FEMINIST FORUM

Rape Myths: History, Individual and Institutional-Level Presence, and Implications for Change

Katie M. Edwards · Jessica A. Turchik ·
Christina M. Dardis · Nicole Reynolds ·
Christine A. Gidycz

Abstract Rape myths, which are present at both the individual and institutional/societal levels, are one way in which sexual violence has been sustained and justified throughout history. In light of an increasing accumulation of rape myth research across a variety of disciplines, this paper proposes to use a feminist lens to provide an overview of the historical origins of rape myths, to document the current manifestations of these myths in American society, and to summarize the current body of research literature. We focus on the history of several specific rape myths (i.e., "husbands cannot rape their wives," "women enjoy rape," "women ask to be raped," and "women lie about being raped") and how these particular myths permeate current legal, religious, and media institutions (despite their falsehood). The paper concludes with suggestions for further research and describes how existing evidence could be used to aid in eradicating rape myths at both the individual and institutional levels.

Keywords Rape myths · Rape · Sexual assault · Review · History

K. M. Edwards (✉) · C. M. Dardis · C. A. Gidycz
Department of Psychology, Ohio University,
200 Porter Hall,
Athens, OH 45701, USA
e-mail: ke264505@ohio.edu

J. A. Turchik
National Center for PTSD at VA Palo Alto Health Care System,
Menlo Park, CA, USA

J. A. Turchik
Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences,
Stanford Univeristy of Medicine,
Stanford, CA, USA

N. Reynolds
Department of English, Ohio University,
Athens, OH 45701, USA

N. Reynolds
Department of Women and Gender Studies, Ohio University,
Athens, OH 45701, USA

Introduction

Sexual violence is an endemic problem in U.S. society (the focus of our paper), as evidenced by the fact that 18–25% of U.S. women report experiencing either an attempted or completed rape in their lifetimes (Fisher et al. 2000; Tjaden and Thoennes 2000). Research suggests that numerous factors are related to rape proclivity and the occurrence of sexual aggression, one of which is the acceptance and perpetuation of rape myths (Desai et al. 2008; Lonsway and Fitzgerald 1994; Loh et al. 2005). In the 1970s, sociologists (e.g., Schwendinger and Schwendinger 1974) and feminists (e.g., Brownmiller 1975) introduced the concept of rape myths in order to explain a set of largely false cultural beliefs that were thought to underlie sexual aggression perpetrated against women. Rape myths, which include elements of victim blame, perpetrator absolution, and minimization or rationalization of sexual violence, perpetuate sexual violence against women (Payne et al. 1994). Indeed, research has documented that men's engagement in sexual violence is predicted by rape myth acceptance (Desai et al. 2008; Loh et al. 2005).

Due to the increasing accumulation of rape myth research over the past 30 years across a variety of disciplines, the purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of the historical origins of rape myths, document the current manifestations of these myths in U.S. society,

and summarize the current body of research literature. Consistent with Brownmiller's (1975) groundbreaking feminist analysis of rape, we assert that sexual violence is perpetuated by a patriarchal system where men hold higher status and have greater power than women. We aim to demonstrate how rape ideologies emanate from this patriarchal system and are present at various levels of society. We assert that, given patriarchy's marginalization of women and their experiences, rape myths serve to legitimize sexual violence against women. Using this feminist approach, we review the current body of rape myth literature and argue that rape myths, despite their falsehood, are endorsed by a substantial segment of the population and permeate legal, media, and religious institutions. Concluding this paper, we discuss what further research is needed and how existing data could be used to aid in eradicating rape myths at both the individual and institutional levels.

In an effort to accomplish these goals, we begin by providing an overview of how rape myths are studied in the social sciences and a brief review of the literature to underscore that rape myths are endorsed by a substantial segment of the population and are present at the institutional level. Subsequently, the majority of the paper focuses on several specific rape myths that were chosen based on their extensive presence in the academic literature; the myths chosen have been documented consistently across time, settings, and disciplines. Specifically, we focused on the following myths as they exist in the U.S.: "husbands cannot rape their wives," "women enjoy rape," "women ask to be raped," and "women lie about being raped." Within the discussion of each rape myth we provide rates of endorsement, empirical evidence to dispute the veracity of the myth, a brief historical overview, and a discussion of how the particular myth permeates legal, religious, and media institutions. Given the needed balance between thoroughness and brevity, not all rape myths could be addressed. We assert that the overarching points and conclusions we make in this paper apply to the larger rape myth literature and not only to the specifically addressed rape myths. Of note, rape myths pertaining to men as victims were not included, such as "men cannot be raped" and "men who are raped must be homosexual" because of this paper's focus on women (for a discussion of male rape myths see Davies 2002). Further, when discussing rape myths and religious institutions, we focused on Christianity since this is the dominant religion in the U. S. We are not aware of any published review in the past decade that has concurrently examined several different rape myths with the purpose of establishing an agenda for individual and institutional-level change; this is needed given the amount of research that has occurred. In order to ensure the integrity, accuracy, and inclusivity of the interdisciplinary review process, we consulted with experts in theology, history, media studies, legal studies, and criminology.

Definitions and Assessment of Rape Myths

The majority of social science research on rape myths has utilized two measures: The Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (RMAS; Burt 1980) and the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (IRMAS; Payne et al. 1994). Burt's RMAS was the first widely-used measure created, based on her definition of rape myths: "prejudicial, stereotyped or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists" (1980; p.217). The RMAS combined with rape myths the concepts of sex role stereotyping, adversarial sexual beliefs, and acceptance of interpersonal violence. An example item is: "When women go around braless or wearing short skirts and tight tops, they are just asking for trouble." Answering above the midpoint on this 7-point scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" typically denotes agreement with a myth. Subsequently, Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994) proposed a modified definition of rape myths: "attitudes and beliefs that are generally false, but are widely and persistently held, and that serve to deny and justify male sexual aggression against women" (Lonsway and Fitzgerald 1994, p.134). Using this definition, Payne et al.'s (1994) IRMAS was created; an example item is "Many women secretly desire to be raped." Although the majority of social science research has used the RMAS and IRMAS to study rape myths, other measures and methods have also been employed. These include (1) other self-report measures of rape-related attitudes, such as the Attitudes Toward Rape Scale (Feild 1978) or the Attitudes Toward Rape Victims Scale (Ward 1988), (2) open-ended questions with written or oral responses that are content-analyzed or otherwise qualitatively analyzed, (3) content analysis (or a similar method of analysis) of texts, films, magazines, news articles, and other forms of historical and modern media and art and (4) other types of analysis such as feminist rhetorical analysis, historical analysis, and legal analysis of crime and court records.

Evidence for the Existence of Rape Myths

Research using various scales to measure rape myths document that between 25% and 35% of respondents (both male and female) agree with the majority of these rape myths (Lonsway and Fitzgerald 1994), and that men are more likely than women to endorse rape myths (Suarez and Gadalla 2010). When utilizing open-ended questions asking participants to list their personal beliefs about rape victims, Buddie and Miller (2001) found that 66% of their college

sample (comprised of women and men) endorsed some combination of rape myths. Although the majority of rape myth research has been conducted with college students, studies with non-college samples generally find similar rates of rape myth endorsement (Basile 2002; Feild 1978). Additionally, although there are some researchers who have suggested that some rape myth rates may be decreasing over time (Edward and McLeod 1999), the methodological differences across studies make it difficult to compare endorsement rates of these beliefs across time. Further, results from a study by Hinck and Thomas (1999) suggest that college women and students who attend rape education or rape awareness workshops are less likely to endorse rape myths than college men and students who do not attend such programs, which suggests that increases in rape education programming could lead to decreased rates of rape myth acceptance. Paradoxically, however, rape education may result less in a decreased acceptance of rape myths than in an increased reluctance to acknowledge them as a result of a newfound awareness that sexual aggression is socially unacceptable.

Also, rape myths may often operate implicitly rather than explicitly, and our self-report rape myth measures may not be able to detect these more subtle rape myths (McMahon and Farmer 2011). Indeed, research has found that the implicit belief (associative, well-learned preconscious knowledge) that power and sex are associated is related to greater rape proclivity (Zurbriggen 2000), that power-sex associations appear to activate rape myths, and that rape myths account for the relationship between power-sex association and higher rape proclivity (Chapleau and Oswald 2010). However, although many men may implicitly associate power with sex and under certain circumstances (e.g., being tired, intoxicated) act on this association, many of these men are unlikely to explicitly endorse this connection under normal circumstances (e.g., Chapleau and Oswald 2010; Devine 1989). In fact, explicit and implicit power-sex association measurements were found to be uncorrelated, suggesting that under typical research situations, the association between power and sex is not explicitly acknowledged and therefore rape myths may not be activated or endorsed, especially on a self-report measure. For instance, McMahon (2010) found that although individuals are not likely to directly blame a female rape victim, 53% of college students agreed that her actions led to her assault (e.g., dressing a certain way, drinking alcohol).

Rape myths are also present within legal, religious, and media institutions. For example, Gylys and McNamara (1996) found that 43% of prosecuting attorneys sampled from a Midwestern state demonstrated a moderate to high level of rape myth acceptance. In a study of German law students, Krahe et al. (2008) documented that although more students rejected rape myths than accepted them,

greater endorsement of rape myths was related to higher levels of victim blame and shorter sentencing recommendations for perpetrators. Also, research demonstrates that rape myths affect police officers' interactions with victims of rape, such that police officers were less likely to believe victims whose characteristics were not consistent with a stereotypical rape victim (e.g., are not virgins, had a prior relationship with the suspect; Page 2008). Although there is minimal empirical research on rape myths within religions institutions, preliminary research suggests that some rape myths are endorsed by a substantial number of clergy (Sheldon and Parent 2002); there is a larger body of non-empirical, theoretical literature on religions institutions and rape myths (e.g., Fortune 2005). Rape myths are also prevalent in the media and directly affect consumers' attitudes towards rape. For example, results from a content analysis of prime-time television dramas found that 42% of storylines depicted a women "wanting" to be raped, 38% depicted a victim lying about rape, and 46% featured women "asking" to be raped (e.g., by being scantily dressed; Brinson 1992). In an experimental study examining whether newspaper headlines have an effect on readers, Franiuk et al. (2008b) exposed college participants to an article with either a rape myth-endorsing or non rape myth-endorsing headline concerning the Kobe Bryant rape case. Results showed that participants exposed to the rape myth-endorsing headline were less likely to believe that Bryant was guilty of rape and more likely to hold rape-supportive attitudes than participants exposed to the non rape myth-endorsing headline. This is consistent with social psychological research which generally finds that media has a notable impact on consumers' attitudes (Bryant and Oliver 2009). Thus, rape myths not only influence societal attitudes towards rape victims, but influence important decisions related to legal cases and how information is reported to the public.

Review of Specific Rape Myths

Husbands Cannot Rape Their Wives

Research with college students suggests that 9% of men and 5% of women believe that a husband's use of physical force to have sex with his wife does not constitute rape, and in the same sample 31% of men and 19% of women indicated that a husband having sex without his wife's consent does not constitute rape (Kirkwood and Cecil 2001). Moreover, in a national telephone survey, Basile (2002) found that only 15% of the sample believed that boyfriends and husbands could rape their partners. Although little research has assessed if certain groups of individuals are more likely to endorse the marital rape

myth, preliminary research suggests that men (compared to women) endorse higher rates of this particular myth (Ewoldt et al. 2000). However, data are mixed with regard to age, with some research suggesting that younger males are more likely to support marital rape myths than females and older men (Aromaki et al. 2002), and some finding that college males and their fathers did not differ in the evaluation of marital rape (Luddy and Thompson 1997). Further, research has found that people who believe that husbands can rape their wives are unlikely to believe that the sexual act violated the wife's rights or that she was harmed psychologically by the act (Ferro et al. 2008). Despite these beliefs, research shows that 10–14% of all women are raped by their husbands in their lifetime and this rises to 40–50% among battered women (Martin et al. 2007). Research also documents that there are numerous deleterious physical and psychological consequences to marital rape (Bennice and Resick 2003).

In modern European and American history, husbands who raped their wives have been exempt from legal punishment (Russell 1990). The marital rape exemption is most commonly traced back to Sir Matthew Hale (an English Chief Justice) and eighteenth century common law (Martin et al. 2007). Hale stated that "the husband cannot be guilty of a rape committed by himself upon his lawful wife, for by their mutual matrimonial consent and contract the wife hath given up herself in this kind unto her husband, which she cannot retract" (1736, as cited in Martin et al. 2007, p.331). This statement, the Hale doctrine, was formally recognized in the United States in 1857 under the *Commonwealth v. Fogarty* decision. Subsequently, in the *Frazier vs. State of Texas* (1905) case, the court decided that the "law would not permit a woman to retract her consent to marital relations after once assuming them" (Barshis 1983, p. 384). This set a precedent that would not be legally changed for nearly a century.

In addition to the Hale doctrine, the marital rape exemption also was sustained by the unities theory put forth by William Blackstone (1765), an English juror and professor. Blackstone's (1765) unities theory asserted that after marriage "Husband and wife are legally one person. The legal existence of the wife is suspended during marriage, incorporated into that of the husband… If a wife is injured, she cannot take action without her husband's concurrence" (Blackstone, 1765, as quoted in Bennice and Resick 2003, p. 229). Thus, rape was considered a crime against another man's property rather than a crime against a woman's body and integrity (Bennice and Resick 2003). Not only did the unities theory serve as an underpinning for the legal marital rape exemption, but it also served as the basis for domestic violence victims' ineligibility to file civil suits against their spouse for physical and psychological damages (Caringella-MacDonald 1998).

The U.S. Women's Movement in the 1970s brought national attention to marital rape. These efforts led in 1975 to South Dakota becoming the first state to make marital rape a crime and, in 1978, John Rideout being the first individual charged with marital rape (Russell 1990). In 1979, during *Commonwealth v. Chretien*, the United States witnessed its first marital rape conviction (Bennice and Resick 2003), and in the past 30 years all states have developed laws forbidding marital rape (Martin et al. 2007). However, 31 states plus Washington D.C. have partial or qualified exemptions to their sexual assault laws, such that marital rape is prosecutable only if the spouses are living apart, legally separated, or divorced, if physical force is used, or if the wife cannot consent due to mental impairment or incapacitation (National Center for the Prosecution of Violence Against Women, 2009).

In addition to legal institutions, some religious institutions have contributed to the myth that husbands cannot rape their wives. For instance, some people use Biblical verses such as Ephesians 5:22, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord," or 1 Corinthians 7:4 "The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does" (New King James Version), to justify sexually aggressive behaviors (Fortune 2005). Subsequent Biblical scripture instructs husbands to submit to their wives and suggests that wives have control over their husbands' bodies as well. However, given the patriarchal structures of many religious institutions, it is most often the right of the husband to his wife's body that is emphasized. Indeed, Fortune (2005) argued that Biblical scripture such as those mentioned above are reflective of larger religious ideologies, and that the church is partially responsible for perpetuating the societal notion that husbands have conjugal rights to their wives. In an investigation of clergy's attitudes toward rape, clergy were given fictional marital rape scenarios and were asked whether or not the incident is rape and how much husband and wife were each to blame for the incident. The clergy then were able to give open-ended responses as to what led to their attributions of blame (Sheldon and Parent 2002). Although 61% of clergy identified that the "wife did something she did not want to", 24% of clergy endorsed ideas that the women did not use adequate forms of self-defense (e.g., resistance, escape), and 11% agreed that the wife "needs to know the proper marital role," (e.g., be submissive, sexually competent). Thus, legal exemptions and religious doctrines support the notion that marital rape is not as serious as other types of sexual violence, that men, still today, possess a degree of ownership over their wives' bodies, and that marriage is equated with unconditional sexual consent.

With regard to the media, one way this institution perpetuates rape myths is by the exclusion of some stories and the focus on others. For instance, rape coverage in the

news media concentrates heavily on stranger rape cases (compared to primetime episodic series, Cuklanz 2000), even though marital rape is much more common than stranger rape (Martin et al. 2007; Russell 1990). Although Cuklanz (2000) concluded that primetime representations of rape changed between 1976 and 1990, such that there are fewer depictions of stranger rapes and more sympathy for victims, this is not the case for marital rape depictions. Generally the rapes depicted on primetime series are those perpetrated by acquaintances or dates. Given that experimental research suggests that media portrayals of rape cases directly affects consumers' attitudes about rape (Franiuk et al. 2008a, b), it is probable that the exclusion of marital rape depictions in the media obscures the problem from the public, allowing individuals to believe that this does not happen or is not a significant problem. However, very little empirical research has directly examined the effects of media's portrayal of marital rape, and studies in this area are needed.

Women Enjoy Rape

Studies with college students suggest that 1–4% of female participants believe that women secretly desire to be raped (Carmody and Washington 2001; Johnson et al. 1997), whereas 15–16% of men believe this myth (Edwards et al. 2010; Johnson et al. 1997). Additionally, approximately 11% of college men report that they believe women exaggerate how much rape affects them (Edwards et al. 2010). However, research clearly demonstrates that rape often leads to numerous deleterious physical, psychological, and social consequences (Centers for Disease Control, 2004). One of this myth's earliest origins can be traced back to Herodotus, a Greek historian in the fifth century B.C., who wrote:

> Abducting young women is not, indeed a lawful act; but it is stupid after the event to make a fuss about it. The only sensible thing is to take no notice; for it is obvious that no young woman allows herself to be [raped] if she does not want to be (as cited by Horos 1974, p. 3).

The belief that rape must occur forcibly and against her will was cited by Blackstone in eighteenth century England (Schulhofer 1998). English law required that the victim resisted her attacker "earnestly" or "to the utmost," a perspective that carried over to the United States (Schulhofer 1998). Although such resistance has been removed from some states' laws, evidence of physical force is often still required above and beyond verbal threats or coercion (Bryden 2000). Due to this requirement, the absence of vaginal injury is often used as evidence against women, as it is then assumed that if she was able to self-lubricate, she must have enjoyed the forced sex act (Lees 1996). An English law created by the 1975 case of *Director of Public Prosecutions vs. Morgan* stated that a man's honest belief that a woman had consented was enough to negate his liability for rape. Though this law was repealed in 2003 by the Sexual Offense Act, "token resistance," the attitudinal belief that women mean "yes" when they say "no" to sexual advances from men (Muehlenhard and Hollabaugh 1988), is still present in society. Indeed, men's belief in token resistance can be used as justification for not stopping sexual activity despite a woman's protests. Recent studies have found a link between men's belief in token resistance, acceptance of rape myths (Garcia 1998), and sexual perpetration (Loh et al. 2005; Masser et al. 2006). For example, Loh et al. (2005) found that one-third of college men perceived token resistance from a partner in the past, and that these men were almost three times as likely to have engaged in sexually aggressive behaviors compared to those who did not perceive token resistance from partners.

Beliefs that women desire forced sex have been incorporated for centuries into "mainstream cultural work in art, religion, law, literature, philosophy, psychology, films, and so forth" (Dworkin 1981, p. 166). The popular eighteenth century tales penned by sexual sadist Marquis de Sade not only celebrate the raping of women, but Sade advocated that women can and should accept rape and can choose to enjoy the experience (Dworkin 1981). Also popular in the eighteenth century print media were depictions of women secretly desiring sexual intercourse despite their stated refusal: "A woman's dual role as temptress and regulator [as demonstrated in song and print media] meant that her stated 'no' might still mean 'yes' to sexual overtures" (Block 2006; p. 39). The idea that women enjoy rape was present in academic literature even into the twentieth century. For example, in a 1952 edition of *The Yale Law Journal*, Freudian psychoanalytic theory was used to argue that "a woman's need for sexual satisfaction may lead to the unconscious desire for forceful penetration, the coercion serving neatly to avoid the guilt feeling which might arise after willing participation" (p. 67). In present times, the most visible perpetrator of the myth that women enjoy rape is arguably the pornography industry and other sexually explicit forms of media.

Dworkin's (1981) groundbreaking book asserted that pornography portrays sexual violence as something that is desired and enjoyed by women, and that pornography fosters rape myths and leads to violence against women, all in an effort to preserve patriarchal power. In fact, recent empirical research supports Dworkin's theory; a recent meta-analysis found a direct significant and positive relationship between use of pornography (especially violent pornography) and attitudes supporting violence toward

women (r=.24; Hald et al. 2010). Self-reported exposure to such materials has also been directly and positively related to rape myth acceptance. For instance, Emmers-Sommer and Burns (2005) recently studied the use of Internet porn, and found that 12% of community men in their sample endorsed watching porn in which women were coerced into having sex. In this sample, rape myth acceptance was positively correlated with reported viewing of pornography that includes sexual coercion, but not more broadly with viewing pornography. Priming studies have shown that pornography activates and reinforces hostility toward women among those college and community men who already have risk factors for sexual aggression and fosters the development of sexual preoccupation (see Malamuth et al. 2000 for a review). Further, a meta-analysis of experimental studies found that exposure to pornography depicting nonviolent sexual activity as well as media depictions of violent sexual activity lead to increases in aggressive behaviors, with depictions of violent sexual activity leading to greater increases in behavioral aggression than nonviolent sexual activity (Allen et al. 1995). Thus, pornography itself is not the sole causative factor for aggressive tendencies or rape myth acceptance, but serves to bring these beliefs to the surface and reinforce such already held misogynistic beliefs.

It is not only pornography that elicits negative beliefs about women; a recent meta-analysis found that the use of degrading images (such as displaying pin-ups and advertisements of scantily clad women) was positively related to endorsing rape myths, with a moderate effect size (.72; Suarez and Gadalla 2010). In an experimental study, Milburn et al. (2000) showed college men clips from movies: some portrayed male dominance and female objectification, while the other contained nonsexual material. The men were then asked to read a fictitious magazine story of a rape scenario. This study found that individuals exposed to film clips portraying female objectification and male domination were more likely to express that the female rape victims received pleasure from the rape experience than individuals who watched nonsexual film clips. Another media form, romance novels, which represent 40% of the mass paperback sales in the United States (Salmon and Symons 2003), often include rape of the principle female character. In a historical review of romance novels, Thurston (1987) found that in 54% of the novels, the female lead was raped. Mayerson and Taylor (1987) found that college women who read these stories reported higher rape myth acceptance. However, few studies address the relationship between women's media use and rape myth acceptance, though one article found that greater television viewing in general was positively related to rape myth acceptance in college women (Kahlor and Morrison 2007). In sum, it appears that a substantial number of individuals

either believe that woman ask to be raped or can be primed to endorse such a belief in experimental studies. Although research clearly demonstrates that media is riddled with rape myths, there are very few studies that assess the direct role that media has on attitudes, and more importantly, behaviors. Thus, it should be noted that much of what we know about the role of media, and other institutions, in perpetuating the belief that women desire to be raped is limited and warrants empirical inquiry using rigorous methodological designs.

Women Ask to be Raped

"Women ask to be raped" is an umbrella under which more specific ideas, such as "she was walking at night by herself," "she is promiscuous," and "she was asking to be raped in that outfit," can be categorized (Allison and Wrightsman 1993; Carmody and Washington 2001). Carmody and Washington (2001) reported that approximately 21% of college women endorsed the myth that women are asking for trouble if they wear sexy or provocative clothing. Moreover, Johnson et al. (1997) found that 27% of college men and 10% of women endorsed the myth that "women provoke rape." A British Amnesty International poll conducted in 2005 found that 22% of those surveyed thought that a woman was partially or totally responsible for rape if she had many sexual partners, and 26% thought her partially or totally responsible for rape if she was wearing sexy or revealing clothing (Walklate 2008). Experimental research further supports the existence of this myth. For example, in a study of college males and females, Workman and Orr (1996) varied the skirt length of a women portrayed as a rape victim—either short, moderate, or long—and found that when the victim was wearing the short skirt (compared to the other two) she was deemed to have wanted sex more, to have been more suggestive to the perpetrator, and to have led the perpetrator on to a greater degree.

Block (2006) argued that the burgeoning emphasis in eighteenth century America on women's ability to make autonomous decisions about their relationships with men coincided with the view that women were even more culpable than in the past for sexual behaviors, including rape. This belief played out in eighteenth century legal proceedings, such that rape cases were more likely to be dismissed than in previous centuries. Discussing rape myths as a "historical invention," Stevenson (2000) suggested that with the rise of "respectability" and expectations about womanhood during the mid-nineteenth century, social mystifications of rape were instituted into legal practices. Accordingly, "women alleging rape were expected to act and portray themselves as *unequivocal victims* [i.e., Caucasian, middle- or upper- class, pious, submissive] if their allegations were to have any credibility" (Stevenson

2000, p. 345). Although more subtle today, Stevenson asserted that the notion of the unequivocal victim has persisted into modern times and contributes to the current belief that women lie about being raped, especially in legal institutions. For example, research shows that jury members' attitudes toward rape (i.e., women are responsible for preventing rape, women bring rape upon themselves) were found to be the single best predictor of their decisions in rape case verdicts (Feild and Bienen 1980). Similarly, in a study of 360 jurors from rape trials, LaFree et al. (1985) found that any evidence of victim drinking, drug use, or adultery led to disbelief of perpetrator guilt. Additionally, in cases in which consent is less clearly delineated, such as when drugs or alcohol are implicated, mock jurors have stated that they would like more information on whether the woman was generally the type to act in a promiscuous manner (Finch and Munro 2005). Further, experimental studies document the important role that media coverage of rape has on jury-decision making in rape trial cases (Kovera 2002; Mullin et al. 1996).

Additionally, although rape shield laws were designed to prevent bias against the victim's character, such laws are limited to sexual history and not other factors (e.g., drug or alcohol use), and information about victim behaviors are often found to be admissible to explain the circumstances that lead up to rape (Bryden and Lengnick 1997). These data relate to Cahill's (2000) feminist analysis of the social construction of the female body and the belief that women are culpable for rape:

> In the specific moments and movements of the body are written the defense of the sexual offender: she was somewhere she should not have been, moving her body in ways that she should not have, carrying on in a manner so free and easy so as to convey an utter abdication of her responsibility of self-protection, that is, of self-surveillance (p. 56).

Cahill further asserted that women are expected to monitor, police, restrict, and even hinder their movements in an attempt to ensure the safety of their bodies. This underscores the widespread belief that women are responsible for preventing bodily violations and that women who are sexually victimized are culpable.

Some aspects of religiosity and religious institutions may perpetuate the belief that women are culpable for rape. In a study conducted at a Christian liberal arts college, men higher in religiosity (measured by amount of prayer and importance of religion) compared to less religious men were more likely to believe that women who are promiscuous or who dress in a provocative manner deserve to be raped (Freymeyer 1997). Biblical scripture supports this notion. For example, *Genesis* 34 tells the story of a woman named Dinah who goes out alone to meet a woman in town, but is abducted and raped by the local prince. The general theological interpretation of the meaning of this story is that Dinah is culpable for this rape by going out alone without a companion. Theological interpretations have even implied that by going out alone she must have desired to be seen by the local men, and thus her rape was "inevitable" (Parry 2002). The extent to which such Biblical passages directly affect victim-blaming attitudes and behaviors awaits empirical inquiry.

Media coverage of rape cases can also contribute to victim blame by insinuating that the victim is at fault for being in a dangerous area or that promiscuous women deserve to be raped for acting inappropriately (Caringella-MacDonald 1998). Howitt (1998) argued that media stories are often constructed from a viewpoint that is more favorable to the perpetrator (e.g., by focusing on the perpetrator's version of events) rather than the victim, and that acquittals were more likely to make the front page of a newspaper than rape convictions. Fountain (2007) found in an experimental study of college students that news stories that cast victims in a negative light led to higher levels of victim blame compared to stories with a negative perpetrator portrayal or control (unbiased) stories. Although preliminary research suggests that the media contributes to the perpetuation of the myth that women asked to be raped, greater research is needed to determine how prevalent this myth is in various media forms and what impact the media's presentation of this myth has on attitudes and behaviors.

Women Lie About Being Raped

Although there is great debate about the prevalence of unfounded accusations of rape (Marshall and Alison 2006), most researchers suggest that false rape allegations are highly infrequent (Patton and Snyder-Yuly 2007). In fact, an international report that reviewed studies and law enforcement estimates reported that approximately 2–8% of reported sexual assaults are believed to be false (Lonsway et al. 2007). Nevertheless, Burt (1980) found that 50% of community men and women believe that women lie about being raped, but more recently, Kahlor and Morrison (2007) documented in their sample of college women that participants on average believed that 19% of rape accusations were false. Among college men, recent data showed that 22% agreed that "women lie about rape to get back at men," and 13% agreed that "a lot of women lead men on and then cry rape" (Edwards et al. 2010). Thus, prevalence of this myth may have decreased over time, but methodological differences as well as possible changes in willingness to disclose make this hard to determine.

This belief has been in existence for centuries. For example, consider the ancient Greek myth of Hippolytus and Phaedra and the Biblical tale of Joseph and Potiphar's wife (*Genesis* 39: 7–23). In both stories a married woman

becomes interested in another man, is rejected by that man, and then vindictively accuses him of rape to punish him for rejecting her romantic overtures. Such accounts portray a woman's act of claiming rape as an attempt to cover up "her deviant sexual behavior, [as] an act of revenge, fury of fantasy, and/or [as] an instrument for pulling the wool over her husband's and society's eyes" (Gavey and Gow 2001, p. 343). Davison (2006) noted that most people perceive women in the Bible as being "temptresses, liars, and evil" (p. 8) since: 1) women are not commonly portrayed in the Bible and 2) over the centuries the Bible has been interpreted from a patriarchal viewpoint. In late eighteenth century America, depictions of women who falsely accused men of rape were popular in tales intended for bawdy humor, which downplayed the seriousness of rape (Block 2002). These stories often depicted fallen women tricking upstanding men into marrying them by lying about paternity. Furthermore, lower and working class women in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were depicted as tough and able to defend themselves (Bourke 2007). These women were considered unrapeable and were often not believed if they reported being assaulted.

The legal system is an institution that has a long history of perpetuating the belief that women lie about being raped (Ask 2010; MacKinnon 1982, 1987). The seventeenth century judge Sir Matthew Hale asserted that rape is "an accusation easily to be made, hard to be proved, and harder to be defended by the party accused, tho' never so innocent" (Hale 1736, p. 635). This statement would become known as the "Hale Warning" and was often read in courtrooms during rape cases up until the late twentieth century, casting suspicion on the testimonies of women who reported being raped (Ferguson 1987). In modern court proceedings, similar language can still be heard. Matosian (1993) argued that the language used by defense attorneys in cross-examining the victim, as well as their manner of defining and identifying rape serves to recast the act as consensual or to paint victims as liars. A 1993 report prepared by the Senate Judiciary Committee found that less than one half of rape cases are convicted, 21% of convicted rapists are never sentenced to prison time, and 24% of convicted rapists receive time in local jails for less than 11 months (The Response to Rape: Detours on the Road to Equal Justice). Many cases are unlikely to be made into official reports, as a recent study found that police officers believed that between 16% and 25% of rape cases reported to them were false (Ask 2010). Such police reports may also impact jurors or other observers. A British content analysis examining a set of police recorded rape allegations—half determined to be true and half false—and a set of false rape allegations written by research participants found that both the research generated and police-recorded false allegations contained more rape stereotypes than the police-recorded

allegations deemed to be true (Norton and Grant 2008). The researchers suggested that since true statements contain fewer rape myths, and if these myths are held by jurors and judges, offenders may be more likely to be acquitted since these statements may not fit with jurors' stereotypical views of rape. In fact, if victims do not sustain physical injuries from the assault or if a weapon is not used, this often is considered evidence that the victim is lying and that the alleged perpetrator is innocent (Carmody and Washington 2001).

The media is another institution that perpetuates the rape myth that women lie about being raped. Experimental research has found that the framing of rape in news stories directly affects consumers' attitudes about rape, such that after reading stories which contain rape myths, college men and women were more likely to blame the victim (Franiuk et al. 2008a). Such findings indicate that the news media's biased focus on the perpetrator's account (Howitt 1998), victim blame, and the idea that women lie about being raped (Gavey and Gow 2001) could have an even more pernicious effect on consumer attitudes. Also, the media seem to focus on the minority of rape cases where DNA evidence has proved that the woman made a false accusation or where acquittals were made ("All charges dropped in Duke case," 2007). Such a tendency to recall highly publicized situations and deem them as more common than they actually are is related to the social psychology principle known as the availability heuristic. According to the availability heuristic, individuals estimate the likelihood or frequency of an event based on how easily an example can be brought to mind (Tversky and Kahneman 1973). In the same way that people overestimate the likelihood that they might be attacked by a shark or die in an airplane crash, individuals likely overestimate the chances that a rape claim is false due to a few highly publicized trials where there is evidence a woman is lying. Such priming is even more likely to occur when individuals share the belief being primed in the communication (Wyer and Hartwick 1980), which has been found in research on rape myths, such that individuals high in rape proclivity are much more likely to accept the myths provided to them than those with low rape proclivity (Malamuth and Check 1985).

Implications for Research and Change

The purpose of this paper was to provide an overview of the historical origins of rape myths, document the current manifestations of these myths in American society, summarize the current body of research literature, and demonstrate that rape myths emanate from a patriarchal system present at various levels of society. First, we provided an overview of how rape myths are defined and assessed and

underscored that rape myths are endorsed by a substantial segment of the population and are present at the institutional level. Next, we reviewed several specific rape myths in terms of rates of endorsement, empirical evidence to dispute the veracity of the particular myth, historical antecedents of the myth, and how the particular myth permeates legal, religious, and media institutions. We will now focus on a more critical discussion of the research literature and what further research is needed as well as how existing research and theory could be used to aid in eradicating rape myths at both the individual and institutional levels.

Directions for Research

Although Burt's (1980) and Lonsway and Fitzgerald's (1994) definitions of rape myths are the most commonly used ones, there remains a lack of consistency in the measurement of rape myths across studies, which limits our ability to generalize and detect patterns over time and across various populations and institutions. For example, although we know that rates of sexual violence have remained stable over the past several decades given the consistency in methodologies among researchers (i.e., use of the Sexual Experiences Survey; Koss and Oros 1982), we cannot make such statements about rape myths given that lack of consistency in definition and measurement across studies. Whereas some research suggests that rates of some rape myths may be decreasing (Edward and McLeod 1999), it is unclear whether this is due to high levels of social desirability (which frequently create floor effects of rape myth endorsement; Lonsway and Fitzgerald 1994) or whether this is due to rape education efforts (Hinck and Thomas 1999) or a combination of these factors.

Additionally, current measures used to assess rape myths often include the word "rape" (i.e., "If a woman doesn't physically fight back, you can't really say that it was rape"). This is inconsistent with how we most commonly measure sexual perpetration and victimization experiences (i.e., by using behavioral definitions, such as in the Sexual Experiences Survey; Koss and Oros 1982; Koss et al. 2007). For example, 16% of college men agreed with the statement "Although most women wouldn't admit it, they generally find being physically forced into sex a real 'turn-on,'" whereas 4% of the same college men agreed with the statement "Many women secretly desire to be raped" (Edwards et al. 2010). The content of these two statements is largely the same, the exception being the first statement uses "physically forced" whereas the second statement uses "raped." Further, research indicates that even though men make automatic implicit associations between power and sex, they may not explicitly endorse rape myths on highly face valid self-report measures of rape myths. Given the

face validity of most rape myths measures, it is difficult to know how much social desirability and bias affect participants' reporting. Those who use self-report measures must take into account these potential limitations and control for these reporting effects, or utilize updated measures such as the recently revised version of the IRMAS to capture these more subtle rape myths (see McMahon and Farmer 2011). Future research would also benefit from more standard definitions and assessment of rape myths, inclusion of behavioral definitions (e.g., excluding the word "rape"), evaluation of report bias, increased use of implicit and mix-methodologies, and use of experimental and longitudinal research designs with diverse samples of people. Additionally, a better understanding of which groups are more likely to generally accept rape myths and endorse specific myths as well as the developmental trajectory of rape myth acceptance could lead to more focused programmatic efforts to refute such myths.

At a more conceptual level, there needs to be more focus on what actually constitutes a myth. Although most would agree that rape myths are inaccurate or overgeneralized, there is no consensus on how many people are "enough" to constitute a cultural myth. Put another way, do rape myths need to be explicitly endorsed by a substantial segment of the population in order to be considered a rape myth? We argue no for several reasons. First, as described earlier, research demonstrates that the absence of a person's self-reported endorsement of a belief does not necessarily mean that a person does not implicitly hold the belief or that his or her behavior is not influenced by such cultural beliefs. Although our current measures may not elicit explicit victim blaming or rape supportive attitudes, many people may still endorse covert negative attitudes toward rape victims (McMahon 2010). Second, there are likely cumulative effects; for example, even though only a minority of the population might endorse one particular myth, the majority of individuals believe in at least one rape myth (Buddie and Miller 2001). Third, even if a particular myth is not endorsed by a substantial segment of the population it does not mean that there are not potential deleterious consequences associated with it. In fact, if just one or two powerful individuals hold such myths, their social impact could be far-reaching. Indeed, social psychological theory suggests that even if one person or a few people in positions of social power (e.g., judge, media executive) hold a belief, they can still exert significant influence over elements of policy, media, law, or religion that can affect many people (Gladwell 2002; Rogers 1995).

In addition to issues regarding the conceptualization, definition, and measurement of rape myths, several specific areas of future research are warranted. Although research shows that rape myths are common in media portrayals of

sexual violence, there is a need for more research to assess whether there is a direct impact of media rape depictions on individuals' attitudes about rape and rape victims and how these attitudes affect rape-related behaviors. Additionally, similar to research that has been conducted to understand rape myths in the legal system, it could be useful to study the prevalence and manifestations of rape myths among directors and producers of various media forms. The role of pornography in the perpetuation of rape myth acceptance and sexual violence is another area in need of rigorous empirical investigation.

Furthermore, there is a critical need for empirical research on rape myths within religious institutions, including those other than Christianity. Preliminary research suggests that a substantial number of clergymen endorse marital rape myths (Sheldon and Parent 2002), that Biblical texts may support some rape myths such as conjugal "rights" of men to their wives, and that certain types of women deserve rape (Blyth 2009; Fortune 2005). Further, there are data that suggest that individuals who identify as religious are more likely to endorse rape myths than individuals who do not identify as such (Freymeyer 1997). However, more research is needed to better understand why this is the case (e.g., interpretation of biblical scripture, patriarchal structures of some religions institutions) and how these rape ideologies affect the behaviors of religious peoples (and associated moderating variables).

Directions for Individual and Institutional Change

There have been burgeoning efforts to create and empirically validate the efficacy of sexual assault risk reduction and prevention programming for women and men, respectively. One component of these programs is to debunk prevailing rape myths. This is generally done by presenting the myth (e.g., women lie about being raped) and then presenting facts/research evidence (e.g., 2–8% of reported sexual assaults are false). The majority of sexual violence prevention programs occur with college-age individuals (Gidycz et al. 2011); however, it has also been suggested that prevention programming should begin early in life and continue throughout the life course. Also, given that younger people may endorse more overall rape myths (Ferro et al. 2008), interventions may be particularly effective if they occur prior to the time when adolescents begin dating.

Efforts must extend beyond intervening at the individual level. Specifically, it is important that intervention target institutions and the unique role that they play in perpetuating rape myths. For example, Hyman et al. (2000) pointed out that "because many of the roots of devaluing women are based on religions and cultural beliefs, church and community leaders [are] considered to

be in an ideal position to provide support as well as to change social norms regarding violence" (p. 289). A reframing of religious perspectives could be useful in eradicating rape myths from religious institutions (Keener 1996). For instance, Keener uses the Bible to support his argument that victims of rape are not responsible for their assault and retain their "moral virginity", while Turell and Thomas (2001) discuss specific ways that counselors can reframe passages in the Bible to aid Judeo-Christian sexual assault victims within a feminist framework.

Among those working within the field of media, it is the social responsibility of those reporting on rape to do so in a way that is factual and devoid of rape myths. Although salacious reports and storylines (e.g., stranger rapes, the lying "victim") may be more likely to attract viewers or sell papers, it behooves those within the field of media to promote the message to the public that these are more uncommon and that rapes most commonly occur under different circumstances (e.g., acquaintance, rarity of lying about rape). Further, journalists should be educated with regard to the fallaciousness of rape myths and the inappropriateness of attributing equal blame to the perpetrator and victim in a rape trial story in order to achieve "fair and balanced" news reporting. Within the legal institution, the allowance of certain information in cases that promotes rape myths (e.g., discussing a victims' sexual history) needs to be eliminated. Finally, it is important to provide education to attorneys, judges, and other legal professionals on the impact of rape myths in legal decisions.

These suggestions are consistent with social diffusion theory, which underscores that social change is stimulated by socially influential leaders allying with a specific cause (Rogers 1995; Gladwell 2002). Although largely ignored within the sexual violence prevention literature, there is growing empirical support for this macro-level theory within the health prevention literature with evidence that these tactics prepare communities for change (i.e., substance abuse, HIV/AIDS; Edwards et al. 2000). Within the realm of sexual assault prevention, this would require a collaborative effort between multiple disciplines and institutions. Specifically, socially influential leaders would work at the institutional and societal level by debunking myths and raising awareness about the facts of sexual violence, whereas psychologists, social workers, and similar professionals would work at the individual level by implementing developmentally-appropriate risk reduction and prevention efforts beginning early in life. Given that rape ideologies exist as a part of broader patriarchal power structures, discourses on sex and gender, masculinity and femininity, sexuality and heterosexuality, sexism and racism, and other systems of social oppression must be addressed through similar individual and institutional-level approaches (Gavey

2005). Rectifying conceptual and methodological issues as well as continued basic research on various aspects of rape myths and related systems of oppression and individual-based discrimination will likely inform interventions efforts at individual, institutional, and societal levels.

References

All charges dropped in Duke case (2007, April 12). *New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/12/us/12duke.html

Allen, M., D'Alessio, D., & Brezgel, K. (1995). A meta-analysis summarizing the effects of pornography II: Aggression after exposure. *Human Communication Research, 22,* 258–283. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2958.1995.tb00368.x.

Allison, J. A., & Wrightsman, L. S. (1993). *Rape, the misunderstood crime.* Thousand Oaks: Sage. doi:10.1111/1467-9450.00310.

Aromaki, A. S., Haebich, K., & Lindman, R. E. (2002). Age as a modifier of sexually aggressive attitudes in men. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology, 43,* 419–423.

Ask, K. (2010). A survey of police officers' and prosecutors' beliefs about crime victim behaviors. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 25,* 1132–1149. doi:10.1177/0886260509340535.

Barshis, V. G. (1983). The question of marital rape. *Women's Studies International Forum, 6,* 383–393. doi:10.1016/0277-5395(83)90031-6.

Basile, K. C. (2002). Attitudes toward wife rape: Effects of social background and victim status. *Violence and Victims, 17,* 341–354. doi:10.1891/vivi.17.3.341.33659.

Bennice, J. A., & Resick, A. (2003). Marital rape: History, research, and practice. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 4,* 228–246. doi:10.1177/1524838003004003003.

Blackstone, W. (1765). *Commentaries on the law of England.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Block, S. (2002). Rape without women: Print culture and the politicization of rape, 1765–1815. *The Journal of American History, 89,* 849–868. doi:10.2307/3092343.

Block, S. (2006). *Rape and sexual power in early America.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Blyth, C. (2009). Terrible silence, eternal silence: A feminist re-reading of Dinah's voicelessness in *Genesis* 34. *Biblical Interpretation: A Journal of Contemporary Approaches, 17,* 483–506. doi:10.1163/156851508X401150.

Bourke, J. (2007). *Rape: A history from 1860 to present.* London: Virago Press.

Brinson, S. L. (1992). The use and opposition of rape myths in prime-time television dramas. *Sex Roles, 27,* 359–375. doi:10.1007/BF00289945.

Brownmiller, S. (1975). *Against our will: Men, women, and rape.* New York: Penguin Books.

Bryant, J., & Oliver, M. B. (2009). *Media effects: Advances in theory and research.* New York: Taylor & Francis.

Bryden, D. P. (2000). Redefining rape. *Buffalo Criminal Law Review, 3*(2), 317–479. doi:10.1525/nclr.2000.3.2.317.

Bryden, D. P., & Lengnick, S. (1997). Rape in the criminal justice system. *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology, 87,* 1194–1384. doi:10.2307/1144018.

Buddie, A. M., & Miller, G. (2001). Beyond rape myths: A more complex view of perceptions of rape victims. *Sex Roles, 45,* 139–160. doi:10.1023/A:1013575209803.

Burt, M. R. (1980). Cultural myths and supports for rape. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 38,* 217–230. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.38.2.217.

Cahill, A. (2000). Foucault, rape, and the construction of the feminine body. *Hypatia, 15,* 43–63. doi:10.1111/j.1527-2001.2000.tb01079.x.

Caringella-MacDonald, S. (1998). Parallels and pitfalls: The aftermath of legal reform for sexual assault, marital rape, and domestic violence victims. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 3,* 174–189. doi:10.1177/088626088003002004.

Carmody, D. C., & Washington, L. M. (2001). Rape myth acceptance among college women: The impact of race and prior victimization. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 16,* 424–436. doi:10.1177/088626001016005003.

Centers for Disease Control (2004). *Sexual violence facts.* Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/svfacts.htm

Chapleau, K. M., & Oswald, D. L. (2010). Power, sex and rape myth acceptance: Testing two models of rape proclivity. *The Journal of Sex Research, 47,* 66–78. doi:10.1080/00224490902954323.

Cuklanz, L. M. (2000). *Rape on prime time: Television, masculinity, and sexual violence.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Davies, M. (2002). Male sexual assault victims: A selective review of the literature and implications for support services. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 7,* 203–214.

Davison, L. (2006). *Preaching the women of the Bible.* St. Louis: Chalice Press.

Desai, A. D., Edwards, K. M., & Gidycz, C. A. (2008, November). Testing an integrative model of sexual aggression in college men. In A. C. Aosved (Chair), *Sexual violence perpetration: Individual and contextual factors.* Symposium conducted at the annual meeting of the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, Orlando, FL.

Devine, P. G. (1989). Stereotypes and prejudice: Their automatic and controlled components. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 56,* 5–18. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.56.1.5.

Dworkin, A. (1981). *Pornography: Men possessing women.* New York: Penguin Books.

Edward, K. E., & McLeod, M. D. (1999). The reality and myth of rape: Implications for the criminal justice system. *Expert Evidence, 7,* 37–58. doi:10.1023/A:1008917714094.

Edwards, R. W., Jumper-Thurman, P., Plested, B. A., Oetting, E. R., & Swanson, L. (2000). Community readiness: Research to practice. *Journal of Community Psychology, 28,* 291–307. doi:10.1002/(SICI)1520-6629(200005)28:3<291::AID-JCOP5>3.0.CO;2-9.

Edwards, K. M., Gidyz, C. A., & Desai, A. D. (2010). [Rape myths]. Unpublished raw data.

Emmers-Sommer, T. M., & Burns, R. J. (2005). The relationship between exposure to internet pornography and sexual attitudes toward women. *Journal of Online Behavior, 1,* Retrieved from: http://www.behavior.net/JOB/v1n4/emmers-sommer.html

Ewoldt, C. A., Monson, C. M., & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, J. (2000). Attributions about rape in a continuum of dissolving marital relationships. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 15,* 1175–1182. doi:10.1177/088626000015011004.

Ferguson, F. (1987). Rape and the rise of the novel. *Representations, 20,* 88–112. doi:10.1525/rep.1987.20.1.99p0185u.

Ferro, C., Cermele, J., & Saltzman, A. (2008). Current perceptions of marital rape: Some good and not-so-good news. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 23,* 764–779. doi:10.1177/0886260507313947.

Feild, H. S. (1978). Attitudes toward rape: A comparative analysis of police, rapists, crisis counselors, and citizens. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 36,* 156–179. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.36.2.156.

Feild, H. S., & Bienen, L. B. (1980). *Jurors and rape*. Lexington: D. C. Health.

Finch, E., & Munro, V. E. (2005). Juror stereotypes and blame attribution in rape cases involving intoxicants. *British Journal of Criminology, 45*, 25–38. doi:10.1093/bjc/azh055.

Fisher, B. S., Cullen, F. T., & Turner M. G. (2000). *The sexual victimization of college women.* Retrieved from www.ncjrs.org/txtfiles1/nij/182369.txt

Forcible and statutory rape: An exploration of the operation and objectives of the consent standard. (1952). *The Yale Law Journal, 62*, 55–83.

Fortune, M. M. (2005). *Sexual violence: The sin revised*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press.

Fountain, A. (2007). It's all in the words: Determining the relationship between newspaper portrayal of rape victims and reader responses. *Bridgewater State College Undergraduate Review, 4*, 33–40. Retrieved from http://www.bridgew.edu/undergraduatereview/pdf/volume%20IV%20UR.pdf

Franiuk, R., Seefelt, J. L., Cepress, S. L., & Vandello, J. A. (2008a). Prevalence and effects of rape myths in print journalism: The Kobe Bryant case. *Violence Against Women, 14*, 287–309. doi:10.1177/1077801207313971.

Franiuk, R., Seefelt, J. L., & Vandello, J. A. (2008b). Prevalence of rape myths in headlines and their effects on attitudes toward rape. *Sex Roles, 58*, 790–801. doi:10.1007/s11199-007-9372-4.

Freymeyer, R. H. (1997). Rape myths and religiosity. *Sociological Spectrum, 17*, 473–489. doi:10.1080/02732173.1997.9982179.

Garcia, L. T. (1998). Perceptions of resistance to unwanted sexual advances. *Journal of Psychology & Human Sexuality, 10*, 43–52. doi:10.1300/J056v10n01_03.

Gavey, N. (2005). *Just sex? The cultural scaffolding of rape*. New York: Routledge.

Gavey, N., & Gow, V. (2001). 'Cry wolf', cried the wolf: Constructing the issue of false rape allegations in New Zealand media texts. *Feminism & Psychology, 11*, 341–360. doi:10.1177/0959353501011003006.

Gidycz, C. A., Orchowski, L. M., & Edwards, K. M. (2011). Sexual violence: Primary prevention. In J. White, M. Koss, & A. Kazdin (Eds.), *Violence against women and children (Vol 2): Navigating solutions* (pp. 159–179). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Gladwell, M. (2002). *The tipping point: How little things can make a big difference*. Boston: Little, Brown, & Co.

Gylys, J. A., & McNamara, R. (1996). Acceptance of rape myths among prosecuting attorneys. *Psychological Reports, 79*, 15–18.

Hald, G. M., Malamuth, N. M., & Yuen, C. (2010). Pornography and attitudes supporting violence against women: Revisiting the relationship in nonexperimental studies. *Aggressive Behavior, 36*, 14–20. doi:10.1002/ab.20328.

Hale, M. (1736). *Historia placitorum cornae: The history of the pleas of the crown*. London: Gyles, Woodword, and Davis.

Hinck, S. S., & Thomas, R. W. (1999). Rape myth acceptance in college students: How far have we come? *Sex Roles, 40*, 815–832. doi:10.1023/A:1018816920168.

Horos, C. V. (1974). *Rape*. New Canaan: Tobey.

Howitt, D. (1998). *Crime, the media, and the law*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Hyman, I., Guruge, S., Stewart, D. E., & Ahmad, F. (2000). Primary prevention of violence against women. *Women's Health Issues, 10*, 288–293. doi:10.1016/S1049-3867(00)00066-9.

Johnson, B. E., Kuck, D. L., & Schander, P. R. (1997). Rape myth acceptance and sociodemographic characteristics: A multidimensional analysis. *Sex Roles, 36*, 693–707. doi:10.1023/A:1025671021697.

Kahlor, L., & Morrison, D. (2007). Television viewing and rape myth acceptance among college women. *Sex Roles, 56*, 729–739. doi:10.1007/s11199-007-9232-2.

Keener, C. (1996). Some biblical reflections on justice, rape and an insensitive society. In C. Kroeger & J. Beck (Eds.), *Women, abuse, and the Bible: How scripture can be used to hurt or to heal* (pp. 117–130). Grand Rapids: Baker Books.

Kirkwood, M. K., & Cecil, D. K. (2001). Marital rape: A student assessment of rape laws and marital exemption. *Violence Against Women, 7*, 1234–1253. doi:10.1177/1077801201007011003.

Koss, M. P., & Oros, C. J. (1982). Sexual Experiences Survey: A research instrument investigating sexual aggression and victimization. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 50*, 455–457. doi:10.1037/0022-006X.50.3.455.

Koss, M. P., Abbey, A., Campbell, R., Cook, S., Norris, J., Testa, M., et al. (2007). Revising the SES: A collaborative process to improve assessment of sexual aggression and victimization. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 3*, 357–370. doi:10.1111/j.1471-6402.2007.00385.x.

Kovera, M. B. (2002). The effects of general pretrial publicity on juror decisions: An examination of moderators and mediating mechanisms. *Law and Human Behavior, 26*, 43–72. doi:10.1023/A:1013829224920.

Krahe, B., Temkin, J., Bieneck, S., & Berger, A. (2008). Prospective lawyers' rape stereotypes and schematic decision making about rape cases. *Psychology, Crime and Law, 14*, 461–479. doi:10.1080/10683160801932380.

LaFree, G. D., Reskin, B. F., & Visher, C. A. (1985). Juror's responses to victims' behavior and legal issues in sexual assault trials. *Social Problems, 32*, 389–407. doi:10.1525/sp.1985.32.4.03a00070.

Lees, S. (1996). *Carnal knowledge: Rape on trial*. London: Women's Press.

Loh, C., Gidycz, C. A., Lobo, T. R., & Luthra, R. (2005). A prospective analysis of sexual assault perpetration: Risk factors related to perpetrator characteristics. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 20*, 1325–1348. doi:10.1177/0886260505278528.

Lonsway, K. A., & Fitzgerald, L. R. (1994). Rape myths: In review. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 18*, 133–164. doi:10.1111/j.1471-6402.1994.tb00448.x.

Lonsway, K., Archambault, J., & Lisak, D. (2007). False reports: Moving beyond the issue to successfully investigate and prosecute nonstranger sexual assault. *National Center for the Prosecution of Violence Against Women*. Retrieved from http://www.ndaa.org/publications/newsletters/the_voice_vol_3_no_1_2009.pdf

Luddy, J. G., & Thompson, E. H. (1997). Masculinities and violence: A father-son comparison of gender traditionality and perceptions of heterosexual rape. *Journal of Family Psychology, 11*, 462–477. doi:10.1037/0893-3200.11.4.462.

MacKinnon, C. (1982). Feminism, Marxism, method, and the state: An agenda for theory. *Signs, 7*, 515–544. doi:10.1086/493898.

MacKinnon, C. (1987). *Feminism unmodified: Discourses on life and law*. Boston: Harvard University Press.

Malamuth, N. M., & Check, J. V. P. (1985). The effects of aggressive pornography on beliefs in rape myths: Individual differences. *Journal of Research in Personality, 19*, 299–320. doi:10.1016/0092-6566(85)90021-2.

Malamuth, N. A., Addison, T., & Koss, M. (2000). Pornography and sexual aggression: Are there reliable effects and can we understand them? *Annual review of sex research, 11*, 26–91. Retrieved from http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/comm/malamuth/pdf/00arsr11.pdf

Marshall, B. C., & Alison, L. J. (2006). Structural behavioural analysis as a basis for discriminating between genuine and simulated rape allegations. *Journal of Investigating Psychology and Offender Profiling, 3*, 21–34. doi:10.1002/jip.42.

Martin, E. K., Taft, C. T., & Resick, P. A. (2007). A review of marital rape. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 12*, 329–347. doi:10.1016/j.avb.2006.10.003.

Masser, B., Viki, G. T., & Power, C. (2006). Hostile sexism and rape proclivity amongst men. *Sex Roles, 54*, 565–574. doi:10.1007/s11199-006-9022-2.

Matosian, G. M. (1993). *Reproducing rape: Domination through talk in the courtroom.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mayerson, S. E., & Taylor, D. A. (1987). The effects of rape myth pornography on women's attitudes and the mediating roles of sex role stereotyping. *Sex Roles, 17*, 321–338. doi:10.1007/BF00288456.

McMahon, S. (2010). Rape myth beliefs and bystander attitudes among incoming college students. *Journal of American College Health, 59*, 3–11. doi:10.1080/07448481.2010.483715.

McMahon, S., & Farmer, G. (2011). An updated measure for assessing subtle rape myths. *Journal of Social Work Research.* (in press).

Milburn, M. A., Mather, R., & Conrad, S. D. (2000). The effects of viewing R-rated movie scenes that objectify women on perceptions of date rape. *Sex Roles, 43*, 645–664. doi:10.1023/A:1007152507914.

Muehlenhard, C. L., & Hollabaugh, C. (1988). Do women sometimes say no when they mean yes? The prevalence and correlates of women's token resistance to sex. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 54*, 872–879. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.54.5.872.

Mullin, C., Imrich, D. J., & Linz, D. (1996). The impact of acquaintance rape stories and case-specific pretrial publicity on juror decision making. *Communication Research, 23*, 100–135. doi:10.1177/009365096023001004.

National Center for the Prosecution of Violence Against Women. (2009). *Summary of Spousal Rape Laws.* Retrieved from http://www.wcsap.org/pdf/Spousal%20Rape%20Statutes%202009.pdf

Norton, R., & Grant, T. (2008). Rape myth in true and false rape allegations. *Psychology, Crime & Law, 14*, 275–285. doi:10.1080/10683160701770286.

Page, A. D. (2008). Judging women and defining crime: Police officers' attitudes toward women and rape. *Sociological Spectrum, 28*, 389–411. doi:10.1080/02732170802053621.

Parry, R. (2002). Feminist hermeneutics and evangelical concerns: The rape of Dinah as a case study. *Tyndale Bulletin, 53,* 1–28. Retrieved from http://98.131.162.170/tynbul/library/TynBull_2002_53_1_01_PerryFeministHermeneutics.pdf

Patton, T. O., & Snyder-Yuly, J. (2007). Any four Black men will do: Rape, race, and the ultimate scapegoat. *Journal of Black Studies, 37*, 859–895. doi:10.1177/0021934706296025.

Payne, D., Lonsway, K., & Fitzgerald, F. (1994). Rape myth acceptance: Exploration of its structure and its measurement using the Illinois Rape Myth Awareness Scale. *Journal of Research in Personality, 33*, 27–68. doi:10.1006/jrpe.1998.2238.

Rogers, E. M. (1995). *Diffusion of innovations* (4th ed.). New York: Free Press.

Russell, D. (1990). *Rape in marriage.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Salmon, C., & Symons, D. (2003). *Warrior lovers: Erotic fiction, evolution and female sexuality.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Schulhofer, S. J. (1998). *Unwanted sex: The culture of intimidation and the failure of law.* Harvard University Press.

Schwendinger, J. R., & Schwendinger, H. (1974). Rape myths: In legal, theoretical, and everyday practice. *Crime and Social Justice, 1*, 18–26.

Senate Judiciary Committee (1993). *The response to rape: Detours on the road to equal justice.* Paper prepared by the majority staff of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Sheldon, J. P., & Parent, S. L. (2002). Clergy's attitudes and attributions of blame toward female rape victims. *Violence Against Women, 8*, 233–256. doi:10.1177/10778010222183026.

Stevenson, K. (2000). Unequivocal victims: The historical roots of the mystification of the female complainant in rape cases. *Feminist Legal Studies, 8*, 343–366. doi:10.1023/A:1009270302602.

Suarez, E. B., & Gadalla, T. (2010, January). *Stop blaming the victim: A meta-analysis on rape myths.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Social Work and Research, Tampa, FL.

Thurston, C. (1987). *The romance revolution: Erotic novels for women and the quest for a new sexual identity.* Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Tjaden, P., & Thoennes, N. (2000). Prevalence and consequences of male-to-female and female-to-male intimate partner violence as measured by the National Violence Against Women Survey. *Violence Against Women, 6*, 142–161. doi:10.1177/10778010022181769.

Turell, S. C., & Thomas, C. (2001). Where was God? Utilizing spirituality with Christian survivors of sexual abuse. *Women and Therapy, 24*, 133–147.

Tversky, A., & Kahneman, D. (1973). Availability: A heuristic for judging frequency and probability. *Cognitive Psychology, 5*, 207–232. doi:10.1016/0010-0285(73)90033-9.

Walklate, S. (2008). What is to be done about violence against women? Gender, violence, cosmopolitanism and the law. *The British Journal of Criminology, 48*, 39–54. doi:10.1093/bjc/azm050.

Ward, C. (1988). The attitudes toward rape victims scale. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 12*, 127–146. doi:10.1111/j.1471-6402.1988.tb00932.x.

Workman, J. E., & Orr, R. L. (1996). Clothing, sex of subject, and rape myth acceptance as factors affecting attributions about an incident of acquaintance rape. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal, 14*, 276–284. doi:10.1177/0887302X9601400407.

Wyer, R. S., & Hartwick, J. (1980). The role of information retrieval and conditional inference processes in belief formation and change. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 13, pp. 241–283). New York: Academic Press.

Zurbriggen, E. L. (2000). Social motives and cognitive power-sex associations: Predictors of aggressive sexual behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 78*, 559–581. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.78.3.559.