3.
Sexual Aggression:
Studies of Offenders Against Women

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ABSTRACT. Comparative data indicate that coercive male mating strategies are common in a variety of animals, including primates. Because coercive mating can result in differential male reproductive success, it may have been related to the evolutionary development of greater male size and aggressiveness. Competition among males for females has undoubtedly favored the same evolutionary result.

Male competition for females is related to warfare among preliterate societies. In general, the more warlike the society, the higher the frequency of rape. Groups of men who exert power through the application of force are characteristic of these societies. Male dominance in itself, however, is not a sufficient condition for high rape frequency.

Studies of men in Western society reveal marked individual differences in their self-reported proclivity to rape, their sexual arousability to rape descriptions, and their attitudes toward rape. Rapists themselves often engage in other criminal activities, are more sexually aroused by descriptions of rape, and frequently have other sexual deviations. Sadistic rapists are commonly obsessed with aggressive sexual imagery and exhibit marked sexual arousal to descriptions of rape. There is evidence that violent sexual pornography may be conducive to the development of an interest in sexual aggression.

Clearly, learning plays an important role in both appropriate and aggressive sexual behaviors. Learning is involved in the acquisition of sexual behaviors, sexual attitudes and, more importantly in the present context, sexual arousal patterns. The acquisition of an interest in aggressive sexual imagery is, therefore, a central problem in this area of research. Progress in understanding this issue may well hinge on discovering the genesis of “normal” sexual fantasies.

There are few differences between rapists and other nonsexual offenders in personality, intelligence, drug addiction, testosterone levels, or social competence. Rapists may, however, more frequently have assertive deficits but more data are needed on this point. Alcohol appears to be related both to the propensity to rape and to inflict physical damage on the victim. Attitudes toward women do not appear to be strongly related to rape but specific attitudes toward rape may be more important.

With respect to the treatment of rapists, there are, unfortunately, no comparative evaluative studies of different treatment types. Behavioral methods of treatment appear very promising and antiandrogen treatment may be effective with hypersexual rapists but there are no longer-term followup data relevant to either treatment method. Castration appears to be related to low recidivism rates but is ethically problematic.

This review was supported by grant 847 from the Ontario Mental Health Foundation. I wish to thank G. Harris, A. Maguire, M. Rice and D. Upfold for comments on an earlier draft of this paper and M. Quinsey for bringing many of the anthropological studies to my attention.
SEXUAL AGGRESSION

Both treatment and research suffer from the absence of a demonstrably valid typological scheme for rapists. Rapists are a heterogeneous group; they vary in their sexual responsiveness to rape and sadistic imagery, their social competence, their level of criminality, and the degree to which alcohol is related to their offense pattern. In addition, there are great differences in the offense patterns themselves (frequency, degree of violence, and so on). Rapists who engage in multiple offender rapes, for example, are different from solitary offenders on a variety of measures. Clearly, a taxonomy is required to bring order to the repeatedly observed individual differences among rapists. These individual differences among rapists undoubtedly obfuscate comparisons of rapists with non-sex offenders and hinder rational treatment programming.

Research on etiologically relevant differences among rapists is thus indicated. More importantly, however, an understanding of the development of male sexual interest in both consenting and aggressive sexual activities is required before any definitive theories of rape can be formulated in the future.

SOMMAIRE. Des données comparatives montrent que les stratégies d'accolement coercitif du mâle sont répandues chez différents animaux, notamment les primates. Comme l'accolement coercitif peut avoir des résultats différents pour le succès de la reproduction, il se peut qu'il ait entraîné une évolution caractérisée par la taille et l'agressivité accrue du mâle. La concurrence entre les mâles pour posséder les femelles a sans aucun doute favorisé le même phénomène d'évolution.

Dans les sociétés primitives, la concurrence des hommes pour les femmes est liée à la guerre. En général, plus la société est guerrière, plus l'incidence du viol est fréquente. Dans ces sociétés, ce sont des groupes d'hommes qui exercent le pouvoir par la force. Toutefois, la prédominance du mâle n'est pas, en soi, une condition suffisante pour que le viol soit très fréquent.

L'étude des hommes dans la société occidentale révèle des différences individuelles marquées quant à la propension déclarée au viol, à l'excitation sexuelle devant des descriptions de viol et aux attitudes en matière de viol. Les auteurs de viol eux-mêmes ont souvent d'autres activités criminelles, sont plus vite excités sexuellement par des descriptions de viol et souffrent, très souvent, d'autres déviations sexuelles. Les violeurs sadiques sont très souvent obsédés par des images d'agression sexuelle, et ils manifestent une excitation sexuelle marquée face à des descriptions de viol. Il est prouvé que la pornographie violente peut être la cause du développement d'un goût pour l'agression sexuelle.

Il est sûr que l'apprentissage joue un rôle important sur le comportement sexuel, tant approprié qu'agressif. L'apprentissage intervient dans l'acquisition du comportement sexuel, des attitudes sexuelles et, ce qui est plus important dans le présent contexte, dans les modèles d'excitation sexuelle. L'acquisition d'un goût pour les images sexuelles agressives est, par conséquent, un problème crucial dans ce domaine de la recherche. Tout progrès dans la compréhension du problème dépendra peut-être surtout de la découverte de la genèse des fantasmes sexuels normaux.

Il existe peu de différences entre les coupables de viol et les autres délinquants non sexuels eu égard à la personnalité, à l'intelligence, à l'accoutumance aux drogues, aux niveaux de testostérone ou à la compétence sociale. Toutefois, le violeur peut plus fréquemment avoir un "déficit d'assertion," mais il faudrait davantage de données sur ce point. L'alcool semble être lié à la propension, à la fois, à violer et à infliger des blessures à la victime. Les attitudes à l'égard des femmes ne semblent pas être fortement liées au viol, mais il se peut que des attitudes spécifiques vis-à-vis du viol aient plus d'importance.

Quant au traitement des coupables de viol, il n'existe malheureusement aucune étude comparative sur l'évaluation des différents types de traitement. Les méthodes de traitement behavioriste semblent très prometteuses et le traitement antiandrogène peut s'avérer efficace auprès des violeurs hypersexués, mais il ne se trouve aucune donnée de suivi à long terme qui traitent de l'un ou l'autre de ces méthodes. La castration semble avoir causé une diminution du taux de récidive, mais elle pose un problème déontologique.

Tant le traitement que la recherche souffrent de l'absence d'un modèle typologique valable pour les cas de viol. Les violeurs constituent un groupe hétérogène; il varient dans leurs réactions sexuelles aux images de viol et de sadisme, dans leur compétence sociale, leur niveau de criminalité et eu égard à l'incidence de l'alcool sur leurs types de délìnquance. De plus, on remarque des différences très nettes dans les modèles de délinquance (fréquence, degré de
Les violeurs qui se livrent à des viols collectifs, par exemple, ne sont pas les mêmes que ceux qui opèrent tout seuls, à de multiples égards. Il est clair qu’il faut établir une classification afin de mettre en ordre les différences individuelles maintes fois observées entre les violeurs. Ces différences individuelles entre ces délinquants nuisent sans aucun doute aux comparaisons entre les violeurs et les délinquants non sexuels, et empêchent aussi l’instauration d’un traitement rationnel.

Il convient, par conséquent, de se livrer à une recherche sur les différences pertinentes, d’ordre étiologique, entre les violeurs. Cependant, il est primordial de comprendre le développement de l’intérêt sexuel du mâle dans les activités sexuelles tant volontaires qu’agressives, avant de tenter de formuler à l’avenir toute théorie définitive à propos du viol.

Introduction

Rape is of increasing concern in contemporary society. This concern has been reflected in and promoted by a great deal of attention from the popular media; fortunately, it has also motivated a large amount of scholarly activity in a heretofore ignored area. The purpose of this chapter is to organize and interpret this large amount of recent literature and to suggest lines of further inquiry.

Rape is often defined as the vaginal penetration of an unwilling female. Unfortunately, this definition excludes a number of coercive sexual activities that are closely related (e.g., anal intercourse, forced fellatio, and so on); in addition, there are legal offenses in many jurisdictions such as “indecent assault” and “statutory rape” which may or may not involve rape as more strictly defined. These vagaries of the law make it exceedingly difficult to count the number of rapes. Partly because of these difficulties in definition, the Law Reform Commission of Canada (1978) has successfully recommended that “rape” be replaced by “sexual assault” in the criminal code. A sexual assault is sexual contact with another person (including the touching of the sexual organs of another or the touching of another with one’s sexual organs) without that person’s consent. The Law Reform Commission suggested that circumstances involving violence and/or penetration be taken into account only in sentencing. In this review, the term “rape” will be used interchangeably with the term “sexual assault.”

The focus of the present paper is on sexual assailters of adult women: Sexual assaults on children (Quinsey, 1977) and adult males (Groth & Burgess, 1980) will be excluded, as will be issues of prevention and rape resistance (e.g., Bart, 1981; Brodsky, 1976; Wright, 1980). The more coercive and violent the sexual behavior is, the more it will be emphasized in the present review, both because very aggressive behavior is more serious and of more concern to society and the victim (Ellis, Atkeson, & Calhoun, 1981; Kilpatrick, Resick, & Veronen, 1981) and because it is more easily studied. Very violent acts are more likely to be reported, less likely to suffer from definitional variance, and more likely to be viewed by various social groups in the same light.

This review is primarily substantive in that it attempts to determine what is known about sexual assailters and sexual violence, and is not a critique of the literature per se. Although the literature is improving, all reviewers have lamented its scientific weakness. There is no need to document this scientific inadequacy further, particularly since several methodological critiques have already been published (Bentler & Abramson, 1981; Dietz, 1978; Schwartz, 1980). Methodological comments, therefore, will be made only when necessary for an understanding of the material. On a more positive note, however, we have come a very long way from the state of almost complete ignorance documented over 20 years ago (Wheeler, 1960).

This chapter is organized in sections which reflect the disparate areas of investigation subsumed under the topic of sexual assault. Immediately following this introduction, background information is presented from biological and cross-cultural perspectives and the incidence of sexual assault in Western societies is examined. A final subsection deals with relevant data obtained from non-sexual assailters. The next major section reviews studies of known sexual assailters and presents data derived from comparisons of these men with various non-sex offender groups; this is followed by a section on treatment. Using the material presented in the earlier sections, the
Perspectives on Sexual Assault

Sexual Assault in Biological Perspective

A biological perspective involves evolutionary or physiological concepts. From an evolutionary point of view, it is apparent that coercive intercourse can increase the relative reproductive success of males and under certain, less likely, conditions, females as well. Comparative behavioral data can provide important information about these various conditions (Beach, 1976). However, it is important to remember in attempting to extrapolate from non-human species to the primates, there are wide variations in mating strategies and that, even within a species, the relations between the sexes vary with habitat (Goy & McEwen, 1980; Jensen, 1973); indeed, humans are unique among mammals in that females do not advertise their peak periods of fertility with estrus (Symons, 1979). Human capacity for language, in particular, makes generalization from animals to man hazardous. In addition, evolutionary arguments are "ultimate" rather than "proximate:" that is, they involve the history of natural selection in a given species and not the mechanisms currently in operation which determine the behavior. These caveats aside, observations of other species are at least useful heuristics and some common features are indeed observed in a variety of species.

Coercive intercourse has been described in a wide variety of species from insects to mammals (Crawford, 1982). Among insects, forced insemination of unwilling females has been described in detail among Panorpa scorpionflies (Thornhill, 1980). In nonforced mating, female scorpionflies are attracted by males who exude a pheromone and present a nuptial offering which the female eats during copulation. Females' preferences for offerings, in descending order, are large dead insects, smaller dead insects, and a salivary mass. The males risk predation by gathering the insects (especially from spider webs) and guarding their nuptial offerings. Males without offerings assault passing females using a specially developed notal organ on their wings to restrain the females' wings and a pair of muscular abdominal claspers. Thornhill hypothesizes that this behavior and the physical structures which make it possible have evolved because the male requires control of significant resources to attract females. As resource control is risky and not always possible, natural selection favors the development of an alternative method of fertilization on the part of males. It is of significance that the reproductive interests of the males and females do not coincide in forced mating; both sexes, however, prefer non-forced mating.

Attempts at forced copulation are very common among mallards and most often involve multiple male attackers (Titman & Lowther, 1975). The attempts are not preceded by courtship behavior and the female is frequently injured and sometimes even killed. If a male's pair bond partner has been raped, he sometimes copulates with her immediately thereafter, thereby increasing the chances that the offspring will be his. The relative social dominance of males influences coercive mating and reproductive success. Dominant drakes successfully protect their pair bond partners with threat displays, although the likelihood of the male pair bond partner's intervention has been shown to vary inversely with the number of attackers. More aggressive males often interrupt subordinate males during mating attempts. The subordinates have little success in defending their mates and often make no attempt to do so (Barash, 1977).

McKinney, Derrickson, and Mineau (in press) have reviewed the literature on forced copulation among waterfowl (family Anatidae) and concluded that forced copulation is an important but less common method of insemination than pair bonding. The frequency of forced copulation varies with species and increases with crowding, as reflected in the dispersal of nesting sites. Another important variable is the extent to which male territory guarding and mate guarding behaviors are incompatible with forced copulation strategies. These data on waterfowl as well as those on scorpionflies illustrate clearly that the optimal mating strategies of males and females are not always complementary, as coercive mating frequently involves physically damaging females.

Turning to primates, coercive mating has been described among several primate species (Crawford, 1982). Among orangutans, subadult males commonly force intercourse on females who are not in estrus but the adaptive significance of this
behavior is unknown. Male chimpanzees have also been observed to coercively copulate with females. Because chimpanzees are our closest relatives extant, their mating habits are of considerable interest. Groups of males are highly territorial and social; they patrol the borders of their territory and attempt to kill members of other bands. Females are more solitary and live within the defended territory; thus, the larger the territory a group of males controls, the more females who are available. Groups of males serially copulate with females who are in estrus but there is evidence that male status is positively correlated with reproductive success and high ranking males inhibit males of lower status from breeding. Individual males attempt to separate females who are in estrus from the group in order to form pair bonds; the male forces the female to follow with threat displays but higher ranking males interrupt this process when possible (Symons, 1979).

Clearly, male chimpanzees aggressively compete for females both within and between groups.

Coercive mating among mammals in general and primates in particular is related to a variety of gender-related differences in dominance, physiology, and the development of sexual behavior. In most mammalian species, males are larger, more aggressive, and more socially dominant than females (Goy & McEwen, 1980). These differences between genders have been linked to fetal brain organization and post-pubertal testosterone levels (Gadpaille, 1980; Michael, 1964), although the relationship between androgens and aggression is complex and affected by a variety of variables (Goldstein, 1974). Goy and McEwen (1980), in a thorough review of the literature on sexual dimorphism, have concluded that testosterone masculinizes the fetal brain in mammals at a critical period. This masculinization is reflected among juvenile rhesus monkeys, for example, in a high frequency of “rough and tumble” play and high frequencies of mounting which are not dependent on post-natal testicular secretions. Females exposed to androgens prenatally exhibit the same behaviors. Prenatal masculinization of the brain is positively related to subsequent dominance rank. There is also evidence in man that prenatal androgenization of the brain alters female prepubertal gender role behavior.

It is of interest that, in many species of mammals, the hormones involved in male sexual behavior are those involved in aggression and dominance and, furthermore, that sexual and aggressive behaviors can be elicited from common areas of the brain (Blumer, 1970; MacLean, 1973; Prentky, 1982, 1984). Among squirrel monkeys, for example, the striatal complex appears to be the neural area for genital displays used in greeting, courtship, and aggression (MacLean, 1973). Among rhesus monkeys, the copulatory behavior of less dominant males is inhibited by the presence of more dominant males (Jensen, 1973). Marler and Hamilton (1967) conclude that the courtship of many species is a modified version of their fighting behavior which involves elements of both aggression and withdrawal.

Humans, like many other species, form pair bonds for reproduction where the paternity of offspring is relatively certain and both parents invest time and effort in the rearing of their young. Pair bonding occurs in societies which practice polygyny (serial or not), polyandry, and monogamy. An abundance of correlational data relate the stability and strength of pair bonds to reproductive success in man and in other species (Rasmussen, 1981). Because organisms are “programmed” to achieve reproductive success (Dawkins, 1978), a variety of reproductive strategies can be expected to occur given particular circumstances. Male reproductive success can be achieved by forming a pair bond with one or more healthy, young (but reproductively mature) females, avoiding being cuckolded, and if the risks (including those of competition for resources) are not too high, fathering as many children by sexual assault or seduction as possible outside the pair bond. Symons (1979) has argued that men must after a variety of female partners for precisely this reason; whereas females, who can produce a strictly limited number of offspring, do not. Given that reproductively successful men inevitably supplant their less successful fellows, we might wonder why sexual assault is not more common than it is. Although it must be remembered that reproductive success means having children that themselves survive to reproduce and, therefore, that simply having a lot of offspring is not necessarily a viable strategy, there is, in many instances, little cost to males in having children that someone else will care for, providing the male helps to take care of the offspring from his own pair bond(s).

An additional impetus to forced mating exists where females discriminate among potential male
partners. Such female discrimination exists among non-human primates (Beach, 1976) and has been well documented in the beagle (Beach & LeBoeuf, 1967). Clearly, males who are unattractive and cannot secure a partner have an evolutionary incentive for forced mating. Sexual dimorphism in which males are larger than females could well have arisen in this context as well as in the context of inter-male competition (Dawkins, 1978).

For females, the results of a coercively produced pregnancy are quite different; if the male who sexually assaults her does not have “good genes” her own offspring are less likely to reproduce. In addition, if she is not in a pair bond, she will have fewer resources with which to raise the child. Furthermore, if she is in a pair bond, the “infidelity” may lead to its dissolution (Rasmussen, 1981). An optimal female strategy would be to form a pair bond with a reproductively capable male who has control over significant resources, and, if the male turns out to be infertile, to cuckold him or form another pair bond.

In summary, biological data indicate that forced mating strategies are common in a wide variety of species, that optimal male and female reproductive strategies do not always coincide, and that there may well be heritable tendencies for males to engage in forced mating under certain conditions. These considerations have been elaborated in a sociobiological theory of sexual assault to be considered later.

Cross Cultural Perspective on Sexual Assault

We have seen that, among primates, sexual behavior patterns vary with ecology, experience, and species; it is no surprise, therefore, that these patterns vary widely over human cultures as well (e.g., Carstairs, 1964; Gadpaille, 1980). With respect to sexual assault, there are great difficulties in obtaining incidence data over various cultures; firstly, one must depend on the respondents’ reports rather than on frequency data and, secondly, “rape” is socially defined and this definition is in fact different in different cultures (Chappell, 1976). Despite these methodological difficulties, however, it does appear that frequencies of sexual assault vary markedly over cultures. Sexual assault has been reported to be rare or absent among such disparate societies as the peace-loving pygmies of the Ituri forest (Turnbull, 1961), the reprehensibly exploitative and loveless Ilok of the African mountains (Turnbull, 1972), and the Torrican islanders in their tropical paradise (Malinowski, 1929). In contrast, sexual assault has been extremely common among certain societies, for example, the Gusii of Kenya, and, in fact, appeared to be the most common form of sexual interaction among them whether the interaction was perceived by them as legitimate or not (LeVine, 1959). LeVine has argued from his study of the Gusii that four factors are related to high rape frequency: (a) severe restrictions on non-marital female sexual activity, (b) female sexual inhibition, (c) prolonged bachelorhood of males, and (d) an absence of physical segregation between the sexes. A study of a single culture can, however, only yield hypotheses and other interpretations of these data can be offered, perhaps most notably concerning the importance of the conception among the Gusii that all sex involves coercion and violence.

Several interesting attempts have been made to examine differences in sexual assault frequency among cultures in a systematic way with somewhat comparable results. Otterbein (1979) studied 135 non-literate societies using data from the Human Relations Area Files; of these societies, there were data for 43 on rape frequency and for 32 on punishment for this crime. Rape frequency was coded on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (concept absent or rape reported not to occur) to 7 (all sexual relations viewed as aggressive). Punishment was rated from 1 (death) to 7 (none). In addition to punishment severity, two further variables were coded. The first was the existence of fraternal interest groups, which are power groups of biologically-related men who resort to aggression in order to defend their members’ interests. The existence of fraternal interest groups was measured by patrilocality, a marital residence pattern in which the family lives with the groom’s relatives, or by a residence pattern in which the males live together and apart from the family. The second variable was feuding, defined as blood revenge in response to a homicide.

Significantly higher rape frequencies were found in societies characterized by patrilocality and feuding. There was an inverse relationship between rape frequency and punishment severity. An interesting relationship among these two
findings emerged: Punishment severity was related to rape frequency only when there were no fraternal interest groups but societies with no punishment for rape had high frequencies whether there were fraternal interest groups or not.

Sanday (1981) examined 156 tribal societies from a standard cross-cultural sample. Inter-rater agreement on the 21 variables selected was high and rape frequency data were found for 75 societies. Rape incidence was classified as (a) rare or absent, (b) present but no data on frequency or said to be not atypical, or (c) rape-prone (where used as punishment or as a threat against women, as part of a ceremony, or where rape was clearly of moderate to high frequency). Eighteen percent of the societies were rape-prone and 47% rape-free. Variables related to sexual repression (e.g., attitudes toward premarital sex and age of males at marriage) were not significantly related to rape frequency. However, variables relating to interpersonal violence were correlated with rape frequency; these variables were: (a) raiding other groups for wives, (b) degree of interpersonal violence, (c) ideology of male toughness, and (d) war. Similarly, variables related to the ideology of male dominance correlated with rape frequency: (a) lack of female power and authority, (b) lack of female political decision-making, (c) negative attitudes toward women as citizens, (d) the presence of special places for men, and (e) the presence of special places for women. The largest of these correlations, however, were found for degree of interpersonal violence and the ideology of male toughness. This finding relates well to the fraternal interest group theory of Otterbein (1979).

The fierce Yanomamo of South America offer a classic example of a rape-prone society (Chagnon, 1977); the Yanomamo are obsessed with male toughness. Fights within villages and wars between villages are very common and male mortality due to warfare is high; both fights and wars are primarily over women. Dominant males and villages possess more women than those less dominant. Symons (1979) suggests that warfare was very common among nonliterate groups before contact with state societies, that it was motivated by competition for women, and that it resulted in 25% of adult male mortality. We can conclude that rape among nonliterate societies must be viewed in the context of male competition for women.

These considerations make it appear that warfare among groups of men over women is the phenomenon most predictive of rape frequency. It is therefore, unfortunate that the Sanday paper does not include the intercorrelations among the variables used to predict rape frequency or, even better, a regression analysis, as we are left to suspect that after degree of interpersonal violence is partialled out, there is no variance left in the other variables to correlate with rape frequency. Thus, a plausible interpretation of these data is that rape frequency is only related to gender dominance and sexual separation as a byproduct of a warlike culture; the correlations between rape frequency and variables such as female lack of authority thus being epiphenomenal. This interpretation agrees in part with that of Sanday but suggests that an ameliorative course would involve addressing the issue of interpersonal violence in general rather than the issue of gender dominance. In support of this position, there are societies, such as the Hutterites, where there is complete male dominance, no machismo ideology, no war, and little or no rape (Hostetler & Huntington, 1980).

**Incidence and Variation in Western Societies**

Statistics Canada (1981) reports that in 1981 there were 3,625 rapes reported to the police, of which 1,066 were classified as unfounded. Of the 2,559 remaining, 1,050 were cleared by charges (1,119 adult males were charged, 2 adult females, and 75 juveniles). There were, in addition, 7,370 indecent assaults on females reported, of which 647 were classified as unfounded (without basis). To put the statistics in perspective, the total of "founded" sexual assaults on females (9,282) is much larger than the number of homicides (657) and much smaller than the number of non-sexual assaults (121,076). There were 56,370 forcible rapes recorded in the U.S. during 1976; indicating a rape rate at least twice that of Canada.

Scanlon (1982), using Statistics Canada information, has reported that rapes per 100,000 Canadian population have increased from 3.1 in 1962 to 8.6 in 1978. In the U.S., the Uniform Crime Report indicates a steadily increasing trend since 1933 (Bowker, 1979). How much of the increase is due to increases in rape frequency or is simply a function of variation in victim reporting probability or police reporting practices is a matter of contention. Scanlon (1982) has argued that, although there are real problems in using rape
statistics because of differences in local definition, regional disparities are obscured in broad national samples and can be used in static situations to measure changes in the same location. Regional disparities are indeed a real problem: Chappell (1976), for example, found that the Los Angeles police used a very liberal set of criteria in defining rape whereas the Boston police used a very restrictive one and concluded that sophisticated comparisons of different geographical localities were unsound.

With respect to the reporting of rapes, Bowker (1979) cites data from the National Opinion Research Centre victimization polls which show that rape is the most underreported crime of personal violence; the self-report rate was almost 4 times the Uniform Crime Report rate of the FBI. Although other victimization studies show the reporting rate to be higher (40%) and to be the same as for other crimes of violence against the person (Scanlon, 1982), it is clear that underreporting is a serious problem. More serious sexual assaults, particularly those involving personal injury, are, however, more likely to be reported (Monahan, 1981). It is, however, one thing to have various estimates of the degree of underreporting but it is quite another to find that reporting rates vary with victim variables. In the most comprehensive study relevant to this issue, Feldman-Summers and Ashworth (1981) interviewed 100 women in each of Asian, Black, Hispanic or White ethnic groups in Seattle. Each participant was interviewed by a woman of the corresponding ethnic group. The intention to report a hypothetical rape was related to the perceived likelihood and evaluation of each of a variety of outcomes and the perceived expectations of various social referents with which the respondent was motivated to comply (e.g., husband). Ethnic differences were most marked in the likelihood of reporting to the police or a rape crisis center; not surprisingly, white women were more likely to say they would report to these public agencies. The results of this study, therefore, support the idea that the underreporting of sexual assault is markedly biased.

One of the variables most closely related to the decision to report a sexual assault is the relationship of the victim to the rapist. In most jurisdictions, sexual assault within the context of marriage is not even a criminal offense. Sexual assault which occurs in a dating context is also very unlikely to be reported. Kirkpatrick and Kanin (1957) reported that, in the previous academic year, 56% of women students at Ohio State University had been offended by sexual aggression, 21% by forceful attempts at intercourse, and 6% by attempts involving threats or the infliction of physical pain. Similar results were found by Kanin (1957) who gathered reports concerning women’s experiences in their last year of high school: Of 163 offended women, two reported the attack to the police. Although these data are striking and important, the majority of the assaults were, of course, fairly minor.

These data underscore the difficulties inherent in using officially-gathered statistics on the incidence of sexual assault; it appears that the official statistics are both gross and biased underestimates, particularly in cases where there is no physical injury. “Sexual assaults” or “rapes” are socially defined behaviors; behaviors which “look” like sexual assault, i.e., which involve actual or attempted coercive intercourse and the infliction of pain, are not always labeled as sexual assaults, as, for example, in the Gusli wedding night activities or in the dating activities of Western society.

It is important to realize that the issue in Western society is whether a particular instance is classified as a sexual assault; once such a label is applied, there is a consensus about the seriousness of the act—i.e., people agree about the seriousness of the behavior once it is classified as rape. Akman and Normandeau (1967), using a ratio scaling technique in which subjects rated the seriousness of 14 offenses in comparison to a standard offense, found that French and English university students in several Canadian provinces, white collar workers, judges, and police officers agreed very well with each other and a Philadelphia sample on the relative seriousness of the index offenses. Forcible rape (without physical injury or intimidation with a weapon) was seen as very serious; specifically, to put the matter into concrete (if strange) perspective, it was 1.43 times as serious as being hurt to the extent of requiring hospitalization, equal to a property loss or destruction of between $62,501.00 and $100,000.00, and as 2.8 times less serious than homicide.

The classical study on sexual assault was conducted by Amir in Philadelphia (Amir, 1965, 1971). Using police files, data were gathered on 646 victims and 1,292 offenders involved in 370 single-rapes, 105 pair-rapes and 171 group rapes. The results of this large study can be summarized
very briefly as follows: Rape was found to be primarily intra-racial and of higher frequency among blacks, in more than a third of the cases the victim and offender knew each other (if only slightly), the participants typically lived in the same neighborhood, the offenses often occurred in the home of one of the participants, three-quarters of the rapes were planned, 50% of the victims did not resist, 43% of the rapes involved more than one rapist, most rapes occurred on weekend evenings, most participants were of lower socioeconomic status, and finally, alcohol was associated with increasing amounts of violence used by the offender.

Dietz (1978) has critically summarized a large number of sociological studies of rape. He begins by noting that, in the U.S., only 16% of reported forcible rapes lead to any conviction (cf. Abel, Becker, & Skinner, 1980; Peterson, Braiker, & Polich, 1980) and that the probability of reporting, arrest, and conviction are probably all strongly related to social status and race; thus Dietz reaffirms the position taken earlier on the biases inherent in studies of sexual assault. Sexual assaulters available for study come differentially from low socioeconomic backgrounds and are poorly educated. Similarly, blacks are disproportionately represented (cf. Schiff, 1973). Lester (1974) has also found that there is a small correlation between the proportion of blacks in a state and the incidence of rape. Data on temporal and spatial patterning from a variety of European and American studies indicate that rapes are more common in the evening, in the summer, and on weekends. With respect to locale, the rapist typically breaks into the victim’s residence (or uses a ruse to effect the same purpose) or entices or forces her to accompany him to a convenient location (Dietz, 1978).

Considerable light is thrown on the nature of sexual assault by a study of rape frequency before, during and after a transit strike in Toronto (Geller, 1977). During the 23-day strike, the number of sexual offenses against female hitchhikers increased 9 times to 13% of all sex offenses (as compared to 1.6% in a comparable pre-strike period and 0% in a comparable post-strike period). The total number of sexual assaults, however, was unaffected by the strike. The most plausible interpretation of these data appears to be that sexual assailants were looking for accessible victims and opportunistically changed the place where they ordinarily found them.

There are a number of interesting differences between multiple offender and solitary offender rapes (Dietz, 1978): Multiple offender rapes: (a) are more sharply clustered on weekends, summers, and evenings; (b) involve younger offenders from lower status ethnic groups in communities with pronounced ethnic hierarchies; (c) more often involve alcohol; (d) involve offenders who less frequently have previous offenses against the person or sex offenses; (e) more often involve offenders from the same neighborhood as the victim and the crime; (f) more often begin in the street, less often occur in the residence of the participants, and more often in an automobile; (g) less often involve intimates; and (h) involve greater force. Peterson, Braiker and Polich (1980) have supported these results in a study of California inmate self-reports; gang membership was found to be associated with high rates of all types of violent crime, including rape. These findings are reminiscent of the cross-cultural data pertaining to societies which use rape in pubertal rites, as well as to fraternal interest group theory, and the influence of machismo ideology.

Variations in the rates of sexual assault have been studied within Western societies but in view of the softness of the data have to be viewed with extreme caution (Chappell, 1976; Geis & Geis, 1979). Schiff (1974) concludes that Greece, Italy, Spain, and Switzerland have lower incidents of forcible rape than the U.S. Geis and Geis (1979) present data indicating that Stockholm has the same incidences as comparably-sized cities in the U.S. and much higher incidences than London, for example. They argue that sexual permissiveness in Sweden leads occasionally to misunderstandings on the part of (especially foreign) men in dating situations.

The incidence of rape and attempted rape does not appear to vary with increased penalties upon conviction. In a Philadelphia study, Schwartz (1968) found that large increases in the duration of incarceration for rape and attempted rape had no effect on the seriousness or number of sexual assaults. This is not to argue, of course, that criminal sanctions have no deterrent effect, only that an increase in an already severe sanction had no increased effect (cf. Otterbein, 1979).

In summary, data on the incidence and variation of sexual assault in Western societies are subject to discrepancies in police definitions and victim reporting practices. Nevertheless, there are some indications that rape is increasing in rate
over time in many locations; that, in the U.S., rape is more common in slum conditions and black communities with adolescent gangs (note that the rates are higher and victims less likely to report); that rapists are predatory and opportunistic; and that rapists involved in multiple offender rapes are different from solitary rapists.

Variations in the Proclivity to Sexual Assault

This section reviews studies of men who are not identified as sexual assaulters. In addition to providing a general context for the evaluation of data on sexual assaulters, several issues can be addressed by these studies: most notably, the identification of attitudes and behaviors which are conducive to sexual assault and the identification of individual differences among "normal men" in their proclivity to rape. If we were to assume that some or all rapists were in some way different from men who never rape, they would be differentially recruited from subgroups of men or boys with certain characteristics. If this is so, there must be variation in theoretically- or, better, empirically-relevant variables within the population of non-sex offenders.

Among these variables are beliefs concerning sexual assault itself. It would not strain our credulity to believe that men who think that certain women deserve or "look for" sexual assault would be more likely to engage in such behavior; or, perhaps, more to the point, that men who think that women's resistance is invariably coyness or that women cannot be forced into intercourse against their will would be more likely to commit a sexual assault. Note that the truth or falsity of these beliefs is irrelevant, as is their logical relationship as to whether women should be sexually assaulted. The assertion here is only that there is an intuitively appealing link for a relationship between these sorts of beliefs and a predilection for sexual assault (cf. Gager & Schurr, 1976), although the direction of causality presumed by this assertion has not been established.

Some of the beliefs mentioned above are surprisingly common. Consider Heller's (1969) views on victim precipitation: "The victim herself may contribute unwittingly to her demise by masochistic provocation... Among common fatal attitudes or 'games' played by female victims are provocativeness of dress, posture or gait accompanied by a rigid, stubborn defense of genital 'integrity'. When rape is inevitable, these same women act as though they would rather be dead than in bed, and are tragically accommodated."

In an important study on beliefs about rape (Burt, 1980), a large sample of adults in Minnesota, of whom 60% were women, were interviewed by female interviewers concerning a variety of attitudes toward sexual behaviors and relations between the sexes. Subjects were selected at random to yield representative age and sex distributions. A variety of scales were used to measure: (a) Own sex role satisfaction; (b) Self-esteem; (c) Romantic self-image; (d) Sex role stereotyping (e.g., "A woman should be a virgin when she marries."); (e) Adversarial sexual beliefs (e.g., "In a dating relationship a woman is largely out to take advantage of a man."); (f) Sexual conservatism (e.g., "People should not have oral sex."); (g) Acceptance of interpersonal violence (e.g., "Being roughed up is sexually stimulating to many women."); and (h) Rape myth acceptance (e.g., "A woman who is stuck-up and thinks she is too good to talk to guys on the street deserves to be taught a lesson.").

In the male sample the following variables were correlated (in descending order) with the Acceptance of Rape Myths Scale: sex role stereotyping, acceptance of interpersonal violence, sexual conservatism, education (negative), adversarial sexual beliefs, and age. Very similar zero order (simple) correlations were obtained in the female sample. Burt developed a model based on these relationships in which acceptance of interpersonal violence was the best predictor of scores on the Acceptance of Rape Myths Scale, but, although this relationship is plausible, it was unfortunately contaminated by overlap in content between the two scales. The most important result of Burt's survey, however, was the finding of the great prevalence of mistaken ideas about rape: for example, over half the sample believed that 50% or more of reported rapes result from a woman trying to get back at a man because she was angry or attempting to cover up an illegitimate pregnancy.

Briere, Malamuth, and Check (1981) administered a questionnaire containing Burt's Rape Myth, Adversarial Sexual Beliefs, and Acceptance of Interpersonal Violence items, together with others concerning issues such as use of pornography and sexual inhibitions, to a large sample of male undergraduates. These items were then subjected to factor analysis, a procedure which determines the degree to which items form
homogeneous clusters by correlating with each other and not with other items. The Rape Myth Acceptance Scale was found to contain four independent factors: disbelief of rape claims, victim responsibility for rape, rape reports as manipulation, and rape can be resisted. These unidimensional factors appear more useful for future research than the Rape Myth Scale and, in addition, do not bear value laden titles. The Adversarial Sexual Beliefs scale was comprised of two factors: male dominance is justified, and adversarial sexual beliefs. Finally, the Acceptance of Interpersonal Violence scale contained two interpretable factors: women enjoy sexual violence, and acceptance of domestic violence. These 9 new scales were related to the sexuality variables using multiple regression. The tendency not to believe victim rape reports was predicted by pornography use, perceived importance of sex, self-reported sexual knowledge, an absence of serious relationships with women, and little sexual experience. The beliefs that women enjoy sexual violence and are responsible for their own rapes were correlated with self-reported sexual inhibition. These data illustrate the complex multidimensional nature of attitudes toward rape and emphasize the importance of male individual differences in sexual inhibition and actual sexual experience.

In a series of studies, Malamuth and his associates (Malamuth, 1981c) directly dealt with individual differences in the self reported proclivity to commit sexual assault by asking college students to rate on a 5-point scale how likely they were to rape if they could be assured of not being caught. Approximately 35% of the sampled men rated their likelihood as “2” or higher and 20% as “3” or higher. Individuals rating themselves as likely to rape have been found to endorse more callous attitudes toward rape and to endorse mistaken ideas about rape to a greater extent. In addition, such individuals, when mildly insulted by a female confederate in a contrived laboratory aggression situation, reported more anger toward the female, reported more desire to hurt her, and used higher intensities of aversive noise to correct her errors in a bogus learning task. It should be noted in this context that male aggression toward females in laboratory paradigms is ordinarily strongly inhibited (Donnerstein & Barrett, 1978); for example, Taylor and Smith (1974) found, using a bogus reaction time competitive task with liberal profeminist and traditional male undergraduates, that the traditional subjects gave higher shocks than profeminist men but that both groups gave lower intensity shocks to female, relative to male, “opponents.”

In addition to attitudes which may contribute to the likelihood of a male committing a sexual assault, it would seem that the degree to which he finds rape-related stimuli sexually arousing would be related to the probability of such behaviors. Malamuth and Check (1980a) exposed 75 male undergraduates to either an audiotaped description of mutually-consenting sexual activity, a rape in which the victim became sexually aroused, or a rape in which the victim continued to abhor the assault. The first story presentation was followed by another rape description, the criterion rape story. Subjects’ ratings of their degree of sexual arousal were obtained and, in addition, their penile tumescence changes in response to the stories were measured with a mercury in rubber strain gauge. Penile tumescence increases are indicative of male sexual arousal; measurement of penis size is sometimes called “phalometry.” Subjects were significantly less sexually aroused, as measured by changes in penile circumference, by the rape-abhorrence story than by the rape-arousal story and a similar trend was found in the self-report data. Interestingly, subjects who heard the rape-arousal and mutually desired stories first showed larger circumference changes in response to the criterion rape story than those who heard the rape-abhorrence scenario. Subjects who heard the rape-arousal story first rated less victim trauma in the criterion rape story than other subjects. These findings suggest that pornography can strongly influence subjects’ ideas about rape.

In the questionnaire data, subjects’ self-reported proclivity to rape was correlated positively with the beliefs that women would enjoy victimization, the woman derived pleasure from the criterion rape story, and the woman shares responsibility. Self-reported proclivity to rape was positively correlated with self-reported sexual arousal to the rape abhorrence story and to the rape criterion story if it followed either of the rape stories. A small but significant correlation was obtained between the belief that women derive pleasure from rape and both penile tumescence and self report measures of arousal to the criterion rape description. In a questionnaire study of undergraduate males, Malamuth and Check (1980b) replicated the finding of lowered self-reported sexual arousal to descriptions of a rape in which the victim experienced disgust.
Malamuth (1981a) used a bogus extrasensory perception task in which male undergraduates “helped” a female confederate by delivering aversive noise as punishment for incorrect responses to study the influence of sexual arousal to rape stimuli and attitudes on aggression towards females. All 42 subjects were exposed to audiotaped scenarios sometime before the ESP task. Subjects were angered by the female before the task began. The difference between their penile responses to the rape and to the mutually consenting intercourse stories as well as high scores on Burt’s Rape Myth Acceptance and Acceptance of Interpersonal Violence Toward Women scales predicted the intensity of noise that subjects gave the confederate. Although some subjects suspected the anger manipulation and the data analysis was rather sophisticated for the number of subjects, the results support the links between attitude, sexual arousal, and aggression towards women.

In the final study of this series, Malamuth and Check (1983) found that male undergraduates who rated themselves as likely to rape were more sexually aroused (as indicated by self-report and penile tumescence responses) by rape descriptions when the victim was described as sexually aroused than by a mutually-consenting sex description. Subjects who rated themselves as unlikely to rape showed equal amounts of arousal to the two story types; all subjects were less aroused to descriptions of rape where the victim showed disgust. Self-reported sexual arousal to the rape depictions was positively correlated with self-reported likelihood of raping, Eysenck’s psychoticism and neuroticism scales, and Nelson’s “power motivation” for sexual activity scale (sample item: “I enjoy the conquest.”). Sexual arousal to rape depictions was negatively correlated with sexual experience.

The research reviewed so far in this section clearly indicates that there are individual differences among men in their self-reported proclivity to sexually assault females. In addition, those men who claim that they are relatively likely to rape show greater arousal to rape cues, are less sexually experienced, and endorse more callous attitudes toward rape. The studies which follow have addressed the issue of whether there are situational variables which appear to increase the probability of sexual assault. It is, of course, clear that gross societal disorganization (as in wartime) and marked social inequities (as in slavery) increase the frequencies of sexual assault (Brownmiller, 1975) but the studies to be reviewed below deal with issues involving “everyday” sorts of variables.

Perhaps the most obvious variable which may be related to sexual assault is the ingestion of alcohol. In a series of studies of male undergraduates (Briddell & Wilson, 1976; Wilson & Lawson, 1976), it has been found that penile responses to erotic films decline as a function of blood alcohol level and are increased by the expectation that alcohol has been received, regardless of whether subjects have received no alcohol or a low alcohol dose. Lansky and Wilson (1981) reported that alcohol expectancy increased penile responses to erotic audiotaped stories among subjects who were high in sex guilt.

Of greater relevance to the present review, however, are similar studies which include sexual assault descriptions as stimuli. Unfortunately, the results of these studies are inconsistent. Briddell, Rimm, Caddy, Krawitz, Shotis, and Wunderlin (1978) studied undergraduate male social drinkers using a placebo-alcohol design; the placebo condition involved subjects being led to believe they had ingested alcohol when in fact they had not. Subjects were exposed to audio descriptions of consenting sex, rape, and nonsexual violence toward women. The alcohol expectancy condition was associated with increased arousal (penile tumescence changes) to the rape and nonsexual violence scenarios but alcohol itself was not related to sexual arousal. There were, however, methodological difficulties with this study; the most important of these is the possibility of a ceiling effect on the responses to consenting sex which makes it impossible to conclude whether there is an overall increase in sexual arousal to all stimuli with alcohol expectancy or a differential increase in arousal to deviant stimuli. Barbaree, Marshall, Lightfoot, and Yates (in press) did not replicate these findings with a similar design. These investigators found no effect of alcohol expectancy but did find an effect of alcohol itself: Subjects who had consumed alcohol did not increase their discrimination between rape and consenting sex scenarios upon second testing whereas sober subjects did. Unfortunately, the expectancy manipulation in the Barbaree et al. study was not completely successful. Essentially, the results of laboratory studies on alcohol, alcohol expectancy, and sexual arousal to deviant and non-deviant stimuli are equivocal.

Another variable which may be involved in sexual assault is anger; indeed, sexual assault is
often viewed as a crime of anger and hostility. Yates, Barbaree, and Marshall (unpublished manuscript) examined the effects of an anger-producing insult on penile responses to rape cues among 24 university students. Subjects' arousal was measured to consenting and nonconsenting sexual intercourse descriptions in the first session; in the second session the subjects were assigned to three conditions: an exercise condition in which subjects pedalled on a bicycle ergometer before testing, an exercise and insult condition in which a female confederate made derogatory comments on the subject's exercise performance, or a no exercise and no insult control condition. Sexual arousal measurements were then repeated; subjects were told the purpose of the study was to determine the effects of exercise on sexual arousal. Pilot data indicated that the insult condition was credible and resulted in increased aggression in a bogus laboratory strategic game. In initial testing, all groups showed less arousal to the rape than to the consenting stimuli; for the exercise and control groups, this discrimination was sharper upon the second testing. The angered subjects, however, showed less response to the mutually-consenting episodes and more arousal to the non-consenting sexual activity. Anger, therefore, appeared to make males more likely to rape.

What can be concluded from these studies of non-sex offenders? First, although sexual assault of adult women (particularly in its less violent and brutal forms) is very common, men show great individual variation in their self-reported propensity to sexually assault. Men who claim they are more likely to sexually assault are more likely to have mistaken beliefs about rape and endorse more callous attitudes toward rape, are more hostile towards women, show greater sexual arousal to descriptions of sexual assault where the victim is depicted as sexually aroused than to descriptions of mutually-consenting sex, and are relatively sexually inexperienced. Angered men would appear more prone to sexual assault but the effects of alcohol are equivocal.

The studies reviewed in this section suffer from obvious limitations; none involve comparisons with rapists, most involve college populations, many use laboratory tasks in which demand characteristics and ecological validity issues cause difficulties in interpretation, and most deal with attitudes or self-report rather than behaviors. The authors of these studies are, of course, well aware of these limitations and never intended them to stand alone in the manner in which they have been presented here. This research on normal subjects acquires significance in connection with studies of known sexual assailters which are presented below.

**Studies of Known Sexual Assaulters**

The advantage of studying normal populations is that random sampling techniques can be employed, whereas the disadvantage is that it is unknown whether any sexual assailters are in the sample. College student samples, however, are more problematic because they are hardly randomly selected. In addition, even if minor sexual assaults are common among them, there is no way to know whether those students who claim they may rape under certain circumstances in fact ever do. Studying groups of known sexual assailters avoids these problems but raises others. We have seen that rapes are under-reported in a biased manner. One cannot assume, therefore, that known sexual assailters are representative of sexual assailters in general. In particular, on the basis of victim data, we would expect that known sexual assailters would be more likely to have white, middle-class victims and victims who were not well known to them. It should be noted that bias or selection increases with each step in the criminal justice process from arrest to incarceration.

The representativeness problem is not, however, as severe as it may appear. For certain issues, representativeness is irrelevant; most notably, in treatment research only sexual assailters who can be identified can be treated, so that the question of the treatability of unidentified sexual assailters does not arise. Moreover, the principal reason that assaults are not reported is lack of seriousness of the crime (Monahan, 1981); the more serious the offense, particularly in terms of personal injury, the more likely it is to be reported to the police. Perhaps more importantly, offenders who have been convicted of one sexual assault are many times more likely than the general population to have committed similar offenses for which they were not arrested (Monahan, 1981). Thus, known offenders in fact make up an appreciable number of the "unknown" sexual assailters. Known sexual assailters are, therefore, a biased sample in part because they are likely to have committed more serious offenses
and more frequent offenses than non-apprehended sexual assaulters. In short, known sexual assaulters tend to be those in whom we should be most interested.

**General Descriptions and Typologies**

There is a large literature of varying quality which describes the general characteristics of sexual assaulters. Among these papers are articles written for laypersons which are often directed toward dispelling myths about sex offenders (Cohen & Boucher, 1972; Kozol, 1971; Littner, 1974; Rada, 1977) and those which are largely or exclusively transcripts of interviews with sexual assaulters (Levine & Koenig, 1980; Parks, 1974). A further category of articles describes groups of sexual assaulters in mental hospitals, prisons, or outpatient clinics; these descriptions are sometimes accompanied by a classification scheme or typology (Anderson, Kunce, & Rich, 1979; Brancato, Ellis, & Doorbar, 1982; Cohen, Garofalo, Boucher, & Seghorn, 1971; Henn, Herjanic, & Vanderpearl, 1976; Mccaldon, 1967; Paich & Cowden, 1974; Peterson, Brailer, & Polich, 1980; Rada, 1978; West, 1965; Wile, 1941). Some of the more influential studies of this type are reviewed below.

In the most ambitious description of sexual offenders, Gebhard, Gagnon, Pomeroy, and Christenson (1965) interviewed 1,356 men convicted of a sexual offense, 888 convicted of a nonsexual offense, and 477 controls. Official records were also examined. One hundred and forty men in this sample were convicted of sexual contact accompanied by force or threat with females aged 16 years or older who were not their daughters; these were called “heterosexual aggressors against adults.” By age 26, 66% of these men had spent at least one year in prison for a single offense and 87% had been convicted of some crime other than the index offense; about half of the convictions were for sex offenses. Only 33% of the men had only previous sex offenses. The most common previous sexual offenses, aside from aggression against adult women, were offenses (such as statutory rape) against willing females (27%), exhibition (21%), and peeping (19%). Langevin, Paithich, and Ruscak in press have also reported the presence of various sexual deviations among rapists and a history of a variety of nonsexual offenses.

Heterosexual aggressors against adults reported being sexually aroused by pictures or stories concerning sadomasochistic activity more than any other group of sex offenders save heterosexual aggressors against minors but the proportion was small (15%). More reported sadomasochistic dreams than any other sex offender group but again the proportion was small (4%). Most (70%) of the offenses were premeditated but many of the offenders (39%) were drunk at the time of the offense and a further 15% had been drinking. More of these offenders than any other group (13%) used violence which was designed to inflict physical injury rather than to obtain coitus.

Gebhard et al. assigned the heterosexual aggressors against adults to seven categories. The “assaultive offenders” constituted between 25 and 33% of the sample. Typically, they committed their offenses alone against unknown women, often used weapons, made no or little attempt at seduction, were not discriminating as to the appearance of the victim, and often stole their victim’s money. The assaultive offender appeared to be sadistic and used unnecessary violence. Often there was erectile dysfunction during the offense. Less common categories were: amoral delinquents, drunks, explosive assaulters (who exhibited inexplicable and out-of-character aggression), double standard assaulters (who believed that force applied to bad girls after failed seduction was appropriate), psychotics, and mental defectives. About one-third of the sample did not fall clearly into any of the categories and appeared to be mixtures.

Gebhard et al. also assigned the heterosexual aggressors against adults into incidental (N = 83) and patterned offender categories (N = 57). Patterned offenders were those who committed the same offense repeatedly. In comparison to incidental offenders, patterned heterosexual aggressors against adults completed more years of schooling, more frequently reported not getting along with their father as a teenager, reported more prepubertal sex play of all types, and more often reported sadomasochistic fantasy (20% as compared to 0%). This is the first study of sexual assaulters which hints at the importance of sadistic fantasies. Given the legal status of the inmate respondents, it is likely that many of those who claimed not to have these fantasies, in fact entertained them.

Cohen, Garofalo, Boucher, and Seghorn (1971) have presented a clinical classification of rapists
developed during their assessment and treatment of offenders in the Bridgewater prison hospital setting. The first pattern is labelled "rape-aggressive aim," in which the offender's sexual behavior is in the service of aggression and his purpose is to humiliate and hurt the victim. In the "rape-sexual aim" pattern the rapist is primarily interested in sex and uses only as much violence as is required. The final pattern is "rape-sex aggression defusion" in which the offender requires violence in order to become sexually aroused. Rapists of the first type have been shown to be more popular with other patients than other types in a maximum security setting (Cohen, Seghorn, & Calmas, 1969).

Groth and his associates (Groth & Birnbaum, 1979; Groth, Burgess, & Holmstrom, 1977) have used victim and rapist accounts of rapes to establish a typology. Groth asserts that rape is never primarily a matter of sex but is a pseudosexual act. "Power assault" rapists seek to control their victims through intimidation: the power-assertive rapist uses rape to express his virility, whereas the power-reassurance rapist uses the offense to offset doubts about his masculinity. In "anger rape" the victim is beaten and degraded; the anger-excitation rapist is sadistic and his aggression eroticized.

Unfortunately, these taxonomies are unsatisfactory both methodologically and conceptually. With respect to method, some taxonomies rely heavily on interview data; such data are useful but there are important limitations on offenders' self-reports. As McDonald (1971) has observed: "The conscious confessions of criminals and a statement of the circumstances of the crime, be it ever so complete, will never sufficiently explain why the individual in the given circumstances had to commit just that act. External circumstances very often do not motivate the deed at all, and the doer, did he wish to be frank, would mostly have to acknowledge that he really did not himself exactly know what impelled him to do it; most often, however, he is not so frank, not even to himself, but subsequently looks for and finds explanation of his conduct." A further problem with these classification schemes is that no investigators have presented inter-clinician reliability data; we cannot know, therefore, whether the category descriptions are specific enough to permit agreement or how discrete the categories are. One would think that a classification scheme could best be arrived at through clustering algorithms or factor analytic techniques rather than intuition.

In addition, theoretical issues such as the relative contributions of "sex," "power," and so on, to sexual assault cannot be resolved by examining a series of cases. The collection and description of case material is, of course, important and necessary but it must be accompanied by rigorous analysis before theory can proceed.

Such a clustering approach to a taxonomy of sexual aggressors has recently been attempted and the results, although yet preliminary, indicate the promise of this strategy. Knight, Prentky, Schneider, and Rosenberg (1982) examined a large amount of file data on 41 child molesters and 78 rapists who had been committed to the Bridgewater institution as sexually dangerous. Separate factor analyses on family characteristics, childhood behavior, adult behavior and offense characteristics led to the identification of 15 factors which were used in subsequent regression and path analyses. There were a number of differences between the rapists and child molesters but only the rapists' results will be reported here. Childhood social and academic incompetence predicted both adult social incompetence and severe adult psychopathology and sexual pathology. Childhood antisocial behavior predicted adult antisocial behavior, indicating long-term stability of this behavior. Offense frequency (unfortunately, both sexual and nonsexual) was predicted by childhood psychiatric system contact, adult academic and vocational incompetence and adult antisocial behavior. Degree of violence was associated only with adult alcohol abuse. Two major paths appeared to originate in family instability: The first involved juvenile antisocial behavior, adult antisocial behavior, and frequent criminal offenses; whereas the second involved juvenile psychiatric system contact and frequent criminal offenses. Thus there appear to be impulsive, antisocial rapists, incompetent rapists with no evidence of early conduct disorder (both groups with high adult offense frequencies) and, by implication, a third group of "normal" men with low offense frequencies.

Further work on these data have been reported by Rosenberg (1981). Briefly, five factors (substance abuse, social competence, antisocial behavior, impulsivity in sexual offenses, and sexual aggression) were used in a cluster analysis of 114 rapists or child molesters. Eleven clusters emerged, the most noteworthy of which were: (a) explosive-aggressive rapists, controlled type,
characterized by high competence, low general antisocial behavior and high sexualized aggression; (b) explosive-aggressive rapists, impulsive type, comprised of persons with high sexual aggression and impulsivity; and (c) disturbed antisocial-aggressive rapists characterized by substance abuse, general antisocial behavior, and sexualized aggression. Although the validity of these clusters must be established in future research using independent information, such an effort appears justified and would put a taxonomic scheme on a firm empirical foundation.

In summary, the descriptions of known sexual assailants, despite their methodological inadequacies, indicate a degree of offender heterogeneity which must be taken into account in any theory of rape. This heterogeneity is consistent with studies of non-sex offenders who show variation in variables potentially related to sexual assault. In particular, several variables appear potentially useful in assigning sexual assailants to types: the presence of aggressive sexual fantasies, alcohol abuse, general antisocial criminal behavior, and degree of violence in the offense.

Descriptions of Sexual Murderers

Sexual homicides and sadistic murders are extremely rare (Swigert, Farrell, & Yoels, 1976) but receive a great deal of media attention. These murders are distinguished by sexual assault and mutilation or deliberate efforts to cause pain. Because of the infrequency of this type of crime, the literature on sadistic murderers is sparse and consists primarily of psychoanalytically-oriented case descriptions (Howell, 1972; Thornton & Pray, 1975; Williams, 1964, 1965) or psychoanalytic theory (Glover, 1964). Reutelich (1965) reviewed nine cases of sexual murder and 34 of sexual assault. "Dynamic factors" in these cases were speculated to be: hostility to women, preoccupation with maternal sexual conduct, incestuous preoccupations, guilt over sex, rejection of sex as impure, feelings of sexual inferiority, and the need to possess the victim or what she represents. It is noteworthy in this connection that sexual guilt is strongly associated with sexual inexperience in normal samples (DiVasto, Pathak, & Fishburn, 1981). Reutelich hypothesized that fetishism of female underwear, previous instances of solo breaking-and-entering, sadistic fantasies, minor assaults on females, and mutilation of animals may be important prognostic signs.

Brittain (1970) has described the characteristics of sadistic sex murderers based upon his clinical experience. Such offenders are commonly introverted and withdrawn, appear studious, are mild mannered and timid, are tidy in their personal habits and are most likely to offend after a loss of self-esteem (particularly in a sexual context). They are often prudish about sexual matters, hypochondriacal, and considered to be a little "weird" by their associates. Many appear somewhat effeminate or perhaps overpolite. Typically, they are daydreamers who imagine sadistic scenes and are interested in such things as Nazi atrocities. Their sexual contacts are very limited; they are modest, and often feel physically inadequate. Often, there have been no previous offenses but, if there are, they involve minor offenses such as stealing women's underwear or voyeurism. Their occupational record is usually not good and may include such trades as that of a butcher; many are fascinated by weapons. They are often "Mama's boys." Transvestism is common, as is cruelty to animals. Many sadistic murderers are interested in anatomy, forensic medicine, and sadistic pornography. Such offenders are typically model prisoners.

These descriptions of sadistic murderers are, of course, only impressions but can be useful in providing hypotheses for future research. Several elements are found in each of the descriptions in the literature: sexual murderers tend to be shy and passive, have dependent relations with their mothers, are hostile to women, and have extremely sadistic fantasies. Fortunately, there are some data which relate to this latter point. Langevin, Paitich, and Russon (in press) have reported that the amount of force used in rapists' sexual assaults was correlated with more frequent sadistic and more frequent masochistic fantasies. Abel and his associates (Abel, Barlow, Blanchard, & Guild, 1977; Abel, Becker, Blanchard, & Djenderedjian, 1978) found that sadistic offenders showed very high penile responses to audio descriptions of rape scenes relative to their responses to descriptions of consenting sex and, in addition, showed marked arousal to scenes depicting nonsexual violence against women.

Quinsey and Chaplin (1982) studied the penile responses of 44 rapists to audiotaped narrations describing neutral heterosexual activities, mutually-desired intercourse, rape, and nonsexual
violence towards women. A ratio formed for each rapist by dividing the average response to nonsexual violence narratives by the average response to consenting sex was significantly related to whether or not the rapists had seriously injured their victims. The relationship between sexual arousal to nonsexual violence and victim damage was not large enough to provide much help in making release decisions but would appear to be useful in identifying targets for treatment. The small number of offenders who show large amounts of sexual arousal to nonsexual violence against women are of considerable theoretical and practical interest. In particular, such arousal to sadistic themes offers the opportunity to do research on sadistic individuals as only the most extreme sadists can reliably be differentiated from aggressive sexual assailants on the basis of their history and offense description (e.g., Quinsey & Chaplin, 1982).

**Recidivism Studies**

Studies of recidivism are vital to understanding sexual assailants. If, for example, sexual assailants commit a wide variety of offenses of which sexual assault is but one, we are dealing with general criminality and specialized treatment and research efforts concerning sexual assailants themselves are unwarranted because sexual recidivism would be extremely rare. Recidivism studies are also central to attempts to predict subsequent dangerousness and to evaluate treatment programs. There is a large general literature on the prediction of dangerousness and future violence which will not be reviewed here; but, in general, the evidence indicates that clinicians are not very accurate in their appraisals (e.g., Quinsey & Ambtman, 1978, 1979) and tend to overpredict dangerousness (Monahan, 1981). Despite these findings, however, accurate prediction is theoretically possible under certain conditions (Quinsey, 1980; Monahan, 1978).

A number of articles have appeared which describe methods of making release decisions concerning sexual offenders in various prison and hospital settings (Andriola, 1966; Kozol, Cohen, & Garofalo, 1966; Roberts & Pacht, 1965), and also offer lists of criteria which are used in making predictions. Unfortunately, none of these lists have been evaluated by relating them to follow-up data specifically concerning sex offenders of adult women. There are well-known and large differences among the recidivism rates of different types of sexual offenders (Christiansen, Elers-Nielson, LeMaire, & Sturup, 1965; Frisbie, 1965; Gray & Mohr, 1965) which make follow-ups of undifferentiated sex offenders difficult to interpret. In addition, the clinical, or case conference, method of making predictions, although representing the state of the art, is inaccurate under the best conditions because of poor interclinician agreement (Quinsey & Ambtman, 1978) and the suboptimal manner in which the case conferences address the issue of dangerousness (Dix, 1975).

The literature on sexual assailants of adult females has been reviewed by West, Roy, and Nichols (1978) who conclude that recidivism rates vary with the characteristics of the sample studied and that there is a small number of sexual assailants against adult females who repetitively offend. Unfortunately, there are fewer data on rapists than on other sexual offenders. The major studies are reviewed below.

As part of a large follow-up study of sex offenders treated and released from the Atascadero institution in California, Frisbie and Dondis (1965) followed 70 sexual aggressors (defined as men who committed sexual acts on females 18 years of age or older which were accompanied by threats or force). After adjusting for opportunity to reoffend, sexual aggressors were found to have the highest sexual recidivism rate during their first post-release year. The cumulative 5-year recidivism rate was 36%, interestingly, higher than that of heterosexual child molesters. The new sex offenses tended to be of the same type.

The Cambridge study examined a large number of sex offenses committed in England during 1951 (Radzinowicz, 1957). Of 22 men convicted of rape and attempted rape, only 9% had been convicted of a previous sex offense although many had committed other crimes. During a 4-year follow-up, 10% of 40 men convicted of a sex offense against adult women committed another sex offense. A positive association was found between alcohol and the amount of violence used in the index offense.

In another English study, Soothill, Jack, and Gibbens (1976) found that of 86 men convicted of rape or attempted rape in 1951, 6% were reconvicted of rape, 9% of other sexual offenses, 27% of violence toward the person, 15% of burglary or robbery, and 64% of other offenses within 22 years. The proportion of violent offenses declined
with age but the proportion committing sex offenses before and after the 1951 index offense remained the same. A remarkable finding was the length of time during which reoffending of all kinds continued to occur. The six rapes (committed by five offenders) occurred 3, 5, 10, 13, 16, and 17 years after the index offense. The investigators also followed up 23 men who were acquitted in 1951; of these, 30% had subsequent convictions and 22% of the total had reconvictions for a sexual offense (one person for rape). A number of other investigators have also found sexual aggressors against women to have relatively high rates of non-sexual offenses of a variety of kinds (Christiansen et al., 1965; Frisbie, 1965; Gebhard et al., 1965).

The differences in recidivism across these studies is truly remarkable; clearly, by selectively contemplating the various studies one can conclude anything one wants. Taken as a group, however, the follow-up studies make an important, if simple, methodological and theoretical point: Sexual aggressors are heterogeneous. If one chooses a sample where subjects have been convicted of an offense, one gets a very different picture than if one chooses persons judged to be sexually dangerous (as in the Atascadero study) or persons with a history of repeated sexual assaults. This point may at first seem trivial but is responsible for many of the disagreements and much of the confusion in the literature. Investigators tend to speak of “rapists” or “the rapist” and to design research studies with this view in mind, even though, as we have seen, there have been a number of typologies described (but not validated) which imply marked heterogeneity among these offenders.

One must also remember in interpreting these data, that reports of convictions or arrests underestimate the amount of reoffending which actually occurs. There are small numbers of sexual assaulters who commit large numbers of offenses for which they are seldom charged. In a sample of 25 outpatients whose primary sexual arousal pattern involved rape themes, the average number of self-reported rapes and attempted rapes was 21; among four subjects whose arousal pattern involved sadism, the average was 46 (Abel, Becker, & Skinner, in press).

The Search for Unique Attributes of Sexual Assaulters

This section reviews studies which explicitly com-
pare sexual assailters with a comparison group. When the comparison group is from the same institution and convicted of a criminal offense, some of the difficulties of biased sampling are avoided and clearer inferences may be drawn.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS WOMEN

In view of the frequent clinical observations that sexual assailters have negative attitudes toward women and endorse various peculiar ideas about rape, it is surprising that so few investigators have studied these relationships. The only published investigation on this topic is that of Feild (1978). Data were gathered from 528 males and 528 female citizens, 254 patrol police officers, 118 female counselors in rape crisis centers, and 20 rapists at a state mental hospital. Each respondent completed the Attitudes Towards Rape Questionnaire, the Rape Knowledge Test, and the Attitudes Towards Women Scale (Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1973). Factor analysis of the Attitudes Towards Rape Questionnaire yielded eight factors. Rape counselors and rapists were significantly different on all eight but citizens and police officers (the most appropriate comparison group) were more similar to rapists than counselors. In comparison to the police officers on the individual factors, rapists were more likely to endorse the views that rape was primarily a woman’s responsibility, rapists should not be punished severely, victims precipitate rape, and women should not resist during rape. Rapists and police officers did not differ in their opinions on sex as motivation for rape, power as motivation for rape, the desirability of a raped woman, or the normality of rapists. These data make manifest rapists’ relatively pro-rape and self-serving attitudes.

Among the citizen groups, Feild (1978) found that liberal or profeminist scores on Attitudes Towards Women Scale correlated with anti-rape attitudes; gender differences were similar. Among the rapists, however, there was no significant correlation of rape attitudes with the Attitudes Towards Women Scale. Similarly, using the same scale, Stermac and Quinsey (submitted for publication) found that sexual assailters of adult women were not differentiated by their attitudes towards women from non-sex offenders sampled from the same maximum security psychiatric institution or unemployed males from the local community. Thus it appears that specific attitudes concerning rape are related to sexual assault but not necessarily more general attitudes concerning
women; however, comparisons between rapists and non-sex offender criminal groups on both attitudes towards rape and attitudes towards women will be required for a definitive conclusion. Unfortunately, it is not yet apparent whether pro-rape beliefs are antecedent to rape or vice versa.

**PORNOGRAPHY USE**

There is great controversy over the effects of pornography and at least some of this concern is politicized. Early research into pornography (Lipton, 1973) found no association between pornography and sexual crimes or delinquency. These conclusions, are, however, now being challenged, chiefly because of the shift in pornography over recent years from depictions of explicit sex to depictions of more violent and deviant activities.

Sex offenders have been found to have been exposed to less pornography than normal control subjects of various types (Cook, Fosen, & Pacht, 1971). Data specifically concerning men who have sexually assaulted adult women are of more interest in the present context and have been presented by Goldstein and his colleagues (Goldstein & Kant, 1973; Goldstein, Kant, Judd, Rice, & Green, 1971). These investigators interviewed 20 rapists in a maximum security mental hospital (Atascadero), 53 control subjects, 78 heavy pornography users, 20 heterosexual child molesters, 20 homosexual child molesters, 13 transsexuals, and 37 homosexuals.

In contrast to controls, rapists were exposed to less erotica in adolescence and adulthood; however, a variety of findings indicate that the effect of erotica on rapists was different than on normals. Rapists reported that their most exciting (peak) experience with erotica occurred at an earlier age, was more likely to be either inhibited or enhanced by the presence of friends, and more often wanted to imitate the erotic activities but less often tried to do so. Rapists more often reported arousal and disgust; they relied heavily on masturbation and more often daydreamed about the content of the erotic stimulus. As adults, the rapists more often had a peak experience with erotica alone, daydreamed more about sex, thought more about erotica in their daydreams, masturbated more to thoughts of erotica, and reported more negative affect concerning the content of their daydreams. Rapists' adult daydreams more often concerned sadistic acts and homosexual activities but they reported finding sadistic material disgusting. It was curious that the rapists described depictions of heterosexual intercourse most exciting. Goldstein and Kant (1973:137) conclude:

They reported oral-genital, homosexual, and transvestite daydreams, as well as fantasies involving aggression and sadism—themes that disgust and upset them—in greater profusion than the controls. This contrasts sharply with their reports that the erotica they find most stimulating involves depictions of heterosexual intercourse. . . It would seem that the rapist is beset with a variety of self-generated fantasies, which he finds distasteful but cannot control. Rather than being cathartic, these daydreams apparently lead him further toward action. Pornography, however, is neither stimulating nor cathartic, instead serving as a means of warding off anxiety, disgust, and guilt about his disturbing daydreams.

There have been dramatic increases in the amount of violent sexual imagery in both soft core (Malamuth & Spinner, 1980) and hard core pornography (Dietz & Evans, 1982) available in North America; similar trends have occurred elsewhere (Court, 1976). In Denmark, where these changes have been most marked, there appear to have been declines in some categories of minor sex offenses (Court, 1976; Kutchinsky, 1976) but apparent increases in the frequencies of rape and attempted rape (Court, 1976). Court has examined rape and attempted rape statistics from England, Sweden, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand. In each of these countries, rape rates increased with the availability of sadistic pornography; in Singapore, there was no increase in rape rates; the government there, however, had strictly controlled pornography.

These data on the effects of violent pornography suffer from the methodological problems of official crime statistics but the results appear consistent. Fortunately, these criminological data are supported by laboratory demonstrations of effects which would be expected if violent pornography did in fact cause men to rape. Donnerstein and his colleagues (Donnerstein, 1980; Donnerstein & Barrett, 1978; Donnerstein & Berkowitz, 1981) found that aggressive erotic films increased males' aggression in a laboratory task toward a female
confederate who had angered them; in a second study, it was shown that, among nonangry subjects, only films depicting erotic aggression with a positive outcome were associated with increased aggression toward the female confederate.

Malamuth, Haber, and Feshbach (1980) exposed college students to a sadomasochistic or nonviolent sexual story and then to a rape depiction. Males who read the sadomasochistic story reported more sexual arousal to the rape story. In a further study (Malamuth, Heim, & Feshbach, 1980), males were found to report equal amounts of sexual arousal to rape stories as to consenting sex stories when the victim of rape was portrayed as being involuntarily aroused. Males were most aroused when the rape victim was described as having an orgasm and experiencing pain. In a "field experiment" Malamuth and Check (1981) found that viewing regular movies which portrayed sexual violence as having positive consequences increased males' acceptance of rape myths.

In the final study of this series (Malamuth, 1981b), 29 male college students (of which 13 reported that they found the idea of force somewhat or very attractive and/or thought they might engage in coercive sex) were exposed to either a rape or consenting sexual story and later to a rape story. Force-oriented subjects created more arousing fantasies (by self-report) after the rape stories whereas non-force-oriented subjects showed the reverse pattern. All subjects created more violent fantasies after the rape version than the mutually-consenting version.

In summary, rape rates vary positively with the availability of violent pornography. It appears that rapists are more strongly affected by pornography than normals. Rapists often report violent sexual fantasies. Among normal subjects, descriptions of female sexual arousal disinhibits male sexual arousal to rape stories; violent sexual descriptions encourage violent fantasies and force-oriented subjects are differentially aroused by rape depictions. Although the interpretation of these findings must be tentative, it seems fair to conclude that certain individuals are made more likely to rape by violent pornography.

**Psychometric Variables**

The data on the personality characteristics as shown by psychological testing has been reviewed by Langevin (1983), Lester (1975), and Rada (1978c). These reviewers concur that few personality variables have been found to reliably differentiate rapists from other offenders and that the literature is weak scientifically. The most common methodological problems in this literature are the use of inappropriate control groups such as college students (e.g., Marsh, Hilliard, & Liecht, 1955), small sample size (e.g., Ruff, Templer, & Ayers, 1976), and the use of heterogeneous groups of sex offenders (e.g., Fisher & Rivlin, 1971; Marsh, Hilliard, & Liecht, 1955).

There have been a number of studies which have compared rapists with other populations on various measures of intelligence (Langevin, 1983; Langevin, Paitich, & Russon, in press; Perdue & Lester, 1972; Ruff, Templer, & Ayers, 1976; Stermac & Quinsey, submitted for publication; Vera, Barnard, & Holzer, 1979). Although some of these studies have presented data indicating that rapists score lower on standard tests of intelligence than control groups of offenders, the majority, and, in particular, the better-designed studies with larger samples, have not found such differences.

Projective testing of personality traits has not shown differences between rapists and other offenders (e.g., Jensen, Prandoni, & Abudabbeh, 1971; Perdue & Lester, 1972). Objective testing has typically involved the MMPI. Data collected on the MMPI indicate that rapists score highly on the Psychopathic Deviate Scale, as do many institutionalized populations. Although some differences between rapists and other offenders have been reported (Armentrout & Hauer, 1978; Rader, 1977), these differences are small and, in general, one must be impressed by the similarity in MMPI profile between rapists and other groups of offenders, from addicts to nonsexual assaulters (Quinsey, Arnold, & Puesse, 1980). Langevin (1983) and Quinsey, Arnold, and Puesse (1980) found that rapists did not differ from various other offender groups on any MMPI scale, including Megargee's Overcontrolled-Hostility Scale.

**Testosterone Levels**

Folklore has it that sexual assaulters are simply "oversexed" and, although clinical observation (e.g., Walker & Myer, 1981) reveals that some sexual assaulters are hypersexual (as indicated by extremely high masturbatory frequencies), there have been very few studies of the issue. Rada, Laws, and Kellner (1976) provide the only published data on plasma testosterone levels
among rapists. They compared 52 rapists from Atascadero with male employees from the same institution. There were no differences in plasma testosterone levels between the two groups but the five rapists with the greatest amount of violence in their index offense were all above the testosterone average for the rapist group. These findings, particularly the relationship between violence and testosterone, should be replicated with a larger sample. Studies of sexual arousability and hypersexuality, which both can be relatively independent of testosterone level, are also needed.

SOCIAL COMPETENCE

Sexual assaulters are often deemed to be heterosocially inept (Abel, Blanchard, & Becker, 1978) and many treatment programs incorporate social skill training components (e.g., Whitman & Quinsey, 1981). Despite clinical observations, however, there has been little systematic study of sexual assaulters’ heterosocial skills. If it were assumed that heterosocial deficits played an etiological role in sexual assault, sexual assaulters should exhibit more social deficits than other offenders, particularly in difficult interactions with women.

Stermac and Quinsey’s (submitted for publication) examined these hypotheses by comparing 20 sexual assaulters against adult women with 20 non-sexual offenders from the Oak Ridge maximum security psychiatric institution in Ontario and 20 low socioeconomic status normal controls. Subjects were audiotaped in unstructured brief conversations with a male and a female partner, separately. Audiotapes were also made of subjects’ responses to prerecorded standard heterosocial and heterosexual situations which varied from rude rejection to a sexual overt ure; subjects were required to complete each of the interactions at the sound of a tone by taking the part of one of the participants (always a male who had made a social overture).

The audiotapes were rated on dimensions of social skillfulness by raters who were blind to subjects’ group assignment. Subjects rated their own performance and completed a number of questionnaires. Behavioral measures of social competence (including self-ratings) did not differentiate the two offender groups but did indicate that the normal controls were superior in hetero- and homosocial skills. The only variables to differentiate the sexual assaulters from both other groups were the General Assertiveness and Heterosexual Assertiveness scales of the Callner-Ross Assertiveness Questionnaire (Callner & Ross, 1976); rapists reported themselves to be less assertive than both other groups.

It is noteworthy that Langevin, Paichich and Russon (in press) found somewhat similar results using rapists’ self-reports. In their study, rapists, as well as sexually-deviant men, reported more frequently than normal controls and nonsexually assaultive men that they wished to be more forceful and more athletic, that they felt they were unattractive to women and that they were more often thought of as sissies. Similarly, Fisher and Rivlin (1971) found rapists to be less self-assured, aggressive and independent than other offenders on the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule.

Stermac and Quinsey’s data indicate that rapists are unlikely to have unique heterosocial deficits, although they are less skilled than normals. With respect to treatment, this study implies that although improvement of heterosocial skills may be ameliorative or even necessary, it cannot be considered sufficient. Theoretically, these results similarly suggest that social competence, if involved with the causation of sexual assault at all, acts in concert with other variables. Deficits in rapists’ assertion (or perhaps their self-perceived assertion) deserve further study.

ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ADDICTION

Rada (1975) collected autobiographical information from 77 rapists hospitalized at Atascadero. Thirty-five percent of the subjects were classified as alcoholics by direct admission or evidence of serious alcohol problems in their histories and 51% were drinking (mostly drinking very heavily) at the time of the offense. Very few offenders were using other drugs at the time of the offense. Knight, Prentky, Schneider, and Rosenberg’s study of rapists at the Bridgewater institution (1983) found that the only variable related to the degree of violence in the offense was adult alcohol abuse; an association between alcohol and violence has also been reported several other times in the literature (Amir, 1971; Gebhard et al., 1965; Radzinowitz, 1957). Langevin, Paichich, and Russon (in press) confirmed Rada’s results in a study of 40 rapists; 54% had a chronic drinking problem and 60% were drinking at the time of the offense. In contrast to other studies however, there was no significant relation between use of alcohol at the time of the offense and the amount of force used.

Although these data must be viewed with some caution because rapists may well claim alcohol
use as an exculpatory strategy, it does appear as a significant problem in the history of many rapists and deserves further study, particularly in the context of physical violence, as well as attention in therapy programs for rapists.

SEXUAL AROUSAL PATTERNS

Individual differences in sexual arousal patterns among non-sex offenders lead one to expect that rapists would come differentially from the most rape-prone groups—i.e., we would expect rapists to find rape cues sexually exciting. Rapists, however, are often reluctant to volunteer descriptions of aggressive sexual imagery for legal reasons; outpatients, on the other hand, are more likely to do so but only when directly questioned. Walker and Meyer (1981) have found that 80% of their rapists report primarily or exclusively deviant sexual fantasies. Abel and his co-workers (Abel, Becker, & Skinner, in press) have also found that a large proportion of their outpatient sample report aggressive sexual fantasies. Even in maximum security settings, such as Oak Ridge, sexual aggressors who are motivated for treatment sometimes describe an astonishing preoccupation with aggressive and sadistic sexual themes. These data, of course, indicate the sexual nature of rape; claims that rape is not a sexual crime are based primarily on reports of sexual dysfunction during the act. However, sexual dysfunction can occur for a variety of reasons, for example, anxiety or distraction, and is not useful in identifying the motive for an assault. A sexual assault committed by an individual examined at our Oak Ridge laboratory nicely confirms this point. Prior to the index offense (an attempted sexual murder) this man stalked a young woman with the intent to rape her; as he grabbed her from behind, however, he had an orgasm. Thus thwarted in his aim, he threw her down and ran away.

Psychophysiological study has confirmed that sexual aggressors tend to be more responsive to descriptions of coercive sex than non-aggressors. Early work in this area was methodologically weak and produced negative results (Kercher & Walker, 1973). More recent research, however, has produced the expected results. Abel, Barlow, Blanchard, and Guild (1977) monitored the penile tumescence responses of 13 rapists and seven other sexual deviants to audiotaped descriptions of consenting sex, rape, and nonsexual violence. A rape index formed by dividing the average response to the rape stories by the average response to depictions of consenting sex differentiated the rapists from nonrapists and was related to rape frequency among the rapists. Rapists responded less to descriptions of nonsexual violence but their arousal to these stimuli was correlated with their responses to rape depictions. Following this initial study, Abel and his associates (Abel, Becker, Blanchard, & Djenderedjian, 1978; Abel, Becker, & Skinner, 1980) gathered more data using similar procedures. Briefly, they found that (a) nonrapists do not respond to rape cues where rapists do, (b) nonrapists' subjective reports parallel their physiological data whereas rapists' reports underestimate their arousal to rape cues, (c) the rape index correlates with victim injury and rape frequency, and finally, (d) sadists show large erectile responses to nonsexual violence.

The basic finding of Abel's group that rapists can be differentiated from nonrapists with measures of erectile responses to rape and consenting sex stories has been replicated several times. Barberee, Marshall, and Lanthier (1979) compared 10 incarcerated rapists and 10 graduate students. Because their results indicated that mutually consenting sex descriptions elicited comparable levels of arousal in both groups, but that rape cues elicited less arousal among nonrapists, they hypothesized that force and violence may not produce arousal among rapists but rather fail to inhibit the arousal generated by the sexual elements in the rape stories.

Wydra, Marshall, Earls, and Barberee (in press) attempted to determine whether the differential arousal of rapists to rape depictions was a result of their inability to discriminate appropriate from inappropriate sexual behavior. Using the same stories as in their initial study, subjects were asked to press a button as soon as they detected what type of story (i.e., rape or consenting) it was. Latency data were comparable for rapists, nonrapist offenders, and non-offenders for consenting stories and the less aggressive rape stories; on the most aggressive rape story, however, rapists took longer to identify its category than other subjects. Thus, rapists appear to have discrimination difficulties where they would be least expected, on the most extreme rape descriptions. The interpretation of this result is unclear. In a second experiment (Wydra, Marshall, Earls, & Barberee, in press), rapists and normals were found to differentially respond to rape stimuli as in previous research; however, when subjects were asked to inhibit their penile response to a tone occurring
where subjects in the first experiment detected the stimulus category, both groups were able to inhibit their arousal to both types of rape. Rapists appear, therefore, to be able to control their sexual arousal, at least in a laboratory setting.

Quinsey, Chaplin, and Varney (1981) examined the sexual arousal patterns of 20 rapists, 10 non-sex offender patients from a maximum security mental hospital and 20 nonpatient (primarily unemployed) volunteers from the local community. Penile responses to audiotaped descriptions of neutral (i.e., nonsexual) heterosocial interactions, consenting sex, rape, and nonsexual violence were recorded. Half of the non-offender subjects were instructed that sexual arousal to “unusual” sexual cues was common and expected among non-sex offenders in order to examine the effects of demand characteristics in the testing session. Rapists were differentiable from non-sex offender subjects as in previous work; subjects given permissive instructions responded more to rape and consenting sex descriptions but the relative relationship between the average response to these two categories was the same as in the other non-sex offender groups (i.e., more response to consenting sex than rape).

Quinsey and Chaplin (1984) attempted to determine what aspects of the rape stimuli were responsible for the differential response of rapists and non-sex offenders. Fifteen rapists and 15 non-rapists (community volunteers or non-sex offender patients) served as subjects. In addition to consenting sex stories, rape stories were included and varied in a 2 × 2 factorial design where the variables were initial victim resistance strategy (pleading for mercy or assertive refusal) and ultimate response to the assault (pain or involuntary arousal). These categories were selected because of Marques’ (1979) demonstration that rapists were more sexually aroused by a pleading for mercy strategy than assertive refusal, attempts to establish a relationship, or no verbal resistance strategies and Malamuth and Check’s (1980a, 1980b) finding that non-sex offenders showed more arousal to rape scenes where the victim enjoyed as opposed to when she abhorred the assault. Rapists responded equally to all of the categories whereas non-sex offenders responded most to the consenting sex narrations, less to the rape stories where the victim became aroused, and least to the rape stories where the victim experienced pain. These results support the idea that non-consent and violence fail to inhibit rapists’ sexual arousal.

Freund and his colleagues (Freund, Scher, Campbell, Hucker, Ben-Aron, & Heasman, in preparation; Freund, Scher, & Hucker, in press) have approached these issues from an ethological perspective. They note that normal male sexual activity involves location and choice of a partner, precopulatory integration, tactile integration, and effecting genital union. Sexual deviations are hypothesized to be courtship disorders in which there is an exaggeration of one of these normal phases. Respectively, the disorders or deviations of each phase are: voyeurism, exhibitionism, toucheurism, or frotteurism, and the preferential rape pattern. Toucheurism involves touching the breasts of an unknown female and, frottage, rubbing the genitals against the buttocks of an unknown female. Preferential rapists are those who are more sexually aroused by rape than consenting sexual intercourse. Preferential rapists, in turn, are hypothesized to fall into at least three sub-categories those (mentioned above) in whom the precopulatory sequence is vestigial, those who exhibit the hyperdominance syndrome (that is, who are excited by female fear), and sadists (who are sexually excited by inflicting pain).

The idea that rapists may exhibit a courtship disorder suggests that they are similar to voyeurs, exposer, frotteurs, and toucheurs. Rapists are, in fact, often found to have multiple sexual deviations (cf. Abel, Becker, & Skinner, in press; Langevin, 1983). In support of this similarity, Freund has shown that exhibitionists show greater penile volume responses to audiotaped descriptions of voyeuristic activities than normals, although the exhibitionists denied any interest in voyeurism; similarly, voyeurs were more sexually aroused than normals to descriptions of exposing. Rapists, unlike normal controls, showed as much sexual arousal to descriptions of voyeuristic and toucheuristic activities as to intercourse; rapists did not, however, show arousal to indecent exposure. Similarly to other studies, rapists were found to respond as much to intercourse with a fearful woman as to intercourse with a cooperative woman, whereas normal subjects were more aroused by the cooperative partner description.

In summary, rapists have been shown to be differentiable from nonrapists on the basis of their penile responses to audiotaped descriptions of consenting and forced intercourse in studies employing different stimuli, instructions, rapist samples (outpatient, correctional, maximum security
sexual hospital) and comparison groups (sexual deviants, college students, non-sex offender inmates, non-sex offender security hospital patients, and low socioeconomic status volunteers given normal or permissive instructions). Although it appears firmly established, despite certain criticisms (Krisak, Murphy, & Stalgaitis, 1981; Langevin, 1983), that a large proportion of rapists respond differently than non-sex offenders in phallometric assessment, the interpretation of these data is more at issue. One theoretical interpretation, as mentioned earlier, is that rapists are aroused by sex and violence and the other is that they are aroused by sex but not inhibited by violence. A number of studies support the latter view (Barbaree, Marshall, & Lanthier, 1979; Freund et al., in preparation, Quinsey & Chaplin, 1984; Quinsey, Chaplin, & Varney, 1984). The studies of Abel and his associates do not permit clear interpretation on this issue. Although the average responses of rapists are roughly the same to consenting sex and rape as the theory requires, more detailed analysis indicates that the situation is more complex than either theory suggests. First, some rapists (probably sadistic individuals) are more sexually aroused by rape scenes than by consenting sex stories; similarly, some rapists (often the same individuals) show marked arousal to scenes of nonsexual violence (Quinsey & Chaplin, 1982).

An example of a sexual murderer tested in our laboratory at Oak Ridge is illuminating. This individual showed no arousal to depictions of consenting sex but large penile responses to both rape and nonsexual violence stories. When asked how he had sex with his wife, he replied that he fantasized strangling her. These extremely sadistic rapists are not common but are of considerable interest. It would appear, therefore, that populations of rapists are comprised primarily of individuals who are not particularly aroused by violence but are not inhibited by it, and to a much lesser extent, of sadistic individuals for whom violence is arousing, at least in a sexual context. In support of this interpretation, Quinsey, Uphold, and Chaplin (in preparation) have recently found that rapists who respond to descriptions of nonsexual violence involving females do not respond to nonsexual violence involving males; the gender of the victim appears to be a sufficient context.

The important elements in rapists' sexual fantasies have, however, just begun to be explored. To date, the elements or features of sexual fantasies which have been manipulated include coercion, physical violence, female sexual arousal, female pain, female fear, and victim gender. Other elements may be equally or more important in generating sexual arousal; in particular, humiliating the victim (Darke, Marshall, & Earls, in press) or expressing power over her (Groth & Birnbaum, 1979). These features are common in rapists' explanations of their offenses but one often wonders whether these elements have been suggested to them in therapy. In order to clarify these issues, the stimulus control of rapists' sexual arousal requires much further work and such research will probably lead to the identification of idiosyncratic arousal patterns. An interesting and unusual such pattern was reported by a rapist who was tested in the Oak Ridge laboratory and asked to write the most arousing sexual fantasy of which he could think. His elaborate fantasy, which elicited large erectile responses, involved capturing rich and beautiful enemy women whom he would enslave, embarrass, and degrade. It is of interest that the actual sexual activities in this fantasy were almost incidental and the cues eliciting sexual arousal appeared to be "contextual" and related to dominance and humiliation. Rapists are, of course, no more interested in identifying specific cues which arouse them than anyone else. If they have an exciting fantasy they use it and don't apply Mill's method of agreement to systematically vary the content of the fantasies in order to determine the critical elements. Unaided self-report, therefore, is not the best method of identifying idiosyncratic sexually-arousing stimuli. Abel, Blanchard, Barlow, and Mavissakalian (1975) have described a phallometric technique to identify such stimuli which appears very promising for future research. In view of the idiosyncratic nature of the sexual fantasies reported by sex offenders whom we have treated, it is all the more surprising that differences in sexual arousal to standard stimulus sets have been found between non-sex offenders and rapists.

In conclusion, studies of sexual arousal have found large differences among men in their relative preferences for mutually-consenting sex and rape. Variation occurs within non-sex offender groups, although most non-sex offenders clearly prefer consenting sexual activity. Rapists' sexual arousal patterns appear to be further along the continuum and they exhibit little or no discrimination between rape and consenting sex. Sadistic rapists occupy the end of the continuum
characterized by greater sexual arousal to sexual violence than consenting sex.

**Treatment of Sexual Assaulter**

The literature on the treatment of sexual assaulter is conspicuously casual and few convincing evaluative studies exist (Pacht, 1976; West, Roy, & Nichols, 1978). There are many fewer articles on the treatment of rapists than there are on the treatment of less serious sex offenders (Langevin, 1983). In part, this lack of attention is understandable because, as we have seen, many convicted rapists do not commit further sex crimes; however, for repetitive offenders, the lack of research on treatment efficacy is most unfortunate. Moreover, many sexual assaulter do, in fact, receive treatment and it is sometimes lengthy (Brecher, 1978).

There are many descriptions of treatment programs: Most of these deal with undifferentiated groups of sex offender of various kinds, do not precisely describe their methods of treatment (i.e., do not allow for the possibility of replication), do not present acceptable data on short-term changes, and do not include follow-up data. Of those programs for which follow-up data are provided, comparison conditions are seldom included and the descriptions of treatment are usually inadequate. In addition, there has been little scientific attention paid to potential differences in the treatability of sexual assaulter, although there is little doubt that such differences exist and are important (Pacht, 1976). Koncini, Mulcahy, and Ebbesen (1980) found that previous sex offenses best predicted whether sex offenders were sent to a mental hospital for treatment instead of a prison; psychiatric diagnosis and testimony, courtroom variables, previous non-sex offenses, and probation officers' reports were irrelevant once the history of previous sex offenses was taken into account. Given current knowledge, this may well be a good, if simple, method of selecting persons with actual sexual problems, although it does not address the issue of differential responsiveness to treatment.

Most treatment programs for rapists use a variety of methods (Brecher, 1978) but emphasize group psychotherapy, behavior therapy, or techniques for reducing androgens. Abel, Blanchard, and Becker (1976, 1978) point out that five major components are included (at least minimally) in most treatment programs for rapists: establishing an empathic relationship, confronting them with their responsibility, training in heterosocial skills, increasing sexual arousal to adult women, and decreasing arousal to rape urges.

**Group Psychotherapy**

The most common form of therapy for sexual assaulter is group therapy but, unfortunately, the criticisms listed above apply most clearly to descriptions of group psychotherapy programs (Brancale, Vuocolo, & Frenzergast, 1972; Cabeen & Coleman, 1961; Cohen & Kozol, 1966; Costell & Yalom, 1972; MacIndoe & Pengelly, 1976; Marcus, 1966; Pacht, Halleck, & Ehrmann, 1962; Peters & Roether, 1972; Peters & Sadoff, 1971; Sarafian, 1963; Silver, 1976; Smith, 1968), although some papers have dealt exclusively with the treatment of rapists and recognize different treatment needs among them (Cohen, Garofalo, Boucher, & Seghron, 1971; Groth & Cohen, 1976; West, Roy, & Nichols, 1978).

Brecher (1978) has reviewed group psychotherapy programs for sex offenders in the United States. None of these have been convincingly evaluated and few involve rapists as a separate entity. Common elements of treatment involve the offender confronting his own behavior, accepting responsibility for it, and making a commitment to change. In addition, most of the programs attempt to improve the self-esteem of the participants.

Although the emphasis of this review is on scientific evidence and evaluation (subjects which the group therapy literature fails abysmally to address), it should be noted that the lack of evidence cannot be used to infer that these programs do not work. Moreover, although the ultimate criterion of success is lowered sexual recidivism, treatment programs, particularly in maximum security settings, can serve demonstrably valuable functions, such as providing a humane system of inmate or patient management and functioning as a morale building tool for both patients and staff (cf. Quinsey, 1983).

**Castration**

Surgical castration as a treatment for sex offenders in Denmark has been described as highly successful (Orno, 1965; Ortmann, 1980; Sturup, 1968, 1972); it involves enucleation of the testes and their replacement with a suitable substance. A
lengthy follow-up of 900 castrated Danish offenders indicates a sexual recidivism rate of about 2% and a low frequency of serious psychological or physical sequelae. Sturup (1968) has concluded that the treatment is indicated for adult sex offenders who cannot control their sexual urges, are likely to recidivate, suffer guilt about their crimes, and are not psychotic. Of 11 rapists who were castrated and followed for a minimum of 13 years, five recidivated with nonsexual difficulties; one offender, however, who obtained testosterone from a physician, was charged with a new sex offense and committed suicide.

Careful management of the cases and prolonged aftercare is advocated by Sturup because depression can result from the procedure (2% of the castrates commit suicide) and various physical symptoms can occur. Patients report that their sexual fantasies and interests decline and that they are less responsive to sexual stimuli but about a third report engaging in post-operative sexual intercourse with understanding partners (Sturup, 1968; Heim, 1981).

Although no comparison data from similar untreated subjects are available because the cases are carefully selected and the mechanism of therapeutic action is unclear (possible variables include: aftercare procedure, hormone change, motivation for change, and cognitive dissonance, among others), castration does appear to be related to low rates of sexual recidivism despite methodological criticisms (Heim & Hursch, 1979). Castration is, however, not always effective and there is at least one case reported of a post-operative sadistic rape and other cases of sexual reoffending (Sturup, 1972).

The strongest arguments against castration are ethical. Castration can, of course, be viewed as punishment instead of treatment and because it is an irreversible procedure it presents special difficulties. If castration is viewed as treatment, patient consent should be obtained without coercion. Unfortunately, coercion is extremely difficult to preclude as the state can give long life sentences, arrange harsh institutional living conditions, or place special restrictions on parole or release in order to induce sex offenders and their families to comply with it. This state of affairs is most unfortunate for there are small numbers of hypersexual and sadistic individuals for whom castration appears beneficial (Freud, 1976), ethically justifiable, and, at present, the most likely way of reducing the length of their incarceration.

Fortunately, however, “chemical castration” may offer an equally effective, more humane, and more practical alternative (Ortmann, 1980).

**Antiandrogen Medication**

Investigators agree that libido-reducing drugs do not alter the direction of sexual interests but affect their strength. In studies of the effects of cyproterone acetate in sexual deviants (Bancroft, Tennent, Loucas, & Cass, 1974) and studies of testosterone replacement therapy for hypogonadal men (Bancroft & Wu, 1983), it has been shown that arousal generated by sexual fantasy is much more susceptible to modification than erectile responsiveness to strong sexual stimuli (e.g., movies). Thus it appears possible to have sex offenders who receive antiandrogens enjoy sexual intercourse but not fantasize obsessively about sex.

Medroxyprogesterone acetate and cyproterone acetate have been used in the treatment of a variety of sex offenders (Berlin & Meinicke, 1981; Langvin et al., 1979; Laschet, 1973; Rubin & Henson, 1979; Spodak, Falck & Rappoport, 1978; Walker & Meyer, 1981) but the literature has been criticized on methodological grounds, especially for short follow-up periods (Ortmann, 1980). Reports on the effectiveness of these treatments are extremely variable, with recidivism rates following treatment ranging from 50% downwards. Patient dropout is often reported to be a significant problem. Treatment failures with these chemical interventions have been attributed to noncompliance, drug and alcohol abuse, sexual impulsivity, sociopathy, histories of violence, psychosis, senile dementia, and neurotic fixation of pedophilia (Berlin & Meinicke, 1981; Laschet, 1973). It is at present unclear how serious the various side effects of these medications are, particularly with long term administration. For a review of the side effects of these drugs see Bradford (1983).

Despite these reservations and restrictions, there have been enough clinical demonstrations of beneficial effects to merit therapeutic optimism with respect to selected cases. Perhaps the most important variable determining the usefulness of antiandrogens is hypersexuality (as defined by extremely high masturbatory frequencies and obsessive fantasies) because that problem involves strength of sexual interest, not direction. Cooper (1981) reported very favorable results in a
placebo-controlled trial of cyproterone acetate with hypersexual men. Further research is required to evaluate the effectiveness of these drugs with hypersexual rapists. Future improvements in the drugs themselves and refinements in clinical techniques may offer a palatable alternative to castration, particularly when the drug administration is coupled with techniques designed to produce more lasting change. Further theoretical work on the effects of drugs on sexual behavior is clearly needed (Rubin & Henson, 1979).

**Behavior Modification**

Behavior modification programs for sexual assaulteders share several characteristics: brief intervention, separate focused assessment of a particular problem area, individualized treatments depending on assessment results, the use of training as a form of treatment, and pre- and post-treatment measurement of change (Abel, Becker, & Skinner, in press; Abel, Blanchard, & Becker, 1976, 1978; Marshall & Barbee, 1978; Marshall, Earls, Segal, & Darke, in press; Turner & Van Hasselt, 1979). The problem areas which have been studied most extensively are: inappropriate sexual arousal (including responsiveness to aggressive imagery and hyporesponsiveness to non-coercive sexual imagery), heterosocial skill deficiencies, assertive deficits, and lack of sexual knowledge.

A wide variety of techniques, such as electrical aversion therapy, covert sensitization, and olfactory aversion, have been used to reduce inappropriate sexual arousal (Quinsey & Marshall, 1983). Each of these techniques associates inappropriate arousal with unpleasant stimuli. Although many of these techniques can effectively reduce sexual arousal to aggressive cues as measured by changes in penile responses, there are variations in effectiveness which are not well-understood. Satiation therapy, in which sadistic or aggressive fantasies are extensively rehearsed in a non-aroused state, has also been shown to reduce inappropriate arousal (Marshall & Barbee, 1978). Improvements in heterosocial skill are readily produced by modeling, coaching, and videotape feedback and not surprisingly, sexual knowledge can be markedly improved through sex education (Whitman & Quinsey, 1981).

Unfortunately, there are no behavioral treatment studies of rapists, other than case reports, which include follow-up data. Thus, the promise offered by short-term improvement, even though impressive, has yet to be verified. Clearly, the greatest need in the treatment literature is for outcome studies of a variety of treatments offered to similar clients, and studies of the prediction of recidivism from measures of therapeutic change. At present, it cannot be concluded unequivocally whether any of the forms of treatment reviewed are differentially effective with different sorts of sexual assaulting or effective at all in the long term. On the other hand, both the behavioral and somatic treatments appear promising.

**Theories of Sexual Assault**

There are no comprehensive theories of sexual assault. From the literature reviewed above, we know that a variety of classes of variables are relevant: biological, sociological, cultural, and psychological. These classes of variables appear to be differentially related to different types of sexual assault: gang rape, sexual aggression in dating contexts, repetitive predatory sexual assaults, and sexual sadism. Because theories of sexual assault tend to focus on certain variables and types of assault and to ignore others, there may or may not be contradictions among widely different theories purporting to explain the "same" phenomena. In addition, there is confusion between the ultimate and proximate causes of sexual assault. A further but related issue is that different theories are pitched at different levels of explanation: we would suppose, if perfect knowledge were available, that biological, sociological, and psychological theories would all exist for sexual assault and all be compatible with each other. In fact, there are, in principle, explanations of sexual assault at the subatomic level. Unfortunately, our knowledge of imperfect and it is often difficult to compare theories at different levels of explanation; few opportunities exist, therefore, for quantitative and rigorous comparisons because of the incompatible levels of explanation, vagueness of the theories and the mushiness of much of the data.

In view of the state of the theoretical art, it would perhaps be best to think of the theories to be described as invitations to conceptualize sexual assault in particular ways. The relative value of these alternate conceptualizations can sometimes be assessed only by determining which lead to interesting research questions or practical implications. Inference research which compares alternative predictions for identical data sets is seldom a possibility.
Brodsky (1976) has suggested that lay explanations of sexual assault blame sexual assaults on victims, offenders, and/or situations. Victim blame models in their strong form assert that women provoke sexual attacks. However, popular beliefs aside (Burt, 1980; Toner, 1977), there is an abundance of disconfirming evidence for this proposition (e.g., Hursch, 1977). Victim behavior is, however, undoubtedly involved in some sexual assaults (Amir, 1972) but appears to be a minor factor because of the large percentage of assaults involving weapons, complete strangers, and premeditation (Amir, 1965; Gager & Schurr, 1976; Wright, 1980). Data suggesting that sexual assaults are predatory and opportunistic (Geller, 1977) point to the same conclusion.

Attribution of fault to victims shows strong gender effects. Calhoun, Selby, and Warring (1976) presented 64 male and 64 female undergraduates with an identical videotape of a mock rape victim interview. Background information on the "case" was varied systematically over subjects: The victim was raped before or not, the rapist was in the victim's class previously or not, and there had been zero or seven other rapes in the area recently. In comparison to females, males tended to see the rape as being caused by the victim's personality traits and behavior and thought the rape was more the victim's fault. Female blameability has also been shown to be a function of her "respectability" (Jones & Aronson, 1973).

Turning to offender blame, explanatory accounts often focus on why a man would choose to rape when consenting sexual activity is, in the eyes of the explainer, more fun, more honorable, and less risky. One explanation is that sexual assailants cannot engage in consenting sexual behavior because they are less attractive and more heterosexually unskilled. Unfortunately, for this approach, many sexual assailants are married (Gebhard et al., 1965) and they have not been found to be less attractive or heterosexually skilled than other offenders (Stermac & Quinsey, submitted for publication). Another similar explanation involves lack of opportunity as reflected by imbalanced sex ratios. Lester (1974), however, found no relation between sex ratio and rape frequency. In addition, it must be remembered that because of male desire for a variety of sexual partners, females are always a scarce resource (Symons, 1979). Sex ratios may be a factor under extreme conditions but these are not found in Western societies.

A further variation on this theme is that there is something wrong with the offender's judgment. He may be psychotic, retarded, or drunk and simply not know what he is doing. None of these pass muster. Very few sexual assailants are psychotic (e.g., Quinsey & Chaplin, in press; Quinsey, Chaplin, & Varney, 1984) and as we have seen there is little difference in intelligence between rapists and other offenders. Alcohol does appear to be important but its role is unclear (giving the offender courage, providing an excuse for the offense, disinhibition of inappropriate sexual interests, pathological intoxication, and so on). In a similar manner, sexual assailants are sometimes said to be psychopaths (i.e., have defective moral judgment) and certainly most are diagnosed as personality disordered; the diagnosis is not sufficient, however, as personality disordered nonsexual offenders can be differentiated from rapists on the basis of their sexual interests (Quinsey & Chaplin, in press; Quinsey, Chaplin, & Varney, 1984). This is not to argue, however, that general criminality or psychopathy is not involved, particularly in gang rapes.

Situational blame has also been invoked, and as we have seen, forceful seduction often occurs in a dating context. Nevertheless, the predatory nature of rape makes such an explanation lose force (e.g., Geller, 1977). Rapists too frequently create opportunities to rape by breaking and entering, or following women, for this explanation to have much value.

Freudians have not attempted to theorize about rape in any systematic fashion (Brownmiller, 1975; Langewin, 1983). There have been a few case reports and some speculation (e.g., Glover, 1964; Kardener, 1975; Williams, 1964, 1965) but little in the way of research or evaluation. Berlin and Meinicke (1981:602) summarize the situation aptly:

Psychodynamic theory generally assumes that sexually deviant behaviors occur because of unresolved unconscious conflicts, and treatment is directed at uncovering such conflicts...To our knowledge there have been no well-controlled clinical trials to demonstrate that any of the individual or group psychodynamic methods result in sustained behavioral change in these conditions, and achieving insight into how they develop does not necessarily alter them. In point of fact, most of us have little un-
standing about why particular things
arouse us sexually.

Feminists have argued that "rape stems from a
fundamental conflict in our competitive, aggres-
sive society, justified by the sexist notion that
males should control and dominate a woman's
sexual being as well as the economic life. The fear
of rape, as well as the way rape is prosecuted in
our courts serves to maintain social control over
the entire feminine population and to maintain
the domination of men over women. Our social
and economic structure generates rape and does
nothing to discourage it" (Kasinsky, 1975). Brownmiller (1975) has gone further, asserting
that rape is "nothing more or less than a conscious
process of intimidation by which all men keep all
women in a state of fear."

Although there is little doubt that our society is
sexist, and that the fear of rape troubles women
and restricts their behavior (Riger & Gordon,
1979; Riger, Gordon, & LeBailly, 1982), the na-
ture of the relationship between sexism and sexual
assault is less clear. If the feminist argument is
simply that all men are rapists, it must fail. All
men, of course, are potential rapists in the same
sense that they are potential murderers or moun-
tain climbers but data on non-sex offenders
clearly indicate large variations in male proclivity
to rape. Some of these differences are consistent
with a feminist analysis, that is, that men who
hold anti-women views tend to be those more
likely to rape. The effects appear stronger, how-
ever, when specific attitudes toward rape are ex-
amined as opposed to more general attitudes
concerning women. As the cross-cultural data
indicate, sexism is not necessarily connected with
high rape rates.

Sociobiological theories are in a sense comple-
mentary to feminist theories in that they empha-
size the different reproductive interests of males
and females. Thornhill and Thornhill (in press)
have presented the most complete formulation of
a sociobiological theory of rape. Briefly, they ar-
gue that, evolutionarily, humans have been in a
polygynous situation where men compete for fe-
who lose this competition and cannot secure
mates resort to other strategies, including forced
mating. Thus, rape victims should be those who
are most fertile and rapists those men who are
disadvantaged (e.g., poor) and who are compet-
ing most strongly for mates (i.e., prior to first
marriage). Support for the theory is provided by a
disproportionate representation of young and
poor men among rapists and a close correspon-
dence between female fertility values (based on
age) and rape victimization rates of women of
varying ages. Unfortunately, the correspondence
between fertility and victimization, although rea-
sonable at the adult and older age ranges, is very
problematic at the prepubescent age ranges.
There are, of course, many sex offenses against
female children; many of these are not classified
as rape or attempted rape simply because of label-
ing policies; moreover, rape is in many cases
physically impossible with young children. Thus,
plotting rapes as a function of age is grossly mis-
leading at prepubescent ages.

In addition to these methodological problems,
sociobiological theories of sexual behavior have a
variety of potentially-problematic phenomena to
explain. Perhaps most importantly they must ex-
plain why some men do not rape and why many
rapists engage in fellatio or anal intercourse in-
stead of vaginal intercourse. Child molestation
and homosexuality, in addition, appear to be ex-
tremely wasteful forms of sexual activity and their
existence, particularly in their exclusive forms,
provides a problem for a baldly stated evolutionary
theory. This is not to argue, however, that genetic
explanations for such phenomena as familially
transmitted homosexuality may not be forthcoming
in the future (Pillard, Pournadere, & Carretta,
1981, 1982). The evolutionary explanation of sex-
ual assaults of adult females (which do not result in
murder), however, does not suffer from a prima
facie implausibility; nevertheless, until theories of
natural selection purporting to explain human sex-
ual assault can specify heritable mechanisms
which are currently in operation, they will be ex-
tremely difficult to test rigorously in any direct
fashion.

In the long run, however, a complete theory of
sexual behavior and sexual assault must involve
natural selection as a crucial element. As Dawkins
(1978) has argued, current reproductive strategies
have inevitable consequences for the behavior and
characteristics of succeeding generations. It is of
no use to argue that sexual behavior is learned in
man, and therefore, highly variable, as any
 genetic mechanism which is associated with un-
successful reproduction (e.g., learning the wrong
preferences) will be inevitably bred out of the
population, ceteris paribus. One could only as-
sume the doubtful proposition that there is no
genetic variance in the mechanisms under discussion to be acted upon by natural selection or that the mechanisms are linked to others which are very helpful.

The issue of mechanism is critical for the development of a theory of sexual assault and sexual behavior in general. Observation of human sexual behavior reveals extreme diversity; most male sexual behavior is clearly adaptive in an evolutionary sense but some is very plainly not. A mechanism must be sought which encompasses both sets of observations. Specifically, in regard to sexual assault, such a mechanism must be able to explain individual differences in the amount of arousal occasioned by sadistic imagery. The most obvious candidate for such a mechanism is some variety of learning.

There is a great deal of evidence that learning is involved in the sexual behavior of a wide variety of animal species. This learning appears to be of two sorts: learning associations between certain environmental cues and sexual arousal and learning specific copulatory behavior sequences. Considering the first type of learning, recent studies of quails, sticklebacks, and pigeons (Hollis, 1982) have shown that male courtship behavior can be elicited by and directed toward a stimulus associated with copulation or, in sticklebacks, the sight of a gravid female. In the latter case, the courtship behavior directed toward the conditional stimulus (a rod) interfered with the male performing the biting response on the rod which was required to obtain a view of the female. This Pavlovian or classical conditioning process clearly produces an animal analog to a human fetish.

The prefiguring hypothesis (Hollis, 1982) asserts that the biological function of classically conditioned responding is to enable the organism to optimize interactions with a biologically important event, thus, the conditional response serves to prepare the animal to deal with the unconditional stimulus. In support of this view, presentation of a conditional stimulus (associated with the sexual activity) reduces copulating latency in the quail and the rat. Among quails, in particular, fast copulation is very adaptive for males in the natural mating context because of competition from other males. Thus the unfortunate capacity to learn the wrong things from an evolutionary perspective may be the inevitable consequence of the actual phenomenon of learning helpful (but sometimes arbitrary) things most of the time. Parenthetically, this explanation very naturally accounts for the fact that human fetish objects are usually associated with female sexuality and change with fashion (Gebhard, 1969).

Turning to sex offenders, McGuire, Carlisle, and Young (1965) have argued from case history data that sexual deviations are acquired through masturbation to deviant sexual imagery. The original source of the imagery can be a real event or something fictional but the erotic value of the stimulus is maintained and strengthened through its association with masturbation. Unfortunately, there are no convincing data one way or the other on this theory, although it is, in broad outline, compatible with what is known.

Learning is also involved in establishing appropriate copulatory behaviors and its importance is greatest among mammalian species. This learning can sometimes go awry. It is known that male sexual performance among mammals is more easily disrupted by traumatic learning experiences, cortical lesions, and distraction than is female sexual behavior (Gadpaille, 1980). Among rhesus monkeys, sex play with juvenile peers is crucial in establishing normal adult sexual behaviors but the effects of depriving juveniles of this experience is only irreversible in the male (Gadpaille, 1980).

Taken together, these lines of evidence have possible implications for human sexual behavior and suggest that learning an association between sexual arousal and "peculiar" stimuli is quite possible, as is the learning of inappropriate sexual behaviors. It appears as though early learning is important. Despite the importance of learning in sexual behavior, it seems implausible that it is unconstrained by genetic influences because of its great relevance to reproductive success. Genetic influence could occur in a variety of ways. The most obvious of these is the establishment of unconditional stimuli involved in classical conditioning or reinforcers involved in instrumental learning; orgasm is one such event and we may speculate that youthful female body shape is another. Another form of influence is on the ease with which certain connections are learned. What is being suggested here is a "preparedness" type notion whereby certain sorts of associations are much more easily acquired than others.

Some support for a preparedness theory is provided by studies on classically conditioned sexual arousal. Rachman (1966) and Rachman and Hodgson (1968) found that penile responses to pictures of female high heeled boots could be acquired through the experimental association of
the boot slides with pictures of nude women. Much weaker classical conditioning was found by Langevin and Martin (1975) who used patterns of low association value as conditional stimuli. One can argue, therefore, that non-arbitrary stimuli which are associated with women may be more easily conditionable (Marks, 1976).

Among potentially easily acquired associations, the ultimate link between sex and violence is the most important in the present context. It is plausible that such an association is easily acquired because of the presumed genetic benefits of forced mating strategies in evolutionary history, the close association of neural structures mediating sex and aggression, the intimate association of dominance hierarchies and mating success, and the likely phylogenetic association of inter-male aggression and sexual behavior. This account is conjectural, of course, but does agree with what is known.

Conclusions

Although the literature is far from definitive, there are interpretations which can be made and these may be useful both in organizing the literature and in a heuristic manner. It is in this spirit that the following conclusions are offered.

The literature indicates that all or at least most men are capable of rape but that its frequency varies with cultural variables such as the prevalence of male warlike behavior and the extent of social upheaval (most commonly found in wartime). In Westernized societies, most men prefer consenting sex to rape but there are large individual differences among them in the extent to which they consider rape to be legitimate and the extent to which they find the thought of it sexually exciting. Many males, although preferring consenting sex, will use forceful seduction strategies in an opportunistic, if half-hearted, fashion. The likelihood of such forceful seduction behaviors is related to the presence of alcohol, attitudes relating to women and sexuality, the amount of sexual experience the man has had, appropriate opportunities, and the female’s behavior. Such attempts do not usually end in rape.

Rapists tend to be individuals who are more sexually aroused by rape than non-rapists. They often engage in nonsexual criminal activities as well. In particular, gang rapes appear to reflect a criminal or delinquent lifestyle, rather than inappropriate sexual interests (although this proposition requires direct testing). Rapists who are repetitive or commit extremely brutal crimes appear to be erotically attracted to this type of behavior; they fantasize about it, stalk women, and use rape fantasies in masturbation. This obsession with violent sex reaches its apogee among sadistic murderers. Thus, considering individual difference variables, it appears there are two relevant and independent continua in the proximate causation of rape: criminality and an erotic attraction to violent sexuality. Situational variables appear to be more important among rapists who do not have inappropriate sexual interests.

Thus there are two phenomena which require explanation; the first of these is criminality and the second is the acquisition of an erotic attraction toward violent sexuality. Turning first to criminality, the association between rape and the commission of a variety of other offenses appears reasonable in a broad evolutionary context. Symons (1979) has cogently argued that males have been selected to desire a large number of sexual partners. Among the arguments supporting the idea that male desire is stimulated by novelty is the “Coolidge effect” observed in many mammalian species where the substitution of new female partners potentiates the male sexual responses and the differences in partner choice between male and female homosexuals. Symons suggests with respect to homosexuality, that sexual relations within genders allow us to see what male and female sexuality is like when compromises do not have to be made with the opposite sex. Male homosexuals tend to have very large numbers of partners and partner choice is determined by physical attractiveness, particularly youthfulness. Female homosexuals, on the other hand, tend to form enduring relationships and to have few sexual partners. Evolution, being concerned with reproductive success, is indifferent to frustration in heterosexual men and disappointment among heterosexual women.

Given the plausibility of Symon’s thesis, we must be impressed by the role of socialization in male sexual behavior. When socialization fails, as, for example, when men do not feel “appropriate” guilt or do not emulate “responsible” role models, we may expect not only a high frequency and variety of criminal activities but also the occasional sexual assault. Poorly socialized or criminal individuals would be expected to rape when the costs are low and an appropriate opportunity occurs. We would expect that the sexual arousal of such men would not be inhibited by victim
suffering or nonconsent and the research on the sexual arousal patterns of rapists supports this expectation. The finding that rapists are differentiable on the basis of their sexual responsiveness to rape cues from other personality disordered offenders probably indicates that some rapists are erotically attracted to sexual sadism and that poor socialization does not always entail poor sexual socialization. The socialization argument allows us to predict that rapists should resemble other offenders in personality and that alcohol should be related to the commission of rape. Callous attitudes towards rape may reflect this specific failure of socialization.

Turning to the acquisition of an erotic attraction toward violent sexuality, in an earlier section it was argued that such an association might be easily learned. Now, we must inquire as to what sorts of individuals would be most likely to learn it. One would expect those most likely to develop sadistic interests to be those individuals who are: (a) socially isolated, as they would elaborate sexual fantasies without interruption, would not have realistic ideas about sexual behavior and would have few real-life exemplars of consenting sexual behavior to serve as stimuli to masturbation; (b) hypersexual, as hypersexuals would engage in a great deal of masturbatory activity; (c) exposed to violent pornography, as such material may appear to legitimize such thoughts, as well as serving as a masturbatory stimulus; and (d) hostile towards women, as such hostility and anger would be paired with sexual thoughts, particularly if the hostility was in a sexual context (e.g., rejection). These ideas lead one to predict the observed high frequencies of other sexual deviances among sadistic assailants.

A wide variety of topics offer interesting opportunities for further investigation: typologies of rapists, testosterone and sexual aggression, rapists' attitudes toward women, alcohol and rape, comparative evaluative studies of different treatment methods, assertive deficits among rapists, and hypersexuality. Research on the development of both “normal” and inappropriate sexual interests is, however, the most important and is fundamental to theory development, prevention, and treatment interventions.

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SEXUAL AGGRESSION


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