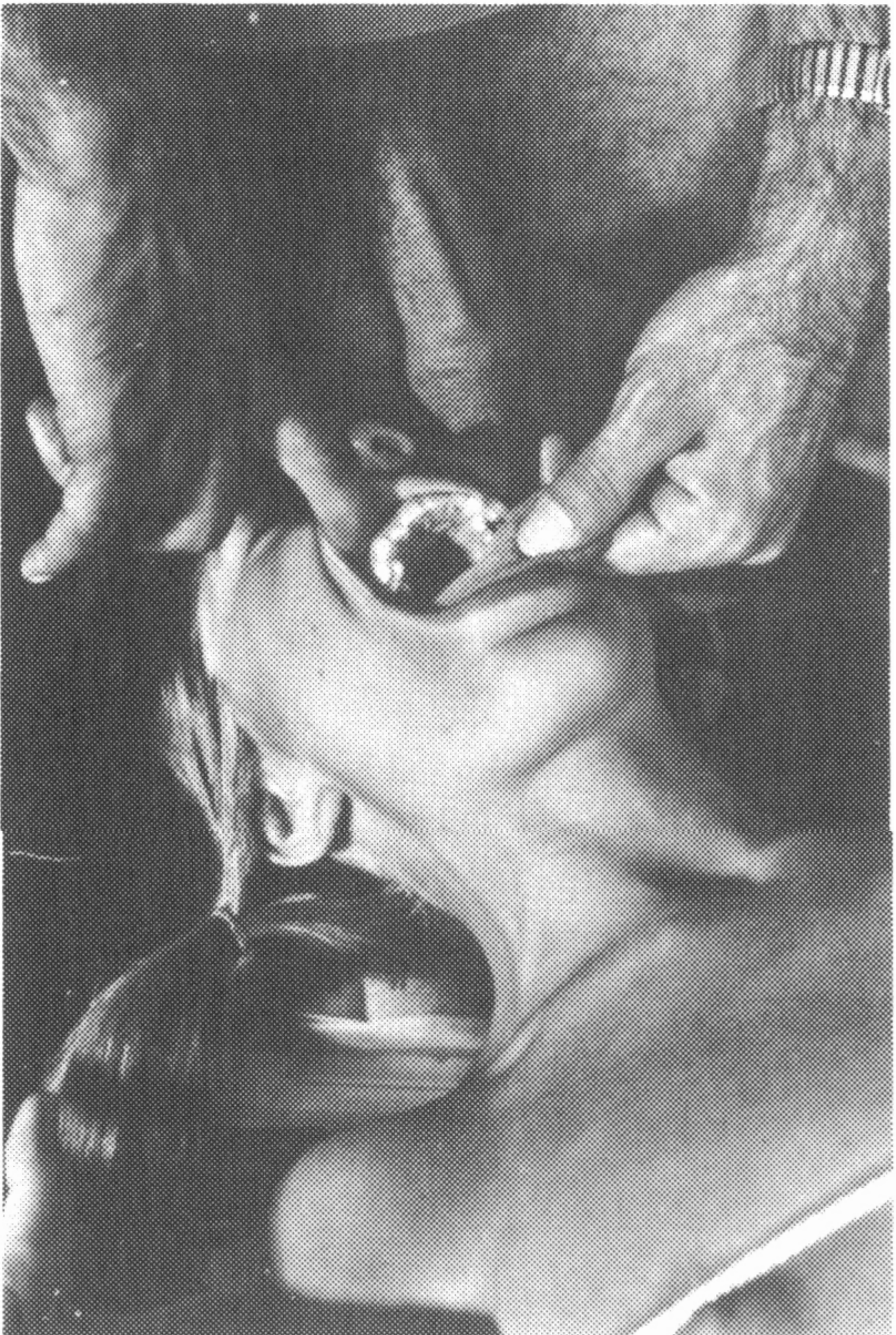


## PART 2

# PORNOGRAPHY AS A CAUSE OF RAPE



*Source unknown*

## INTRODUCTION:

### PORNOGRAPHY AS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

"I don't need studies and statistics to tell me that there is a relationship between pornography and real violence against women. My body remembers."  
— *Woman's testimony, 1983.*<sup>1</sup>

"The relationship between particularly sexually violent images in the media and subsequent aggression...is much stronger statistically than the relationship between smoking and lung cancer."  
— *Edward Donnerstein, 1983.*

When addressing the question of whether or not pornography causes rape, as well as other forms of sexual assault and violence, many people fail to acknowledge that the actual *making* of pornography sometimes involves, or even requires, violence and sexual assault. Testimony by women and men involved in such activity provides numerous examples of this (*Public Hearings, 1983; Attorney General's Commission, 1986*).

In one case, a man who said he had participated in over a hundred pornographic movies testified at the Commission hearings in Los Angeles as follows: "I, myself, have been on a couple of sets where the young ladies have been forced to do even anal sex scenes with a guy which [sic] is rather large and I have seen them crying in pain" (1986, p. 773).

Another witness testified at the Los Angeles hearings as follows:

Women and young girls were tortured and suffered permanent physical injuries to answer publisher demands for photographs depicting sado-

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<sup>1</sup> This survivor of pornography-related incestuous abuse testified at the Minneapolis Hearings on pornography (*Public Hearings, 1983*).

masochistic abuse. When the torturer/photographer inquired of the publisher as to the types of depictions that would sell, the torturer/photographer was instructed to get similar existing publications and use the depiction therein for instruction. The torturer/photographer followed the publisher's instructions, tortured women and girls accordingly, and then sold the photographs to the publisher. The photographs were included in magazines sold nationally in pornographic outlets (1986, pp. 787-788).

Peter Bogdanovich writes of *Playboy* "Playmate of the Year" Dorothy Stratten's response to her participation in a pornographic movie: "A key sequence in *Galaxina* called for Dorothy to be spread-eagled against a cold water tower. The producers insisted she remain bound there for several hours, day and night. In one shot of the completed film, the tears she cries are real" (1984, p. 59). Although this movie was not made for the so-called adult movie houses, I consider it pornography because of its sexist and degrading combination of sexuality and bondage.

A letter was sent to the United States Attorney General's Commission on Pornography reporting that: "A mother and father in South Oklahoma City forced their four daughters, ages ten to seventeen, to engage in family sex while pornographic pictures were being filmed" (1986, p. 780).

It should not be assumed that violence occurs only in the making of violent pornography. For example, although many people would classify the movie *Deep Throat* as non-violent pornography because it does not portray rape or other violence, we now know from Linda (Lovelace) Marchiano's two books (*Ordeal*, 1980, and *Out of Bondage*, 1986), as well as from her public testimony (for example, *Public Hearings*, 1983), that this film is in fact a documentary of her rape from beginning to end.

Many people, including some of the best researchers on pornography in this country, ignore the violence used by pornographers in the manufacturing of these misogynist materials (for example, see Malamuth and Donnerstein, 1984). Catharine MacKinnon points out the frequently forgotten fact that "before pornography became the pornographer's speech it was somebody's life" (1987, p. 179). Testimony presented at the hearings held on the anti-pornography civil rights ordinance in Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1983, provides powerful evidence for the truth of this statement (*Public Hearings*, 1983; Russell, 1993a).

Because it is important to know the proclivities and the state of mind of those who read and view pornography, I will start by discussing some of the data on males' propensity to rape.

## MALES' PROPENSITY TO RAPE<sup>2</sup>

"Why do I want to rape women? Because I am basically, as a male, a predator and all women look to men like prey. I fantasize about the expression on a woman's face when I 'capture' her and she realizes she cannot escape. It's like I won, I own her."

— Male respondent, *Shere Hite*, 1981, p. 718.

Research indicates that 25% to 30% of male college students in the United States and Canada admit that there is some likelihood they would rape a woman if they could get away with it.<sup>3</sup> In the first study of males' self-reported likelihood to rape that was conducted at the University of California at Los Angeles, the word *rape* was not used; instead, an account of rape (described below) was read to the male subjects, of whom 53% said there was some likelihood that they would behave in the same fashion as the man described in the story, if they could be sure of getting away with it (Malamuth, Haber, and Feshbach, 1980). Without this assurance, only 17% said they might emulate the rapist's behavior. It is helpful to know exactly what behavior these students said they might emulate:

Bill soon caught up with Susan and offered to escort her to her car. Susan politely refused him. Bill was enraged by the rejection. "Who the hell does this bitch think she is, turning me down," Bill thought to himself as he reached into his pocket and took out a Swiss army knife. With his left hand he placed the knife at her throat. "If you try to get away, I'll cut you," said Bill. Susan nodded her head, her eyes wild with terror.

The story then depicted the rape. There was a description of sexual acts with the victim continuously portrayed as clearly opposing the assault (Malamuth, Haber, and Feshbach, 1980, p. 124).

In another study, 356 male students were asked: "If you could be assured that no one would know and that you could in no way be punished for engaging in the following acts, how likely, if at all, would you

<sup>2</sup> I use the term *males* rather than *men* because many rapists are juveniles.

<sup>3</sup> In 1984 Malamuth reported that in several studies an average of about 35% of male students indicated some likelihood of raping a woman (1984, p. 22). This figure has decreased to 25% to 30% since then, for reasons Malamuth cannot explain (personal communication, July 1986).



be to commit such acts?" (Briere and Malamuth, 1983). Among the sexual acts listed were the two of interest to these researchers: "forcing a female to do something she really didn't want to do" and "rape" (Briere and Malamuth, 1983). *Sixty percent of the sample indicated that under the right circumstances, there was some likelihood that they would rape, use force, or do both.*

In a study of high school males, 50% of those interviewed believed it acceptable "for a guy to hold a girl down and force her to have sexual intercourse in instances such as when 'she gets him sexually excited' or 'she says she's going to have sex with him and then changes her mind' " (Goodchilds and Zellman, 1984).

Some people dismiss the findings from these studies as "merely attitudinal." But this conclusion is incorrect. Malamuth has found that male subjects' self-reported likelihood of raping is correlated with physiological measures of sexual arousal to rape depictions. Clearly, erections cannot be considered attitudes. More specifically, the male students who say they might rape a woman if they could get away with it are significantly more likely than other male students to be sexually aroused by portrayals of rape. Indeed, these males were more sexually aroused by depictions of rape than by mutually consenting depictions. And when asked if they would find committing a rape sexually arousing, they said yes (Donnerstein, 1983, p. 7). They were also more likely than the other male subjects to admit to having used actual physical force to obtain sex with a woman. These latter data were self-reported, but because they refer to actual behavior they too cannot be dismissed as merely attitudinal.

Looking at sexual arousal data alone (as measured by penile tumescence), not its correlation with self-reported likelihood to rape, Malamuth reports that:

- About 10% of the population of male students are sexually aroused by "very extreme violence" with "a great deal of blood and gore" that "has very little of the sexual element" (1985, p. 95).
- About 20% to 30% show substantial sexual arousal by depictions of rape in which the woman never shows signs of arousal, only abhorrence (1985, p. 95).
- About 50% to 60% show some degree of sexual arousal by a rape depiction in which the victim is portrayed as becoming sexually aroused at the end (personal communication, August 18, 1986).

Given these findings, it is hardly surprising that after reviewing a whole series of related experiments, Neil Malamuth concluded that "the overall pattern of the data is...consistent with contentions that many men have a proclivity to rape" (1981b, p. 139).

Shere Hite (1981, p. 1123) provides data on men's self-reported desire to rape women from the general population outside the university laboratory. Distinguishing between those men who answered the question anonymously and those who revealed their identities, Hite reports the following answers by the anonymous group to her question "Have you ever wanted to rape a woman?": 46% answered "yes" or "sometimes," 47% answered "no," and 7% said they had fantasies of rape, but presumably had not acted them out — yet (1981, p. 1123).

Surprisingly, the non-anonymous group of men reported slightly more interest in rape: 52% answered "yes" or "sometimes," 36% answered "no," and 11% reported having rape fantasies. (Could it be that many men don't think there is anything wrong with wanting to rape women?) Although Hite's survey was not based on a random sample, and therefore, like the experimental work cited above, cannot be generalized to the population at large, her finding that roughly half of the more than 7,000 men she surveyed admitted to having wanted to rape a woman on one or more occasions suggests that men's propensity to rape is probably very widespread indeed. It is interesting that Hite's percentages are comparable to my finding that 44% of a probability sample of 930 adult women residing in San Francisco reported having been the victim of one or more rapes or attempted rapes over the course of their lives (Russell, 1984).

The studies reviewed here suggest that at this time in the history of our culture, a substantial percentage of the male population has some desire or proclivity to rape females. Indeed, some males in this culture consider themselves deviant for *not* wanting to rape a woman. For example, the answer of one of Hite's male respondents was: "I have never raped a woman, or wanted to. In this I guess *I am somewhat odd*. Many of my friends talk about rape a lot and fantasize about it. The whole idea leaves me cold" (1981, p. 719; emphasis added). Another replied: "I must admit a certain part of me would receive some sort of thrill at ripping the clothes from a woman and ravishing her. But I would probably collapse into tears of pity and weep with my victim, *unlike the traditional man*" (1981, p. 719; emphasis added).

Some feminists are among the optimists who believe that males' proclivity to rape is largely a consequence of social and cultural forces, not biological ones. And, of course, having a *desire* to behave in a certain way is not the same as actually *behaving* in that way, particularly in the case of antisocial behavior. Nevertheless, it is helpful to have this kind of baseline information on the desires and predispositions of males, who are, after all, the chief consumers of pornography.

## A THEORY ABOUT THE CAUSATIVE ROLE OF PORNOGRAPHY

Sociologist David Finkelhor has developed a very useful multicausal theory to explain the occurrence of child sexual abuse (1984). According to Finkelhor's model, in order for child sexual abuse to occur, four conditions have to be met. First, someone has to *want* to abuse a child sexually. Second, this person's internal inhibitions against acting out this desire have to be undermined. Third, this person's social inhibitions against acting out this desire (e.g., fear of being caught and punished) have to be undermined. Fourth, the would-be perpetrator has to undermine or overcome his or her chosen victim's capacity to avoid or resist the sexual abuse.

According to my theory, these conditions also have to be met in order for rape, battery, and other forms of sexual assault on adult women to occur (Russell, 1984). Although my theory can be applied to other forms of sexual abuse and violence against women besides rape, the following formulation of it will focus on rape because most of the research relevant to my theory is limited to this form of sexual assault.

In *Sexual Exploitation* (1984) I suggest many factors that may predispose a large number of males in the United States to want to rape or assault women sexually. Some examples discussed in this book are (1) biological factors, (2) childhood experiences of sexual abuse, (3) male sex-role socialization, (4) exposure to mass media that encourage rape, and (5) exposure to pornography. Here I will discuss only the role of pornography.

Although women have been known to rape both males and females, males are by far the predominant perpetrators of sexual assault as well as

the biggest consumers of pornography. Hence, my theory will focus on male perpetrators.

A diagrammatic presentation of this theory appears in Figure 1. As previously noted, in order for rape to occur, a man must not only be predisposed to rape, but his internal and social inhibitions against acting out his rape desires must be undermined. My theory, in a nutshell, is that pornography (1) predisposes some males to want to rape women and intensifies the predisposition in other males already so predisposed; (2) undermines some males' internal inhibitions against acting out their desire to rape; and (3) undermines some males' social inhibitions against acting out their desire to rape.

## THE MEANING OF "CAUSE"

Given the intense debate about whether or not pornography plays a causal role in rape, it is surprising that so few of those engaged in it ever state what they mean by "cause." A definition of the concept of *simple causation* follows:

An event (or events) that precedes and results in the occurrence of another event. Whenever the first event (the cause) occurs, the second event (the effect) necessarily or inevitably follows. Moreover, in simple causation the second event does not occur unless the first event has occurred. Thus the cause is both the SUFFICIENT CONDITION and the NECESSARY CONDITION for the occurrence of the effect (Theodorson and Theodorson, 1979).

By this definition, pornography clearly does not cause rape, as it seems safe to assume that some pornography consumers do not rape women, and that many rapes are unrelated to pornography. However, the concept of *multiple causation* is applicable to the relationship between pornography and rape.

With the conception of MULTIPLE CAUSATION, various possible causes may be seen for a given event, any one of which may be a sufficient but not necessary condition for the occurrence of the effect, or a necessary but not sufficient condition. In the case of multiple causation, then, the given effect may occur in the absence of all but one of the possible sufficient but not necessary causes; and, conversely, the given effect would not follow the occurrence of some but not all of

### Theoretical Model of Pornography as a Cause of Rape

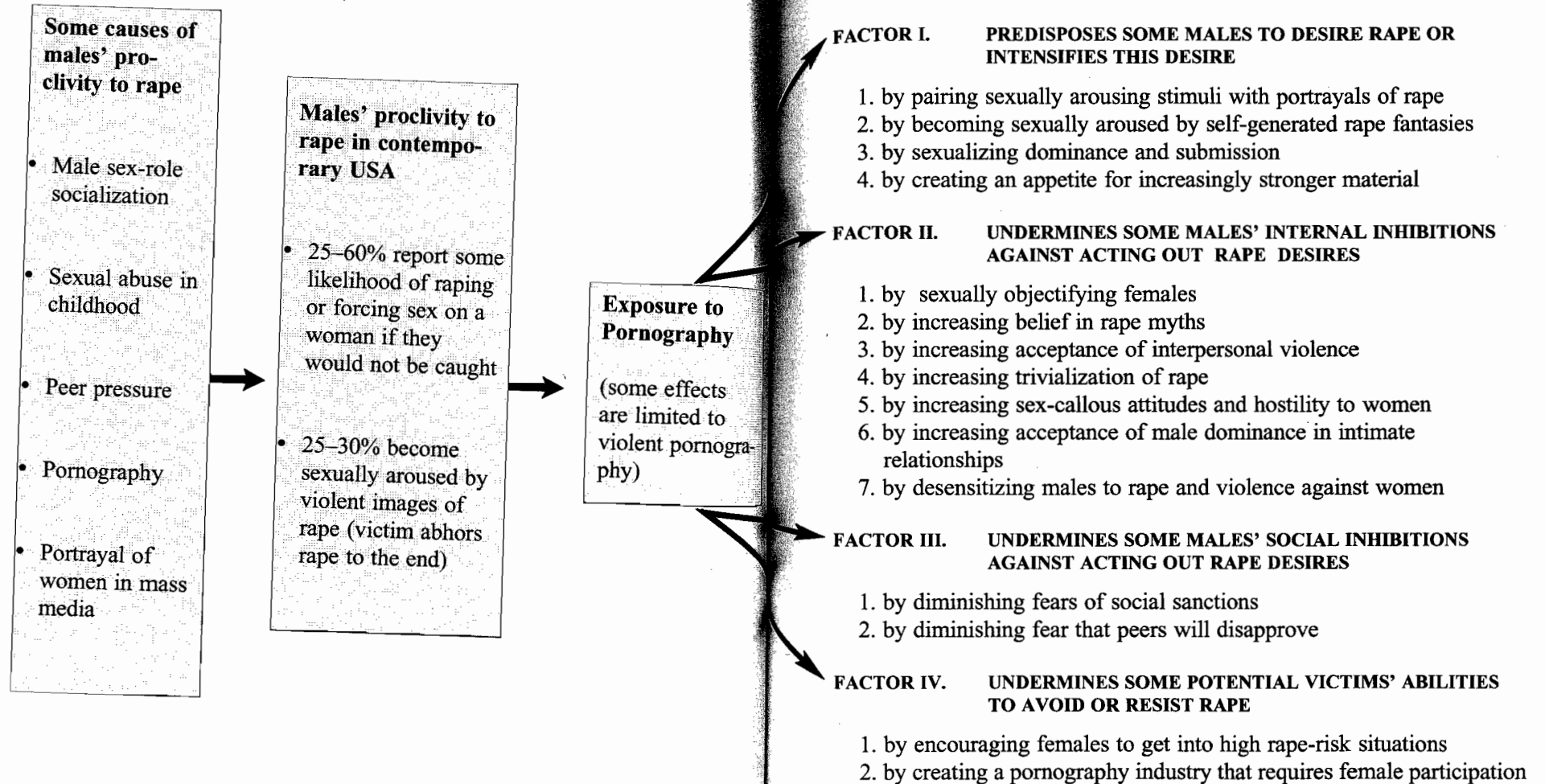


Figure 1

the various necessary but not sufficient causes (Theodorson and Theodorson, 1979).

As I have already presented the research on males' proclivity to rape, I will next discuss some of the evidence that pornography can be a sufficient (though not *necessary*) condition for males to desire to rape (see the list on the far right of Figure 1). I will mention when the research findings I describe apply to violent pornography and when to pornography that appears to the viewer to be non-violent.

#### I. THE ROLE OF PORNOGRAPHY IN PREDISPOSING SOME MALES TO WANT TO RAPE

"I went to a porno bookstore, put a quarter in a slot, and saw this porn movie. It was just a guy coming up from behind a girl and attacking her and raping her. That's when I started having rape fantasies. When I seen that movie, it was like somebody lit a fuse from my childhood on up.... I just went for it, went out and raped." (Rapist interviewed by Beneke, 1982, pp. 73-74.)

According to Factor I in my theoretical model, pornography can induce a desire to rape women in males who previously had no such desire, and it can increase or intensify the desire to rape in males who already have felt this desire. This section will provide the evidence for the four different ways in which pornography can induce this predisposition that are listed alongside Factor I in Figure 1.

##### (1) *Pairing sexually arousing/gratifying stimuli with rape*

The laws of social learning (for example, classical conditioning, instrumental conditioning, and social modelling), about which there is now considerable consensus among psychologists, apply to all the mass media, including pornography. As Donnerstein testified at the hearings in Minneapolis: "If you assume that your child can learn from Sesame Street how to count one, two, three, four, five, believe me, they can learn how to pick up a gun" (Donnerstein, 1983, p. 11). Presumably, males can learn equally well how to rape, beat, sexually abuse, and degrade females.

A simple application of the laws of social learning suggests that viewers of pornography can develop arousal responses to depictions of rape, murder, child sexual abuse, or other assaultive behavior. Researcher S. Rachman of the Institute of Psychiatry, Maudsley Hospital, London, has demonstrated that male subjects can learn to become sexually aroused by

seeing a picture of a woman's boot after repeatedly seeing women's boots in association with sexually arousing slides of nude females (Rachman and Hodgson, 1968). The laws of learning that operated in the acquisition of the boot fetish can also teach males who were not previously aroused by depictions of rape to become so. All it may take is the repeated association of rape with arousing portrayals of female nudity (or clothed females in provocative poses).

Even for males who are not sexually excited during movie portrayals of rape, masturbation subsequent to the movie reinforces the association. This constitutes what R. J. McGuire, J. M. Carlisle and B. G. Young refer to as "masturbatory conditioning" (Cline, 1974, p. 210). The pleasurable experience of orgasm — an expected and planned-for activity in many pornography parlours — is an exceptionally potent reinforcer. The fact that pornography is widely used by males as ejaculation material is a major factor that differentiates it from other mass media, intensifying the lessons that males consumers learn from it.

##### (2) *Increasing males' self-generated rape fantasies*

Further evidence that exposure to pornography can create in males a predisposition to rape where none existed before is provided by an experiment conducted by Malamuth. Malamuth classified 29 male students as sexually force-oriented or non-force-oriented on the basis of their responses to a questionnaire (1981a). These students were then randomly assigned to view either a rape version or a mutually consenting version of a slide-audio presentation. The account of rape and accompanying pictures were based on a story in a popular pornographic magazine, which Malamuth describes as follows:

The man in this story finds an attractive woman on a deserted road. When he approaches her, she faints with fear. In the rape version, the man ties her up and forcibly undresses her. The accompanying narrative is as follows: "You take her into the car. Though this experience is new to you, there is a temptation too powerful to resist. When she awakens, you tell her she had better do exactly as you say or she'll be sorry. With terrified eyes she agrees. She is undressed and she is willing to succumb to whatever you want. You kiss her and she returns the kiss." Portrayal of the man and woman in sexual acts follows; intercourse is implied rather than explicit (1981a, p. 38).

In the mutually consenting version of the story the victim was not tied

up or threatened. Instead, on her awakening in the car, the man told her that "she is safe and that no one will do her any harm. She seems to like you and you begin to kiss." The rest of the story is identical to the rape version (Malamuth, 1981a, p. 38).

All subjects were then exposed to the same audio description of a rape read by a female. This rape involved threats with a knife, beatings, and physical restraint. The victim was portrayed as pleading, crying, screaming, and fighting against the rapist (Abel, Barlow, Blanchard, and Guild, 1977, p. 898). Malamuth reports that measures of penile tumescence as well as self-reported arousal "indicated that relatively high levels of sexual arousal were generated by all the experimental stimuli" (1981a, p. 33).

After the 29 male students had been exposed to the rape audio tape, they were asked to try to reach as high a level of sexual arousal as possible by fantasizing about whatever they wanted but without any direct stimulation of the penis (1981a, p. 40). Self-reported sexual arousal during the fantasy period indicated that those students who had been exposed to the rape version of the first slide-audio presentation, created more violent sexual fantasies than those exposed to the mutually consenting version *irrespective of whether they had been classified as force-oriented or non-force-oriented* (1981a, p. 33).

As the rape version of the slide-audio presentation is typical of what is seen in pornography, the results of this experiment suggest that similar pornographic depictions are likely to generate rape fantasies even in previously non-force-oriented consumers. As Edna Einsiedel points out (1986, p. 60):

Current evidence suggests a high correlation between deviant fantasies and deviant behaviors.... Some treatment methods are also predicated on the link between fantasies and behavior by attempting to alter fantasy patterns in order to change the deviant behaviors (1986, p. 60).

Because so many people resist the idea that a desire to rape may develop as a result of viewing pornography, let us focus for a moment on behavior other than rape. There is abundant testimonial evidence that at least some males decide they would like to perform certain sex acts on women after seeing pornography portraying such sex acts. For example, one of the men who answered Shere Hite's question on pornography wrote: "It's great for me. *It gives me new ideas to try and see*, and it's always sexually exciting" (1981, p. 780; emphasis added). Of course, there's nothing wrong with getting new ideas from pornography or any-

where else, nor with trying them out, as long as they are not actions that subordinate or violate others. Unfortunately, many of the behaviors modelled in pornography *do* subordinate and violate women, sometimes viciously.

The following statements were made by women testifying at the Hearings on Pornography in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in 1983 (Russell, 1993a).

Ms. M testified that,

I agreed to act out in private a lot of the scenarios that my husband read to me. These depicted bondage and different sexual acts that I found very humiliating to do.... He read the pornography like a textbook, like a journal. When he finally convinced me to be bound, he read in the magazine how to tie the knots and bind me in a way that I couldn't escape. Most of the scenes where I had to dress up or go through different fantasies were the exact same scenes that he had read in the magazines.

Ms. O described a case in which a man brought pornographic magazines, books, and paraphernalia into the bedroom with him and told her [his ex-wife] that if she did not perform the sexual acts in the 'dirty' books and magazines, he would beat her and kill her.

Ms. S testified about the experiences of a group of women prostitutes who, she said,

were forced constantly to enact specific scenes that men had witnessed in pornography.... These men...would set up scenarios, usually with more than one woman, to copy scenes that they had seen portrayed in magazines and books. Then they would make their movies using home video equipment and Polaroid cameras for their own libraries of pornography. [For example, Ms. S. quoted a woman in her group as saying:] "He held up a porn magazine with a picture of a beaten woman and said, 'I want you to look like that. I want you to hurt.' He then began beating me. When I did not cry fast enough, he lit a cigarette and held it right above my breast for a long time before he burned me."

Ms. S also described what three men did to a nude woman prostitute whom they had tied up while she was seated on a chair:

They burned her with cigarettes and attached nipple clips to her breasts. They had many S and M magazines with them and showed her many pictures of women appearing to consent, enjoy, and encourage this abuse. She was held for twelve hours while she was continuously raped and beaten.

Another example cited by Ms. S:

They [several Johns] forced the women to act simultaneously with the movie. In the movie at this point, a group of men were urinating on a



naked woman. All the men in the room were able to perform this task, so they all started urinating on the woman who was now naked.

When a male engages in a particularly unusual act that he had previously encountered in pornography, it becomes even more likely that the decision to do so was inspired by the pornography. One woman, for example, testified to the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography about the pornography-related death of her son:

My son, Troy Daniel Dunaway, was murdered on August 6, 1981, by the greed and avarice of the publishers of *Hustler* magazine. My son read the article "Orgasm of Death," set up the sexual experiment depicted therein, followed the explicit instructions of the article, and ended up dead. He would still be alive today were he not enticed and incited into this action by *Hustler* magazine's "How to Do" August 1981 article, an article which was found at his feet and which directly caused his death (1986, p. 797).

When children do what they see in pornography, it is even more improbable than in the case of adults that their behavior can be attributed entirely to their predispositions.

Psychologist Jennings Bryant testified to the Pornography Commission about a survey he had conducted involving 600 telephone interviews with males and females who were evenly divided into three age groups: students in junior high school, students in high school, and adults aged 19 to 39 years (1985, p. 133). Respondents were asked if "exposure to X-rated materials had made them want to try anything they saw" (1985, p. 140). Two-thirds of the males reported "wanting to try some of the behavior depicted" (1985, p. 140). Bryant reports that the desire to imitate what is seen in pornography "progressively increases as age of respondents *decreases*" (1985, p. 140; emphasis added). Among the junior high school students, 72% of the males reported that "they wanted to try some sexual experiment or sexual behavior that they had seen in their initial exposure to X-rated material" (1985, p. 140).

In trying to ascertain if imitation had occurred, the respondents were asked: "Did you actually experiment with or try any of the behaviors depicted [within a few days of seeing the materials]?" (1985, p. 140). A quarter of the males answered that they had. A number of adult men answered "no," but said that some years later they had experimented with the behaviors portrayed. However, only imitations within a few days of seeing the materials were counted (1985, p. 140). Male high school stu-

dents were the most likely (31%) to report trying the behaviors portrayed (1985, p. 141).

Unfortunately, no information is available on the behaviors imitated by these males. Imitating pornography is cause for concern only when the behavior imitated is violent or abusive, or when the behavior is not wanted by one or more of the participants. Despite the unavailability of this information, Bryant's study is valuable in showing how common it is for males to *want* to imitate what they see in pornography, and for revealing that many *do* imitate it within a few days of viewing it. Furthermore, given the degrading and often violent content of pornography, as well as the youthfulness and presumable susceptibility of many of the viewers, how likely is it that these males only imitated or wished to imitate the non-sexist, non-degrading, and non-violent sexual behavior?

Almost all the research on pornography to date has been conducted on men and women who were at least 18 years old. But as Malamuth points out, there is "a research basis for expecting that children would be more susceptible to the influences of mass media, including violent pornography if they are exposed to it" than adults (1985, p. 107). Bryant's telephone interviews show that very large numbers of children now have access to both hard-core and soft-core materials. For example:

- The average age at which male respondents saw their first issue of *Playboy* or a similar magazine was 11 years (1985, p. 135).
- All of the high school age males surveyed reported having read or looked at *Playboy*, *Playgirl*, or some other soft-core magazine (1985, p. 134).
- High school males reported having seen an average of 16.1 issues, and junior high school males said they had seen an average of 2.5 issues.
- In spite of being legally under age, junior high students reported having seen an average of 16.3 "unedited sexy R-rated films" (1985, p. 135). (Although R-rated movies are not usually considered pornographic, many of them meet my definition of pornography.)
- The average age of first exposure to sexually oriented R-rated films for all respondents was 12.5 years (1985, p. 135).
- Nearly 70% of the junior high students surveyed reported that they had seen their first R-rated film before they were 13 (1985, p. 135).

- The vast majority of all the respondents reported exposure to hard-core, X-rated, sexually explicit material (1985, p. 135). Furthermore, "a larger proportion of high school students had seen X-rated films than any other age group, including adults": 84%, with the average age of first exposure being 16 years, 11 months (1985, p. 136).

In a more recent anonymous survey of 247 Canadian junior high school students whose average age was 14 years, James Check and Kristin Maxwell (1992) report that 87% of the boys and 61% of the girls said they had viewed video-pornography. The average age at first exposure was just under 12 years.

33% of the boys versus only 2% of the girls reported watching pornography once a month or more often. As well, 29% of the boys versus 1% of the girls reported that pornography was the source that had provided them with the most useful information about sex (i.e., more than parents, school, friends, etc.). Finally, boys who were frequent consumers of pornography and/or reported learning a lot from pornography were also more likely to say that it was "OK" to hold a girl down and force her to have intercourse.

Clearly, more research is needed on the effects of pornography on young male viewers, particularly in view of the fact that recent studies suggest that "over 50% of various categories of paraphiliacs [sex offenders] had developed their deviant arousal patterns prior to age 18" (Einsiedel, 1986, p. 53). Einsiedel goes on to say that "it is clear that the age-of-first-exposure variable and the nature of that exposure needs to be examined more carefully. There is also evidence that the longer the duration of the paraphilia, the more significant the association with use of pornography" (Abel, Mittelman, and Becker, 1985).

The first two items listed under Factor I in my theoretical model both relate to the viewing of *violent* pornography. But sexualizing dominance and submission is a way in which non-violent pornography can also predispose some males to want to rape women.

### (3) *Sexualizing dominance and submission*

Canadian psychologists James Check and Ted Guloien (1989) conducted an experiment in which they distinguished between degrading non-violent pornography and erotica, and compared their effects. Their experiment is rare not only for making this distinction, but also for in-

cluding non-students as subjects; 436 Toronto residents and college students were exposed to one of three types of sexual material over three viewing sessions, or to no material. The sexual materials were constructed from existing commercially available videos and validated by measuring subjects' perceptions of them. The contents of the sexual materials shown to the three groups of subjects were as follows:

1. The *sexual violence* material portrayed scenes of sexual intercourse involving a woman strapped to a table and being penetrated by a large plastic penis.
2. The *sexually explicit, dehumanizing but non-violent* material portrayed scenes of sexual activity that included a man sitting on top of a woman and masturbating into her face.
3. The *sexually explicit non-degrading* material portrayed sexual activities leading up to heterosexual intercourse (Check and Guloien, 1989).

Check and Guloien's experiment revealed that the viewing of both the non-violent dehumanizing materials as well as the violent materials resulted in male subjects reporting a significantly greater likelihood of engaging in rape or other coercive sex acts than the control group.

Although self-reported likelihood of raping is not a proper measure of *desire* to rape, as it also indicates that the internal inhibitions against acting out rape desires have been undermined to some extent, Check and Guloien's experiment does offer tentative support for my theoretical model's claim that pornography sexualizes dominance and submission. In addition, it makes theoretical sense that sexualizing dominance and submission would probably be generalized to include eroticizing rape and/or other abusive sexual behavior for some males. For example, Ms. S testified at the Minnesota Hearings that: "Men constantly witness the abuse of women in pornography and if they can't engage in that behavior with their wives, girlfriends, or children, they force a whore to do it" (Russell, 1993a). And the Rev. Susan Wilhem testified in support of an anti-pornography ordinance in New York City that, "I came across a picture [in pornography] of a position my ex-husband had insisted we try. When we did, I hemorrhaged for three days. My bruised cervix is still a problem after ten years.... We should have some place to go to complain about how pornography is part of making our husbands into rapists" (Russell, 1993a).

Further research is needed on this issue, and more researchers need to

follow the lead of the Canadian researchers in going beyond the distinction between violent and non-violent pornography, and distinguishing also between non-violent degrading pornography and erotica.

#### (4) *Creating an appetite for increasingly stronger material*

Dolf Zillmann and Jennings Bryant have studied the effects of what they refer to as "massive exposure" to pornography (1984). (In fact, it was not particularly massive: 4 hours and 48 minutes per week over a period of six weeks.) These researchers, unlike Malamuth and Donnerstein, focus on trying to ascertain the effects of *non-violent* pornography and, in the study to be described, they use a sample drawn from a non-student adult population.

Male subjects in the *massive exposure* condition saw 36 non-violent pornographic films, six per session per week; male subjects in the *intermediate* condition saw 18 such movies, three per session per week. Male subjects in the control group saw 36 non-pornographic movies. Various measures were taken after one week, two weeks, and three weeks of exposure, as well as information about the kind of materials that the subjects were most interested in viewing.

Zillmann and Bryant found that a desire for stronger material was fostered in their subjects. "Consumers graduate from common to less common forms of pornography," Zillmann maintains, that is, to more violent and more degrading materials (1984, p. 127). Zillmann suggests this may be "because familiar material becomes unexciting as a result of habituation" (1984, p. 127).

According to Zillmann and Bryant's research, then, pornography can transform a male who was not previously interested in the more abusive types of pornography, into one who *is* turned on by such material. This is consistent with Malamuth's findings (described on p. 124) that males who did not previously find rape sexually arousing, generate such fantasies after being exposed to a typical example of violent pornography.

## II. THE ROLE OF PORNOGRAPHY IN UNDERMINING SOME MALES' INTERNAL INHIBITIONS AGAINST ACTING OUT THE DESIRE TO RAPE

"The movie was just like a big picture stand with words on it saying 'go out and do it, everybody's doin' it, even the movies.'" (Rapist interviewed by Beneke, 1982, p. 74.)

Evidence has been cited showing that many males would like to rape a

woman, but that an unknown percentage of these males have internal inhibitions against doing so. Some males' internal inhibitions are likely to be very weak, others' very strong. Presumably, the strength of internal inhibitions also varies in the same individual from time to time. Seven ways in which pornography undermines some males' internal inhibitions against acting out rape desires are listed in Figure 1. Research evidence about these processes will be presented in this section.

(1) *Objectifying women.* The first way in which pornography undermines some males' internal inhibitions against acting out their desires to rape is by objectifying women. Feminists have been emphasizing the role of objectification in the occurrence of rape for years (e.g., Medea and Thompson, 1974; Russell, 1975). Objectification makes it easier to rape them. "It was difficult for me to admit that I was dealing with a human being when I was talking to a woman," one rapist reported, "because, if you read men's magazines, you hear about your stereo, your car, your chick" (Russell, 1975, pp. 249-250). After this rapist had hit his victim several times in her face, she stopped resisting and begged, "All right, just don't hurt me." "When she said that," he reported, "all of a sudden it came into my head, 'My God, this is a human being!' I came to my senses and saw that I was hurting this person." Another rapist said of his victim, "I wanted this beautiful fine *thing* and I got it" (Russell, 1975, p. 245, emphasis added).

Another example is provided by Ms. N who testified at the Hearings on Pornography in Minnesota about how her boyfriend treated her as a sexual object after he had watched pornography: "This encounter differed from previous ones. It was much quicker, it was somewhat rougher, and he was not aware of me as a person. There was no foreplay" (Russell, 1993a).

Dehumanizing oppressed groups or enemy nations in times of war is an important mechanism for facilitating brutal behavior toward members of those groups. Ms. U, for example, testified that: "A society that sells books, movies, and video games like 'Custer's Last Stand' ['Custer's Revenge'] on its street corners, gives white men permission to do what they did to me. Like they [her rapists] said, I'm scum. It is a game to track me down, rape and torture me" (Russell, 1993a). However, the dehumanization of women that occurs in pornography is often not recognized because of its sexual guise and its pervasiveness. It is important to note that

the objectification of women is as common in non-violent pornography as it is in violent pornography.

Doug McKenzie-Mohr and Mark Zanna conducted an experiment to test whether certain types of males would be more likely to sexually objectify a woman after viewing 15 minutes of non-violent pornography. They selected 60 male students who they classified into one of two categories: masculine sex-typed or gender schematic — individuals who “encode all cross-sex interactions in sexual terms and all members of the opposite sex in terms of sexual attractiveness” (Bem, 1981, p. 361); and androgynous or gender aschematic — males who do not encode cross-sex interactions and women in these ways (McKenzie-Mohr and Zanna, 1990, p. 297, 299).

McKenzie-Mohr and Zanna found that after exposure to non-violent pornography, the masculine sex-typed males “treated our female experimenter who was interacting with them in a professional setting, in a manner that was both cognitively and behaviorally sexist” (1990, p. 305). In comparison with the androgynous males, for example, the masculine sex-typed males positioned themselves closer to the female experimenter and had “greater recall for information about her physical appearance” and less about the survey she was conducting (1990, p. 305). The experimenter also rated these males as more sexually motivated based on her answers to questions such as, “How much did you feel he was looking at your body?” “How sexually motivated did you find the subject?” (1990, p. 301).

This experiment confirmed McKenzie-Mohr and Zanna’s hypothesis that exposure to non-violent pornography causes masculine sex-typed males, in contrast to androgynous males, to view and treat a woman as a sex object.

(2) *Rape myths.* If males believe that women enjoy rape and find it sexually exciting, this belief is likely to undermine the inhibitions of some of those who would like to rape women. Sociologists Diana Scully and Martha Burt have reported that rapists are particularly apt to believe rape myths (Burt, 1980; Scully, 1985). Scully, for example, found that 65% of the rapists in her study believed that “women cause their own rape by the way they act and the clothes they wear”; and 69% agreed that “most men accused of rape are really innocent.” However, as Scully points out, it is not possible to know if their beliefs preceded their behavior or constitute

an attempt to rationalize it. Hence, findings from the experimental data are more telling for our purposes than these interviews with rapists.

As the myth that women enjoy rape is widely held, the argument that consumers of pornography realize that such portrayals are false, is totally unconvincing (Brownmiller, 1975; Burt, 1980; Russell, 1975). Indeed, several studies have shown that portrayals of women enjoying rape and other kinds of sexual violence can lead to increased acceptance of rape myths in both males and females. In an experiment conducted by Neil Malamuth and James Check, for example, one group of college students saw a pornographic depiction in which a woman was portrayed as sexually aroused by sexual violence, and a second group was exposed to control materials. Subsequently, all subjects were shown a second rape portrayal. The students who had been exposed to the pornographic depiction of rape were significantly more likely than the students in the control group (1) to perceive the second rape victim as suffering less trauma; (2) to believe that she actually enjoyed it; and (3) to believe that women in general enjoy rape and forced sexual acts (Check and Malamuth, 1985, p. 419).

Other examples of the rape myths that male subjects in these studies are more apt to believe after viewing pornography are as follows: “A woman who goes to the home or the apartment of a man on their first date implies that she is willing to have sex;” “Any healthy woman can successfully resist a rapist if she really wants to;” “Many women have an unconscious wish to be raped, and may then unconsciously set up a situation in which they are likely to be attacked;” “If a girl engages in necking or petting and she lets things get out of hand, it is her own fault if her partner forces sex on her” (Briere, Malamuth, and Check, 1985, p. 400).

In Maxwell and Check’s 1992 study of 247 high school students (described on page 128), they found very high rates of what they called “rape supportive beliefs,” that is, acceptance of rape myths and violence against women. The boys who were the most frequent consumers of pornography and/or who reported learning a lot from it, were more accepting of rape supportive beliefs than their peers who were less frequent consumers and/or who said they had not learned as much from it.

A full 25% of girls and 57% of boys indicated belief that in one or more situations, it was at least “maybe okay” for a boy to hold a girl down and force her to have intercourse. Further, only 21% of the boys and 57% of the girls believed that forced intercourse was “definitely not okay” in any of the situations. The situation in which forced intercourse



was most accepted, was that in which the girl had sexually excited her date. In this case 43% of the boys and 16% of the girls stated that it was at least "maybe okay" for the boy to force intercourse (1992).

According to Donnerstein, "After only 10 minutes of exposure to aggressive pornography, particularly material in which women are shown being aggressed against, you find male subjects are much more willing to accept these particular myths" (1983, p. 6). These males are also more inclined to believe that 25% of the women they know would enjoy being raped (1983, p. 6).

(3) *Acceptance of interpersonal violence.* Males' internal inhibitions against acting out their desire to rape can also be undermined if they consider male violence against women to be acceptable behavior. Studies have shown that viewing portrayals of sexual violence as having positive consequences increases male subjects' acceptance of violence against women. Examples of some of the attitudes used to measure acceptance of interpersonal violence include "Being roughed up is sexually stimulating to many women;" "Sometimes the only way a man can get a cold woman turned on is to use force;" "Many times a woman will pretend she doesn't want to have intercourse because she doesn't want to seem loose, but she's really hoping the man will force her" (Briere, Malamuth, and Check, 1985, p. 401).

Malamuth and Check (1981) conducted an experiment of particular interest because the movies shown were part of the regular campus film program. Students were randomly assigned to view either a feature-length film that portrayed violence against women as being justifiable and having positive consequences (*Swept Away* or *The Getaway*) or a film without sexual violence. The experiment showed that exposure to the sexually violent movies increased the male subjects' acceptance of interpersonal violence against women. (This outcome did not occur with the female subjects.) These effects were measured several days after the films had been seen.

Malamuth suggests several processes by which sexual violence in the media "might lead to attitudes that are more accepting of violence against women" (1986, p. 4). Some of these processes also probably facilitate the undermining of pornography consumers' internal inhibitions against acting out rape desires.

1. Labelling sexual violence more as a sexual than a violent act.

2. Adding to perceptions that sexual aggression is normative and culturally acceptable.
3. Changing attributions of responsibility to place more blame on the victim.
4. Elevating the positive value of sexual aggression by associating it with sexual pleasure and a sense of conquest.
5. Reducing negative emotional reactions to sexually aggressive acts (1986, p. 5).

(4) *Trivializing rape.* According to Donnerstein, in most studies on the effects of pornography, "subjects have been exposed to only a few minutes of pornographic material" (1985, p. 341). In contrast, Zillmann and Bryant examined the impact on male subjects of what they refer to as "massive exposure" to non-violent pornography (4 hours and 48 minutes per week over a period of six weeks; for further details about the experimental design, see page 130). After three weeks the subjects were told that they were participating in an American Bar Association study that required them to evaluate a trial in which a man was prosecuted for the rape of a female hitchhiker. At the end of this mock trial various measures were taken of the subjects' opinions about the trial and about rape in general. For example, they were asked to recommend the prison term they thought most fair.

Zillmann and Bryant found that the male subjects who were exposed to the massive amounts of pornography considered rape a less serious crime than they did before they were exposed to it; they thought that prison sentences for rape should be shorter; and they perceived sexual aggression and abuse as causing less suffering for the victims, even in the case of an adult male having sexual intercourse with a 12-year-old girl (1984, p. 132). They concluded that "heavy exposure to common non-violent pornography trivialized rape as a criminal offense" (1984, p. 117).

(5) *Callous attitudes toward female sexuality.* In the same experiment on massive exposure, Zillmann and Bryant also reported that, "males' sexual callousness toward women was significantly enhanced" (1984, p. 117). Male subjects, for example, became increasingly accepting of statements such as "A woman doesn't mean 'no' until she slaps you"; "A man should find them, fool them, fuck them, and forget them"; and "If they are old enough to bleed, they are old enough to butcher." However, judging by these items, it is difficult to distinguish sexual callousness from a general hostility to women.

(6) *Acceptance of male dominance in intimate relationships.* A marked increase in males' acceptance of male dominance in intimate relationships was yet another result of massive exposure to pornography (Zillmann and Bryant, 1984, p. 121). The notion that women are, or ought to be, equal in intimate relationships was more likely to be abandoned by these male subjects (1984, p. 122). Finally, their support of the women's liberation movement also declined sharply (1984, p. 134).

These findings demonstrate that pornography increases the acceptability of sexism. As Van White points out, "by using pornography, by looking at other human beings as a lower form of life, they [the pornographers] are perpetuating the same kind of hatred that brings racism to society" (1984).

The greater trivializing of rape by males, the increase in their callous attitudes toward female sexuality, and their greater acceptance of male domination, are all likely to contribute to undermining some males' inhibitions against acting out their desires to rape.

For example, Ms. O testified about the ex-husband of a woman friend and next door neighbor: "When he looked at the magazines, he made hateful, obscene, violent remarks about women in general and about me. He told me that because I am female I am here to be used and abused by him, and that because he is a male he is the master and I am his slave" (Russell, 1993a).

(7) *Desensitizing males to rape.* In an experiment specifically designed to study desensitization, Linz, Donnerstein, and Penrod showed ten hours of R-rated or X-rated movies over a period of five days to male subjects (Donnerstein and Linz, 1985, p. 34A). Some students saw X-rated movies depicting sexual assault; others saw X-rated movies depicting only consenting sex; and a third group saw R-rated sexually violent movies — for example, *I Spit on Your Grave*, *Toolbox Murders*, and *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. Donnerstein (1983) describes *Toolbox Murders* as follows: There is an erotic bathtub scene in which a woman massages herself. A beautiful song is played. Then a psychotic killer enters with a nail gun. The music stops. He chases the woman around the room, then shoots her through the stomach with the nail gun. She falls across a chair. The song comes back on as he puts the nail gun to her forehead and blows her brains out. According to Donnerstein, many young males become sexually aroused by this movie (1983, p. 10).

Donnerstein and Linz point out that, "It has always been suggested by critics of media violence research that only those who are *already* predis-

posed toward violence are influenced by exposure to media violence" (1985, p. 34F). These experimenters, however, actually preselected their subjects to ensure that they were not psychotic, hostile, or anxious.

Donnerstein and Linz described the impact of the R-rated movies on their subjects as follows:

Initially, after the first day of viewing, the men rated themselves as significantly above the norm for depression, anxiety, and annoyance on a mood adjective checklist. After each subsequent day of viewing, these scores dropped until, on the fourth day of viewing, the males' levels of anxiety, depression, and annoyance were indistinguishable from baseline norms (1985, p. 34F).

By the fifth day, the subjects rated the movies as less graphic and less gory and estimated fewer violent or offensive scenes than after the first day of viewing. They also rated the films as significantly less debasing and degrading to women, more humorous, and more enjoyable, and reported a greater willingness to see this type of film again (1985, p. 34F). However, their sexual arousal by this material did *not* decrease over this five-day period (Donnerstein, 1983, p. 10).

On the last day, the subjects went to a law school where they saw a documentary re-enactment of a real rape trial. A control group of subjects who had never seen the films also participated in this part of the experiment. Subjects who had seen the R-rated movies: (1) rated the rape victim as significantly more worthless, (2) rated her injury as significantly less severe, and (3) assigned greater blame to her for being raped than did the subjects who had not seen the film. In contrast, these effects were not observed for the X-rated non-violent films.<sup>4</sup> However, the results were much the same for the violent X-rated films, despite the fact that the R-rated material was "much more graphically violent" (Donnerstein, 1985, pp. 12-13).

In summary: I have presented only a small portion of the research

4 It is a mystery why Donnerstein finds no effects for non-violent pornographic movies while Zillmann reports many significant effects. Unfortunately, there is reason to believe that Donnerstein's reporting of his findings that have become unpopular in academia and other segments of the liberal establishment is not entirely accurate. For example, see Page, 1989, 1990a, 1990b; and Russell, "The experts cop out," in Russell, 1993b.

evidence for seven different effects of pornography, all of which probably contribute to the undermining of some males' internal inhibitions against acting out rape desires. This list is not intended to be comprehensive.

### III. THE ROLE OF PORNOGRAPHY IN UNDERMINING SOME MALES' SOCIAL INHIBITIONS AGAINST ACTING OUT THEIR DESIRE TO RAPE.

"I have often thought about it [rape], fantasized about it. I might like it because of having a feeling of power over a woman. But I never actually wanted to through *fear of being caught and publicly ruined*" (Male respondent, Hite, 1981, p. 715, emphasis added).

A man may want to rape a woman *and* his internal inhibitions against rape may be undermined by his hostility to women or by his belief in the myths that women really enjoy being raped and/or that they deserve it, but he may still not act out his desire to rape because of his *social* inhibitions. Fear of being caught and convicted for the crime is the most obvious example of a social inhibition. In addition to Hite's respondent quoted above, a second man's answer to her question on whether he had ever wanted to rape a woman illustrates this form of inhibition:

I have never raped a woman, but have at times felt a desire to — for the struggle and final victory. I'm a person, though, who always thinks before he acts, and *the consequences wouldn't be worth it. Besides I don't want to be known as a pervert* (1981, p. 715, emphasis added).

(1) *Diminishing fear of social sanctions.* In one of his early experiments, Malamuth, along with his colleagues, Haber and Feshbach (1980), reported that after reading the account of a violent rape by a stranger, 17% of their male student subjects admitted that there was some likelihood that they might behave in a similar fashion in the same circumstances. However, 53% of the same male students said there was some likelihood that they might act as the rapist did *if they could be sure of getting away with it*. The 36% difference in these percentages reveals the significant role that can be played by social inhibitions against acting out rape desires. My hypothesis is that pornography also plays a role in undermining some males' social inhibitions against acting out their desire to rape.

In his content analysis of 150 pornographic home videos, Palys investigated "whether aggressive perpetrators ever received any negative consequences for their aggressive activity — if charges were laid, or the person felt personal trauma, or had some form of 'just deserts'" (1986, p.

32). The answer was no in 73% of the cases in which a clear-cut answer was ascertainable. Similarly, Don Smith (1976) found that fewer than 3% of the rapists portrayed in the 428 pornographic books he analyzed were depicted as experiencing any negative consequences as a result of their behavior. Indeed, many of them were rewarded. The common portrayal in pornography of rape as easy to get away with probably contributes to the undermining of some males' social inhibitions against the acting out of their rape desires.

If there were more effective social sanctions against pornography, this would almost certainly increase the reluctance of some people to participate in the pornography industry. There are many reasons why progressive people are strenuously opposed to government efforts to censor pornography. There are, however, many alternative kinds of sanctions that need to be explored. For example, many women have been forced to participate in pornography against their will. I would have thought that pornographic publications that publish photos of these women would be accessories after-the-fact to false imprisonment, rape, assault, and sometimes, possibly, murder.

(2) *Diminishing fear of disapproval by peers.* Fear of disapproval from one's peers is another social inhibition that may be undermined by pornography. Zillmann, for example, found that "massive" exposure to non-violent pornography caused subjects to overestimate the number of people who engage in uncommon sexual practices, such as anal intercourse, group sexual activities, sadomasochism, and bestiality (1985, p. 118). Rape is portrayed as a very common male practice in much violent pornography, and the actors themselves may serve as a kind of pseudo-peer group and/or role models for consumers. Further research is needed to evaluate these hypotheses.

In general, I hypothesize the following disinhibiting effects of viewing violent pornography, particularly in "massive" amounts: (a) viewers' estimates of the percentage of other males who have raped women would probably increase; (b) viewers would be likely to consider rape a much easier crime to commit than they had previously believed; (c) viewers would be less likely to believe that rape survivors would report their rapes to the police; (d) viewers would be more likely to expect that rapists would avoid arrest, prosecution and conviction in those cases that are reported; (e) viewers would become less disapproving of rapists, and less likely to expect disapproval from others if they decided to rape.

#### IV. THE ROLE OF PORNOGRAPHY IN UNDERMINING POTENTIAL VICTIMS' ABILITIES TO AVOID OR RESIST RAPE

"He...told me it was not wrong because they were doing it in the magazines and that made it O.K." (*Attorney General's Commission*, 1986, p. 786).

Obviously, this fourth factor (the role of pornography in undermining potential victim's abilities to avoid or resist rape) is not necessary for rape to occur. Nevertheless, once the first three factors in my causal model have been met — a male not only wants to rape a woman but is willing to do so because his inhibitions, both internal and social, have been undermined — a would-be rapist may use pornography to try to undermine a woman's resistance. Pornography is more likely to be used for this purpose when males attack their intimates (as opposed to strangers).

(1) *Encouraging females to get into high rape-risk situations.* Most adult rape victims are not shown pornography in the course of being raped, although the testimony of prostitutes reveals that this is quite a common experience for many of them who are raped (*Everywoman*, 1988; Russell, 1993a). But pornography is more often used to try to persuade a woman or child to engage in certain acts, to legitimize the acts, and to undermine their resistance, refusal, or disclosure of these acts. Donald Mosher, for example, reported in his 1971 study that 16% of the "sex calloused" male students had attempted to obtain intercourse by showing pornography to a woman, or by taking her to a "sexy" movie. When this strategy succeeds in manipulating women into so-called sex play, it can make women very vulnerable to date rape.

In a more recent study conducted in Canada, Charlene Senn found that "the more pornography women were exposed to, the more likely they were to have been forced or coerced into sexual activity they did not want" (1992). In addition, a male was present in most of the cases in which women were exposed to pornography. This suggests that most women who consume pornography do so because a man wants them to (1992). This is a particularly important finding because the media have made much of the alleged fact that increasing numbers of women are renting pornographic videos, presuming that they do so for their own gratification.

There are at least two possible explanations for the positive correlation between the quantity of pornography to which women are exposed and

their experiences of forced or coerced sex. It could be that women who co-operate with males' requests to view pornography are more likely to be sexually assaulted because viewing pornography somehow undermines their ability to avoid being sexually assaulted. Or perhaps women who can be coerced into viewing pornography can also more easily be coerced sexually than women who refuse to view it.

Ms. M describes how her husband's continual pornography-related abuse of her during their years together almost drove her to suicide:

I could see how I was being seasoned by the use of pornography and I could see what would come next. I could see more violence and I could see more humiliation, and I knew at that point I was either going to die from it — I would kill myself — or I would leave. And I felt strong enough to leave (Russell, 1993a).

When women are shown such materials, they probably feel more obliged to engage in unwanted sex acts that they mistakenly believe are normal. The Reverend Susan Wilhem, for example, testified about her ex-husband that pornography "made him expect that I would want to do crazy things" (Russell, 1993a). Evidence for this hypothesis is provided by Zillmann and Bryant's previously mentioned findings that massive exposure to pornography distorts the viewers' perceptions of sexuality by producing the lasting impression that relatively uncommon sexual practices are more common than they actually are; for example, "intercourse with more than one partner at a time, sadomasochistic actions, and animal contacts" (1984, pp. 132-133).

The following statements by two other women reveal how their husbands used pornography for this purpose.

Once we saw an X-rated film that showed anal intercourse. After that he insisted that I try anal intercourse. I agreed to do so, trying to be the available, willing creature that I thought I was supposed to be. I found the experience very painful, and I told him so. But he kept insisting that we try it again and again (*Attorney General's Commission*, 1986, p. 778).

He told me that if I loved him I would do these things, and that, as I could see from the things that he had read to me in the magazines, a lot of times women didn't like it initially, but if I tried it enough, I would probably like it or learn to like it. Then he read me stories where women learned to like it (Russell, 1993a).

More systematic research is needed to establish how frequently males



use pornography to try to undermine women's ability to avoid or resist rape and other sexual abuse, and how effective this strategy is.

(2) *A pornography industry that requires female participation.* Because the portrayal of rape is one of the favorite themes of pornography, a large and ever-changing supply of girls and women have to be found to provide it. Clearly, some women are voluntary participants in simulated acts of rape. But many of the rapes that are photographed are real (for examples, see *Everywoman*, 1988; Russell, 1993a).

In summary: A significant amount of research supports my theory that pornography can, and does, cause rape. Nevertheless, much of the research undertaken to date does not adequately examine the four key variables in my theory. Malamuth's concept of males' self-reported likelihood to rape women, for example, merges the notion of a *desire* to rape with my notion that internal inhibitions against acting out this desire can be undermined. So if a man says that there is some likelihood that he would rape a woman if he could get away with it, he is saying both that he has the desire to rape a woman *and* that his internal inhibitions against doing so are at least somewhat undermined (the degree of undermining depends on whether he is very likely, somewhat likely, or only slightly likely to do it). I hope that more research will be guided in the future by the theoretical distinctions required by my model.

#### FURTHER EMPIRICAL FINDINGS ON THE CAUSATIVE ROLE OF PORNOGRAPHY IN RAPE

The 25% to 30% of male students who admit that there is some likelihood that they would rape a woman if they could be assured of getting away with it, increases to 57% after exposure to sexually violent images, particularly sexually violent images depicting women enjoying rape (Donnerstein, 1983, p. 7). This means that *as a result of one brief exposure to pornography, the number of males who are willing to consider rape as a plausible act for them to commit actually doubles.*

One such brief exposure to pornography also increases male subjects' acceptance of rape myths and interpersonal violence against women. Given the hypothesis that such increased acceptance would serve to lower viewers' inhibitions against acting out violent desires, one would expect pornography consumption to be related to rape rates. This is what the following ingenious study found.

Larry Baron and Murray Straus (1984) undertook a 50-state correlational analysis of reported rape rates and the circulation rates of eight pornographic magazines: *Chic*, *Club*, *Forum*, *Gallery*, *Genesis*, *Hustler*, *Oui*, and *Playboy*. A highly significant correlation (+0.64) was found between reported rape rates and circulation rates. Baron and Straus attempted to ascertain what other factors might possibly explain this correlation. Their statistical analysis revealed that the proliferation of pornographic magazines and the level of urbanization explained more of the variance in rape rates than the other variables investigated (for example, social disorganization, economic inequality, unemployment, sexual inequality).

In another important study, Mary Koss conducted a large national survey of over 6,000 college students selected by a probability sample of institutions of higher education (Koss, Gidycz, and Wisniewski, 1987). She found that college males who reported behavior that meets common legal definitions of rape were significantly more likely than college males who denied such behavior to be frequent readers of at least one of the following magazines: *Playboy*, *Penthouse*, *Chic*, *Club*, *Forum*, *Gallery*, *Genesis*, *Oui*, or *Hustler* (Koss and Dinero, 1989).

Several other studies have assessed the correlation between the degree of males' exposure to pornography and attitudes supportive of violence against women. Malamuth reports that in three out of four studies, "higher levels of reported exposure to sexually explicit media correlated with higher levels of attitudes supportive of violence against women" (1986, p. 8).

(1) Malamuth and Check (1985) conducted a study in which they found a positive correlation between the amount of sexually explicit magazines a sample of college males read and their beliefs that women enjoy forced sex.

(2) Similarly, Check (1985) found that the more often a diverse sample of Canadian males were exposed to pornography, the higher their acceptance of rape myths, violence against women, and general sexual callousness was.

(3) Briere, Corne, Runtz and Malamuth (1984) found similar correlations in another sample of college males.

In her study of male sexuality, Shere Hite found that 67% of the males

who admitted that they had wanted to rape a woman reported reading pornographic magazines, compared to only 19% of those who said that they had never wanted to rape a woman (1981, p. 1123). With regard to the frequency of exposure to pornography, Hite reported that only 11% of the 7,000 males she surveyed said that they had never looked at pornography; 36% said they viewed it regularly, 21% said they did so sometimes, 26% said they did so infrequently, and 6% said that they had looked at it in the past (1981, p. 1123). While correlation does not prove causation, and it therefore cannot be concluded from these studies that it was the consumption of the pornography that was responsible for the males' higher acceptance of violence against women, their findings are consistent with a theory that a causal connection exists.

If the rape rate was very low in the United States, or if it had declined over the past few decades, such findings would probably be cited to support the view that pornography does not play a causative role in rape. While drawing such a conclusion would not be warranted, it is nevertheless of interest to note that my probability sample survey in San Francisco shows that a dramatic increase in the rape rate has occurred in the United States over the last several decades, during which there has also been a great proliferation of pornography (Russell, 1984). Unlike the rapes studied by Straus and Baron, 90% of the rapes and attempted rapes described in my survey were never reported to the police.

With regard to experimental work, Donnerstein points out that, "one cannot, for obvious reasons, experimentally examine the relationship between pornography and *actual* sexual aggression" (1984, p. 53). He has, however, conducted experiments that show that the level of aggression of male subjects toward females increases after they have been exposed to violent pornography in which a female rape victim was portrayed as becoming aroused by the end of the movie. (Aggression was measured by the intensity of electric shock subjects were willing to administer.) Violent films that were non-pornographic (depicting, for example, a man hitting a woman) also increased male subjects' levels of aggression toward women, but not to the same extent as violent pornographic films. When Donnerstein used violent pornography in which the victim was portrayed as being distressed by the sexual assault throughout the movie, the levels of aggression of male subjects toward females became increased only when they had first been angered by a confederate of the experimenter before seeing the movie.

To explain why male subjects' aggression toward women increases the most after seeing pornography that depicts a female rape victim becoming sexually aroused by the assault, Malamuth suggested that: "positive victim reactions...may act to justify aggression and to reduce general inhibitions against aggression" (1984, p. 36). This interpretation is consistent with my causal model's emphasis on the important role pornographic depictions play in undermining males' inhibitions against acting out hostile behavior toward women.

Many psychologists reject the use of attitudes as a basis for predicting behavior. Similarly, some people question whether Malamuth's measure of males' self-reported likelihood to rape has any meaningful relationship with their rape behavior. Hence, Malamuth's experiment to test whether males' attitudes and sexual arousal to depictions of rape can predict non-sexual aggression in the laboratory is of particular interest. A week after measuring male subjects' attitudes and sexual arousal to rape, they were angered by a female confederate of the experimenter. When the subjects were given an opportunity to behave aggressively toward her by administering an unpleasant noise as punishment for errors she made in an alleged extrasensory perception experiment, males who had higher levels of sexual arousal to rape and who had attitudes that condoned aggression "were more aggressive against the woman and wanted to hurt her to a greater extent" (Malamuth, 1986, p. 16). On the basis of this experiment, as well as two others, Malamuth concluded finding that "attitudes condoning aggression against women related to objectively observable behavior — laboratory aggression against women" (1986, p. 16).

Both Donnerstein and Malamuth emphasize that their findings on the relationship between pornography and aggression toward women relate to aggressive or violent, not to non-violent, pornography. Donnerstein, for example, maintains that "nonaggressive materials only affect aggression when inhibitions to aggress are quite low, or with long-term and massive exposure. With a single exposure and normal aggressing conditions, there is little evidence that nonviolent pornography has any negative effects" (1984, pp. 78-79). In the real world, however, inhibitions on aggressive behavior are often very low, and long-term and massive exposure to non-violent material is also quite common. Furthermore, there is a lot of evidence of harm from non-aggressive pornography, aside from its impact on aggressive behavior (for example, see my earlier discussion of some of Zillmann's findings).

Finally, given how saturated United States culture is with pornographic images and how much exposure many of the male subjects being tested have already had, the task of trying to design experiments that can show effects on the basis of one more exposure is challenging indeed. When no measurable effects result, it would be wrong, because of this methodological problem, to interpret the experiment as proving that there are no effects in general. We should focus, therefore, on the effects that *do* show up, rather than being overly impressed by the effects that do not.

Some people are critical of the fact that most of the experimental research on pornography has been conducted on college students who are not representative of males in the general population. Hence, the research of Richard Frost and John Stauffer (1987) comparing the responses to filmed violence of college students and residents of an inner-city housing project is of particular interest.

In five of the ten violent films shown to these two groups the violence was directed at females. Frost and Stauffer evaluated these male's sexual arousal to these films by applying both self-report and physiological measures. They found that "there was no single form of violence for which the responses of the college sample exceeded those of the inner city sample on either measure" (1987, p. 36). Four of the five most physiologically arousing categories of violence were the same for both groups: a female killing another female; a male killing a female; rape/murder; and a female killing a male (1987, p. 37). Interestingly, depictions of male/female assault were the least exciting to all subjects of all ten types of violence measured (1987, p. 39).

The greatest disparity between the two groups in both physiological and self-reported sexual arousal was to depictions of rape. These "caused the highest response by inner-city subjects but only the fifth highest by the college sample" (1987, p. 38). Although it is not acceptable to infer action from arousal, nevertheless there is evidence that males who are aroused by depictions of violence toward women are more likely to act violently toward them than males who are not aroused by such depictions.

Hence, Frost and Stauffer's study suggests that college students are less prone to sexual violence than some other groups of males. This will come as no surprise to many people, as inner-city environments are more violent than colleges or than the places in which most college students grew up. One reason this finding is significant is that most of the research in this area has been conducted on college males. It is important to realize

that the high percentages of male college students who admit that they might rape women, for example, might well be even higher if samples were drawn from non-student populations.

The exposure of sex offenders to pornography is another area of research that is relevant to the causal connections between pornography and rape. It is well known that many sex offenders claim that viewing pornography affects their criminal behavior. Ted Bundy is perhaps the most notorious of these males. For example, in one study of 89 non-incarcerated sex offenders conducted by William Marshall, "slightly more than one-third of the child molesters and rapists reported at least occasionally being incited to commit an offense by exposure to forced or consenting pornography" (Einsiedel, 1986, p. 62). Exactly a third of the rapists who reported being incited by pornography to commit an offense said that they deliberately used pornography in their preparation for committing the rape. The comparable figure for child molesters was much higher — 53% versus 33% (Einsiedel, 1986, p. 62).

However, as these sex offenders appear to have used the pornography to arouse themselves after they had already decided to commit an offense, it could be argued that it was not the pornography that incited them. To what extent they actually required the pornography in order to commit their offenses, like some perpetrators require alcohol, we do not know. Even if these perpetrators were eliminated from the data analysis, however, that still leaves 66% of the rapists and 47% of the child molesters who claimed that they were at least sometimes incited by pornography to commit an offense.

Gene Abel, Mary Mittelman, and Judith Becker (1985) evaluated the use of pornography by 256 perpetrators of sexual offenses, all of whom were undergoing assessment and treatment. Like Marshall's sample, these males were outpatients, not incarcerated offenders. This is important because there is evidence that the data provided by incarcerated and non-incarcerated offenders differ (Einsiedel, 1986, p. 47). Abel and his colleagues reported that 56% of the rapists and 42% of the child molesters implicated pornography in the commission of their offenses. Edna Einsiedel, in her review of the social science research for the 1985 Attorney General's Commission of Pornography, concluded that these studies "are suggestive of the implication of pornography in the commission of sex crimes among *some* rapists and child molesters" (p. 63, emphasis in original).

In another study, Michael Goldstein and Harold Kant found that incar-

cerated rapists had been exposed to hard-core pornography at an earlier age than males presumed to be non-rapists. Specifically, 30% of the rapists in their sexual offender sample said that they had encountered hard-core pornographic photos in their preadolescence (i.e., before the age of 11; 1973, p. 55). This 30% figure compares with only 2% of the control group subjects exposed to hard-core pornography as preadolescents. (The control group was obtained by a random household sample that was matched with the offender group for age, race, religion, and educational level; 1973, p. 50). Could it be that this early exposure of the offenders to hard-core pornography played a role in making them rapists? Hopefully, future research will address this question.