

# Do Heterosexual Men Misperceive a Gay Man's Friendliness as Sexual Interest? Evidence from Observers

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The question of whether heterosexual men, as observers, would perceive sexual interest in another male's friendliness as a function of knowing he is gay was experimentally investigated. Thirty-six heterosexual male undergraduate students read vignettes featuring conversational interaction between two men. Sexual orientations of the characters were manipulated, and participants rated both characters on various trait terms, including an index of sexual interest. Measures of liking for characters and of attitudes toward gay men and being gay were also administered. As predicted, a gay character was rated to be more sexually interested in and to like his heterosexual co-actor, compared to when the same character was known to be heterosexual. Attitudes toward gay men and being gay predicted liking a gay character but failed to mediate the perception of sexual interest. Results are discussed in terms of social perception processes and suggestions for further investigation are presented.

*When a straight guy meets a gay guy, right away he thinks to himself that the gay guy wants to suck his dick. I say, "Doll, don't flatter yourself."*

Scott Valentine, US actor

Misperception of sexual intent occurs when a person mistakenly thinks that another person is sexually attracted to or interested in engaging in sexual relations with him or her (Abbey, McAuslan, & Ross, 1998).

## **A Case of Misperception: She wants him!**

One reliable finding in the social psychological literature is that of males' misperception of females' friendliness as sexual interest (Abbey, 1982, 1988; Abbey, McAuslan, & Ross, 1998; Bondurant & Donat, 1999; Johnson, Stockdale

& Saal, 1991; Saal, Johnson & Weber, 1989; Shotland, 1988). In various laboratory and field settings, including the workplace and the academe, men have been found to misperceive a woman's friendly behavior as seductive, whether as actors in a heterosexual dyadic conversation or as observers watching such an interaction. This finding has been significant so much so that males' misperception of women's friendliness as sexual interest has been identified to be an important component of acquaintance rape and sexual harassment (Abbey, 1991; Abbey, McAuslan, & Ross, 1998; Berkowitz, 1992; Stockdale, 1993).

### **A Queer Critique: Which men are misperceiving women?**

Do all kinds of men tend to see sexual intent in a friendly woman's behaviors? Because the studies on the misperception of women's friendliness as sexual interest have focused only on heterosexual men (data from non-heterosexual men are excluded from analysis, e.g., Abbey, McAuslan, & Ross, 1998), it cannot be concluded that the misperception applies to the non-heterosexual male population. Arguably, sexual orientation may be a mediating variable in this phenomenon, since males who are not sexually attracted to females should, by definition, be less inclined to perceive a female target as a potential sexual partner and thus may less likely think of her behavior in terms of sexual intent. Whether this is true or not remains to be investigated.

### **Enter Sexual Orientation: Beyond heterosexist concerns**

Momentarily leaving behind research that renders gay men invisible, we move on to an area of concern more mindful of the experiences of both heterosexual and gay individuals: interactions across sexual orientation.

Anecdotal reports from gay men suggest a phenomenon not dissimilar to males misperceiving females—that heterosexual males apparently tend to perceive gay men's friendliness as sexual interest. That is, upon meeting a gay man, a heterosexual man attributes what may be construed in any other kind of interaction as friendliness to a form of sexual interest: that the gay man is apparently attracted to him sexually.

Admittedly, it is not unheard of for a gay man to find himself sexually attracted to a male who happens to be heterosexual (Holmes, 1993). Consequently, we may identify at least two possibilities that could lead to a heterosexual man's perception of a gay man's friendliness as indicative of sexual interest:

- 1) true sexual interest exists and is communicated by the gay man; or
- 2) sexual interest is not in reality present but is perceived by the heterosexual man and, in effect, exists only “in his mind.”

Apparently, one aspect of social stereotypes held by heterosexuals of gay and lesbian individuals is that they are hypersexual, “promiscuous,” and unequivocally attracted to *all* members of the same sex, including non-gay people (Fahy, 1995; Madon, 1997). Though it has been argued, for example, that gay men in general form the most sociosexual group compared to heterosexuals and lesbians (e.g., LeVay, 1996), there is no evidence to validate the claim that all lesbian and gay individuals are attracted indiscriminately to people of the same sex. The literature on interpersonal attraction has not identified specific normal populations who become unequivocally attracted to entire categories of persons and to all members of such categories (Smith & Mackie, 2000). After all, sex (or gender, if one prefers) is but one social category an individual may fall under. As one popular rebuff within the gay and lesbian community goes, heterosexual men themselves are not attracted to every woman, regardless of age, physical appearance, etc., that they encounter.

### **“Homophobia:” Prejudicial attitudes of heterosexuals**

Research on heterosexuals’ attitudes toward lesbians and gay men have consistently demonstrated forms of bias. For example, heterosexuals are more likely to think that unattractive males and females are gay than heterosexual compared to their attractive counterparts (Dunkie & Francis, 1996). They are also more likely to place blame on a person with AIDS for his situation if they think he is gay (Schellenberg & Bem, 1998). Heterosexuals, in addition, perceive bisexuals as less likely to be monogamous and more likely to give a sexually transmitted disease to a partner (Spalding & Peplau, 1997). Even in the perception of romantic relationships, a heterosexist bias been found: gay and lesbian couples are perceived to have less satisfaction and be less in love than heterosexual couples (Testa, Kinder, & Ironson, 1987).

In addition, US college students have been found to show favoritism in adjective ratings toward heterosexual male targets even when provided with no justification for such a bias, whereas no bias was demonstrated toward gay male targets, even when justification was provided (Aberson, Swan & Emerson, 1999). Liking for gay male targets by heterosexual male undergraduates is attenuated when group membership in terms of sexual orientation is salient (Abrams, Carter & Hogg, 1989). Also, gender differences in bias have been consistently demonstrated: heterosexual men have more

negative attitudes toward gay men and lesbians compared to heterosexual women (Kite, 1998; Kite & Whitley, 1996; LaMar & Kite, 1998; Louderback & Whitley, 1997).

Anti-gay bias has been shown to translate into discriminatory behavior; for example, shoppers were less likely to help a person wearing a pro-gay t-shirt compared to an unmarked t-shirt even when socially acceptable reasons for asking for help were presented (Gray, Russell & Blockley, 1991).

These biases heterosexual people have against gays and lesbians have been traditionally termed “homophobia,” originally conceptualized as a fear of gay men, lesbians, and their sexualities (Haaga, 1991). More recently, however, there has been a move to reframe the “homophobia” construct as a form of prejudicial attitudes (Haddock, Zanna & Esses, 1993; Logan, 1997). The Task Force on Non-Heterosexist Research, convened in 1985 by the American Psychological Association Board for Social and Ethical Responsibility in Psychology (APA BSERP), has advocated, for instance, against the use of the term “homophobia” because of its implications that prejudice against gay men and lesbians is a form of psychopathology and because of its focus on the individual rather than on the larger cultural context (American Psychological Association Committee on Lesbian and Gay Concerns, 1991). Many psychologists now refer to what was once labeled “homophobia” variously as anti-gay prejudice, anti-homosexual prejudice, homo-prejudice, or heterosexism (on the individual and group level). The general term “heterosexism” is also used to refer to the ideological system that denies, denigrates, or stigmatizes same-sex sexual behaviors and lesbian, gay, and bisexual identities, relationships, and communities (Herek, Kimmel, Amaro & Melton, 1991; Fahy, 1995).

### **Problem: Do they or do they?**

The question remains: Do heterosexual males misperceive a gay man’s friendliness as sexual interest? And are negative attitudes toward gay men and being gay associated with any such misperception? To investigate these questions, a theoretical manipulation of sexual orientation was set up. From the perspective of observers considering a male-male dyadic interaction, three vignettes featuring two male characters were constructed, all identical to one another in every respect—except that in one, both characters were heterosexual, and in the other two, one was heterosexual and the other, gay.

Based on previous findings of males misperceiving females’ friendliness as sexual interest and on anecdotal reports from gay men, it was predicted that heterosexual male subjects, as observers of an interaction between two

men, would perceive an actor to be more sexually interested in the co-actor, given the knowledge that the actor is gay, compared to subjects who know him to be heterosexual. Furthermore, heterosexual males with more negative attitudes toward gay men and being gay were predicted to exhibit greater misperception than their less prejudiced counterparts.

## METHOD

### Design

The experiment was built upon a split-block factorial design, with Story (Heterosexual-Heterosexual vs. Heterosexual-Gay vs. Gay-Heterosexual) as a between-groups variable and Character (Brian vs. Michael) as a within-groups variable. In this mixed design, participants were randomly assigned to one of the three story conditions and then asked to rate both characters Brian and Michael on the dependent measures. A third variable, attitudes towards gay men and being gay (“homophobia”), served as a covariate.

<b>STORY</b>	<b>BRIAN</b>	<b>MICHAEL</b>
<b>1</b>	Heterosexual	Heterosexual
<b>2</b>	Heterosexual	Gay
<b>3</b>	Gay	Heterosexual

### Participants

A total of 42 male undergraduate UP Diliman students participated in the study in fulfillment of research participation requirements in introductory psychology. Data from 8 participants, who were of non-heterosexual sexual orientations, were excluded from the analysis. The remaining sample was composed of 36 heterosexual males, 12 per story condition, with ages ranging from 17 to 23.

### Materials

Three original vignettes about two male UP students named Michael and Brian meeting each other for the first time were developed. Each vignette featured an experimental manipulation of the characters' sexual orientations: in Story 1, Brian and Michael both made reference to their ex-girlfriends. In Story 2, Michael referred to an ex-boyfriend, while Brian mentioned an ex-

girlfriend. And in Story 3, Brian made mention of an ex-boyfriend, Michael of an ex-girlfriend. Apart from this one difference, participants read the same vignettes, featuring identical descriptions, dialogues, and storylines. Vignettes were in English and contained approximately 660 words each. Flesch Reading Ease score was 83 on a 100-point scale (higher scores indicating greater readability), and Flesch-Kincaid reading Level was 3.3, implying that individuals of at least fourth grade reading ability (based on the US educational system) are expected to comprehend such a text.

## Measures

*Heterosexuality.* Four yes/no and two Likert-scaled items were formulated and included in a premanipulation questionnaire as behavior and attraction indicators of sexual orientation (Appendix A). The following criteria were employed to identify heterosexual subjects: Participants who reported romantic love for another male at some point in their lives were automatically classified as non-heterosexual, as well as those who did not indicate exclusive sexual attraction to women. Factor analysis of this sexual orientation measure using Varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization revealed two components that accounted for 59.65% of the variance: Heterosexual Experience and Same-sex Orientation.

*Attitudes toward gay men and being gay.* Participants were administered the short form of the Attitudes Toward Gay Men scale Revised (Herek, 1998) embedded within a general gender and relationships attitude questionnaire. For this five-item measure, a 5-point Likert-type scaling (*strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree*) was employed. Mean score was 14.92, with a standard deviation of 4.09. A Shapiro-Wilk test of normality indicated that the scores were somewhat normally distributed,  $c^2(36) = 0.936$ ,  $p > 0.057$ . Cronbach's alpha for the ATG-R-S5 was 0.8343.

*Dependent measures.* After reading the vignettes, participants completed a questionnaire asking them to evaluate the quality of the interaction of the two characters and their reactions to each of them. Characters were rated on trait terms using a 5-point scale (*very much, much, moderately, little, and not at all*) based on how participants thought each was "trying to behave" (because according to the hypothesis it is the intentions that are misjudged). Key trait terms for the measure of perceived sexual interest were *flirtatious, lustful, promiscuous, and sexually preoccupied*. These four items demonstrated significant intercorrelations, from  $r(72) = 0.385$  to  $0.586$ , all  $p$ 's  $< 0.001$ , and were summed to form an Index of Perceived Sexual Interest. Cronbach's alpha for this index was 0.7716. The second dependent measure, liking for a

character, was assessed using two items: how likeable the actor was and how much the observer would like to get to know him better, again using the previous 5-point scaling. These two items were significantly correlated,  $r(72) = 0.722$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , and were combined to form an Index of Liking, with Cronbach's alpha = 0.8377. Remaining relevant measures found in the questionnaire were questions asking participants to estimate how much one character liked the other and vice versa, again on 5-point scales.

*Manipulation check.* Participants were asked to recall the sexual orientations of the two actors in their vignette using a multiple-choice item (*Brian gay, Michael heterosexual, Brian heterosexual, Michael gay, Brian and Michael both heterosexual, or Brian and Michael both gay*) that was included part of the "recall of story" section of the post-manipulation questionnaire.

## **Procedure**

A male experimenter (the same all throughout the study) told participants that the study was concerned about "male memory." They were then administered the pre-manipulation questionnaire which contained the sexual orientation check and the ATG-R-S5. Afterward, they completed ostensibly related memory tasks. Finally, participants were given five minutes to read the vignette, after which they completed a post-manipulation questionnaire containing a story recall section (including the manipulation check) and the dependent measures. Debriefing and distribution of participation credit took place shortly.

## **Ethical considerations**

All participants were informed prior to any data collection or experimental manipulation that they would be performing simple memory tasks, reading vignettes, and answering various questionnaires. Right to withdraw was explicitly communicated. Confidentiality was assured, and no names or personal identifiers were obtained from participants. Full debriefing as to the exact nature of the experiment, including the use of a cover story, immediately followed data collection.

## RESULTS

### Manipulation check

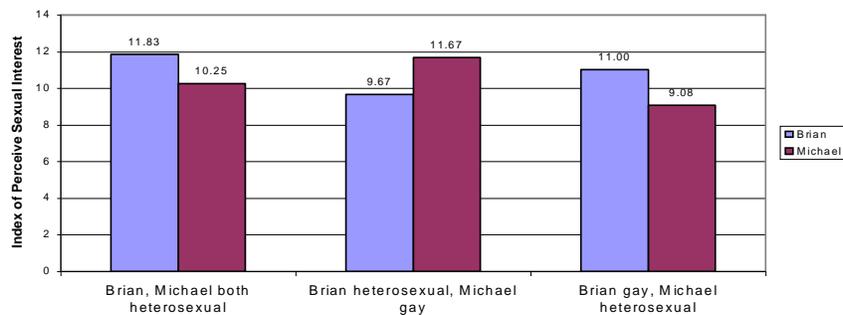
Thirty-five of the 36 participants (97.22%) passed the manipulation check by indicating a character–sexual orientation configuration that correctly corresponded to their randomly assigned condition. A goodness-of-fit test indicated the experimental manipulation of characters’ sexual orientations was indeed strong enough to be accurately noted by participants,  $\chi^2(2) = 0.167, p > 0.92$ . Analyses on the dependent measures conducted with the one participant excluded did not differ markedly from the results of using the entire 36 cases, so the analyses that follow involve the entire sample of  $n = 36$  heterosexual males.

### Dependent measures

Dependent variables were analyzed using a  $3 \times 2$  analysis of covariance with Story (1 vs. 2 vs. 3) as the between-subjects factor, Character (Brian vs. Michael) as the within-subjects factor, and ATG-R-S5 scores as covariate.

*Perception of sexual interest.* No main effects on scores on the Index of Sexual Interest were significant, indicating that the three vignettes as well as the two characters were indeed equivalent to one another on level of discernible sexual interest. The Story-Character interaction, as predicted, was significant,  $F(2, 32) = 6.626, p < 0.005 (h^2 = 0.281)$ . According to post-hoc comparisons of Story-Character means using Scheffé tests within stories, significant differences existed for Story 2 (Brian heterosexual, Michael gay),  $F_S = 5.666, p < 0.023$ , and for Story 3 (Brian gay, Michael heterosexual),  $F_S = 5.205, p < 0.029$ . That is, when a character—whether Brian or Michael—was gay, he was perceived to be display more sexual interest than his

Figure 1. Perceptions of Sexual Interest



heterosexual co-actor. The difference in perceived sexual interest of actors in Story 1, where both characters are heterosexual, was not significant,  $F_s = 3.549$ ,  $p > 0.069$ .

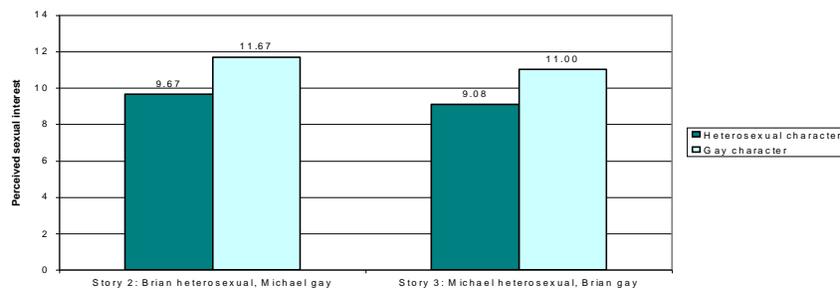
Also, contrary to hypothesis, attitudes to gay men and being gay was not significantly related to perceiving sexual interest in the characters,  $F(1, 32) = 1.801$ ,  $p > 0.189$ . No significant Character-Attitude interaction was observed either,  $F(1, 32) = 0.083$ ,  $p > 0.775$ . Participants, regardless of how negatively or positively they evaluated gay men and being gay, found a character to show greater sexual interest if they knew him to be gay.

To investigate further the differential perceptions of sexual interest in the characters as a function of their being gay or heterosexual, Character Sexual Orientation was analyzed as a within-subjects factor using a  $2 \times 2$  analysis of variance (excluding cases from Story 1, which feature only heterosexual characters). A main effect for Character Sexual Orientation was found,  $F(1, 22) = 10.833$ ,  $p < 0.003$  ( $h^2 = 0.33$ ). The gay character, regardless of whether it was Brian or Michael, was rated as more sexually interested than his heterosexual counterpart. No other significant effects were found.

Attitudes toward gay men were not significantly correlated with perceptions of sexual interest in the gay character,  $r(24) = -0.078$ ,  $p > 0.359$ , one-tailed, or in the heterosexual character,  $r(24) = -0.029$ ,  $p > 0.447$ , one-tailed.

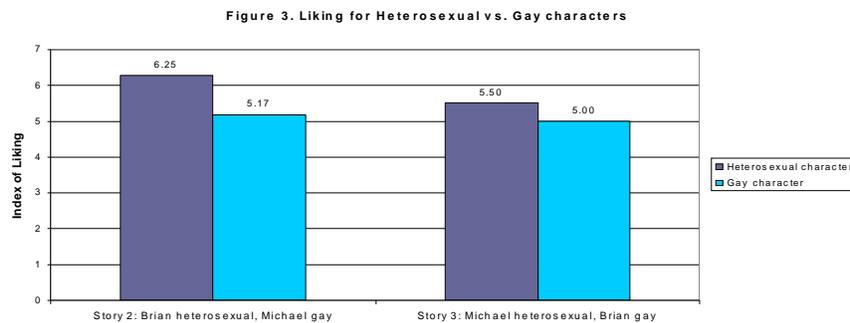
*Liking.* No main effects for Story or for Character were found, indicating that the three vignettes and the two characters did not significantly differ in likeability. The Story-Character interaction was marginally significant,  $F(2, 32) = 3.245$ ,  $p > 0.052$  ( $h^2 = 0.169$ ), and the attitudes toward gay men covariate had significant effects on liking as well,  $F(1, 32) = 13.644$ ,  $p < 0.001$  ( $h^2 = 0.299$ ). Regression analysis showed that ATG-R-S5 scores predicted liking, across vignettes, for the character Brian,  $F(1, 35) = 10.693$ ,  $p < 0.002$

Figure 2. Perceived Sexual Interest in Heterosexual vs. Gay Characters



( $b = 0.489$ ,  $R^2 = 0.217$ ), and for the character Michael,  $F(1, 35) = 6.496$ ,  $p < 0.015$  ( $b = 0.401$ ,  $R^2 = 0.136$ ). Thus, it appeared that heterosexual males with positive attitudes toward gay men and being gay had a tendency to like a male other, regardless of his sexual orientation.

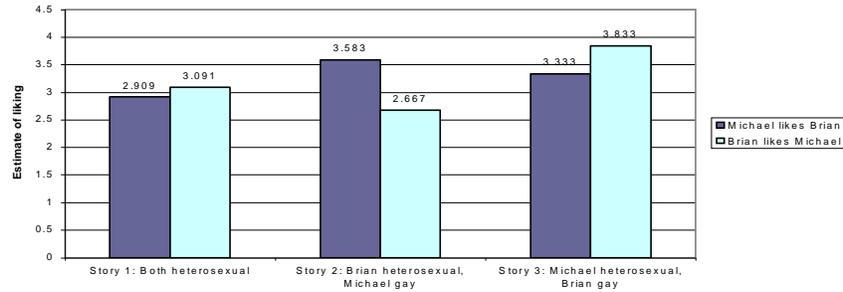
However, when ratings were collapsed across sexual orientation and cases from Story 1 were excluded to isolate effects for instances of perceiving interaction across sexual orientation, a clearer picture became apparent. A significant main effect for Character Sexual Orientation emerged,  $F(1, 21) = 7.172$ ,  $p < 0.014$  ( $h^2 = 0.255$ ), as well as for a Character Sexual Orientation–Attitude interaction,  $F(1, 21) = 4.641$ ,  $p < 0.043$  ( $h^2 = 0.181$ ). Participants liked a character, whether Brian or Michael, who was heterosexual more than when he was gay.



Regression analysis indicated that ATG-R-S5 scores were significantly correlated only to ratings of liking for a gay character,  $r(24) = 0.491$ ,  $p < 0.007$ , one-tailed, but not for a heterosexual character,  $r(24) = 0.127$ ,  $p > 0.277$ , one-tailed. Positive attitudes toward gay men and being gay predicted liking the character who was gay,  $F(1, 23) = 6.976$ ,  $p < 0.015$  ( $b = 0.491$ ,  $R^2 = 0.241$ ), but no similar relationship existed for the character who was heterosexual. No other effects were statistically significant.

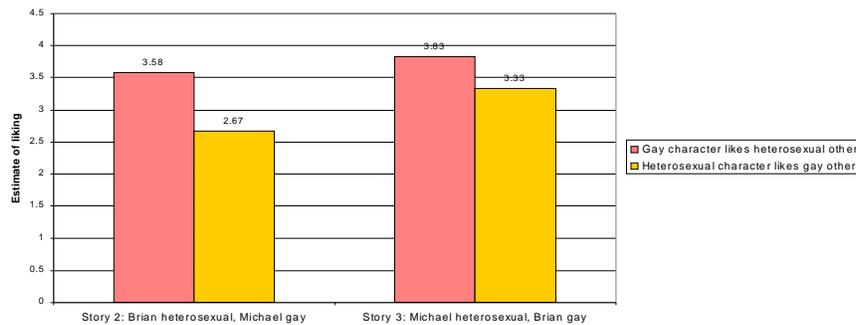
*Characters' liking for co-actors.* Further evidence for the misperception of sexual interest comes from how much participants they thought each character liked the other and vice versa. As in the perceived sexual interest variable, no significant main effects for Story, Direction of Liking, or Attitude were found, and only the Story-Direction of Liking interaction was significant,  $F(2, 31) = 5.571$ ,  $p < 0.009$  ( $h^2 = 0.264$ ). In the vignettes that featured one gay and one heterosexual character, the gay character was consistently thought to like the heterosexual more than vice versa.

Figure 4. Characters' perceived liking for one another



When Direction of Liking was analyzed as a within-subjects factor for the conditions that featured interaction between a heterosexual and a gay character, the difference in estimates of characters' liking for each other became particularly apparent. The gay character, whether he was Brian or Michael, was perceived to like his co-actor more than the heterosexual character liked him,  $F(1, 22) = 8.855$ ,  $p < 0.007$  ( $h^2 = 0.287$ ). No other main or interaction effects were significant.

Figure 5. Characters' perceived liking for the other



Attitudes toward gay men and being gay were not significantly related to perceiving the gay character as liking his heterosexual co-actor,  $r(24) = 0.096$ ,  $p > 0.328$ , one-tailed, nor to the reverse,  $r(24) = 0.329$ ,  $p > 0.058$ , one-tailed.

## DISCUSSION

Findings from the experiment supported the main hypothesis: Heterosexual men, as observers, perceived an actor's friendliness towards a male co-actor as sexual interest, if they thought he was gay. The gay character was rated as being more sexually interested than his heterosexual counterpart across the two stories, while no such perception existed when the same two characters were thought to be both heterosexual.

Gay characters were also judged to like their heterosexual co-actors more than the heterosexual characters liked them. Thus, heterosexual men demonstrated perceiving sexual interest in a target as a function of knowing he is gay, even though there was no veridical evidence to support such judgments.

Also, contrary to what was hypothesized, attitudes toward gay men and being gay did not mediate the misperception. It appeared that the misperception occurred whether the perceiver was "homophobic" or not, a finding that merits further investigation. Because scores on the attitude measure approached normality only marginally, the result could be an artifact of measurement inadequacy or even of insufficient sample size.

Attitudes toward gay men, however, predicted liking for the character who was gay, indicating that the ATG-R-S5 indeed tapped effectively into evaluations of gay men and being gay, consequently demonstrating construct validity, since liking representative members of a group is a logical consequence of positive attitudes toward that group (Smith & Mackie, 2000).

### **Beyond arrogance**

Why did heterosexual men, regardless of their attitudes toward gay men and being gay, misperceive a gay man's friendliness as sexual interest? One explanation comes from the research on males' misperception of women's friendliness—that men in general are simply likely to perceive the world in sexual terms and tend to make more sexual judgments (Abbey, 1982). For example, men across the lifespan have been found to score higher on measures of sexual interest, frequency of sexual arousal, and sexual enjoyment (Murstein & Tuerkheimer, 1998). It could very well be that males in general are indeed more oriented sexually, whether because of biological predispositions or socialization and cultural factors, or interactions of those forces (Baldwin & Baldwin, 1997). A possible test of this argument would be to conduct similar experiments on both men *and* women, heterosexual and gay/lesbian. If this claim were true, then we would expect men, whether

heterosexual or gay, to misperceive the gay character's friendliness as sexual interest, while women should "know" friendliness when they see it.

Such a dispositional explanation may appear to be parsimonious, but closer examination of its assumptions may reveal it to be problematic. For example, such a model would have to account for the differences in socialization of heterosexual and gay men, not to mention any potential biological factors, as more and more evidence is coming in to support the idea of physiological, hormonal, and genetic bases of sexual orientation (LeVay, 1996).

A more social psychological explanation would be in terms of stereotypes and how they guide social perception (and misperception). It was noted earlier that one aspect of stereotypes of gay men and lesbians was that they are of extremely unrestricted sociosexual orientations. Given that stereotypes may be activated automatically (Smith & Mackie, 2000), it would not be surprising that participants judged the gay character exhibiting sexual interest. This explanation, of course, presupposes that Filipino social stereotypes of gay men indeed contain the sociosexual label. Also, this line of reasoning, that stereotyping causes the misperception, would have to address the lack of a significant correlation between misjudgment and attitudes toward gay men and being gay, given that stereotypes are one component of these attitudes (LaMar & Kite, 1998). Future investigations could look into the relationship between stereotype adherence and misperception to test this explanation.

In addition, intergroup perception may be at work in the heterosexual men's misperceptions, leading to biases in favor of the in-group member (i.e., the heterosexual target). In-group bias easily explains why heterosexual observers expressed more liking for the heterosexual actor than for the gay actor. Also, it could be argued that being the object of another person's sexual interest is generally a positive experience and that this condition was bestowed upon the in-group member. Thus the finding that heterosexual subjects judged the heterosexual actor to be liked by the gay actor more than the other way around is also attributable to in-group bias: the character is heterosexual, therefore he is automatically more likeable, by both co-actor and observer.

Also, considering that the experiment involved heterosexual males as observers, group-serving attributional biases may have arisen. Any behavior in the heterosexual actor remotely resembling sexual interest may have been attributed to friendliness or not even considered sexually motivated (since after all, he was heterosexual and the co-actor was not female). On the other hand, the same behavior in the gay actor was judged sexual, stable and internal, which would justify him being rated as such on trait terms.

Future investigation of the problem, including the use of more complete designs, more participants (possibly from various genders and sexual orientations), different targets (e.g., female-female dyadic interaction), and a subject-as-actors paradigm rather than observers, will shed further light into the question of heterosexual men's misperceptions of a gay man's friendliness as sexual interest.

### **On a somber note**

In October 1998, a 21-year old student from the University of Wisconsin was lured from a bar in Laramie, Wyoming by two heterosexual men who took him on a ride on their pickup. The two men later beat him brutally, fracturing his skull with a pistol, tying him to a barbed-wire fence, and leaving him there unconscious in sub-zero temperature. He was found after 18 hours. He died in the hospital a few days later, never to regain consciousness. His name was Matthew Shepard.

During their murder trial, the two heterosexual men claimed that Matthew Shepard had come on to them at the bar (Lopez, 1998; Rodriguez, 1998). Whether any sexual advances were made or not cannot be known for sure. However, in light of preliminary experimental evidence that heterosexual men may see sexual interest in the friendliness of another man as a function of knowing him to be gay, actual advances seem unnecessary.

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### Appendix A: Heterosexuality measure

1. I am currently in a romantic relationship with a woman\*
2. I have had at least one girlfriend\*
3. I've fallen in love with another man at some point in my life\*
4. I have had experience courting women\*
5. I feel sexually drawn to other men\*\*
6. I find women sexually attractive\*\*

\* yes/no response format

\*\* 5-point scale (*strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree*)

Participants who responded “yes” to Item 3 were automatically considered non-heterosexual, likewise those who responded “undecided,” “agree” or “strongly agree” to Item 5, or “undecided,” “disagree,” or “strongly disagree” to Item 6.

A total of eight participants were excluded from analysis. Two responded “yes” to Item 3. One responded “agree” to Item 5, and two were “undecided.” Another participant was “undecided” in Item 6. One participant did not answer Item 3 and changed his response to Item 5 from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” Finally, the last of the eight indicated strong disagreement to Items 5 and 6, as well as negative responses to Items 1 to 4.

### Appendix B: Attitudes Toward Gay Men Scale Revised (ATG-R-S5)

1. I think male homosexuals are disgusting.
2. Male homosexuality is a perversion.
3. Male homosexuality is a natural expression of sexuality in men.
4. Sex between men is just plain wrong.
5. Male homosexuality is merely a different kind of lifestyle that should not be condemned.

Responses were made on a 5-point scale (*strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree*). Items 3 and 5 are reverse-scored.

## Appendix C: Vignettes

### *Story 1 (Brian and Michael both heterosexual)*

One Wednesday afternoon, two Psych 101 students were waiting outside PHAn 313–315 for an experiment they had signed up for. Both of them had been joining various experiments that day since the early morning.

Finally, the experimenter came out and greeted them. She asked if the two already knew each other.

“No, not really,” said Brian. Michael, the other student, shook his head.

The experimenter told the two that the study was about how paired individuals handle persuasion. She explained that before they could begin with the actual experiment, which would involve watching a videotaped speech, the two of them were required to become acquainted. The experimenter handed them a sheet of paper containing four ice-breaker questions they were supposed to discuss with one another. She said they could take as long as they needed; they were just supposed to call her when they were done. Then she left the two men so they could talk in private.

Michael and Brian sat down and got to work.

“My name is Michael,” said the first, extending his hand. “Mike.”

“I’m Brian,” replied the other, shaking Michael’s hand. “Let’s start so we can get this over with. What’s the first question?”

“How old are you?”

“I’m 20,” answered Brian. “You?”

“Same. Just turned 20 last month,” said Michael.

“Belated. Leo?” Brian asked.

“No,” said Michael. “Virgo.”

“Ah, the virgin?” asked Brian with a little smile.

“Supposedly,” Michael replied, matching Brian’s smile. “But you’ll have to ask my ex about that.”

“Why, what will she say?”

“Nah, never mind. She’s long gone now anyway. Back to this.” Michael looked at the question sheet. “The second question is ‘What sort of music do you listen to?’”

“Well, mostly rock. REM. U2. That sort of thing,” Brian replied. “You?”

“I like Chemical Brothers and Groove Armada.”

Brian thought for a while. “Didn’t they do the theme song from *Sex and the City?*”

Michael smiled. “Well, they have a version. It’s in the soundtrack.”

“Yeah, I’ve been thinking of buying a copy,” Brian said, scratching his chin. “Anyway, the next question is ‘Do you play any sports?’ Do you?”

“Yup, table tennis. I also run, here at the Acad Oval whenever I can. How about you?” asked Michael.

“I swim laps,” said Brian.

“Breast stroke?” Michael smiled.

“He he. Freestyle, actually. But I do a pretty good breast stroke too.”

“We’re still talking about swimming, right?”

“We are?” joked Brian. “You’ll have to ask *myex* about that.

“Why, what will she say?”

“I was kidding. Seriously though, I like swimming. And volleyball, especially beach volleyball.”

“Cool.” Michael glanced at the paper. “The last question we have to ask each other is ‘Do you approve of cohabitation?’ I guess she means living in.”

“Well,” started Brian. “To tell you the truth, I lived in for a while with my ex-girlfriend.”

“Really?”

“Yeah, just for a few months, to try it out. Didn’t really work out, but I have no regrets. Learning experience, I guess.”

“Would you do it again?” asked Michael.

“Sure, if I meet the right girl. What about you? You and your girlfriend..?”

Michael shook his head. “No, we never reached that stage. Although I was playing with the idea for a while. But I think she wasn’t ready for that step. And I don’t think our parents would’ve been too happy.”

Brian nodded sympathetically. “Yeah, parents can be a factor. Anyway, is that all the questions?”

“Yup,” said Michael. “We can call her in.”

Brian and Michael then called the experimenter for the experiment proper. Later, after they had finished with everything, the two students left the room.

“I’m kind of thirsty. Want to get a Coke at CASAA, Mike?” asked Brian.

“Sure! My treat, okay?” said Michael.

“Uh, why not? Who am I to turn down a free drink?” said Brian with a smile as the two of them headed down the stairs of PHAn.

*Story 2 (Brian heterosexual, Michael gay)*

One Wednesday afternoon, two Psych 101 students were waiting outside PHAn 313–315 for an experiment they had signed up for. Both of them had been joining various experiments that day since the early morning.

Finally, the experimenter came out and greeted them. She asked if the two already knew each other.

“No, not really,” said Brian. Michael, the other student, shook his head.

The experimenter told the two that the study was about how paired individuals handle persuasion. She explained that before they could begin with the actual experiment, which would involve watching a videotaped speech, the two of them were required to become acquainted. The experimenter handed them a sheet of paper containing four ice-breaker questions they were supposed to discuss with one another. She said they could take as long as they needed; they were just supposed to call her when they were done. Then she left the two men so they could talk in private.

Michael and Brian sat down and got to work.

“My name is Michael,” said the first, extending his hand. “Mike.”

“I’m Brian,” replied the other, shaking Michael’s hand. “Let’s start so we can get this over with. What’s the first question?”

“How old are you?”

“I’m 20,” answered Brian. “You?”

“Same. Just turned 20 last month,” said Michael.

“Belated. Leo?” Brian asked.

“No,” said Michael. “Virgo.”

“Ah, the virgin?” asked Brian with a little smile.

“Supposedly,” Michael replied, matching Brian’s smile. “But you’ll have to ask my ex about that.”

“Why, what will she say?”

“Uh, actually... it’s a *he*. His name was Jun. I don’t really go for girls, if you know what I mean. I like guys,” explained Michael.

“Oh.”

“Anyway, never mind. He’s long gone now anyway. Back to this.” Michael looked at the question sheet. “The second question is ‘What sort of music do you listen to?’”

“Well, mostly rock. REM. U2. That sort of thing,” Brian replied. “You?”

“I like Chemical Brothers and Groove Armada.”

Brian thought for a while. “Didn’t they do the theme song from *Sex and the City*?”

Michael smiled. “Well, they have a version. It’s in the soundtrack.”

“Yeah, I’ve been thinking of buying a copy,” Brian said, scratching his chin. “Anyway, the next question is ‘Do you play any sports?’ Do you?”

“Yup, table tennis. I also run, here at the Acad Oval whenever I can. How about you?” asked Michael.

“I swim laps,” said Brian.

“Breast stroke?” Michael smiled.

“He he. Freestyle, actually. But I do a pretty good breast stroke too.”

“We’re still talking about swimming, right?”

“We are?” joked Brian. “Seriously though, I like swimming. And volleyball, especially beach volleyball.”

“Cool.” Michael glanced at the paper. “The last question we have to ask each other is ‘Do you approve of cohabitation?’ I guess she means living in.”

“Well,” started Brian. “To tell you the truth, I lived in for a while with my ex-girlfriend.”

“Really?”

“Yeah, just for a few months, to try it out. Didn’t really work out, but I have no regrets. Learning experience, I guess.”

“Would you do it again?” asked Michael.

“Sure, if I meet the right girl. What about you? You and your, uh, boyfriend..?”

Michael shook his head. “No, we never reached that stage. Although I was playing with the idea for a while. But I think he wasn’t ready for that step. And I don’t think our parents would’ve been too happy.”

Brian nodded sympathetically. “Yeah, parents can be a factor. Anyway, is that all the questions?”

“Yup,” said Michael. “We can call her in.”

Brian and Michael then called the experimenter for the experiment proper. Later, after they had finished with everything, the two students left the room.

“I’m kind of thirsty. Want to get a Coke at CASAA, Mike?” asked Brian.

“Sure! My treat, okay?” said Michael.

“Uh, why not? Who am I to turn down a free drink?” said Brian with a smile as the two of them headed down the stairs of PHAn.

*Story 3 (Brian gay, Michael heterosexual)*

One Wednesday afternoon, two Psych 101 students were waiting outside PHAn 313–315 for an experiment they had signed up for. Both of them had been joining various experiments that day since the early morning.

Finally, the experimenter came out and greeted them. She asked if the two already knew each other.

“No, not really,” said Brian. Michael, the other student, shook his head.

The experimenter told the two that the study was about how paired individuals handle persuasion. She explained that before they could begin with the actual experiment, which would involve watching a videotaped speech, the two of them were required to become acquainted. The experimenter handed them a sheet of paper containing four ice-breaker questions they were supposed to discuss with one another. She said they could take as long as they needed; they were just supposed to call her when they were done. Then she left the two men so they could talk in private.

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“I’m Brian,” replied the other, shaking Michael’s hand. “Let’s start so we can get this over with. What’s the first question?”

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“I’m 20,” answered Brian. “You?”

“Same. Just turned 20 last month,” said Michael.

“Belated. Leo?” Brian asked.

“No,” said Michael. “Virgo.”

“Ah, the virgin?” asked Brian with a little smile.

“Supposedly,” Michael replied, matching Brian’s smile. “But you’ll have to ask my ex about that.”

“Why, what will she say?”

“Nah, never mind. She’s long gone now anyway.”

“Kind of like mine,” remarked Brian.

“What would she say?” asked Michael.

“Uh, actually... it’s a ~~he~~ His name was Jun. I don’t really go for girls, if you know what I mean. I like guys,” explained Brian.

“Oh.”

“But moving on...”

“Yeah, back to this.” Michael looked at the question sheet. “The second question is ‘What sort of music do you listen to?’”

“Well, mostly rock. REM. U2. That sort of thing,” Brian replied. “You?”

“I like Chemical Brothers and Groove Armada.”

Brian thought for a while. “Didn’t they do the theme song from *Sex and the City*?”

Michael smiled. “Well, they have a version. It’s in the soundtrack.”

“Yeah, I’ve been thinking of buying a copy,” Brian said, scratching his chin. “Anyway, the next question is ‘Do you play any sports?’ Do you?”

“Yup, table tennis. I also run, here at the Acad Oval whenever I can. How about you?” asked Michael.

“I swim laps,” said Brian.

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“We are?” joked Brian. “Seriously though, I like swimming. And volleyball, especially beach volleyball.”

“Cool.” Michael glanced at the paper. “The last question we have to ask each other is ‘Do you approve of cohabitation?’ I guess she means living in.”

“Well,” started Brian. “To tell you the truth, I lived in for a while with my ex-boyfriend.”

“Really?”

“Yeah, just for a few months, to try it out. Didn’t really work out, but I have no regrets. Learning experience, I guess.”

“Would you do it again?” asked Michael.

“Sure, if I meet the right guy. What about you? You and your girlfriend..?”

Michael shook his head. “No, we never reached that stage. Although I was playing with the idea for a while. But I think she wasn’t ready for that step. And I don’t think our parents would’ve been too happy.”

Brian nodded sympathetically. “Yeah, parents can be a factor. Anyway, is that all the questions?”

“Yup,” said Michael. “We can call her in.”

Brian and Michael then called the experimenter for the experiment proper. Later, after they had finished with everything, the two students left the room.

“I’m kind of thirsty. Want to get a Coke at CASAA, Mike?” asked Brian.

“Sure! My treat, okay?” said Michael.

“Uh, why not? Who am I to turn down a free drink?” said Brian with a smile as the two of them headed down the stairs of PHAn.