

“SORRY! I LEFT IT AT HOME”:
EXAMINING RAPE HUMOR’S POTENTIAL ROLE IN RAPE CULTURE

by

MEGAN L. STRAIN

B.S., Nebraska Wesleyan University, 2006

M.S., Kansas State University, 2010

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Psychological Sciences
College of Arts and Sciences

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

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Abstract

The current studies examine two types of rape humor to determine whether there are differences in individuals' evaluations and understanding of each. Reinforcing rape humor is that which contributes to the normalization of rape, while subversive humor challenges it. Across two studies, I compared these types of humor to determine if individuals' evaluations (i.e., as funny, offensive, etc.) and understanding differed between types (and compared to neutral humor), as well as how individual difference variables may moderate those effects. Results suggest that while there is variation in individuals' understanding of subversive humor depending on the way in which they are asked to express their understanding, subversive humor evokes more positive evaluations than reinforcing rape humor, as expected. Additionally, reinforcing rape humor also evoked variation in understanding, which was related to participants' evaluations of the humor, and selected individual differences. Examining these research questions provides insight into an issue that has become increasingly important in the United States, and may also inform us about the potential role of humor in contributing to the national discussion on this issue. Thus, although some have suggested that rape humor is never appropriate, these studies suggest that there is potential for humor to be an effective tool in working toward diminishing rape culture.

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Approved by:

Major Professor
Donald A. Saucier

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Dedication

To my superhero advisor: thanks for everything. Asking to switch to your lab was easily the best career decision I have ever made. To Chris: I don't know how people who don't have a "you" can make it through graduate school.

“Sorry! I left it at home”:

Examining Rape Humor’s Potential Role in Rape Culture

Megan Strain, Ph.D.

Kansas State University

Abstract

The current studies examine two types of rape humor to determine whether there are differences in individuals' evaluations and understanding of each. Reinforcing rape humor is that which contributes to the normalization of rape, while subversive humor challenges it. Across two studies, I compared these types of humor to determine if individuals' evaluations (i.e., as funny, offensive, etc.) and understanding differed between types (and compared to neutral humor), as well as how individual difference variables may moderate those effects. Results suggest that while there is variation in individuals' understanding of subversive humor depending on the way in which they are asked to express their understanding, subversive humor evokes more positive evaluations than reinforcing rape humor, as expected. Additionally, reinforcing rape humor also evoked variation in understanding, which was related to participants' evaluations of the humor, and selected individual differences. Examining these research questions provides insight into an issue that has become increasingly important in the United States, and may also inform us about the potential role of humor in contributing to the national discussion on this issue. Thus, although some have suggested that rape humor is never appropriate, these studies suggest that there is potential for humor to be an effective tool in working toward diminishing rape culture.

“Sorry! I left it at home”: Examining Rape Humor’s Potential Role in Rape Culture

In July 2012, comedian Daniel Tosh made headlines when he targeted an audience member at one of his shows by suggesting that it would be funny if she were gang raped. As Tosh’s fans would say the next day, the woman had “heckled” the comedian by yelling out that rape jokes were never funny – his response was therefore justifiable, because comedians have a right to joke about what they want, especially when challenged. In the days that followed, and in fact, over the next year, a conversation unfolded on various news and media outlets in which contributors and commenters argued about whether Tosh’s joke was appropriate, and if rape jokes could ever be funny or acceptable.

Unfortunately, Tosh’s joke has not been the only one of its kind to reach a wide audience; actor Rainn Wilson (who played Dwight on NBC’s *The Office*) tweeted (February 12, 2012), “If I were ever date raped I would want it to be to ‘Whole Lotta Love’ by Led Zeppelin.” Wilson later apologized for his joke, but his supporters countered that women “can’t take jokes” and needed to “get over it” (Murdoch, 2012). Other comedians have also used rape material in their acts more recently, and some have argued that comedians are drawn to the topic. American comedian Scott Capurro was quoted as saying that material “about raping women [is] like the new black on the comedy circuit” (Logan, 2010). Another American comedian, Anthony Jeselnik, suggested that because rape is an “untouchable” topic in normal social discourse, some comedians are automatically drawn to it as a potential topic for their routines, if for no other reason than the fact that it is taboo (Romano, 2012). Rape humor has also appeared on multiple American television shows in recent history (e.g., *30 Rock*, *Family Guy*, *Two Broke Girls*, *Whitney*, *Girls*, *New Girl*). Symptomatic of the very culture to which they may be contributing, writers and comedians seem to be more concerned about shock value than about their potential

perpetuation of rape culture – a society in which sexual violence is prevalent, excused, and encouraged by popular attitudes, norms, and media messages (Buchwald, Fletcher, & Roth, 1993; Sanday, 2003).

Rape Culture in American Society

The fact that there are so many easily accessible examples of rape humor in American culture is important for several reasons, the most significant of which is the prevalence of rape. At least 2.8% of college women are raped per semester each academic year, and at least 25% of women will be raped during their lifetimes (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000). Unsurprisingly, individuals who have been raped may experience a range of negative consequences, such as pelvic or menstrual pain, sexual dysfunction, depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (e.g., Burgess & Holmstrom, 1974; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006). Additionally, as a function of living in a society that excuses and/or encourages sexual violence, it is common for individuals to believe in rape myths – beliefs that are statistically false, but perceived as truths (e.g., “only certain types of men rape” or “only certain types of women are raped”). Belief in rape myths has been established as a measurable construct (Burt, 1980; Payne, Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1999) that predicts various rape-related attitudes, including negative perceptions of women who have been raped (Anderson, Cooper, & Okamura, 1997; Hammond, Berry, & Rodriguez, 2011) and an increased self-reported likelihood (among men) of committing rape (i.e., rape proclivity Bohner, Reinhard, Rutz, Sturm, Kershbaum, et al., 1998; Chiroro, Bohner, Viki, & Jarvis, 2004).

Further, individuals’ narrow and often inaccurate definitions or false beliefs about what constitutes rape may affect social perceptions of rape, those who perpetrate it, and those who have experienced it (e.g., Maier, 2008; Williams, 1984). For example, a commonly held rape

myth is that women who are raped do not know their perpetrators. In actuality, 73% of sexual assaults are perpetrated by an acquaintance (Sedgwick, 2006). As a result of this misconception, individuals may be more likely to blame women who have been raped in rape scenarios that involve acquaintances instead of strangers. Tetreault and Barnett (1987) illustrated this when they found that perceptions of a woman who had been raped varied depending on whether a vignette described her as having been raped by a stranger versus by an acquaintance. Women assigned more blame to the woman who had been raped and saw her as less likeable when her rapist was someone she knew, compared to when her rapist was a stranger. Conversely, men assigned more blame to the woman who had been raped and saw her as less likeable when her rapist was a stranger, compared to when her rapist was an acquaintance. Additionally, women perceived the acquaintance rape to be less serious than the stranger rape, while men perceived the stranger rape to be less serious than the acquaintance rape. Thus, beliefs about the relationship between a woman and her rapist may affect individuals' perception of whether that rape was "real," which could alter individuals' attitude toward, and therefore treatment of, women who have been raped.

Building on this, rape myth acceptance has been found to mediate the relationship between participant gender and the assignment of responsibility of blame in cases of rape. Hammond et al. (2011) found that men were less likely than women to assign blame to a perpetrator because they were more likely to accept rape myths as truths. This is just one example of the ways in which attitudes and beliefs about rape may affect individuals' perceptions of rape as a social issue. Because attitudes and beliefs affect behavior, further research is warranted to increase scientific knowledge of the factors that may contribute to rape culture.

Humor's Potential Roles in Rape Culture

There are two major ways in which humor has the potential to influence rape culture: by reinforcing it, or by challenging it. Humor that targets individuals who have been raped, or that trivializes rape itself, may reinforce rape culture by perpetuating inaccurate ideas, overpowering or silencing individuals against whom rape may have been perpetrated, and desensitizing individuals to the severity of rape. However, humor that targets rapists or rape culture in its subtext may challenge individuals' acceptance of rape, and actually work as a tool in changing society's collective awareness of rape as a social problem. That is, by using humor to draw attention to and create public discourse around rape culture, it may be possible to challenge the social norms about rape that pervade the collective mindset.

As part of the conversation surrounding the Tosh incident, writer and comedian Lindy West (2012) asserted that some people have joked about rape in ways that do not diminish survivors' experiences or mock the idea that rape is a problem. Rather, comedians such as John Mulaney, Ever Mainard, and Wanda Sykes have used humor to illustrate the pervasiveness of rape culture in women's and men's lives. In her comedy film *Sick and Tired*, Sykes (2006) includes a bit about how much easier life would be for women if they could detach their vaginas from their bodies:

It's just so much pressure on us...and I would like a break. You know what would make my life so much easier? Ladies, wouldn't you love this? Wouldn't it be wonderful...if our pussies were detachable?... Just think of the freedom you would have. You get home from work, it's getting a little dark outside, you're like "oh, I'd like to go for a jog, but it's getting too dark...I'll just leave it at home!" You're out jogging...some crazy guy

jumps out of the bushes, and you're like "Oh! I left it at home! Sorry, I have absolutely nothing of value on me. I'm pussy-less!"

Citing Sykes' bit as a positive example of rape humor, feminist journalist Jessica Valenti (2012) added to the ongoing commentary surrounding the Tosh incident by suggesting that rape humor could actually be an effective way of addressing the problem of rape at the societal level. However, she argued that the way to accomplish this would be to draw attention to the absurdity of rape and the fact that it is normalized in our culture, rather than joking about the threat of rape or experiencing it. At the core of this argument is the difference between reinforcing and subversive humor.

Reinforcing humor. For the purpose of the current research, "reinforcing humor" will be used to describe humor that serves to maintain and reinforce the gendered power differential perpetuated by rape culture. This is a domain-specific adaptation of the explanation of reinforcing humor put forth by Holmes and Marra (2002), which suggests that reinforcing humor can manifest in both prosocial and antisocial forms, depending upon whether it is used in relationships centered on solidarity, or in those centered on power. Solidarity-based reinforcing humor may be used among friends to maintain positive relationships, while power-based reinforcing humor emphasizes authority and exacerbates repression or oppression (despite the inherent pleasantness of humor). Solidarity-based humor can be likened to affiliative humor, which is quite common among friends and colleagues, and has been shown to improve relationships and ease social interactions (Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, & Weir, 2003). However, power-based reinforcing humor is more relevant to the present studies because it results in antisocial outcomes that serve individuals in socially superior positions, while potentially hurting those in inferior positions. It is aggressive in nature, and often takes the form

of disparagement conveyed in a “friendly” manner, allowing its deliverer to use the humorous format as a cover for expressing attitudes that may be socially undesirable (Crandall & Eshleman, 2003).

Power-based reinforcing humor encompasses the type of rape humor that has the potential to exacerbate rape culture by targeting individuals who have experienced sexual violence. Such humor may also target women in general, because they are statistically more likely to be raped than are men (Sedgwick, 2006), and they maintain a lower position than do men in the sexual hierarchy (Pratto, Sidanius, & Stallworth, 1993), meaning that they tend to hold less power in sexual relationships. By making women who have been or could be raped the “punchline” of rape humor, the sexual hierarchy is reinforced, and the powerful (re)assert power over the powerless. To illustrate the notion of power-based reinforcing humor, recall the young woman who questioned Daniel Tosh during his stand-up show. Already in a position of inferiority by being an audience member, the power she was trying to exert was taken away when Tosh suggested to his audience that it would be funny if she were raped in response to her comment. In making her the target, Tosh trivialized her concern and, by extension, rape in general.

Subversive humor. In contrast to reinforcing humor, subversive humor can be generally characterized as that which challenges and subverts the status quo and existing power relationships (Holmes & Marra, 2002). It uses humor’s inherent ambiguity to convey two messages simultaneously: one that can be clearly understood based on the literal meaning of the words used in the joke, and another message in its subtext, which can be inferred from the joke and which may be inconsistent with the literal meaning. Subversive rape humor, then, has the potential to target rape culture by pointing out the absurdity of the sexual hierarchy and its

continuity, or by making individuals who perpetuate rape culture the “butt of the joke.” The literal meaning of such a joke would be understood as “a joke about rape,” while its subtext would imply “rape is bad.” (This is quite different from reinforcing rape humor, which would also be understood as “a joke about rape,” but would imply “rape is funny” in the subtext.) To illustrate, in a comedy bit that does just this, comedian Ever Mainard (2012) subverts rape culture by using the experience familiar to so many women in which they feel they are in a situation that has the potential to end in rape. By narrating a hypothetical situation in which a woman’s fear of rape is made analogous to a game show, Mainard challenges the sexual hierarchy by drawing attention to the frequency at which women experience its consequences.

Distinguishing types of subversion. It should be noted that subversion in humor has been examined, but those who have done so have used a different conceptualization of subversion than I am using in the proposed research. Specifically, it has been suggested that all humor is inherently “deceptive” (i.e., presents dual messages), in that it says one thing and means another (Schutz, 1995). This ambiguity is the result of humor’s characteristic incongruity – the surprising or unexpected aspect of a humorous stimulus that contributes to its interpretation as funny (Martin, 2007). At a joke’s setup, perceivers naturally develop an expectation, based on their existing schemas, about what is likely to happen at the conclusion. When the punch line provides something inconsistent with that expectation, the perceivers are forced to quickly review the joke’s setup to figure out how the punch line makes sense. Upon resolving this issue, they find humor in the joke. This entire process is referred to as the two-stage model of humor comprehension (Suls, 1972), but the specific process in which two ideas (the expected and the unexpected) are activated at once is referred to as *bisociation* (Koestler, 1964). These two incompatible thoughts are triggered at the same time, but once the perceiver reinterprets the

setup so that the unexpected thought can fit the scenario, incongruity is resolved and humor is experienced. To illustrate this concept, consider the following joke from (McGhee, 1979):

Mr. Brown: *This is disgusting. I just found out that the janitor has made love to every woman in the building except one.*

Mr. Brown's wife: *Oh, it must be that stuck-up Mrs. Johnson on the third floor.*

The punchline in this joke triggers two incompatible thoughts at the same time. The perceiver expects that the response from Mr. Brown's wife will demonstrate that she is the one woman the janitor has not been with, but after the punch line is completely processed, it becomes clear that Mrs. Brown is admitting she is *not* that woman, and has, in fact, slept with the janitor. As soon as this is understood, the perceiver has realized that what seemed incongruous now makes sense, and the joke (theoretically) becomes funny.

Unlike the subversive rape humor examples referenced earlier, this joke does not involve any form of challenging a hierarchy; there is no subtext in which a serious societal issue is brought to the perceiver's attention. However, from a technical perspective, it still has both a literal meaning and subtext. Literal interpretation of the punch line leads the perceiver to understand that Mrs. Brown is criticizing Mrs. Johnson; the subtext indirectly explains that Mrs. Brown has cheated on her husband with the janitor.

It may be argued that this example of subtext is subversive (or "deceptive") because rather than stating it directly, the joke presents a message (i.e., that Mrs. Brown cheated), which must be inferred by the perceiver (Schutz, 1995). I think this and similar examples of ambiguity, incongruity, and resolution demonstrate the key components of humor that make it enjoyable, and they also make for interesting theoretical discussion. However, this type of subversion (i.e., deceiving the perceiver through ambiguity) is not the primary focus of the current research.

Rather, the humor to be examined in the current studies is subversive in an additional way; the *content* of the subtext subverts a cultural norm – in this case, rape culture.

Historical Examples of Subversive Humor

Although subversive forms of rape humor are of primary interest to the current studies, they are a relatively recent development in popular culture. As reinforcing rape jokes have increased in popularity in recent years, subversive ones have developed in response, and both have contributed to a national discussion of rape culture in the United States (e.g., Valenti, 2012; West, 2012). To further illustrate the potential for humor to subvert a cultural norm, it may be helpful to examine similar processes that have occurred in other domains. Though a thorough review of the history of subversive humor in American culture is beyond the scope of the current discussion, addressing a few of the major examples that have occurred throughout history is relevant to establishing a frame of reference for subversive humor in the context of rape culture.

Feminism. Despite media representations of feminism that have historically portrayed women and feminists as incapable of humor (and in many cases, the target of it), humor has played a fundamental role in the feminist movement (Willet, Willet, & Sherman, 2012). Historians have frequently noted the humor that was a significant aspect of the relationship between Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton during the suffrage era (Colman, 2011; Sherr, 1995), and the essay written by feminist icon Gloria Steinem (1983), “If Men Could Menstruate,” is rife with exaggeration and absurdity, which make it humorous but simultaneously dissident. She suggested ideas with which the reader was likely to be familiar, but that were humorous when paired with the notion of men menstruating (e.g., “men would brag about how long and how much”). This was an illustrative example for Steinem to select because menstruation has been historically, and continues to be, used to suggest that women are not as

capable as men.¹ By the end of the essay, the subtext of Steinem's commentary illustrated her view that if society allowed it, the justification of men's greater social power would exist, regardless of which sex menstruates.

Steinem was and remains an outspoken advocate for women's rights, so her use of subversive humor stands out because she is not generally viewed as a humorist. But other examples exist, specific to the domain of comedy, in which women have used humor to draw attention to and provide social commentary on women's issues. Comedians like Phyllis Diller, Roseanne Barr, and Margaret Cho are well-known, at least among feminists, as being the first to address women's experiences and issues in a comedic context. For example, Barr's eponymous sitcom, *Roseanne*, drew attention to the struggles of working class women by using humor to challenge stereotypes about marriage, parenting, and femininity. As described in Willet et al. (2012), Barr provided a voice to women in situations similar to her character's by using humorous subtext to challenge traditional expectations about men's and women's roles.

Race. Unsurprisingly, women have not been the only group to make use of subversive humor as a way of coping with inequality. Absurdity, self-deprecation, and humor targeting oppressors all appear in multiple places throughout Black history, including folklore, protest hymns, work songs, and other music (Gordon, 1998). Early on, it served as a way to cope with the hardships of slavery, but over time, African Americans' humor has remained a significant part of their cultural history, marked not only by undertones of coping and resistance, but of establishing power in the face of ongoing oppression.

¹ This happened in the 2008 presidential campaign, when it was suggested that PMS and mood swings could affect Hillary Clinton's ability to be president (Ironside, 2008), and again in 2013 when a former Arizona state legislator suggested that menstrual cycles could be too problematic for women to be in combat (Barnes, 2013).

This has continued among modern day African American comics, such as Dave Chappelle, Chris Rock, Whoopie Goldberg, Wanda Sykes, or more recently, Keegan-Michael Key and Jordan Peele, of Comedy Central's *Key and Peele*. Of these, Chris Rock has become one of the most widely known comedians to use race in his material; he continually uses subversive humor to challenge ideas about racial stereotypes and race relations in the United States. For example, in a tweet he published on July 4, 2012, Rock wrote, "Happy white people's Independence Day. The slaves weren't free but I'm sure they enjoyed fireworks." The joke's literal meaning is a comical point about the fact that the first Independence Day did not actually bring independence for everyone. But it could be argued that its subtext, and the fact that the joke was made in 2012, also acknowledges the idea of White privilege by subtly pointing out that things were not equal then, and implying that they are still not equal now. Incidentally, this point was illustrated when conservative bloggers responded to Rock's joke by, among other things, explaining that because the United States has a Black president, Rock should "get over it already" (Shaw, 2012).

Interestingly, this response to Rock's joke demonstrates a response to current civil rights discourse that has become increasingly common in recent years – the idea of *postracialism*, which "positions race and racism as ancient history with little bearing on contemporary culture" (Rossing, 2012, p. 44). This perspective has also been referred to as "colorblindness," and has actually become a topic frequently addressed in satirical humor, perhaps most prevalently by Stephen Colbert on Comedy Central's *The Colbert Report*. This widely viewed TV program is a satirical news show on which Colbert acts as a (White) news show host, in a caricature of conservative news personalities like Bill O'Reilly and Rush Limbaugh. In portraying himself as a "hyperbolic ideologue" (Baumgartner & Morris, 2008, p. 622), he makes his character appear

extremist, but uses subtext and exaggeration to point out flaws in the very arguments he *appears* to be supporting. For example, Colbert frequently reminds viewers that he “does not see color,” while following such statements with satirical news segments that use subversive humor to point out the racial issues that are still pervasive in American culture. Though research on this genre of humor has demonstrated mixed results in terms of the messages that viewers actually take away from it (e.g., Baumgartner & Morris, 2008; LaMarre, Landreville, & Beam, 2009), it has been argued that such tactics may be an effective way to contend the idea of a postracial or colorblind America (Rossing, 2012). Thus, in addition to comedians’ inclusion of race in their stand-up material, political commentary is another established medium through which subversive humor has shown the potential to draw attention to racial issues, often contributing to social discourse on the topic.

Humor as a “Sword” or a “Shield”

My discussion to this point has centered on one way in which humor’s ambiguity affords individuals the ability to joke about an issue (literally) while simultaneously providing social commentary (in its subtext). This use of humor fits well with the conceptualization of humor as a “sword” or “shield.” Rappoport (2005) summarized this metaphor by explaining that depending on its context, humor may serve to deride an individual or group (i.e., act as a sword), protect the group from being the subject of derision (i.e., act as a shield), or both. That is, individuals in power may use humor as a sword to disparage groups that hold less power. Those with less power can also use humor to cope with their situation and defend themselves against oppression. But when the powerless use humor to fight back and mock those who oppress them, they “shield” themselves by wielding a “sword” through humor that serves both purposes. Arguably, subversive humor fits best into this final category because it both defends and fights

back – Chris Rock’s Independence Day joke about White privilege could both ease the frustration of disadvantage for Blacks while simultaneously drawing attention to the issue of White privilege.

Likewise, subversive rape humor may provide a shield for those most affected by rape culture (i.e., women in general, or women who have been raped) by allowing for the release of frustration through humor. Through its subtext, such humor may also deride the individuals and systemic factors contributing to the power difference in the sexual hierarchy, acting as a sword by challenging the beliefs that reinforce that hierarchy.

Consistent with this view, and in line with the historical evidence discussed previously, some have gone as far as suggesting that in addition to humor coming about as a coping mechanism for oppression (e.g., Davies, 1990; Hong, 2010; Juni & Katz, 2001), it may even be considered a *strategy* in resisting oppression through nonviolence. Specifically, Sorensen (2008) theorized, based on qualitative research of humor’s role in the Serbian Optor movement, that humor could be used in social movements to facilitate outreach, mobilize volunteers, contribute to a culture of resistance, and “turn oppression upside down” (p. 180). He proposed that for subversive humor to be effective in challenging oppression, the humor itself must confront the oppressor, must reduce fear among the oppressed, and may take words used by the powerful and turn them against them in some way.

An illustration of such humor also occurred in the state of Kansas in 2011, during a debate over whether insurance policies should cover abortion in cases of rape or incest. State Representative Pete DeGraaf suggested that such coverage should only be available through separate policies, at an additional cost. When Representative Barbara Bollier questioned whether women would take the precaution of buying insurance in case they experienced rape or incest,

DeGraaf responded by pointing out that he carried a spare tire in his car as a way of planning ahead.² In the following week, the Kansas Chapter of the National Organization for Women raised \$4,000 to deliver 170 pounds worth of model spare tires to the steps of the state building as part of their demand for an apology, and in protest against the proposed legislation (Hnytka, 2011). The absurdity and humor of Kansas NOW's response had prompted volunteers from across the country to send in donations, which led to the confrontation of the individual in power by using his own words against him.³

It is evident from historical and recent examples that humor has been used as a method of resistance among individuals faced with oppression. Its popularity in public discourse warrants study of its effectiveness in raising awareness about an issue, and its ability to change individuals' thought processes about that issue. As such, it is important to consider the variables that may affect individuals' processing of humor in general, and of reinforcing and subversive humor specifically.

Cognitive Processing of Reinforcing vs. Subversive Humor

In order to understand the factors that may affect how individuals attend to and understand reinforcing and subversive humor, recall the basic ideas addressed earlier about how humor in general is processed. Incongruity, or the perception of something as unexpected,

² Though this comment's status as humorous may be debated, the subtext of his comment is a good example of reinforcing rape culture: by implying that women should be the ones to carry the (additional) burden of managing the financial cost of rape, rather than discussing ways to reduce men's likelihood of committing it, the comment reinforces the idea that rape is women's responsibility, despite the fact that men (statistically) are the ones committing the act.

³ DeGraaf later stated that his remarks were taken "out of context."

surprising, or odd (Martin, 2007), is a key component in humor processing. It is the initially ambiguous aspect of a humorous stimulus that catches the perceivers' attention because it violates the expectations they had developed based on how the stimulus was set up. When the original stimulus is reframed so that the (previously) incongruous part makes sense, resolution occurs and humor is experienced (Shultz, 1972; Suls, 1972).

It may be the case that reinforcing and subversive forms of humor initiate these processes differently, thus affecting individuals' likelihood of comprehending the humor as it is intended. While comedians and audiences may view hierarchy-reinforcing rape humor as "edgy" simply because rape is a taboo subject, the subtext of this type of humor is symptomatic of rape culture and may reinforce rape as excusable, encouraged, or even funny. Recall Tosh's joke targeting his audience member; it was shocking and unexpected, but the underlying message served as a threat to the woman who had "heckled" Tosh, and members of the audience found that humorous. Despite the inherent ambiguity that allowed Tosh to employ the "it was just a joke" defense, the underlying message of the joke left little room for alternative interpretation. Subversive humor, on the other hand, is more likely to have multiple interpretations, and may require additional cognitive processing, background information, and knowledge to grasp the hierarchy-challenging subtext because it is less apparent. For example, Sykes' "detachable pussy" bit provides a very unexpected punchline, but also points out the absurdity of how much women have to worry about rape. However, that message may be lost on audience members who lack awareness of rape culture, or who focus solely on the absurdity of the idea or Sykes' delivery. That is, in order for the humor to be subversive, additional thought is required on the part of the perceiver to grasp the anti-rape culture message. It may be that not all perceivers are

willing to expend the cognitive effort to do so, or do not possess the cognitive representations (i.e., schemas) that would enable that thought process.

This possibility is addressed by Wyer and Collins (1992), who expand on the idea of resolving incongruity as it relates to an individual's schemas. When a stimulus is presented that does not fit the expected schema (i.e., it is incongruous), it is reassigned to a different schema that makes sense, thereby resolving the incongruity and eliciting a humorous response.

However, the authors establish that another factor that affects the interpretation of a humorous stimulus is elaboration, or the act of thinking further (i.e., engaging in deep processing), about the stimulus after it has been presented. The way in which one elaborates (i.e., what she or he thinks about after the stimulus is presented) may affect how the joke is understood.

Additionally, humor's inherent ambiguity, a function of its "polysemy" (Rossing, 2012, p. 53), means that regardless of a teller's intention, a perceiver's interpretation of a humorous stimulus will depend upon what she or he wants to hear. Thus, upon elaborating, perceivers may be more likely to attend to aspects of the stimulus that fit their worldview (e.g., the literal meaning) than the aspects that do not (e.g., the subtext), likely resulting in a failure to understand the subversive message. Alternatively, it is also possible that picking up on the subtext may spark a new view of the targeted issue that perceivers had not previously considered, resulting in full processing of the subversive message. This range of possible "products" of elaboration has been demonstrated in previous work on political satire.

The popularity of TV shows such as *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* has led to several empirical investigations and academic discussions on the influence of such media in American political discourse (e.g., Hart & Hartelius, 2007; Hmielowski, Holbert, & Lee, 2011; Holbert, Hmielowski, Jain, Lather, & Morey, 2011; Jones, Baym, & Day, 2012). In a study on

the effect of participants' own political ideology on their interpretation of the ideology of Stephen Colbert's character on *The Colbert Report*, LaMarre et al. (2009) found that participants viewed Colbert as sharing their own ideology after exposure to an ambiguous clip from the show. Specifically, while ideology did not affect participants' perceptions of Colbert as funny, liberals tended to perceive Colbert's character as satirical, while conservatives tended to perceive him as artificial in his humor (i.e., pretending to be joking), but genuine in his message. For clarification, if these findings were applied to the earlier example of Colbert's stance on colorblindness, the liberal participants in this study would have perceived Colbert as mocking the idea, while the conservative participants would have perceived him as genuinely believing that colorblindness is a positive thing for society. Quite simply, participants exhibited a confirmation bias (e.g., Nickerson, 1998), and attended to the aspects of Colbert's performance that reinforced their beliefs.

In addition to these findings, other researchers have found that exposure to Colbert's program could actually result in increased agreement with the sentiments that he satirizes. Baumgartner and Morris (2008) exposed young adults to clips from either Bill O'Reilly's conservative talk show, *The O'Reilly Factor*, or *The Colbert Report*, and then examined their beliefs about Republican versus Democratic leaders' ability to handle major issues. Both groups, regardless of the clips to which they were exposed, indicated an increased preference for Republican approaches to current issues, and increased affinity for President Bush. This effect was maintained even after controlling participants' self-reported party affiliation. The authors suggested that what appeared to be overt criticism of Democrats on *The Colbert Report* (e.g., referring to them as "commies") may have influenced participants' attitudes toward the topics addressed in the clips. In other words, they attended to the literal interpretation of Colbert's

humor rather than the subtext. These findings suggest that, in some instances, subversive humor's overt message may be stronger than its covert one, such that perceivers not only miss the point, but interpret it in a way that counters the actual intent.

However, work examining the influence of satirical news on individuals' attitudes and views has shown that late-night news comedy shows act as a "gateway" to more traditional forms of news consumption; rather than affecting individuals' attitudes toward issues, they tend to increase attentiveness to politics in general (i.e., individuals who watch these programs tend to seek out more information and more sources about the stories that are addressed) (Cao, 2010; Feldman & Young, 2008). Additional evidence also suggests that discussing and processing different forms of ethnic humor (i.e., elaborating on it) may lead to a greater understanding of stereotyping and prejudice (Saucier, Veenendaal, Smith, & Strain, in progress). Lending additional support to these findings, Rappoport (2005) notes the role of the "Archie Bunker question" in assessing the effectiveness of humor usage in social commentary. During the airing of the 1970's sitcom *All in the Family*, some argued that the character of Archie Bunker perpetuated stereotypes by expressing negative attitudes toward women and minorities in a humorous manner. However, polls demonstrated that most viewers perceived the character as relatively out of touch, and that the show was mocking his prejudice, not the minority groups themselves. Thus, contrasting previous findings that suggest subversive humor may be easily misinterpreted, there is also evidence to suggest that it may provoke curiosity and/or thought about the issue(s) it targets. This warrants examination of the aspects of reinforcing and subversive humor that may affect individuals' perceptions of it.

Specifically, the studies mentioned above may provide insight into the ways in which cognitive processing could be affected by exposure to such humor. In their study showing that

exposure to *The Colbert Report* actually resulted in an increase in Republican responding, authors Baumgartner and Morris (2008) suggested that perhaps the satirical complexity of Colbert's commentary decreased participants' confidence in their knowledge of the issues discussed. While this seems feasible, it also seems reasonable to consider the possibility that the satire's subversion was lost on participants because they failed to enact central route processing (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) and elaborate on the content. In fact, Polk, Young, and Holbert (2009) examined the effect of joke complexity on individuals' cognitive resources in their study on sarcastic (i.e., simplistic) versus ironic (i.e., complex) uses of humor in *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*. Based on the characterization of sarcasm and irony as two distinct forms of humor, first put forth by Attardo (2000), the authors argued that sarcasm is in an overt, aggressive message with a clear target; it is not subtle, and is therefore easier to grasp, resulting in the depletion of fewer cognitive resources and more easily understood meaning, compared to irony. Conversely, irony requires inference; humor that employs it is deemed funny as a result of reinterpretation of a statement, and if that reinterpretation is not made, the humor is lost. To put this in terms of the present discussion, both sarcasm and irony have literal messages that oppose their subtext, but understanding irony's subtext requires additional effort. In order to examine the effects of this difference, Polk et al. (2009) had participants view an example of sarcasm or irony used by Jon Stewart in *The Daily Show*, and then had participants create a counterargument in response to the clip. They found that compared to Stewart's sarcasm, participants had a much more difficult time developing counterarguments in response to his use of irony, suggesting that the latter required significantly more cognitive effort to process than the former. The researchers further concluded that this higher processing demand impeded participants' ability to develop possible arguments against Stewart's points because their cognitive resources were exhausted. This

supports the notion that complex forms of humor require greater cognitive resources than simpler forms in order for perceivers to resolve incongruity.

Though Polk et al. (2009) examined two forms of satire (irony and sarcasm), reinforcing and subversive humor warrant a similar comparison in thought process. Specifically, because reinforcing humor reflects the status quo, it is more easily processed and fits better into our available schemas, which requires relatively little elaboration and is more likely to invoke peripheral route processing. As a result, it may ultimately reinforce social norms because it requires little thought to understand and easily fits existing ideas and perceptions of cultural norms. In contrast, subversive humor requires more elaboration, may not fit existing schemas in a way that evokes a humorous response, and may actually require the creation of a new schema in order to understand and find it humorous. This would require more elaboration and more central route processing, and therefore presents several possible outcomes; the potential exists to change the way individuals think about the targeted issue, but the underlying subversive message must be attended to in order for this to occur. The alternate possibility is that the subversive message is missed, due either to lack of knowledge or cognitive laziness, either of which could prevent attention to subversion.

It was the purpose of the current research to examine the correlates and possible outcomes associated with subversive humor, in the context of rape and rape culture, over the course of two studies. Specifically, I examined the ways in which humor intended to subvert rape culture was evaluated and understood, compared to humor that reinforces rape culture, and for further comparison, to neutral humor. I also examined attitudinal and cognitive individual difference variables that could influence evaluations and understanding of rape humor, thereby

potentially influencing whether it is interpreted in a way that perpetuates or challenges rape culture.

Study 1 Method

The purpose of Study 1 was to compare individuals' responses to the two types of rape humor under investigation, thus providing a baseline comparison of how individuals attend to each. Participants were exposed to one of three sets of clips, constructed to be either reinforcing, subversive, or neutral, in a one-way between groups design. Participants were told that the purpose of the study was to obtain feedback on various types of media (e.g., film, TV, comedy, drama), and that they had been randomly selected to listen to excerpts from a comedy routine. After hearing the excerpts, they evaluated the clips to which they were exposed by rating them on a set of eight relevant characteristics (e.g., funniness, offensiveness). These ratings were used to compare positive and negative evaluations of each humor type. Next, participants provided an indication of their understanding of the humor to which they were exposed by identifying the target and underlying message of the clips, and by rating their agreement with a series of statements about the content in the jokes they heard. In sum, the purpose of Study 1 was to determine whether individuals' evaluation and understanding of rape humor varied, depending upon the type to which they were exposed, and further, if evaluation of the humor as positive or negative was related to their understanding of it.

Hypotheses

Because subversive humor is a relatively new area of research in humor psychology and rape humor has yet to be examined, there is minimal research to suggest how it may be evaluated compared to more traditional forms of humor. However, it was hypothesized ($H_{1.1}$) that there would be significant differences in participants' evaluations of the humor's characteristics (e.g.,

as funny, offensive), depending upon the type of humor to which they were exposed. Because it is expected that these evaluations would vary depending upon individual differences that will not be assessed until Study 2, no specific predictions about directionality were made for Study 1. Rather, the purpose of Study 1 was to establish that differences in evaluations exist across humor types.

Additionally, previous research on satire suggests that more complex forms of humor may require more effort for perceivers to process (Baumgartner & Morris, 2008; LaMarre et al., 2009). Further evidence also suggests that participants may be prone to misunderstanding subversive humor. Till, Strain, and Saucier (in preparation) examined individuals' appreciation of racial jokes that were either prosocial (i.e., subverted racism) or antisocial (i.e., reinforced racism), and how this appreciation related to their support for diversity initiatives. Though it was not the focus of the study, results indicated that just under one third of participants exposed to the subversive joke incorrectly identified it as racist, when in fact the joke targeted racism (i.e., it was anti-racist). However, all participants exposed to the reinforcing joke understood it as targeting Blacks. Thus, in the current study it was hypothesized ($H_{1.2}$) that there would be greater variation in participants' understanding of the subtext and joke targets in the subversive condition, compared to participants in the reinforcing condition. Specifically, participants exposed to subversive rape humor will be more likely than those exposed to reinforcing or neutral humor to report a range of possible targets (e.g., rape, rape culture, or rapists if they interpret it as subversive; women and/or women who have been raped if they interpret it as reinforcing). Those in the reinforcing condition will be more likely than those in the other conditions to universally recognize women and/or women who have been raped as the targets of the humor they hear.

Participants

Participants ($N = 97$) were obtained via social media and through announcements in an undergraduate psychology course, and were offered the opportunity to be entered into a drawing for a \$25 Amazon gift card in appreciation for their participation. The sample was 71.9% women, 82.3% White, and ranged in age from 18 to 52 ($M = 23.19$, $SD = 5.97$). When asked to summarize their political views, 21.6% identified as Liberal, 19.6% identified as Conservative, and 57.7% identified as “Middle of the Road.” Due to the nature of the study, participants were also asked sensitive questions concerning their previous experiences involving sex without consent. Consistent with nationally reported statistics, 27.5% of female participants and 11.1% of male participants reported that they had, at some point prior, experienced some form of sex without consent.

Procedure and Materials

Upon signing up to participate in the online study, participants were presented with a brief overview of the study, which provided a broad cover story stating that researchers were interested in receiving feedback on various types of media. Participants were forewarned that some of the material to which they could be exposed could contain language unsuitable for public viewing (e.g., that it is “not safe for work”), and that the content could include potentially offensive topics, “including but not limited to race, sex, profanity, or sexual assault,” with the potential to make them or anyone overhearing the clip uncomfortable. As such, headphones were recommended for viewing/completing the study. All materials presented as part of the cover story used in Study 1 can be found in Appendix A.

Clip creation. Clips for each condition consisted of jokes written specifically for this study by a local professional comedian, as well as other jokes adapted from material written by

comedians such as Louis C.K., Ever Mainard, and John Mulaney (obtained from various internet and media sources). After transcribing several possible jokes from these sources, three subject matter experts served as coders and independently rated the clips based on definitions of rape culture (i.e., the status quo), and reinforcement and subversion of rape culture provided to them. Specifically, coders were told that reinforcing rape humor “maintains the status quo by reinforcing power dynamics and therefore exacerbating repression and/or oppression. In the context of rape humor, this would likely be jokes that target women (who are likely to experience it and have less power in the sexual hierarchy), or women who have been raped.” For the definition of subversive humor, they were told that it “challenges the status quo by questioning the power dynamics and fighting repression and/or oppression. In the context of rape humor, this would likely be jokes that target rape culture, rapists, the fact that this is still a problem in our culture, etc.” The coders used these definitions to rate the jokes from 1 (*Reinforces Status Quo*) to 9 (*Subverts Status Quo*). Jokes that were consistently rated as being on the extreme end of the scale (i.e., 1-2 for reinforcing, 8-9 for subversive) were selected from the initial pool of jokes as possible options for the stimuli. Jokes that were rated consistently close to the midpoint of the scale and that targeted consensual sex (i.e., there was no mention of force, consent was implied) were selected for use in the neutral condition.

After selecting jokes based on written transcriptions, two volunteer actors (one man, one woman) audio-recorded the jokes and assisted in incorporating laugh tracks using Apple *Garage Band* software. Each joke teller’s time amounted to 2.5 to 3 minutes of material in each condition, such that in each of the three conditions, participants were exposed to approximately 5 to 6 minutes of jokes. The jokes were then compiled into separate, randomly-ordered playlists for each condition, and uploaded to www.soundcloud.com so that they could be embedded in the

Qualtrics survey system being used to administer the survey. The complete scripts that were used for the audio recordings are provided in Appendix B.

Measures. After providing informed consent and listening to one of the three randomly selected playlists, participants were asked to rate their evaluation of the clips, to identify the literal and underlying messages present in each, as well as who/what the jokes were targeting, and to rate their agreement with a set of statements representing the content of the set of clips as a whole. All materials presented in this portion of the study (and described below) can be found in Appendix A.

Humor evaluations. After hearing their randomly assigned playlist, participants were presented with the message, “You were randomly selected to hear the following media type: COMEDY CLIPS. Using the scale below, please rate the JOKE CONTENT from the clips you just heard on each of the following characteristics.” The characteristics (i.e., *funny*, *enjoyable*, *clever*, *prosocial*, *belittling*, *offensive*, *ignorant*, or *antisocial*) were presented with nine response options, ranging from 1 (*Not at All*) to 9 (*Very Much*). Characteristics that had the potential to be misinterpreted (e.g., *prosocial*) included a brief clarification (e.g., “positive toward a person or group”). After verifying internal consistency of the participants’ ratings on the set of positive characteristics ($\alpha = .93$), a score was calculated by computing the average of participants’ ratings of the playlist as funny, enjoyable, clever, and prosocial. Likewise, after verifying internal consistency of the participants’ ratings on the set of negative characteristics ($\alpha = .92$), a score was calculated by computing the average of participants’ ratings of the playlist as belittling, offensive, ignorant, and antisocial. Thus, each participant ended up with both a positive and negative characteristic score for the playlist in the condition to which they were assigned.

Previous exposure. Although attempts were made to minimize recognition of the jokes used in all conditions (i.e., by including jokes written specifically for this study that would not have been heard previously; by using audio recordings of actors whose voices were unlikely to be recognized), there was still a chance that participants familiar with certain comedians may have recognized parts of their material in the stimuli used. As such, we asked participants to indicate whether or not they had ever heard any of the jokes previously. Approximately 13% of the participants indicated that they had indeed heard some of the stimuli previously, and as such this variable was included as a covariate in later analyses.

Qualitative humor understanding. In addition to providing evaluation ratings, participants were presented with a brief explanation (see Appendix A) of the literal and subtextual meanings of a message, after which they were asked to provide a brief, written explanation of each, as it pertained to the playlist they heard. From these items, participants' responses to the subtext item were coded for the degree to which they reflected a reinforcing or subversive idea. Thus, if the jokes were understood as intended, more reinforcing ideas should be evident in responses from participants exposed to the reinforcing condition, while more subversive ideas should be evident in responses from participants in the subversive condition. Given the purpose of the current study, the literal item was actually of little relevance in examining participants' understanding of the playlist, and was included to give participants a way to mentally compare the literal meaning to the subtext in order to provide a response. The variable of interest was actually their response to the subtext item. From this point forward, this qualitative dependent measure of humor understanding will be referred to as "subtext understanding" and will refer to the coded written responses provided by participants to indicate the underlying message present in the humor they heard.

Next, participants were asked to provide a brief written response to the item “In your opinion, who (if anyone) or what (if anything) was being made fun of in the clip you just viewed?” Responses on this item were coded similarly to the qualitative subtext item, based on whether participants had identified the joke target as one that would be reinforcing of rape culture (e.g., identifying women as the target) or as one that would subvert it (e.g., identifying rape as the target). Methods similar to this have been useful in previous work (Till et al., in preparation) as a method of examining how a joke has been understood. From this point forward, this qualitative dependent measure of humor understanding will be referred to “target identification” and will refer to the coded written responses provided by participants to indicate who or what was targeted in the humor they heard.

Quantitative humor understanding. Additionally, in order to measure understanding of the humor quantitatively, participants completed ten items assessing their agreement that the playlist they heard was consistent with a set of either reinforcing (e.g., *Rape doesn’t need to be taken so seriously; Women are responsible for preventing rape*) or subversive statements (e.g., *The threat of rape is a constant worry for women; Men are responsible for preventing rape*). Specifically, participants were given the message, “Based on the JOKE CONTENT in the clips you just heard, please rate your agreement about the overall message of the jokes on the scale below. Please keep in mind that for this section, we need your responses to be about the JOKES, not to reflect your personal beliefs.” They were then asked to rate their agreement from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 9 (*Strongly Agree*) that the humor they heard exemplified each statement, essentially providing an indication of how strongly they recognized the statement as being consistent with the playlist’s subtext. Thus, this quantitative dependent measure of humor

understanding will be referred to as “subtext recognition,” discussed in terms of the two possible types described below.

These subtext recognition ratings were subjected to a principal components analysis with varimax rotation, from which two components emerged with eigenvalues greater than 1 that combined to account for over 70% of the variance. As shown in Table 1, Component 1, which captured rape culture-reinforcing ideas, accounted for 37.94% percent of the variance, and all five original reinforcing items loaded ($> .50$) only onto this factor. Component 2, which captured rape culture-subverting ideas, accounted for 32.08% of the variance, and all five original subversive items loaded ($> .50$) only onto this factor. Given this outcome, each set of five items was averaged to produce two quantitative ratings of humor understanding, reinforcing subtext recognition and subversive subtext recognition, which were expected to differ depending on the condition to which participants were exposed ($H_{1,2}$). Reinforcing ratings ($\alpha = .88$) were expected to be higher among participants exposed to the reinforcing playlist, while subversive ratings ($\alpha = .83$) were expected to be higher among participants exposed to the subversive playlist. Bivariate correlations run between the two items revealed they were not related ($r = .068, p = .511$), suggesting that the content of the statements (and therefore the subtext of the humor) was specific to each corresponding condition. Thus, “reinforcing subtext recognition” and “subversive subtext recognition” served as the quantitative dependent measures of humor understanding.

Social desirability. Finally, participants completed the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). Because rape is a sensitive issue, and may lead individuals to respond based on socially accepted standards, this 33-item True/False measure (including statements such as “I never hesitate to go out of my way to help someone in trouble”)

allowed us to account for individual differences in the tendency to respond based on what is perceived as socially desirable. Appropriate items on the measure were reverse-coded, and the total number of socially desirable responses was summed for each participant, such that higher scores indicated a greater tendency to respond in a socially desirable way ($KR-20 = .75$).

Demographics. Finally, participants completed a brief demographics questionnaire in which they reported their age, year in school, and various characteristics that could feasibly be relevant to the cover story presented at the start of the study (i.e., that participants would be providing feedback on media, and may be exposed to material involving race, sex, profanity, or sexual assault). Consistent with these, participants were asked to report their ethnicity, sex, preferences for certain genres of media, and previous exposure to sexual violence.

To assess exposure to sexual violence, items were adapted from Gibson and Leitenberg (2001); after emphasizing the anonymity of their responses, participants were presented with four items that resembled the definition of rape, without explicitly using the terms “sexual assault” or “rape” (e.g., *Have you engaged in sexual activity with someone when you didn’t really want to because they gave you drugs or alcohol?*). Participants responded to these and other distractor items (e.g., *Have you ever experienced an uncomfortable situation based on your race?*) by indicating “yes” or “no.” Responses on the four sexual assault items were coded into one variable, such that participants who responded “yes” to any of the items were identified as having experienced sexual violence, and those who reported “no” for all items were coded as not having experienced sexual violence. This was controlled for in later analyses, and examined for group differences in the dependent measures.

Closing. Upon completing the survey items, participants were directed to the final page of the survey, which provided debriefing and researcher contact information, and thanked them

for their participation. The debriefing included resources and contact information for individuals dealing with sexual assault, since individuals in the rape humor conditions may have been at higher risk of experiencing minimal distress upon exposure to the content.

Study 1 Results

Prior to conducting analyses, the data were examined to verify that the assumptions of the general linear model were met. Tests for multivariate outliers revealed no significant outlying cases (based on critical value of Mahalanobis' $D(4) < 18.47, p = .001$) and as such all data cases were retained ($N = 97$). Visual inspection of histograms for each dependent measure suggested that there may be departures from normality. As such, Shapiro-Wilk tests were conducted and revealed that across conditions, several distributions were significantly non-normal ($.035 ps < .001$), however examination of specific skewness and kurtosis values revealed no values greater than $|1.43|$, which, when compared to their corresponding standard errors revealed minimal departure from normality. In other words, despite reaching statistical significance, the sample distributions' skewness and kurtosis scores did not deviate from normality enough to make a substantive difference in later analyses (see Tabachnik & Fidell, 2006). Examination of bivariate scatterplots revealed a lack of linearity in the dependent variable of subversive subtext recognition, suggesting that results regarding this variable should be interpreted with caution. (These scores were not transformed so that conclusions that were drawn would be based on participants' original data.) Levene's test of equality of error variances was also conducted, and was significant for the dependent measure of positive clip evaluation, suggesting results for this variable should be interpreted with caution, but that otherwise the equal variances assumption of the general linear model was met.

Preliminary Analyses

In order to examine whether potential covariates led to significant differences in evaluations of humor, a series of one-way ANOVA's was conducted to test whether sex, ethnicity, political orientation, prior exposure to the humor, or previous experience involving sex without consent was related to responses on the quantitative dependent measures.⁴ Correlations were also conducted in order to examine whether age or social desirability were related to the outcome variables.

Sex. There were no significant differences between male and female participants in terms of positive evaluations of humor, but differences did emerge in negative evaluations ($F(1, 94) = 6.11, p = .015$) such that women ($M = 5.86, SD = 2.43$) rated jokes as significantly more negative than men ($M = 4.58, SD = 1.74$). As such, sex was retained as a covariate in later analyses.

Ethnicity. There were no significant differences between White participants and non-White participants' humor evaluations ($F(1, 90) < .19, ps > .663$). Thus, ethnicity was not included in later analyses as a covariate.

Age. Bivariate correlations revealed that participants' age was not significantly related to their positive humor evaluations, but was related to their negative humor evaluations ($r = -.204, p = .049$), suggesting that as participant age increased, their likelihood of evaluating humor as negative decreased. Thus, age was retained as a covariate in later analyses.

⁴ It should be noted that the groups compared in the preliminary analyses were not equal in numbers across conditions, and the results should therefore be interpreted with caution. (Equal cell size was prioritized for humor type (i.e., condition), given the focus of the current studies.)

Political orientation. Participants were asked to summarize their political beliefs as liberal, conservative, or middle of the road. This did not affect their humor evaluations; there were no significant differences among these groups in positive humor evaluations ($F(2, 93) = .12, p = .898$), or in negative evaluations ($F(2, 93) = .09, p = .910$). As such, political orientation was not included as a covariate in later analyses.

Prior exposure to jokes in stimuli. Although some participants reported having previously heard a portion of the humorous stimuli in another setting, prior exposure to the humorous stimuli did not affect participants' humor evaluations ($F(1, 95) > .50, ps > .423$). Thus, prior joke exposure was not included in later analyses as a covariate.

Prior experience involving sex without consent. Upon comparing participants who reported that they had previously experienced sex without consent to those who had not, no significant differences emerged ($F(1, 94) < 1.35, ps > .248$). This individual difference was therefore not included in later analyses as a covariate.

Social desirability. Lastly, the relationship between social desirability scores and humor evaluations was examined. Bivariate correlations revealed a significant negative relationship between social desirability scores and positive humor evaluations ($r = -.26, p = .011$), suggesting that as the tendency to respond in a socially desirable manner increased, positive ratings of the humorous stimuli decreased. A significant positive relationship emerged between social desirability scores and negative clip evaluations ($r = .23, p = .023$), suggesting that as the tendency to respond in a socially desirable manner increased, so did negative ratings of the humorous stimuli. Given these findings, social desirability was included as a covariate in later analyses.

Bivariate Relationships between Positive and Negative Evaluations

In order to first examine the relationships between participants' ratings of the clips to which they were exposed, bivariate correlations were conducted among the clip evaluation ratings. As shown in Table 2, significant positive intercorrelations emerged among all relationships within the set of four positive characteristics, as well as among all relationships within the set of four negative characteristics. Further, significant negative relationships emerged among all relationships between the sets of positive and negative characteristics. This confirmed the creation of composites using the averages of the positive characteristics, and of the negative characteristics.

Differences in Evaluations across Humor Types

The composite scores created from positive and negative evaluation ratings were then used as dependent variables to test for significant differences in evaluations of the clips across conditions using multivariate analysis of covariance. The independent variable was playlist condition (i.e., reinforcing, subversive, or neutral), and the set of composite dependent variables was participants' positive and negative evaluation scores. Sex, age, and social desirability scores were included as covariates to control for any difference in evaluation based on those characteristics. Box's test for homogeneity was significant (Box's $M = 17.43$, $p = .010$), indicating heterogeneity of covariance. As such, Pillai's Trace was used because it is robust to this assumption violation. As shown in Table 3, after accounting for the influence of sex, age, and social desirability scores, humor type had a significant effect on the combined DV's of positive and negative humor evaluations (Pillai's Trace = .250, $F(4, 176) = 6.29$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .125$). The univariate ANCOVA revealed that humor type had a significant effect on positive humor evaluations ($F(2, 88) = 10.71$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .196$). As displayed in Figure 1, post-hoc

Scheffe tests further demonstrated that reinforcing rape jokes were evaluated as significantly lower on positive characteristics ($M = 2.00$, $SD = 1.70$) than subversive rape jokes ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 2.06$, $p = .002$) and neutral sex jokes ($M = 4.41$, $SD = 2.02$, $p < .001$). Subversive rape jokes were not evaluated as significantly different in positive characteristics, compared to neutral sex jokes ($p = .484$).

With respect to negative humor evaluations, the univariate ANCOVA also revealed a significant effect for humor type ($F(2, 88) = 10.50$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .193$). Also shown in Figure 1, post-hoc Scheffe tests demonstrated that reinforcing rape jokes were evaluated as significantly higher on negative characteristics ($M = 6.98$, $SD = 2.31$) than subversive rape jokes ($M = 5.43$, $SD = 2.47$, $p = .032$) and neutral sex jokes ($M = 4.54$, $SD = 1.74$, $p < .001$). Subversive rape jokes were not evaluated as significantly different in negative characteristics, compared to neutral sex jokes ($p = .249$).

These results suggest, consistent with hypotheses, that there are significant differences in how individuals evaluate reinforcing humor, compared to subversive humor. Reinforcing rape jokes were evaluated as significantly less positive (i.e., funny, enjoyable, clever, prosocial) and significantly more negative (i.e., belittling, offensive, ignorant, antisocial) compared to subversive rape jokes, and neutral sex jokes.

Further testing of evaluations with single DV. In addition to examining positive and negative evaluations as they varied by humor type, I also tested to see if the effects would hold when the positive and negative evaluation ratings were combined into one composite variable. Because the composite positive and negative ratings had a moderate negative relationship ($r = -.552$, $p < .001$), I reverse coded the negative clip evaluation items, and then examined the reliability of all eight humor characteristics together (i.e., the four original positive evaluation

items, and the four reverse-coded items). The reliability test demonstrated that the eight items had strong reliability ($\alpha = .93$), and as such, I created a composite DV by averaging the eight scores to produce an overall humor evaluation score, for which higher scores indicated more positive evaluations.

I then tested the same potential covariates as I had previously done for the positive and negative evaluations, and results were generally consistent with the previously reported findings. Specifically, there was no significant difference in overall humor evaluation between men and women ($F(1, 94) = 2.13, p = .147$), White and non-White participants ($F(1, 90) < .001, p = .999$), political affiliation ($F(2, 93) = .16, p = .853$), participants who had and had not heard some of the jokes before ($F(1, 95) = .84, p = .361$), or those who had a prior experience involving sex without consent ($F(1, 94) = .05, p = .824$). Age was not correlated with overall humor evaluation ($r = .05, p = .655$), but social desirability was negatively related ($r = -.27, p = .007$), suggesting that greater tendencies to respond in a socially desirable manner were associated with less positive evaluations of the humor to which participants were exposed. Given these findings, I retained only social desirability as a covariate in the following analysis.

A univariate ANCOVA revealed, as shown in Table 4, that after accounting for the influence of social desirability, humor type had a significant effect on overall humor evaluation ($F(2, 93) = 14.41, p < .001$). Post-hoc Scheffe tests (shown in Figure 2) demonstrated that both subversive rape humor ($M = 4.24, SD = 2.20$) and neutral sex jokes ($M = 5.001, SD = 1.55$) were evaluated as significantly more positive than reinforcing rape humor ($M = 2.55, SD = 1.67, ps = .003, < .001$, respectively). Neutral sex jokes and subversive rape humor were not significantly different in overall humor evaluation ($p = .227$). These results again demonstrate that subversive

rape humor was evaluated as significantly more positive than reinforcing rape humor, and as similar to neutral humor.

Differences in Subtext Recognition across Humor Types

Based on the principal components analysis discussed above, the composite scores created from subversive and reinforcing recognition ratings were used as dependent variables in a multivariate analysis of covariance to test for significant differences in understanding of the clips across humor conditions. The independent variable was again playlist condition (i.e., reinforcing, subversive, or neutral), and the set of composite dependent variables was subtext recognition (i.e., participants' recognition ratings of the message in their humor playlist as reinforcing or subversive).

I then tested the same potential covariates as I had previously done for the positive and negative evaluations. Specifically, there was no significant difference in reinforcing or subversive subtext recognition between men and women ($F_s(1, 94) < .623, p_s > .432$), between political affiliations ($F_s(2, 93) < 1.40, p_s > .251$), between participants who had or had not heard some of the jokes previously ($F_s(1, 95) < 1.26, p_s > .265$), or those who had or had not had a prior experience involving sex without consent ($F_s(1, 94) < 1.81, p_s > .181$). Neither age nor social desirability scores were correlated with subtext recognition ($r_s < |.82|, p_s > .434$). The only significant effect to emerge was between White and non-White participants in their recognition of subversive subtext ($F(1, 90) = 6.33, p = .014$), and as such, ethnicity was the only covariate of those listed here to be included in further analyses.

Box's test for homogeneity was again significant (Box's $M = 21.66, p = .002$), indicating heterogeneity of covariance. Thus, Pillai's Trace was used and as shown in Table 5, revealed that humor type had a significant effect on the combined DV's of subversive and reinforcing

subtext recognition (Pillai's Trace = .511, $F(4, 176) = 15.11$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .256$), above and beyond the influence of ethnicity. The univariate ANCOVA then revealed a significant main effect for humor type on reinforcing subtext recognition ($F(2, 92) = 13.91$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .240$). As displayed in Figure 3, post-hoc Scheffe tests demonstrated that reinforcing rape jokes produced significantly greater recognition of messages that reinforce rape culture ($M = 5.93$, $SD = 2.48$), compared to subversive rape jokes ($M = 4.34$, $SD = 2.12$, $p = .019$) and to neutral sex jokes ($M = 3.04$, $SD = 1.80$, $p < .001$). Participants were also significantly more likely to recognize messages that reinforce rape culture in the subversive condition compared to the neutral condition ($p = .044$), but this makes sense, given that the neutral jokes contained no references to rape, and that some degree of variation in the interpretation of subversive jokes was likely.

Univariate analyses also revealed a significant main effect for humor type on subversive subtext recognition ($F(2, 92) = 19.33$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .305$). Also shown in Figure 3, post-hoc Scheffe tests further demonstrated that subversive rape jokes produced significantly greater recognition of messages that challenge rape culture ($M = 5.72$, $SD = 1.62$), compared to reinforcing rape jokes ($M = 4.49$, $SD = 1.83$, $p = .042$) and neutral sex jokes ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 1.98$, $p < .001$). Participants were also significantly more likely to recognize subversive messages in the reinforcing condition compared to the neutral condition ($p = .011$), but this makes sense, again because the neutral jokes contained no references to rape.

In sum, it was hypothesized ($H_{1.2}$) that subversive humor would be more difficult for participants to understand than reinforcing humor. However, these results actually indicate that, based on the quantitative measures of reinforcing and subversive subtext recognition, participants understood the underlying messages in both types of rape humor. Specifically,

participants in the current study who were exposed to reinforcing rape jokes were more likely than those exposed to other humor types to recognize rape culture-reinforcing ideas as representative of the humor they heard. Similarly, participants exposed to subversive rape jokes were more likely than those exposed to other humor types to recognize rape culture-challenging ideas as representative of the humor they heard.

Bivariate Relationships between Humor Evaluations and Subtext Recognition

In examining the relationships between participants' humor evaluations and their recognition of reinforcing or subversive subtext across conditions, several significant relationships emerged. Positive clip evaluations were negatively related to recognition of reinforcing subtext ($r = -.44, p < .001$), and unsurprisingly, a similar pattern emerged between overall clip evaluation and reinforcing message recognition ($r = -.56, p < .001$). These results suggest that across conditions, more positive evaluations of humor were associated with less recognition of subtext that reinforced rape culture. Adding to this finding, negative clip evaluations were positively related to recognition of reinforcing subtext ($r = .54, p < .001$), suggesting that more negative evaluations of humor were associated with more recognition of subtext that reinforced rape culture. Together, these results support the hypothesis that when rape culture-reinforcing messages are recognized, humor is seen less favorably.

With respect to recognition of subversive subtext, I hypothesized that when people recognized the humor as challenging rape culture, it would be viewed more positively. No such results emerged in the correlations across conditions; neither positive, negative, nor overall humor evaluations were significantly related to recognition of subversive subtext ($r_s = |.04|, p_s > .674$). To better understand these relationships, I examined these same correlations within each condition in order to determine if humor type could be related to the above outcomes.

The above pattern emerged among participants in both the reinforcing and subversive conditions. That is, recognition of reinforcing subtext was related to both positive clip evaluation ($r_{\text{subversive}} = -.40, p = .028$; $r_{\text{reinforcing}} = -.50, p = .008$) and overall clip evaluation ($r_{\text{subversive}} = -.40, p = .029$; $r_{\text{reinforcing}} = -.79, p < .001$). Further, recognition of reinforcing subtext was also positively related to negative humor evaluations ($r_{\text{subversive}} = .37, p = .042$; $r_{\text{reinforcing}} = .73, p < .001$). Recognition of subversive subtext, once again, was not significantly related to humor evaluations in either condition ($r_s < |.29|, p_s > .115$). As would be expected among participants exposed to the neutral sex jokes, no significant relationships emerged between humor evaluation and recognition of either kind of subtext ($r_s < |.13|, p_s > .414$). Again, these results support the notion that humor recognized as reinforcing rape culture tends to be seen more negatively. When humor was recognized as challenging rape culture, no clear patterns in evaluation emerged. Please refer to Table 6 for a complete listing of the relationships in these analyses.

Qualitative Subtext Understanding

To further examine participants' understanding of the humor to which they were exposed, and because the quantitative assessment of understanding only provided a test of their recognition of messages, I also assessed participants' open-ended responses to their initial understanding of the subtext and targets of the playlist they heard. As explained previously, participants were provided with a brief explanation of what is meant by the literal meaning of a message, and then asked to identify what the literal meaning would be in the set of jokes they heard. The same process was then repeated with respect to identifying the subtext of the set of jokes, and finally, participants were asked to identify who was targeted by the joke (see Appendix A for full instructions). Participants' responses were then coded independently by

expert coders who categorized the responses based on their relation to rape culture, which was defined as a culture in which rape is both condoned and prevalent, and in which false beliefs about rape are perpetuated (Sanday, 2003).

Variation in subtext understanding across humor types. With respect to understanding the subtext, responses were coded into one of four possible categories, as representing an idea that was either *reinforcing* (i.e., perpetuated rape culture); *subversive* (i.e., challenged rape culture); *neutral* (i.e., not about rape); or *not applicable* (i.e., not an appropriate answer to the item). Table 7 provides the operational definitions and examples that the coders used for these categories, in order for the coders to complete the coding process. Of the 97 participants in the study, 82 provided responses to this item, and the independent coders reliably matched each other's ratings on 68 of those cases, reaching a moderate level of inter-rater reliability ($\kappa = .75$). Next, the 14 cases that were originally disagreed upon were resolved through discussion. After all 82 responses had been categorized, chi square tests of independence were conducted in order to examine participants' subtext understanding as it related to humor type.

Upon comparing the observed distribution to that which would be expected by chance, a significant deviation was detected across conditions ($\chi^2 (6, N = 82) = 58.61, p < .001$), suggesting that the distribution of coded responses was related to humor type (see Table 8). Chi square goodness of fit tests revealed that participants in the subversive condition were more likely to understand the subtext as either subversive or reinforcing than would be expected by chance ($\chi^2 (3, n = 27) = 17.59, p = .001$), participants in the reinforcing condition were marginally more likely to understand the subtext as reinforcing than would be expected by chance ($\chi^2 (3, N = 24) = 7.67, p = .053$), and participants in the neutral condition were more likely to understand the

subtext as neutral than would be expected by chance ($\chi^2 (2, N = 31) = 36.07, p < .001$). These findings support the hypothesis ($H_{1.2}$) that subversive humor would lead to greater variation in subtext understanding, due to its relatively complicated content, compared to reinforcing and neutral humor.

Variation in target identification across humor types. As another indicator of participants' understanding of the jokes to which they were exposed, the above chi square procedure was also conducted using participants' identification of the targets in the humor they heard. For this portion of coding, it should be noted that a slightly different coding scheme was used. Because the participants' target identification responses were comparatively less detailed (i.e., shorter, more vague) than their responses for subtext understanding, the target responses were coded into one of five categories (instead of four), and the category labels were adjusted to better fit the target responses. Thus, target identification responses, as shown in Table 7, were labeled as either *reinforcing* (e.g., "women who have been raped"); *subversive* (e.g., "men who rape"); *both reinforcing and subversive* (i.e., the participant listed targets that would fit in both categories); *neither reinforcing or subversive* (i.e., the participant listed targets that were not related to rape culture); or *not applicable* (i.e., the participant listed a target that did not make sense given any of the humor they may have heard). Of the 97 participants in the study, all participants responded to this item, and the independent coders reliably matched each other's ratings on 91 of these cases, resulting in a strong inter-rater reliability ($\kappa = .91$). Next, the six cases that were originally disagreed upon were resolved through discussion. After all 97 responses had been categorized, chi square tests of independence were conducted in order to examine participants' target understanding as it related to humor type.

Upon comparing the observed distribution to that which would be expected by chance, a similar pattern of results emerged for target identification as was found for subtext understanding. An overall significant deviation was detected ($\chi^2 (6, N = 97) = 64.76, p < .001$), suggesting that the distribution of target response codes was related to humor type (see Table 9). Chi square goodness of fit tests demonstrated that participants in the subversive condition were more likely to identify a subversive or reinforcing target than would be expected by chance ($\chi^2 (3, n = 30) = 8.67, p = .034$), participants in the reinforcing condition were not any more likely to identify a reinforcing target than would be expected by chance ($\chi^2 (3, N = 28) = 3.71, p = .294$), and participants in the neutral condition were significantly more likely to identify a neutral target than would be expected by chance ($\chi^2 (2, N = 39) = 66.46, p < .001$). Thus, a similar amount of variation emerged in response to the reinforcing jokes compared to the neutral jokes, suggesting that participants interpreted *both* types of rape humor – at least initially after hearing it – as containing both reinforcing and subversive subtext.

Variation in Humor Evaluation across Qualitative Response Categories

The results in the current study have thus far indicated that participants' quantitative subtext recognition scores were consistent with the jokes they heard, and correlated (in some cases) with their evaluations of those jokes. Further, based on the chi square analyses, it was also found that participants seemed to be somewhat inconsistent in identifying the subtext of reinforcing and subversive rape jokes when asked to identify that subtext themselves, as opposed to rating a list of statements. Given the greater amount of variation present in the qualitative responses, I wanted to further examine whether those responses might still be related to participants' humor evaluations, in order to obtain a more complete picture of how evaluation and understanding relate. So although no specific hypothesis was made with respect to this

analysis, I conducted a series of exploratory univariate ANOVA analyses, treating the qualitative coding categories as IV's, and participants' humor evaluations as DV's.

Subtext understanding responses and humor evaluations. The 4-level categorical variable of subtext understanding code (used to code participant responses as *reinforcing*, *subversive*, *neutral*, or *not applicable*) was entered into a univariate ANOVA as the IV, and positive humor evaluation was entered as the DV. A significant difference in positive evaluation emerged across the coding categories ($F(3, 78) = 12.31, p < .001, \eta^2 = .321$). Consistent with the mean differences in humor evaluation found across the experimenter-manipulated conditions, post-hoc Scheffe tests demonstrated a similar pattern across participant-identified subtext categories; among subtext responses coded as subversive, jokes were evaluated as significantly more positive ($M = 3.75, SD = 1.98$) than for subtext responses coded as reinforcing ($M = 1.93, SD = 1.44, p = .015$). Additionally, among subtext responses coded as neutral, jokes were evaluated as significantly more positive ($M = 4.83, SD = 1.94, p < .001$) than for subtext responses coded as reinforcing. No significant difference emerged between subtext responses coded as subversive versus those coded as neutral.

Similar effects emerged for the overall humor evaluation DV, with a significant difference in overall evaluation emerging across coding categories ($F(3, 78) = 15.64, p < .001, \eta^2 = .376$), such that among subtext responses coded as subversive, jokes were evaluated with higher overall positive scores ($M = 4.16, SD = 2.00$) than for subtext responses coded as reinforcing ($M = 2.15, SD = 1.40, p = .002$). Among subtext responses coded as neutral, jokes were again evaluated as significantly more positive overall ($M = 5.23, SD = 1.51, p < .001$) than for subtext responses coded as reinforcing. No significant difference emerged between subtext responses coded as subversive versus those coded as neutral.

Likewise, a significant difference in negative evaluation also emerged across coding categories ($F(3, 78) = 11.69, p < .001, \eta^2 = .310$), such that among subtext responses coded as reinforcing, jokes were evaluated with higher negative scores ($M = 7.65, SD = 1.66$) than for subtext responses coded as subversive ($M = 5.37, SD = 2.12, p = .003$), or those coded as neutral ($M = 4.57, SD = 1.83, p < .001$). No significant difference emerged between subtext responses coded as subversive versus those coded as neutral.

Target identification responses and humor evaluations. To further verify these effects using the other qualitative response that was a key dependent variable in the current study, the 5-level categorical variable of target code (used to code participant responses as *reinforcing*, *subversive*, *both*, *neither*, or *not applicable*) was entered into a univariate ANOVA as the IV, and positive humor evaluation was entered as the DV. A significant difference in positive evaluation again emerged across the coding categories ($F(3, 93) = 8.54, p < .001, \eta^2 = .216$). Post-hoc Scheffe tests demonstrated a significant difference in positive evaluations that approached statistical significance, between target responses coded as subversive ($M = 3.79, SD = 1.81$) compared to those coded as reinforcing ($M = 2.11, SD = 1.88, p = .055$). Targets rated as neither subversive nor reinforcing (i.e., lacking reference to rape) were rated as significantly more positive ($M = 4.43, SD = 2.09, p < .001$) than targets rated as reinforcing. No other significant differences emerged between target categories.

Similar effects emerged for the overall humor evaluation DV, with a significant difference in overall evaluation emerging across coding categories ($F(3, 93) = 13.63, p < .001, \eta^2 = .305$), such that among target responses coded as subversive, jokes were evaluated with higher overall positive scores ($M = 4.47, SD = 1.62$) than for target responses coded as reinforcing ($M = 2.36, SD = 1.93, p = .002$). Among target responses coded as neither

subversive or reinforcing, jokes were again evaluated as significantly more positive overall ($M = 5.02$, $SD = 1.63$, $p < .001$) than for target responses coded as reinforcing. No significant difference emerged between target responses coded as subversive versus those coded as neither subversive nor reinforcing.

Finally, a significant difference in negative evaluation again emerged across coding categories ($F(3, 93) = 11.71$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .274$), such that among target responses coded as reinforcing, jokes were evaluated with higher negative scores ($M = 7.42$, $SD = 2.26$) than for target responses coded as subversive ($M = 4.88$, $SD = 1.70$, $p = .001$), or those coded as neither subversive or reinforcing ($M = 4.58$, $SD = 1.82$, $p < .001$). No significant difference emerged between subtext responses coded as subversive versus those coded as neither one nor the other.

Together, these exploratory analyses lend further support to the notion that participants' evaluations of rape humor vary depending on how they understand the humor. It further evidences the relationship between understanding and evaluation by demonstrating mean differences in evaluation based not only on researcher manipulations (i.e., intended interpretations of humor, quantitative subtext recognition), but also on how the humor was understood by the participants, as indicated by their own responses.

Study 1 Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to determine how individuals evaluate and understand two key types of rape humor: that which reinforces rape culture and that which is intended to subvert it. I first examined whether individuals' positive and negative evaluations differed between the two types (and as compared to neutral sex jokes), and then compared individuals' cognitive processing of each type of humor by examining their own interpretations of its subtext and targets, and their ratings of the extent to which reinforcing or subversive

messages were present in the jokes. Finally, I examined the relationship between participants' evaluations and understanding of the humor they heard.

The hypothesis that humor evaluations would vary across humor types ($H_{1.1}$) was strongly supported, while the hypothesis that subversive humor would produce more variation in understanding compared to the other types ($H_{1.2}$) was partially supported. In examining participants' qualitative subtext understanding responses, there was indeed more variation in responses to subversive jokes than in response to neutral humor, but the same pattern also occurred in response to reinforcing humor, albeit to a lesser extent, suggesting that humor on the topic of rape in general (regardless of the motivations behind the humor) may not be processed in a consistent way by perceivers.

On the other hand, when participants were tasked with recognizing the subtext instead of explaining it on their own, their quantitative responses demonstrated that they understood the difference between the reinforcing and subversive statements. That is, participants in the reinforcing condition reported greater recognition of the reinforcing statements, while participants in the subversive condition reported greater recognition of the subversive statements. These findings offer the first insight into how individuals may respond to and think about rape humor, but they also suggest that there is potential for such humor to be misunderstood.

Humor Evaluation

The current study provided strong support for the hypothesis that individuals would evaluate each type of humor differently; subversive and neutral humor were rated as significantly more positive than reinforcing humor. Further, reinforcing humor was also rated as significantly more negative than subversive and neutral humor.

Although these patterns were not originally hypothesized, they make logical sense, and are actually encouraging in terms of what they suggest about how individuals respond to jokes about rape. Making light of rape by minimizing it as a problem was not favorably perceived, compared to when the jokes drew attention to the problem. This suggests that humor which reinforces rape culture is unlikely to be viewed as acceptable joking material, whereas humor that points out problems associated with rape culture is likely to be viewed as more acceptable.

Humor Understanding

With respect to humor understanding, interesting patterns emerged when examining participants' (quantitative) recognition of subtext messages, versus the qualitative responses that they provided on their own. Recall the hypothesis that subversive humor would be more difficult to understand than reinforcing or neutral humor, an outcome that was expected to result in a wider range of participant responses to items assessing their understanding. This was not the case when participants were asked to rate their agreement with a set of statements about the possible underlying meanings of the jokes they heard; rather than agreeing that a mix of reinforcing and subversive content was present in the jokes, participants were able to pick out the reinforcing or subversive statements that were representative of the jokes. These findings suggest, similar to the ideas put forth by Rossing (2012) with respect to postracialism, that subversive rape humor may be an effective medium for initiating cultural discussions about the issue of rape, because individuals did seem to recognize the underlying subversive subtext. That said, if the use of subversive humor were to be pursued as a way of initiating discussion about rape, it would be important to develop a way to ensure that the intended prosocial message is conveyed. Without being prompted to identify the underlying meaning of the jokes, it may be

unlikely that individuals would carefully consider its meaning. And even if they do, their own identification of the underlying message may not be consistent with what was intended.

Specifically, *both* the reinforcing and subversive forms of rape humor presented in the current study produced qualitative responses that were interpreted by coders as having both reinforcing and subversive elements, suggesting that when participants were asked to “produce” the subtext themselves, they had more difficulty than when asked to recognize it from a list of statements. This may suggest that identifying subtext is somewhat difficult, which would be consistent with previous work on political satire, in which participants did not consistently grasp what the intended subtext was meant to convey (e.g., Baumgartner & Morris, 2008; LaMarre et al., 2009). However, there may also be explanations for this variation in qualitative responses that relate to cognitive requirements of each task, participant motivation, or their need for cognition; although these variables were not assessed in the current study, it is possible that they may have influenced participants’ responses to the open-ended items, which likely required more cognitive effort than the quantitative method of providing ratings on a series of statements. Regardless, both the quantitative and qualitative findings provide insight into the potential ways in which individuals may interpret reinforcing and subversive rape humor, and prompt questions for further investigation. For example, examining individuals’ cognitive effort and how much they care about the issue of rape (both of which I do in Study 2) could provide explanations for the variation that emerged in understanding both reinforcing and subversive rape humor.

Relationship between Evaluation and Understanding

Finally, I found that recognition of reinforcing subtext was associated with lower positive and higher negative evaluations, but recognition of subversive subtext was not related to any clear patterns in humor evaluation. This supports the notion that subversive rape humor is more

complicated than reinforcing rape humor, leading to mixed evaluations among participants. It is possible that although participants may have recognized a more prosocial sentiment in the subversive rape humor, this recognition was not enough to override the fact that the jokes were about rape, which is a sensitive and controversial topic, thus resulting in mixed positive and negative evaluations of the humor.

However, upon treating participants' qualitative responses as an independent variable, results demonstrated that humor evaluation was clearly associated with whether participants identified a reinforcing or subversive message in the subtext of the humor they heard. Further, this pattern was true for all categories of participants' responses, not just those coded as reinforcing.

Summary

Overall, Study 1 fulfilled its purpose of establishing a baseline assessment of the ways in which individuals may evaluate and understand reinforcing and subversive rape humor. It demonstrated that individuals tend to view humor that reinforces rape culture more negatively than humor that challenges it, and that those evaluations were related to the recognition of each type of subtext. It further demonstrated that understanding both types of humor may be somewhat difficult; participants were able to recognize, but not consistently identify on their own what the underlying messages were in both types of humor.

However, Study 1 was conducted online, and therefore may have lacked the interpersonal component present in the majority of humor experiences that individuals enjoy. The current study was also unable to provide any insight into the characteristics that may affect how individuals evaluate and understand this form of humor. These issues were addressed in Study 2.

Study 2

The purpose of Study 2 was to compare individuals' responses to subversive humor versus reinforcing humor, as a function of relevant individual differences. Participants were exposed to one of the same three humorous playlists (reinforcing, subversive, or neutral) in a one-way between groups design, under the same cover story used in Study 1. However, in the current study, participants completed paper-and-pencil packets under the supervision of an undergraduate research assistant. After listening to the playlist for their session, participants provided their evaluations of the humor to which they were exposed by rating it on the same set of traits used in Study 1, by identifying underlying message and target of the clips, and by rating their agreement that specific messages were present in the playlists. Additionally, participants completed a set of individual difference measures so that I could examine the role of these variables in affecting their evaluations of the clips. Based on the role of attitudes and cognition in individuals' processing of humorous stimuli (e.g., Shultz, 1972; Suls, 1972; Wyer & Collins, 1992), both attitudinal and cognitive variables relevant to rape humor were included. In sum, the purpose of the second study was to examine the effects of individual differences in affecting participants' evaluations and understanding of different forms of humor.

Hypotheses

The individual difference variables assessed in Study 2 were included in order to test them as moderators of the relationships between humor type and humor evaluations, as well as between humor type and understanding. Generally speaking, it was expected that the findings for individuals' humor evaluations and understanding that were found in Study 1 would be replicated in Study 2. Additionally, more positive attitudes toward social hierarchy and greater acceptance of rape were expected to be associated with more positive evaluations of rape culture-

reinforcing humor. Conversely, among individuals who are exposed to subversive humor, and understand it as such, more negative attitudes toward social hierarchy and lower acceptance of rape were expected to be associated with more positive evaluations of the humor. Additionally, greater preferences for thinking and greater awareness of rape culture should be associated with understanding of subversive humor as it is intended (i.e., as challenging rape culture). More specific hypotheses have been made for each individual difference variable beyond these general expectations, but in order to make those predictions more easily accessible to the reader, I have included them with the descriptions of the constructs below.

Attitudinal measures. It has been established that pre-existing attitudes affect individuals' schemas, and that those schemas affect how humor is processed (Wyer & Collins, 1992). Further, because the topic of rape relates to group dominance, it was imperative that attitudes toward both group dominance and rape were assessed. Specifically, I assessed individual differences in preference for social hierarchy maintenance as both a general worldview (Social Dominance Orientation) and as expressed through humor use (Cavalier Humor Beliefs). I also assessed evaluations of rape and of women who have been raped (Rape Myth Acceptance scale), as well as participants' perceptions of potential precursors to rape (i.e., sexually-pressuring behaviors), and how they suspect others perceive such behaviors (Attempts to Pressure). Finally, I also examined participants' tendency to attribute others' behavior to prejudiced beliefs (Propensity to Make Attributions of Prejudice Scale).

Social dominance orientation. Social dominance orientation (SDO; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994) is the belief that social group hierarchies should exist. This construct has previously predicted rape-related beliefs (e.g., rape myth acceptance; Hockett, Saucier,

Hoffman, Smith, & Craig, 2009), and could therefore affect how individuals process rape-related humor.

Specifically, it was hypothesized that SDO would interact with humor type to predict humor evaluations, such that ($H_{2.1}$) higher SDO scores would be associated with more positive evaluations of reinforcing humor, because it would be consistent with SDO beliefs (i.e., it reinforces the hierarchy created by rape culture). Higher SDO scores were expected to be associated with more negative evaluations of subversive humor because it challenges SDO beliefs (i.e., it challenges the hierarchy created by rape culture). Finally, lower SDO scores were expected to be associated with more negative evaluations of reinforcing humor and more positive evaluations of subversive humor because individuals lower on SDO should demonstrate preferences in the opposite direction of those higher on the construct.

Additionally, individual differences in SDO scores were expected to affect how individuals attend to aspects of the humorous stimuli. Specifically, higher SDO scores may be related to a higher likelihood of interpreting a subversive joke only as its surface level, thus leading to its interpretation as a rape joke consistent with social dominance motives that reinforce a sexual hierarchy. In this case, lower SDO scores were expected to be associated with a higher likelihood of recognizing the oppressive nature of reinforcing humor, and the system-challenging characteristics of subversive humor. As such, it was hypothesized ($H_{2.2}$) that lower SDO scores would be associated with greater identification of the underlying message present in subversive humor, compared to individuals higher in SDO.

Alternatively, individuals who score highly on SDO could be primed to attend to hierarchy-related messages as a function of their beliefs. Thus, a competing hypothesis ($H_{2.3}$) is

possible, in which higher SDO scores were associated with increased understanding of subversive humor, but also more negative evaluations of it because it challenges their views.

No significant difference in understanding was predicted for individuals exposed to reinforcing humor, since both higher and lower SDO scores should be associated with recognition of the intent behind the humor when it supports the sexual hierarchy.

Cavalier humor beliefs. Cavalier humor beliefs (CHB; Hodson, Rush, & MacInnis, 2010) are a set a beliefs that legitimize social dominance through the use of humor. Individuals who hold these beliefs tend to hold favorable views of humor that targets low-status groups, and they approach such humor in a blithe, uncritical, nonchalant manner. This is often associated with the trivialization of the possibility that groups targeted by such humor may experience harm or could be offended by it. This tendency to trivialize, which is common among those with heightened cavalier humor beliefs, is then associated with the perpetuation of prejudicial attitudes. That is, not only are cavalier humor beliefs predicted by higher levels of prejudice, but they also lead to the perpetuation of those beliefs by increasing the likelihood of perceiving prejudice as normal in a joking context (as found by Ford, Boxer, Armstrong, & Edel, 2008; Ford, Wentzel, & Lorion, 2001)

This construct was included in the current study in order to examine the tendency to minimize humor's potential impact on women who have been raped, and how this tendency could affect one's interpretation of rape humor. Given previous findings that higher CHB scores are associated with a preference for humor that keeps low-status groups in positions absent of power (Hodson et al., 2010), it was expected that ($H_{2.4}$) compared to lower CHB scores, higher CHB scores would be associated with more positive evaluations and greater enjoyment of

reinforcing humor, and more negative evaluations and lower enjoyment of subversive humor when it is understood as such.

With respect to understanding each type of humor being examined, it is possible that there may be some variation, but the way in which that variation may occur is unclear. Higher CHB scores have been associated with individual difference variables that could increase the likelihood of cognitive elaboration on the humorous stimuli (e.g., higher openness to experience, lower need for personal structure; Hodson et al., 2010). However, because CHB as a construct is relatively new to the study of humor in general, its relationship to cognitive processing has not yet been directly examined. Thus, there is insufficient evidence to allow for a specific prediction about CHB and a potential difference in understanding between reinforcing and subversive humor types. Therefore, this relationship was examined from an exploratory perspective.

Rape myth acceptance. Rape myth acceptance refers to individuals' agreement with false beliefs about rape. This construct consists of beliefs that are both shaped by and perpetuate rape culture, many of which downplay the severity of rape as a problem (e.g., the myth that the prevalence of false charges is higher than for other crimes), or misconstrue the ways in which it occurs (e.g., that women "ask for it" by wearing certain clothes).

It was expected that ($H_{2.5}$) higher IRMA scores would be associated with more positive evaluations and greater enjoyment of reinforcing humor than of subversive humor when understood as such, because it would be consistent with pre-existing attitudes about rape in general. Likewise, lower RMA scores were expected to be associated with more positive evaluations and greater enjoyment of subversive humor (when understood as such) compared to reinforcing humor. Because exposure to rape humor is likely to activate schemas that would be associated with belief in rape myths, which would then increase the likelihood of interpreting

subversive humor by its surface level only, it was also expected that (H_{2.6}) compared to lower IRMA scores, higher IRMA scores would be associated with greater variation in the understanding of subversive humor.

Pressuring behaviors. In order to assess pre-existing attitudes about behaviors that are common in United States culture and have been found to be related to rape proclivity, participants completed the Attempts to Pressure and Benign Dating Behaviors perception scales (Strain, Hockett, & Saucier, in press). Although not a direct measure of the tendency to commit the act of rape, these items provide an indication about how participants view behaviors that, while less aggressive than rape, mimic its power dynamics, and have been found to strongly predict (among men) the self-reported likelihood of committing rape. This construct was included over the more direct rape proclivity construct (Bohner, Reinhard, Rutz, Sturm, Kerschbaum, et al., 1998) so that both men and women could provide data, and because the scale items less obviously assess rape-related attitudes (thus reducing the influence of social desirability). Moreover, given that acceptance of these behaviors has been found to predict more overt sexually violent behaviors, and therefore influence evaluations of rape humor, participants' acceptability ratings of commonplace behaviors was expected to provide a good indication of their attitudes toward rape culture, while still refraining from asking about evaluations of rape itself, which is unlikely to produce variation in responses.

The measure presents participants with a scenario in which a young man encounters a young woman, and then asks participants how acceptable it would be for the man to engage in several different behaviors (see Appendix C for full list). The behaviors include benign dating behaviors (e.g., asking a woman out for coffee) and relatively aggressive attempts to sexually pressure (e.g., buying a woman extra drinks with the intention of getting her drunk quickly).

Participants rate how acceptable they perceive each behavior to be, as well as how they perceive others' views of the behaviors.

It was hypothesized (H_{2.7}) that higher acceptance of attempts to pressure would be associated with more positive perceptions of rape culture-reinforcing humor than of subversive humor. Further, it was expected (H_{2.8}) that higher acceptance of attempts to pressure should also be associated with decreased understanding of subversive humor, because the underlying message of the humor will be inconsistent with acceptance of pressuring behaviors. Given that benign dating behaviors are much more mild than pressuring behaviors, and that they are generally accepted in society (i.e., not seen as dangerous), no relationship is expected to emerge between individuals' acceptance of these behaviors, and their humor evaluation or understanding.

Cognitive measures. It has been established that enjoyment of humor is dependent upon individuals' ability to interpret the punch line by reframing something that is initially incongruous so that it makes sense (as found by Ford et al., 2008; Ford et al., 2001). The process of completing this reframing is affected by the schemas that individuals use to interpret the joke and its punch line (Koestler, 1964; Martin, 2007; Suls, 1972). That is, individuals' background knowledge or prior experience will determine how they interpret a humorous stimulus. Due to the ubiquity of rape culture, I assessed individuals' rape-relevant schemas to account for their awareness of rape as a problem, and their awareness of rape culture. Finally, because understanding of humor tends to increase with additional thought, which is more likely to occur when individuals enjoy the thought process, I also assessed need for cognition, in order to account for individual differences the tendency to enjoy thinking.

Propensity to make attributions to sexism. Because rape is an issue that overwhelmingly affects more women than men, humor that uses rape for its content may be perceived – by low-prejudice individuals or those who are attuned to rape as a social problem – as a specific form of sexism. It is possible that because expressions of prejudice have become more subtle in recent years, and a cultural emphasis has been placed on the importance of political correctness, individuals may vary in their tendency to judge a behavior as prejudiced or not (Miller, Hockett, O'Dea, Till, & Saucier, in preparation). Humor may be subject to variation in how it is judged socially, because is often used as a cover for expressing beliefs that others may view as unacceptable (e.g., Crandall & Eshleman, 2003). Thus, upon hearing a joke about rape, listeners may assume that the joke teller holds negative attitudes toward women who have been raped, or toward women in general. However, if this assumption is made in error, and the joke teller is intending to be subversive, the listener's misinterpretation of the joke (i.e., their perception of it as reinforcing rape culture) may prevent him or her from grasping the underlying message intended to challenge rape culture. Among individuals who are lower in prejudicial attitudes, I expect that some may be more likely to make this error than others, as a function of their tendency to be more likely to attribute ambiguous behaviors to prejudice. I also expect that these individuals will be less likely to make positive attributions about humor that they interpret as reinforcing rape culture. Thus, participants will also complete the Propensity to Make Attributions to Prejudice Scale (PMAPS; Miller, Culbertson, Hockett, & Saucier, in preparation) so that I can assess the role of attributions of humor to sexism in perceiving rape humor.

This scale was originally constructed using items that assessed individuals' recognition of racism in their everyday experiences. However, given that rape humor is more relevant to recognition of sexism, the items were adapted to fit the current study more appropriately. Thus,

from this point forward, in keeping with the purposes of the current study and for clarity, the scale will be referred to as the Propensity to Make Attributions to Sexism Scale (PMASS).

It was hypothesized that (H_{2.9}) higher PMASS scores would be associated with more negative evaluations of both types of humor, compared to individuals with lower PMASS scores, because the humor would be attributed to prejudiced behavior. Additionally, (H_{2.10}) higher PMASS scores should be associated with decreased understanding of subversive humor compared to lower PMASS scores, because the rape content should lead to the conclusion that the humor is inappropriate.

Rape culture awareness. Individuals with knowledge of the arguments for and against a given social issue may interpret humorous stimuli within the context of those arguments because they are primed to do so as a result of their familiarity with the issue. Individuals who lack this knowledge may not find the stimuli humorous, or may interpret it by selecting a schema that they think will help them make sense of the humor. Thus, in order to account for participants' knowledge of the issues relevant to studying rape humor (i.e., knowledge of rape as a social problem, awareness of rape culture), participants responded to a brief set of items about their perceptions of the prevalence of rape as a pretest, prior to their participation in the present study. They were asked to provide estimates of rape statistics (e.g., the percentage of college women raped in a semester), as well as a set of items adapted from Krosnick, Boninger, Chuang, Berent, and Carnot (1993). These items assessed attitude strength, or how certain they felt about their views on the issue of rape (labeled "certainty"), how knowledgeable they felt about the issue (labeled "knowledge"), their direct experience with raising awareness about it (labeled "direct experience"), and how often they discuss the issue with others or think about it in general (labeled "accessibility").

It was expected ($H_{2.11}$) that compared to lower scores, higher scores on the prevalence estimates and attitude strength items would be associated with more positive evaluations of subversive humor when it was understood as such, and with more negative evaluations and decreased enjoyment of reinforcing humor. Further, it was hypothesized that ($H_{2.12}$) higher scores on these measures would also be associated with increased understanding of the underlying message of the subversive humor, compared to lower awareness scores.

Need for cognition. Generally speaking, individuals who tend to think carefully about things and enjoy the thought process are more likely to take it upon themselves to elaborate on a stimulus (Wyer & Collins, 1992). If they tend to do this in when they encounter most stimuli, it is also likely that they will be more likely to elaborate on humorous stimuli, thus increasing the chances that they will process humor deeply, and understand any underlying message that may be present. As such, participants also completed the Need for Cognition Scale (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982) in order to examine the role of individual differences in thought processing as it related to understanding humorous stimuli.

It was hypothesized ($H_{2.13}$) that compared to lower NCS scores, higher NCS scores would be associated with more positive evaluations of subversive humor (e.g., as clever) compared to reinforcing humor, and ($H_{2.14}$) increased understanding of subversive humor.

Correlational predictions. In addition to the expected effects predicted for each individual difference variable, it was also hypothesized that scores on each of these individual difference variables would be related. Specifically, positive relationships should emerge among SDO, CHB, IRMA, and ATP scores (Hockett et al., 2009; Hodson et al., 2010; Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003; Strain et al., in press), which were expected to each be negatively related to PMAPS (Miller, Culbertson, et al., in preparation) and awareness of rape culture. No

significant relationships were expected to emerge between need for cognition and any of the above variables, because the desire to think deeply about a given issue may occur regardless of one's support for social hierarchy, view of humor, belief in rape myths, perceptions of prejudice, or awareness of rape culture.

Method

Participants

Undergraduates in General Psychology ($n = 137$) were recruited to participate in an in-person study that would earn them one credit hour toward their General Psychology research participation course requirement. Students in the Psychology of Personality ($n = 38$) were also recruited to participate, in exchange for bonus credit that was applied toward their final grade in the course. Of the total number of participants ($N = 175$), 51.4% identified as female, and 74.3% identified as White. The sample ranged in age from 18 to 44 ($M = 20.45$, $SD = 2.69$). When asked to summarize their political views, 21.1% identified as Liberal, 25.7% identified as Conservative, and 52.6% identified as "Middle of the Road." Finally, just as in Study 1, participants were also asked sensitive questions concerning their previous experiences with sexual violence; 34.4% of female participants and 17.6% of male participants in the current study reported that they had, at some point prior, experienced some form of sex without consent.

Procedure and Materials

Upon signing up for the study, participants were told to come to the classroom where their study session was being held. The research assistant gathered the participants and distributed materials, then verbally explained the general procedure to participants, who could also read the instructions printed on their survey packets. They were then asked to sign informed

consent forms, and after collecting the forms, the research assistant explained that they were going to listen to a set of audio recordings, under the same cover story used in Study 1.

The research assistant then played the audio playlist on a personal computer that allowed all participants in the room to hear. Each session employed one condition, selected ahead of time by the researcher, and the tracks were played in randomized order using the “shuffle” function in iTunes music player. Aside from monitoring the number of participants in study sessions to maintain equal cell size across conditions, participants were randomly assigned to their condition. They completed the same assessments of humor evaluation, qualitative understanding (i.e., subtext understanding and target identification), and quantitative understanding (i.e., subtext recognition) as participants in Study 1 (with the exception of completing them in paper-and-pencil format). Then, upon completion of these initial measures, participants were presented, in counterbalanced order, with cognitive and attitudinal individual difference measures relevant to the evaluation and understanding of rape humor. All materials completed by participants in Study 2 can be found in Appendix C.

Social dominance orientation. I assessed SDO using the 16-item scale by Pratto et al. (1994). Participants indicated their agreement with statements about the positioning of groups in a social hierarchy (e.g., *To get ahead in life, it is sometimes necessary to step on other groups*) using a Likert-type scale from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 9 (*Strongly Agree*). Relevant items were reverse-coded and scores on all the items were averaged, such that higher scores indicate greater belief in social hierarchies ($\alpha = .90$).

Cavalier humor beliefs. In order to examine the tendency to minimize humor’s potential impact on women who have been raped, and how this tendency could affect one’s interpretation of rape humor, participants completed the cavalier humor beliefs scale (Hodson et al., 2010).

They indicated their agreement with statements about humor use (e.g., *Sometimes people need to relax and realize that a joke is just a joke*) using a Likert-type scale from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 9 (*Strongly Agree*). Appropriate items were reverse-coded and scores on all the items were averaged such that higher scores indicated greater cavalier humor beliefs ($\alpha = .85$).

Rape myth acceptance. Rape myth acceptance was measured with the short form of the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (IRMA-SF; Payne et al., 1999). Participants indicated their agreement with false beliefs about rape (e.g., *It is usually only women who dress suggestively that are raped*) using a Likert-type scale from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 9 (*Strongly Agree*). Appropriate items were reverse-coded and scores on all the items were averaged such that higher scores indicated greater acceptance of rape myths ($\alpha = .91$).

Pressuring behaviors. In order to assess pre-existing attitudes about behaviors that are common in United States culture and have been found to be related to rape proclivity, participants completed the Attempts to Pressure and Benign Dating Behaviors perception scales (Strain et al., in press). As stated above, the measure presents participants with a scenario in which a young man encounters a young woman, and then asks participants how acceptable it would be for the man to engage in various behaviors. Participants provide ratings of the behaviors from 1 (*Not at All Acceptable*) to 9 (*Completely Acceptable*); one rating indicates their own perspective, while the other indicates how they think others in their peer group perceive the behaviors. Thus, participants provide a total of four scores: one pair indicating their own perceptions of attempts to pressure ($\alpha = .90$) and benign dating behaviors ($\alpha = .89$), and another pair indicating how they think others perceive attempts to pressure ($\alpha = .91$) and benign dating behaviors ($\alpha = .90$), with higher scores indicating greater acceptance of the set of behaviors.

Propensity to make attributions to sexism. As stated above, perceptions of rape humor may be related to individuals' perceptions of sexism more generally. As such, participants completed the propensity to make attributions of sexism scale (PMAPS; Miller, Culbertson, Hockett, & Saucier, in preparation). Participants indicated their agreement with statements about recognizing sexism (e.g., *I am on the lookout for instances of sexism*) using a Likert-type scale from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 9 (*Strongly Agree*). Appropriate items were reverse-coded and scores on all the items were averaged such that higher scores indicated a stronger tendency to identify sexism in social interactions ($\alpha = .87$).

Rape culture awareness. In order to account for participants' knowledge of the issues relevant to rape humor, they responded to a brief set of items about their perceptions of the prevalence of rape as a pretest, prior to their participation in the present study. They were asked to provide an estimate of the percentage of all rapes that go unreported, the percentage of college-aged women who are raped each semester, and the percentage of all women who will experience rape in their lifetime, (e.g., *In the space below, please indicate your best estimate of the percentage of women who will be raped in their lifetime*). These items were included to provide an indication of participants' awareness of rape as a problem; thus, the higher the values, the more aware participants are likely to be about issues related to sexual assault. Upon examining the reliabilities of these three items, however, it became clear that participants were not entirely sure how to estimate the percentage of all rapes that go unreported. The alpha value of the three items together was .67, however removal of this item increased the alpha value to .82. As such, participants' prevalence estimates were calculated by averaging their estimates of the percentage of college women raped in a given semester, and the percentage of all women who are raped in their lifetime.

In addition to the above estimates, participants also completed a set of items adapted from Krosnick et al. (1993) assessing attitude strength. The items measured how certain they felt about their views on the issue of rape (labeled “certainty”), how knowledgeable they felt about the issue (labeled “knowledge”), their direct experience with raising awareness about it (labeled “direct experience”), and how often they discuss the issue with others or think about it in general (labeled “accessibility”). With the exception of the direct experience items, participants provided responses on a scale from 1 (*Not at All*) to 9 (*Very Much*) and scores on each subscale were averaged such that higher scores on each subscale indicated greater certainty ($\alpha = .34$), knowledge ($\alpha = .92$), and accessibility ($\alpha = .93$) (and therefore indicating greater awareness of rape culture in general).

Given the low reliability of the certainty items, certainty was excluded from any further analysis. The direct experience items, as written by Krosnick et al. (1993), include one item on the 1 to 9 scale used for the other constructs, followed by six Yes/No items asking about their involvement in activities that increase public awareness, in this case about the issue of rape. However, given the setup and instructions on the survey, some participants in the current study failed to recognize that the first item (“How involved are you in activities about this issue?”) was intended to use the same 1 to 9 response scale as the other items, and as such nearly 17% of participants left the item blank. Further, reliability analysis demonstrated that the third item, “Have you ever written a letter to a public official expressing your views on this issue?” was not reliable, resulting in a relatively low overall reliability ($KR-20 = .678$). As such, both direct experience items 1 and 3 were excluded from total score calculation. The remaining five items were summed, such that higher scores indicated more direct experience raising awareness about the issue of rape ($KR-20 = .70$).

Need for cognition. As stated above, individuals' understanding and evaluation of rape humor may be related to how much they elaborate on the humorous stimuli. As such, participants also completed the Need for Cognition Scale (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982) in order to examine the role of individual differences in thought processing as it related to understanding humorous stimuli. Participants indicated their agreement with statements about enjoyment of thinking (e.g., *The notion of thinking abstractly is appealing to me*) using a Likert-type scale from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 9 (*Strongly Agree*). Appropriate items were reverse-coded and scores on all the items were averaged such that higher scores indicated a greater need for cognition ($\alpha = .91$).

Demographics. Finally, participants completed a brief demographics questionnaire in which they reported their sex, age, political orientation, and previous exposure to sexual violence, as measured in Study 1. These variables were examined for group differences in or significant relationships with the dependent measures, and if necessary, controlled for in later analyses.

Exploratory behavioral measure. One final exploratory purpose of the current study was to explore the question of whether subversive humor may have the potential to prosocially affect individuals' behavior. Given its relatively prosocial intentions (compared to reinforcing humor), I was interested to see if there would be a difference in the number of individuals who indicated interest in helping with a rape-related cause, depending on the type of humor they had heard. As such, upon completion of their survey packets, participants were given the opportunity to take a flyer that contained information about joining *Wildcats Against Rape*, the campus group whose goal is to use peer education to raise awareness among students about issues of sexual

violence.⁵ The dependent measure then, was whether or not participants removed the flyer from their study packet and took it with them. Undergraduate researchers who conducted the research sessions checked a box on the participant's survey if the flyer was taken, and left the box blank if the participant had left it in the packet. Though exploratory, the question being examined was whether there would be a greater number of flyers taken among participants who had heard subversive jokes, compared to those who had heard reinforcing or neutral jokes.

Finally, after deciding whether or not to take the flyer from their packet, participants turned in their materials, were thanked, provided with debriefing information, and permitted to leave the study.

Study 2 Results

Prior to conducting analyses, the data were examined to verify that the assumptions of the general linear model were met. As in Study 1, tests for multivariate outliers revealed no significant outlying cases (based on critical value of Mahalanobis' $D(4) < 18.47, p = .001$) and as such all data cases were retained ($N = 175$). Visual inspection of histograms for each dependent measure suggested that there may be departures from normality. As such, Shapiro-Wilk tests were conducted and revealed that across conditions, several distributions were significantly non-normal ($.001 > ps \leq .037$), however examination of specific skewness and kurtosis values revealed no values greater than $|1.10|$, which, when compared to their corresponding standard errors revealed minimal departure from normality (as in Study 1). Examination of bivariate scatterplots revealed a lack of linearity in the dependent variable of

⁵ Although not a direct measure of individuals' actual behavior, it was determined to be the most realistic way to pilot test this question (as opposed to signing up for an email list, or signing a petition, both of which were suspected to be less meaningful to students).

subversive subtext recognition, suggesting that results regarding this variable should be interpreted with caution. (Again, these scores were not transformed so that the conclusions drawn would be based on participants' original data.) Levene's test of equality of error variances was also conducted, and was significant for the subversive subtext recognition DV ($F(2, 171) = 7.42, p < .001$), again confirming that results involving the recognition of subversive subtext should be interpreted with caution.

Preliminary Analyses for Humor Evaluation

In order to examine whether potential covariates lead to a significant difference in evaluations of humor, a series of one-way ANOVA's was conducted to test whether sex, ethnicity, political orientation, prior exposure to the humor, previous experience involving sex without consent, the course level from which participants were recruited, or the composition of participants in each study session was related to humor evaluations. Correlations were also conducted in order to determine whether age, social desirability, rape culture awareness, or the numbers of participants in each study session were related to the outcome variables.⁶

Sex. Significant differences emerged between male and female participants for positive evaluations of humor ($F(1, 173) = 8.78, p = .003$), such that men ($M = 3.97, SD = 1.97$) rated jokes as significantly more positive than women ($M = 3.13, SD = 1.77$). There were no significant differences between men and women in their negative humor evaluations, but due to the differences in positive evaluations, sex was retained as a covariate in later analyses.

⁶ As in Study 1, the assumption of equal cell sizes was violated in these analyses. Given that the variables being examined were not the primary variables of interest, humor type (i.e., condition) was the variable that was prioritized as needing equal cell sizes.

Ethnicity. There were no significant differences between White participants and non-White participants in their humor evaluations ($F_s(1, 164) < .08, p_s > .774$). As such, ethnicity was not included as a covariate in later analyses.

Age. Bivariate correlations revealed that participants' age was not significantly related to either of their humor evaluations ($r_s < .12, p_s > .190$). Thus, age was not included as a covariate in later analyses.

Political orientation. Contrary to Study 1, significant differences in humor evaluation did emerge for participants' reported political orientation. There was a significant difference in positive humor evaluation ($F(2, 171) = 3.43, p = .035$) such that individuals who rated their views as "middle of the road" rated humor significantly more positively ($M = 3.84, SD = 1.88$) than liberals ($M = 2.89, SD = 1.91, p = .010$), but not significantly different from conservatives ($M = 3.5, SD = 1.87$). A significant difference also emerged for negative humor evaluation ($F(2, 171) = 2.97, p = .054$), such that participants identifying as "middle of the road" rated humor as significantly less negatively ($M = 5.35, SD = 2.09$) than liberals ($M = 6.24, SD = 1.78, p = .022$). Interestingly, liberals and conservatives did not significantly differ from each other in their positive or negative evaluations. Regardless, political orientation was retained as a covariate in later analyses.

Rape culture awareness. Bivariate correlations were run between the dependent measures and the indicators of rape culture awareness previously described (i.e., rape prevalence estimate composite, each attitude strength measure). Two significant relationships emerged, one between interest in rape as a cultural issue and positive humor evaluation ($r = -.20, p = .014$), and the other between interest and negative humor evaluation ($r = .17, p = .029$). No other

significant relationships were found, and as such interest was the only aspects of rape culture awareness that were retained as covariates in later analyses.

Course level. Because the participants in the current sample consisted of students in both 100-level and 600 level courses, I examined mean differences in humor evaluations between course levels. No significant differences emerged between lower and upper level students in their positive or negative humor evaluations ($F_s(1, 156) < 1.08, p_s > .300$). Course level was therefore excluded as a covariate from subsequent analyses.

Participant composition of study sessions. Because participant sex was found to influence humor evaluation, and because laughter and humor enjoyment are subject to the effects of social contagion, research assistants recorded the number of women and men (and therefore total participants) in each study session. In order to examine the relationships between these variables and the outcome variables within each condition, bivariate correlations were conducted. The numbers of women, men, and total participants were not significantly related to humor evaluation in the subversive or reinforcing conditions, however the percentage of women within each study session was found to be related to humor evaluation in these two conditions ($r = -.16, p = .038$), suggesting that having higher ratios of women to men in the study sessions was associated less positive humor evaluations among all participants.

In the neutral condition, the number of total participants was significantly related to negative clip evaluation ($r = .32, p = .014$), suggesting that the more participants that were present in neutral sessions, the more likely they were to rate the humor negatively. Other relationships also emerged as significant in this condition; the number of women present was significantly related to positive clip evaluation ($r = -.35, p = .007$), negative clip evaluation ($r = .34, p = .009$). Together, these results suggest that when more women were present in the

sessions using neutral playlists, participants rated the jokes more negatively. Given these findings, the number of female participants and the percentage of women in the study session were both included as covariates in later analyses.

Prior exposure to jokes in stimuli. Consistent with Study 1, prior exposure to the stimuli did not relate to participants' evaluations of the humor to which they were exposed ($F_s(1, 167) < 1.22, ps > .27$). It was therefore not included as a covariate in later analyses.

Prior experiences involving sex without consent. Participants who reported that they had experienced sex without consent did not differ significantly from those who reported they had not experienced it, in either their positive or negative humor evaluation ($F_s(1, 173) < .513, ps > .475$). Therefore, this individual difference variable was not included as a covariate in later analyses.

Social desirability. Lastly, the relationship between social desirability scores and humor evaluations was once again examined. Contrary to Study 1, bivariate correlations revealed no significant relationships between social desirability and humor evaluation ($r_s < |.11|, ps > .148$). Social desirability was therefore not included as a covariate in subsequent analyses.

Differences in Humor Evaluation across Humor Types

As in Study 1, the composite scores created from positive and negative evaluation ratings were used as dependent variables to test for significant differences in evaluations of the clips across conditions using multivariate analysis of covariance. The independent variable was once again playlist condition (i.e., reinforcing, subversive, or neutral), and the combined dependent variable was participants' positive and negative evaluation scores. Sex, political orientation, interest in rape as a cultural issue, and the number and percentage of female participants were included as covariates to control for any differences in evaluation based on those characteristics.

The initial MANCOVA revealed that the covariates did not have a significant influence on the combined DV's of positive and negative humor evaluation (Pillai's Trace < .024, $F_s(2, 148) < 1.89, p_s > .16$). Thus, the covariates were removed to conserve degrees of freedom and a MANOVA was run without covariates. Box's test of homogeneity was not significant (Box's $M = 12.53, p = .055$), indicating that covariance of the dependent variables across groups was similar. However, because the test was approaching significance, and because of other assumption violations explain above, Pillai's Trace was used because it is robust to such violations. As shown in Table 10, humor type had a significant effect on the combined DV's of positive and negative humor evaluations (Pillai's Trace = .220, $F(4, 344) = 10.62, p < .001, \eta^2 = .110$). The univariate ANOVA revealed that humor type had a significant effect on positive humor evaluations ($F(2, 172) = 10.38, p < .001, \eta^2 = .108$). As displayed in Figure 4, post-hoc Scheffe tests further demonstrated that, consistent with Study 1, reinforcing rape jokes were evaluated as significantly lower on positive characteristics ($M = 2.74, SD = 1.60$) than subversive rape jokes ($M = 3.59, SD = 1.95, p = .041$) and neutral sex jokes ($M = 4.28, SD = 1.87, p < .001$). Subversive rape jokes were not evaluated as significantly different in positive characteristics, compared to neutral sex jokes ($p = .126$).

With respect to negative humor evaluations, the univariate ANOVA also revealed a significant effect for humor type ($F(2, 172) = 23.51, p < .001, \eta^2 = .215$). Also shown in Figure 4 and consistent with Study 1, post-hoc Scheffe tests demonstrated that reinforcing rape jokes were evaluated as significantly higher on negative characteristics ($M = 6.84, SD = 1.60$) than subversive rape jokes ($M = 5.68, SD = 1.76, p = .003$) and neutral sex jokes ($M = 4.54, SD = 1.99, p < .001$). Subversive rape jokes were also evaluated as significantly more negative than neutral sex jokes ($p = .003$).

These results add further support to my hypotheses by demonstrating that there are significant differences in how individuals evaluated reinforcing humor, compared to subversive humor. Consistent with Study 1, jokes intended to reinforce rape culture were evaluated as significantly less positive (i.e., funny, enjoyable, clever, prosocial) and significantly more negative (i.e., belittling, offensive, ignorant, antisocial) than those intended to subvert rape culture, and subversive rape humor was evaluated more negatively than neutral humor.

Further testing of evaluations with single DV. As in Study 1, in addition to examining positive and negative humor evaluations, I again tested to see if the effects would hold when the positive and negative evaluation ratings were combined into one composite variable. Reverse coding the negative clip evaluation items and combining them with the positive evaluation items resulted in strong reliability for all eight humor characteristics ($\alpha = .93$). Thus, I again created a composite DV by averaging the eight scores to produce an overall humor evaluation score, for which higher scores indicated more positive evaluations.

I then tested the potential covariates as I had previously done for the positive and negative evaluations, and results were generally consistent with the previously reported findings. Specifically, there was a significant difference in overall humor evaluation between men and women ($F(1, 173) = 5.29, p = .023$), and between political orientations ($F(2, 171) = 4.02, p = .020$) such that “middle of the road” participants tended to provide more positive overall humor evaluations ($M = 4.23, SD = 1.84$) compared to liberals ($M = 3.27, SD = 1.65$). No significant differences emerged in overall humor evaluation between White and non-White participants ($F(1, 164) = .003, p = .959$), between course levels ($F(1, 156) = .70, p = .405$), between participants who had and had not heard some of the jokes before ($F(1, 167) = .145, p = .704$), or between those who had or had not previously experienced sex without consent ($F(1, 173) = .34,$

$p = .561$). None of the continuous variables (i.e., age, participant sex composition, number of participants in each study session, or social desirability scores) were significantly related to overall humor evaluation ($r_s < |.10|$, $p_s > .206$). Given these findings, I retained only sex and political orientation as covariates in the following analysis.

A univariate ANCOVA revealed that after accounting for the influence of sex and political orientation, humor type had a significant effect on overall humor evaluation ($F(2, 169) = 21.59$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .204$). Post-hoc Scheffe tests demonstrated significant differences in overall positive clip evaluation between each of the three conditions. Specifically, neutral humor was rated as significantly more positive overall ($M = 4.87$, $SD = 1.72$) than either reinforcing ($M = 2.92$, $SD = 1.48$, $p < .001$) or subversive humor ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 1.70$, $p = .006$). Subversive humor was also rated as significantly more positive overall than reinforcing humor ($p = .007$). These results demonstrate that while neutral (non-rape) humor was evaluated more positively than either form of rape humor, subversive rape humor was evaluated more positively than reinforcing rape humor.

Preliminary Analyses for Quantitative Subtext Recognition

In order to examine whether potential covariates led to significant differences in recognition of either type of humor subtext, a series of one-way ANOVA's was conducted to test whether sex, ethnicity, political orientation, prior exposure to the humor, previous experience involving sex without consent, the course level from which participants were recruited, or the composition of participants in each study session was related to quantitative measure of understanding, subtext recognition. Correlations were also conducted in order to determine if

relationships existed between age, social desirability, rape culture awareness, or the number of participants in each study session, and subtext recognition.⁷

Demographic comparisons. In examining group differences in recognizing reinforcing and subversive subtext in humor, no significant differences emerged between men and women ($F_s(1, 172) < 2.37, p_s > .126$), between Whites and non-Whites ($F_s(1, 164) < .08, p_s > .774$), or between political orientations ($F_s(2, 171) < 1.72, p_s > .183$). Bivariate correlations revealed that participants' age was also not significantly related to their recognition of either type of subtext ($r_s < .05, p_s > .505$). Given these outcomes, sex, ethnicity, and political orientation, and age were not included as covariates in later analyses.

Rape culture awareness. Bivariate correlations revealed that none of the components of rape culture awareness measured in the present study were significantly related to recognition of subversive or reinforcing subtext ($r_s < .11, p_s > .157$), with the exception of accessibility ($r = .16, p = .049$). This suggests that the more individuals thought and talked about the issue of rape, the more they recognized the subtext present in rape humor (across conditions). Given this finding, accessibility was retained as a covariate in later analyses on subtext recognition.

Course level. In testing for significant differences in subtext recognition between 100- and 600- level course participants, no significant difference emerged in reinforcing subtext recognition ($F(1, 155) = 2.17, p = .143$). A significant difference did emerge between the 100-level course and the 600-level course for subversive subtext recognition ($F(1, 156) = 13.16, p < .001$) such that participants in the 100-level course demonstrated significantly higher subversive subtext recognition ($M = 4.94, SD = 1.87$) than individuals in the 600-level course ($M = 3.68, SD = 1.78$). However, in examining mean differences between course groups *within each condition*,

⁷ Again, the equal cell size assumption was not met for these analyses.

no significant differences were found. That is, among participants exposed to subversive jokes, there was no significant difference in subversive subtext recognition between the lower- and upper-level course groups. The same was true for participants exposed to reinforcing jokes, and to neutral jokes. Given that course level did not significantly affect subtext recognition within each condition, it was not included as a covariate in later analyses.

Participant composition of study sessions. The number of women, men, and total participants was not significantly related to subtext recognition in the subversive or reinforcing conditions ($r_s < .17, p_s > .191$), but the number of women present was significantly related to subversive subtext recognition in the neutral condition ($r = -.28, p = .037$). These results suggest that when more women were present in the sessions using neutral playlists, participants were less likely to recognize subversive subtext in the humor. However, given that the neutral humor was devoid of such messages, and that no similar relationships emerged in the manipulated conditions, it is likely that these relationships are spurious.

Additionally, the percentage of women within each study session was found to be related to subversive subtext recognition across studies ($r = -.19, p = .012$), suggesting that in sessions with a greater ration of women to men, all participants demonstrated decreased recognition of subversive subtext. However, upon examining correlations within each condition, there was no relationship between percentage of women in each session, and the subtext recognition variables. Thus, participant sex composition and total participant numbers were not included in later analyses as covariates.

Prior exposure to jokes in stimuli. When examining differences between participants who reported that they had previously heard some of the jokes, and those who had not, no significant differences emerged in recognition of either type of subtext recognition ($F_s (1, 167) <$

2.76, $ps > .099$). Thus, prior exposure to the humor was not included as a covariate in later analyses.

Prior experiences involving sex without consent. Contrary to the findings in Study 1, participants who had experienced sex without consent at some point *did* significantly differ from those who had not in reinforcing subtext recognition ($F(1, 172) = 6.98, p = .009$). This occurred in the direction that would be expected, with individuals who had such prior experiences scoring higher on reinforcing subtext recognition ($M = 5.14, SD = 2.19$) in the reinforcing stimuli, compared to those that had not previously had such experiences ($M = 4.22, SD = 1.95$). Upon examining this effect within conditions, a similar pattern, trending toward significance, was found between groups exposed to reinforcing jokes ($F(1, 54) = 3.13, p = .082$). It is likely that with a larger sample size, this effect would have reached significance. (The present study had 58 people in the reinforcing condition, with 11 people reporting prior non-consensual sex, and 47 reporting they had not experienced it.) Similar effects did not emerge in the subversive or reinforcing conditions, or for subversive subtext recognition in any condition. But given the findings above, this individual difference was accounted for as a precaution in later analyses involving subtext recognition.

Social desirability. Finally, in examining the relationships between social desirability scores and recognition of either type of subtext, bivariate correlations revealed that contrary to Study 1, no significant relationships existed ($rs < .13, ps > .092$). Therefore, social desirability was not included as a covariate in subsequent analyses.

Differences in Subtext Recognition across Humor Types

As done in Study 1, the composite scores created from subversive and reinforcing subtext recognition ratings were used as dependent variables in a multivariate analysis of covariance to

test for significant differences in recognition of subtext across humor conditions. The independent variable was again playlist condition (i.e., reinforcing, subversive, or neutral), and the set of composite dependent variables was participants' recognition ratings of the subtext in their humor playlist as reinforcing or subversive. Accessibility to the issue of rape and previous experience of sex without consent were included as covariates, however the initial MANCOVA revealed no significant effect on the model for either variable ($F_s(2, 146) < 2.74, p_s > .068$), and as such the two variables were removed in order to save degrees of freedom, and a MANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of humor type on the combined DV's of reinforcing and subversive subtext recognition.

Box's test for homogeneity of variance was significant (Box's $M = 28.43, p < .001$) indicating heterogeneity of variance across conditions, and therefore Pillai's Trace was employed for its robustness to such assumption violations. As shown in Table 11 and consistent with Study 1, humor type had a significant effect on the combined DV's of subversive and reinforcing subtext recognition (Pillai's Trace = .562, $F(4, 342) = 33.40, p < .001, \eta^2 = .291$). The univariate ANOVA then revealed a significant main effect for humor type on reinforcing subtext recognition ($F(2, 171) = 21.27, p < .001, \eta^2 = .199$). As displayed in Figure 5, post-hoc Scheffe tests demonstrated that reinforcing rape jokes produced significantly greater reinforcing subtext recognition ($M = 5.72, SD = 2.10$), compared to subversive rape jokes ($M = 4.19, SD = 1.73, p < .001$) and to neutral sex jokes ($M = 3.52, SD = 1.69, p < .001$). Participants' reinforcing subtext recognition did not significantly differ between the subversive condition and the neutral condition ($p = .150$).

Univariate analyses also revealed a significant main effect for humor type on subversive subtext recognition ($F(2, 171) = 50.59, p < .001, \eta^2 = .372$). Also shown in Figure 5, post-hoc

Scheffe tests further demonstrated that subversive rape jokes produced significantly greater subversive subtext recognition ($M = 5.93$, $SD = 1.20$), compared to reinforcing rape jokes ($M = 4.71$, $SD = 1.46$, $p < .001$) and neutral sex jokes ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 1.84$, $p < .001$). Participants also scored significantly higher on subversive subtext recognition in the reinforcing condition compared to the neutral condition ($p < .001$), but this makes sense, given that the neutral sex jokes contained no references to rape.

All together, these results are consistent with Study 1 and again demonstrate that there are significant differences in how individuals understand these two types of rape humor. Specifically, participants exposed to reinforcing rape jokes were more likely than those exposed to other humor types to recognize rape culture-reinforcing ideas as representative of the humor they heard. Likewise, participants exposed to subversive rape jokes were more likely than those exposed to other humor types to recognize rape culture-challenging ideas as representative of the humor they heard.

Qualitative Humor Understanding

As in Study 1, to further examine participants' understanding of the humor to which they were exposed, I again assessed participants' open-ended qualitative responses for subtext understanding and target identification in the playlist they heard. The directions provided to participants and the coding methods used were identical to those used in Study 1, with the only exception being that participants completed paper-and-pencil surveys instead of typing responses on a personal computer.

Variation in subtext understanding across humor types. Recall from Study 1 that responses to the item asking participants to identify the subtext (i.e., "subtext understanding") were coded into one of four categories, as either *reinforcing*, *subversive*, *neutral*, or *not*

applicable. (Again, refer to Table 7 for operational definitions and examples.) The independent coders reliably matched each other's ratings on 138 of the 175 cases, reaching a moderate level of inter-rater reliability ($\kappa = .71$). Next, the 37 cases that were originally disagreed upon were resolved through discussion. After all responses had been categorized, chi square tests of independence were conducted in order to examine participants' subtext understanding as it related to humor type.

It was expected, as in Study 1, that subversive humor would produce a wider range of responses in subtext understanding, compared to reinforcing and neutral humor. However, the observed distribution did not significantly differ from the distribution expected by chance ($\chi^2 (6, N = 175) = 7.79, p = .254$). These results suggest, contrary to the findings of Study 1, that participants' pattern of responses regarding their subtext understanding did not differ depending on the type of humor they heard (see Table 12).

Variation in target identification across humor types. Following the same process as described above, chi square tests of independence were also conducted using participants' identification of the targets in the humor they heard. Recall from Study 1 that responses to the item asking participants to identify the target (i.e., "target identification") were coded into *five* categories (instead of four) due to participants' responses being shorter and less detailed. Target identification responses were therefore coded as falling in one of the five categories of *reinforcing*, *subversive*, *both reinforcing and subversive*, *neither reinforcing or subversive*, or *not applicable*. The independent coders reliably matched each other's ratings on 152 of the 175 cases, resulting in a good inter-rater reliability ($\kappa = .82$). Next, the 23 cases that were originally disagreed upon were resolved through discussion. After all responses had been categorized, chi

square tests of independence were conducted in order to examine participants' target understanding as it related to humor type.

Contrary to Study 1 but consistent with the above analysis of subtext understanding in Study 2, no significant deviation was detected ($\chi^2(8, N = 175) = 6.06, p = .640$), suggesting that participants' responses were not related to the type of humor they heard (see Table 13).

Bivariate Relationships

Following the examination of differences in humor evaluation and understanding across conditions, bivariate correlations were conducted in order to examine the relationships among participants' scores on the individual difference measures included in Study 2, and their evaluation and understanding of the clips to which they were exposed. It should be noted that, consistent with Study 1, both positive clip evaluation ($r = -.30, p < .001$) and negative clip evaluation ($r = .35, p < .001$) were associated with recognition of reinforcing subtext, but not with recognition of subversive subtext ($r_s < |.12|, p_s > .119$), suggesting that reinforcing subtext recognition was related to humor evaluation, but subversive subtext recognition was not. Also, the individual difference variables were generally related as expected, with positive relationships emerging among SDO, CHB, IRMA, and ATP, which in turn were negatively related to PMAPS and some components of rape culture awareness.

However, in order to remain focused on the primary relationships of interest in Study 2, the correlations reported below are between the individual difference variables and the dependent variables of clip evaluation and subtext recognition. Correlations across all conditions are reported first, followed by the relationships within the reinforcing and subversive conditions. For a complete listing of all correlations, refer to Table 14 for the relationships across all conditions, and Table 15 for the relationships within conditions.

Cavalier humor beliefs. Collapsed across all conditions, participants' cavalier humor belief (CHB) scores were significantly positively correlated with positive clip evaluation ($r = .44, p < .001$) and subversive subtext recognition ($r = .21, p = .005$). Participants' CHB scores were significantly negatively correlated with negative clip evaluation ($r = -.35, p < .001$) and reinforcing subtext recognition ($r = -.25, p = .001$). These findings suggest that the tendency to trivialize humor's ability to harm the group(s) it targets is generally associated with more positive evaluations, less negative evaluations, decreased recognition of reinforcing subtext, and increased recognition of subversive subtext.

Within the subversive condition, a similar pattern emerged, in which cavalier humor beliefs were significantly positively correlated with positive clip evaluation ($r = .38, p = .003$) and subversive subtext recognition ($r = .26, p = .042$), and significantly negatively correlated with negative clip evaluation ($r = -.43, p = .001$), and reinforcing subtext recognition ($r = -.27, p = .041$). In the reinforcing condition, cavalier humor beliefs were significantly positively correlated with positive clip evaluation ($r = .51, p < .001$) and significantly negatively correlated with negative clip evaluation ($r = -.54, p < .001$), but not with either type of subtext recognition ($r_s < |.25|, p_s > .065$). In the neutral condition, CHB was also associated with positive evaluations of neutral sex jokes ($r = .52, p < .001$), but not with any of the other three DVs ($r_s < |.24|, p_s > .068$). Thus, while it was hypothesized ($H_{2.4}$) that higher CHB scores would be associated with positive evaluations of reinforcing humor and negative evaluations of subversive humor, positive evaluations occurred in response to *all* types of humor, suggesting that in the current sample, the tendency to trivialize humor's potential for harm was associated with an appreciation of humor in general.

Rape myth acceptance. The only significant relationship to emerge across conditions with respect to rape myth acceptance (RMA) was a significant positive relationship with positive humor evaluations ($r = .18, p = .018$), suggesting that greater acceptance of false beliefs about rape was associated with more positive evaluations of humor. Upon examining the correlations within conditions, no relationships emerged between RMA and the DV's in response to subversive jokes ($rs < |.24|, ps > .066$) or neutral jokes ($rs < |.15|, ps > .267$), but RMA was positively related to positive humor evaluation ($r = .28, p = .036$) and negatively related to negative humor evaluation ($r = -.28, p = .033$) in response to reinforcing jokes. This suggests, as expected ($H_{2.5}$), that greater acceptance of false beliefs about rape is associated with more positive evaluations and less negative evaluations of jokes that reinforce rape culture.

Pressuring behaviors. Of the four subscales that make up this construct, three significant relationships emerged across conditions. Personal acceptance of attempts to pressure (ATP) was positively associated with positive humor evaluations ($r = .19, p = .014$), while personal acceptance of benign dating behaviors (BDB) was negatively associated with negative humor evaluations ($r = -.15, p = .041$). Together, these two findings provide some indication that acceptance of pressuring behaviors and acceptance of benign dating behaviors were both associated with more positive perceptions of humor in general. Perceptions of others' acceptance of attempts to pressure (ATPO) was related to reinforcing subtext recognition across conditions ($r = .17, p = .024$), but was not associated with either positive or negative humor evaluation ($rs < |.12|, ps > .127$), and perceptions of others' acceptance of benign dating behaviors (BDBO) was not related to any of the four DV's ($rs < |.09|, ps > .227$).

Within the subversive condition, the only significant relationship to emerge was between BDB and subversive subtext recognition ($r = .32, p = .014$), suggesting that in response to

subversive humor, the preference for more traditional forms of initiating relationships (e.g., a man asking a woman out for ice cream) was associated with the recognition of subtext that challenge rape culture.

Within the reinforcing condition, there were a handful of significant relationships; as expected, ATP was positively associated with positive humor evaluations ($r = .39, p = .003$) and negatively associated with negative evaluations ($r = -.40, p = .002$). This suggests that greater acceptance of pressuring behaviors was associated with more positive perceptions of jokes that reinforce rape culture, to which pressuring behaviors also contribute (Strain et al., in press). Further, BDB was negatively associated with reinforcing subtext recognition ($r = -.35, p = .008$), suggesting, somewhat contrary to the findings stated above, that the preference for more traditional ways of initiating relationships is associated with less recognition of messages that reinforces rape culture. Lastly, while some relationships emerged in the correlational findings across conditions, ATPO and BDBO were not significantly associated with humor evaluations or subtext recognition ($r_s < |.22|, p_s > .109$) in the reinforcing condition, with one exception: perceptions of others' acceptance of benign dating behaviors (BDBO) was negatively associated with reinforcing subtext recognition ($r = -.31, p = .020$). This suggests that in addition to one's own acceptance of traditional ways to initiate dating relationships (BDB), the perception that others have a preference for these methods (BDBO) is also associated with decreased recognition of reinforcing subtext in reinforcing rape humor.

Together, these relationships suggest that acceptance of pressuring behaviors and of benign dating behaviors may both be related to the ways in which individuals evaluate each type of rape humor, and whether or not they are able to recognize the subtext of the jokes.

Individual Differences as Moderators

In order to examine whether individual differences interacted with humor type to predict evaluations and understanding of humor, a series of multiple linear regression analyses was conducted. One set of regressions examined the effect of each proposed individual difference variables on the relationship between humor type and the composite dependent measure of overall humor evaluation. The other two sets of regressions each examined the dependent measures of subtext recognition – one on reinforcing subtext, and one on neutral subtext.

All regressions employed the same basic steps. Based on earlier analyses, Step 1 of each regression controlled for the demographic variables of sex, political orientation, previous experience with sexual assault, and the interest and accessibility components of rape culture awareness. The number and percentage of women in the data collection session were also controlled for in Step 1. Next, the standardized individual difference variable was entered in Step 2 of each regression, followed in Step 3 by the dummy-coded condition variables. Finally, Step 4 carried the 2-way interaction terms between the individual difference variable and the dummy-coded condition variables. Significant interactions were probed with simple slopes analyses to determine how the relationships between the individual differences and the DV varied by condition. With the exception of the broad explanations of findings below, the results reported are grouped by dependent variable, and statistical details are provided only for the individual variables for which a significant interaction (with dummy-coded condition variables) emerged. Complete regression results are provided in Tables 16-36.

Testing attitudinal moderators of humor evaluation. It was hypothesized that the individual difference variables of social dominance orientation ($H_{2.1}$), cavalier humor beliefs ($H_{2.4}$), rape myth acceptance ($H_{2.5}$), and acceptance of attempts to pressure ($H_{2.7}$) would each

interact with humor type to predict humor evaluations, such that exposure to reinforcing rape humor would produce more positive evaluations of jokes among individuals higher on each of these attitudinal variables. Generally speaking, these effects were expected because jokes that reinforce rape culture, and therefore the existing power structure, would be consistent with such attitudes. However, these hypotheses were not supported, as the variables did not interact significantly with condition to predict positive perceptions of any one specific humor type. (Refer to Tables 16-19 for full regression results).

Testing cognitive moderators of humor evaluation. In addition to the attitudinal variables discussed above, the cognitive variables of rape culture awareness (i.e., estimates of rape prevalence; $H_{2.11}$) and need for cognition ($H_{2.13}$) were expected to interact with humor type to predict humor evaluations, such that exposure to subversive rape humor would produce more positive evaluations of the jokes. These effects were expected because individuals who are more aware of the issue of rape, and who tend to enjoy thinking, should be appreciative of the intention and cleverness that is characteristic of subversive humor. However, neither estimates of rape prevalence nor need for cognition moderated the relationship between humor type and overall clip evaluation. (Refer to Tables 20-22 for full regression results)

PMASS. The propensity to make attributions to sexism ($H_{2.9}$) was expected interact with humor type such that *both* reinforcing and subversive humor would be evaluated more negatively, compared to neutral sex jokes. In testing this variable as a moderator (see Table 16), this hypothesis was partially supported. The step carrying the interaction term significantly improved the model ($R^2 \text{ change} = .04$, $F \text{ change} (2, 137) = 4.06$, $p = .019$), such that in response to subversive rape jokes, the propensity to make attributions to sexism was associated with less positive humor evaluations ($\beta = -.46$, $t = -2.98$, $p = .003$). This suggests that, as expected,

individuals with the tendency to attribute an ambiguous behavior (e.g., a controversial joke) to prejudice (in this case, to sexism) may exhibit a “knee-jerk” response in which it is immediately dismissed as inappropriate, without further consideration of other explanations. In the case of subversive rape humor, for individuals higher in PMASS, the literal meaning (i.e., a joke about rape) appeared to override the subtext (i.e., that rape is bad), resulting in less positive perceptions of the humor. However, this effect did not occur (at significant levels) for reinforcing rape humor ($\beta = -.20, t = -1.58, p = .116$). Although it was originally hypothesized that PMASS levels would affect evaluations of reinforcing humor, in retrospect, the observed outcome makes more logical sense; because of the jokes’ decreased ambiguity (i.e., they were more obviously inappropriate/offensive), they should receive less positive evaluations than subversive humor, regardless of the propensity to recognize sexism.

Testing attitudinal moderators of subtext recognition. It was hypothesized that the individual difference variables of social dominance orientation ($H_{2.2-2.3}$), rape myth acceptance ($H_{2.6}$), and acceptance of attempts to pressure ($H_{2.8}$) would each interact with humor type to predict humor understanding, such that exposure to subversive rape humor would produce decreased subversive subtext recognition among individuals higher on each of these attitudinal variables. Cavalier humor beliefs were also tested on an exploratory basis. With the exception of social dominance orientation (for which there were competing hypotheses), the above effects were predicted because jokes perceived as subverting rape culture, and therefore the existing power structure, would be inconsistent with the mindset behind these attitudes. With the exception of social dominance, no significant interactions emerged in testing these attitudinal variables as moderators of the relationship between humor type and subtext recognition. (Refer

to Tables 23-26 for results on reinforcing subtext recognition, and Tables 30-33 for results on subversive subtext recognition.)

SDO. It was originally hypothesized that SDO could be associated with either decreased ($H_{2.2}$) or increased ($H_{2.3}$) understanding of the subtext in subversive rape humor. Decreased understanding would suggest that individuals higher in SDO did not grasp the subversive subtext because it did not fit with their worldview, whereas increased understanding of the subtext would suggest that they understood it because it challenged their worldview. In testing social dominance as a moderator (see Table 30), the step carrying the interaction term significantly improved the model (R^2 change = .04, F change (2, 139) = 4.90, p = .009), above and beyond the effects of SDO (in Step 2) and of humor type (in Step 3). Upon probing the interaction using simple slopes, a counterintuitive, and somewhat puzzling, significant effect emerged demonstrating that in response to neutral sex jokes, SDO was associated with increased subversive subtext recognition (β = .47, t = 3.65, p < .001). Similar effects did not occur in response to reinforcing (β = .03, t = .26, p = .793) or subversive rape humor (β = .003, t = .024, p = .981).

Testing cognitive moderators of subtext recognition. In addition to the attitudinal variables discussed above, the cognitive variables of rape culture awareness (i.e., estimates of rape prevalence; $H_{2.12}$) and need for cognition ($H_{2.14}$) were expected to interact with humor type to predict subtext recognition, such that exposure to subversive rape humor would produce increased recognition of subversive subtext. These effects were expected because individuals who are more aware of the issue of rape, and who tend to enjoy thinking, would be more apt to recognize the underlying message present in such humor. However, while I did find effects for need for cognition, estimates of rape prevalence were not found to predict subtext recognition.

(See Tables 27-29 for results on reinforcing subtext recognition, and Tables 34-36 for results in subversive subtext recognition).

NFC. As shown in Table 36, the regression step carrying the interaction terms for need for cognition and humor type significantly improved the model (R^2 change = .32, F change (2, 139) = 4.01, p = .020). Simple slopes analyses demonstrated, contrary to expectations, that the need for cognition was associated with increased subversive subtext recognition in response to neutral sex jokes (β = -.31, t = -2.77, p = .006), but not in response to subversive (β = .14, t = 1.25, p = .214) or reinforcing rape humor (β = -.07, t = -.63, p = .533). It is possible that this finding occurred because individuals higher on need for cognition would have made more effort to find subtext even when it was not present, which may have inflated their subtext recognition ratings.

PMASS. The propensity to make attributions to sexism was expected to interact with humor type such that exposure to subversive humor would produce decreased recognition of subversive subtext ($H_{2.10}$), given the “knee jerk” response discussed above. That is, higher PMASS would be associated with dismissing a subversive rape joke as sexist, before fully considering the underlying message. No such effect was found for recognition of subversive subtext, however, an effect approaching significance did emerge for recognition of reinforcing subtext (see Table 27). The step carrying the interaction term between PMASS and humor type nearly reached significance in predicting recognition of reinforcing subtext (R^2 change = .03, F change (2, 136) = 2.89, p = .06). Upon exploratory probing, an effect was found suggesting that PMASS was related to increased reinforcing subtext recognition in response to neutral sex jokes (β = .28, t = 2.32, p = .022), but not in response to reinforcing (β = -.14, t = -1.05, p = .296) or subversive rape humor (β = .07, t = .414, p = .679). While this finding is contrary to

expectations, it is somewhat suggestive of the notion that individuals higher in PMASS may have been searching for sexism (in the form of rape-culture reinforcing statements) in sex jokes that were based on themes of consensual sex between partners. However, this result should be interpreted with caution, given that step carrying the interaction term did not quite reach statistical significance.

Testing subtext recognition as a moderator of humor evaluation. In addition to examining the interactions between each individual difference variable and humor type, I also wanted to examine recognition of subversive subtext as a moderator variable. Doing so allows for the examination of understanding and evaluation in the same model (instead of being tested as separate DV's), which will provide additional insight into the role of understanding in affecting evaluation, based on individual difference variables. Given that the primary interest in the current studies is subversive humor (due to its greater complexity, and potential for promoting more prosocial messages), I conducted regressions within the subversive condition only, to see if individual difference variables interacted with subversive subtext recognition to predict evaluations of the subversive humor.

Step 1 of the regressions was identical to those described previously, accounting for sex, political orientation, previous experience with sexual assault, and the interest and accessibility components of rape culture awareness. Step 2 entered the standardized individual difference variable of each regression, followed by Step 3, which entered the standardized variable of subversive subtext recognition. Step 4 then carried the 2-way interaction terms between the individual difference variable and subversive subtext recognition. If they occurred, significant interactions were probed with simple slopes analyses to determine how the relationship between the individual difference and subversive subtext recognition interacted to affect humor

evaluation. As per the above method of reporting regression findings, all results are reported in Tables 37-43, and variables for which significant interactions occurred are described below. A significant interaction occurred for rape myth acceptance, but the other individual difference variables did not interact with subversive subtext recognition to predict subversive humor evaluations.

RMA. It was expected ($H_{2.5}$) that rape myth acceptance would interact with subversive subtext recognition, such that when subversive jokes were understood as such (i.e., recognition is higher), higher levels of RMA would be associated with decreased positive evaluations of the jokes because their subversive nature would challenge rape myths. This hypothesis was not supported (see Table 39). The step in the regression that carried the interaction term did significantly improve the model above and beyond the effects of RMA and subversive subtext recognition alone ($R^2 \text{ change} = .10$, $F \text{ change} (1, 41) = 7.70$, $p = .008$). However, upon probing the interaction, simple slopes revealed that contrary to expectations, when subversive subtext recognition was high (indicating higher levels of understanding), RMA was not related to humor evaluation ($\beta = .19$, $t = 1.10$, $p = .277$). But when subversive subtext recognition was *lower* (i.e., the jokes were not understood as subversive), higher levels of RMA were associated with higher levels of overall positive evaluation ($\beta = 1.50$, $t = 3.49$, $p = .001$). This suggests that when individuals higher on RMA were exposed to subversive humor but did not recognize its subtext, they evaluated the humor positively.

Exploratory Behavioral Measure

Finally, in order to examine the exploratory behavioral measure, I calculated the total number of individuals who were recorded as having kept the *Wildcats Against Rape* flyer in their survey packets. Out of 175 participants, a total of 43 people (24.6 %) chose to take the flyer.

Chi square tests of independence revealed a non-significant difference across conditions in participants' decision to take the flyer or not ($\chi^2(2, N = 175) = .85, p = .652$), demonstrating that the type of humor to which participants were exposed was not related to their decision to take a flyer. This lack of effect is likely due to the low rates of participants' taking the flyer and consequent lack of variability in this behavioral measure. Future research should pursue alternative, more direct behavioral measures with greater variability in order to examine whether humor type may affect individuals' behavior toward a rape-related issue.

In order to gain insight into whether individual differences may have played a role in participants' decisions to take or leave the flyer, point bi-serial correlations were conducted between each individual difference measure, and whether or not participants took the flyer. However, no significant relationships emerged ($r_s < .13$, $p_s > .103$), suggesting that individual differences were not related to participants' decision to take or leave the informational flyer.

Study 2 Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to replicate the major findings from Study 1, and to further examine those findings by investigating the role of attitudinal and cognitive individual difference variables in affecting humor evaluation and understanding. As in Study 1, reinforcing rape humor was evaluated more negatively than subversive rape humor, which was in turn was seen as more negative than neutral humor. Reinforcing rape humor was also evaluated less positively than both subversive rape humor and neutral humor. Also replicated from Study 1 was the finding that humor type affected quantitative subtext recognition; individuals exposed to subversive jokes scored higher on subversive subtext recognition than on reinforcing subtext recognition, while the opposite was true for individuals exposed to reinforcing jokes.

When examining the relationships between individual difference variables and humor evaluation, some interesting but unanticipated relationships emerged with respect to cavalier humor beliefs, which were associated with more positive humor evaluations of not just reinforcing rape humor as expected, but subversive and neutral jokes as well. Rape myth acceptance was positively associated with positive humor evaluations as expected, as was acceptance of attempts to pressure. Interestingly, acceptance of benign dating behaviors, though not expected to significantly relate to any of the DV's, was negatively associated with negative humor evaluations. In addition to these relationships that were collapsed across conditions, many other relationships emerged within conditions as well. Cavalier humor beliefs were associated with both evaluation and subtext recognition in the subversive condition, and in the reinforcing condition, CHB, RMA, and ATP all were associated with the humor evaluation DV's in that ways that were expected. Thus, the current study adds to what is now known about how individuals interpret rape humor.

However, it should be noted that some of my hypotheses were not supported: the results of the qualitative chi square analysis did not replicate Study 1, some expected bivariate relationships did not emerge between some individual differences and the DV's, and several expected moderator relationships did not emerge as expected. Although social dominance orientation, need for cognition, and PMASS did moderate the relationship between humor type and subtext recognition, they did not moderate in the manner that was predicted. In fact, the only moderator to emerge in the expected direction was PMASS, which moderated the relationship between humor type and humor evaluation: in response to subversive jokes, the propensity to attribute ambiguous behaviors to sexism was associated with negative evaluations of subversive humor, indicating that individuals who score higher on this construct may be quick to label a

joke involving rape as sexist, and in the process do not consider alternative (and potentially prosocial) meanings of the joke. In sum, these findings offer the first evidence that individual difference variables, especially those related to current cultural power dynamics (i.e., CHB, RMA, ATP, PMASS) are related to the ways that individuals evaluate and understand rape humor. But along with that, it may also be informative to examine the effects that emerged, or failed to emerge, that were inconsistent with my original hypotheses in order to better explore the evidence for how rape humor is evaluated and understood.

It was particularly surprising that social dominance orientation was not related to any of the dependent measures of humor evaluation or understanding. It correlated with other constructs as expected, relating positively to cavalier humor beliefs, rape myth acceptance, and acceptance of attempts to pressure ($r_s > .26, p_s \leq .001$), and relating negatively to PMASS, and the interest and accessibility components of rape culture awareness ($r_s > .16, p_s \leq .046$; see Table 14), suggesting that there were no issues with the (well-validated) measure itself in this particular sample. Further, previous research has established a clear link between SDO and the variables of RMA (Hockett et al., 2009), and CHB (Hodson et al., 2010), two individual differences that behaved almost exactly as expected in the current study. Perhaps then, the underlying aspect of SDO that drives its relationships with these measures, was actually not present in the humor that was employed in the current studies. That is, while rape and rape culture are in fact elements of a *sexual* hierarchy that pervades our culture, the beliefs that comprise SDO may be more relevant to the *general* social hierarchy (e.g., that which is class-based). If this is the case, one's views on whether some groups should have higher status may not necessarily be related to his or her response to rape humor, which would suggest that the link between SDO, RMA, and CHB is based in a more general aspect of dominance, as opposed to

sexual dominance. That is, while the rape jokes in the current studies did contain clear elements relating to false beliefs about rape (i.e., RMA), and the potential for humor to harm (i.e., CHB), they were not clearly related to the more general social hierarchy that is relevant to SDO.

Also rather perplexing was the finding that with the exception of PMASS, none of the attitudinal or cognitive variables tested acted as moderators of the relationship between humor type and humor evaluation. Further, the variables that moderated the relationship between humor type and subtext understanding (i.e., social dominance, need for cognition, and PMASS) did not behave as expected, demonstrating relationships within the neutral condition rather than within the subversive or reinforcing conditions as expected. It may be the case that this occurred because participants had a relatively easy time with the subtext recognition in the reinforcing and neutral conditions; they easily matched which of the statements corresponded to the humor that they had heard. Perhaps participants in the neutral condition, while attempting to rate statements in the measure that were not consistent with what they heard, bent over backward to try to rate *some* of the statements as consistent (i.e., in an effort to be “good participants”) and this contributed to the odd moderation findings that emerged.

Summary

Despite not finding support for all the predictions made for the individual differences, Study 2 provides valuable insight into the ways in which individuals may respond to rape humor. I replicated the finding that reinforcing rape humor is seen as significantly less positive than either subversive humor or neutral humor, and re-established that the recognition of subtext in either type of rape humor is related to the evaluation of the rape humor. I also identified individual difference variables that were related to both the evaluation and understanding of rape humor, thus contributing to the literature on a relatively new type of humor that has become

more popular in recent years. This information has the potential to contribute to ongoing cultural discussions on the issue of rape humor, and in turn rape culture, by beginning to examine the factors that affect how people respond to humor that references rape.

General Discussion

On Wednesday, June 26, 2014, *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* aired a segment titled “The Fault in our Schools.” Stewart outlined a news story about a recent case at James Madison University, where three fraternity members had video-recorded their sexual assault on a female student, and shared it with others on campus. The school responded by assigning the attackers “expulsion upon graduation,” or as Stewart referred to it, “graduation.” After pointing out other instances in which schools had failed to hand down severe punishments for sexual assault, Stewart introduced two *Daily Show* correspondents, a man and a woman, to provide college students with a list of “safety do’s and don’ts”. Their recommendations started out as jokes about not falling asleep on a couch to avoid friends pulling pranks. But as the segment progressed, correspondent Jessica Williams’ suggestions quickly escalated to warn women about the numerous precautions they should take, while male correspondent Jordan Klepper continued to list suggestions for men that paled in comparison. The segment concluded with Klepper playing the part of someone unaware of the expectations for women that Williams had alluded to, and Williams attempting to “clue him in.”

Although the written description here can, admittedly, only convey a glimpse of the humor in this segment, it is a perfect example of the focus of the current studies. The *Daily Show* segment epitomizes subversive rape humor by conveying the difference in societal expectations that exist for men and women in preventing rape – the writers and comedians of the

sketch targeted rape culture in a humorous manner through the subtext of the segment, and without ever explicitly stating their intention.

The purpose of the current studies was to examine how humor, such as this segment, that serves to subvert rape culture, and humor that serves to reinforce rape culture, may be differentially evaluated and understood. I was also interested in the role of attitudinal and cognitive variables that might help explain individuals' evaluations and understanding of these types of humor. Across two studies, I established that individuals' evaluations of both reinforcing and subversive rape humor are related to their recognition of its subtext. Although participants' own written explanations of subtext were somewhat inconsistent across humor types and across studies, they consistently recognized the underlying messages of the humor they heard when presented with a set of statements that it could convey. Further, of the individual difference variables examined, meaningful relationships emerged that provide a deeper understanding of the factors that may be related to individuals' evaluation and understanding of this increasingly common type of humor. In sum, the current studies provide the first empirical investigation of factors involved in individuals' reactions to rape humor.

Humor Evaluation and Understanding

The first set of hypotheses in the current studies examined the difference in humor evaluation across humor types. It was predicted (H_1) that there would be a significant difference in humor evaluation across humor types; this hypothesis was supported across both studies, through the use of three measures of evaluation (positive, negative, and overall) that consistently showed the same outcome. The findings demonstrated that reinforcing humor was perceived unfavorably, compared to subversive humor and neutral sex jokes. In some cases in Study 2, subversive humor was seen not only as significantly more positive than reinforcing humor, but as

significantly less positive than neutral humor. This was somewhat odd; given the prosocial intentions in subversive humor and the fact that participants were generally able to recognize those intentions (via subtext), one might expect that if a difference emerged, subversive humor would be perceived more positively than neutral humor. It may be the case that subversive humor's greater ambiguity produced mixed attitudes toward it, which resulted in lower overall ratings. Considering the findings related to humor understanding may help to further explore this possibility.

The findings for humor understanding partially supported my hypothesis (H₂) that subversive humor would be understood less clearly than reinforcing or neutral humor. In examining Study 1 participants' qualitative responses to being questioned about the subtext and targets of the humor they heard, the subversive jokes did produce a wider range of responses from participants, compared to the neutral sex jokes. However, there was a similar amount of variation in response to the reinforcing jokes compared to the neutral jokes, suggesting that participants interpreted *both* types of rape humor – at least initially after hearing it – as containing both reinforcing and subversive subtext. Study 2 participants also provided a wide range of qualitative responses in the subversive condition, but a similar variety also emerged in the neutral condition. Further, there was a greater frequency of responses (compared to Study 1) that were coded as “not applicable,” due to a lack of relevance to the question posed on the survey. Although not exactly replicated, when considered together with the Study 1 responses, the qualitative findings across both studies support the notion that processing rape humor, and in some cases neutral sex jokes, was not necessarily a straightforward process.

In contrast to the mix of responses provided by the qualitative data I collected, the quantitative data suggested a slightly different story. Recall that the quantitative data on

participants' humor understanding (i.e., their "subtext recognition" scores) essentially asked them if they recognized a set of statements about rape as being consistent with the humor to which they had been exposed. Participants' scores on these items were not indicative of a lack of understanding. Rather than showing variation in responses on these items, participants in both studies demonstrated higher recognition scores on the items that corresponded to the humor they had heard. That is, subversive jokes led to recognition of subversive statements, and reinforcing jokes led to recognition of reinforcing statements.

These findings, though inconsistent with the qualitative data and with my hypothesis, are still interesting and informative. They suggest that the difference in qualitative and quantitative responses may be a function of the difference in cognitive requirements between memory recall and recognition. Much like a student who struggles with completing an essay test compared to a multiple choice exam, participants may have had a difficult time explaining the subtext on their own, but when presented with options, were clearly able to identify the statements that were consistent with their respective stimuli. In addition to requiring a more demanding memory process, the item asking participants to identify the subtext required participants to summarize content from several jokes at once, which likely required deeper level processing than did the recognition task. As such, future research may find it valuable to a.) consider the qualitative assessment of individual joke understanding as opposed to the set of jokes overall, and b.) continue to employ both qualitative and quantitative measures of humor understanding to provide a comprehensive picture of participants' thought processes.

So to summarize thus far, the qualitative measures of understanding produced slightly different results between Studies 1 and 2, but in general, suggested that participants may have had a difficult time explaining the subtext of the humor to which they were exposed. It cannot

be determined from the data available whether this was a result of summarizing across several jokes, or a true lack of understanding. In examining the quantitative measures of understanding, the results demonstrated that participants were able to recognize the subtext that was specific to the humor they heard, which is indicative of their understanding.

In order to gain a deeper insight into how understanding was related to evaluation, I examined differences in humor evaluation across qualitative response categories. Across these groups, results demonstrated similar patterns to those that emerged in the analyses on the (experimenter-manipulated) humor type conditions. In that analysis, participants exposed to reinforcing humor provided significantly lower humor evaluations, compared to the other conditions. In the groups based on participants' qualitative responses, the same effect occurred, this time based on participant responses. The responses coded as reinforcing had significantly lower overall evaluation scores than those coded as subversive or neutral. Thus, both analyses of mean differences in humor evaluation across groups suggest that subversive humor was perceived significantly more positively than reinforcing humor.

That said, it should be noted that the bivariate correlations between participants' subtext recognition and humor evaluation scores did not lead to quite the same conclusion. In both studies, higher reinforcing subtext recognition was associated with lower positive (and higher negative) evaluation scores, which is consistent with the mean differences described above. However, no relationship emerged between subversive subtext recognition and evaluation scores. This oddity may add further support to the earlier speculation that although subversive humor was generally seen as more positive than reinforcing, it may have received mixed evaluations as a result of its greater ambiguity.

These findings may help to address the “Archie Bunker question,” described by Rappoport (2005) and mentioned in the introduction to the current studies. It alludes to the issue of whether or not mocking prejudice (or other social issues) is an effective method of addressing it. Given the increasing popularity of both forms of rape humor, it is important to consider the effectiveness of using humor as a method of addressing rape-related issues in our culture. Both of the current studies’ findings on humor understanding illustrate that although rape humor may not be the easiest thing for people to explain, they *are* able to recognize its underlying meaning. Further, the fact that participants consistently evaluated subversive humor more positively than reinforcing humor suggests that people may be receptive to the use of humor to make a point about a cultural issue as serious as rape.

That said, the variation in participants’ qualitative responses should not be completely dismissed. It would be inappropriate to conclude from the present data that humor as a delivery mechanism for serious cultural conversations will consistently be effective at conveying an intended message. It is important to recall the well-documented findings on satire (Baumgartner & Morris, 2008; Hmielowski et al., 2011; LaMarre et al., 2009), which suggest that subtext which is too “deeply buried” in its own humor may make its way over the heads of its intended recipients, especially if those recipients perceive the humor’s literal meaning as consistent with their worldview. As such, it is important to take into account the potential characteristics of the individuals who may be on the receiving end of such literal and subversive messages.

The Role (or Lack Thereof) of Individual Differences

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the factors that could affect how individuals respond to reinforcing and subversive rape humor, I examined a set of attitudinal and cognitive variables that would capture the individual differences in views that might influence responses to

jokes about rape. It was generally expected that the variables associated with maintaining the status quo with respect to hierarchy maintenance (i.e., SDO, CHB) or rape culture (i.e., RMA, ATP), would be negatively associated with evaluations of subversive humor because it would challenge the views associated with these attitudes, and positively associated with reactions to reinforcing humor because it would be consistent with these attitudes.

These hypotheses were partially supported. As expected, the tendency to trivialize humor's potential to do harm (CHB) was associated with more positive and less negative evaluations of reinforcing humor ($H_{2.4}$), as were false beliefs about rape (RMA; $H_{2.5}$) and acceptance of attempts to pressure (ATP; $H_{2.7}$). However, contrary to expectations, CHB was also associated with more positive and less negative evaluations of subversive humor, and with positive evaluations of neutral humor, suggesting that at least in the present sample, CHB was more predictive of attitudes toward humor in general than it was toward humor that facilitates the perpetuation of (sexual) hierarchy. Additionally, the hypotheses that RMA and ATP would each be associated with more negative evaluations of subversive humor were not supported; no significant relationships were found in either direction between these variables and subversive humor evaluation. This suggests that with respect to these individual differences, perhaps reinforcing and subversive humor do not comprise "two sides of the same coin," but instead are differentially evaluated. Perhaps reinforcing humor clearly relates to such attitudes, while the greater ambiguity of subversive humor makes it less likely that participants will draw on such attitudes when evaluating it.

Further, while SDO was expected to be associated with positive evaluations of reinforcing humor and negative evaluations of subversive ($H_{2.1-2.2}$), it was not significantly associated with any DV in either of these conditions, which was equally as puzzling as the

finding that it interacted with condition to predict humor evaluation, but only in the neutral condition. However, it may be the case that these effects occurred because the humor that was tested did not contain explicit elements relevant to the general group hierarchy. That is, while its relevance to sexual hierarchy was clear, perhaps it failed to evoke the more general social hierarchy beliefs that are relevant to SDO.

Interestingly, the cognitive-oriented individual differences of need for cognition, rape culture awareness, and the propensity to make attributions to sexism were not generally associated with subtext recognition as expected ($H_{2.9-2.14}$). The only significant relationship to emerge across conditions occurred between reinforcing subtext recognition and the rape culture awareness measure of accessibility. The two were positively related, suggesting that the more individuals think and talk about the issue of rape, the more they recognized reinforcing subtext (regardless of condition). Within conditions, the only cognitive variable that significantly related to subtext recognition was PMASS, which was negatively related to reinforcing subtext recognition but only in the subversive condition. This suggests that among individuals exposed to subversive humor, the propensity to make attributions to sexism was associated with decreased recognition of rape culture-reinforcing messages in subversive humor. This is counterintuitive, given the moderation analyses supporting the “knee-jerk” response to subversive humor. Perhaps rather than dismissing subversive jokes as *reinforcing* before thinking about them in more depth, they are actually just dismissing them as *sexist*, and the immediate negative evaluation of the jokes is not associated with their recognition of subtext.

Finally, with the exception of the aforementioned moderation effect that was found for PMASS, the hypotheses that the individual differences examined in Study 2 would interact with humor type to predict humor evaluation were not supported. Though perplexing, this may be

indicative of somewhat universal responses in how people respond to subversive and reinforcing rape humor. That is, although a few correlations emerged as expected, none of the variables tested varied by humor type in their respective relationships with humor evaluation. The exception here is PMASS, but perhaps this speaks to the ambiguity factor once again. PMASS is a construct based on the evaluation of ambiguous behavior. Humor in general is an ambiguous phenomenon, and subversive rape humor is an especially ambiguous type of humor. So it makes sense that in response to a particularly ambiguous form of humor, an ambiguity-based tendency would emerge as a moderator of the behavior's evaluation.

However, as was suggested previously with respect to SDO, the majority of individual differences tested may not have shared an underlying component with the humorous stimuli that were used in this study. The fact that this lack of moderation occurred across all but one individual difference suggests that in general, the variables selected for examination in the current study did not explain the individual variation in humor evaluation and understanding. Future research should pursue the study of other factors that could help further explain these differences in the perception of humor.

Limitations and Future Directions

Of course, no study is without limitations. The present studies' reliance on self-report measures should be taken into consideration when interpreting findings. Given the taboo content of the humor, it is possible that participants may have been hesitant to report their true feelings about it, despite the efforts made in the instructions to ensure participants that their responses would be separated from any identifying information. However, the fact that both online and in-person data collection methods were used may have provided variation in the degree of anonymity that participants felt while completing the measures. That is, online participants may

have felt more anonymous and thus more comfortable to freely report their responses, while participants who came to the in-person sessions may have felt less so. Still, humor evaluation and quantitative understanding scores were quite similar across studies, and this consistency suggests that responses are likely a good representation of participants' actual attitudes and understanding.

Additionally, it is a strength of the current study that the methods used to create stimuli allowed for a more realistic delivery of content, compared to other methods of delivery (e.g., written jokes). By using audio-only recordings of volunteer voice actors, several aspects of impression formation (i.e., background scenery, video quality, familiarity with a comedian) were controlled for, thus increasing the likelihood that participants' evaluations of the humor were based on content alone. Further, the manual addition of laugh tracks to the recordings allowed a degree of control over the social contagion component of humor that would not otherwise have been achieved. Had the recordings been made in a more realistic setting such as a comedy club, it would have been difficult to ensure that the punchlines of each joke were emphasized in a way that drew attention to the subtext. That being said, by using methods that provided this degree of control, it is possible that I forfeited a degree of realism. The audio recordings were intended to simulate a comedy album, but it is possible that the use of volunteers (as opposed to professional comedians) to create the recordings may have made the delivery somewhat more mechanical than a professional soundtrack would have been. Still, as a whole, the recordings provided a much more realistic and controlled humor manipulation than using written content would have. Future research should explore the option of using one or more confederates during in-person data collection sessions, to determine if confederate laughter (or lack thereof) influences participants' evaluation, and potentially their understanding, of the jokes.

It is also possible that the way in which the current studies' jokes were selected may have influenced the outcomes observed in each study. Joke interpretation is subjective, and it is possible that the coders who rated the jokes shared similar characteristics (e.g., having similar training in the same research lab) that caused them to perceive the jokes as subversive or reinforcing. Future research should account for individual differences in the coders' backgrounds, and employ more than three coders, in helping to select jokes as stimuli. That said, the fact that participants consistently demonstrated higher subversive subtext recognition ratings in the subversive condition (and likewise for the reinforcing condition) suggests that the joke stimuli that were selected did demonstrate the intended ideas.

Further, because these studies served as the initial examination of subversive and reinforcing rape humor, I chose to expose participants to several jokes of the same type at once (i.e., presented as "excerpts" from stand-up routines) as per previous work on other types of humor (e.g., Ford et al., 2001; LaFrance & Woodzicka, 1998). It would be interesting to examine whether similar effects emerge when one reinforcing or subversive joke is embedded in a stand-up routine or dialogue that consists of other topics. This would mimic the way that rape jokes are often presented in sitcoms (as one or two lines in a scene), or as part of longer comedy routines in which the rape humor only makes up a small portion of the routine. This would provide insight into whether single jokes would produce effects in understanding and evaluation that are similar to those resulting from exposure to a set of several jokes.

Additionally, while presenting jokes told by both a man and a woman reduced the influence of joke teller sex on participants' responses, it would be interesting to examine if the joke teller's group membership affects participants' evaluation or understanding of the joke. Previous work has found that when joke tellers mock their own group, or a group that is above

them in a hierarchy, they are perceived more positively than when they tell jokes about groups below them in a hierarchy (Strain, Saucier, & Martens, accepted). However, it would be interesting to examine how the joke teller's group membership affects joke perceptions specifically in the context of rape humor. Likewise, it would also be informative, given the wide range of responses to real-world instances of rape humor (e.g., Daniel Tosh), to examine participants' perceptions of the joke teller in response to telling reinforcing or subversive rape jokes.

It was interesting that the expected effects of many of the individual differences did not emerge as expected. Future research should examine whether similar patterns emerge in other (perhaps more diverse) samples, as well as investigating other individual differences (e.g., sexism, humor styles). This would provide further insight into the possibility that differences in evaluation and understanding can be explained by attitudes and tendencies that are specifically relevant to the topics of humor and rape (e.g., humor preferences, perceptions of women who have been raped), as opposed to more broad constructs (e.g., social dominance orientation, need for cognition), as discussed above. On a similar note, the current studies used samples in which the majority of participants were from the Midwestern United States. Given that the prevalence of sexual violence in societies has been directly linked to the level of egalitarianism within those societies (Schwartz & Rutter, 1998), it would be interesting to examine men's and women's responses to rape humor in societies that exhibit greater gender equality, compared to those that exhibit less.

The current studies lay the groundwork for future studies on perceptions of rape humor that will further develop both the scholarly work and continuing national conversation on this issue. Moving forward, it would be interesting to examine rape humor in the context of the

benign violation theory (McGraw, Warren, Williams, & Leonard, 2012), which suggests that humor occurs when something is simultaneously perceived as wrong or unsettling (i.e., a violation), as well as acceptable and safe (i.e., benign). It may be the case that a rape joke's status as either reinforcing or subversive, causes it to "swing" one way or the other, thus increasing or decreasing individuals' evaluation of it.

Additionally, it would be interesting to examine the degree to which simply asking about a joke's subtext influences participants' understanding of that joke. In the current study, it is possible (though not verifiable with the data available) that simply by presenting participants with items assessing their understanding of the humor to which they were exposed, that it encouraged thought that would not have otherwise occurred. Given the focus of the current studies, this was appropriate. However, comparing humor evaluations between individuals whose understanding is assessed and those whose is not may provide additional insight into the cognitive processes involved in grasping subtext. Further, given the disparity between participants' written explanations of the joke subtext and their subtext recognition scores, it would be valuable to further examine the possible reasons for this apparent difference in understanding. Participants' generally limited ability to explain the subtext of the full set of jokes they heard might have been due to their difficulties in drawing generalizations across all the jokes, as opposed to their lack of understanding of the jokes themselves. It would be valuable to examine whether similar patterns emerge in a simplified task, where participants are asked to explain just one joke (rather than summarizing a set). It might also be informative to ask participants to choose among a set of possible joke interpretations that are more detailed and a bit more extensive than the one-sentence statements that were used to assess subtext recognition in the current studies; it could provide a more detailed assessment of their ability to

understand the jokes, but would not be as difficult as developing their own explanation for the jokes to which they were exposed.

Also, given the inherently social nature of humor, and the possibility that participants may use others' reactions as a way to gauge their own responses, it would be informative to examine whether participants respond differently depending on whether they are alone or in a group. Further, because differences in evaluation emerged depending on the number of women present in the in-person sessions, it would also be interesting to compare groups consisting of only men or only women to groups consisting of both men and women.

Finally, while these studies were based on the self-evident premise that rape humor is an indication both of rape culture and individuals' attempts to cope with it, the current studies did not allow for the investigation of whether or not exposure to each type of rape humor could actively increase or decrease individuals' behavior that could contribute to or challenge rape culture. While my exploratory measure that was intended to examining how exposure to either type of rape humor might affect participants' decision to take a *Wildcats Against Rape* flyer did not show effects, more effort should be made to find behavioral measures that would allow for variation in behavior, depending upon humor exposure. Further, it would be valuable to examine the role of reinforcing and subversive humor in affecting several aspects of rape culture, such as individuals' perceptions of the prevalence of rape (treated as a covariate in the current studies), rape proclivity, as well as treatment and perceptions of men accused of rape and women who have been raped. And given that the current findings suggest that people would be receptive to the use of subversive humor as a way of initiating discussions about rape, it would eventually be valuable to examine the effectiveness of such discussions (e.g., in the context of a rape education curriculum). It would be especially informative to examine these factors in repeated measures,

within-groups designs (i.e., pre- and post-manipulation assessments), in addition to the between groups designs that were employed in the current research.

Conclusion

This research is the first in the psychological study of humor to compare perceptions of subversive and reinforcing rape humor, and to examine the relationships between individuals' understanding and evaluation of it as it relates to their attitudinal and cognitive tendencies. These studies established that individuals' evaluation of rape humor is related to their understanding of rape humor as either reinforcing or subverting rape culture. Further, it demonstrated that perceptions of reinforcing humor (but not necessarily subversive humor) as positive or negative may be influenced by individuals' attitudes toward disparaging humor in general (i.e., CHB), their beliefs about rape (i.e., RMA), and their acceptance of everyday manifestations of rape culture in the form of sexually pressuring behaviors (i.e., ATP acceptance).

Additionally, by examining the social issue of rape and rape awareness, the research itself has the potential to contribute to a national dialogue that has increased in volume in recent years, as a function of news stories about incidents of rape, and people joking about the issue. However, the discussion had yet to incorporate empirical research that tests individuals' responses to this increasingly popular genre of comedy. The present studies are the first to provide that empirical perspective, to quantify the ways in which an increasingly common form of humor, with the potential to be both harmful and helpful, is interpreted. While some have argued that joking about rape is never acceptable, the findings from these studies demonstrate humor's potential to be used as a tool in undermining rape culture.

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Table 1

Factor Loadings from Principal Component Factor Analysis: Communalities, Eigenvalues, and Percentages of Variance for Subtext Recognition Items.

Item	Factor Loading		Communality
	1	2	
3. The issue of rape is exaggerated (R)	0.94		0.89
1. Rape doesn't need to be taken so seriously. (R)	0.89		0.8
9. Jokes about rape are funny when they poke fun at the people it could happen to. (R)	0.89		0.79
5. Women are responsible for preventing rape. (R)	0.75		0.61
7. Men just have certain urges that need to be fulfilled. (R)	0.62		0.56
4. The issue of rape is a big problem. (S)		0.91	0.88
6. Men are responsible for preventing rape (S)		0.80	0.64
8. It is unfortunate that women need to think so often about their safety. (S)		0.80	0.64
2. The threat of rape is a constant worry for women. (S)		0.73	0.66
10. Jokes about rape are funny when they point out the severity of the problem. (S)		0.60	0.53
Eigenvalue	3.8	3.21	
% of Variance	37.95	32.08	

Note. (R) indicates rape culture-reinforcing ideas; (S) indicates rape culture-subverting ideas.

Table 2

Summary of Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for Positive and Negative Humor Evaluation Ratings (Across Conditions).

	<i>M (SD)</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Funny	3.92 (2.45)							
2. Enjoyable	3.53 (2.36)	.937***						
3. Clever	3.74 (2.40)	.865***	.801***					
4. Prosocial	3.03 (2.26)	.688***	.687***	.652***				
5. Belittling	5.66 (2.46)	-.346***	-.392***	-.332***	-.333***			
6. Offensive	5.37 (2.67)	-.458***	-.512***	-.407***	-.364***	.870***		
7. Ignorant	5.40 (2.79)	-.614***	-.565***	-.597***	-.402***	.607***	.681***	
8. Antisocial	5.63 (2.50)	-.534***	-.523***	-.478***	-.410***	.765***	.795***	.686***

*** $p \leq .001$

Table 3

Multivariate and Univariate Analyses of Variance for Humor Evaluation.

Source	Multivariate					Univariate							
						Positive Humor Evaluation					Negative Humor Evaluation		
	df_1	df_2	F	p	η^2	df_1	df_2	F	p	η^2	F	p	η^2
Sex	2	87	7.29	0.001	0.144	1	88	0.31	0.582	0.003	12.85	0.001	0.127
Age	2	87	10.20	<.001	0.190	1	88	1.67	0.199	0.019	10.00	0.002	0.102
SDSum	2	87	5.21	0.007	0.107	1	88	5.20	0.025	0.056	9.82	0.002	0.100
HumorType	4	176	6.29	<.001	0.125	2	88	10.71	<.001	0.196	10.50	<.001	0.193

Note. Multivariate F ratios were generated from Pillai's statistic.

SDSum = Social Desirability score.

Table 4

Univariate Analyses of Variance for Overall Humor Evaluation (Study 1).

Source	df_1	df_2	F	p	η^2
SDSum	1	93	6.41	0.013	0.064
HumorType	2	93	14.41	<.001	0.237

Note. Multivariate F ratios were generated from Pillai's statistic.

SDSum = Social Desirability score.

Table 5

Multivariate and Univariate Analyses of Variance for Humor Subtext Recognition.

						Univariate							
						Reinforcing Subtext					Subversive Subtext Rating		
						Recognition							
Source	df_1	df_2	F	p	η^2	df_1	df_2	F	p	η^2	F	p	η^2
Ethnicity	2	176	3.89	0.024	0.082	1	92	1.62	0.207	0.018	6.73	0.011	0.071
HumorType	4	176	15.11	<.001	0.256	2	92	13.91	<.001	0.240	19.33	<.001	0.305

Note. Multivariate F ratios were generated from Pillai's statistic.

Table 6

Summary of Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for Humor Evaluations and Subtext Recognition.

	<i>M (SD)</i>	1	2	3	4
1. Positive Clip Evaluation	3.55 (2.16)				
Subversive Condition	3.85 (2.06)				
Reinforcing Condition	2.02 (1.66)				
Neutral Condition	4.42 (2.00)				
2. Negative Clip Evaluation	5.52 (2.32)	-.55***			
Subversive Condition	5.43 (2.47)	-.79***			
Reinforcing Condition	6.93 (2.24)	-.34			
Neutral Condition	4.56 (1.73)	-.17			
3. Overall Clip Evaluation	4.06 (2.06)	.87***	-.89***		
Subversive Condition	4.24 (2.21)	.93***	-.95***		
Reinforcing Condition	2.55 (1.67)	-.73***	-.88***		
Neutral Condition	5.01 (1.55)	.80***	-.72***		
4. Recognition of Reinforcing Subtext	4.27 (2.40)	-.44***	.54***	-.56***	
Subversive Condition	4.34 (2.12)	-.40*	.37*	-.40*	
Reinforcing Condition	5.93 (2.48)	-.50**	.73***	-.79***	
Neutral Condition	3.04 (1.80)	-.01	.12	-.08	
5. Recognition of Subversive Subtext	4.31 (2.12)	-.03	.04	-.04	.07
Subversive Condition	5.72 (1.62)	.12	-.12	.20	-.29
Reinforcing Condition	4.49 (1.83)	.20	-.183	.24	-.49**
Neutral Condition	3.10 (1.98)	-.14	.03	-.12	.38*

* $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$

Note. Numbered (grayed) lines represent correlations across conditions. Subsequent lines represent relationships within each condition.

Table 7

Definitions of Terms and Sample Items for Qualitative Coding in Studies 1 and 2.

Term	Definition	Sample Item
Subtext Categories		
Reinforcing	Indicates a concept that is associated with the continuation of rape culture or rape myths.	"Rape isn't a problem." or "Rape is funny."
Subversive	Indicates a concept that is associated with challenging rape culture, or making light of a serious issue in order to cope with it.	"Rape is a problem." or "Rape can be joked about to help people manage with it."
Neutral	Did not mention or allude to rape, or focused on consensual sex.	"Sex is funny." or "Men and women are awkward about sex."
Not Applicable	Did not provide a relevant response, or response did not fit into any of the above categories.	"Drugs are funny."
Target Categories		
Reinforcing	Participant identified target(s) that result in the continuation of rape culture if made fun of.	"Women" or "women who have been raped"
Subversive	Participant identified target(s) that, when made fun of, results in a message that challenges rape culture.	"Rapists" or "the act of rape"
Both Subversive and Reinforcing	Participant listed target(s) that could fit in either category.	"Women, rapists, men, rape culture"
Neither Subversive nor Reinforcing	Participant listed target(s) that did not qualify as either subversive or reinforcing.	"People"
Not Applicable	Participant gave a response that did not make sense, or was not relevant to the question asked.	"People who do drugs."

Table 8

Prevalence of Response Codes for Subtext Understanding Across Conditions in Study 1.

Response coded as	Reinforcing Condition (<i>n</i> = 24)		Subversive Condition (<i>n</i> = 27)		Neutral Condition (<i>n</i> = 31)	
	<i>n</i>	% within condition	<i>n</i>	% within condition	<i>n</i>	% within condition
Reinforcing	11	13.4	10	37	1	3.2
Subversive	7	29.2	14	51.9	0	0
Neutral	2	8.3	2	7.4	26	83.9
Not applicable	4	16.7	1	3.7	4	4.9
$\chi^2 (3)$		7.67		17.59		36.07
<i>p</i>		0.053		0.001		< .001

Table 9

Prevalence of Response Codes for Target Identification Across Conditions in Study 1.

Response coded as	Reinforcing Condition ($n = 28$)		Subversive Condition ($n = 30$)		Neutral Condition ($n = 39$)	
	n	% within condition	n	% within condition	n	% within condition
Reinforcing	11	39%	12	40%	1	3%
Subversive	7	25%	11	37%	1	3%
Both	6	21%	3	10%	0	0%
Neither	4	14%	4	13%	37	95%
Not applicable	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
$\chi^2(3)$		3.71		8.67		66.46
p		0.294		0.034		< .001

Note. "Not applicable" category contained 0 responses coded as such in Study 1, but category was retained for consistency with Study 2.

Table 10

Multivariate and Univariate Analyses of Variance for Humor Evaluation (Study 2).

Source						Univariate							
	Multivariate					Positive Humor Evaluation					Negative Humor Evaluation		
	df_1	df_2	F	p	η^2	df_1	df_2	F	p	η^2	F	p	η^2
HumorType	4	344	10.62	<.001	0.110	2	172	10.38	<.001	0.108	23.51	<.001	0.215

Note. Multivariate F ratios were generated from Pillai's statistic.

Table 11

Multivariate and Univariate Analyses of Variance for Humor Subtext Recognition (Study 2).

Source	Univariate															
	Multivariate					Reinforcing Subtext Recognition								Subversive Subtext Rating		
	df_1	df_2	F	p	η^2	df_1	df_2	F	p	η^2						
HumorType	4	342	33.40	<.001	0.291	2	171	21.27	<.001	0.199	50.59	<.001	0.372			

Note. Multivariate F ratios were generated from Pillai's statistic.

Table 12

Prevalence of Response Codes for Subtext Understanding Across Conditions in Study 2.

Response coded as	Reinforcing Condition ($n = 57$)		Subversive Condition ($n = 60$)		Neutral Condition ($n = 58$)	
	n	% within condition	n	% within condition	n	% within condition
Reinforcing	14	25%	18	30%	15	26%
Subversive	19	33%	14	23%	9	16%
Neutral	14	25%	17	28%	25	43%
Not applicable	10	18%	11	18%	9	16%

Table 13

Prevalence of Response Codes for Target Identification Across Conditions in Study 2.

Response coded as	Reinforcing Condition ($n = 57$)		Subversive Condition ($n = 60$)		Neutral Condition ($n = 58$)	
	n	% within condition	n	% within condition	n	% within condition
Reinforcing	21	37%	16	27%	52	90%
Subversive	11	19%	11	18%	31	79%
Both	4	7%	9	15%	4	10%
Neither	20	35%	23	38%	29	74%
Not applicable	1	2%	1	2%	1	3%

Table 14

Summary of Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for DV's and Covariates (Study 2).

	<i>M (SD)</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1. PosClipEval	3.54 (1.91)																
2. NegClipEval	5.68 (2.01)	-.59***															
3. ReinfSubtRecog	4.47 (2.05)	-.30***	.35***														
4. SubvSubtRecog	4.60 (1.90)	0.01	0.12	0.06													
5. SDsum	15.00 (5.38)	0.02	-0.11	-0.10	0.13												
6. CHBmean	6.26 (1.67)	.44***	-.35***	-.25**	.211**	0.07											
7. PMASSmean	5.29 (1.24)	-0.12	0.12	0.11	-0.03	-0.05	-.29***										
8. NFCmean	5.83 (1.32)	-0.05	-0.02	0.08	-0.14	0.11	0.07	0.10									
9. SDOmean	2.88 (1.32)	0.09	-0.05	0.10	0.10	-0.08	.28***	-.28***	-0.03								
10. IRMAmean	2.38 (1.18)	.179*	-0.06	0.02	0.15	0.07	.37***	-.29***	-0.11	.41***							
11. ATPmean	2.03 (1.11)	.186*	-0.15	0.04	0.08	0.00	.23**	-0.11	-0.05	.26***	.38***						
12. BDBmean	7.77 (1.11)	0.08	-.155*	-0.13	0.08	0.03	.20**	0.06	0.03	0.01	-0.04	0.02					
13. ATPOmean	3.73 (1.48)	0.12	0.04	.171*	-0.05	-0.04	0.06	0.08	0.10	.21**	.22**	.38***	0.05				
14. BDBOmean	7.88 (1.06)	-0.08	-0.05	-0.09	0.00	-0.08	0.03	0.13	0.08	-.23**	-.24***	-0.12	.73***	-0.08			
15. Prevalence%Estimate	24.11 (14.64)	-0.02	-0.10	-0.01	0.01	0.03	-0.05	0.10	-0.03	-0.01	-0.12	-0.01	0.08	0.03	0.11		
16. Knowledge	5.33 (1.68)	-0.04	0.12	0.01	0.10	-0.07	0.06	.17*	0.00	-0.07	-0.06	-0.07	0.01	0.08	0.05	.17*	
17. Interest	5.82 (1.85)	-.195*	.173*	0.08	-0.02	-0.04	-.27***	.29***	-0.02	-.16*	-.26**	-.23**	-0.03	-0.08	0.06	0.09	.58
18. Accessibility	3.51 (1.57)	-0.11	0.11	.160*	0.00	-0.08	-.22**	.29***	0.15	-.17*	-0.11	-0.06	-0.14	0.05	-0.09	.25**	.52
19. DirectExperSum	0.89 (1.26)	-0.03	-0.02	0.11	-0.05	-0.06	-.21**	.34***	.23**	-0.14	-.32***	-.23**	-0.09	0.01	0.00	0.12	.35

* $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$

Table 15

Summary of Conditional Correlations for DV's and Individual Differences (Study 2).

	Condition	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. PosClipEval	Subversive													
	Reinforcing													
	Neutral													
2. NegClipEval	Subversive	-.529**												
	Reinforcing	-.657**												
	Neutral	-.431**												
3. ReinfSubtRecog	Subversive	-.195	.292*	-.252										
	Reinforcing	-.179	.198	-.208										
	Neutral	-.156	.080	-.130										
4. SubvSubtRecog	Subversive	.210	.038	.123	-.036									
	Reinforcing	.188	-.083	.170	-.423**									
	Neutral	.099	-.097	.135	.266*									
5. CHBmean	Subversive	.381**	-.433**	.474**	-.265*	.264*								
	Reinforcing	.510**	-.537**	.568**	-.250	.198								
	Neutral	.521**	-.241	.435**	-.237	.077								
6. PMASSmean	Subversive	-.281*	.327*	-.349**	.079	-.117	-.314*							
	Reinforcing	-0.120	0.204	-0.177	-0.101	0.032	-							
	Neutral	-.007	-.068	.041	.350**	.106	.397**	-.133						

	Condition	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
7. NFCmean	Subversive	-0.014	0.047	-0.024	-0.019	0.193	.200	.067						
	Reinforcing	-0.043	0.017	-0.044	0.249	-0.140	.039	-.002						
	Neutral	-.109	-.082	-.027	.001	-.284*	.015	.199						
8. SDOmean	Subversive	0.116	-0.134	0.149	0.243	0.000	.184	-.110	-.002					
	Reinforcing	-0.023	-0.018	-0.016	0.066	-0.090	.303*	-	-.062					
	Neutral	.263*	-.097	.202	-.060	.429**	.384**	.449**	-.263*	-.020				
9. IRMAmean	Subversive	0.239	-0.127	0.209	-0.069	-0.058	.280*	-.192	-.238	.317*				
	Reinforcing	.279*	-.283*	.306*	.076	.081	.468**	-	-.139	.436**				
	Neutral	.140	.046	.061	-.070	.148	.322*	.431**	-.231	.107	.516**			
10. ATPmean	Subversive	.140	-.060	.123	.084	.078	.308*	-.233	-.085	.241	.354**			
	Reinforcing	.387**	-.399**	.439**	-.031	-.024	.122	-.025	-.190	.149	.374**			
	Neutral	.281*	-.339**	.355**	-.199	.099	.357**	-.133	.205	.488**	.429**			
11. BDBmean	Subversive	-.002	-.096	.073	.050	.317*	.274*	-.043	.072	.157	-.057	.165		
	Reinforcing	.030	-.122	.071	-.350**	.095	.111	.067	-.059	-.096	-.027	-.128		
	Neutral	.160	-.190	.202	-.058	.047	.211	.152	.051	-.037	-.010	.082		
12. ATPOmean	Subversive	.051	.105	-.026	.058	.085	.015	.086	-.154	.252	.221	.429**	.058	
	Reinforcing	.198	-.029	.122	.216	-.037	-.007	-.146	.115	.175	.300*	.502**	-.153	
	Neutral	.207	-.023	.133	.173	-.059	.250	.257	.342**	.186	.154	.134	.261*	
13. BDBOmean	Subversive	-.245	.002	-.135	.160	.249	.040	.008	.164	-.063	-.328*	-.031	.750**	-.145
	Reinforcing	-.032	-.001	-.016	-.310*	.090	-.038	.220	.059	-	-.296*	-.232	.781**	-.189
	Neutral	.019	-.125	.089	-.109	-.197	.107	.144	.007	.417**	-.170	-.074	.675**	.103

Table 16

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) Predicting Overall Humor Evaluation.

Step and Predictor Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	$R^2\Delta$	F Δ	p
Step 1				0.06	0.06	1.37	0.223
Sex	0.32	0.36	0.09				0.385
Political Orientation	-0.05	0.08	-0.05				0.523
Previous Assault	0	0.36	0				0.995
Interest in Rape as a Cultural Issue	-0.17	0.1	-0.17				0.1
Accessibility to Rape as a Cultural Issue	0.02	0.12	0.02				0.867
Number of Females in Study Session	-0.07	0.07	-0.08				0.326
Percent Women in Study Session	-0.09	0.79	-0.01				0.909
Step 2				0.06	0	0	0.956
SDO	0.01	0.17	0.01				0.956
Step 3				0.28	0.22	21.73	<0.001
Humor Type (Subv)	-1.19	0.37	-0.31				0.002
Humor Type (Reinf)	-2.19	0.33	-0.57				<0.001
Step 4				0.29	0	0.21	0.809
SDOxHumorType (Subv)	0.22	0.36	0.07				0.542
SDOxHumorType (Reinf)	0.06	0.35	0.02				0.866

Table 17

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for Cavalier Humor Beliefs (CHB) Predicting Overall Humor Evaluation.

Step and Predictor Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	$R^2\Delta$	$F\Delta$	p
Step 1				0.06	0.06	1.35	0.23
Sex	0.35	0.37	0.1				0.34
Political Orientation	-0.04	0.08	-0.04				0.665
Previous Assault	0.02	0.36	0				0.965
Interest in Rape as a Cultural Issue	-0.16	0.1	-0.17				0.122
Accessibility to Rape as a Cultural Issue	0.01	0.12	0.01				0.935
Number of Females in Study Session	-0.07	0.07	-0.08				0.346
PercentWomen in Study Session	-0.09	0.79	-0.01				0.91
Step 2				0.22	0.15	27.96	<0.001
CHB	0.79	0.15	0.44				<0.001
Step 3				0.44	0.22	27.7	<0.001
Humor Type (Subv)	-1.35	0.33	-0.35				<0.001
Humor Type (Reinf)	-2.17	0.3	-0.56				<0.001
Step 4				0.44	0.01	0.67	0.51
CHBxHumorType (Subv)	0.34	0.3	0.11				0.248
CHBxHumorType (Reinf)	0.18	0.3	0.06				0.551

Table 18

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for Rape Myth Acceptance (RMA) Predicting Overall Humor Evaluation.

Step and Predictor Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	$R^2\Delta$	F Δ	p
Step 1				0.06	0.06	1.37	0.223
Sex	0.32	0.36	0.09				0.385
Political Orientation	-0.05	0.08	-0.05				0.523
Previous Assault	0	0.36	0				0.995
Interest in Rape as a Cultural Issue	-0.17	0.1	-0.17				0.1
Accessibility to Rape as a Cultural Issue	0.02	0.12	0.02				0.867
Number of Females in Study Session	-0.07	0.07	-0.08				0.326
PercentWomen in Study Session	-0.09	0.79	-0.01				0.909
Step 2				0.06	0	0.07	0.796
RMA	0.04	0.17	0.3				0.796
Step 3				0.29	0.23	22.32	<0.001
Humor Type (Subv)	-1.24	0.37	-0.32				0.001
Humor Type (Reinf)	-2.22	0.33	-0.58				<0.001
Step 4				0.31	0.02	2.04	0.134
RMAxHumorType (Subv)	0.55	0.33	0.2				0.099
RMAxHumorType (Reinf)	0.64	0.33	0.22				0.058

Table 19

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for Attempts to Pressure (ATP) Predicting Overall Humor Evaluation.

Step and Predictor Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	$R^2\Delta$	F Δ	p
Step 1				0.06	0.06	1.37	0.223
Sex	0.32	0.36	0.09				0.385
Political Orientation	-0.05	0.08	-0.05				0.523
Previous Assault	0	0.36	0				0.995
Interest in Rape as a Cultural Issue	-0.17	0.1	-0.17				0.1
Accessibility to Rape as a Cultural Issue	0.02	0.12	0.02				0.867
Number of Females in Study Session	-0.07	0.07	-0.08				0.326
PercentWomen in Study Session	-0.09	0.79	-0.01				0.909
Step 2				0.07	0.01	1.58	0.211
ATP	0.19	0.15	0.11				0.211
Step 3				0.32	0.24	24.97	<0.001
Humor Type (Subv)	-1.26	0.37	-0.33				0.001
Humor Type (Reinf)	-2.32	0.33	-0.6				<0.001
Step 4				0.32	0.01	0.5	0.609
ATPxHumorType (Subv)	-0.2	0.36	-0.06				0.589
ATPxHumorType (Reinf)	0.09	0.34	0.03				0.801

Table 20

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for Propensity to Make Attributions of Sexism Scale (PMASS) Predicting Overall Humor Evaluation.

Step and Predictor Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	$R^2\Delta$	$F\Delta$	p
Step 1				0.06	0.06	1.25	0.281
Sex	0.36	0.36	0.1				0.323
Political Orientation	-0.04	0.08	-0.04				0.599
Previous Assault	-0.05	0.37	-0.01				0.901
Interest in Rape as a Cultural Issue	-0.17	0.1	-0.17				0.098
Accessibility to Rape as a Cultural Issue	0.06	0.12	0.05				0.644
Number of Females in Study Session	-0.1	0.08	-0.12				0.184
PercentWomen in Study Session	0.26	0.82	0.03				0.752
Step 2				0.07	0.01	1.78	0.184
PMASS	-0.22	0.16	-0.12				0.184
Step 3				0.29	0.22	21.53	<0.001
Humor Type (Subv)	-1.17	0.38	-0.31				0.002
Humor Type (Reinf)	-2.18	0.33	-0.57				<0.001
Step 4				0.33	0.04	4.06	0.019
PMASSxHumorType (Subv)	-0.9	0.32	-0.25				0.006
PMASSxHumorType (Reinf)	-0.45	0.29	-0.15				0.128

Table 21

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for Rape Prevalence Estimates (PrevEst) Predicting Overall Humor Evaluation.

Step and Predictor Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	$R^2\Delta$	F Δ	p
Step 1				0.07	0.07	1.45	0.19
Sex	0.23	0.36	0.06				0.537
Political Orientation	-0.06	0.08	-0.07				0.425
Previous Assault	-0.05	0.36	-0.01				0.9
Interest in Rape as a Cultural Issue	-0.18	0.1	-0.18				0.084
Accessibility to Rape as a Cultural Issue	0	0.12	0				0.985
Number of Females in Study Session	-0.08	0.07	-0.09				0.296
PercentWomen in Study Session	-0.15	0.79	-0.02				0.85
Step 2				0.07	0	0.46	0.498
Prevalence Estimate (PrevEst)	0.11	0.16	0.06				0.498
Step 3				0.29	0.23	22.27	<0.001
Humor Type (Subv)	-1.3	0.37	-0.34				0.001
Humor Type (Reinf)	-2.17	0.33	-0.57				<0.001
Step 4				0.31	0.01	1.1	0.336
PrevEstxHumorType (Subv)	-0.37	0.31	-0.13				0.233
PrevEstxHumorType (Reinf)	-0.48	0.36	-0.13				0.182

Table 22

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for Need for Cognition (NFC) Predicting Overall Humor Evaluation.

Step and Predictor Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	$R^2\Delta$	$F\Delta$	p
Step 1				0.06	0.06	1.37	0.223
Sex	0.32	0.36	0.09				0.385
Political Orientation	-0.05	0.08	-0.05				0.523
Previous Assault	0	0.36	0				0.995
Interest in Rape as a Cultural Issue	-0.17	0.1	-0.17				0.1
Accessibility to Rape as a Cultural Issue	0.02	0.12	0.02				0.867
Number of Females in Study Session	-0.07	0.07	-0.08				0.326
PercentWomen in Study Session	-0.09	0.79	-0.01				0.909
Step 2				0.06	0	0.11	0.742
NFC	-0.05	0.16	-0.03				0.742
Step 3				0.28	0.22	21.73	<0.001
Humor Type (Subv)	-1.21	0.37	-0.32				0.002
Humor Type (Reinf)	-2.19	0.33	-0.57				<0.001
Step 4				0.29	0	0.22	0.805
NFCxHumorType (Subv)	0.14	0.33	0.04				0.682
NFCxHumorType (Reinf)	-0.09	0.33	-0.03				0.796

Table 23

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) Predicting Reinforcing Subtext Recognition.

Step and Predictor Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	$R^2\Delta$	F Δ	p
Step 1				0.08	0.08	1.81	0.089
Sex	-0.39	0.41	-0.1				0.337
Political Orientation	0.1	0.09	0.09				0.268
Previous Assault	-0.85	0.41	-0.18				0.039
Interest in Rape as a Cultural Issue	-0.03	0.12	-0.03				0.786
Accessibility to Rape as a Cultural Issue	0.12	0.13	0.09				0.38
Number of Females in Study Session	-0.09	0.08	-0.09				0.271
PercentWomen in Study Session	-0.26	0.9	-0.03				0.774
Step 2				0.11	0.03	4	0.047
SDO	0.38	0.19	0.18				0.047
Step 3				0.27	0.17	15.83	<0.001
Humor Type (Subv)	0.63	0.43	0.15				0.144
Humor Type (Reinf)	2.11	0.38	0.49				<0.001
Step 4				0.28	0.01	0.85	0.429
SDOxHumorType (Subv)	0.5	0.4	0.14				0.214
SDOxHumorType (Reinf)	0.41	0.4	0.12				0.304

Table 24

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for Cavalier Humor Beliefs (CHB) Predicting Reinforcing Subtext Recognition.

Step and Predictor Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	$R^2\Delta$	$F\Delta$	p
Step 1				0.08	0.08	1.82	0.089
Sex	-0.41	0.41	-0.1				0.315
Political Orientation	0.09	0.09	0.08				0.331
Previous Assault	-0.86	0.41	-0.18				0.037
Interest in Rape as a Cultural Issue	-0.04	0.12	-0.03				0.746
Accessibility to Rape as a Cultural Issue	0.12	0.13	0.09				0.357
Number of Females in Study Session	-0.09	0.08	-0.1				0.263
PercentWomen in Study Session	-0.26	0.9	-0.03				0.776
Step 2				0.12	0.03	5.19	0.024
CHB	-0.41	0.18	-0.2				0.024
Step 3				0.28	0.17	16.15	<0.001
Humor Type (Subv)	0.64	0.43	0.15				0.136
Humor Type (Reinf)	2.13	0.38	0.49				<0.001
Step 4				0.28	0	0.15	0.859
CHBxHumorType (Subv)	-0.03	0.38	-0.01				0.935
CHBxHumorType (Reinf)	0.16	0.38	0.05				0.681

Table 25

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for Rape Myth Acceptance (RMA) Predicting Reinforcing Subtext Recognition.

Step and Predictor Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	$R^2\Delta$	$F\Delta$	p
Step 1				0.08	0.08	1.81	0.089
Sex	-0.39	0.41	-0.1				0.337
Political Orientation	0.1	0.09	0.09				0.268
Previous Assault	-0.85	0.41	-0.18				0.039
Interest in Rape as a Cultural Issue	-0.03	0.12	-0.03				0.786
Accessibility to Rape as a Cultural Issue	0.12	0.13	0.09				0.38
Number of Females in Study Session	-0.09	0.08	-0.09				0.271
PercentWomen in Study Session	-0.26	0.9	-0.03				0.774
Step 2				0.09	0.01	1.48	0.226
RMA	0.23	0.19	0.12				0.226
Step 3				0.26	0.16	15.46	<0.001
Humor Type (Subv)	0.53	0.43	0.12				0.219
Humor Type (Reinf)	2.1	0.39	0.48				<0.001
Step 4				0.27	0.01	1.06	0.349
RMAxHumorType (Subv)	-0.19	0.38	-0.06				0.631
RMAxHumorType (Reinf)	0.32	0.39	0.09				0.417

Table 26

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for Rape Myth Acceptance (RMA) Predicting Reinforcing Subtext Recognition.

Step and Predictor Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	$R^2\Delta$	F Δ	p
Step 1				0.08	0.08	1.81	0.089
Sex	-0.39	0.41	-0.1				0.337
Political Orientation	0.1	0.09	0.09				0.268
Previous Assault	-0.85	0.41	-0.18				0.039
Interest in Rape as a Cultural Issue	-0.03	0.12	-0.03				0.786
Accessibility to Rape as a Cultural Issue	0.12	0.13	0.09				0.38
Number of Females in Study Session	-0.09	0.08	-0.09				0.271
PercentWomen in Study Session	-0.26	0.9	-0.03				0.774
Step 2				0.09	0	0.65	0.423
ATP	0.14	0.17	0.07				0.423
Step 3				0.25	0.17	15.58	<0.001
Humor Type (Subv)	0.57	0.43	0.13				0.191
Humor Type (Reinf)	2.14	0.39	0.49				<0.001
Step 4				0.27	0.01	1.3	0.277
ATPxHumorType (Subv)	0.68	0.42	0.19				0.11
ATPxHumorType (Reinf)	0.41	0.4	0.14				0.303

Table 27

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for the Propensity to Make Attributions to Sexism Scale (PMASS) Predicting Reinforcing Subtext Recognition.

Step and Predictor Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	$R^2\Delta$	$F\Delta$	p
Step 1				0.07	0.07	1.43	0.2
Sex	-0.44	0.41	-0.11				0.281
Political Orientation	0.09	0.09	0.09				0.301
Previous Assault	-0.81	0.41	-0.17				0.048
Interest in Rape as a Cultural Issue	-0.03	0.12	-0.03				0.805
Accessibility to Rape as a Cultural Issue	0.07	0.14	0.05				0.618
Number of Females in Study Session	-0.06	0.08	-0.06				0.504
PercentWomen in Study Session	-0.69	0.93	-0.07				0.458
Step 2				0.07	0	0.65	0.421
PMASS	0.15	0.18	0.08				0.421
Step 3				0.24	0.17	15.45	<0.001
Humor Type (Subv)	0.49	0.44	0.12				0.267
Humor Type (Reinf)	2.09	0.39	0.48				<0.001
Step 4				0.27	0.03	2.89	0.059
PMASSxHumorType (Subv)	-0.41	0.38	-0.1				0.28
PMASSxHumorType (Reinf)	-0.82	0.34	-0.24				0.018

Table 28

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for Rape Prevalence Estimates (PrevEst) Predicting Reinforcing Subtext Recognition.

Step and Predictor Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	$R^2\Delta$	$F\Delta$	p
Step 1				0.08	0.08	1.86	0.081
Sex	-0.3	0.41	-0.07				0.467
Political Orientation	0.11	0.09	0.1				0.209
Previous Assault	-0.8	0.4	-0.17				0.049
Interest in Rape as a Cultural Issue	-0.02	0.12	-0.02				0.833
Accessibility to Rape as a Cultural Issue	0.14	0.13	0.11				0.294
Number of Females in Study Session	-0.09	0.08	-0.09				0.288
PercentWomen in Study Session	-0.2	0.89	-0.02				0.822
Step 2				0.09	0.01	0.8	0.372
Prevalence Estimate (PrevEst)	-0.17	0.18	-0.08				0.372
Step 3				0.26	0.17	15.83	<0.001
Humor Type (Subv)	0.66	0.43	0.16				0.125
Humor Type (Reinf)	2.13	0.38	0.49				<0.001
Step 4				0.26	0	0.04	0.965
PrevEstxHumorType (Subv)	0.08	0.36	0.03				0.826
PrevEstxHumorType (Reinf)	-0.01	0.43	-0.003				0.979

Table 29

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for Need for Cognition (NFC) Predicting Reinforcing Subtext Recognition.

Step and Predictor Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	$R^2\Delta$	$F\Delta$	p
Step 1				0.08	0.08	1.81	0.089
Sex	-0.39	0.41	-0.1				0.337
Political Orientation	0.1	0.09	0.09				0.268
Previous Assault	-0.85	0.41	-0.18				0.039
Interest in Rape as a Cultural Issue	-0.03	0.12	-0.03				0.786
Accessibility to Rape as a Cultural Issue	0.12	0.13	0.09				0.38
Number of Females in Study Session	-0.09	0.08	-0.09				0.271
PercentWomen in Study Session	-0.26	0.9	-0.03				0.774
Step 2				0.08	0	0.31	0.582
NFC	0.1	0.18	0.05				0.582
Step 3				0.25	0.17	15.99	<0.001
Humor Type (Subv)	0.58	0.43	0.13				0.183
Humor Type (Reinf)	2.14	0.39	0.49				<0.001
Step 4				0.28	0.03	2.42	0.093
NFCxHumorType (Subv)	-0.1	0.38	-0.03				0.783
NFCxHumorType (Reinf)	0.67	0.37	0.18				0.075

Table 30

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) Predicting Subversive Subtext Recognition.

Step and Predictor Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	$R^2\Delta$	F Δ	p
Step 1				0.08	0.08	1.76	0.099
Sex	0.11	0.38	0.03				0.777
Political Orientation	0.06	0.08	0.06				0.481
Previous Assault	0.15	0.38	0.03				0.7
Interest in Rape as a Cultural Issue	0.02	0.11	0.02				0.885
Accessibility to Rape as a Cultural Issue	0.06	0.12	0.05				0.62
Number of Females in Study Session	0.19	0.08	0.21				0.013
PercentWomen in Study Session	-2.19	0.83	-0.25				0.009
Step 2				0.09	0.01	1.12	0.291
SDO	0.19	0.18	0.1				0.291
Step 3				0.42	0.33	40.48	<0.001
Humor Type (Subv)	3.12	0.36	0.78				<0.001
Humor Type (Reinf)	1.68	0.32	0.41				<0.001
Step 4				0.46	0.04	4.9	0.009
SDOxHumorType (Subv)	-0.93	0.33	-0.28				0.005
SDOxHumorType (Reinf)	-0.88	0.32	-0.26				0.008

Table 31

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for Cavalier Humor Beliefs (CHB) Predicting Subversive Subtext Recognition.

Step and Predictor Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	$R^2\Delta$	$F\Delta$	p
Step 1				0.09	0.09	1.93	0.07
Sex	0.17	0.38	0.05				0.656
Political Orientation	0.09	0.08	0.09				0.299
Previous Assault	0.18	0.38	0.04				0.633
Interest in Rape as a Cultural Issue	0.03	0.11	0.03				0.755
Accessibility to Rape as a Cultural Issue	0.04	0.12	0.04				0.731
Number of Females in Study Session	0.2	0.08	0.22				0.011
PercentWomen in Study Session	-2.19	0.82	-0.25				0.008
Step 2				0.11	0.02	3.31	0.071
CHB	0.3	0.17	0.16				0.071
Step 3				0.42	0.32	38.43	<0.001
Humor Type (Subv)	2.99	0.35	0.75				<0.001
Humor Type (Reinf)	1.73	0.31	0.43				<0.001
Step 4				0.43	0.01	1.23	0.294
CHBxHumorType (Subv)	0.48	0.32	0.15				0.127
CHBxHumorType (Reinf)	0.35	0.31	0.11				0.267

Table 32

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for Rape Myth Acceptance (RMA) Predicting Subversive Subtext Recognition.

Step and Predictor Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	$R^2\Delta$	F Δ	p
Step 1				0.08	0.08	1.76	0.099
Sex	0.11	0.38	0.03				0.777
Political Orientation	0.06	0.08	0.06				0.481
Previous Assault	0.15	0.38	0.03				0.7
Interest in Rape as a Cultural Issue	0.02	0.11	0.02				0.885
Accessibility to Rape as a Cultural Issue	0.6	0.12	0.05				0.62
Number of Females in Study Session	0.19	0.08	0.21				0.013
PercentWomen in Study Session	-2.19	0.83	-0.25				0.009
Step 2				0.9	0.02	2.33	0.129
RMA	0.27	0.17	0.14				0.129
Step 3				0.41	0.32	37.62	<0.001
Humor Type (Subv)	3.04	0.36	0.76				<0.001
Humor Type (Reinf)	1.67	0.32	0.41				<0.001
Step 4				0.42	0.01	1.08	0.344
RMAxHumorType (Subv)	-0.46	0.32	-0.16				0.151
RMAxHumorType (Reinf)	-0.34	0.32	-0.11				0.285

Table 33

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for Attempts to Pressure (ATP) Predicting Subversive Subtext Recognition.

Step and Predictor Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	$R^2\Delta$	$F\Delta$	p
Step 1				0.08	0.08	1.76	0.099
Sex	0.11	0.38	0.03				0.777
Political Orientation	0.06	0.08	0.06				0.481
Previous Assault	0.15	0.38	0.03				0.7
Interest in Rape as a Cultural Issue	0.02	0.11	0.02				0.885
Accessibility to Rape as a Cultural Issue	0.6	0.12	0.05				0.62
Number of Females in Study Session	0.19	0.08	0.21				0.013
PercentWomen in Study Session	-2.19	0.83	-0.25				0.009
Step 2				0.08	0	0.34	0.562
ATP	0.09	0.16	0.05				0.562
Step 3				0.41	0.33	38.51	<0.001
Humor Type (Subv)	3.08	0.36	0.77				<0.001
Humor Type (Reinf)	1.71	0.32	0.42				<0.001
Step 4				0.41	0	0.27	0.766
ATPxHumorType (Subv)	-0.05	0.35	-0.01				0.9
ATPxHumorType (Reinf)	-0.21	0.33	-0.08				0.538

Table 34

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for Propensity to Make Attributions of Sexism Scale (PMASS) Predicting Subversive Subtext Recognition.

Step and Predictor Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	$R^2\Delta$	F Δ	p
Step 1				0.09	0.09	1.93	0.07
Sex	0.09	0.38	0.02				0.81
Political Orientation	0.06	0.08	0.06				0.449
Previous Assault	0.12	0.38	0.03				0.747
Interest in Rape as a Cultural Issue	0.02	0.11	0.02				0.842
Accessibility to Rape as a Cultural Issue	0.03	0.13	0.02				0.838
Number of Females in Study Session	0.21	0.08	0.23				0.008
PercentWomen in Study Session	-2.42	0.86	-0.27				0.006
Step 2				0.09	0	0.39	0.532
PMASS	-0.11	0.17	-0.06				0.532
Step 3				0.41	0.32	37.16	<0.001
Humor Type (Subv)	3.07	0.37	0.76				<0.001
Humor Type (Reinf)	1.69	0.32	0.41				<0.001
Step 4				0.42	0.01	1.08	0.344
PMASSxHumorType (Subv)	-0.47	0.32	-0.12				0.148
PMASSxHumorType (Reinf)	-0.11	0.29	-0.04				0.693

Table 35

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for Rape Prevalence Estimates (PrevEst) Predicting Subversive Subtext Recognition.

Step and Predictor Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	$R^2\Delta$	$F\Delta$	p
Step 1				0.08	0.08	1.77	0.099
Sex	0.13	0.38	0.03				0.741
Political Orientation	0.06	0.08	0.06				0.465
Previous Assault	0.16	0.38	0.04				0.684
Interest in Rape as a Cultural Issue	0.02	0.11	0.02				0.875
Accessibility to Rape as a Cultural Issue	0.07	0.13	0.05				0.596
Number of Females in Study Session	0.19	0.08	0.21				0.013
PercentWomen in Study Session	-2.18	0.83	-0.25				0.01
Step 2				0.08	0	0.19	0.662
Prevalence Estimate (PrevEst)	0.08	0.17	0.04				0.662
Step 3				0.41	0.33	39.35	<0.001
Humor Type (Subv)	3.12	0.36	0.77				<0.001
Humor Type (Reinf)	1.69	0.32	0.42				<0.001
Step 4				0.42	0.01	0.93	0.398
PrevEstxHumorType (Subv)	0.4	0.3	0.13				0.188
PrevEstxHumorType (Reinf)	0.32	0.35	0.08				0.359

Table 36

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for Need for Cognition (NFC) Predicting Subversive Subtext Recognition.

Step and Predictor Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	$R^2\Delta$	$F\Delta$	p
Step 1				0.08	0.08	1.76	0.099
Sex	0.11	0.38	0.03				0.777
Political Orientation	0.06	0.08	0.06				0.481
Previous Assault	0.15	0.38	0.03				0.7
Interest in Rape as a Cultural Issue	0.02	0.11	0.02				0.885
Accessibility to Rape as a Cultural Issue	0.06	0.12	0.05				0.62
Number of Females in Study Session	0.19	0.08	0.21				0.013
PercentWomen in Study Session	-2.19	0.83	-0.25				0.009
Step 2				0.09	0.01	1.42	0.235
NFC	-0.2	0.16	-0.1				0.235
Step 3				0.41	0.32	38.7	<0.001
Humor Type (Subv)	3.06	0.36	0.76				<0.001
Humor Type (Reinf)	1.7	0.32	0.42				<0.001
Step 4				0.44	0.03	4.01	0.02
NFCxHumorType (Subv)	0.87	0.31	0.26				0.005
NFCxHumorType (Reinf)	0.45	0.31	0.13				0.142

Table 37

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) and Subversive Subtext Recognition (SSR) Predicting Overall Humor Evaluation.

Step and Predictor Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	$R^2\Delta$	$F\Delta$	p
Step 1				0.22	0.22	1.74	0.124
Sex	0.96	0.44	0.27				
Political Orientation	0.31	0.13	0.35				
Previous Assault	-0.59	0.45	-0.15				
Interest in Rape as a Cultural Issue	-0.15	0.14	-0.18				
Accessibility to Rape as a Cultural Issue	-0.03	0.20	-0.03				
Number of Females in Study Session	0.14	0.13	0.15				
PercentWomen in Study Session	1.03	2.13	0.07				
Step 2				0.27	0.05	1.56	0.223
SDO	0.18	0.25	0.10				
SSR	0.62	0.37	0.23				
Step 3				0.32	0.05	3.04	0.089
SDOxSSR	-0.72	0.41	-0.40				

Table 38

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for Cavalier Humor Beliefs (CHB) and Subversive Subtext Recognition (SSR) Predicting Overall Humor Evaluation.

Step and Predictor Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	$R^2\Delta$	$F\Delta$	p
Step 1				0.22	0.22	1.74	0.124
Sex	0.96	0.55	0.27				
Political Orientation	0.31	0.13	0.35				
Previous Assault	-0.59	0.56	-0.15				
Interest in Rape as a Cultural Issue	-0.15	0.14	-0.18				
Accessibility to Rape as a Cultural Issue	-0.03	0.20	-0.03				
Number of Females in Study Session	0.14	0.13	0.15				
PercentWomen in Study Session	1.03	2.12	0.07				
Step 2				0.46	0.24	9.29	<.001
CHB	0.88	0.23	0.51				
SSR	0.15	0.34	0.06				
Step 3				0.46	0.00	0.08	0.778
CHBxSSR	0.09	0.33	0.05				

Table 39

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for Rape Myth Acceptance (RMA) and Subversive Subtext Recognition (SSR) Predicting Overall Humor Evaluation.

Step and Predictor Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	$R^2\Delta$	$F\Delta$	p
Step 1				0.22	0.22	1.74	0.124
Sex	0.96	0.55	0.27				
Political Orientation	0.31	0.13	0.35				
Previous Assault	-0.59	0.56	-0.15				
Interest in Rape as a Cultural Issue	-0.15	0.14	-0.18				
Accessibility to Rape as a Cultural Issue	-0.03	0.20	-0.03				
Number of Females in Study Session	0.14	0.13	0.15				
PercentWomen in Study Session	1.03	2.12	0.07				
Step 2				0.35	0.13	4.28	0.02
RMA	0.61	0.26	0.39				
SSR	0.62	0.35	0.23				
Step 3				0.45	0.10	7.70	0.008
RMAxSSR	-1.04	0.37	-0.58				

Table 40

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for Attempts to Pressure (ATP) and Subversive Subtext Recognition (SSR) Predicting Overall Humor Evaluation.

Step and Predictor Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	$R^2\Delta$	$F\Delta$	p
Step 1				0.22	0.22	1.74	0.124
Sex	0.96	0.55	0.27				
Political Orientation	0.31	0.13	0.35				
Previous Assault	-0.59	0.56	-0.15				
Interest in Rape as a Cultural Issue	-0.15	0.14	-0.18				
Accessibility to Rape as a Cultural Issue	-0.03	0.20	-0.03				
Number of Females in Study Session	0.14	0.13	0.15				
PercentWomen in Study Session	1.03	2.12	0.07				
Step 2				0.28	0.06	1.72	0.191
ATP	0.22	0.25	0.13				
SSR	0.57	0.37	0.21				
Step 3				0.31	0.04	2.09	0.156
ATPxSSR	-0.72	0.50	-0.37				

Table 41

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for the Propensity to Make Attributions of Sexism Scale (PMASS) and Subversive Subtext Recognition (SSR) Predicting Overall Humor Evaluation.

Step and Predictor Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	$R^2\Delta$	$F\Delta$	p
Step 1				0.22	0.22	1.74	0.124
Sex	0.96	0.55	0.27				
Political Orientation	0.31	0.13	0.35				
Previous Assault	-0.59	0.56	-0.15				
Interest in Rape as a Cultural Issue	-0.15	0.14	-0.18				
Accessibility to Rape as a Cultural Issue	-0.03	0.20	-0.03				
Number of Females in Study Session	0.14	0.13	0.15				
PercentWomen in Study Session	1.03	2.12	0.07				
Step 2				0.44	0.22	8.16	0.001
PMASS	-1.04	0.29	-0.50				
SSR	0.24	0.34	0.09				
Step 3				0.45	0.02	1.13	0.294
PMASSxSSR	-0.36	0.34	-0.17				

Table 42

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for Rape Prevalence Estimate (PrevEst) and Subversive Subtext Recognition (SSR) Predicting Overall Humor Evaluation.

Step and Predictor Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	$R^2\Delta$	$F\Delta$	p
Step 1				0.22	0.22	1.74	0.124
Sex	0.96	0.55	0.27				
Political Orientation	0.31	0.13	0.35				
Previous Assault	-0.59	0.56	-0.15				
Interest in Rape as a Cultural Issue	-0.15	0.14	-0.18				
Accessibility to Rape as a Cultural Issue	-0.03	0.20	-0.03				
Number of Females in Study Session	0.14	0.13	0.15				
PercentWomen in Study Session	1.03	2.12	0.07				
Step 2				0.30	0.08	2.39	0.105
PrevEst	-0.10	0.24	-0.06				
SSR	0.77	0.36	0.29				
Step 3				0.30	0.00	0.01	0.907
PrevEstxSSR	-0.08	0.64	-0.04				

Table 43

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for Need for Cognition (NFC) and Subversive Subtext Recognition (SSR) Predicting Overall Humor Evaluation.

Step and Predictor Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	$R^2\Delta$	$F\Delta$	p
Step 1				0.22	0.22	1.74	0.124
Sex	0.96	0.55	0.27				
Political Orientation	0.31	0.13	0.35				
Previous Assault	-0.59	0.56	-0.15				
Interest in Rape as a Cultural Issue	-0.15	0.14	-0.18				
Accessibility to Rape as a Cultural Issue	-0.03	0.20	-0.03				
Number of Females in Study Session	0.14	0.13	0.15				
PercentWomen in Study Session	1.03	2.12	0.07				
Step 2				0.27	0.05	1.38	0.262
NFC	-0.10	0.26	-0.06				
SSR	0.63	0.38	0.23				
Step 3				0.33	0.06	3.65	0.063
NFCxSSR	0.65	0.34	0.35				

Figure 1

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Measures of Humor Evaluation as a Function of Condition.

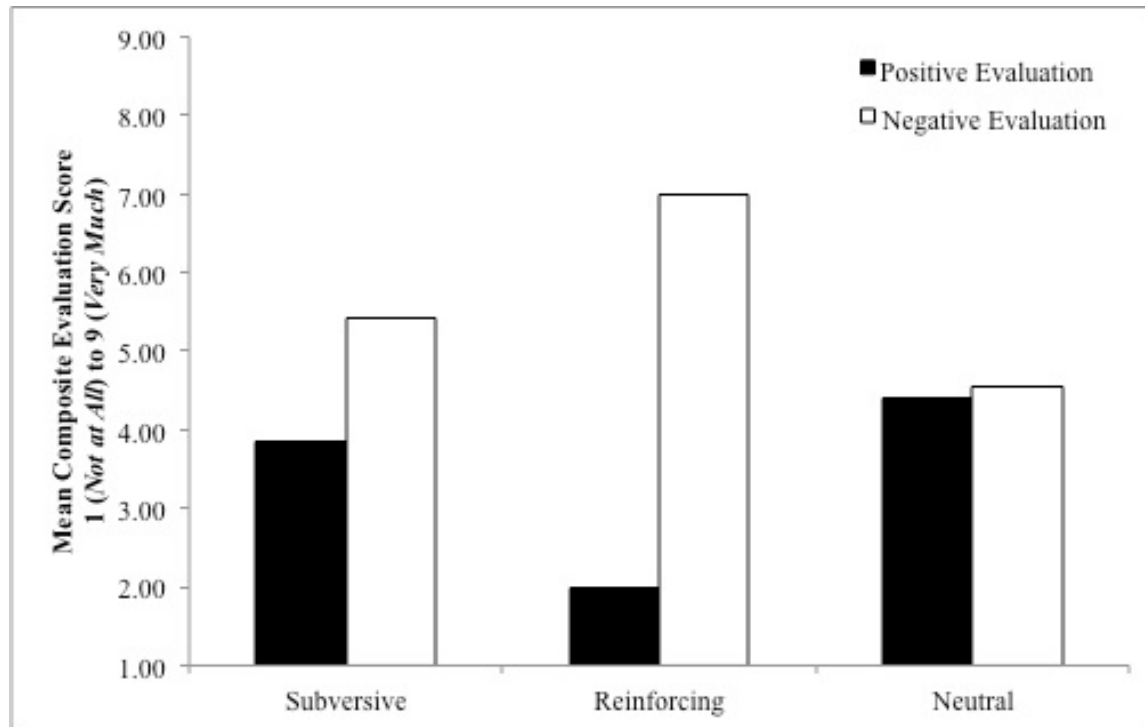


Figure 2

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Overall Humor Evaluation as a Function of Condition.

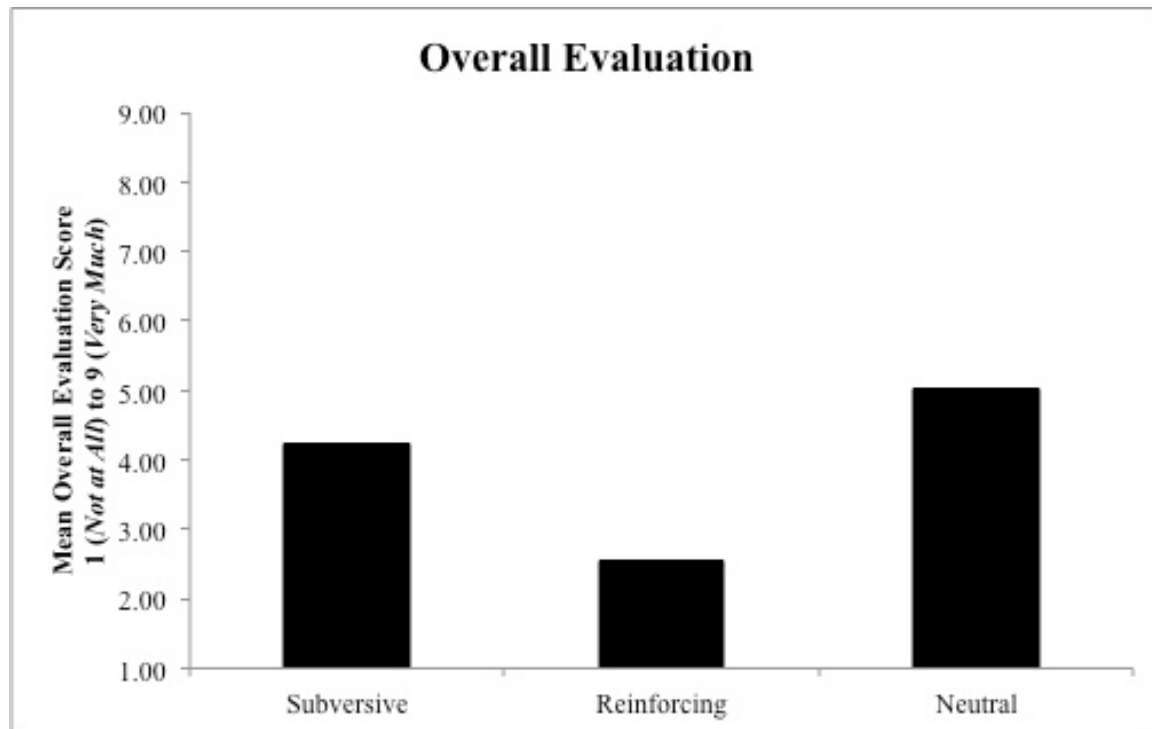


Figure 3

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Measures of Subtext Recognition as a Function of Condition.

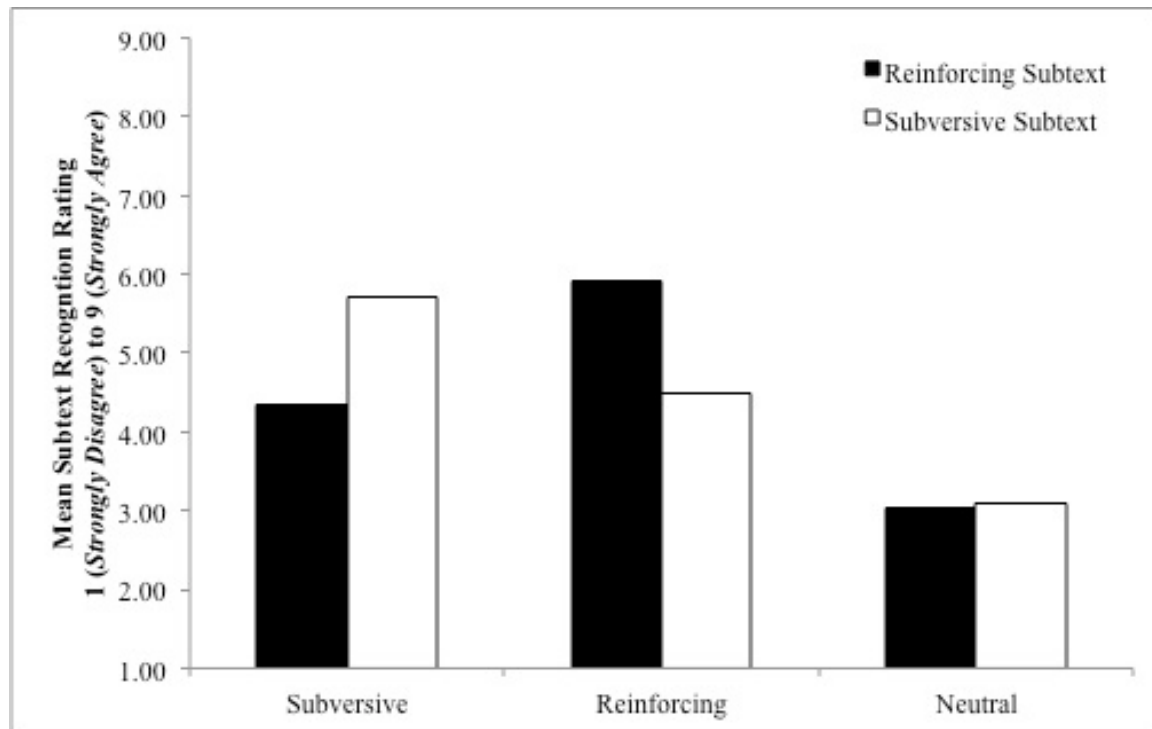


Figure 4

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Measures of Humor Evaluations as a Function of Condition (Study 2).

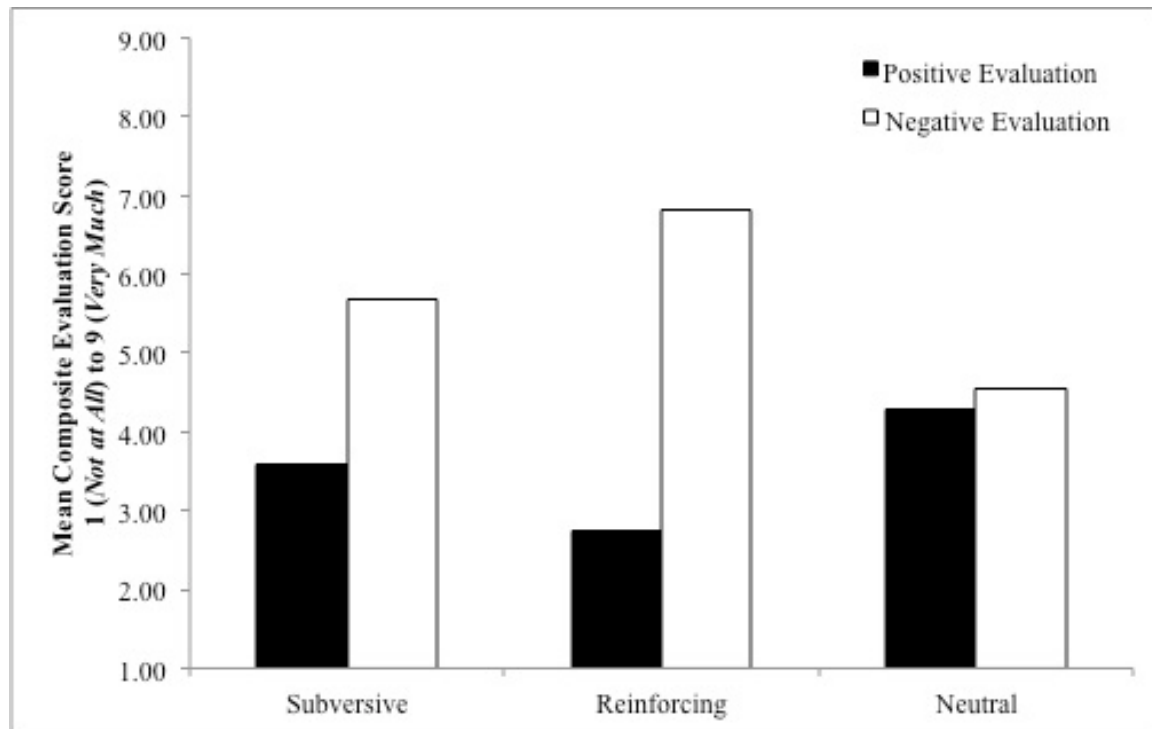
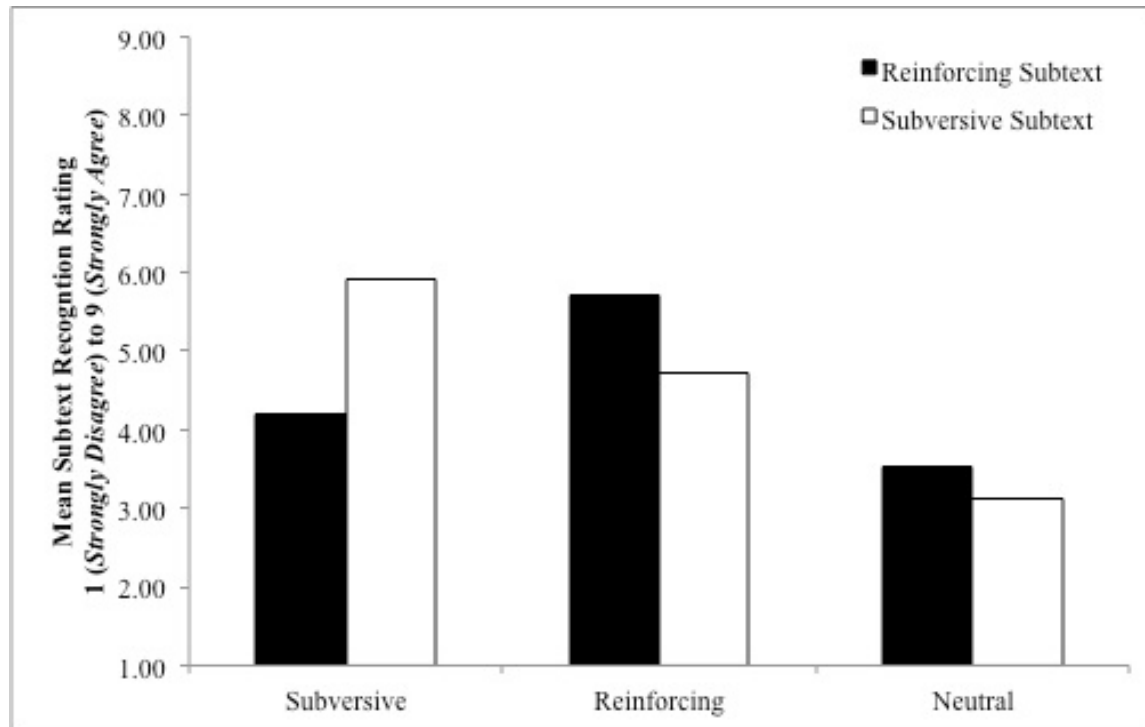


Figure 5

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Measures of Subtext Recognition as a Function of Condition (Study 2).



Appendix A. Study 1 (Online) Materials

General Participation Information

Thank you for your participation in this study. The purpose of this study is to examine perceptions of various forms of media to which individuals may be exposed on a regular basis. This may include such formats as TV shows, video or audio content from social media or news sources, entertainment websites, or other forms of media.

REQUIREMENTS: As part of your participation in this study, you will be asked to listen to a set of brief clips of one of the above formats, and then provide some feedback about the clips afterward. As such, you will need to complete the survey at a time and location in which:

- You are able to listen to audio.
- Your browser settings are set to ALLOW PLUG-INS (this is likely in the Security settings). If you are not able to allow plug-ins, please use Firefox to complete this survey.
- You are not using a mobile device.
- You can complete the survey in one sitting.

If you are currently unable to complete the survey because of the above requirements, please revisit the link to this survey at a later time. Additionally, some of the content to which you may be exposed may be offensive to some, and/or inappropriate for certain situations (e.g., the workplace, library, or if children are nearby). Specifically, content may include the use of profanity, and may contain references to race, sex, sexual assault, or other potentially offensive topics. Please be aware that headphones should be used if you are completing this survey in a public space, so as not to disturb those around you.

Survey Description

As part of your participation in this study, you will listen to audio clips that may pertain to a variety of topics, and then complete a brief survey relating to the clips. As stated above, the potential exists for some of the content you will hear to be offensive or use harsh language. Further, some content may contain reference to sexual violence, which may cause anxiety or discomfort to some, especially among those who have had or may know someone who has had similar experiences. You will be free to discontinue your participation at any time without penalty, but please note that once the audio clips have concluded, you will be able to provide feedback about your reaction and are free to express your thoughts as you wish. Additionally, some items in the questionnaire may also ask briefly about prior sexual encounters, which may make some participants uncomfortable.

Informed Consent Information

Approval date of project: April 18, 2014

Expiration date of project: April 18, 2015

Principal investigator: Donald A. Saucier, PH.D.

Contact and phone for any problems/questions: saucier@ksu.edu; (785) 532-6881

IRB CHAIR CONTACT/PHONE INFORMATION: Rick Scheidt, Chair, Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, 1 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS

66506, (785) 532-3224; Jerry Jaax, Associate Vice Provost for Research Compliance and University Veterinarian, 1 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224.

PURPOSE OF RESEARCH: The research is designed to examine your attitudes about various forms of media to which individuals may be exposed on a regular basis

PROCEDURES OR METHODS TO BE USED: You will complete a set of questionnaires after listening to audio excerpts. Please be sure that audio is enabled on your computer, and that you have access to earphones if you are in a public space.

LENGTH OF STUDY: This study will take 30 minutes or less to complete.

RISKS ANTICIPATED: The media to which you may be exposed may contain language about sensitive social issues, including sexual assault, which may cause anxiety or discomfort, especially among those who have had or may know someone who has had similar experiences. Some of the survey content may also contain profanity, or may ask about sexual orientation or sexual history, which may make some participants uncomfortable. However, it is not expected that individuals will experience any more distress than they would encounter on a daily basis.

BENEFITS ANTICIPATED: You will contribute to the advancement of research and knowledge, and experience participation in a psychological research study.

EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY: Your responses will be strictly anonymous and confidential, and will be used only by the researchers for approved research purposes.

TERMS OF PARTICIPATION: I understand this project is research and that my participation is completely voluntary. I also understand that if I decide to participate in this study, I may withdraw my consent at any time, and stop participating at any time without explanation, penalty, or loss of benefits or academic standing to which I may otherwise be entitled. Finally, I understand that I may read a peer-reviewed article from a psychology journal and respond to it in writing for credit rather than participating in research studies.

I verify that by clicking the button below, I am indicating that I have read and understand this consent form, and willingly agree to participate in this study under the terms described. By providing responses to this survey, I acknowledge that I have received this consent information.

If you are in a public space, please plug in your headphones now, and ensure that your browser is set to allow plug-ins (accessed in Security settings). Press the green Play button, and listen to the full playlist below (approximately X minutes). Tracks will play consecutively on their own, so please avoid clicking any of the tracks individually, as this may cause difficulties with playback. After "Track10" has finished playing, then proceed to the next page after listening. Please note that some content may not be appropriate for certain scenarios (e.g., workplace, library, in front of children, etc.).

<<Audio Clips>>

Clip Evaluation

You were randomly selected to hear the following media type: **COMEDY CLIPS**

Using the scale below, please rate the JOKE CONTENT from the clips you just heard on each of the following characteristics. I found the clip content to be...

	Not at all (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	Very Much (9)
Funny	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Enjoyable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Clever (i.e., smart, intelligent)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prosocial (i.e., positive toward a person or group)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Belittling (i.e., derogatory)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Offensive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ignorant (i.e., uninformed, unsophisticated)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Antisocial (i.e., negative toward a person or group)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

1. Have you previously heard any of the content in these clips anywhere else? Yes / No
2. The literal (or surface level) meaning of a message may be described as the message that is most apparent. It can be identified from the words alone and is usually understood without too much trouble. When a person says one thing, but may mean something else, the literal meaning still refers to what they actually said. In your opinion, what is the literal theme underlying the set of jokes you just heard? Type your response in the space below.
3. The subtext (or underlying meaning) of a message may be described as meaning that requires a little more thought in order to understand. It could also be described as what is being conveyed "between the lines" of what was said. When a person says one thing, but means another, the subtext is what they mean. In your opinion, what is the subtext theme underlying the set of jokes you just heard? Type your response in the space below.

Social Desirability

Listed below are a number of statements concerning personal attitudes and traits. Read each item and decide whether the statement is true or false as it pertains to you personally. Select True or False beside each item number to indicate your answers.

	True	False
1. Before voting I thoroughly investigate the qualifications of all the candidates.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. I never hesitate to go out of my way to help someone in trouble.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. It is sometimes hard for me to go on with my work if I am not encouraged.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. I have never intensely disliked someone.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. On occasion I have had doubts about my ability to succeed in life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. I am always careful about my manner of dress.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. My table manners at home are as good as when I eat out in a restaurant.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. If I could get into a movie without paying and be sure I was not seen, I would probably do it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. On a few occasions, I have given up doing something because I thought too little of my ability.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. I like to gossip at times.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. I can remember "playing sick" to get out of something.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. I always try to practice what I preach.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. I don't find it particularly difficult to get along with loud mouthed, obnoxious people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. I sometimes try to get even, rather than forgive and forget.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. When I don't know something I don't at all mind admitting it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. At times I have really insisted on having things my own way.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. There have been occasions when I felt like smashing things.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. I would never think of letting someone else be punished for my wrongdoings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. I never resent being asked to return a favor.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27. I never make a long trip without checking the safety of my car.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
28. There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
29. I have almost never felt the urge to tell someone off.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

30. I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favors of me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31. I have never felt that I was punished without cause.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
32. I sometimes think when people have a misfortune that they only got what they deserve.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
33. I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Part 4: Demographics

To the extent with which you are comfortable, please provide the demographic information requested below so that we may obtain an accurate idea of the participants in our study, and examine how this relates to response trends from the previous section. Please note that we will only examine aggregated (composite) data, and your individual responses below will not be identifiable or linked to your identity.

What is your gender?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Prefer not to respond

What is your ethnicity?

- ☐ American Indian
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Hispanic or Latino/a
- ☐ White
- ☐ Biracial or multiracial
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Prefer not to respond

What is your age? _____

If you are in college, please identify what year you are in currently.

- ☐ First
- ☐ Second (sophomore)
- ☐ Third (junior)
- ☐ Fourth (senior)
- ☐ Fifth or Greater

Where are you from? If you are from the United States, please provide your city/town and state (e.g., Kansas City, MO). If you are not from the United States, please provide your city/town and country (e.g., Beijing, China). _____

Which of the following best describes your favorite genre of TV?

- ☐ Drama
- ☐ Comedy
- ☐ Suspense
- ☐ Action

Which of the following best describes your favorite genre of film?

- ☐ Drama
- ☐ Comedy
- ☐ Suspense
- ☐ Action

Using the scale below, please indicate your political position on Economic Issues.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Very Conservative							Very Liberal	

Using the scale below, please indicate your political position on Social Issues.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Very Conservative							Very Liberal	

Using the scale below, please indicate your political position on Foreign Policy Issues.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Very Conservative							Very Liberal	

Although it is often difficult to summarize one's political, economic, and social views in a single word or phrase, please indicate which of the following positions best represents your viewpoint.

- ☐ Liberal
- ☐ Middle of the Road
- ☐ Conservative

The following items pertain to your previous experiences in potentially uncomfortable or harmful scenarios. Please answer as honestly as possible, keeping in mind that your responses are anonymous and will only be examined in combination with other participants' responses.

For each of the following scenarios, please indicate "yes" or "no" as to whether you have experienced the situation.

	Yes	No
Have you ever experienced an uncomfortable situation based on your gender?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have you ever experienced harassment at work, based on your gender?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have you ever been called a derogatory name, based on your gender?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have you ever experienced an uncomfortable situation based on your race?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have you ever experienced harassment at work, based on your race?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have you ever been called a derogatory name, based on your race?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have you engaged in sexual activity with someone when you didn't really want to because they gave you drugs or alcohol?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have you engaged in sexual activity with someone when you didn't really want to because of nonverbal threats of force?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have you engaged in sexual activity when you didn't want to because the person threatened to use physical force if you didn't cooperate?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have you been in a situation where the person used some degree of physical force (twisting your arm, holding you down, etc.) to make you engage in sexual activity when you didn't want to?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Debriefing Statement, Researcher Contact Information, and Contact Information for Local and National Sexual Assault Services

Thank you for your participation in this study. Our research team is interested in the factors that are involved in reactions to certain types of humor. In this study, you were exposed to one type of humor in the clips that you heard, while other participants viewed different types. Due to the increasing popularity of humor that involves rape, some of the clips our participants viewed included rape-related humor. We are interested learning more about the aspects of this type of humor that people are most likely to pay attention to. Our findings have the potential to play an important role in changing individuals' ideas about this serious issue.

Although topics related to rape may be sensitive in nature, this research aims to demonstrate the importance of understanding individuals' reactions to an increasingly popular component of U.S. culture in order to 1) understand how it may affect individuals' perceptions of women who have been raped, and 2) to further our theoretical understandings of humor and social influence. This research would not be possible without your input. If you wish to find out more about this study, including its results, or make a comment or complaint about the study, please contact Dr. Donald Saucier, the study's lead investigator, by email at saucier@ksu.edu, by phone at (785) 532-6881. Additional contact information for the IRB is included on the informed consent.

If you, a friend, or family member has been sexually assaulted and/or raped, you can contact the following services for immediate help. There may also be additional local resources in your area. These facilities are also capable of answering any questions you may have regarding sexual assault and/or rape. Please feel free to print this page to keep these resources available.

National Sexual Assault Hotline: 800-656-HOPE (4673)
www.rainn.org, info@rainn.org
All Emergencies: 911

NOTE: If you have been sexually assaulted and/or raped DO NOT SHOWER OR CHANGE CLOTHES. Seek medical attention immediately to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. If you suspect you have been drugged ask for a urine test to be taken. Date rape drugs leave the body quickly and need be tested for immediately following the assault. Ask for a specially trained SANE/SART nurse to perform the exam.

Appendix B. Joke Scripts (for Audio Recordings)

MALE REINFORCING

1. The other day I said to my neighbor buddy, “Hey did you and your girlfriend break up? I heard you guys yelling at each other last night.” He goes, “Yeah man, we were having sex last night, but she was yelling another guy’s name.” I said, “Really? Who was it?” And my buddy said, “Do you know a guy named *Rapist*?”
2. I know a girl who broke up with her boyfriend after being raped, but it wasn’t because he didn’t understand or care, it was because he was afraid the rapist was a better at sex than him.
3. There’s been a movement to put pictures of smoker’s lunges on the outside of cigarette boxes. I think they should put pictures of fat asses on Big Macs, maybe pictures of ugly girls on cheap beer, and pictures of rape victims on shot glasses.
4. Don’t understand girls. Don’t understand the way they interpret the world around them. The other night, I thought that this lady and I were in a race. Turns out, that *she* thought that *she* was about to get raped [Pause] which was an awkward misunderstanding. So what happened was, it was really late at night. It’s like 2am. It was a really bad part of Toronto. It’s the kind of area where businesses have spelling mistakes in their names. And we were the only two people to get off the subway at that stop. And she exited the station, and she turned right. Then I exited the station, and I turned right. And she was about 20 feet in front of me. And the thing was, that I was in a rush. So I started walking faster, but then *she* started walking faster. And for some reason, my competitive juices just started flowing, and I thought ‘Oooh, a race!’ And then I literally yelled out, ‘Not so fast!’ And then I started running. But then *she* started running. The problem was that she was faster than me, so she started pulling away, and what I said next made perfect sense to me based on what I thought what was going on, it probably confused the hell out of her, because I yelled out, ‘What have you been training for this?’ And then I realized that she didn’t think it was a race, cause she started yelling out, ‘Rape! Rape!’
5. I’m not condoning rape, you guys. Obviously, you shouldn’t rape anyone. Unless you have a reason: You want to fuck someone and they won’t let you. In which case...uh, what other option do you have? How are you supposed to have an orgasm in their body if you don’t rape them, I mean what the fuck?

FEMALE REINFORCING

1. If shoe size is really related to penis size then my fear of being raped by a clown is justified. And further warranted, because they always travel in cars with 20 or 30 other clowns, that my friends in an insane clown posse.
2. Women are told to travel in packs, to never walk alone at night, to run with a buddy. I take that one step further and make sure I hang out with women who I can *outrun*. If we

are attacked I don't have to run faster than the rapist, I just have to run faster than those other girls. Perhaps you should reconsider those high heels.

3. We have all heard that one in three women will be raped in their lifetime. Look to your left, look to your right and if neither of those women have been raped, then unfortunately for you, this might be your might to go home early and avoid a bad evening.
4. For real though, don't you hate it when you get raped to a song and then it ruins it for you? Lucky for me it was "Happy Birthday to You." I was always my uncle's favorite niece and not just cuz I never reported him.
5. We need more rape jokes. Rape is...needless to say, the most heinous crime imagineable. It's a comic's dream, though, because it seems when you do rape jokes, that the material is so dangerous and edgy, and the truth is, it's like the safest area to talk about in comedy. Cuz who's gonna complain...about a rape joke? Rape victims?? They don't even report rape! They're traditionally not complainers. The worst thing that can happen is that after a show, maybe someone comes up to you and is like, "look, I'm a victim of rape. And as a victim of rape, I just wanna say that I thought that joke was inappropriate, and insensitive, and totally my fault. I am SO SORRY."

MALE SUBVERSIVE

1. So I've lived in the city for a while now, and I've noticed this thing where women...late at night on the street...will perceive me as a threat. Which is funny, because, like, I'm afraid of being kidnapped. So as an example of this, I was walking home and happened to come up behind this woman, and she's walking a few yards in front of me and carrying a bag. And she hears me, and starts givin' me, like, the over-the-shoulder look. And *then*, she starts to pick up the pace and she drops her bag. So I think, "Oh! She must be trying to catch a cab or something," you know. So I start to jog after her to help her with her stuff, and she looks back, and she's like "AAAAHHHH!!" and then she's bookin' it. So then I start running, and I am gaining on her, and then it dawns on me. "Oh! She's running from *me*. Because in her eyes, I'm an *adult*. And adults rape each other. Kind of a lot. So I wanted to go up to her and be like, "Woah! No, no, no, no. I'm not like a...like a...I'm not a *man*. I'm just a man *child*."
2. I think that the word we should be more uh, conscious of, maybe remove from our everyday vernacular, is the word um, "raped." Do you ever just listen to a bunch of guys playing video games online? They're just like 'Awh, you just shot me in the back, dude, you RAPED me, man. Oh, I got you back! Rrrraped.' I'm pretty sure when talking to a woman who's been through that horrific situation, if I say, 'What was it like to be raped?' she's not gonna look at me and go, 'Have you ever played Halo? It's like getting waylaid with a gravity hammer.'"
3. The other day I came across some person handing out these postcard things, supposedly to help prevent date rape. And they've got the most poorly written, impractical date safety tips you could imagine. I mean, here's one: 'Carry a drink-testing kit and use it if

you're in any doubt.' There you go. There's your simple solution, ladies, just always carry a drink-testing kit with you. That wouldn't be an awkward first date...Ugh, that would be—I would love to be on the other end of that first date. 'Hi! Hi, I'm Rachel.... Um, thanks for comin' down and meetin' me, I just wanted to hang out and uh—Is that an appletini? For me? I love appletinis, thank you! So...um, so Connie tells me that uh, that you're into skydiving. That's so—I mean, I—that's one of those things I've always wanted to do, and I, you know, I'd love to be able to do it, but—Oh, it's a drink-testing kit. Yeah. Oh, I—No, no I just wanna uh, see if you're gonna try to date rape me. If it turns cloudy I have to go.' (*pause for laughter*)... Ah, the old "date rape drink test" joke.

4. I saw this ad on TV the other night. It showed a guy and a girl, clearly just getting back from a date. Then it showed them kissing and cuddling... and then it got a little more serious. And he shoves her down onto the sofa, and then the ad fades out, and then back in, and he's in court. And the voiceover goes, "if you don't get consent, you could go to prison for rape." What sort of society has to *remind someone not to rape*? Were there people going, "just been out raping, mom."
 - a. Mom (in different voice): 'Oh, remember the ad, dear.'

FEMALE SUBVERSIVE

1. People say babies conceived by rape should be aborted but I think those kids should get a chance because they are going to grow into adults who will fight for what they want and not take no for an answer, just like their dad.
2. I was walking to the Red Line the other night and it's about 11:45 at night and I'm alone, and I see this guy in front of me. And before I get to him, he's like pacing back and forth, in and out the alley way, you know what I mean. He's got like no, he's got no purpose. And then I walk by and all of a sudden, he gets this strut going on like he's gonna do something.... and here's the thing. As a woman, we're taught like, [loud volume] *never walk alone at night!! You will get raped if you're walking alone at night. You need a man to survive! Unless he's following you at night, then you will die!* [Normal volume] So of course, I'm like, I'm starting to walk faster and he's kind of starting to strut faster. And the problem is, that like, every woman in their entire life has that one moment where you think, "Here's my rape!" Yep, this is it. Oh, 11:47. How old am I? 25. Alright. Here's my rape. You know, it's like we wait for it. We're just like waiting for it, like what took you so long? I feel like that should be a game show. You know what I mean? [said like a game show announcer] *Here's your rape! It's loud in the club and the music is bumping and you went to the restroom. But uh oh, time out. You forgot to put that cardboard thing over your drink. Here's your rape! You're saying no, but he's saying yes. Here's your rape! Wait a minute, a suspicious van in a dark parking lot next to your car? Wait a second, what's that? Your keys fell; you're fumbling on the ground. Here's your rape!*
3. We live in a world where 1 in 4 women has already been or will be a victim of sexual violence. And that statistic is so high it scares the shit out of me and it gives me night terrors and keeps the glass ceiling over everyone's head. And there is no statistic that will scare straight, white men that much (*pause*) but I want there to be. 1 in 4 men, every time

they play a sports ball game, will lose to a little girl in pigtails while their dad watches disapprovingly. 1 in 4 men has a tinier wiener than a baby kitten. 1 in 4 men, every time they go to disrobe to make love to a woman they will remove their underwear, only to find a skid mark shit stain...that spells out their greatest fear.

4. Hallmark makes a lot of cards, and you can pretty much get any card you want printed on the internet, but I'm still waiting for my rape anniversary card. "Happy Rapeversary" ... maybe with a picture of my therapist on it.

FEMALE NEUTRAL

1. So I am a grown woman, with a twin-sized bed. You know, the kind you slept on in 3rd grade? Yeah, that's me. At some point when I do get a date, how am I ever inviting a guy up to that bed? You know...things are going kinda great, and you'd be like, makin the move, like "Yeah, you wanna come see my bedroom? You what I'm gonna do when we get in there? I'm gonna throw you down on the bed, and then I'm gonna lay RIGHT ON TOP OF YOU. Because there is NOWHERE ELSE to lay. And don't move! Or you'll fall on the floor."
2. I'm a little tired today, because the people in the hotel room next to me were humpin all night. Which...I'm a big fan of that, you know, but those people never look how you expect them to look. I was layin there picturing movie stars all night, you know, and it helped me get through it. I saw them at breakfast...they did look like movie stars, but it was Donkey and Shrek.
3. Human males photograph their genitals and send them electronically to people's cellular phones. My boyfriend sent me a picture of Richard Nixon as his "dick pic." I thought it was cute, and he was cute, so I slept with him. I should have asked for an actual dick pick before hand because he had the smallest Richard Nixon I have ever seen.
4. My boyfriend thinks I'm an awesome lay because I'm great on top. But really it's that I'm 5 foot tall and he's 6'2" so if I'm on the bottom, sex is just a whole lot of me trying to keep my face out of his armpit.

MALE NEUTRAL

1. Sex is really about trying to get somewhere. You don't want to think about that because we've separate them, but the ENTIRE reason sex exists is to have babies. That's the only reason it exists at all, but we're such a narcissistic species that we've separate it. Cuz we just wanna...UH!...we just wanna, just...(grunting and groaning sounds). But that urge, is the urge to procreate! A horny teenage boy is thinking "oh I want a baby. I want a precious, tiny baby of my very own to take care of. Look at her boobs. I want her to feed my baby with her big boobs." That's what that is! But we make it this separate thing. Animals must think we're idiots! Animals that watch us have sex must think, "they don't know what they're doing! Why is he doing *that*? That's not going to accomplish anything. What a moron!"

2. I live in an apartment, and we have a loud sex neighbor in the building. I don't mind loud sex, I can deal with loud sex. It's the duration that I have a problem with. It's the hour and a half every night that I can't stand. I'm just laying in bed with my wife after like 45 minutes just going...heh heh...oh...uh...sorry. That's uh...he should take a break, he's gonna cramp up pretty soon. I wouldn't know, I've never gone that long, but I'd imagine...
3. I don't like condoms. And here's why. No guy has ever seen an attractive woman and been like, "aw man, I wonder what it would be like to not feel what it would be like to be with her! I bet that would be amazing, wondering what that would be like." And girls don't like condoms either, and that means NOBODY likes condoms. Have you guys ever had sex with a condom? When you're done, both people are just like... "at least we didn't get pregnant..." More like at least nobody had fun...should have just watched Avatar again, right?
4. My girlfriend and I have been trying new things in the bedroom. Recently, she suggested that I completely shave my junk. It had been a while since the last time I tried this, and although I knew it would be itchy, I decided to go for it, on one condition. I told her she had to shave her hoo-ha. Ladies and gentlemen, THAT was a huge mistake. We have hair down there for a reason. The next time we had sex, it was like two pieces of sandpaper rubbing together. We nearly set the bed on fire from the friction. Once we recovered from that incident, we decided to try something else and bought some edible underwear...which turned out to be just as unfortunate. It was quite an embarrassing visit to the ER to find out she is allergic to strawberries.

Appendix C. Study 2 (Paper and Pencil) Materials

Perceptions of Media Humor and Individual Differences

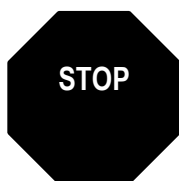
Please note that we respect your privacy, and the following information will **ONLY** be used for research purposes. Your information will **NOT** be distributed anywhere or given to anyone other than the researchers on this project.

Please write the last 6 digits of your WID: _____

Please write your K-State email address:

Survey Description

As part of your participation in this study, you will listen to audio clips that may pertain to a variety of topics, and then complete a brief survey pertaining to the clips. As stated previously, it is possible that some of the content you will hear may contain offensive or harsh language. Further, some content may contain reference to sexual violence, which may cause anxiety or discomfort to some, especially among those who have had or may know someone who has had similar experiences. You will be free to discontinue your participation at any time without penalty, but please note that once the audio clips have concluded, you will be able to provide feedback about your reaction and are free to express your thoughts as you wish. Additionally, some items in the questionnaire may also ask briefly about sexual orientation and prior sexual encounters, which may make some participants uncomfortable.



Please listen to the researcher's instructions before proceeding.

The session you are in was selected to hear the media type: comedy clips

Using the scale below, please rate the JOKE CONTENT from the clips you just heard on each of the following characteristics.

<i>I found the clip content to be...</i>								
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all				Very Much				
_____ 1. Funny				_____ 5. Belittling (i.e., derogatory)				
_____ 2. Enjoyable				_____ 6. Offensive				
_____ 3. Clever (i.e., smart, intelligent)				_____ 7. Ignorant (i.e., uninformed, unsophisticated)				
_____ 4. Prosocial (i.e., positive toward a person or group)				_____ 8. Antisocial (i.e., negative toward a person or group)				

9. Have you previously heard any of these clips anywhere else? (Circle one) **Yes**
No

10. The literal (or surface level) meaning of a message may be described as the message that is most apparent. It can be identified from the words alone, and is usually understood without too much trouble. When a person says one thing, but may mean something else, the literal meaning still refers to what they actually said.

In your opinion, what is the literal theme underlying the set of jokes you just heard? Write your answer in the space provided:

11. The subtext (or underlying meaning) of a message may be described as meaning that requires a little more thought in order to understand it. It could also be described as what is being conveyed "between the lines" of what was said. When a person says one thing, but means another, the subtext is what they mean.

In your opinion, what is the subtext theme underlying the set of jokes you just heard? Write your answer in the space provided:

12. In your opinion, who or what was being made fun of in the clips you just heard?

Based on the JOKE CONTENT in the clips you just heard, please rate your agreement about the overall message of the jokes on the scale below.

Please keep in mind that for this section, we need your responses to be about the JOKES, not to reflect your personal beliefs.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Strongly Disagree								Strongly Agree

Overall, the JOKES gave the message that...

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Rape doesn't need to be taken so seriously. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. The threat of rape is a constant worry for many women. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. The issue of rape is exaggerated. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. The issue of rape is a big problem. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Women are responsible for preventing rape. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. Men are responsible for preventing rape. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. Men just have certain urges that need to be fulfilled. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 8. It is unfortunate that women need to think so often about their safety. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 9. Jokes about rape are funny when they poke fun at the people it could happen to. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 10. Jokes about rape are funny when they point out the severity of the problem. |

You may now continue with the rest of the study packet at your own pace.

ATP-BDB MEASURE

*If a college-aged man were to encounter a college-aged woman, how acceptable would it be for him to do each of the following behaviors? Using the scale below, write a number in the left column to indicate how acceptable **YOU** view each behavior to be, and write a number in the right column to indicate how acceptable you think **OTHER COLLEGE STUDENTS** would view each behavior to be.*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>Not at all</i>								<i>Completely</i>
<i>Acceptable</i>								<i>Acceptable</i>

Acceptance Ratings:

YOU	OTHERS	
		1. text her a naked picture of him out of the blue.
		2. pay for drinks.
		3. unexpectedly show up at her house to try to have sex.
		4. compliment her appearance.
		5. tell her she's "fuckable."
		6. expect to have sex with her after paying for dinner.
		7. tell her she's beautiful.
		8. grab her ass when she passes him at a bar.
		9. make sexual gestures (e.g., mimicking oral sex, pelvic thrusting) toward her at a bar or party.
		10. friend her on Facebook.
		11. offer her recreational drugs at a party to get her loosened up.
		12. ask for her phone number.
		13. continue to hit on her when she tells him she has a boyfriend.
		14. invite her for coffee.
		15. compliment her on her smile.
		16. give her extra drinks at a party to get her drunk faster.
		17. call her a "tease" if she doesn't go as far as he wants.
		18. invite her to get ice cream.
		19. ask her to dance with him.
		20. pay for a date.
		21. make sexual remarks to her about how her body looks.
		22. make sure she gets home safely after drinking.
		23. stand up for her if other guys are hitting on her.
		24. suggest oral sex if she says "no" to intercourse.

CHB MEASURE

Using the scale provided, write the number in the blank that best represents your feelings on each item.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>								<i>Strongly Agree</i>

- | | |
|--|--|
| _____

_____ | 1. Sometimes people need to relax and realize that a joke is just a joke.
2. Society needs to lighten up about jokes and humor generally.
3. People get too easily offended by jokes.
4. It is okay to laugh at the differences between people.
5. Jokes are simply fun.
6. People should try to tell jokes that don't put others down. |
|--|--|

SDO MEASURE

Using the scale provided, write the number in the blank that best represents your feelings on each item.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>								<i>Strongly Agree</i>

- | | |
|---|---|
| _____

_____ | 1. Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups.
2. In getting what you want, it is sometimes necessary to use force against other groups.
3. It's OK if some groups have more of a chance in life than others.
4. To get ahead in life, it is sometimes necessary to step on other groups.
5. If certain groups stayed in their place, we would have fewer problems.
6. It's probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top and other groups are at the bottom.
7. Inferior groups should stay in their place.
8. Sometimes other groups must be kept in their place.
9. It would be good if groups could be equal.
10. Group equality should be our ideal.
11. All groups should be given an equal chance in life.
12. We should do what we can to equalize conditions for different groups.
13. Increased social equality.
14. We would have fewer problems if we treated people more equally.
15. We should strive to make incomes as equal as possible.
16. No one group should dominate in society. |
|---|---|

IRMA-SF

Using the scale provided, write the number in the blank that best represents your feelings on each item.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Strongly								Strongly
Disagree								Agree

- _____ 1. If a woman is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for letting things get out of control.
- _____ 2. Although most women wouldn't admit it, they generally find being physically forced into sex a real "turn-on."
- _____ 3. If a woman is willing to "make out" with a guy, then it's no big deal if he goes a little further and has sex.
- _____ 4. Many women secretly desire to be raped.
- _____ 5. Most rapists are not caught by the police.
- _____ 6. If a woman doesn't physically fight back, you can't really say that it was rape.
- _____ 7. Men from nice middle-class homes almost never rape.
- _____ 8. Rape accusations are often used as a way of getting back at men.
- _____ 9. All women should have access to self-defense classes.
- _____ 10. It is usually only women who dress suggestively that are raped.
- _____ 11. If the rapist doesn't have a weapon, you really can't call it a rape.
- _____ 12. Rape is unlikely to happen in the woman's own familiar neighborhood.
- _____ 13. Women tend to exaggerate how much rape affects them.
- _____ 14. A lot of women lead a man on and then they cry rape.
- _____ 15. It is preferable that a female police officer conduct the questioning when a woman reports a rape.
- _____ 16. A woman who "teases" men deserves anything that might happen.
- _____ 17. When women are raped, it's often because the way they said "no" was unclear.
- _____ 18. Men don't usually intend to force sex on a woman, but sometimes they get too sexually carried away.
- _____ 19. A woman who dresses in skimpy clothes should not be surprised if a man tries to force her to have sex.
- _____ 20. Rape happens when a man's sex drive gets out of control.

NFC MEASURE

Using the scale provided, write the number in the blank that best represents your feelings on each item.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Strongly								Strongly
Disagree								Agree

- _____ 1. I prefer complex to simple problems.
- _____ 2. I like to have the responsibility of handling a situation that requires a lot of thinking.
- _____ 3. Thinking is not my idea of fun.
- _____ 4. I would rather do something that requires little thought than something that is sure to challenge my thinking abilities.
- _____ 5. I try to anticipate and avoid situations where there is a likely chance I will have to think in depth about something.
- _____ 6. I find satisfaction in deliberating hard and for long hours.
- _____ 7. I only think as hard as I have to.
- _____ 8. I prefer to think about small daily projects to long term ones.
- _____ 9. I like tasks that require little thought once I've learned them.
- _____ 10. The idea of relying on thought to make my way to the top appeals to me.
- _____ 11. I really enjoy a task that involves coming up with new solutions to problems.
- _____ 12. Learning new ways to think doesn't excite me very much.
- _____ 13. I prefer my life to be filled with puzzles I must solve.

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14. The notion of thinking abstractly is appealing to me.
15. I would prefer a task that is intellectual, difficult, and important to one that is somewhat important but does not require much thought.
16. I feel relief rather than satisfaction after completing a task that requires a lot of mental effort.
17. It's enough for me that something gets the job done; I don't care how or why it works.
18. I usually end up deliberating about issues even when they do not affect me personally.
-

PMASS

Using the scale provided, write the number in the blank that best represents your feelings on each item.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>Strongly</i>								<i>Strongly</i>
<i>Disagree</i>								<i>Agree</i>

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1. People discriminate against women.
2. Sexist behavior is more widespread than people think it is.
3. Other people treat women based on stereotypes.
4. You'll see lots of sexism if you look for it.
5. Women are too worried about being discriminated against.
6. Women are too sensitive about stereotypes.
7. Women today are overly worried about being victims of sexism.
8. People are overly concerned about the issue of sexism.
9. I think about why women are treated stereotypically.
10. I think about whether people act in a sexist manner.
11. I consider whether other people's actions are sexist.
12. I am on the lookout for instances of sexism.
13. I am quick to recognize sexism.
14. My friends think I am good at spotting sexism.
15. I find that sexism is pretty easy to spot.

SD SCALE

Listed below are a number of statements concerning personal attitudes and traits. Read each item and decide whether the statement is true or false as it pertains to you personally. Select True or False beside each item to indicate your answers.

	True	False
1. Before voting I thoroughly investigate the qualifications of all the candidates.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. I never hesitate to go out of my way to help someone in trouble.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. It is sometimes hard for me to go on with my work if I am not encouraged.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. I have never intensely disliked someone.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. On occasion I have had doubts about my ability to succeed in life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. I am always careful about my manner of dress.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. My table manners at home are as good as when I eat out in a restaurant.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. If I could get into a movie without paying and be sure I was not seen, I would probably do it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. On a few occasions, I have given up doing something because I thought too little of my ability.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. I like to gossip at times.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. I can remember "playing sick" to get out of something.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. I always try to practice what I preach.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. I don't find it particularly difficult to get along with loud mouthed, obnoxious people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. I sometimes try to get even, rather than forgive and forget.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. When I don't know something I don't at all mind admitting it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. At times I have really insisted on having things my own way.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. There have been occasions when I felt like smashing things.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. I would never think of letting someone else be punished for my wrongdoings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. I never resent being asked to return a favor.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27. I never make a long trip without checking the safety of my car.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
28. There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
29. I have almost never felt the urge to tell someone off.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30. I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favors of me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31. I have never felt that I was punished without cause.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
32. I sometimes think when people have a misfortune that they only got what they deserve.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
33. I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please continue to the next page.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

To the extent with which you are comfortable, please provide the demographic information requested below so that we may obtain an accurate idea of the participants in our study, and examine how this relates to response trends from the previous section. Please note that we will only examine aggregated (composite) data, and your individual responses below will not be identifiable or linked to your identity.

1. What is your gender?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Prefer not to respond

2. What is your ethnicity?

- ☐ American Indian
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Hispanic or Latino/a
- ☐ White
- ☐ Biracial or multiracial
- ☐ Other _____
- ☐ Prefer not to respond

3. What is your age? _____

Using the scale below, please write the number most representative of your political position each issue.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Very								Very
Conservative								Liberal

4. _____ Economic Issues

5. _____ Social Issues

6. _____ Foreign Policy Issues

7. Although it is often difficult to summarize one's political, economic, and social views in a single word or phrase, please indicate which of the following positions best represents your general viewpoint:

Liberal	Conservative	Middle of the Road
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8. In the space below, please state your hometown and country (i.e., where you are from). If you are from the United States, please provide your city/town and state (e.g., Kansas City, MO). If you are not from the United States, please provide your city/town and country (e.g., "London, UK" or "Beijing, China").

9. Which of the following best describes your favorite genre of TV? (Circle one)

Drama	Comedy	Suspense	Action	Other
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10. In the space below, please write the name of your favorite TV show.

11. Which of the following best describes your favorite genre of film? (Circle one)

Drama	Comedy	Suspense	Action	Other
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12. In the space below, please write the name of your favorite movie.

The following items pertain to your previous experiences in potentially uncomfortable or harmful scenarios. Please answer as honestly as possible, keeping in mind that your responses are completely confidential, will not be linked to identifying information, and will only be examined in combination with other participants' responses. For each of the following scenarios, please indicate "yes" or "no" as to whether you have experienced the situation.

		Yes	No
13.	Have you ever experienced an uncomfortable situation based on your gender?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14.	Have you ever experienced harassment at work, based on your gender?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15.	Have you ever been called a derogatory name, based on your gender?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16.	Have you ever experienced an uncomfortable situation based on your race?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17.	Have you ever experienced harassment at work, based on your race?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18.	Have you ever been called a derogatory name, based on your race?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19.	Have you engaged in sexual activity with someone when you didn't really want to because they gave you drugs or alcohol?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20.	Have you engaged in sexual activity with someone when you didn't really want to because of nonverbal threats of force?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21.	Have you engaged in sexual activity when you didn't want to because the person threatened to use physical force if you didn't cooperate?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22.	Have you been in a situation where the person used some degree of physical force (twisting your arm, holding you down, etc.) to make you engage in sexual activity when you didn't want to?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

One final request: in cooperation with the K-State Women's Center, we are providing informational flyers to our participants. Please take a look at the flyer in your packet.

If you would like to take the flyer, please go ahead and take it with you.

(Flyer consisted of the image below, on one separate half sheet of purple paper.)

*Do you want to help work toward a society without rape?
Consider the K-State Women's Center!*

The K-State Women's Center works to promote a safe and equitable work and learning environment for all students through advocacy, presentations, academic classes, training, and referral. We are here to assist any student who has been victimized by violence, and to help educate others on such important issues.

On the academic side, we worked with the College of Arts and Sciences on the development of its new 15-hour Nonviolence Studies Certificate Program. The P.E.E.R.S. (Proactive Educators for the Elimination of Rape and Sexual Violence) class is periodically taught by the Women's Center director and **is founded on the belief that students can effectively educate each other on issues concerning rape and sexual/relationship violence.** PEERS is offered as a two-semester, 3 credit seminar, providing in-depth training about the cultural, psychological, medical, criminal, and legal system aspects of sexual assault, followed by opportunities to present to organizations, living groups, and classes.



If you are interested in this, or other information about the Women's Center, please contact us!

- Visit our web page at <http://www.k-state.edu/womenscenter>
- Call us at the Women's Center at 785-532-6444