imrich (1997) found that sex-typed men who viewed the sexually degrading films rated their female partner's intellectual competence significantly lower than did the non-sex-typed men. These results are consistent with the hypothesis that such degrading portrayals of women contribute to men's objectification of them.

Some research suggests that sexually explicit material that degrade or objectify women or do both is even more harmful to women than the images of violence against women. Research participants exposed to female-initiated sex recommended a lower prison sentence for a rapist and trivialized the act of rape to a greater extent than did participants exposed to coercive and violent pornography (Zillmann & Weaver, 1989). Consistent with these results, Check and Guloien (1989) reported that frequent pornography users exposed to nonviolent but dehumanizing pornography were especially likely to report that they might rape, were more sexually callous, and reported more frequent acts of sexual aggression compared to those exposed to violent pornography and erotica. Further, research suggests that sexually explicit stimuli that portray men and women in equal power relations with mutual respect for each other do not increase misogynist responses and may actually reduce them (Baron & Bell, 1977).

Some research suggests that viewing images of women depicted in a degrading manner may have immediate consequences on the way individuals view their environment. Such research indicates that a gender role schema, for example, that women's primary value is for sex, is operative when these kinds of images are perceived. Schemas provide a framework for understanding what is perceived by the participant. Schemas logically assume behavioral scripts because traits, intentions, and dispositions are incorporated in them (Schank & Abelson, 1977; Taylor & Crocker, 1981).

Hansen and Hansen (1988) used rock music videos that depicted gender-role stereotyped men and women--specifically, women presented as sexual objects--to prime gender-role stereotypic schemas and then asked participants to appraise an interaction between a male and female in which the experimenters manipulated schema-relevant elements. Participants who watched the rock videos prior to viewing the interaction were more likely to evaluate the couple in terms of gender-role stereotypes than participants who watched neutral videos. Participants who watched neutral videos judged the female more favorably when she did not reciprocate his advances, and the male as more skilled when he praised the female in spite of her nonreciprocation. The "primed" participants judged the female character as skilled, competent, sexual, and sensitive when she reciprocated the male's sexual advances. "Primed" participants judged the male as more skilled when he derogated her for not reciprocating. Hansen and Hansen (1988) conceptualize the media as enhancing the chronic accessibility of gender-role stereotypic schemas through the "activation frequency" hypothesis.

There is further evidence that pornography may activate gender-role schemas that can then affect sexually aggressive behavior in males. McKenzie-Mohr and Zanna (1990) conducted a study designed to test how nonviolent pornography activates gender-role schemas in gender-schematic (high in gender-role stereotyping) and gender-aschematic (low in gender-role stereotyping) males. This study consisted of four conditions: (1) gender-schematic males exposed to nonviolent pornography, (2) gender-aschematic males exposed to nonviolent pornography, (3) gender-schematic males exposed to a control video, and (4) gender-aschematic males exposed to a control video. After viewing either the pornographic video or the control, participants were interviewed by a female research

assistant blind to the conditions. The female research assistant judged the gender-schematic males who had viewed the pornographic film to be significantly more sexually motivated in their behavior toward her than the males in the other three conditions. Furthermore, the gender-schematic males in the pornography condition, when asked to recall the interview, were significantly more likely to describe characteristics pertaining to the woman's body than were the males in the other conditions.

Donnerstein, Linz, and Penrod (1987) have hypothesized that exposure to degrading images of women activate gender schemas in viewers that result in their overestimating women's sexual activity and sexual desire. Consistent with this hypothesis, Weaver (1987) found that exposing males to sexually explicit materials increased their ratings of the "sexual receptivity" of female peers.

Not every study, however, has obtained results consistent with this hypothesis. Linz, Donnerstein, and Penrod (1988) showed male participants films that were either R-rated violent, X-rated nonviolent, or R-rated (teen sex) nonviolent, along with a no-exposure control. They reported that on measures of endorsement of force in sexual relations, tendency to see women as sexual objects, or belief in conservative sex roles, there were no differences between males who saw the films and the no-exposure participants. Linz, Donnerstein, and Adams (1989) found no difference in ratings of victim responsibility in video clips containing violence against women following exposure to either sexually arousing nonviolent R-rated sex scenes or to violent, slasher films, although a no-exposure condition was not included in their design.

In the present study, we incorporate feminist theory and empirical research on the importance of gender-role socialization, a feminist analysis of pornography, empirical literature on perceptions of perpetrator and victim in stranger versus acquaintance rape situations, and gender-role stereotypic schema. We use a feminist definition of pornography that specifies that it is not "X-rated" or sexually explicit material itself, but, rather, objectifying and degrading images of women that are pornographic. Using that definition, we selected images of women from popular films and constructed a video consisting of short R-rated segments of such depictions. The material we used in this study is not considered "pornography" by the ratings board. We expected that viewing such images would result in the activation of a gender-role stereotypic schema, which would, in essence, evoke attitudes about men and women that are traditional/stereotypical in nature, including, but not limited to "rape myths." We expected, therefore, that viewing the objectification video would result in a higher rate of gender-role stereotyping than viewing a control video would. We further expected that participants who viewed the objectification video would be more likely to blame the victim of a date-rape situation as opposed to a stranger-rape situation because of the priming of a gender-role schema, which specifies that women on a date have already committed to having sex. Finally, we hypothesized these effects to be stronger among men than among women.

METHOD

Participants

One hundred and thirty-seven participants took part in the study. Ninety-nine participants were drawn from introductory psychology courses and received course credit whereas 38 participants were recruited through posters on campus and were paid \$5. The sample was 53% female and 47% male, and it was also socioeconomically and ethnically diverse. Seven percent of the participants had parents who had not completed high school, and 42% had parents with only a high-school education. Eighteen percent of the sample was African American, 12% was Asian, 4% percent was Hispanic, and 61% was White. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 68 with a mean age of 24.

Procedure

During recruitment, participants were told that they might be exposed to sexually explicit material. To reduce demand characteristics in the study, participants were told that they would participate in two different, unrelated studies, a "Censorship study" and a "Legal Decision-making study." In fact, these two studies were simply two parts of the same overall design.

Overall, two experimental variables were manipulated: (1) exposure to objectifying images of women and (2) exposure to a fictitious magazine account of a date rape or a stranger rape. During part one, the "censorship study," the objectification variable was manipulated with one condition involving exposure to objectifying images of women from R-rated films and a comparison condition featuring video from an animation festival. Part two, the "legal decision-making study," also had two conditions, a stranger-rape condition versus an acquaintance-rape condition. The effects of the two variables on rape-myth beliefs and prospective male rape behavior were measured in the legal decision-making segment of the study.

Participants were tested in groups of five or fewer, with each group homogeneous by sex. Viewing sessions were scheduled at different times of the day and days of the week, balancing male/female groups and R-rated objectification/Cartoon conditions. Both for males and for females, two groups were scheduled on the same day of the week and time of day and were then randomly assigned to either the R-rated objectification condition or the Cartoon condition.

In the "censorship" segment of the study, participants were told that we were interested in the effects of watching different types of media content. The experimenter had participants watch either the R-rated sexually objectifying video or a video from an animation festival. Participants then completed a "Censorship Questionnaire" with 10 questions measuring their opinions toward censorship of sexually explicit material (e.g., "Some view sexually explicit media as a harmless form of artistic self-expression. What is your stance on this issue?" and "The organization called 'Women Against Pornography' seeks to ban all sexually explicit visual material that exploits and degrades women. How do you feel about this position?"); their own use of sexually explicit material (e.g., "Have you ever bought sexually explicit magazines such as Playboy or Penthouse?"; "How often do you watch films or videos with explicit sexuality?"); and their feelings about their

partner's use of sexually explicit videos (e.g., "It would bother me if my boyfriend/girlfriend/partner/spouse watched sexually explicit videos by him! herself."). Following these items, participants also answered demographic questions and a 9-item gender-role inventory that measured gender-role traditionalism (Burt, 1980).

The experimenter then left the room, and a new experimenter came in for the "legal decision-making study." The experimenter gave participants a copy of a fictitious magazine account, titled "Marianne & Steven," that described either a date rape or a stranger rape. Questionnaire packets that contained the date-rape scenario were alternated with packets that contained the stranger-rape scenario. Distributing the questionnaires thus randomly assigned the participants to either the acquaintance-rape or stranger-rape conditions. After reading the article, participants answered the primary dependent measure (Rape Perception Questions) consisting of six questions developed by the authors to measure participants' perceptions of the victim's responsibility for the rape and of the pleasure they thought she received from the experience, the sentence participants felt the perpetrator should receive (a measure of rape tolerance), and male participants' judgments of how likely it would be that they would behave like the perpetrator in the story:

1. (Answered only by males) How likely is it that you would act in the same manner as the man in the vignette you just read? (Answer scale from 0 to 100)
2. The woman in the vignette could have prevented the man from having sexual intercourse with her if she had really wanted to. (Answer scale from [1] "Strongly Agree" to [7] "Strong Disagree")
3. How responsible was the woman in the story for the sexual intercourse which occurred at the end? (Answer scale from 0 to 100%)
4. The woman in the story probably derived some pleasure from the sexual intercourse with the man. (Answer scale reversed to [1] "Strongly Disagree" to [7] "Strongly Agree")
5. If you read between the lines, the woman in the story really got what she wanted in the end. (Answer scale reversed: [1] "Strongly Disagree" to [7] "Strongly Agree")
6. The story you previously read went on to report that the man was arrested for and convicted of raping the woman. If you were the judge in this case, what sentence would you impose? (This was the man's first offense. Answer scale from 0 = suspended sentence to 20+ years)

Stimulus Materials

Video

Participants in the objectification condition viewed a 22-min compilation of scenes from two popular R-rated movies judged by the authors to fit the definition of "sexually

degrading." These scenes included a strip-tease and lap-dancing scene from the movie *Showgirls* and two scenes from the movie *9 1/2 Weeks*, one where Kim Basinger does a striptease, and a second in which she is blindfolded and Mickey Rourke humiliates her by having a prostitute caress her while she believes it to be Rourke touching her. As in Jansma et al. (1997), the degrading scenes contained male dominance, female availability, and female objectification. Male power and sexual gratification were foremost, with no regard for female gratification.

To assess the level of objectification present in the three scenes shown to participants, 10 independent judges were recruited to rate the video scenes. These judges were given the following definition: "Sexual objectification is sexual material that is demeaning, degrading, dehumanizing and exploitive of women and that presents women as mere sexual objects to be exploited and manipulated sexually." The judges were then asked, for each scene, "On a scale of 1 to 10, how objectifying of women do you feel this scene is?" with responses from (1) "Not at all objectifying" to (10) "Extremely objectifying." Judges saw the first scene, the tape was stopped and rated; they saw the second scene, the tape was stopped and rated; and then the third scene was shown and rated.

The first scene shown, the Kim Basinger striptease scene from *9 1/2 Weeks*, was judged to be moderately objectifying of women (mean = 6.0). The second scene, the striptease/lap-dancing scene from *Showgirls* was judged to be extremely objectifying of women (mean = 9.6), and the third scene shown, Kim Basinger blindfolded and caressed by a prostitute from *9 1/2 Weeks*, was judged similarly objectifying (mean = 9.3). Thus, the research participants saw scenes that were moderate to high and increased in the level of objectification of women over the 22-min period of viewing. The judges' evaluations of the first scene varied considerably in how objectifying they were judged to be, as indicated by the greater variability in judges' ratings of the first scene compared to the second and third ($[SD.sub.scene\ 1] = 2.7$ compared to $[SD.sub.scene\ 2] = .7$ and $[SD.sub.scene\ 3] = .7$).

Magazine Rape Account

The layout of the fictitious article was designed by a graphic artist, with the title in large font set-off in the left-hand corner, with two lines from the article pulled out and presented in separate boxes (e.g., "Marianne told her friends that perhaps this was her 'lucky night'." and "Steven ignored her protestations and kissed her more passionately.") The article presentation was very realistic; several participants afterwards asked in which magazine the article had appeared.

The text of the two articles was very similar in background details. Both described Marianne as a "single 21-year-old junior in the undergraduate Arts and Sciences program at Boston University" and Steven who "was a 25-year-old law student at B.U." In the acquaintance-rape scenario, Marianne has a date with Steven at a local bar where they have several drinks, and then Steven walks Marianne back to her dorm. In the stranger-rape scenario, Marianne goes to the same bar for a date with "James" who never shows up. Steven is at the same bar, also stood up by his date, and he follows Marianne

out when she leaves. In the acquaintance-rape version, the story ends as follows:

They spent a few moments chatting about the merits of the album, and then Marianne said she was getting really tired and thought she should just pass out. Steven leaned over to kiss her and she weakly protested. Steven ignored her protestations and kissed her more passionately. He then started to pull off her clothes. She begged him to stop, but he would not. He forced himself on her and completed the act of intercourse.

In the stranger-rape version, the ending is virtually identical:

It was obvious to Steven that Marianne was drunk; she actually stumbled a few times. When Marianne stopped before her dorm building to search through her purse for her keys, Steven approached her. He embraced her and began to kiss her. She weakly protested. Steven ignored her protestations and kissed her more passionately. He walked her over to a large tree where he started to pull off her clothes. She begged him to stop, but he would not. He forced himself on her and completed the act of intercourse.

RESULTS

Immediately following viewing either the R-rated objectification video or the Cartoon video, participants filled out a "Censorship Questionnaire." At this point in the overall study, the participants were unaware of the rape scenarios, so a 2 x 2 analysis of Sex (male/female) x Video (R-rated objectification/Cartoon) was used to assess the effects of the video on the censorship questions. There was no effect of the objectifying video nor was there an interaction effect of the independent variables. There were no significant effects of watching the video and no significant differences between males and females on the censorship questions. The more egalitarian or liberal in their gender-role orientation participants were, the less they favored restrictions on sexually explicit materials ($r = .22$, $p = .011$).

Of the six primary dependent variables completed in phase two, the Legal Decision-Making segment, one question--asking about behaving like the perpetrator in the story--was asked only of males. Consequently, this question was analyzed separately from the five questions asked of the entire sample. To control for Type I error, we first conducted a MANCOVA analysis, using five variables (Rape Perception questions 2-6) as dependent measures. A multivariate analysis of variance on the 2 x 2 x 2 design, Sex (male/female) x Video (R-rated objectification/Cartoon) x Rape (stranger/date), using the five rape-perception questions as dependent variables, with age and gender-role orientation used as covariates, revealed significant effects of gender role (Wilks' $[\lambda] = .61$, $F(5, 102) = 13.12$, p [less than] $.001$), main effects of Video (Wilks' $[\lambda] = .88$, $F(5, 102) = 2.85$, $p = .019$) and Rape (Wilks' $[\lambda] = .87$, $F(5, 102) = 2.94$, p [less than] $.016$), and interaction effects of Video x Rape (Wilks' $[\lambda] = .89$, $F(5, 102) = 2.66$, $p = .027$) and of Sex x Video x Rape (Wilks' $[\lambda] = .89$, $F(5, 102) = 2.64$, $p = .027$).

An examination of the tests of individual dependent variables indicated that there were

significant effects primarily on two variables: the participants' perception that the victim "probably derived some pleasure from the sexual intercourse" and participants' judgment of whether the victim "really got what she wanted in the end." Tables I and II present the ANCOVA source tables for the three-way design, Sex x Video x Rape, with gender-role orientation and age as covariates. As can be seen, the Sex x Video x Rape interaction is significant for both dependent variables. The means comparing males' and females' perceptions of the victim's pleasure are presented in Figs. 1 and 2, and the means comparing males' and females' agreement that the victim "got what she wanted" are presented in Figs. 3 and 4. Although no participants perceived the victim in the stranger-rape scenario to have derived any pleasure or gotten what she wanted, males who saw the objectifying video perceived the acquaintance-rape scenario differently than other participants did. They were significantly more likely to agree that the victim derived pleasure from the rape and got what she wanted.

The ANCOVA analyses for the two dependent variables of got what she wanted and victim pleasure were modified, adding the pornography censorship variable and the pornography use variable as additional covariates. The pornography use variable was created by summing together the three pornography use items (Cronbach's $[\alpha] = .40$), and the pornography censorship variable was the sum of the remaining seven items (Cronbach's $[\alpha] = .61$). The effects of the pornography use variable did not even approach significance (p [greater than] $.60$) for either dependent variable, indicating that the effects of the objectifying video were consistent across both users and nonusers of pornographic material. Although the effect of the censorship attitudes variable approached significance (p [less than] $.06$) for the perception of the victim's pleasure, adding these two additional covariates did not change the significance of the Sex x Video x Rape interaction for either dependent variable.

Some previous studies (e.g., McKenzie-Mohr & Zanna, 1990) have found an interaction effect of gender-role traditionalism with exposure to pornography. We tested models, using a dichotomized gender-role variable, and although there were main effects of gender role as in the model just described, there were no significant interactions of the gender-role variable with any of the other variables. The effects of the images in the objectifying video appear to be most pronounced for males, even after controlling for gender-role attitudes.

Because it was possible that our video manipulation might have produced a difference in participants' expressed gender-role attitudes, we conducted a 2 x 2 analysis of covariance (Sex x Video) predicting gender-role attitudes, with age as a covariate. There were no main effects or interaction effects on gender-role attitudes. In addition, if the gender-role attitude variable was excluded from the overall analysis, the results remained essentially unchanged.

Looking at the responses to the question asked of male participants, "How likely is it that you would act in the same manner as the man in the vignette you just read?", there was very little variability: across conditions, 69% said it was not possible. Although mean differences were not significant, the pattern of the means for the different conditions is

consistent with these findings. On the average, males judging the stranger-rape scenario, regardless of video condition, thought that there was only a 5% chance that they would behave like the perpetrator. Males in the date-rape condition who saw the animation estimated that there was an 8% likelihood of their engaging in the rape behavior. In contrast, males who saw the objectifying video and who read the date-rape scenario estimated that there would be a 17% chance of them behaving like the perpetrator.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that exposure to scenes from R-rated movies that contain sexual content and also present women in an objectified or degrading way have the effect of altering the way men perceive the account of an acquaintance rape, lessening males' perception of the victim's suffering. Although previous research has indicated that violent pornography has this effect, our results suggest that violence or explicit sexual intercourse is not necessary to obtain these effects. Merely presenting images of women who are degraded or objectified can produce these results.

An earlier study, Weaver (1987), showed different groups of participants a variety of different video scenes, including eroticized violence, male coerced sex, and female instigated sex, as well as neutral stimuli. In each of these treatment conditions, compared to the neutral stimuli condition, participants rated a female target person as significantly more "promiscuous." Although the visual stimuli used in the current experiment were different, being sexualized and objectifying without having explicit sex, our findings that male participants thought the victim "got what she wanted" parallel Weaver's findings.

It is important to note that the effect of the objectifying video was obtained even after controlling for gender-role orientation. Thus, watching the objectifying video resulted in participants, primarily males, believing that the woman being raped had received pleasure from the experience and "got what she wanted," regardless of how traditional or liberal their gender-role attitudes were. Individuals' attitudes toward sexually explicit materials were unrelated to their perception of the victim's pleasure, so individuals who were antipornography were just as influenced as were individuals who favored the availability of sexually explicit materials.

The activation recency hypothesis emphasizes the role of priming stimuli. The encoding of the priming stimulus activates the schema. A stimulus encountered following the priming stimulus is likely to be evaluated in the context of the primed schema. In this case, the pornography is the priming stimulus: it activates and primes the gender-role stereotypic schema. As a result, the appraisal of the rape vignettes is likely to be done in the context of the gender-role stereotypic schema. Further, an individual's previous exposure to such images should affect the accessibility of the gender-role stereotypic schema in the following way: high exposure to gender-role stereotypic media will result in the chronic accessibility of the schema; the priming stimulus should more easily activate this schema. Thus, high exposure means that individuals are even more likely to evaluate the rape vignette in the context of gender-role schemas.

In the context of an accessible schema, individuals' impressions will be organized around the elements of a person's behavior that are pertinent to the gender-role stereotypic schema. For example, in the rape vignettes when the victim flirts with the doorman on her way out to the bar, this will be highly relevant to viewers in the R-rated objectification condition, but not to viewers in the Cartoon condition. Appraisal in the context of a schema also causes a "shift of meaning" in traits, specifically traits inferred from behavior (Hamilton & Zanna, 1974). Therefore, in the objectification condition, participants would be expected to perceive the meaning of the victim's protestations at the end as part of a sexual script the woman is playing out, to assume that she is not really protesting, and that "no means yes." In the Cartoon condition, a gender-role stereotypic schema should not be as accessible; therefore, participants should be less likely to perceive the woman as playing a role in a sexual script and more likely to perceive the woman as actually protesting the man's advances toward her.

Because of the high chronic accessibility of gender-role stereotypic schemas in the media and culture, it is possible that the behavior of the rapist and the victim in either vignette will still be organized around gender-role stereotypic schemas, regardless of the priming condition (R-rated objectifying vs. Cartoon). Further, one would expect that individuals who view such depictions of women regularly would have higher chronic accessibility of gender-role stereotypic schemas and would therefore be more likely to use a stereotypic schema to appraise the rape vignette, regardless of priming condition. Still, as indicated in the results of the Cartoon condition, without the priming from the objectifying video, the rape vignette is more likely to be perceived in terms of nonstereotypic accessible schemas. In this case, the participant is more likely to see the man in the story as a *bona fide* rapist, particularly in the date-rape condition, where there seems to be more ambiguity due to culturally inculcated sexual scripts.

We have interpreted the results of our study in terms of the activation of culturally stereotypic gender-role schemas resulting from exposure to objectifying images of women. However, because we did not include an additional comparison group who saw erotic content that was not objectifying or degrading, we cannot say for certain that it was the objectifying nature of the R-rated video scenes that activated the sex-role stereotypes, rather than simply the sexual content. Because the objectifying images embody more strongly the ideology of male dominance contained in gender-role stereotypic schemas, it seems most reasonable that it is the objectification, rather than simply the sexual content, that is playing the major role in participants' perceptions of the date-rape scenario. Nevertheless, future research on this issue should include additional types of video stimuli in the design to address this question.

One might argue that our use of the description, "Censorship Study," had some effect on participants' judgments of victim responsibility in the date-rape condition. It is clearly not a simple confound, however, because participants in both the R-rated objectification and the Cartoon conditions were told that the first experiment they were participating in was about censorship. What may have happened, however, is what might be called a "social sanctioning" effect that could provide an alternative explanation for the Sex x Video x Rape interaction effect. Women watching the objectifying video probably experienced

some increased awareness of their own sexuality, an arousal that likely would be experienced negatively. Then having the term "censorship" made salient to them, these women who saw the sexualized video may have been reminded that such sexually-related materials are sanctioned and regulated, affecting their subsequent perception of the date-rape scenario. Thus, this social sanctioning effect might have produced the gender difference in the perception of acquaintance-rape scenario after watching the objectifying video.

However, no such social sanctioning explanation accounts for the reactions of the male subjects. Exposure to the sexually-objectifying video appears to have influenced males' perceptions of the acquaintance rape. If such a social sanctioning effect on women occurred because of our use of the term "censorship," this might have masked an additional effect of the objectifying video on females' perceptions of the date-rape scenario.

Participants saw the objectifying scenes only once in the experiment reported here. One might argue that after repeated exposure to this objectifying material, participants might become desensitized and priming would not occur. If desensitization occurs after repeated exposure, however, this does not mean that the individuals necessarily would be less susceptible to a priming effect. Desensitization would mean that the individuals' physiological reactivity to a particular level of stimulus has decreased. Although evidence suggests that desensitization is likely to happen with repeated exposure, for example, Zillmann and Bryant (1986) found that after exposure to an hour a week of straight-sex, X-rated pornography for 6 weeks, individuals were significantly more interested in more extreme pornography such as bestiality, sadomasochism, and bondage/discipline, this does not mean that the gender-role schema has not been activated. Rather, the Zillmann and Bryant results would suggest that following 6 hr of exposure to the X-rated material, and despite desensitization (or habituation), individuals were even more interested in material that represented the male domination inherent in the traditional gender-role stereotypic schema. What is dramatic about the results presented here is that after only a relatively brief exposure to this material, activation appears to occur.

The results of this study indicate that film content that the movie rating authorities view as less objectionable than explicit sexuality (R-rated vs. X-rated) may nonetheless have significant negative effects on the ways males perceive females' resistance to sexual advances. Given the way males tend to perceive female friendliness as sexual interest, in contrast to females' intentions and perceptions (Abbey, 1982), women who accompany men to watch films with scenes that degrade or objectify women may be at a somewhat increased risk of sexual assault. One overall implication of these findings is that theaters and video stores should be vigilant in their enforcement of the age restrictions on viewing R-rated movies, and parents should be cautious about what films they allow their children to watch.

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(1.) To whom correspondence should be addressed at Psychology Department, University of Massachusetts/Boston, Boston, Massachusetts 02125.

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Sex x Video x Rape ANOVA:
Victim Derived Some Pleasure
Type III sum
Source of squares df Mean square F
Corrected model 162.820 [a] 9 18.091 8.749
Intercept 38.368 1 38.368 18.555
Sex role 84.512 1 84.512 40.871

Age 1.144E-03 1 1.144E-03 .001
 Sex 1.090 1 1.090 .527
 Video 15.386 1 15.386 7.441
 Rape 8.482 1 8.482 4.102
 Sex x Video 2.285 1 2.285 1.105
 Sex x Rape 3.151 1 3.151 1.524
 Video x Rape 19.264 1 19.264 9.316
 Sex x Video x Rape 23.347 1 23.347 11.291
 Error 246.064 119 2.068
 Total 4910.000 129
 Corrected total 408.884 128
 Source Significance [[eta].sup.2]
 Corrected model .000 .398
 Intercept .000 .135
 Sex role .000 .256
 Age .981 .000
 Sex .469 .004
 Video .007 .059
 Rape .045 .033
 Sex x Video .295 .009
 Sex x Rape .219 .013
 Video x Rape .003 .073
 Sex x Video x Rape .001 .087
 Error
 Total
 Corrected total
 Note. Dependent variable: victim pleasure.
 (a.)R-Squared = .398 (Adjusted R-Squared = .353).
 Sex x Video x Rape ANOVA:
 Victim "Got What She Wanted"
 Type III sum
 Source of squares df Mean square F
 Corrected model 165.531 [a] 9 18.392 8.407
 Intercept 51.633 1 51.633 23.601
 Sex role 80.761 1 80.761 36.916
 Age 1.736 1 1.736 .793
 Sex 9.568 1 9.568 4.373
 Video 3.780 1 3.780 1.728
 Rape 21.163 1 21.163 9.674
 Sex x Video 1.454 1 1.454 .664
 Sex x Rape 7.504 1 7.504 3.430
 Video x Rape 22.276 1 22.276 10.182
 Sex x Video x Rape 8.612 1 8.612 3.937
 Error 264.714 121 2.188
 Total 4921.000 131
 Corrected total 430.244 130

Source Significance [[eta].sup.2]]

Corrected model .000 .385

Intercept .000 .163

Sex role .000 .234

Age .375 .007

Sex .039 .035

Video .191 .014

Rape .002 .074

Sex x Video .417 .005

Sex x Rape .066 .028

Video x Rape .002 .078

Sex x Video x Rape .050 .032

Error

Total

Corrected total

Note. Dependent variable: victim got what she wanted.

(a.)R-Squared = .385 (Adjusted R-Squared = .339).

[Graph omitted] [Graph omitted]

[Graph omitted]

[Graph omitted]