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Telling a Rape Joke: Performing Humor in a Victim Help Center

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by

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DEDICATION

First, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my parents, whose unwavering faith in my success and unending support pushed me harder than I ever could have pushed myself. My mother's kind, supportive words and bright personality always helped me feel capable and loved. My father's strong work ethic and critical thinking skills taught me to think long and hard about everything and to never give up. They have been some of my biggest cheerleaders and have always let me know that I would face no challenge alone, including the completion of this project.

I would also like to dedicate this thesis to all the incredible individuals who dedicate their life's work to helping survivors of gender-based violence, especially the advocates. The work they do is draining and difficult, and oftentimes offers little reward. Prevalence remains high, reporting rates remain low, and conviction rates remain abysmal. This work can feel thankless at times so—to put it succinctly—*thank you*. Know that your work has greatly inspired this project. And a special dedication to my best friend, Alexandra Pellot, a truly special advocate. Her never-ending warmth and kindness no doubt has and will continue to touch the lives of many survivors, just as it has touched my life.

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stories are unsafe to share, and those who cannot share their stories because they are no longer with us. This research was really done for you and for the mission to end gender-based violence.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the function of humor as a discourse in discussion of sexual battery. In this study, I examine the ways sexual battery, consent, and victimization are social constructed. Humor is a form of discourse where individuals are allowed to speak more freely about taboo topics, including that of sexual battery. I examine humor within presentations given from a Victim Help Center. Using field notes, slides, videos, and audio-recordings, I analyze instances of humor within the presentations. I analyze the data multimodally, in order to provide a richer, qualitative analysis. In this thesis, I argue that humor observed in the presentations worked to perform power, mask face-threatening acts, enable metaphors, and, essentially authorize accounts of sexual battery. I argue that victim must be performed in a specific way, which is deemed by the university and other state laws on sexual battery, in order to be seriously considered. I believe that this study can contributes to the examination of broader notions of victimization and can work to examine spaces where victim-blaming occur.

CHAPTER ONE:

AN INTRODUCTION: RAPE, HUMOR, AND A VICTIM HELP CENTER

Introduction

Sexual assault and sexual misconduct are issues that are receiving increased attention across the United States. With the rise of the *#MeToo* movement in October 2017 that followed the sexual abuse allegations against Harvey Weinstein, and the surge of allegations against various other well-known individuals, rape and other sexual misconduct have been the focus of a nation-wide conversation.

What does it mean to be "raped," as we now know it doesn't have to look like a woman being dragged off the street into a dark alley by a stranger? What does consent for a sexual act look like and how can someone be sure they have obtained it? Whose responsibility is it to know when the consent is not there, as many of the accused have issued statements that they did not realize the women were made uncomfortable? These are the questions plaguing news headlines, social media platforms, and everyday conversations. These are also the questions I, in my roles as an employee at the University Victim Help Center (UVHC) at South Eastern University (SEU)[1], have been addressing in presentations.

A large portion of the clientele in the UVHC has experienced sexual battery. One aspect of the work the UVHC does addresses this issue within the community, educating about the services that are available to after an act of violence has occurred. My thesis examines how humor works as a discourse, specifically in the presentations about sexual battery and other forms of victimization that the UVHC gives. I attend to how UVHC presentations address topics that are not easy to discuss, as they produce a version of reality where people are either vulnerable to or perpetrators of sexual battery. In Blain's work of victimage, he argues that victimage is the, "personification and ritual destruction of those powers that threaten the survival of a community" (2005, p.33). Therefore, the mere act of discussing victimization or culpability is itself a social breach that acknowledges a common threat to a community. Humor, as I examine it, allows speakers to introduce taboo topics into an interaction (Emerson, 1969). In this study, I examine the function of humor in presentations done by the UVHC. In this introductory chapter, I first explain my study in more detail and how it connects to communicative practices, synthesizing existing literature about the pragmatic functions of humor and laughter. Then, I describe the site of my research, the UVHC. Finally, I offer a brief description of the chapters that follow.

Humor and Sexual Assault

When I tell people that my research interests involve humor, I get one of two responses. The more common of the two is that I must be hilarious, to which I always respond with the joke, "If I need to study it, then I probably am not." The other, more serious,

response I get is the question, “Don’t you think that humor, if used for the wrong purposes, can be a dangerous thing?” This tends to spark a lengthy conversation about ways that humor can be used as a form of aggression in relationships (Berry, 2016), and how humor can be a less explicit way of “doing power” (Holmes, 2000).

In the cases of humor about rape, there have been numerous and highly publicized instances where someone famous, such as a comedian, has made a joke about rape and it became the topic of much controversy. One example of this was in 2012, where Daniel Tosh made a joke about rape during a performance and a female audience member responded by saying, “rape jokes are never funny.” Tosh responded to her with, “Wouldn’t it be funny if that girl got raped by, like, five guys right now? Like right now?” resulting in the female audience member leaving. This led to a heated debate on social media about whether rape was something appropriate to discuss humorously, and what were considered to be acceptable humorous utterances surrounding sexual battery. Where did the differences between acceptable and unacceptable performances of humor lie?

In the case of presentations given by the UVHC, I remember feeling shocked as I watched an advocate giving a presentation for the first time. She began by saying, “Good Morning, everyone! Are we all awake? I hope so, because we’re going to talk about *rape*!” At the time, I was being trained to give this very talk and when I heard the advocate say this, I couldn’t even imagine myself standing in front of a hundred people and repeating it. But, to my surprise, no one seemed upset. People were laughing. As the presentation continued, the humor became even more daring. As a communication researcher interested in how language

works, I began to ask what it is exactly that the discursive mode of humor allows is. How does humor construct possible and authorized candidate versions of sexual battery? How does it authorize some accounts as acceptable? What role does laughter play in the communicative practices of humor? My study addresses these questions. In this section, I discuss existing research that helps in understanding these questions.

The UVHC's role as an organization within the institutional landscape of an academic setting is relevant to my investigation. Statistics show that somewhere between a fifth and a quarter of college women will be victimized by sexual battery during their college career (Krebs, Lindquist, Warner, Fisher Martin, & Childers, 2011). For this reason, the Campus SaVE act, a new component of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) during its 2014 reinstatement, requires a prevention program for sexual violence be put into place on all federally funded universities. Education about sexual battery has been deemed of national importance. Examining humor in the UVHC presentations can be applied to a broader examination of how a university as an organization educates students, staff and faculty about sexual battery, therefore illuminating the workings of an institutional discourse of rape.

Literature Review

In this section, I synthesize literature about the pragmatic functions of humor and laughter. I first examine humor, and how it works as a discourse. I then examine existing literature that addresses common functions of humor within interactions. I discuss the concept of social breach, and humor's role in the performance of social breaches. I then

discuss Goffman's (1959) work with face, and humor's role in face-threatening acts. Then, I examine literature on the negotiation of power through the adoption of a humorous mode. Finally, I discuss literature that addresses the pragmatic functions of laughter.

Humor as Discourse

I analyze humor as a mode of discourse. Discourse is a common term that can be used in a variety of ways. Phillips and Hardy define discourse as an "interrelated set of texts, and the practices of their production, dissemination, and reception, that brings an object into being" (2002, p. 3). By this definition, discourse is understood as texts which are responsible for the production of social reality. In her work on the performance of texts, Bell (2008) writes that, "there is no way of understanding human knowledge that is not text" (p. 70). This research does not focus on the examination of human knowledge, rather on human practices of communication, however this quote is important to the idea that discourse, in the form of text, can work to shape human performances, such as the performances of humor that I analyze in this study.

However, discourse is not limited to text. In Tracy's book *Understanding Face-to-Face Interaction: Issues Linking Goals and Discourse,* Shepard and Rothenbuhler (1991) write:

> The noises we make constitute communication only to the extent we order them according to both individual and collective patterns. Individual ordering principles will include our individual wants, personas, situational reactions, accounting of the other

> individuals in the situation of the moment, and so on. Collective ordering principles will include rules, roles, social structures, relationships, languages, and so on. (p. 200).

Discourse, therefore, is not only responsible for bringing objects into being, but for ordering the world we live in and how we interact with that world. One approach to the study of discourse examines its formative range. Alvesson and Karreman (2000) differentiate between discourse and Discourses, with discourse being locally-situated and Discourses being the long-range, macro-level examination of discourse. The *#MeToo* movement is an excellent example of discourse's power to have a long-range effect on Discourses. Sexual battery and sexual misconduct are social constructs, ones whose existences are very important, that many women have been discussing through the hastag *MeToo*. The stories that women are sharing individually are re-shaping the Discourses around sexual battery in an unprecedented manner. In the case of this study on humor, I examine humor as a discourse, with acknowledgment of its influence on Discourses on sexual battery, victimization, and consent.

Humor functions as a discourse in that it embodies cultural meanings, relying on social norms and expectations to be accomplished in a given space. Many approaches to analyzing humor do so with the assumption that there is an underlying knowledge required to understand a joke. For the purposes of my thesis, I will use the word "joke" to refer to a single instance of humor (Duncan, 1984).

The General Theory of Verbal Humor lays out six knowledge resources that must be tapped to understand a joke, the most pertinent of which is script opposition (Taylor and Raskin, 2012). Script opposition dictates that a humorous utterance must be compatible with

two scripts that oppose each other (Attardo, 1994; Taylor & Raskin, 2012). The social scripts that Taylor & Raskin refer to are both constituted by and constitutive of cultural norms. And the basic structure of a joke requires that at least one of these social norms or expectations laid out by culture be defied (Tayebi, 2016). Purdie states that, "funniness involves at once breaking rules and 'marking' that break, so that correct [behavior] is implicitly instated" (1993, p. 3). As Purdie (1993) argues, the marking of the transgression reinforces the transgression while also allowing the speaker to perform an act of symbolic agency within that norm. Through a joke, a speaker is allowed to at once perform culture and remain agent.

In this way, jokes can also be viewed reflexively as a type of cultural performance (Conquergood, 2013, p. 19). Since there are necessary underlying cultural expectations to understanding humor, jokes have the potential to create solidarity within discourse communities. Holmes and Marra have done work in how humor functions to establish cultures in an organizational environment, including in the workplace. They state that within organizations, there are shared beliefs, values, and attitudes (2002, p. 1684). In another study done by Holmes and Marra, they identified one type of humor as "supportive humor," or humor that "agrees with, adds to, elaborates or strengthens the propositions or arguments of previous [contributions]" (1998, p. 1687). However, humor can also contest information that has been put forth. Through contestive humor, disagreements about an expectation underlying a joke is expressed within an interaction. Supportive and contestive humor generally happen in a conversational setting where one person makes a joke, and another

makes one in response. In the case of my data, this type of humor would be seen during presentations that are more discussion-based.

Social Breach

Humor tends to occur in places where there has been a social breach. Garfinkel argues that there are implicit rules or norms that occur within an interaction and that a social breach occurs when a norm is violated (2002). Though, as Mulkay writes, "Within the realm of [humor], almost anything is allowed and implausibilities do not have to be camouflaged" (1988, p. 21). In this quote, Mulkay refers to what he calls the "humorous mode," or a place where a speaker is allowed much greater freedom in what she or he can say. This may be because, as a mode of discourse, humor allows a speaker to break the boundaries between two opposing interpretive possibilities of reality. This puts humor as a mode of discourse in opposition to serious discourse, in that the social norm within humor is dependent upon multiple, paradoxical accounts of reality, whereas the expectation with serious discourse is that there is a presupposed, single, shared reality.

The freedom provided by the realm of humorous discourse functions as a space for people to discuss difficult topics. Sexual battery can be one of those topics. Cultural discourses of sexual battery have traditionally addressed it as something that could be avoided by the victim. For example, the "rape myth" is a widely-held belief that "victims" have the potential to increase or decrease their risk of sexual battery based on their actions (Gurnham, 2016). The community outreach done through the UVHC counters this notion by addressing

presentation participants as potential offenders needing to understand what qualifies as consent, rather than as potential victims who need to be taught how to avoid rape. The UVHC uses specific language when addressing personal safety measure that can be taken to protect oneself for sexual battery (e.g. calling these measures "risk reduction" rather than avoidance or prevention).

The presence of the UVHC presentations is a social breach, in that the presentations are mandatory. Individuals are forced to participate in conversations on topics that are not commonly discussed, such as sexual battery. Furthermore, during these presentations, the information presented partially frames participants as potential offenders, which is also a social breach. And, as I have discussed in the example of Daniel Tosh, using humor to address these topics is considered to be a social breach. The mere presence of these presentation is a social breach as they force individuals who attend the presentations that (1) remind participants that they could be victimized and in need of our services, (2) they do not at present understand consent, and thereby are possible perpetrators of sexual battery. It makes sense that humor exists in the presentations.

Face-Threatening Acts

Using humor to discuss sexual battery can seem counterintuitive. Though when applying the functions of humor in terms of subversion and politeness, it makes sense not only that jokes are used but also that they work in these presentations. For this reason, it can function to deliver face-threatening messages while still addressing the positive face needs of

the audience (Holmes, 2000). By framing a face-threatening message that as a joke, the face threat present within a humorous interaction in minimized (Zadjman, 1995). At the same time, by entering a mode where multiple versions of reality are allowed, autonomy of the listener is also maintained (Holmes, 2000).

The mere existence of the presentations can be considered an FTA, for they imply an assumption on the part of the UHVC that the attendees are a priori guilty: in need of instruction that will stop them from committing a crime against another human being. They must listen to an explanation of the laws. Using humor to frame a face threat can soften the impact of that face threatening act (Holmes, 2000). For example, I will refer to the "Consent: It's as Simple as Tea" video, which I will revisit in my third chapter. Every time this video is shown, I preface it with a statement like, "I'm going to show you a video that *should* explain consent pretty well." This video addresses the presentation participants as though they are confused about the idea of consent from the perspective of someone who would commit sexual battery. This video is not meant to educate people about how to give consent, it is meant to educate people about how to not rape. It assumes that consent is only something that must be obtained, that it is one-sided, and that everyone in the room is in need of clarification on this. Additionally, it does not address consent as something that may be constructed within an interaction.

There are also occasionally FTAs done by the participants that are mitigated by means of humor. Although I refer to members of the audience in these presentations as participants, one cannot ignore that as the individual on the stage, I am in a position of power. I am

standing in front of a large group of people and making assertions as though they are absolute fact. Although, as humor, itself, works to emphasize, there is no single reality with one absolute fact. When people have questions that don't agree with the social norms we are portraying, they may choose to frame these questions as jokes.

Power

Humor has been studied in terms of "doing power" by multiple scholars. Hay identifies humor as a way that power is done to foster conflict, to set boundaries, and to defend (2000). These elements are relevant for how humor is used to subvert certain discourses around the topic of rape. Dunbar et. al analyze humor in terms of Dyadic Power Theory, or that power is a "dynamic, multidimensional construct that incorporates the perspectives of both individuals in the interaction" (2012, p. 474). They argue that there are differences in the types of humor used according to power.

As well, Janet Holmes has done extensive work with humor in organizations. She identifies humor as a repressive discourse and identifies it as a means of "doing power" less explicitly (2000). She claims that humor has the ability to distract from issues of power within an interaction. Holmes and Marra identified two different kinds of humor: reinforcing and subversive (2002). In reinforcing humor, a status quo or group norm is maintained. This can function to uphold existing power imbalances. Subversive humor works to undo these existing norms by challenging them. By pointing out inconsistent versions of reality within an existing norm, the power carried by this norm can be renegotiated and ultimately undone.

Humor as Agency. Humor can also be viewed as an act of discursive agency or of transgression to a norm (Purdie, 1993). One can view consent as similar to humor, in that it works to create agency. What is interesting is that discussing sexual battery itself can be viewed as a transgression, or even a social breech. By using humor to do so, the speaker is not bound to the same rules put forth by serious discourse, where paradoxes must either not exist or must be explained away somehow, and can speak more freely about consent (Mulkay, 1988). Particularly, the speaker is granted permission to make consent an issue that must be understood from the point of view of someone wishing to obtain it, not someone wishing to give it. But because these transgressions are permitted and there is no need to explain any contradictions that might arise, there is no explanation of consent as something that occurs in a moment.

Laughter

When examining humor in presentations given by the UVHC, it's important to notice that laughter also plays a significant role. Where Mulkay describes a "humorous mode," he explains that adopting a humorous mode is dependent on the participants' "active involvement in its production" (1988, p. 20). Considering the audience of a presentation as "presentation participants" describes their vital role in allowing the production of a humorous mode, particularly when discussing a more delicate issue like sexual battery. While some acts of participation are constituted by asking questions or adding comments relating to the

material, an act of participation can even be something as simple as laughing in response to a joke.

Laughter is multifunctional communication. Laughter can indicate one's stance on a topic (Clift, 2016). While I cannot read the minds of each presentation participant in the audience to know how they feel about sexual battery and consent, their laughter can function to represent agreement or acceptance with the norm presented in the joke that allows the joke to work. One type of laughter, recipient laughter, is typically associated with affiliation and alignment (Partington, 2006). However, there is also an element of politeness at work here. When a joke is made, laughter is what is expected to follow. Not laughing at a joke would be an FTA.

However, laughter can also be transformative (Sacks, 1989). When laughter follows a statement in a presentation about rape, an otherwise serious comment becomes humorous. In this way, laughter can function to release someone of the moral obligation associated with certain statements by turning the statement into one of ceremony. This transformation functions to absolve the listener of moral obligation by setting up the first remark as one of a ceremonial. When someone tells a joke, laughter follows to signal the end of the joke, as well as an acceptance of a humorous mode (Sacks, 1989; Mulkay, 1988). Here is an example provided by Sacks of the transformative nature of laugthter:

A: How are you feeling?

B: You really want to know? ha ha

A: ha ha (1989, p. 239).

I draw this excerpt from Sack's work on suicide threats. Within this interaction, A asks B how they are feeling and B responds with the question, "You really want to know," indicating that B is not doing well. Using laughter to transform this statement into a joke, A has been absolved of their moral obligation to respond with concern or offer help to B (Sacks, 1989).

When a joke constructs a presentation participant as someone who doesn't understand consent, and is therefore potentially a rapist, laughter can serve a similar function. The presentation participants all exist within a society where sexual battery is deemed immoral. As members of this society, the assertion made in the presentation that sexual battery is a serious issue, and that they could be part of the problem, is a claim that comes with a set of expectations or obligations for the participants. Using laughter to transform these claims into jokes, they are absolved of moral obligation. However, by using laughter to absolve participants within the interaction of moral obligation, speakers also inherently reinforce the norm being referenced in the joke. The norm presented within humor in these presentations is that it's not morally acceptable to have sex with someone unless you have their consent and laughing at these jokes can indicate alignment with this version of morality.

What is also interesting is that while laughter can aid in reinforcing humor, it can also function to subvert statements that are not told as jokes during the presentations. In one particular presentation, there was a group of young men who were sitting together and laughing throughout the entire presentation. When I said, "Consent is something that is knowing and voluntary. There's no fear, coercion or submission," and they laughed in

response, they have made this statement into a joke. This laughter transforms that statement in the joke. The serious idea of consent being "knowing" and voluntary" is not taken seriously, it's taken as a joke. If this statement functions as a joke, consent becomes the "target" of the joke, as is laid out by the General Theory of Verbal Humor (Taylor & Raskin, 2012).

The University Victim Help Center

The University Victim Help Center (UVHC) is a resource to individuals within South Eastern Univesrity (SEU) who have been the victim of any kind of crime. The purpose of this organization is to provide advocacy services to SEU-affiliated individuals who have experienced crime. Advocates are trained to assist their clients in crime-related advocacy needs. One example of this would be medical advocacy, such as setting up a forensic-medical exam after a sexual battery, helping a client obtain sexually transmitted infection (STI) or pregnancy preventatives, or accompanying a client to any doctor's appointments related to the crime they experienced. Another example of advocacy done by the UVHC is academic advocacy, so if a student of SEU is struggling in their classes because of the crime, they can write a note to their professor or assist them in a late withdrawal. Other forms of advocacy include:

- Legal advocacy (connecting clients to legal services, accompaniment to court hearings, obtaining injunctions, etc.)
- Reporting advocacy (assisting in filing reports to the police or to SEU)

- Safety planning if someone is being stalked or is in an abusive relationship
- Information or referrals to other relevant services.

During my time in the UVHC, the staff was comprised of a total of six employees. There was a team of three advocates who were certified victim practitioners by the state of Florida, an administrative coordinator, who ensures the office runs smoothly, a student assistant, and a graduate assistant. The UVHC was in a discreet location, tucked away in the basement of the building for Student Assistance. Upon entering the UVHC, there were no uncomfortable, hard chairs, only a couple of red couches for clients to sink into while they wait to be greeted by their advocate. The bright yellow walls were covered with inspirational paintings done by previous clients as part of their healing, designed to help others in the process of healing. There was an unwritten rule shared by the staff members where anyone who walked through the UVHC door is offered a cold water to help them feel comfortable, in an effort to acknowledge that the UVHC is not a place an individual ever hopes to find themselves.

When I began working at the UVHC, other employees who had been working there for a while explained to me that they were in the bit of a transition period, where a few members of the team had recently left, and the office was being downsized. Where there were once five advocates, approximately 8-10 federal work study students, one graduate assistant, and an administrative coordinator, there were now only six remaining people in the office. There were five offices, each decorated differently by the advocate who used the office. Two of the offices from where advocates used to be were empty, but had the eerie, lingering presence

of the advocates who used to reside in those offices based on the remaining decoration in the office. Each office had two, cushiony, armchairs for the clients to sit in while they meet with their advocate.

Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Battery made up for over half of the services that the UVHC provided. Part of what the UVHC did was community outreach to educate students, staff and faculty about our services and about issues like gender-based violence. During the downsizing, which continued throughout my position here, part of the justification was that the office would not be responsible for the violence prevention aspect of assisting crime victims. Because of this transformation period, there was a constant struggle to draw lines for which presentations were appropriate for the office to be doing.

My job duties here mainly included participating in these community outreach events to open up dialogue with students about our office, what to do if they are victimized, and things they can do to "help put an end to violence on campus" (a phrase I use frequently during these events). These community outreach events could be either setting up tables with information for students to pass by and inquire about information or giving presentations about these issues to individuals in the university. As the transition period continued throughout my employment, and more boundaries were drawn for which events were appropriate for us, I attended fewer and fewer of these community outreach events. The presentations I examine for this study are all presentations that were in the process of being reshaped during my employment there.

In this study, I examine three different presentations given by the UVHC. I chose these presentations because all these presentations are given at an orientation, and orientation events are designed to orient newcomers to the culture of a given place. These presentations assist individuals who are not a part of an ingroup to integrate into this group, specifically to understand sexual battery how it is addressed at SEU. These presentations not only maintain, but also create the culture at SEU, integrating new members to the ingroup of policies and regulations that dictate expected future performances. The UVHC has a segment in the designated orientation day (or longer, depending on how long SEU believes the person needs to orient) where the university's stance on crime and sexual misconduct is to be stated. The content covered in these presentations varies based on the role the presentation participants will play within the university system. A few topics have to be covered in every presentation. Each presentation covers:

- Who can receive services from the UVHC
- What services the UVHC provides
- Brief bystander intervention[2] information.

Two of the three types of presentations I analyze in this study no longer exist. Part of the transitional period which I described in the previous section involved the removal of violence prevention from the assignments of the staff of the UVHC office. Violence prevention had been removed before I began working at the UVHC, however SEU had not yet located a new site for violence prevention. For this reason, the orientation presentations were being reshaped to exclude violence prevention before their complete discontinuance. There

was an interesting tension that arose as a result of the removal of violence prevention from the office. It was not plausible for SEU to discontinue violence prevention from the UVHC office and all of the resources dedicated to it and expect the office to continue the violence prevention initiative while they searched for a new site for violence prevention. However, there was a sense of moral obligation to continue presenting certain information that could be considered "violence prevention," in that, if no one was sharing the information, violence prevention was not occurring at all. The presentations I analyze in this study are an artifact of this tension.

Since a large portion of the clients have been victimized by sexual battery, we would always play a humorous video that compares obtaining consent for sex to the dynamic of offering someone tea (see Fig. 1). The "Consent: It's Simple as Tea" video (or as I will refer to it, the tea video) addresses the audience as "you" and goes through a variety of scenarios where consent might be confusing, although it is meant ironically. Really, it conveys the message as though it's very simple, hence the title. It begins by saying, "If you're still struggling with the idea of consent, just imagine instead of initiating consent, you're making them a cup of tea." It even goes so far as to address the audience as though they might feel "entitled" when it says, "Just because you made it doesn't mean you are entitled to watch them drink it." I will cover this video more in Chapter 3.

Figure 1. Beginning of "Consent: It's Simple as Tea" Video.
Taken from "Consent: It's Simple as Tea" video.

The length of each presentation varies by the amount of information that is covered. The shortest presentation of the three is ten minutes long and is given during the transfer orientation. The presentation participants in this presentation are transfer students who are just beginning their studies at the university. This presentation takes place in a large room with close to 200 participants. The transfer orientation gives a brief overview of the services provided by the UVHC, the concept of consent through the tea video, and bystander intervention.

The longest UVHC presentation lasts one hour. The presentation participants in this presentation are new employees who are receiving training for working in the university system. These presentations have approximately thirty people in attendance and happen in a classroom. Because this is designed as a training, the participants expected to be more interactive in this presentation. This presentation is a training that covers the standards to be VAWA compliant and addresses definitions of sexual battery, intimate partner violence, and

stalking on a federal, state, and university level. It also works to construct consent and uses the "Consent: It's Simple as Tea" video to do so.

The third presentation is thirty minutes long. The presentation participants are students who enter an International Student program and aims to explain the cultural context of these issues. There are normally no more than thirty participants for this presentation. We get into issues of culture and what is expected in the United States when it comes to things like sexual battery, domestic violence, and stalking. This presentation tends to get a bit of laughter from the participants, especially at times when it is not appropriate. This one takes place in a classroom setting. These are the three presentations that will be my sites of research.

Data and Framework

For this study, I collected field notes and audio/video recordings of the UVHC presentations. I asked permission from the director of the UVHC and obtained a letter of support. In addition to this, I asked permission from members attending the presentation before taking any video recordings and did not include any identifiable factors in the data analyzed. Using this information, I sought approval from the IRB who, through review of my application, granted this study IRB exemption. I used the following data:

Field notes and Slides

The field notes provided descriptions of the slides, the advocate's explanations of the slides, and presentation participant reactions. I collected field notes from three different presentations which I observed. I took field notes from each of the three types of presentations (employee, transfer, and ISTO).

Here is an example of one of my field notes from an employee training (refer to figure 2 for corresponding slide):

> [Advocate] asks, 'why do we avoid *why* questions?' After receiving the answer about preventing victim-blaming, she shares an example of a woman who went out for chocolate at two in the morning and was raped, only to be asked why she was going out for chocolate at two in the morning. 'Ladies,' [advocate] says. 'We all know that if you want chocolate, it doesn't matter what time it is, you're going to go get some chocolate!' (Field notes from December 5, 2017, advocate's actual name changed to "advocate")

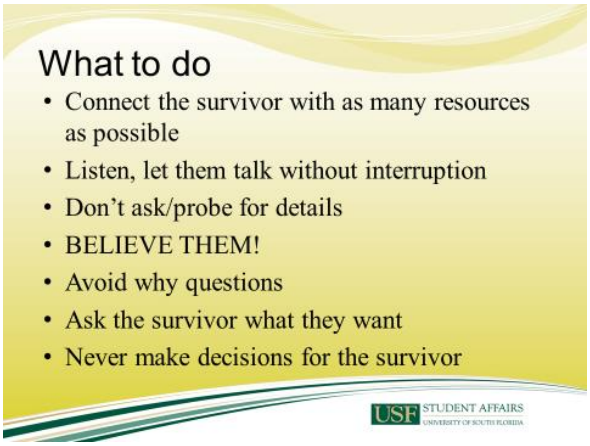

Figure 2. "What to do" Slide on Asking Why Questions.
**Taken from Employee Orientation.*

Audio-Video Recordings

For the audio-video recordings, I recorded five different presentations. I recorded two transfer orientations, two employee orientations, and one ISTO orientation. The recordings provided me with the opportunity to transcribe the humor as it occured, and also capture the laughter and potential contributions from the presentation participants. I am the only person whose face is shown in the recordings when they are by video.

Within the UVHC presentations, there are two videos that the UVHC shows. One of these videos is only used for the training for new employees. However, in my presentations, I do choose not to show this video, although other UVHC presenters do. This video is by a comedian named Dave Chappelle. In this video, Dave Chappelle is lying in bed with a woman and, when they are about to have sex, he pulls out a clipboard and asks this woman to sign in multiple different places as an indication that she consents to the multiple different sex acts. For a visual representation of this video, refer to Figure 3.

Figure 3. Dave Chappelle Consent Video.

**Taken from UVHC Presentation Slides.*

I also use the "Consent: It's Simple as Tea" video as a site of inquiry and analyzing the humor used there. For this video, there are additional elements that add to the humor that are not only verbal. There are also visual components to these videos that add to the humor, as shown below in Figure 4.

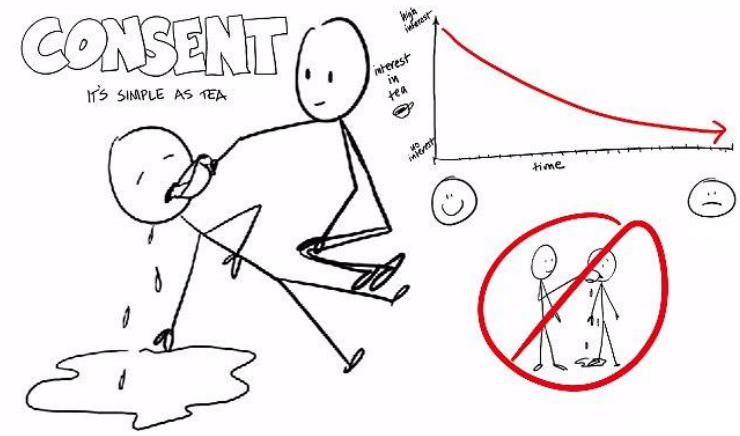

Figure 4. Example of Humorous Visual Component of Tea Video.

**Taken from "Consent: It's Simple as Tea" video.*

Throughout my data, there may be multiple things occurring in one joke. These things are not necessarily mutually exclusive and, as I argue in my thesis, work together to construct a cultural norm of consent.

Methodology

Using a collection of field notes, slides, videos, and transcript, I will approach my data multimodally. As humor is a highly contextual discursive accomplishment with various elements working intertextually for its production, a multimodal approach to the data allows me to incorporate more examples, and thereby complete a richer analysis. I believe that the multimodality of my data allows me to present and analyze the different forms of text and address how they interact to produce the humor. Mulkay compares using serious discourse, as one does in qualitative research, to describing humor as using words to describe a picture in the following quote:

> The attempt to make serious sense of humour is analogous to that of using words to describe pictures. It is without doubt possible, and the enterprise can have important benefits. But there are inherent difficulties and there is a constant danger of misrepresentation (1988).

This quote addresses the difficulties of attempting to research humor, as humor must be explained seriously, but adopts fundamentally different assumptions about the world we live in. I believe that multimodality can assist with the representation of humor in my data.

I am also mindful of my own role as a qualitative researcher in that I am also playing a role within the interactions I am studying. In the UVHC presentations, I am attentive to the fact that I claim the role of participant observer, as described by Macgilchrist & Van Hout, whereby I am also a participant in the site of inquiry and therefore the creation (rather than just the collection) of the data (2011). I do not exempt myself from findings of this research, and in fact, in participating in these presentations, and as an employee of the UVHC, I am playing a role in the construction(s) of sexual battery, consent, and victimization that I examine in this study.

In the following chapters, I will be analyzing three different kinds of data. In chapter two, I examine the field notes I obtained from watching another advocate deliver these presentations. I provide a more in-depth analysis of how the humor used in the presentation works with face-theory and politeness. In chapter three, I analyze the "Consent: It's Simple as Tea" video. I address this video as a humorous metaphor, and the entailments of this metaphor. In chapter four, I use transcriptions from the audio and video recordings to examine discussions of "victimhood." I analyze how humor is used to construct authorized accounts of victimizations. In the final chapter, I synthesize these arguments to examine how humor is used to construct broader moral performances.

Endnotes

[1]The real names of the UVHC and SEU have been changed to protect the identity of the university and office.

[2]Bystander intervention is a program that educates individuals on how to safely intervene when they are witnessing a situation that appears dangerous.

CHAPTER TWO

"THAT'S NOT SEXY, THAT'S RAPE": FACE THREATENING ACTS IN UVHC PRESENTATIONS

Introduction

"So, when exactly is it OK to joke about rape?" Tessa[1] the Advocate asked me defensively. Based on her tone and the way her hand rested on her hip, it was clear to me that there was only one acceptable response: *never*. This conversation began when Tessa asked me about my research interests and I told her I studied humor about sexual battery. Her response came as no surprise since she was an employee at the University Victim Help Center (UVHC). It's Tessa's job to advocate for her client, all of whom have experienced any kind of crime and approximately a quarter of the client services provided by the UVHC are for sexual battery.

So, I rejoined Tessa's question with my usual diplomatic response: while humor is shaped by existing cultural norms and expectations (Conquergood, 2013, p. 19), which can be troublesome in the case of rape jokes, it can also work to resist and reshape cultural expectations (Strain, Martens & Saucier, 2016). And I couldn't help but remember how Tessa, the person who in this instance was claiming that rape jokes are, without exception, inappropriate, was in front of a group of thirty people just a couple weeks ago giving a

presentation about consent. And making jokes about rape. In this chapter, I analyze field notes collected from presentations I attended given by other UVHC employees while I was training to do the presentations.

This chapter discusses the humor used in the presentations as a Face-Threatening Act. In this chapter, I address the face-threatening nature of the existence of the presentations, and how face-work and politeness were done in terms of that face threat. The existence of the presentations comes with an assumption that South Eastern University (SEU) believes the participants in the presentation do not understand certain topics which are already generally understood. These topics include:

- University, state and federal policies of gender-based violence[2] and sexual misconduct
- Consent and definitions of consent
- Ways someone should and should not respond to a disclosure of a victimization

In this chapter, I use my field notes in collaboration with the slides to analyze humorous instances where face-threatening acts (FTAs) are masked by humor. I do not limit the FTAs to the presenter, and also include FTAs that occur from the audience. First, however, I must describe the notion of face & facework theory, politeness, and FTAs to contextualize the framework used for this chapter.

Face and Face Work

As a sociologist, Goffman examined symbolic systems and how they enable and coordinate social interactions (Metts & Cupach, 2015) Goffman argued that, regardless of a psychological identity, all people have a social self or—as Goffman called it—a face that people socially construct within an interaction (Metts & Cupach, 2015). Face Theory explains both how individuals construct their face and strategies individuals use to maintain face within an interaction. For the purpose of this chapter and the broader discussions of humor, I focus on the strategies used to do face work, as I argue that humor is a way of maintaining or restoring face.

Face-Threatening Acts and Politeness Strategies

The concept of face-threatening acts (FTAs) was introduced by Brown & Levinson's (1987) extension of Goffman's notion of face as an individual's social standing (1959). Goldsmith and Norman (2015) argue that there are that there are four key components of face theory important to understanding politeness and FTAs: that face is public, that face is social, that face is claimed, and that we want to maintain face. FTAs are acts that work to damage the face of another therefore tipping the balance of power by threatening positive face or restricting their ability to act by threatening negative face. Politeness strategies are ways of getting around doing face-threats by doing them indirectly. In the presentations I will examine work to threaten the face of the participants within the interaction. Brown and Levinson address joking as positive politeness (1987).

Positionality in Face Work

Metts and Cupach (2015) state that, "status is a feature of a person's role and role is a part of the system that guides our behaviors and gives meaning to during interaction" (p. 230). In terms of face and politeness theory, this highlights the significance of positionality in terms of doing face work, FTAs and politeness. This addresses presentation participants and the asymmetry between individuals who have attended the presentations as individuals receiving information and the presenter, who is inherently in a position of authority. Individuals must speak more politely when addressing people of a higher status (Metts & Cupach, 2015). Goffman (1967) names what he calls an "expressive ritual," where participants within an interaction protect each other's face, which may occur in a presentation where someone has a question that challenges the information put forth by the presenter and chooses to frame it in a humorous manner. Goldsmith and Norman (2015) argue that "effective communication entails choosing the right amount of politeness for the situation" (p. 271). In the next section, I will examine how humor works in the presentations as politeness and to save face.

As I have previously discussed, face is important in establishing the dynamics of power that are occurring within these interactions. I examine power as something that is constituted on an interactional basis, and face is a component of negotiating the power. I contend that these elements of face work and power are negotiated within the presentations interactionally

to construct the social norms, and thereby the praxis of culture within the presentation and within SEU.

Face work is only one element of the humor that is occurring and, for the purposes of this chapter, will be the focus of the analysis. However, that is not to say that there are not various other things being negotiated within the interactions that I am analyzing. It is merely to examine how power is being done.

Humor's Role in Facework

In the following section I provide three examples of interactions that occurred during presentations where I collected field notes. In each example, I examine what face work and politeness are accomplishing. I argue that humor works to (1) mask FTAs and maintain face of presentation participants, (2) "do power" by constituting and maintaining positionality within the presentation (Holmes, 2000), and (3) use FTAs and politeness humorously to construct social norms about sexual battery.

Maintaining Face of the Presentation Participants

Part of the definition of consent (which I further explain in Chapter Three) is that someone cannot give consent if they are "incapacitated." Incapacitated is an ambiguous term that, if left undefined, can be grounds for someone to claim that in their experience of an interaction where sexual battery occurred, they did not believe the individual to be

incapacitated. Tessa explains incapacitation one day in a transfer orientation in the following field notes, which I collected during a transfer orientation:

> Tessa explains incapacitation in the case of drugs and alcohol, stating that it can look like slurring words, falling over, and needing help taking clothes off. "Another example of incapacitation is when someone is *sleeping*," Tessa states, emphasizing the sleeping aspect. "For some reason, this generation finds it sexy to wake their boyfriend or girlfriend up with sex. It is not sexy. It is rape. So, do not have sex with sleeping people!" Tessa wags her finger at the audience members with a chuckle as she states this. Audience members laugh (Field Notes from June 23, 2017).

In this example, Tessa directly references presentation participants, who as transfer students are, for the most part, members of "this generation" that she states to be problematic in her joke. By definitions, rape occurs when consent has not been given in a sexual interaction. Tessa assumes a version of reality in her joke where presentation participants are not obtaining consent and are waking up their significant others with sex, which she describes as rape. By stating this humorously, multiple versions of this reality can exist at the same time. Tessa can accuse presentation participants of raping their boyfriends of girlfriends.

I now reference Sacks's (1989) transformative laughter, which I described in the introductory chapter. Tessa's laughter in this presentation assists in framing this statement as humorous, whereas laughter on the part of the audience can further transform the statement into a joke. Sacks (1989) claims that when one claims member of a certain group, in this case it is the generation Tessa refers to, there are activities that these members of bound to, which

in this case—as per Tessa's definition—is waking up their significant other with sex. However, there is a version of morality being constructed here where that is considered rape and, thereby, immoral. By laughing, this statement is turned into a joke, which is a communication ritual where the statement is not to be taken seriously and moral obligation is removed (Sacks, 1989). Presentation participants can identify as members of the category being described and still remove themselves from this description through laughter.

Positionality within the Presentations

I also argue that FTAs framed as humor are used to maintain positionality within the presentations, and therefore attend to the face needs of the presentation participants, performing politeness. The following example is drawn from field notes collected during an employee orientation. I argue that this is an FTA in the form of a question from a presentation participant that challenges the information being provided by the presenter.

> Tessa describes warning signs of an abuser. She states that one warning sign is telling someone what to wear. One man asks, "Well, it depends on what you mean by telling them what to wear. You know, before my wife and I were together she used to dress like a single person—" and Tessa interrupts with, "And what exactly does a 'single person' dress like?" while laughing. This receives laughter from the audience (Field notes from December 5, 2016).

In the example above, we see how a norm here is challenged by the man, threatening the presenter's (Tessa's) face. As he asks this question, he is laughing when he says, "single person." His laughter could work to frame his question as a joke. Tessa co-produces the humor with him by challenging him in response: "What exactly does a 'single person dress' like?" continuing a face-threat directed at him in the form of humor. When there is a threat to the face of the presenter and the information the presenter is providing, the presenter's positionality as an information source is also at stake. The response to this threat, as we see in the above example, is a humorous FTA from Tessa, the presenter, directed back at the man who challenged her positionality. What is interesting about the laughter on Tessa's behalf is that is cannot only function to frame her response has humorous but can also function as an FTA. If her laughter functions as Sack's transformative laughter, this could transform his asking of the question into a joke, as though his question is so absurd, that she does not even seriously consider it.

What is also interesting about the question asked by the man is the risk involved in asking this question. This man did not just threaten the face of the presenter, but he also put his own face at risk. He responded to a description of an offender by admitting to engaging activities ascribed to that category. While the presentation has been painting a picture of an offender who is a criminal reprimandable by the university, the state and the federal government policies, this man admitted to identification with the offender through his question.

This relates to the agentic nature of humor, as is discussed by Purdie (1993). Purdie states that humor is a transgression that, through the transgressional act, also marks the norm and implicitly reinstates that norm while also allowing the speaker to remain agent. This man is clearly performing a transgression here for various reasons. He is transgressing Tessa by challenging the knowledge that she is putting forward, which is an assertion about what abusive behavior looks like. He is also transgressing the norm being presented here where being an offender is frowned upon. Had this not been framed as a joke through laughter, his transgressions would have been straight forward, and it would have been a far riskier act.

Laughter as a Face Threatening Act

It is also the case that laughter can be an FTA when it is used after something that is not meant to be humorous. During the ISTO presentations, which are given to international students who enter the university under the ISTO program[3], this is a common occurrence. The culture of both SEU and the United States is stressed in this presentation to provide an additional orientation to the laws that individuals in this presentation may not be familiar with. The stressing of these laws is an FTA, particularly when these laws deal with not committing gender-based violence and sexual battery, as it implies that because someone is from another country, they will not understand that sexual battery is not acceptable. Here is one example of an FTA in the form of laughter during one of these presentations:

> Tessa reads the definition of sexual battery. Tessa states that they should be comfortable using words like, “vaginal,” “anal” and “penetration” for two reasons:

> because they are the words written in the laws and because they are part of the culture of silence around sexual battery. There is a group of gentlemen in the back of the room who are laughing as she says this and whispering to each other, also looking at the screen (From Field Notes on ISTO Presentation).

Tessa was not performing humor when she was stating this, she was seriously giving a definition of sexual battery. By laughing at the definition of sexual battery, it worked to transform Tessa's statement into a joke, indicating that someone being rape is something to laugh about and that her information on the definition was not important.

Constructing Norms about Sexual Battery

In this section, I further examine the norms that FTAs create. Part of the employee orientation training centered on how to respond to a disclosure and mitigate the harm of Title IX policies of mandated reporting. Here is one instance of humor which I took from field notes:

> Tessa asks, 'why do we avoid *why* questions?' After receiving the answer about preventing victim-blaming, she shares an example of a woman who went out for chocolate at two in the morning and was raped, only to be asked why she was going out for chocolate at two in the morning. 'Ladies,' Tessa says. 'We all know that if you want chocolate, it doesn't matter what time it is, you're going to go get some chocolate!' (Field notes from December 5, 2017)

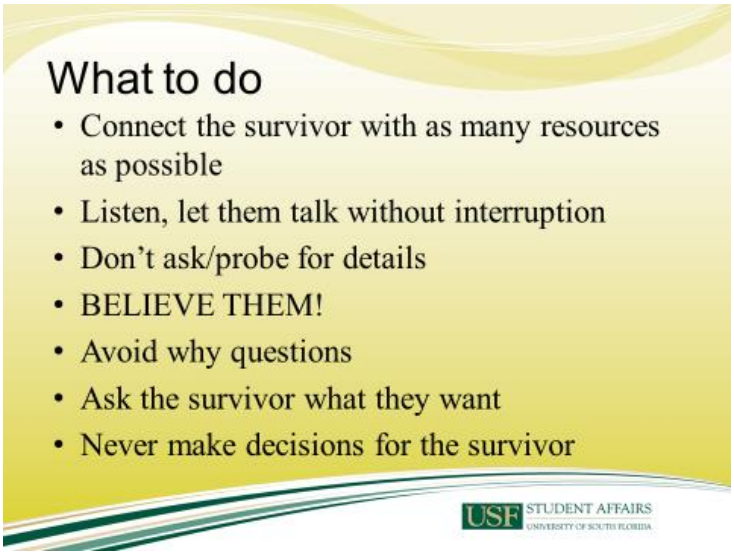

Figure 5. "What to do" Slide on Asking Why Questions.
**Taken from Employee Orientation.*

This slide, as well as the joke that occurred in the extract from my field noteswork as FTAs to the presentation participants. Looking at this slide, we see that there is an implication that everyone in the room receiving this training does not know how to respond to someone who has experienced gender-based violence. In the second bullet point, the slide states, "let them talk without interruption," implying that individuals in the room need to be trained on how to listen to someone who is disclosing an instance of gender-based violence. There are other examples of things individuals should avoid, i.e. things the UVHC believes the presentation participants will do without proper instruction, in almost every bullet point on this slide. This includes probing for details, asking "why" questions, making decisions for the survivor. I would also like to note that one bullet point is in all caps with an exclamation

point, stating, “BELIEVE THEM!” All caps function as a non-lexical sign that contributes to the contextualization of typed verbal messages, increasing the importance of this particular bullet point (Darics, 2013). This bullet point implies that the presentation participant may have difficulty believing someone who has disclosed an instance of sexual battery, and that will have less trouble after viewing this slide.

I now focus attention on the accompanying joke that Tessa included with not asking “why” questions. This slide has created a presumption that the presentation participants will engage in victim-blaming, which is an FTA. The story Tessa sets up is also an FTA, where a woman goes out for chocolate at three o’clock in the morning and is raped, only to be asked why she went out for chocolate at 3 o’clock in the morning. By saying this in a training, Tessa is implying that this is a question that presentation participants might find themselves wondering if someone disclosed this crime to them. She asserts a simple explanation, which is that if a woman wants chocolate at 3 o’clock in the morning, she should be able to get chocolate. The simplicity of the answer, and her need to provide it, functions to further the FTA, as though it should be obvious that this is the case. However, by doing so in a humorous way, the FTA is mitigated.

The slide, as well as Tessa’s joke, are both FTAs. By being a part of an orientation training, they work to constitute a social norm at SEU where victim-blaming is not acceptable. By doing so, there is an assumption made that presentation participants already victim-blame and, although they are told not to do certain things, by assuming a reality where victim-blaming is the established norm, they are also reinforcing that norm while working to subvert

it. Furthermore, this norm of consent does not address it as something that is relational or something that occurs within an interaction and removes the communicative aspect of consent. While it is important to have clear lines established of when consent occurs, if the goal is to inform presentation participants on consent in a way that is understandable—or in a way that they might be able to identify with—it is important to describe it in a way that relates to how consent is performed outside of the presentation.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have analyzed the role of face theory how it relates to humor. I have argued that FTAs and politeness work to negotiate power within an interaction. As this power is negotiated, social norms that form the culture of SEU are being constructed through discourse. Humor can be used to mitigate the impact of FTAs, and therefore can be a less explicit way of power negotiation. In the chapters that follow, I will revisit the concept of FTAs and the social norms being constructed to examine broader discourses of moral performances and victimizations.

Endnotes

[1]Tessa's name has been changed to protect her identity.

[2]I use gender-based violence here that same way I would in a presentation, which is as a blanket term for sexual battery, intimate partner violence, and stalking.

[3]The ISTO program is a program for international students who did not quite excel enough to be accepted into the university to be accepted as a regular international student, and therefore have to go to a special program to aid their success in a new country for the first time.

CHAPTER THREE:

WHEN TEA ISN'T SO SIMPLE: EXPLAINING TEA THROUGH METAPHOR

Introduction

According to the state of Florida Statues (2017), sexual battery (the legal term for rape) happens when there is a sexual act and consent has not been obtained. Thus, education about what consent looks like has become an important component in the initiative of preventing sexual assault, as it is the defining factor for when a rape has occurred. The absence of consent means there is the presence of sexual battery. Because of the frequency of misconduct on college campuses specifically, federally funded universities are required by law[1] to implement a sexual violence prevention campaign with certain educational elements. One of these elements is a definition of consent.

As a federally funded university, South Eastern University (SEU) has extensive sexual misconduct prevention initiatives in place. Part of these initiatives are educational presentations, which the University Victim Help Center (UVHC) delivers to students, staff and faculty about sexual misconduct. In these presentations, a YouTube video[2] called "Consent: It's Simple as Tea" is used to explain some of the intricacies of consent. The video claims that consent is not all that complicated and that should someone still be struggling with

it, they can understand consent better through a metaphor: instead of offering someone sex, one should imagine offering someone a cup of tea. In this chapter, I examine how the tea metaphor portrays consent for sexual acts. Specifically, I argue that the "Consent: It's Simple as Tea" video uses the tea metaphor to present consent humorously. Finally, I address the use of metaphor and humor, and how they work together to create a version of consent is not relational. But ironically, this produces a version of consent that authorizes the experience of sexual assault.

Humor and Metaphor

> Successful humor…gives us a snapshot of "reality" (here signifying socially accepted "proper" views of a situation) but, as in an old camera, the image is upside down or, as in the photo's negative, inside out or backwards (Gabin, 1987, p. 35).

In this quote, Gabin views humor as an exposure of social norms in an indirect, backwards manner. This is similar to Purdie's (1993) explanation of humor, where she claims it is a transgression of a "symbolic law".[3] Purdie argues that in using humor, one is performing a discursive transgression. In this way, they can mark this "symbolic law," or take a screenshot as Gabin (1987) suggests, while also maintaining agency. And because humor—when properly accomplished—does not require an explanation (Mulkay, 1988), someone can speak more freely when using humorous discourse. Because of the discursive freedom allowed when using humor, it can hold a plethora of functions in everyday communication.

Garfinkel argues that there are implicit rules or norms that occur within an interaction and that a social breach occurs when a norm is violated (2002). Though, as Mulkay writes, "Within the realm of [humor], almost anything is allowed and implausibilities do not have to be camouflaged" (1988, p. 21). This may be because, as a mode of discourse, humor allows a speaker to break the boundaries between two opposing interpretive possibilities of reality. In the "Consent: It's Simple as Tea" video, humor—and also metaphor—create social norms of consent that, if the video is effective, surpass the video and become enacted in our everyday practice.

The freedom provided in the realm of humorous discourse functions as a space for people to discuss difficult topics. This video introduces one particular difficult topic: sexual battery. Discussing sexual battery itself can be viewed as a transgression, or even a social breech. Through humor, the speaker is not bound to the same rules put forth by serious discourse. In the case of the "Consent: It's Simple as Tea" metaphor, the speaker is granted permission to make consent an issue that must be understood from the point of view of someone wishing to obtain it, not someone wishing to give it. But because this social breach is permitted and there is no need to explain any contradictions that might arise, there is no explanation of consent as something that occurs in a moment and no need to explain contradictions between offering someone tea and initiating a sexual act.

In addition to the humorous discussion of sexual battery, another social breach performed by the "Consent: It's Simple as Tea" video is its mere existence as a Face Threatening Act (FTA). By framing a face-threatening message that as a joke, the face threat

present within a humorous interaction in minimized (Zadjman, 1995). At the same time, by entering a mode where multiple versions of reality are allowed, autonomy of the listener is also maintained (Holmes, 2000).

The Role of Metaphor in Understanding

Metaphor and humor are similar in that they both rely on duality and tension (Piata, 2016). Metaphor utilizes the framework of one concept that is understood to generate meaning for another concept (Lakoff & Johnson, 2011). Humor occurs when, "there is a sudden movement between, or an unexpected combination of, distinct, interpretive frames" (Mulkay, 1988). However, they differ in that metaphors function to generate a shared account of our reality and how we communicate (Spivey, 1997), whereas humor works if we abandon the assumption that there is only one version of meaning to be understood (Mulkay, 1988). That is, metaphors work to make sense of something whereas humor is not accomplished unless it's nonsensical.

Metaphor is vital to understanding, as we understand new concepts through concepts that are already familiar (Jaynes, 2003). Metaphor also relies upon duality to function, in that is utilizes an existing conceptualization of one thing to aid in the conceptualization of another thing. However, the systematicity of metaphor also obscures other aspects of the concept being explained (Lakoff & Johnson, 2011). Comparing concepts like tea and sex through metaphor comes with a set of entailments. By adopting the framework of one thing to explain something else, it can direct our attention to aspects of the thing being explained which fit the

framework of the metaphor, obscuring other elements that do not fit the framework (Lakoff & Johnson, 2011). By analyzing metaphors like the one used in the "Consent: It's Simple as Tea" video, one can examine essential assumptions made by these metaphors (Spivey, 1997). The elements that the metaphor obscures are aspects that still need to be accounted for in the education and understanding of consent.

"Consent: It's Simple as Tea" Video

The data I analyze for this chapter are the scenarios proposed in the "Consent: It's Simple as Tea" video, including the necessary, corresponding illustrations. While this is only one example of one metaphor used at a single university, I believe analyzing this video has larger implications for the usage of metaphor and humor to produce social norms and understanding of social norms. Furthermore, I believe a close examination of the tea metaphor will illuminate the intricacies of consent when it is not "Simple as Tea." Understanding places where consent becomes complex will reveal areas where consent education can be improved upon, thus furthering the initiative to prevent sexual assault.

I also utilize the Florida statutes regarding sexual battery. I examine how the state of Florida defines consent in comparison to the "Consent: It's Simple as Tea" video. Although rape laws vary by state, Florida laws on sexual battery exist within the context of larger, national discourses of consent and sexual battery. As the absence of consent is the defining factor in a sexual battery, there are very specific guidelines in the Florida statutes about what

consent looks like and who can give consent. The statutes also provide scenarios of when someone can or cannot give consent, as the tea video does.

"Consent: It's Simple as Tea" Scenario List

In this section, I provide a list of the scenarios presented in the "Consent: It's Simple as Tea" video, as well as the proposed course of action for each. The narrator begins the video by saying, "If you're still struggling with consent, just imagine instead of initiating sex, you're making them a cup of tea." He then continues to describe multiple different scenarios of offering someone tea that also work when initiating sex with someone. The different scenarios presented in the video are as follows:

1. You offer someone tea and they say yes. You give them tea.
2. You offer someone tea and they aren't sure if they want it. You can choose to make the tea, but they might not drink it. You should not make them drink it.
3. You offer someone tea and they say "no, thank you." You don't make the person tea or force them to drink it.
4. You offer someone tea, they say yes, but then they change their mind after you've made the tea. You might find this annoying, but they are allowed to change their mind and you are still not "entitled to watch them drink it."

5. Someone is unconscious. You don't make them tea because unconscious people don't want tea.

6. Someone is conscious and agrees to tea, but falls asleep during the making of the tea. You should just "put the tea down, make sure the unconscious person is safe," and not force the tea down their throat.

7. Someone agrees to tea, starts drinking it, but passes out while drinking it. You shouldn't keep pouring it down their throat.

8. Someone agreed to tea last Saturday. This doesn't mean that they want you to make them tea all the time. You shouldn't show up at their doorstep offering them tea or pour it down their throat in the middle of the night.

The Production of Humor

The scenarios are humorous in that they propose situations that do not adhere to social norms. When the initiation of sex is incorporated as an additional framework for this video, we are no longer hearing the scenarios simply in terms of tea. The images shown that correspond to the scenarios incorporate elements of sexual activity, such as Figure 1. In this photo, one stick figure is shown pouring tea down the throat of another stick figure, while the stick figure who is lying down looks unpleasantly surprised. The merging of these two fundamentally different frameworks in the form of a metaphor produce a humorous situation that defies social norms and expectations.

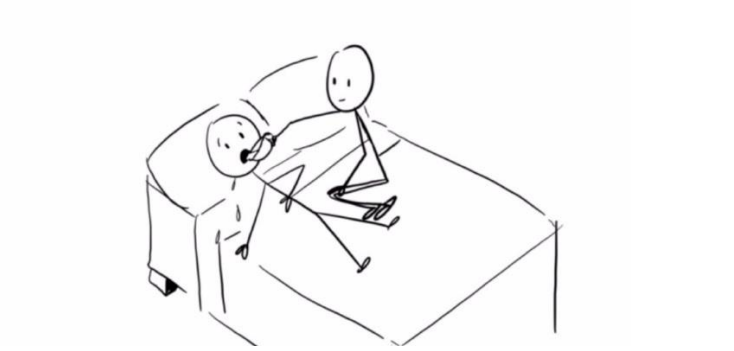

Figure 6. Drinking "Tea" in Bed.
**Taken from "Consent: It's Simple as Tea" video.*

Humor in Producing the Tea Metaphor

Next, I discuss the function of the humor in the production of the tea metaphor. I illuminate two functions in particular that apply to the data: (1) how humor in the "Consent: It's Simple as Tea" produces social norms and (2) how the humor in the "Consent: It's Simple as Tea" is used to breach social norms.

The production of Social Norms through Humor

The "Consent: It's Simple as Tea" video uses both metaphor and humor to produce a social and moral norm of how consent should be enacted. In this video, we see that norm being constructed as an emphasis on the obtaining of consent, rather than an explanation of the providing of consent. This video addresses the viewers in second person. The word "you" is the second most frequently-used word in this video (behind tea), the narrator saying it a total of 30 times. Historically, discourses of sexual battery have addressed rape as something

that could be avoided by the victim, given that they adjust their actions. For example, the "rape myth" is a widely-held belief that "victims" have the potential to increase or decrease their risk of sexual battery based on their actions (Gurnham, 2016).

Holmes and Marra identified two different kinds of humor: reinforcing and subversive (2002). In reinforcing humor, a status quo or group norm is maintained. This can function to uphold existing power imbalances. On the contrary, subversive humor works to undo these existing norms by challenging them. By pointing out inconsistent versions of reality within an existing norm, the power in a norm that places the importance of preventing rape on those who are victimized by it can be undone. In this way, the humor in the "Consent: It's Simple as Tea" video works as subversive humor.

However, in doing this, consent becomes overly simplified, turning it into something of a communicative ritual rather than something that is interactional. When an individual offers someone actual tea, there is a conversation using spoken discourse. It would make sense for there to be a verbal exchange that goes something like:

A: Hey, would you like a cup of tea?

B: Yes, that sounds delightful. Thanks!

A: Great, I'll put the kettle on.

When this is applied to sex, while there may be some verbalized consent, the social norm is not to outright ask someone, "Hey, would you like me to initiate sex with you?" I do not mean to say that consent should not be emphasized and obtained explicitly by both

parties. I mean to say that, if the aim of this video is to shape moral performances beyond the video and beyond tea, ways obtaining affirmative consent verbally need to be practical and applicable in their enactment. For example, during sex, it would make more sense that someone ask, "Do you like that?" or "Do you want me to *insert sex act here*?" Furthermore, as RAINN, the nation's largest sexual violence organization, states, physical cues can also be used to indicate consent ("What Consent Looks Like"). When someone is enthusiastic about either tea or sex, it's clear within that context of that interaction.

Failure to provide resistance. One area that the tea metaphor glosses over is, by Florida law, that consent "shall not be deemed or construed to mean the failure by the alleged victim to offer physical resistance to the offender." The "Consent: It's Simple as Tea" video does not do much to address coercion or coerced submission, language used in the statute, which is partly because it doesn't necessarily fit into the metaphor. If we are only viewing consent from the viewpoint of a potential offender, as this metaphor does, there is no room to discuss the potential authoritative asymmetries that arise that might lead someone to accept the tea (to use the metaphor). The metaphor constructs the victim of rape as an object, because it focuses on discussing the experience of the potential offender, so there is no room for reasons such as a freeze response to trauma or fear of retaliation that would cause the victim to "drink the tea" without wanting it.

Where is the Alcohol? Another aspect of consent dictated by the Florida statutes on sexual battery is the consumption of alcohol. At least half of sexual batteries on college campuses involve alcohol, although this video does not address anything about intoxication. Alcohol usage is very prevalent, with over half of rapes involving alcohol (Abbey, 2015). Part of this is because, as the Florida law states, an individual cannot consent if they are mentally incapacitated, which means, "temporarily incapable of appraising or controlling a person's own conduct due to the influence of a narcotic, anesthetic, or intoxicating substance…" However, through the entailments of the tea metaphor, the complexities of alcohol consumption and consent are concealed.

The video does address physical helplessness, or being unconscious, in the fifth, sixth, and seventh scenario. Here, I would like to focus in on scenarios six and seven, where (6) the person falls asleep during the making of the tea and (7) the person falls asleep during the drinking of the tea, because this is the closest thing to a mention alcohol in this video (figure 2). The narrator says:

> Ok, maybe they were conscious when you asked them if they wanted tea, and they said yes, but in the time it took you to boil that kettle, brew the tea and add the milk they are now unconscious. You should just put the tea down, make sure the unconscious person is safe, and–this is the important part–don't make them drink the tea. They said yes then, sure, but unconscious people don't want tea. If someone said yes to tea, started drinking it, and then passed out before they'd finished it, don't keep on pouring

it down their throat. Take the tea away and make sure they are safe. Because *unconscious people don't want tea*. Trust me on this.

Figure 6. Falling Asleep During Tea.
**Taken from "Consent: It's Simple as Tea" video.*

In the presentations that use this video, there is a brief explanation of what it looks like when someone is too drunk to offer consent. Some indicators of mental incapacitation are if someone is falling over, needs help standing up, needs help taking their clothes off, or is heavily slurring their words. Mental incapacitation is an aspect of consent where there is not a lot of clarity, as is evidenced by the fact that the majority of rapes involve alcohol. However, the metaphor only addresses if someone is unconscious, which, as I state in the presentation, can be due to drugs or alcohol.

Consent as Continuous Relationship. Another aspect that is not clear in the tea metaphor is what "making the tea" means in comparison to "drinking the tea." In the beginning of the video, the narrator states that "instead of initiating sex, you're making them a

cup of tea," so by that definition. If one adapts this metaphor, the making of tea is the *initiation* of a sex act, where the obtaining of the consent happens. So, by means of this metaphor, drinking the tea becomes the participants engaging in the sex act. This element of the metaphor separates obtaining consent from the sex act itself. However, consent should be something given prior to engaging in a sex act, maintained throughout the entire sex act, and obtained for each new sex act engaged in during the intercourse. Separating the obtaining of consent from the sex act itself can be dangerous, in that it does not uphold the need for ongoing consent.

It also does not address consent for sex as something that occurs within that interaction. There is an obvious difference between what it means to stop drinking a cup of tea that someone has made for you halfway through, and to stop having sex with someone halfway through. If one ceases to drink a cup of tea that someone has made them, it has a much different effect on the other person than ceasing to continue the sex act. Consent for sex acts is something that can be shown through actions or words; consent is something that must be socially negotiated. This video seems to be advocating for clearer communication when it comes to the negotiation of consent. However, it does not do much in terms of realistically addressing how consent may be negotiated within that interaction. Through use of a humorous mode, the aspects of consent that are concealed in this metaphor are even further glossed over.

Breaching of Social Norms through Humor

While the "Consent: It's Simple as Tea" video produces and engages social norms through humor, it also utilizes humor to breach social norms. Sexual battery is a topic that is taboo to discuss. Many campaigns about sexual battery or assault use the metaphor of "break the silence." This is evident in current events, such as the *#MeToo* campaign that is circulating the internet, where women are openly speaking out about their experiences with sexual harassment or assault. Less than a third of rapes are reported to the police ("The Criminal Justice System: Statistics," 2016). The presence of this video that openly discusses sexual battery is a breach of a social norm. Furthermore, the fact that it does so in a humorous way is an even more surprising breach, potentially adding to humor. The mere presence of this video is a face-threatening act (FTA), implying that students are "still struggling with the idea of consent," which is a direct quote from the first sentence of the video. In this section, I discuss how humor in this metaphor accomplishes an FTA.

Humor as an FTA. The "Consent: It's Simple as Tea" video accomplishes an FTA in that viewers, which in this case are SEU-affiliated individuals, are a priori guilty: in need of instruction that will stop them from committing a crime against another human being. This video addresses viewers as though they are confused about the idea of consent from the perspective of someone who would commit sexual battery. The "Consent: It's Simple as Tea" video is not meant to educate people about how to give consent, it is meant to educate people about how to not rape.

The framing of this video as an FTA is immediate in the title, which says that consent is "simple." If consent is as simple as the tea metaphor portrays it to be, and viewers is still in need of an explanation, then the reason for the "struggling" with consent is incompetence on the part of the viewer. The narrator speaks slowly and adds emphasis on obvious statements like, "don't *make* them drink it." It uses a lot of repetition, using the word "unconscious" seven times in explaining that unconscious people cannot offer consent and emphasizes twice, word-for-word, that "unconscious people don't want tea." The second time the narrators says, "unconscious people don't want tea," it's followed by, "trust me on this," as through the viewer couldn't understand why unconscious people don't want tea and so they have to resort to trusting the narrator.

Because it is framed humorously, the face-threat is diminished and, in many ways, elements that add to the face-threat are also elements that add to the humor. The presence of the phrase, "unconscious people don't want tea" is humorous in that this is an obvious statement, but the narrator is explaining it as through it seriously needs to be explained, and then it is repeated. He also repeats, "and this is the important part" twice in the video, each time before emphasizing not to make someone drink tea. Part of the humor, and part of why the metaphor makes sense, is that someone would never make someone drink a cup of tea. Although the viewers are told to pay close attention to this obvious aspect, as though it's a source of confusion. Through the tea metaphor, what is communicated by way of inference is that the source of confusion has nothing to do with forcing someone to drink tea and everything to do with forcing people to have sex.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that the "Consent: It's Simple as Tea" video uses humor to (1) produce social norms and (2) accomplish a social breach. The video concludes by saying, "Whether it's tea or sex, consent is everything." Here is where the metaphor extends beyond the communicative act of consent into larger performances of morality, where consent is a vital aspect of interaction of any capacity. The tea metaphor is a vast over-simplification of the social dynamic of consent negotiation, and claiming it is simple then showing a video of stick figures drinking tea to prove it does not produce a pragmatic understanding of consent. Rather, the metaphor, in claiming simplicity, obscures places where consent can be confusing. If the goal is to prevent sexual battery, these are the areas where education about consent needs to focus. Clearly, there are elements of consent that are confusing, or the prevalence of sexual battery would not be so high.

This is not meant as an apologia for rapists; I am not claiming that the issue is that they simply don't understand that they are raping someone. Rather, I'm claiming that the way to truly reshape social norms around sexual battery and victimization is through a more open conversation about the norms that contribute to this issue. The "Consent: It's Simple as Tea" video does not provoke an open conversation about consent and why it's important. It either speaks to a specific set of people who likely already value consent and understand its importance or permits those who do not understand its importance or intricacies to oversimplify it in terms of tea. Change must occur on an interactional level, where new norms

are being constructed and then enacted. It's when everyone understands the value of consent that there will no longer be rape. And on that note, to quote the video, "I'm going to go make myself a cup of tea."

Endnote

[1]This is a component of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which was reinstated under the Obama Administration in 2013. Upon its reinstatement, there was an added component called the Campus SaVE act that required all federally funded universities to implement extensive sexual misconduct prevention programs.

2This video originated from a British blog post called, "Consent: Not Actually that Complicated." It was posted on March 2, 2015 by a blogger who goes by the Pseudonym Rockstar Dinosaur Princess. The post was then turned into the YouTube video titled, "Consent: It's Simple as Tea" with accompanying stick figure photos by Blue Seat Studios in May, 2015.

3While Purdie's (1993) notion of a symbolic law refers to "laws" of language, this notion extends to social norms, which are performed and organized through discourse.

CHAPTER FOUR

PERFORMING VICTIMIZATION: AUTHORIZING ACCOUNTS OF SEXUAL BATTERY

Introduction

"Hey, Angela. I've been kind of hoping to talk to you about something," a friend of mine, who I will call Ashley, says to me as we eat lunch together. She raises the inflections of her voice at the end of her sentence, as though she is asking a question, as though she is unsure. I can tell she is not about to tell me something pleasant.

"Of course," I respond. "What's going on?" I try to hide the worry I feel for my friend.

"Well…do you remember how I told you that I hooked up with that guy, Clayton, a while back? And I wasn't sure how I felt about it?"

I nod.

"I'm…not really sure it was entirely…consensual." Her words come out slowly, as though she is hesitant to speak them. I have heard similar words in other accounts of sexual battery more times than I could count.

I now realize that Ashley is not speaking to her friend Angela. She is speaking to the Angela who works at the University Victim Help Center (UVHC), the Angela who is

part of developing and delivering presentations on the South Eastern University[1] (SEU) campus that focus on crime victimizations.

I ask, "Why do you say that?"

"Honestly…I don't remember ever telling him yes. I don't remember much at all, actually. We had both drank quite a bit. I remember him trying to make a move. I remember brushing him off for him to continue to try over and over again. Each time I said, 'no,' he just kept on until I kind of just let it happen. I guess he just assumed it was alright because this wasn't the first time we hooked up. It wasn't enjoyable at all and I started crying afterward until he left. I don't think he used a condom and I don't know if he has any STIs or anything. This is just really confusing."

I know Ashley's options moving forward with reporting, emotional processing, and medical services. But I also know that these options all require her to make a specific claim about her experience: that she was the *victim* of rape. The world of sexual battery does not allow for shades of grey. There is no room for sort-of-nonconsensual accounts of sexual battery. The word "victim" has a set of entailments for how one experiences an event and in this way, victimhood is a borrowed experience, as Sacks would claim (1977). In this chapter, I explore those entailments through examination of Florida Statutes on Sexual Battery. I examine how these entailments are perpetuated in the presentations given by the UVHC on victimization. I analyze the construction of the term "victim." I do so through transcriptions from a presentation that I delivered in my role as a presenter for the UVHC.

"Victim" as an Authorized Experience

When I think of authorizations of victimhood, one metaphor that comes to mind brings me not to rape, but to soccer, a sport often criticized for the overly-performative injuries received by the players. If a player on team A trips a player on team B while team B's player has the ball, the easiest way for team B to get the ball back is for the referee to call a foul. However, team B's player overly-performing an injury from the trip is the easiest way to claim that a foul has occurred, causing each little stumble to send a player to the floor, holding an "injured" extremity.

Sacks (1977) discusses the ways in which we construct ourselves and our experiences through borrowed versions of this experience. Just as soccer players must perform the experience of being injured from a foul if they wish to reclaim the ball, survivors of sexual battery must perform victim in a way that is defined not by them, but by state and university policies on sexual battery. This metaphor is not to say that survivors of sexual battery over-exaggerate their experience, it is to say that they are bound, by law, to strict guidelines of what their experience must be. Sacks claims that by experiencing an event, one becomes entitled to the event through means of how they experience, or how they recount that they have experienced it. However, within this entitlement to an event, there is the constraint that, "if you are going to have an entitled experience, then you will have to have the experience that you are entitled to" (Sacks, 1977, p. 426) In this chapter, I will use this idea of entitlement to an event to discuss how experiencing sexual battery (rape) is an entitled experience, whereby someone who is a "victim" must not only experience this event in a specific way, but also

recount the event in a certain, authorized manner to claim membership to the category of victim.

The word "victim" has a set of entailments for how one experiences an event and in this way, victimhood is a borrowed experience, as Sacks would claim (1977). The state of Florida defines the victim of sexual battery as someone who has been the object of a crime, so first and foremost, in describing their experience, they must forgo their agency in any recounting of their experience. If one is an object of an event, they cannot also be a subject[1], because if someone is allowed to be a subject of the event, it is presumed they have control over the outcome of the event. If one is to have justice or redemption following a sexual battery, they must report their event and in the reporting of the event, they must claim the identity of object.

However, I claim that this definition of victim as object functions as a form of victim-blaming. It is *required* by law that someone cannot have experienced their victimization as someone who had any control over the situation and, if they did, they did not perform victim in the correct way, thus discounting their ability to transcend their experience through the legal system. When individuals are sharing their story following a sexual battery, they are asked questions about what they were doing at the time of the incident. It is required that the victim not be doing anything that indicates control over the situation or they are not victims and therefore, not redeemable. This becomes problematic when the sense of control a victim has is attributed to something like why the individual was wearing certain clothes, why they were drinking, why they were out in the dark, or why they didn't offer resistance.[2]

The best way I have heard this phenomenon described was by another advocate at the UVHC, Shannon, who said that, "while victims will almost always accept some form of accountability for their part in the crime occurring, offenders will do nothing but deny any form of accountability." Being a "victim" of sexual assault, the way that it the word works in its current state, does not offer transcendence, rather it further removes the agency of the individual in question. Many people who have experience sexual battery will not use that word to describe themselves; some outright refuse. So, what are they left with in terms of making claims to their experience or seeking justice?

Victimage

Blain that victimage, "The ultimate moment of identification" in that it is the, "personification and ritual destruction of those powers that threaten the survival of a community" (2005, p.33). He explains that victimage discourse tends to separate something into "hero" and "villain," into black and white categories, where the victim seemingly plays no role other than existing. By definition, a victim cannot be a victim if they have agency (Tonn, Endress, & Diamond, 1993). Through the presentations, the UVHC separates individuals into these categories through these presentations. However, I argue that they do so at the expense of the agency of victim experiences. While the intention of the presentations is to end victim-blaming through helping presentation participants understand the experience of survivors, and the center itself works based on the empowerment model,[3] throughout the presentations,

there is a constant construction of a victim as someone who has been an "object" of a crime, perpetuating the authorization of their experience.

These versions of victimage do not address rape as something that is relational and, therefore, force a victim to account for any presence they maintained within the interaction. Them having a presence is a violation of what it means to be a victim. In this way, the accounting for their presence, or performance of self-blame, is the accepted version of victimization.

"Don't Rape"

In this analysis, I offer an interaction between me and one woman, who I will name Deborah, who offered a question in regards to what it meant to be a victim as I was describing it. The following transcript is from an employee orientation, where I was asked, in a humorous way, about the role that individuals can play in keeping themselves safe.

> **Me:** SO (.) basically the, uh, *message* that all of these things have been *sending* (.) >to, you know, women< is (.) don't GET raped (.) But, you know, *really* (.) we do NOT believe that it's, you know, someone's *job* to NOT GET RAPED. *We* believe (.) that it is *everyone's* responsibility to not rape. (.) Yes? [I call on Deborah, whose hand is raised].
>
> **Deborah:** So, you know, I know we never want to (.) um (.) *victim-blame* >or anything like that< but, like (.) doesn't the university DO anything to, you know, educate

students about how to stay SAFE? I mean, *nowadays*, you know [chuckles] you look *around* and everyone is (.) looking down at their PHONE like THIS. [fakes typing on phone while lowering her face to be right in the phone. Deborah laughs, and a few presentation participants also laugh].

This humorous comment on behalf of Deborah was an FTA, and a risky one at that. This occurred 43 minutes into the presentation, and for the 43 minutes that preceded it, I, as the presenter, had been constructing a version of victim that reinforced "victim as object." Deborah was proposing a stance that disagreed with victim as object. However, she framed it as a joke, by teasing people that are glued to their phone. Though she still referenced someone who is on their phone and victimized while they are distracted, and they became the target of the joke. When Deborah voiced this question, individuals laughed, but also nodded their heads. She was not the only person in the room who identified with the question.

Sexual Battery as a Women's Issue

Deborah asked this while I was covering information on how rape used to be seen as a women's issue, specifically using the word "women" in line two, and Discourses about victimization have traditionally placed the responsibility for ending sexual battery on women by doing things like, not wearing short skirts, not going out alone at night, or not wearing a pony tail. This way of viewing sexual battery historically led to victim-blaming questions, which is why we discount the notion of viewing violence prevention as a women's job (Katz, 2006). I agree that this should not be viewed as a women's issue for multiple reasons.

One reason deals with the rape myth that I referenced in chapter one, which is, "a widely-held belief that 'victims' have the potential to increase or decrease their risk of sexual battery based on their actions" (Gurnham, 2016). One tool that is used to measure the effectiveness of presentations such as the ones referenced in this study is the Illinios Rape Myth Acceptance Scale, which lists four different myths about rape and asks participants in a presentation to rate how much they agree with those myths before and after the presentation (Baldwin-White, Thompson & Gray, 2016). These myths include discourses that perpetuate the rape myth, where individuals rate how much they agree with certain statements that adhere to the rape myth. Posing rape prevention as a women's issue reinforces the idea that individuals can prevent rape.

Another issue with calling rape a women's issue is that it implies only one gender can be raped, when individuals of any gender identification can experience sexual battery, including men. This can be a hurdle for men who experience sexual violence and want to report. It also reinforces a gender binary that is oftentimes a hurdle in reporting when people who do not identify as cis-gendered experience sexual battery.

However, in my contributions I transcribed above, I create a version of victim that implies only women are victimized. Not only am I portraying victim as women, but I am also stating that women who are victimized have no control over their victimization, as is also required by the definition of "victim" in the Florida statutes on sexual battery. These portrayals of victim threatened Deborah by identifying her as a potential victim and potentially removing her sense of agency. Deborah's question about initiatives to teach

students about safety measures is not an unreasonable question. I have presented a major problem and then I offer very little solution, other than to not blame a survivor.

One interesting thing about Deborah's response is her distance from the potential identification as victim. First, Deborah uses the example of students as a vulnerable population. Her choice to do such reframes the portrayal of a victim as someone who is attending the university. Furthermore, she brings in the example of someone who is on their phone and is not attentive to their surroundings, bringing in examples of how someone could maintain the agency to choose whether or not they want to be on their phone and potentially not be victimized.

University and Accountability

In Deborah's question, "Doesn't the university do anything to educate students about how to stay safe?" three words, in particular, stand out: university, educate, and students. A university's purpose is to educate, and students are who the university if there to educate. She highlights, rather, that what the university is doing is presenting to employees. She acknowledges that the presentation is functioning to remove the accountability for victimization away from the university and onto any of the particular presentation participants who might encounter a student who has experienced sexual battery. However, the employees cannot be separated from the university, as the university itself is a non-human agent that cannot act without the humans who act for it.

While the presentation is meant to be the solution to the problem of sexual battery, informing individuals on why they should not rape and discussing consent, by not offering solutions for individuals to help protect themselves, they also create a norm within that room where each person is vulnerable to sexual battery. There is very specific wording used when describing techniques individuals can partake in to protect themselves, which is risk reduction, and this concept is not used at all in any of the orientations.

Risk Reduction

As I stated in the introductory chapter, violence prevention was not very well-covered in the presentations for reasons related to university resources. The main form of violence prevention covered in the presentation is bystander intervention techniques, which emphasize the role of relying on other individuals to intervene if you are unsafe. Bystander intervention techniques encourage individuals who witness someone in a potentially unsafe situation to intervene in the situation before it becomes dangerous. I agree that this technique should be taught and encouraged, however I believe that by teaching this alone, it further works to remove the agency of individuals who will be labeled victims. This technique relies on the hero-villian narrative to encourage people to step in and rescue victims (Tonn, Endress & Diamond, 1993). I propose that during these presentations, there should be some focus on risk reduction as just that: a reduction in the risk of victimization.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined a transcript from an employee orientation with a presentation participant named Deborah about victimization and their perpetuation in the UVHC presentations. I have argued that victim experiences are authorized by policies and laws about sexual battery that force someone who is claiming the identity as a victim to give up their agency. I analyzed an interaction with a woman who I named Deborah and her concern about the initiative to empower students to keep themselves safe. While I do not believe that prevention should be framed as a women's issue, I do believe that risk reduction techniques should be more encouraged and taught within these presentations.

Endnotes

[1]"Object" is the word used in the statutes by the state of Florida, where they dictate a difference between objectivity and subjectivity within an experience.

[2]It isn't required that someone offer resistance to be considered a victim, however they must prove that it was safer for them not to resist.

[3]The empowerment model is a model based on the idea that victims of crime have had their control and decision-making ability removed from them. This model encourages practitioners to empower survivors to restore their agency.

CHAPTER FIVE:

CONCLUSION

What does this Research Mean?

To summarize my analysis thus far, I have examined the discursive construction of victimization through humor in presentations at the University Victim Help Center (UVHC) and South Eastern University (SEU). In the first chapter, I introduced concepts of humor and sexual battery, as it has been discussed. I also provided a description of my site of research and my data. In the second chapter, I incorporated the concepts of face theory, politeness, FTAs to examine how humor "does power" within these presentations based on field notes taken from presentations given by an advocate named Tessa.

In the third chapter, I examined the "Consent: It's Simple as Tea" video. I analyzed the concept of metaphor in understanding, and how it relates to humor. I described the discussion of consent that this video creates. In the fourth chapter, I examined further how victim was constructed by the presentations given in the UVHC. I argued that victimization was an experience authorized by both the university and the state. In this final chapter I tie my arguments together to look at broader notions of victimization and their implications. And I offer potential changes in the praxis of education on sexual battery. First, I examine the

limitations and future directions for this research, by taking into account the limitations of the scope of my own project.

Where to Next?

Some future directions for studies on humor and sexual assault could be studies that incorporate other sites of education about the issues I have addressed in this thesis. Other potential sites of research within the UVHC for research could be other community outreach events. This study has only focused on three different orientation presentations, however, there are other trainings that are given by the UVHC and other sites of community outreach, such as tabling events.[1] Two of these orientations have been removed from the office since the collection of this data, as the UVHC has been in a transitional state of defining what the office does and does not do as a victim help center. Violence prevention is no longer a responsibility of the office.

Finally, I foresee other federally funded universities that must be VAWA compliant and other offices like the UVHC within these universities as being additional ideal research sites. It would be interesting to see the approach that these sites adopt to educating about gender-based violence. Another potential site for research could be non-profit sites in the community that focus on this issue. These sites also give presentations on gender-based violence, however they are not bound to the same laws that a university is, such as Title IX and VAWA.

Although this study has only addressed one very specific organization that is unique to one specific university, I believe it can represent larger practices that are occurring at multiple sites. In this study, I have made a lot of gendered assumptions about sexual battery that focus on experiences of cis-gendered women, without looking at experiences of other gender identifications and sexual battery. This was not meant to discount the experiences of cis-gendered men, or transgender or genderqueer individuals who have survived sexual battery, merely to narrow the focus of this research.

I also did not examine intersections of race, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religion, etc. Identity factors such as race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status are considered risk factors in the prevalence of gender-based violence, as these cultural aspects can play a role in the discourse about gender-based violence. These identity factors may also work as a barrier for reporting within certain communities. One example of this is with individuals in the LGBTQ+ community, where someone may not have talked to their family yet about their identity and does not want them to find out through them reporting a crime. Another example of this is an instance where someone in an abusive relationship might depend on their partner as the sole bread-winner and might not have the financial means to get out of that relationship.

While I examined power as something that was interactional and negotiated on a moment-to-moment basis, I did not consider broader examinations of power. Another potential future topic of research could be how these moment-to-moment power negotiations apply to a broader, macro scale of power. For the purposes of this study, I also did not

consider how cultural assumptions about different identities are embedded in the negotiation of power, or in other interactions that were analyzed. This could also be a future topic for research.

Concluding Statements

This thesis has discussed how victimization and sexual battery are addressed within a university. I began with the statistic that somewhere between a quarter and a fifth of women will experience sexual battery during college. The rise of the #MeToo movement, a movement empowering survivors of sexual misconduct to speak up and share their story, has led to an unprecedented, controversial discussion that is reconstructing how society views sexual battery and is redefining it as a whole. I have made claims in this study about views on sexual battery that can potentially authorize victim experiences and lead to victim-blaming.

I believe that a potential solution to the controversy surrounding sexual battery, be it in the form of a humorous FTA during a UVHC presentation or an angry Facebook comment on someone's #MeToo story, is a move towards a view of rape and consent that is more relational. That is, I believe that instead of defining consent as something that some either needs to provide explicitly, or obtain explicitly, one should define consent in terms of how it unfolds within an interaction within the context of a specific relationship. A common, usually snarky, response to the "Consent: It's Simple as Tea" video is "I don't ask my significant other every time explicitly whether they want consent, so does that mean I am a rapist?" I believe that the answer to that is simple: if someone isn't sure if they have consent, ask. If someone is

truly concerned about whether they are raping someone, they should engage in a dialogue until they are sure. If they don't feel comfortable engaging in this dialogue, then they also reserve the right to say "no" to sexual acts and should probably exercise that right.

The move away from Discourses that place prevention responsibility onto victims to Discourses that completely remove agency of survivors can both provide a space for victim-blaming, as I have examined in this study. There is an obvious danger in defining sexual battery and consent as relational in that it opens a space for individuals to claim confusion in the case of raping someone. While this is not a black and white issue, I believe that one solution to this that is often overlooked in these conversations, and that is more education about bodily integrity when it comes to consent. I also believe that, in addition to educating about bodily integrity, the education should incorporate more recommendations for safety measures that emphasize personal empowerment, rather than calling these measures prevention or avoidance.

I also acknowledge that in writing this thesis on how victim is defined, and by making recommendations on how it should be discussed, I too am taking part in the construction of "victim." This could be construed not as advocacy for the restoration of agency to survivors, but as a different individual making claims to the experiences of survivors of sexual battery. However, by not researching this topic, there is no solution to be found. And offering criticism in the absence of recommendations for better praxis lead the research nowhere. I could claim that my positioning as a survivor grants me authority to make claims about praxis in managing accounts of sexual battery, however, given the high prevalence of this experience

in college women, I am by no means alone in my experience. Furthermore, this claim would work against my argument that each survivor's experience with sexual assault is unique and should be treated as such.

I am not advocating for the removal of the word victim altogether, rather I am advocating for more of what is traditionally called a "victim-centered" approach to understanding experiences of sexual battery. Although my advocacy for an approach to understanding sexual battery from the standpoint of a survivor is not the first attempt at this practice, I believe that "victim-centered" approaches are in need of reformation to ensure best practice and are always going to be in need of reform, as sexual battery is a social construct that will also always be reformulating as our social world is redefined each day.

Endnotes

[1]"Tablings events" are events that the university puts together where multiple tables are set up within a given location. These tables are assigned to different organizations, so that representatives from the designated organization can set up brochures and give-away items. Tabling events are designed for attendees to gather information about multiple different organizations all at one event.

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