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# Media Influence on Expectations of Partners in Intimate Relationships

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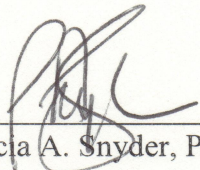
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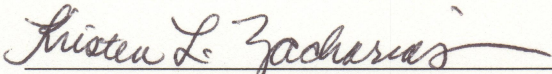
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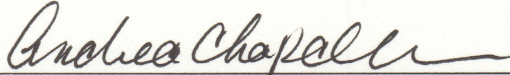
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## Abstract

In the present study the relationship between television viewing and harmful or incorrect beliefs regarding marriage was examined. The participants were 93 college students who filled out a series of questionnaires including a Television Questionnaire, the Romantic Beliefs Scale, the Ambivalent Sexism Scale, and a Marriage Myth Quiz. Significant positive correlations were found between the amount of television the students watched and the number of incorrect beliefs they held about marriage. Significant positive correlations also were found between how romantic or sexist the students were and the number of incorrect beliefs they held about marriage. The researcher believes these findings are important because the false expectations for marriage could lead to lower levels of satisfaction in marriage. Recommendations for future research include a longitudinal, empirical study which would test the satisfaction of marriages for these individuals.

### Media Effects on Expectations of Partners in Intimate Relationships

Two topics that have been a focus of research in recent years are (1) the increased divorce rate since the '60s and (2) the influence that television has on its viewers. The divorce rate increased by 200% between 1960 and 1980 (Larson, 1998). It is also clear that television has an effect on its viewers (Shanahan & Morgan, 1999). But the relationship between these two phenomena is not as clear. Many explanations for the increased divorce rates have been given, such as increased individualism and the feminist movement. One explanation focuses on the idea that individuals are entering into marriage with expectations that are unrealistic (Segrin & Nabi, 2002). These unrealistic expectations could come from a variety of sources and it has been proposed that media, more specifically television, are one source of these expectations (Segrin & Nabi). The current study examines the potential impact of television on the expectations of partners in intimate relationships.

#### *Television*

The American population is exposed to so many different forms of media: television, internet, books, radio, and newspaper. Television is, however, the most prevalent form of media that we choose to expose ourselves to daily. "For roughly fifty years the medium has permeated every corner of public and private space, shaping consciousness, and defining our 'reality'" (Shanahan & Morgan, 1999, p. 1). When compared with all other forms of media, television comprises 48% of the personal time we devote to media (Shanahan & Morgan). In the typical US home, television is viewed about seven hours per day (Gerner, Cross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1994). Gerner et al. do not state by what amount of people the television is watched and it is assumed that in a

household it is being watched by various people during this time. In her 2004 article, Wilson confirms that children spend 6 ½ hours a day using various types of media. She cites that only 2 ½ hours of this time are spent watching television, the remaining amount is spent with various other forms of media. She explains further that, “The average child in this country lives in a household with three television sets, three tape players, three radios, two VCRs, two CD players, one video game player, and one computer” (Wilson, p.563). Television has become a focal point of the American culture. It is hard to imagine life now without television, yet television only became prevalent in American homes in the 1940’s and 1950’s.

As quickly as television became a part of our daily lives, researchers began analyzing its effects on viewers. The two most prominent early research topics were the effect of television on children’s behavior and the effect of television violence on people’s behavior. Bandura demonstrated social learning through television by having children view people attacking a plastic Bobo doll on television. Following this exposure the children then imitated the adult’s behavior and attacked the Bobo doll when exposed to it.

Social learning theory has been further developed in cultivation theory. The most prominent early researcher in cultivation theory is Gerner (Gerner et al., 1994). Cultivation theory is the general concept that watching a great amount of television is correlated with holding certain beliefs and perceptions. Gerner et al. describe television as a unifying source because the same programs are watched by populations in various places across the country and of various income levels. In this way, our culture is said to be “mainstreamed” by the images depicted on television. Television’s primary purpose is

often described as entertainment. But, our entertainment source is seriously impacting our daily lives. An interesting way of describing this phenomenon was stated by Novak in 1986:

If you practice the craft of writing sedulously, you begin to think and perceive differently. If you run for twenty minutes a day, your psyche is subtly transformed. If you work in an executive office, you begin to think like an executive. And if you watch six hours of television, on the average, every day....? (cited in Gerner et al. p. 583).

What is so troubling about the great deal of exposure to television and its effects on us is that television is not an accurate depiction of reality. An example of this is the frequency with which television characters take part in some sort of violent interaction. According to FBI statistics, in any given year, less than 1% of the US population is a victim of a crime (Gerner et al., 1994). However, a message system analysis over three decades by Gerner and colleagues showed that more than half of television characters are involved in some violent act once a week. So, television inaccurately depicts the amount of violence one can expect to experience or be exposed to in a lifetime. Similar findings have been found with regard to television's portrayal of intimate relationships.

#### *Television and Relationships*

Television portrays all aspects of couples: the ways they meet, fall in love, and continue their lives together. From the time we are children, we are inundated with television couples and families. A study by Tanner, Haddock, Zimmerman, and Lund (2003) examined the portrayals depicted in Disney animated films. It was found that in 78% of the Disney movies they analyzed, couples were depicted as romantic, "love at first sight" relationships (Tanner et al., 2003). The period of time that it took for the characters to fall in love was typically a matter of minutes. The idea that love is easy was



also reinforced by the Disney films because little to no relationship maintenance was shown; the couples typically fell in love and then, “lived happily ever after” (Tanner et al.).

There are more studies on the effects of television on children than there are on any other group. In one study, children ages 2 to 10 rated television programs depicting families to be highly realistic (Wilson, 2004). The majority of the elementary schoolers also said that the feelings and events that they viewed on television were similar to those of real families (Wilson).

A common source of conflict in a family may be over work. However, according to an analysis of television programs, this is not depicted. “Only 15% of the episodes depicted any occurrences of conflict between work and family, and rarely was this conflict the central story line” (Wilson, 2004, p. 569). Based on cultivation theory, it is believed that watching inaccurate portrayals of families on television will lead to inaccurate beliefs about family life. In a study, researchers asked 648 fourth, sixth, and eighth graders about their television viewing habits and their beliefs about families. It was found that, “Children that frequently viewed family shows were more likely to believe that real-life families are supportive and compliant than were children who seldom watched these programs” (Wilson, p. 571). This shows a difference in beliefs held by children that watch more television depicting families than those children who do not, although it does not show that the television shows cause these beliefs.

Many television shows depict an already intact family with a husband, wife, and children. In these shows, we are not instructed on how this family originally developed, but simply how it maintains itself now. Previous researchers have criticized these types

of television shows for poorly depicting gender roles within families. One such researcher is Douglas (2003) who conducted a study of gender roles depicted on television shows. He determined that the women are more often seen as running the household while the men are supposedly at work. When the man is present, he is depicted as an overgrown adolescent who needs to be cared for and the wife fulfills this role. He described the balance of power as such, "Husbands appear inept and relatively powerless and wives appear competent and relatively powerful" (Douglas, p. 98).

Ex, Janssens, and Korzilius (2002) conducted a study to measure the effects of television on young females' images of motherhood. The researchers asked the participants how much television they typically watched, how much family-centered television they watched, and then asked the participants to complete a questionnaire regarding how they expected an ideal mother to behave in certain situations. The researchers found that the more exposure the young females had to sitcoms and soaps that portrayed mothers in a traditional role (i.e., the mother's tendency to devote herself fully to her family) the more likely the young females were to believe in this traditional oriented role and the more likely they were to aspire to achieve this type of role for themselves ( Ex et al., 2002). However, there were no questions regarding the type of families the young females came from themselves. This would be important to know, because it may affect the type of television the females chose to watch.

Haferkamp (1999) analyzed the effects of high amounts of soap opera exposure in relation to dysfunctional beliefs about relationships. Soap operas typically portray constant passion and interest by the partners (Haferkamp). The implications for social learning theory in relation to soap opera couples is that the viewers will expect

relationships to play out in a similar way that they do in the soap operas, with undying passion. The participants in this study, who were all female, completed a survey of their television and soap viewing habits and then a relationship belief scale. A common dysfunctional belief that Haferkamp found to be associated with high amounts of soap opera viewing was that “mind reading is expected” in a relationship.

Research has also focused on television comedies. The typical family sitcom comedy is described as following a format of “establishment, complication, confusion, and resolution... All shows have a happy or at least upbeat ending” (Olson & Douglas, 1997). Olson and Douglas analyzed television shows’ contents that were in the Nielson Top 20, a measure of television shows based on popularity, between 1954 and 1993 to develop their definitions of these four elements. Based on their findings the researchers hypothesized that through observation, viewers would learn that familial problems are typically resolved within the scope of a half an hour with little effort.

Segrin and Nabi (2002) conducted research regarding marital expectations and television. They tested these beliefs by administering a survey to two-hundred and eighty-five never-married college students. The survey contained open-ended questions regarding the amount of television watched, types of programming watched, and marital expectations and intentions. Segrin and Nabi found that viewing high amounts of television are not correlated with dysfunctional beliefs about marriage, but that high amounts of romantic-genre television are correlated with idealistic marriage expectations. Two examples of inaccurate beliefs that Segrin and Nabi tested for were “fighting is bad” and “sex will always be perfect.” They also found that people who hold these types of dysfunctional beliefs are more inclined to marry younger and quicker.

For a television show to have a significant effect on an individual's beliefs about marriage, that individual must find the show to be realistic. Perse, Pavitt, and Burggraf (1990) tested how realistic partners viewed television to be. The researchers asked their college student participants to think of one of their favorite television shows that depicted a couple and the students then responded to a satisfaction scale as if they were the couple. Finally, they related how realistic they found the couple portrayal to be. Perse et al. (1990) found that the participants rated the couples as significantly more realistic, if the couples were perceived to be highly satisfied.

Many of these previous studies focused on how television affects certain types of relationships. It is also important to look at the content of the shows. In a content analysis reviewed by Livingstone (1987), it was found that television shows depict relationships as more important to women than men and show more conflict within the family when the women work outside of the home. However, when the women do not work outside of the home, they are shown as using their husbands as their sole support and authority figure. This portrayal can be considered typical of traditional gender roles. This study was conducted in 1987, and the researcher was unable to find a more recent, similar study. Therefore, it is possible that these same themes do not still exist.

These studies focused on how couples are portrayed on television and film and how a great deal of exposure to those genres will lead to dysfunctional beliefs regarding marriage. Romantic as well as dysfunctional beliefs typically have a negative effect on relationships, but it is important to distinguish the two, as discussed below.

*Romanticism*

People enter relationships with pre-existing expectations and beliefs about how the relationship will progress. The degree to which whether or not these pre-existing beliefs and expectations are realistic affects the relationship. One type of view that people may hold about relationships are romantic beliefs. Romanticism can be defined as, “the view that love should be the most important basis for choosing a mate” (Brehm, Rowland, Perlman, & Campbell, 1992, p. 105). There are typically four beliefs that a “romantic” individual holds: (1) their partner will be perfect, (2) each person is only meant to have one true love in a lifetime, (3) true love will overcome anything, and (4) love at first sight exists (Brehm et al.). Romantic individuals are more irrational and hold more unrealistic expectations about love and relationships when compared to less romantic people (Larson, 1998). A romantic person is more likely to see the marriage roles as rewarding and enjoyable (Larson, 1998). A romantic person may feel more frustrated when he or she needs to work on his or her relationship. They do not expect that relationships need work.

While these types of fantasy love stories may be enjoyed by children and serve as entertainment for adults, these types of beliefs may lead to higher levels of unhappiness in marriage because of internal frustration that the relationship is not going the way one thought it would. Unfortunately, highly romantic beliefs are negatively correlated with realistic knowledge regarding relationships. Larson (1998) administered a “Marriage Myth Quiz” to over two hundred college students. First, he administered a romantic beliefs scale to the students. He found that the “romantic” students were more likely to believe the “marriage myths” and thus do poorly on the marriage quiz. Some myths on

the quiz included “In most marriages having a child improves marital satisfaction for both spouses” and “Couples whom cohabitated before marriage usually report greater marital satisfaction than couples who did not” (Larson, p. 5)

Romantic views may be cultivated in a number of ways. The present study tests whether television is a strong source for the cultivation of these types of beliefs, given, as discussed above, the frequent depiction of romantic ideals in relationships on television.

We all hold beliefs in our minds regarding relationships. Another research question is how these beliefs are organized in our minds. Bachen and Illouz (1996) attempted to demonstrate that these beliefs are organized visually in our minds and that these images are largely taken from popular media. They studied this phenomenon in adolescents using personal interviews and also had the adolescents choose magazine pictures which they believed depicted romantic love. The researchers found that, “there are striking parallels between the content and structure of adolescents’ understanding of romance and the content and form in which media portray romance” (p.298). In other words, when the adolescents described their idealistic first date, they described things very similar to what the researchers found in advertisements in popular magazines. A limitation to this study is that the advertisements in popular magazines could have come from popular beliefs that the population already held about romantic relationships, not vice-versa.

### *Sex-Roles on Television*

The sex-roles we expect the opposite gender to fulfill directly affect how we expect our opposite-gender partner to behave in an intimate relationship. According to Olson and Douglas (1997), “families as portrayed on television have provided a historical

record of gender roles” (p. 409). The researchers studied sex roles on television within the family relationships by primarily looking at sitcoms. Between 1954 and 1993, 85 percent of families shown on prime-time were shown in comedic format (Olson & Douglas). The primary problems that these two researchers saw with the depictions were the amount of time spent in the home and the way conflict resolution was depicted. The researchers believed that conflict resolution came too quickly and with little work. They concluded that the amount of time spent in the home by the parents, more specifically the mother, was very high in the television shows and probably not an accurate predictor of the actual amount of time a mother would spend in the home.

With regard to conflict, the researchers found that the resolution is typically shown to be solved quickly and in a comic way. A common show that was exemplified by the researchers was “Home Improvement.” The husband usually says or does something that deeply offends his wife, and by the end of the episode, with very little conversation, she forgives him and life goes on. The researchers suggest that this may provide frustration when one enters a relationship and conflicts are not solved in a timely or simple manner.

The second problem was that in many shows such as “Family Ties,” “Family Matters,” and “Happy Days” the mothers or wives do not work outside of the home. Or if they do, they spend very little time at work. The researchers suggest that this may present a second source of frustration for couples when economics do not allow this to occur. Although the researchers found these inaccurate depictions of gender roles within the families on television, they did not actually test the impact of these television shows on people.

In another study, Tanner et al. (2003) completed an analysis of 26 Disney films. They showed that traditional gender roles were portrayed in a number of the Disney animated films. For example, in "The Emperor's New Groove," the mother was always at home participating in a domestic duty and pregnant while the father was rarely at home. He primarily spent time away from the home, supporting the family. This is significant because this may not be the gender roles always followed in a typical home.

#### *Present Study*

The purpose of the present study is to expand the previous research areas by studying how gender roles and intimate relationships portrayed on television affect individuals' expectations about intimate relationships. The first hypothesis states that those individuals who watched more television will hold more sexist beliefs. This hypothesis logically follows the research that showed television depicted more traditional gender roles. Therefore, if an individual is exposed to these sexist gender roles more often, he or she will be more likely to believe them.

The second hypothesis states those individuals who watched more television will hold more romantic beliefs. The rationale for this hypothesis follows that of the first hypothesis. It has been found that television depicts more romantic relationships. Therefore, if an individual is exposed to these romantic relationships through television at a high rate, he or she will be more likely to believe them.

The third hypothesis states that the more television an individual watches the more false beliefs about marriage he or she will hold. This hypothesis is based on the idea that television presents untrue depictions of married life. Therefore, if an individual



is exposed to these false depictions at a high frequency, he or she should be more likely to believe them.

The fourth hypothesis states that those individuals who are more sexist and romantic will hold more false beliefs regarding marriage. This hypothesis is based on the past research that sexist and romantic beliefs lead to false beliefs regarding marriage. Sexist beliefs and romantic beliefs are themselves false, so it is logical that these individuals would hold false beliefs regarding marriage.

The fifth and final hypothesis states that those individuals who believe television portrayals to be more realistic will also be more sexist, more romantic, and hold more false beliefs regarding marriage.

## Method

### *Participants*

The number of participants obtained for the present study was 93. The researcher obtained participants from a small liberal arts college in Central Pennsylvania by an offer of extra credit in beginning level psychology courses. The participants were both male (22 participants) and female (71 participants) and the only excluding criterion was that the students are not currently married.

### *Materials*

The first material used is an Informed Consent Form (see Appendix A). The researcher created a television questionnaire. The questionnaire includes questions on the amount of television watched, the realism presented in television, and the types of television shows watched (see Appendix B).

The second survey is The Ambivalent Sexism Scale (Plouse, 2002), (see Appendix C). The purpose of The Ambivalent Sexism Scale was to measure the degree of sexist beliefs held by the participants. Higher Scores on this survey indicate that the individual holds more traditional sex role beliefs.

The third survey used was The Romantic Beliefs Scale created by Sprecher and Metts (Brehm et al., 1992). This survey measures the degree to which individuals hold romantic beliefs. The survey includes fifteen items to be rated on a Likert Scale (see Appendix D). The mean score for men on this scale is 4.8 and the mean score for women is 4.6 (Sprecher & Metts, 1989). Scores higher than the mean would indicate that individuals hold highly romantic, highly idealistic beliefs about marriage.

The fourth measure was The Marriage Quiz created by Larson (1998). This quiz measures the extent to which participants endorse fifteen popular myths regarding marriage (see Appendix E). The correct answers to The Marriage Quiz are available in Appendix F.

#### *Procedure*

Psychology professors informed their students of the opportunity to participate in the study and offered extra credit to increase participation rates. The study was conducted in a psychology classroom on campus. The researcher established open hours so that the participants could attend whenever it was convenient to their schedules. Participants completed the informed consent form (Appendix A). Participants completed the self-administered Television Questionnaire (Appendix B), the Ambivalent Sex survey (Appendix C), the Romantic Beliefs Scale (Appendix D), and the Marriage Quiz (Appendix E). The researcher varied the order of the scales so as to decrease sequencing

effects. After completion, the researcher answered any questions. There was no formal debriefing of the study because the participants were aware of the aim of the study from the informed consent. The researcher then dismissed the participants.

### Results

Frequencies showed that significantly more females (71) than males (22) participated in the study. The researcher assigned the participants into one of three groups based on the amount of television they reported they watched, on average, over the past five years. This grouping was based on question three of Appendix B. The low group (0 to 5 hours) contained 33 participants. The moderate group (5 to 15 hours) contained 19 participants. The high group (15 hours or more) contained 41 participants. Therefore, the majority of the participants watched over fifteen hours of television per week, on average, over the past five years.

Table 1 includes means and standard deviations of all test scores based on the gender of the participant. Males had higher sexism and romanticism scores than females. Males answered more items incorrectly on the Marriage Myth Quiz than females indicating that they believed more myths about marriage.

A two-tailed Pearson's correlation was performed (see Table 2). Question 1 on the Television Questionnaire, which measured whether the participants believed television gave an accurate portrayal of couples, was correlated positively with the Ambivalent Sexism score,  $r(91) = 0.02, p < .05$ . Question 2 on the Television Questionnaire, which measured whether participants believed television gave an accurate portrayal of married life, was correlated positively with the Ambivalent Sexism score

$r(91) = 0.02, p < .05$ . However, there was no significant correlation between Questions 1 and 2 and the Marriage Myth Quiz or the Romantic Beliefs Scale.

The Ambivalent Sexism scores were correlated positively with the number wrong on the Marriage Myth Quiz,  $r(91) = .00, p < .05$ . The Romantic Belief scores were correlated positively with the number wrong on the Marriage Myth Quiz as well,  $r(91) = .02, p < .05$ . The Romantic Beliefs scores and Ambivalent Sexism scores were correlated positively with each other  $r(91) = .02, p < .05$ .

Based on a one-way analysis of variance, a significant effect for the amount of television watched (low, moderate, or high) and the number of items wrong on the Marriage Myth Quiz was found,  $F(2, 90) = 3.11, p < .05$ . Results of a post-hoc Tukey B test indicate that as the amount of television viewed moved from low to high, the amount of items wrong on the Marriage Myth Quiz increased. There was a significant positive correlation between the amount of television watched and the number of items wrong on the Marriage Myth Quiz,  $r(91) = .03, p < .05$ . The mean number wrong on the Marriage Myth Quiz was 5.85 for group one (0 – 5 hours), 7.17 for group two (5 -15 hours), and 7.21 for group three (15 hours or more).

#### Discussion

The most interesting hypothesis supported by the present study is that the amount of television watched was significantly positively correlated with the number of items wrong on the Marriage Myth Quiz (H3). Past research shows that television largely depicts unrealistic relationships. Cultivation theory would predict that these beliefs were learned by watching television. In the present study, these beliefs were demonstrated by a higher number of items wrong on the Marriage Myth Quiz.

In the present study, findings do not indicate whether television causes inaccurate beliefs about marriage; the two are merely correlated. A true experiment where individuals are exposed to romantic television and then administered the Marriage Myth Quiz would be a suggestion for future research and would help clarify the present finding.

However, no significant correlations were found between the amount of television watched and the Ambivalent Sexism Scale or the Romantic Beliefs Scale. Amount of television viewed was not correlated with sexist or romantic beliefs as the researcher predicted in hypotheses 1 and 2.

Hypothesis five stated that those individuals who believe television portrayals are realistic will also be more sexist, more romantic, and hold more false beliefs regarding marriage. The correlations showed that participants who believed television was an accurate portrayal of couples and married life were rated significantly higher on the Ambivalent Sexism Scale. In other words, these participants believed in the more traditional sex roles that were depicted on television. The previous research demonstrated that many of the popular television shows typically depicted traditional, sexist role of both males and females. Those who already hold sexist beliefs may have a tendency to believe the sexist roles depicted on television. Or, the sexist roles depicted on television may cause their sexist beliefs. Or, the two may come from a third source.

However, beliefs regarding the accuracy of portrayals of couples and married life were not correlated with the Marriage Myth Quiz or the Romantic Beliefs Scale. So, believing that the depictions are realistic was correlated with a higher sexism score, but not with a higher romanticism score and not with a lower Marriage Myth Quiz score.

Thus, the researcher must reject the original hypothesis that state the degree to which the participants believed that relationship portrayals were realistic would be correlated with the amount of television watched (H5).

The analyses also showed that higher scores on the Ambivalent Sexism Scale and the Romantic Beliefs Scale were significantly correlated with more items wrong on the Marriage Myth Quiz (H4). Also, the Ambivalent Sexism Scale and the Romantic Beliefs Scale were correlated with each other. So, those participants that could be deemed sexist by the scale could also be deemed romantic by the scale. And those participants that were deemed romantic and sexist demonstrated a significantly lower knowledge of married life. Thus, the researcher accepts Hypothesis 4, which stated that scores between the three scales would be correlated.

Two limitations of the study exist: (1) the study is correlational; we are unable to conclude if television caused false beliefs about marriage, and (2) we do not know if these false beliefs cause dissatisfaction in marriages. These two limitations serve as a basis for future research. An empirical study that assigned individuals to watch certain amounts of television over an extended period of time and then tested their romanticism, sexism, and beliefs about marriage would alleviate the first limitation. The second limitation could be alleviated by a continuation of the present study longitudinally by having the same participants rate their marital satisfaction later in life to understand whether false beliefs affected their marriages.

The results of this study will help the research community to understand that individuals who watch a great deal of television also hold more unrealistic beliefs regarding marriage. Hopefully, this research will help pre-marital and marital counselors

to recognize television as a source of unrealistic representations of relationships. The counselors can then pass this information to their clients. Armed with this knowledge of the large amount of people who hold unrealistic expectations about relationships, hopefully counselors can address this issue with many of their clients and treat them accordingly.

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Table 1

*Mean Test Scores*

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Gender	Marriage # Wrong (SD)	Sexism (SD)	Romanticism (SD)
Male (22)	7.95 (2.94)	2.56 (.12)	4.41 (.23)
Female (71)	6.32 (2.27)	2.52 (.09)	4.00 (.09)
Total (93)	6.71 (2.53)	2.53 (.70)	4.10 (.89)

Table 2

*Intercorrelations Between Questions and Scales*

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q10	Q11	Marriage	Sexism	Romanticism
Q1	-	.00	.64	.84	.06	.12	.02	.26
Q2		-	.23	.91	.09	.08	.02	.37
Q3			-	.47	.58	.03	.13	.95
Q10				-	.00	.93	.99	.92
Q11					-	.95	.21	.18
M						-	.00	.02
S							-	.02

Appendix A

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

The study in which you are about to participate is experimental research that is being conducted by Meghan Ozment, a student in the Psychology Department of Albright College. To ensure that participants are treated fairly and ethically, the Institutional Review Board of Albright College has thoroughly reviewed and approved this study.

In this study, will be asked to fill out a series of questionnaires regarding your thoughts on marriage, romanticism, sexism, and television.

Complete anonymity is guaranteed. Your name will not be associated with your responses or with this study at any time. Data will be reported in number form only. At the conclusion of the study, you may obtain a copy of the results by contacting the experimenter via e-mail to meggo5683@yahoo.com, or by contacting Dr. Snyder.

Please understand that your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from this study at any time without punishment and all the data that you have contributed will be removed. Thank you for contributing to this study.

\*\*\*\*\*

I acknowledge that I have been informed of and understand my rights and what I am expected to do during this study. I freely consent to participate in this study and acknowledge that I am at least 18 years of age.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B

## Television Questionnaire

By Meghan Ozment

This questionnaire regards your television habits. Please answer all questions honestly and to the best of your ability by circling the response that best represents your answer.

Indicate your sex \_\_\_\_\_

Indicate your age \_\_\_\_\_

1. I believe that television gives an accurate portrayal of couples.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

*Strongly Disagree*

*Strongly Agree*

2. I believe that television gives an accurate portrayal of married life.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

*Strongly Disagree*

*Strongly Agree*

3. During the past five years, how much television did you watch in an average week?

A) 0 Hours

B) 1-5 Hours

C) 5 – 10 Hours

D) 10 – 15 Hours

E) 15 – 30 Hours

F) More than 30 Hours

Albright College Gingrich Library

For the following questions, of the time you spend watching television, rate how often you watch each type of the following shows:

4. Rate how often you watch Soap Operas

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

*Never*

*Almost Always*

5. Rate how often you watch drama television.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

*Never*

*Almost Always*

6. Rate how often you watch comedies.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

*Never*

*Almost Always*

7. Rate how often you watch Sports

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

*Never*

*Almost Always*

8. Rate how often you watch news programs.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

*Never*

*Almost Always*

9. Rate how often you watch children's programming.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

*Never*

*Almost Always*

10. Of the type of television that you most typically watch (as indicated in previous questions) rate how often the shows depict a romantic couple.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

*Never*

*Almost Always*

11. Of the type of television that you most typically watch (as indicated in previous questions) rate how often the show depicts a female sexually (including advertisements during programming).

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

*Never*

*Almost Always*

## Appendix C

## The Ambivalent Sexism Scale

(Plous, S. (2002) *The Ambivalent Sexism Scale*. Understanding Prejudice.

<http://www.understandingprejudice.org/index.php?section=asi&action=takeSurvey>

The statements on this page concern women, men, and their relationships in contemporary society. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

(1) No matter how accomplished he is, a man is not truly complete as a person unless he has the love of a woman.

Disagree strongly    0    1    2    3    4    5    Agree strongly  
                   

(2) Many women are actually seeking special favors, such as hiring policies that favor them over men, under the guise of asking for "equality."

Disagree strongly    0    1    2    3    4    5    Agree strongly  
                   

(3) In a disaster, women ought not necessarily to be rescued before men.

Disagree strongly    0    1    2    3    4    5    Agree strongly  
                   

(4) Most women interpret innocent remarks or acts as being sexist.

Disagree strongly    0    1    2    3    4    5    Agree strongly  
                   

(5) Women are too easily offended.

Disagree strongly    0    1    2    3    4    5    Agree strongly  
                   

(6) People are often truly happy in life without being romantically involved with a member of the other sex.

Disagree strongly    0    1    2    3    4    5    Agree strongly  
                   

(7) Feminists are not seeking for women to have more power than men.

Disagree strongly    0    1    2    3    4    5    Agree strongly  
                   

(8) Many women have a quality of purity that few men possess.

Disagree strongly    0    1    2    3    4    5    Agree strongly  
                   

(9) Women should be cherished and protected by men.

Disagree strongly    0    1    2    3    4    5    Agree strongly





(20) Men should be willing to sacrifice their own well being in order to provide financially for the women in their lives.

Disagree strongly    0    1    2    3    4    5    Agree strongly

(21) Feminists are making entirely reasonable demands of men.

Disagree strongly    0    1    2    3    4    5    Agree strongly

(22) Women, as compared to men, tend to have a more refined sense of culture and good taste.

Disagree strongly    0    1    2    3    4    5    Agree strongly

## Appendix D

The Romantic Beliefs Scale  
 Susan Sprecher and Sandra Metts (1989)  
 Cited in Brehm et al. (1992)

How romantic are you? Rate how much you agree or disagree with each of these statements by using this scale:

- |   | 1                        | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                     | 6 | 7 |
|---|--------------------------|---|---|---|-----------------------|---|---|
|   | <i>Strongly disagree</i> |   |   |   | <i>Strongly Agree</i> |   |   |
| 1. I need to know someone for a period of time before I fall in love with him or her.   |                          |   |   |   |                       |   |   |
|   | <i>Strongly disagree</i> |   |   |   | <i>Strongly Agree</i> |   |   |
| 2. If I were in love with someone, I would commit myself to him or her even if my parents and friends disapproved of the relationship.                              |                          |   |   |   |                       |   |   |
|   | <i>Strongly disagree</i> |   |   |   | <i>Strongly Agree</i> |   |   |
| 3. Once I experience "true love" I could never experience it again, to the same degree, with another person.  |                          |   |   |   |                       |   |   |
|   | <i>Strongly disagree</i> |   |   |   | <i>Strongly Agree</i> |   |   |
| 4. I believe that to be truly in love is to be in love forever.   |                          |   |   |   |                       |   |   |
|   | <i>Strongly disagree</i> |   |   |   | <i>Strongly Agree</i> |   |   |
| 5. If I love someone, I know I can make the relationship work, despite any obstacles.   |                          |   |   |   |                       |   |   |
|   | <i>Strongly disagree</i> |   |   |   | <i>Strongly Agree</i> |   |   |
| 6. When I find my "true love" I will probably know it soon after we meet.   |                          |   |   |   |                       |   |   |
|   | <i>Strongly disagree</i> |   |   |   | <i>Strongly Agree</i> |   |   |
| 7. I'm sure that every new thing I learn about the person I choose for a long-term commitment will please me.   |                          |   |   |   |                       |   |   |
|   | <i>Strongly disagree</i> |   |   |   | <i>Strongly Agree</i> |   |   |
| 8. The relationship I will have with my "true love" will be nearly perfect.   |                          |   |   |   |                       |   |   |
|   | <i>Strongly disagree</i> |   |   |   | <i>Strongly Agree</i> |   |   |
| 9. If I love someone, I will find a way for us to be together regardless of any opposition to the relationship, physical distance between us, or any other barrier. |                          |   |   |   |                       |   |   |
|   | <i>Strongly disagree</i> |   |   |   | <i>Strongly Agree</i> |   |   |
| 10. There will be only one real love for me.  |                          |   |   |   |                       |   |   |
|   | <i>Strongly disagree</i> |   |   |   | <i>Strongly Agree</i> |   |   |



## Appendix E

## The Marriage Quiz by Jeffrey Larson

Larson, Jeffrey. (1998). *The Marriage Quiz: College Students Beliefs in Selected Myths about Marriage*. Family Life Education.

Please answer all questions by circling a True or False Response

1. A husband's marital satisfaction is usually lower if his wife is employed full time than if she is a full-time homemaker.  
True                      False
2. Today most young, single, never-married people will eventually get married.  
True                      False
3. In most marriages having a child improves marital satisfaction for both spouses.  
True                      False
4. The best single predictor of overall marital satisfaction is the quality of a couple's sex life.  
True                      False
5. The divorce rate in America increased from 1960 to 1980.  
True                      False
6. A greater percentage of wives are in the work force today than in 1970.  
True                      False
7. Marital satisfaction for a wife is usually lower if she is employed full time than if she is a full-time homemaker.  
True                      False
8. If my spouse loves me, he/she should instinctively know what I want and need to be happy.  
True                      False
9. In a marriage in which the wife is employed full time, the husband usually assumes an equal share of the housekeeping.  
True                      False
10. For most couples, marital satisfaction gradually increases from the first year of marriage through the childbearing years, the teen years, the empty nest period, and retirement.  
True                      False
11. No matter how I behave, my spouse should love me simply because he/she is my spouse.  
True                      False
12. One of the most frequent marital problems is poor communication.  
True                      False
13. Husbands usually make more life style adjustments in marriage than wives  
True                      False
14. Couples whom cohabitated before marriage usually report greater marital satisfaction than couples who did not.  
True                      False
15. I can change my spouse by pointing out his/her inadequacies, errors, etc.  
True                      False
16. Couples who marry when one or both partners are under the age of 18 have more chance of eventually divorcing than those who marry when they are older.  
True                      False
17. Either my spouse loves me or does not love me; nothing I do will affect the way my spouse feels about me.  
True                      False
18. The more a spouse discloses positive and negative information to his/her partner, the greater the marital satisfaction of both partners.  
True                      False
19. I must feel better about my partner before I can change my behavior toward him/her.  
True                      False

20. Maintaining romantic love is the key to marital happiness over the life span for most couples.  
True                      False

Appendix F  
The Marriage Quiz by Jeffry Larson(1998)  
Correct Answers

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| 1. A husband's marital satisfaction is usually lower if his wife is employed full time than if she is a full-time homemaker.  | FALSE |
| 2. Today most young, single, never-married people will eventually get married.  | TRUE  |
| 3. In most marriages having a child improves marital satisfaction for both spouses .  | FALSE |
| 4. The best single predictor of overall marital satisfaction is the quality of a couple's sex life.   | FALSE |
| 5. The divorce rate in America increased from 1960 to 1980.   | TRUE  |
| 6. A greater percentage of wives are in the work force today than in 1970.  | TRUE  |
| 7. Marital satisfaction for a wife is usually lower if she is employed full time than if she is a full-time homemaker.  | FALSE |
| 8. If my spouse loves me, he/she should instinctively know what I want and need to be happy.  | FALSE |
| 9. In a marriage in which the wife is employed full time, the husband usually assumes an equal share of the housekeeping.   | FALSE |
| 10. For most couples, marital satisfaction gradually increases from the first year of marriage through the childbearing years, the teen years, the empty nest period, and retirement. | FALSE |
| 11. No matter how I behave, my spouse should love me simply because he/she is my spouse.  | FALSE |
| 12. One of the most frequent marital problems is poor communication.  | TRUE  |
| 13. Husbands usually make more life style adjustments in marriage than wives  | FALSE |
| 14. Couples whom cohabitated before marriage usually report greater marital satisfaction than couples who did not.  | FALSE |
| 15. I can change my spouse by pointing out his/her inadequacies, errors, etc.   | FALSE |
| 16. Couples who marry when one or both partners are under the age of 18 have more chance of eventually divorcing than those who marry when they are older.                            | TRUE  |
| 17. Either my spouse loves me or does not love me; nothing I do will affect the way my spouse feels about me.   | FALSE |
| 18. The more a spouse discloses positive and negative information to his/her partner, the greater the marital satisfaction of both partners.  | FALSE |

19. I must feel better about my partner before I can change my behavior toward him/her.

FALSE

20. Maintaining romantic love is the key to marital happiness over the life span for most couples.

FALSE