Has Dating Become More Egalitarian?
A 35 Year Review Using *Sex Roles*

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Abstract In this selective review, we examined research on heterosexual dating published in *Sex Roles* since its inception to determine if dating practices have become more egalitarian over the past 35 years. An analysis of current best-selling dating advice books suggests that gender roles continue to be institutionalized in cultural scripts. A sexual scripts framework was used to categorize research findings to determine if the empirical evidence confirmed the durability of gender roles over time or revealed that dating has become less gender-typed. Research in *Sex Roles* suggests that heterosexual dating among young adults in the U. S. remains highly gender-typed in terms of cultural scripts (e.g., beliefs, ideals, and expectations), as well as interpersonal scripts (e.g., actual interpersonal emotions, interpersonal behaviors, or behaviors aimed at achieving or signaling a partner). Some variability was observed in interpersonal scripts in terms of occasional initiation of dates by women, for instance, but was not sufficiently widely used to challenge the dominant script. Functional reasons for the persistence of gender stereotypes in dating are presented. In addition, a friendship script is proposed as an alternative, egalitarian model of dating that might fulfill the same functions.

Introduction

"During the "lusting stage" [of dating] the woman can take complete control of the budding relationship by *not* giving him sex…The carrot of sex will keep him around long enough to become attached."

> *Why hasn't he called? How guys really think and how to get the right one interested in you.* Matt Titus and Tamsen Fadal (2008, p. 120).

"Dating rules and techniques are designed out of fear and scarcity….I say, rules shmules! There are times when calling a man is absolutely the thing to do. Eye contact can be very sexy. Talking can be soul enlivening. Sex on the first date can lead to an intensely satisfying lifelong relationship. Dating several men can be fun and exciting."

> *Make every man want you: How to be so irresistible you'll barely keep from dating yourself!* Marie Forleo (2008, p. 71).

Today, guidance and advice about heterosexual dating in the U.S. are ubiquitous. Popular magazines, books, T.V. shows, newspaper columns, and websites are regularly devoted to dating "dos" and "don'ts," first-date etiquette,

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and strategies to succeed with the opposite gender. In part, this is surely due to the general importance of social connectedness for human well-being (for a review see Cacioppo and Patrick 2008). It may also reflect the idolization of romantic relationships in American culture (for a review see Galician 2004), where romance novels have long been the most popular genre in literature (Regis 2003) and single people are pitied and stereotyped as lacking the most important source of happiness (e.g., Cate and Lloyd 1992; DePaulo 2006). Still, this glut of dating advice may also be the consequence of changing dating practices and the resulting conflict between tenacious old norms and preferences and emerging new ones, especially with regard to gender prescriptions.

The quotes at the beginning of this paper are examples of the mixed messages about gender and dating that occur in popular culture. But to what extent has U.S. culture truly abandoned the traditional norms of female passivity and male agency in early dating practices? To what extent have individual men and women embraced egalitarian practices in actual early romantic encounters? In this paper, we use research from the journal Sex Roles to examine the nature of dating today and to determine whether the current dating norms and practices of young people have progressed toward an egalitarian feminist ideal.

Since the inception of the journal Sex Roles 35 years ago, women have made substantial progress in gaining power and authority in the public sphere. Because of this progress, modern concepts and behaviors in dating may be less about male power than they were when Sex Roles was founded. For example, the male-to-female pay gap in the U.S. for full-time workers has been narrowing over the past 30 years (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2009). On the other hand, there is abundant evidence that gender stereotypes remain as strong in the modern collective conscious as they were in the 1970s (e.g., Bergen and Williams 1991; for a review see Wood and Eagly 2010). A careful examination of all empirical research on dating published in Sex Roles will illuminate which of these realities is most true in the realm of early romantic encounters.

In this review, the journal Sex Roles was used as the basis for our analysis in honor of its 35 years of publishing and because of its reputation as one of the premier forums for feminist psychology research, established with the explicit aim of identifying the processes and consequences of gendered stereotypes and behaviors (Chrisler 2010). If there has been a cultural or interpersonal shift in the last several decades in the extent to which beliefs or behaviors about dating are gender-typed, we can expect that Sex Roles will have captured it.

From a feminist perspective, we see dating as a prime arena for evaluating progress towards gender equality. First, dating is a historically-gendered part of heterosexual romantic relationships that supports men's power and gender stereotypes (e.g., Belsey 1994; Impett and Peplau 2003; Mahoney and Knudson-Martin 2009; Sprecher and McKinney 1993; Winstead et al. 1997). Secondly, dates represent important "turning points" where a relationship might move from platonic to romantic (Morr and Mongeau 2004). The preferences and behaviors expressed in early dating may, intentionally or unintentionally, "set the stage" for the entire course of the relationship. If gender roles and norms are used to stabilize and structure early relationship interactions they may establish a trajectory for future interactions that contributes to the perpetuation of gender stereotypes and gender-differentiated behavior. Finally, initial romantic encounters, especially first dates, are known as being vehicles for uncertainty reduction (Afifi and Lucas 2008). However, to the extent that gender is used as the backdrop for this process, gender-inconsistent information about one's partner or oneself may not be revealed, reducing the likelihood of finding a compatible partner and yet again contributing to the perpetuation of cultural stereotypes about men and women.

What Is Dating?

Broadly defined, dating is a publicly-expressed practice undertaken by romantically-interested partners for the purpose of getting to know one another better (e.g., Bailey 1988; Bogle 2008; Diamond et al. 1999). The practice of dating has a long and vibrant history in the U.S., going back about a century (e.g., Bailey 1988). Like many modern social customs, dating has its origins in the post-Industrial revolution. At that time, the sheltered courtship practice of "calling" was closely monitored by the family and community, and took place in the bachelorette's home (Rothman 1984). However, courtship encounters were soon mobilized by average citizens' increased access to automobiles and women's increasing role in the public sphere. These changes moved courtship from the home to public locations, such as movie theaters, dance halls, and restaurants. By the mid-1920s, going on "dates" had become a "universal custom" for young men and women in the U.S. and the dominant script for romantic interactions between singles (Bailey 1988).

Although dating is more recreational than the courtship practices that preceded it, dating is also viewed as a process of narrowing the field of suitable marriage partners (Whyte 1990), and can be understood as a prelude to courtship, which is a prelude to marriage (Laws and Schwartz 1977). Because society is so invested in the outcomes of courtship practices (i.e., marriage and the family system), and because dating is a largely public act, it has always come with a host of prescribed rules and expectations (e.g., Gilligan 1982; Ginsburg 1988). The stereotypes about the

events and actions associated with and appropriate for "a date" are called dating scripts or schemas (Ginsburg 1988). Like all scripts, dating scripts are cognitive representations that include information about the standard and desirable sequence of events and behaviors for a particular situation (Abelson 1981). These scripts are used to organize, interpret, and predict the behavior of individuals in dating encounters, and they exist at both a cultural and interpersonal level (Simon and Gagnon 1986).

Cultural scripts are "collective guides" for situational norms, values, and practices that are characteristic of and accessible to cultural insiders (e.g., Goddard and Wierzbicka 2004; Klinkenberg and Rose 1994; Triandis et al. 1984). Interpersonal scripts, on the other hand, are the behavioral enactment of a specific cultural script by an individual (Simon and Gagnon 1986). Interpersonal scripts are more detailed and subjective than cultural scripts, and incorporate personal preferences and knowledge (Klinkenberg and Rose 1994).

Dating advice books provide one non-empirical source of popular cultural scripts for gender roles in dating. A previous examination of dating advice books from the late 1980s indicated that dating etiquette was highly gender-typed (Rose and Frieze 1989). Men were expected to initiate, plan, and pay for dates and to initiate sexual contact, whereas women were supposed to be alluring, facilitate the conversation, and limit sexual activity. Cultural norms as expressed in dating advice books in 2010 suggest that gender roles in dating have not changed much over the past two decades. We surveyed seven popular books published in the last 5 years that focused on general dating advice for heterosexual adults. In line with the Rose and Frieze's 1989 examination of dating guides, we were specifically concerned with prescriptions for which partner should initiate the date, pay for the date, and engage in or reject physical contact during the date. Three of the selections were among the top five best-selling books in the category of "dating advice" at Amazon.com, a premier online bookseller searched on July 25th, 2010 (Browne 2006; Forleo 2008; Miller 2004). The other four books were among the top 100 best-sellers and were written by well-known authors (e.g., Dr. Phil) and expert matchmakers.

Overall, this select set of current popular books generally endorsed traditional feminine passivity and masculine agency in the dating context. Four of the advice manuals were dependably gender-typed (Titus and Fadal 2008; Casey 2009; Miller 2004; McGraw 2005) (see Table 1). Those aimed at women included whole chapters on using indirect influence and passive strategies in dating, such as the chapter "Getting Him to Ask You Out" (Titus and Fadal 2008); reminded women to indirectly manage their relationship from behind the scenes, given that men "need to feel like the leader in relationships" (McGraw 2005, p. 124); or advised women in multiple chapters about how to beautify or treat various body parts, e.g., "Nipples, Lingerie, and Hosiery" and "The Vagina" (Casey 2009). In the one book designed for single men, they were advised to act like the "natural born aggressor[s]" that they are and to take control of the dating environment (Miller 2004, p. 30). The remaining three books allowed for some gender flexibility in terms of initiating a date, stating that it was acceptable for a woman to ask for a date or encouraging women to try it (Browne 2006; Spindel 2007; Forleo 2008). However, most of the advice was consistent with gender stereotypes. For instance, women who asked for a date were told to take into consideration that the man might think they were "hot to trot" (Browne 2006, p. 91) and were advised "don't object to his plans unless you really have to" (Spindel 2007, p. 43). In summary, current cultural norms for gender roles in dating as expressed in this genre of popular culture were highly gender-typed.

In contrast, some research has shown that dating patterns have changed in the past 35 years. Dating is no longer the direct path to marriage that it once was (Libby 1976), nor is dating the only, or even primary, type of initial romantic encounter young singles engage in today (e.g., Bailey 1988; Paul and Hayes 2002). Some research suggests that the culture of courtship has given way to a hook up culture among college coeds (Bogle 2008), where dates are rare and carry multiple meanings (Glenn and Marquardt 2001). A hook up was defined as "a sexual encounter which may or may not include sexual intercourse, usually occurring between people who are strangers or brief acquaintances" (Paul et al. 2000, p. 76). The gender dynamics associated with hook ups do not appear much different from those in dating, however. In hook ups, women lose status and experience more regret and guilt than men (Crawford and Popp 2003; Eshbaugh and Gute 2008). Many young people today also go on "group dates," in which a handful of young men and women meet at common gathering places for the purpose of having fun with the potential for dyadic relationship initiation (e.g., Bredow et al. 2008), and engage in the practice of speed dating (e.g., Finkel et al. 2007).

Does the addition of these new forms of dating represent a move towards gender equality in early romantic relationships in the U.S.? Or does the empirical evidence indicate that dating beliefs and behaviors continue to be highly stereotypic in terms of gender? We address this question using research in the journal *Sex Roles*, offer an explanation for the tenacity of gender-typing in initial romantic encounter scripts based on research on interpersonal relationship development, and suggest an alternative egalitarian model that could be successfully adapted to suit the "getting to know you" stage in heterosexual relationships.

Table 1 Gender roles in contemporary dating and relationship advice self-help books

Title	Year	Authors (gender)	Target	General advice	Relevant quotes
"Why Hasn't He Called?: How Guys Really Think and How to Get the Right One Interested in You"	2008	Matt Titus (m) & Tamsen Fadal (w)	Women	Women are advised to "get him to ask you out" and to take control of the relationship by rejecting physical contact and sex.	"…there is a very fine line between getting him to ask you out and asking him out yourself. We don't want you to do the latter. The man should still be the aggressor" (p. 101)
"The Man Plan"	2009	Whitney Casey (w)	Women	Women are advised about appearance in multiple chapters, including chapters on "Nipples, Lingerie, and Hoisery," "Body Odor and Bad Breath," and "The Vagina," etc. Women are advised to reject sex (p. 181)	"A woman's vagina is an area of her body that, when it comes to men, has very little wiggle room for mistakes. Men have an incredibly specific vision and expectation of what should be going on down there… it is important to focus on some of the flaws men find here so that you feel completely comfortable with your experience." (p. 37)
"Love Smart: Find the One You Want- Fix the One You Got"	2005	Dr. Phil McGraw (m)	Women	Women are told men need to feel in charge and men are intimidated by strong women. It is insinuated that the male will approach the woman to ask for the date (p.167)	"Men need to feel like the leader in relationships… Right or wrong, women seem to fare pretty well when they manage their relationships with men in a way that allows the man to think that decisions such as whether to make a commitment or not are totally *his* idea." (p. 124)
"Understanding Women: The Definitive Guide to Meeting, Dating and Dumping, if Necessary" (#1 on Amazon.com best seller's list, July 2010)	2004	Romy Miller (w)	Men	Men are told that women are "picky" and "play hard to get" (p. 29) because of their larger investment in the outcomes of mating. Men are "natural born aggressor[s]" from the "hunting and gathering days" (p. 30) and need to approach women for dates and pay for dates.	"If you can't afford a few dinners out and a bouquet of flowers from time to time, you might as well hang it up now." "If they [women] know that you're willing to spend a little on them, more than likely, they'll give you a chance to do a little in the bedroom." (p. 36) "*Do not ever let her pay for anything!*" (p. 38)
"Dating for Dummies" (#5 on Amazon.com best seller's list, July 2010)	2006	Dr. Joy Browne (w)	Both men and women	Either person may ask for date, the one who asks should pay for date, either may initiate or reject physical contact.	"Women, if you've never asked a guy out, you should do it for your own liberal education. Guys love it. However, they may think you're hotter to trot (sexually) than you really are, so take that into consideration." (p. 91)
"How to date men: Dating Secrets from America's Top Matchmaker"	2007	Janis Spindel (w)	Women	Either person may ask for date but it is ideal for the man to ask. The man is portrayed as wanting to pay for the date and the woman is advised to allow him. Women should voice their preferences except when it interferes with the man's agenda or role.	"Don't object to his plans unless you really have to" (p. 43), followed later by "be decisive. Men don't like it when they have to make every decision for you." (p. 64) "Not only does he want to pay, but it's awkward for you to make this half-hearted attempt to split the bill." (p. 74)
"Make every man want you: How to be so irresistible you'll barely keep from dating yourself! (#2 on Amazon.com best seller's list, July 2010)	2008	Marie Forleo (w)	Women	Who asks for the date, pays for the date, and initiates or rejects physical contact depends on the situation. Women are advised to use their "most powerful tool-your intuition-to guide you on a case-by-case basis." (p.137)	"Dating rules and techniques are designed out of fear and scarcity. …There are times when calling a man is absolutely the thing to do…Sex on the first date can lead to an intensely satisfying lifelong relationship. Dating several men can be fun and exciting" (p. 69)

Dating Research in *Sex Roles*

Dating research within the journal *Sex Roles* was identified through the PsychInfo database using a search for any of the following keywords: "date," "dating," "courtship," or "hookup." The "keyword" search option in PsycInfo searches the title, abstract, and descriptors of all entries in the database for the target keyword. One hundred and forty-three works were identified, ranging in publication date from January 1978 to December 2010, including four 2010 advance online publications. Twenty-three were removed because they applied to non-U.S. samples. In addition, 26 works were withdrawn because they were reviews, book reviews, duplicates, references to temporal dating, misclassified as pertaining to dating, or errata. The remaining 94 articles were sorted by decade: the 1980s (N=20), 1990s (N=28), and 2000s (N=46). The vast majority of the articles focused on young adults, typically college students. Research within each decade was further classified and summarized in terms of whether it assessed aspects of cultural scripts (e.g., beliefs, concepts, ideals, responses to hypothetical situations) or interpersonal scripts (i.e., participants' behaviors in actual dating situations). This comparison illustrated the extent of the congruence between cultural scripts and interpersonal behavior.

Dating Research in *Sex Roles*, 1980–1989

One of the central themes in dating research in *Sex Roles* from the 1980s was the effect of gender identity and typicality on dating attitudes and behaviors. For instance, the first empirical article on dating in *Sex Roles* was published in 1982 by Orlofsky, who examined the relationship between participants' gender identity and ideology and their preferences for gender-typed mates. Additional research examined the balance and bases of power in dating relationships for men and women (e.g., Grauerholz 1987; Sprecher 1985) and gender identity and rape acceptance (e.g., Bridges and McGrail 1989). These articles followed the growing trend in feminist psychological research at the time to uncover and understand gender identity and schematicity and gender differences in social behavior.

Cultural Scripts

Fourteen of the 20 articles on dating (70%) from 1980 to 1989 assessed some aspect of cultural scripts, such as ideals, beliefs, attitudes, and responses to hypothetical situations. An analysis of these findings revealed that heterosexual dating relationships in 1980s America were characterized by highly traditional cultural script elements, including gender-typed partner preferences, beliefs, and attributions.

In terms of interpersonal attraction, both women and men rated an ideal woman as thinner (i.e., more underweight) than an ideal man (Stake and Lauer 1987). Men were found to be more concerned with the physical characteristics of potential partners and women were more concerned with psychological and personal qualities of a potential partner, such as achievement and intelligence (e.g., Deaux and Hanna 1984; Nevid 1984). Even women and men with nontraditional (egalitarian) gender role attitudes described an "ideal dating partner" as having stereotypically gender-typed personality traits (Orlofsky 1982).

Gender-typed responses also were found in preferences for opening lines, dating jealousy, attitudes towards extra-dyadic relationships, and acceptance of cross-status relationships. Women preferred that men use innocuous opening lines when meeting a woman (e.g., "Are you a student?") or direct ones (e.g., "I'm sort of shy, but I'd like to get to know you"). However, men preferred cute-flippant lines such as, "Isn't it cold? Let's make some body heat" (Kleinke et al. 1986). Hansen (1985) reported that a majority of both women and men expected dating partners to end close cross-gender friendships and that women college students reacted with more jealousy than men to hypothetical situations involving a dating partner spending time on a hobby or with family members. Furthermore, gender role traditional women and men expressed more jealousy than less traditional participants in response to all the scenarios (Hansen 1985). In response to hypothetical "jealousy-producing" vignettes, Margolin (1989) reported that young men were more accepting of a man having an outside sexual relationship in dating relationships than in marriage; women did not approve of extra-dyadic activities in either dating or marriage. Adams (1984) investigated attitudes towards dating among cadets at West Point during the first 3 years that coeducation was implemented and found that women cadets were more approving than men of dating across cadet ranks rather than restricting dating to those within the same rank. Women also were more accepting of dating in general.

Power strategies in sexual encounters were gender-typed both in terms of concepts and behavior. McCormick et al. (1984) presented twenty descriptions of strategies for influencing a date to have or to avoid sex to college students and asked the probable gender of a person who would use such an approach. Participants stereotyped all strategies for having sex as being initiated more often by men and all strategies for avoiding sex as being initiated more often by women. The authors concluded that this script had not changed from normative expectations reported in the 1950s (cf. Ehrmann 1959) showing that men had positive control in a sexual encounter (using available strategies to initiate sex) and women had negative control (using strategies to avoid having sex). Finally,

Laner (1989) found that both genders perceive their partners as behaving competitively toward them, although both prefer romantic partners who behave cooperatively (e.g., who are "nondefensive," "sharing," "helpful," "empathetic").

Lastly, research investigated the relationship between rape acceptance and gender-based variables. Results indicated that both women and men held a woman more responsible for a hypothetical rape that was perpetrated by a steady dating partner than by a stranger (Bridges and McGrail 1989); those with highly traditional attitudes towards women were less rejecting of date rape (Fischer 1987); and men were more supportive of a man's right to violate a woman's resistance to kiss or have sex than were women (Margolin et al. 1989). Women more often than men were found to define "milder" forms of behavior such as gender-stereotyped jokes as being sexually harassing (Kenig and Ryan 1986).

In sum, cultural scripts for dating in the 1980s were strongly influenced by gender stereotypes, in terms of men and women's partner preferences, men and women's beliefs about date rape, and stereotypes about men and women's attitudes towards sex.

Interpersonal Scripts

Nine of the 20 articles (45%) from the 1980s provided results based on actual behavior indicating that interpersonal as well as cultural scripts followed gender-typical patterns. Three of the articles studied aspects of both hypothetical and actual dates and were also cited in the previous section (Deaux and Hanna 1984; Stake and Lauer 1987; McCormick et al. 1984), thus percentages do not add to 100% by decade due to overlap.

For instance, in terms of ideal characteristics of a partner, Stake and Lauer's (1987) research described above confirmed that the "thin" ideal for women was borne out in actual relationships as being more desirable. Twice as many average weight women were presently dating and dated more often. Overweight women more often than average weight women were criticized by parents, peers, and mates concerning their weight. Ethnically identified Mexican American women expected that Mexican American men would prefer less achieving women as potential partners (Gonzalez 1988). Gender differences also were observed in a content analysis of 800 personal advertisements of heterosexual and homosexual advertisers from east- and west-coast newspapers (Deaux and Hanna 1984). Men more often mentioned physical characteristics and women more often emphasized psychological factors in their ads, regardless of sexual orientation.

Power in dating was the focus of several studies in the 1980s. For instance, Sprecher (1985) found that women's power in actual dating relationships was based in control over the reciprocation of love in the relationship. In contrast, men were found to derive power from the perception that they had access to alternative partners. Interestingly, despite these differences in sources of power, men and women perceived themselves as equally powerful in their relationships. The McCormick et al. (1984) study on the use of power techniques in hypothetical situations that was discussed earlier also assessed actual behavior using self-reports. Both women and men indicated that women used power strategies to avoid having sex and men used them to facilitate having sex. This suggests that cultural and interpersonal scripts were congruent in terms of power strategies in dating.

Undergraduates studied by Grauerholz (1987) provided additional insight into power in dating. Relative power was most gender-typed in actual relationships for decisions concerning who had more influence (themselves or other current partners) in terms of who would pay for a date, who would pay for dinner when they go out, how often to go out, and whether to have sex or not. However, participants that were highly trusting, committed, or dependent perceived their relationships to be egalitarian. These findings point to the difficulty in assessing inequality in actual relationships because a number of factors may disguise or counteract inequality between heterosexual partners.

Gender differences also were dominant in a longitudinal study of dating couples by Stephen and Harrison (1985). Most participants (81% of women and 76% of men) were classified as having "sex-typical" orientations to intimacy, in which the man is romantic and outer-directed and the woman is sensual and inner-directed. However, "non-sex-typical" couples and couples with one non-sex-typical member were found to have more satisfying and committed relationships over a six-month period than sex-typical couples.

The relationship between gender identity and dating behavior was explored by DeLucia (1987) using the Bem Sex Role Inventory and an index of dating behaviors derived from self-reports of undergraduates' dating experiences. Specific masculine behaviors included: "opens door for the other," "pays for activities you do together," and "expresses sexual preferences." Feminine behaviors included: "senses the other is disturbed about something," "supports the other in decisions," and "waits for the other to initiate sex." Strong gender differences in the use of masculine and feminine-typed behaviors were found overall, but the differences were less pronounced for cross-gender typed or undifferentiated individuals. Feminist identity was found to affect dating behavior as well (Rickard 1989). Women at the "passive-acceptance" level of feminist identity development (the first stage of development which includes passive acceptance of tradi-

tional gender roles and the belief that traditional roles are advantageous) engaged in more gender-typed dating behaviors than those at more advanced levels of feminist identity development. Women at the "synthesis" level of feminism, the fourth of five levels in which an authentic and positive feminist identity is developed and men and women are considered and treated as individuals, engaged in the widest range of dating behaviors.

In summary, research in *Sex Roles* from 1980 to 1989 indicated strong empirical evidence for gender roles in many aspects of both cultural and interpersonal scripts. It also pointed to the importance of including measures of gender identity and dating outcomes in studies of actual behavior.

Dating Research in *Sex Roles*, 1990–1999

In this decade, dating research in *Sex Roles* moved away from a focus on gender identity and typicality and deeper into investigations of dating scripts and dating violence (including rape, aggression, and coercion). Based cognitive script theory (e.g., Bower et al. 1979), formal use of the script framework for understanding courtship and sexuality began to occur. This research provided evidence that the cognitive scripts for dating closely followed gender stereotypes, in which men were characterized by agentic traits and the possession of social power and status, while women were characterized by communal traits and the relative lack of social power and status (see Eagly 1987, for a comprehensive discussion of the content and origin of gender roles). A substantial proportion of the research on violence examined how judgments about rape, coercion, and harassment varied based on the presence and type of previous romantic involvement between the male perpetrator and the female victim. These studies typically found that sexual violence was deemed increasingly acceptable as the level of previous intimacy and romantic involvement between the couple increased (e.g., Simonson and Subich 1999).

Cultural Scripts

Of the 28 articles on dating that were published in *Sex Roles* in the 1990s, 21 (75%) focused on some aspect of cultural scripts. Research in the 1990s uncovered continuity with the cultural script of the previous decade in terms of dating preferences. Young men valued physical attractiveness, submissiveness, and vulnerability in women dating partners, while young women preferred dominant and financially successful men partners (Goode 1996; Rainville and Gallagher 1990; Smith et al. 1990). When forced to choose between a romantic relationship and another life goal (e.g., finance, education, physical fitness), research

found that similar number of men and women chose the relationship rather than the life goal (75% of the women and 71% of the men), but consistent with gender stereotypes, women rated relationships as more important than men did, whereas men were more likely to give priority to the goals of "being financially well-off" or "owning one's own home" (Hammersla and Frease-McMahan 1990).

Assimilation to U.S. norms concerning courtship and dating also was found to occur along generational lines for foreign born Asian Indian immigrants and their sons and daughters (Dasgupta 1998). Sons were most accepting of U.S. dating norms such as "Every person should be allowed to choose his or her dating partner freely and independently," followed by daughters. Parents were less accepting, particularly mothers.

Rose and Frieze's (1993) study of hypothetical and actual date scripts confirmed findings from their 1989 study (Rose and Frieze 1989) showing that script actions for hypothetical first dates were highly gender-typed. According to cognitive script theory, spontaneously generated actions used to describe a commonly experienced situation such as "eating in a restaurant" may be classified as consensual script elements if the action is generated or endorsed by 25% or more of participants (Bower et al. 1979). Using this criterion, young heterosexual adults' descriptions of hypothetical first dates yielded some strongly gender-typed script elements. The date script for a woman included 19 actions, including 16 initiated by the woman and three initiated by the man. The man's date script included 19 actions as well and the man initiated all of them. The man was expected to be in control of the public domain (i.e., to plan the date, pay for date events, and control date transportation); the woman was concerned with the private domain (e.g., concerned with their appearance and maintaining the conversation).

Although Rose and Frieze (1993) established that gender-typed scripts were normative, Lottes (1993) reported evidence that variations were sometimes acceptable. For instance, a majority of both women (78%) and men (76%) believed that men and women should be equal initiators of a sexual relationship (Lottes 1993). Moreover, the percentage of women endorsing this egalitarian prescription had increased from that reported by Carroll et al. (1985) The extent to which this applies specifically to woman-initiated dates or the early phase of dating is not clear. Additional evidence of the potential relaxation of gender roles was found by Ross and Davis (1996): only a minority of student participants believed the man should always pay for date activities or that a woman should not initiate intimacy on a date. Younger students were the most likely to endorse traditional dating norms and the majority of both Black and White students indicated that the man should pay for the first date.

An interesting twist on dating scripts was provided by Alksnis et al. 1996 study of what constitutes a "good," "bad," and "typical" date. Participants rated how likely nineteen date events would occur on each type of date. Eight items dealt with sexually charged events such as "your date kisses you" and eleven items dealt with nonsexual events such as "your date pays for everything." Gender differences were found for bad date scripts, but not for good and typical date scripts. Five events were unique to women's bad date script, including: date made sexual advances too early, repeatedly tells you how sexy you look, stares at you, leans in close to you whenever you are sitting together, and repeatedly touches you. Elements of a bad date that were shared by women and men included: your date talks about his/her previous girlfriend/boyfriend; your date rejects your sexual advances; your date does not talk very much; and your date and you each pay for yourself.

Both men and women in heterosexual dating relationships believed the man had more power on dates than the woman, as well as in the relationship generally (Felmlee 1994; Rose and Frieze 1993). A double standard of acceptance of extra-dyadic relationships was noted as well. Young men indicated a greater willingness than young women to disregard their current relationship status to pursue a hypothetical romantic relationship (Seal et al. 1994).

Kowalski's (1993) research on gender differences in the interpretation of sexual signals had important implications for conflict in relationships as well as date rape. Men were significantly more likely than women to perceive that mundane behaviors enacted by a woman signaled sexual interest (e.g., "she smiles at him," "she allows him to pay," and "she compliments him"). Those who were traditional in their attitudes towards women perceived the mundane behaviors as more sexual.

Responses to various types of violent scenarios were the focus of a number of studies in the 1990s. Exposure to nonviolent rap music was found to increase African-American teen women's acceptance of dating violence to the acceptance level of teen men's (Johnson et al. 1995). Rape-supportive beliefs among men also were found for scenarios concerning a steady date more so than for a first date or a stranger rape (Bridges 1991).

Degree of acceptance of sexual coercion in response to hypothetical situations was a frequently used research paradigm. Women were reported to be more disapproving than men of unwanted sexual behavior in date scenarios regardless of a woman's level of sexual resistance (Hannon et al. 1996). In response to rape vignettes, Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson (1991) found that rejection of coercive strategies increased as the level of force increased. However, women rejected coercive strategies enacted by either a woman or a man, whereas men were more accepting of coercive strategies initiated by a woman. Gender differences in acceptance of sexual coercion also were found by Haworth-Hoeppner (1998). Men were twice to three times as likely to indicate support for the use of coercion in every one of the seventeen types of dating encounters described. Some within-gender differences occurred as well: men were more accepting of sexual coercion in the context of established relationships compared to early in the acquaintance process, whereas women were did not support sexual coercion regardless of the depth of involvement.

Evidence from the 1990s repeatedly showed victim blaming to be influenced by gender and traditionality. Snell and Godwin (1993) reported in a study of women only that traditional women were more negative than nontraditional women towards victims across rape scenarios describing casual dating vs. long-term dating situations. In a study of men and women, traditional men tended to blame the victim more than women or egalitarian men in response to all situations (i.e., stranger, acquaintance, date, and marital) (Simonson and Subich 1999). Greater victim blame also was associated with a greater level of acquaintance (i.e., prior sexual involvement vs. no prior involvement) in participants' responses to sexual harassment scenarios (Summers and Myklebust 1992). Finally, both men and women were more likely to blame a woman victim of a hypothetical date rape when she was wearing a short skirt rather than a moderate or long skirt (Workman and Freeburg 1999).

In sum, most research from the 1990s on concepts, beliefs, values, and attitudes concerning dating indicated that the cultural script for dating continued to be strongly gender-typed, particularly in terms of men's power and sexual prerogatives. The findings concerning gender identity suggested that variations in the traditional script did occur, but were not sufficient to pose a challenge to the traditional cultural script. Exceptions to the traditional script were observed, such as good and bad dates and "going Dutch" or woman-initiated dates, implying that alternative scripts were being uncovered or developed in this decade.

Interpersonal Scripts

Twelve articles (43%) from the 1990s focused on some aspect of behavior, contributing to our understanding of interpersonal scripts. Seven focused solely on behavior; five of the twelve had investigated aspects of both cultural and interpersonal scripts and also were discussed in the previous section (i.e., Felmlee 1994; Goode 1996; Lottes 1993; Rose and Frieze 1993; Smith et al. 1990).

A gender-typed cultural script was strongly reflected in actual behavior in terms of interpersonal attraction, dating

scripts, and dating violence. For example, men most frequently sought physical beauty and thinness in a partner when placing personal ads in singles' magazines, whereas women most frequently sought an understanding partner (Smith et al. 1990). Willis and Carlson (1993) found that men and women's singles ads in 1991 were even more aligned with gender stereotypes than they were in 1986, with men offering status and seeking attractiveness in partners, and women offering attractiveness and seeking status in partners. Similarly, almost three times as many men responded to a personal ad placed by a fictional "beautiful waitress" than one placed by an "average looking woman lawyer" and more women replied to an ad by an "average looking man lawyer" than a "handsome cabdriver" (Goode 1996).

On actual first-dates, Rose and Frieze (1993) documented strong proactive-reactive gender typing that was congruent with the cultural script described earlier. Men performed most of the date-related actions (e.g., deciding date events, planning the date, being courtly in behavior, and initiating sexual contact); women were more concerned about their appearance. Actual dates appeared to be more variable than the cultural script. Four types of interruptions or exceptions occurred on actual dates that did not appear in cultural scripts, including double dates (20%), something goes wrong (24%), violations of gender roles (13%), and sex on a first date (2%).

Gender-typed behavior also defined interpersonal scripts in terms of emotionality, power, and communication. Women reported more often experiencing and expressing both positive and negative emotions in dating relationships than men (Sprecher and Sedikides 1993). Felmlee's (1994) study of "who's on top" in terms of power in heterosexual dating revealed that more than half of both men and women said men made more of the decisions, were less emotionally involved, and in general were "getting a better deal." Male dominance also was associated with greater relationship longevity (Felmlee 1994). The majority of dating couples were found to use a gender-stereotyped female-demand/male-withdraw style as their predominant communication pattern and its use increased in response to difficult discussions (Vogel et al. 1999). In addition, couples with a female-demand/male-withdraw and male-demand/female withdraw styles used less positive behaviors towards each other than couples with an equal demand/withdraw pattern.

Young adult dyads asked to participate in role plays concerning sexual behavior in a laboratory setting quickly reverted to gender roles, according to Gilbert et al. (1999). In role play where the man was supposed to ask the woman out on a date, all men did so, but men also initiated 31% of the dates in which the woman was instructed to ask for the date. For role play that focused on rejecting either a public display of affection or greater sexual intimacy, discourse about men's sex drive dominated the discussion regardless of the gender of the initiator. In other words, participants in the woman-initiated, non-conventional conditions quickly reverted to conventional patterns. Gender roles also appeared to be consistent at different stages of relationships (i.e., casually dating, seriously dating, and engaged) according to a cross-sectional study of dating couples by Siavelis and Lamke (1992). Women with boyfriends who were both instrumental and expressive reported more relationship satisfaction at all stages; whereas men with girlfriends who were expressive were more satisfied.

Evidence for some non-normative gender role behavior was found in Lottes' (1993) survey study of actual dates that mirrored the accepting attitudes expressed towards woman-initiated dates mentioned in the previous section. For instance, most men (88%) had been asked out on a date by a woman at least one time and 74% of women had asked a man for a date at least once. Most men (72%) also had been on at least one date where the woman paid all the date expenses and 76% of women had at least once personally paid all date expenses. This is not surprising since typically whoever initiates the date is expected to pay. Lottes did not assess the frequency of woman-initiated or woman-paid dates or how these non-normative dates were viewed. However, these findings suggest that a woman-initiated date script existed as either an emerging script or as a low-frequency "exception" to the dominant interpersonal script.

The last category of research on actual dating behavior in the 1990s concerned studies on violence. The findings concerning gender and gender roles were mixed. One study found that women and men were represented equally as both victims and perpetrators of courtship violence and that both women and men perpetrators of violence had a more masculine gender orientation (Thompson 1991). Hannon et al. (1995) compared recent dates on which unwanted and wanted sex occurred. Lifetime incidence of unwanted sex dates was 64% for women and 35% for men. Variables positively associated with the occurrence of unwanted sex on a date (i.e., "risk factors" for unwanted sex) included when the man initiated the date, paid for the date, or felt led on.

In sum, research on dating during the 1990s expanded to some new areas such as types of dates, gender role reversals in dating, and predictors of behavior. Gender roles were robust within both cultural and interpersonal scripts. Some deviations or exceptions to gender roles were observed in interpersonal behavior but the "typicality" of the exceptions was not explored in depth. Thus, it was not clear if the exceptions (e.g., woman initiates or pays for date) represented emerging scripts or were merely unexceptional exceptions to the (gender) rule, such as "Dutch treat" where each person pays her or his own way.

Dating Research in Sex Roles from 2000 to 2010

Publications on heterosexual dating in *Sex Roles* over the last 10 years have included articles on dating behaviors, attitudes, and outcomes among and between particular social group members (e.g., Bentley et al. 2007); dating scripts, including first-date scripts, rape scripts, and hook-up scripts (e.g., Morr Serewicz and Gale 2008); media influences on dating (e.g., Zurbriggen and Morgan 2006), and dating violence and coercion (e.g., Maurer and Robinson 2008).

Cultural Scripts

Of the 46 articles on heterosexual dating published in *Sex Roles* in the 2000s, 27 (59%) assessed some element of cultural scripts. The evidence from this decade indicated that attitudes, beliefs, and judgments about dating remained strongly gender-typed. Stereotypic gender differences in partner preferences continued to prevail in this decade (e.g., Henningsen et al. 2006; Hetsroni 2000). Men valued beauty more in choosing a partner in a hypothetical dating game (Hetsroni 2000) and expressed more interest in having sex with hypothetical partners (Epstein et al. 2007). In fact, research on sexual language count that men assigned more favorable ratings to the term "feminist" than women, perhaps as the result of men considering feminists to be more liberated sexually (Noland et al. 2004).

Women more often than men selected personality traits as a reason to choose a partner relative to other reasons (e.g., being "bored," "lonely," "wanting physical contact," "wanting someone to spend money on you") (McDaniel 2005). Women also consistently expressed a greater desire for relationship support than men (Perrin et al. 2010), as measured by the relationship support subscale of the Desired Loving Behavior Scale (DLBS; Heesacker et al. 1998). For example, women more than men indicated they would like their partner to do things such as "be a good listener to me," "be sympathetic to my feelings," and "remember my birthday." Finally, women's relationship ideals were guided by benevolent sexist beliefs, but only men's ideals were guided by both benevolent and hostile beliefs, reflecting the cultural paternalism that enables men to have more power in the relationship (Lee et al. 2010, p. 594).

The norm of female thinness also persisted as a theme in the cultural dating script. In one study, sixth-grade girls were asked to provide verbal descriptions of an imagined date (Gershon et al. 2004). Those who expressed more concern about their appearance and placed themselves in a passive role were more concerned about their weight than girls whose dating scripts were more activity-focused and less gender-typed. Both women and men also overestimated the thinness of the female body type preferred by others of the same-gender and the opposite-gender (Park et al. 2007), demonstrating that the norm of female thinness was alive and well.

Cultural scripts for partner preferences as expressed in popular magazines and singles ads also revealed gender differences. Taylor (2005) analyzed random samples of articles from the American "lad" magazines *Maxim*, *FHM* (For Him Magazine), and *Stuff*, starting with the founding issue of each magazine through May 2003. The articles were coded by topic and the accompanying images were coded for the presence of members of each gender, its sexual explicitness, and the nature of the interpersonal contact. Almost all articles (98%) were accompanied by a sexualized image of a woman or women. Common topics concerned how to improve one's sex life when in a serious dating relationship, what women want sexually, and unorthodox sexual positions and locations. The content thus reflected and reinforced the belief that men value physical attractiveness in women and are interested in sexually explicit material. Hypothetical responses to personal ads followed a gender-typed pattern as well (Sheldon 2007). Men showed more interest in ads that mentioned a woman's physical attractiveness. Women expressed greater preference for ads that mentioned the man's personality traits, goals, or financial success.

Morr Serewicz and Gale (2008) found that the hypothetical first-date scripts produced by young heterosexual adults heavily emphasized gender roles, entirely reproducing the hypothetical scripts generated by young adults in *Sex Roles* 20 years earlier (Rose and Frieze 1989). As before, both women and men expected the man to take control of the date, including picking up the woman, paying for the date, and taking her home. This was true regardless of who initiated the date. The only action ascribed to a woman's script was "talk to friends," and only women participants included this action.

Viki et al. (2003) created a measure of "paternalistic chivalry" entirely composed of items related to traditional, gender-typed beliefs about dating and examined the relationship between this new measure and the ambivalent sexism inventory. Example items from the "paternalistic chivalry" measure included: "It is up to the man to decide where the couple are to have their dinner date," "It is inappropriate for a woman to kiss a man first during a date," and "It is up to a man to ask a woman out on a date." The ambivalent sexism inventory included items such as: "Women should be cherished and protected by men." Both women and men were favorable towards paternalistic chivalry. Paternalistic chivalry, in turn, was highly associated with benevolent sexism. Both attitudes restrict women under the guise of protecting them.

Zurbriggen and Morgan (2006) found that young people's views of dating were correlated with their self-reported media consumption. Undergraduate students who said they watched Reality Dating Programs were more likely to endorse a double standard of sexual behavior (e.g., "a man should be more sexually experienced than his wife" and "a woman who initiates sex is too aggressive") and adversarial sexual beliefs (e.g., beliefs that suggest men and women are inherently in opposition with one another in romantic relationships). In addition, those who watched the shows to learn about dating or about the other gender had more highly gender-typed perceptions of dating than those who watched them for sheer entertainment. This suggests that gender-typed media versions of dating may have a strong influence on novice daters.

Research on hookups–the college student's alternative to dating that consists of sexual encounters between mere acquaintances (Paul et al. 2000)– indicated that both the hookup script and traditional date script offer men more power and control than women. In traditional dates, men have the power to initiate the date, initiate physical contact, and direct date activities; in hookups, men "gain status" by having sexual encounters without commitment (Bradshaw et al. 2010) Thus, it is perhaps not surprising that women more so than men preferred traditional dates and men preferred hookups (Bradshaw et al. 2010).

Gender and gender role stereotypes continued to affect young adults' judgments of women victims of rape, dating violence, and stalking. Men more so than women perceived the woman in a date rape scenario as having more interest in sex, and were less confident than women in labeling the scenario as "rape" (Maurer and Robinson 2008). Similarly, men who read interviews about a hypothetical date rape were more likely than women to blame the victim/woman, less likely to blame the perpetrator/man (Brown and Testa 2008), and were more likely to say that that a hypothetical rape was provoked in some way by the woman victim (Cowan 2000). Furthermore, men who watched an R-rated video clip showing women as sexual objects (rather than a cartoon video clip) before reading about a date-rape scenario were more likely to agree that the woman derived pleasure from the rape and "got what she wanted" (Milburn et al. 2000). Stereotypic views of date rape were also held by college women and low-income European-American and Latina women, who rated violent assaults by strangers as being more commonplace than assaults in a dating context or within an established relationship (Littleton et al. 2007, 2009).

Gender also influenced views of dating violence. Both men and women undergraduates rated dating violence in which the perpetrator was a man and the victim was a woman as more violent and frightening than any other gender dyad combination, including "female-on-male," "male-on-male," and "female-on-female" (Hamby and Jackson 2010). This increased perception of fear and violence was due more to physical differences between men perpetrators and women victims than to personality or relationship factors. In addition, women more so than men rated dating violence as more severe and more worthy of intervention than men, and attributed more responsibility to the man/perpetrator. Undergraduates also viewed hypothetical victims and perpetrators of dating violence more favorably when they were portrayed as being from the students' "in-group", i.e., as being from the same university as the participants versus being from a different university (Harrison and Abrishami 2004).

However, both women and men supported a double standard of behavior in several studies comparing violence initiated by a woman versus a man. Hannon et al. (2000) reported that participants rated a date rape initiated by a woman as more justifiable, more understandable, and less aggressive and inappropriate than a date rape initiated by a man. Likewise, both women and men evaluated a man who was sexually-coerced by a woman as being more responsible and as more in control of the situation than a woman who was sexually coerced by a man (Katz et al. 2007). Finally, in the context of a serious dating relationship, a woman was seen as having a greater "right to hit" a boyfriend who betrayed her than a man who was betrayed by a girlfriend (Forbes et al. 2005).

Last, research using hypothetical stalking scenarios found that men more often than women endorsed stalking myths (Sinclair 2010). For example, men agreed more strongly than women with statements such as "Many instances of stalking by would-be-lovers could be avoided if the alleged victim would have just told his/her stalker clearly that s/he was definitely not interested in a romantic relationship." Victim blaming attributions were highest among men for the scenario depicting a woman rejecting a man; men more often than women attributed the stalking incident to the woman being manipulative, disloyal, intentionally leading the pursuer on, playing hard to get, or being afraid of commitment (Sinclair 2010).

Not all aspects of partner preferences and behaviors were gendered. Women and men were found to hold some common ideals. Perrin et al. (2010) found that both women and men reported similar levels of desired and received loving behaviors from their partner, although women expressed a greater desire for relationship support than men. Women and men also used similar standards when describing the desired characteristics of short-term versus long-term dating partners, contrary to the prediction of evolutionary theory that women and men would pursue different mating strategies (Pedersen et al. 2010). Gender similarities also were observed when asking men and women the ideal number of different sexual partners they desired and the number of partners they realistically

expected to have over a 30-year period. The median response for the 30-year period for both men and women was "no difference" between the ideal number of partners and the number realistically expected, suggesting that both men and women, typically, are not constrained in achieving the number of partners they desire (Pedersen et al. 2010).

In sum, elements of cultural scripts studied from 2000 to 2010 revealed that some script variations had become more common (e.g., the hookup), but had a minimal effect on issues like gender and power. Media influences also were documented to reproduce and reinforce gender roles.

Interpersonal Scripts

For 2000–2010, twenty-one articles (46%) in *Sex Roles* focused on some aspect of interpersonal scripts (i.e., actual dating choices and behavior) using U.S. samples, including two articles that assessed both cultural and interpersonal scripts (i.e., Pedersen et al. 2010; Perrin et al. 2010). Research examined traditional topics such as short-term mating strategies, physical attractiveness, scripts, power, and date rape, but also pursued a deeper understanding of some new aspects of dating, such as emotions and unrequited love.

A novel approach to assessing the role physical attractiveness plays in dating was taken by Miller et al. (2001), who classified the content of personal ads listed by 547 writers in terms of whether each expressed a preference for a thin partner, a physically fit partner, or no weight preference. They then mailed the Figure Rating Scale to the ad writers and asked them to specify both ideal body size and acceptable body sizes for partners. Women preferred a physically fit partner, regardless of the preference expressed in the ad. Conversely, regardless of the preferences men expressed in their ads, most indicated that a number of body sizes would be acceptable.

Slightly different findings were reported in a recent study by Glasser et al. (2009),who asked a sample of 5,810 heterosexuals that had placed internet dating profiles on Yahoo what body types they found acceptable in a dating partner (i.e., slim, slender, average, athletic, fit, thick, a few extra pounds, large, voluptuous and curvy). Among those expressing a preference, men were five times more likely than women to prefer to date only those with fit or toned bodies. White men preferred a thin and toned woman whereas African-American and Latino men were accepting of a thin and toned woman as well as one with a larger or thicker body. These apparently contradictory findings nevertheless indicate that men's behavior is not as limited as their hypothetical choices imply.

Other results confirm that in terms of actual behavior, men may be less selective about women's appearance than stereotypes would predict. For example, 85% of high school boys in one study reported that a girl's slimness would affect her attractiveness, but high school girls underestimated the body size that was attractive to boys (Paxton et al. 2005). Women who more strongly endorse gender roles are more likely to act on stereotyped perceptions of what men want. Franzoi (2001) reported that women who held benevolent sexist beliefs were more likely to use cosmetics when preparing for an actual date and to believe that sexual attractiveness could be altered using cosmetics. In addition, Mensinger et al. (2007) found that endorsement of the superwoman ideal was associated with greater disordered eating among the 866 adolescent girls that were studied.

A final study on interpersonal scripts as reflected through the personal ads examined the ads of lesbians and heterosexual men and women (Smith et al. 2010). Heterosexual men most often offered financial security or status in their ads and sought attractiveness in their partners, whereas heterosexual women most often offered their physical attractiveness and sought security and status in a partner. In contrast, lesbians offered and requested a unique constellation of partner attributes; for example, honesty was placed above all other measured traits.

"Do nice guys finish last?" was the focus of two studies by Urbaniak and Kilmann (2003, 2006). Women rated both niceness and physical attractiveness as increasing men's desirability. Urbaniak and Kilmann (2006) then compared undergraduate men's agreeableness and actual dating history with women's ratings of the men's attractiveness (from photographs). Cute macho guys (e.g., less agreeable/more attractive) were more successful than nice guys (e.g., more agreeable/less attractive) in terms of casual dating and one time sexual encounters, but nice guys were equally successful in terms of casual sexual relations and committed relationships. Overall, additional research showed that men and women spend similar amounts of actual effort (i.e., time and money spent) in short-term mating attempts (i.e., brief affairs or one night stands) (Pedersen et al. 2010).

Openness in terms of sexual communication and assertiveness was affected by gender role traditionality in a study of 698 couples by Greene and Faulkner (2005). Men generally had more influence in sexual negotiations than women overall, but more traditional couples were less sexually self-disclosing, less communicative, and less effective at sexual negotiations than less traditional couples. Bentley et al. (2007) also found that adolescent boys had more authority to make decisions than girls in their dating relationships and that those with more power were more sexually aggressive.

Finally, as in previous decades, dating violence was a major thrust of research from 2000 to 2010. The prevalence of different types of violence continued to be explored, but new topics were introduced as well, such persistence in

response to unrequited love. For example, women who reported being a victim of sexual aggression by a man were more likely to have the following risk factors than women who did not report being a victim of sexual aggression, including: the event was spontaneous rather than planned ahead of time, the date began with a group of people instead of alone with the man, the man did not initiate or ask for the date; and the date did not involve any expenses (Yeater et al. 2008). Other findings were that men who held adversarial sexual beliefs, made their dating partner feel uncomfortable, seemed less trustworthy, or used alcohol or illegal drugs were more likely to victimize their dates. Women who used alcohol and drugs and who had difficulty asserting themselves were more likely to be victimized (Yeater et al. 2008). Taken together, these risk factors closely parallel the hookup script and imply that such interactions, though seemingly devoid of gender roles, enhance men's power, particularly that of sexist, macho men.

In a study of playful force and playful aggression, the majority of participants defined playful force as consensual acts or acts that did not cause harm (Ryan and Mohr 2005). However, physically aggressive men did not appear to differentiate the two terms. Asked to give examples of playful force, they said, "ripping clothes off, tying up partner," "rough, almost sadistic behavior toward each other," and "ass spanking, hair pulling, anal play, and handcuffs."

Sinclair and Frieze (2005) investigated a novel topic: unrequited love. Undergraduates were asked to describe dating situations in which they had pursued someone who did not return their interest (unrequited love) or those where they had experienced an unwanted pursuit. Both women and men tended to believe that when they were the pursuer, the object of their affection was more accepting than when they themselves were the object of unwanted pursuit. This was particularly true for men, who more often said the woman they had pursued felt flattered by their attention or were playing hard to get. Men also were less likely than women to tell an unwanted pursuer directly they were "definitely not interested."

Wright, Norton, and Matusek (2010) investigated responses to sexual refusals during actual heterosexual hookups by asking women and men about what coercive tactics they used in response to refusals, if any. Of the 773 women and 776 men who participated, more men (46%) than women (14%) of men reported having had at least one experience in the past year of wanting more sexual activity than their hookup partner. A subgroup of 220 men and 50 women provided narratives of their experience. Men who were high on dominance or who reported experiencing anger and confusion in response to their partner's rejection were more likely to use coercion than men who reported

feeling rejected. In contrast, women who felt rejected by a hookup partner were more likely to coerce than women who were embarrassed by the rejection. Additional research showed that, at times, both men and women attempt to verbally pressure and influence a reluctant partner to engage in unwanted sexual activity (O'Dougherty Wright et al. 2010). However, women were far less likely than men to report having been in hookup situations in which they wanted more sexual activity than their partner.

Another trait associated with sexual coercion was narcissism. A study of heterosexual couples by Ryan et al. (2008) found that men higher in covert narcissism (i.e., "narcissism associated with conscious shame and unconscious grandiosity," p. 804) more often reported physically assaulting their partner, whereas women high in sexual narcissism (i.e., "an egocentric pattern of sexual behavior that involves both low self-esteem and an inflated sense of sexual ability and sexual entitlement," p. 804) more often sexually coerced their partners. Furthermore, men and women with these traits tended to be paired as couples.

Sexually compliant women and those in abusive relationships appeared to be more vulnerable to sexual coercion, low self-esteem, and eating disorders. Sexually compliant women (one-third of the sample studied by Katz and Tirone 2009), who had agreed to unwanted sex in the absence of explicit partner pressure, reported greater investment in the concept of ideal womanhood than non-compliant women. They were less satisfied with their relationships as well. Similarly, Offman and Matheson (2004) reported that women in physically or psychologically abusive or sexually coercive relationships, compared to women who were not, were more depressed and had more negative sexual self-perceptions. Last, women who experienced psychological aggression from men in dating relationships were more likely to express bulimic symptoms and attempt to diet (Skomorovsky et al. 2006).

In conclusion, despite changes in women's status and power over the last 30–35 years, cultural and interpersonal scripts from the most recent decade remain highly influenced by gender role stereotypes that emphasize men's power. However, some research suggests that women's belief about what men want in a woman is more restrictive than men's actual behavior warrants. It is important to note that the majority of the studies on dating in Sex Roles have examined the attitudes, feelings, and behaviors of young people, often undergraduates. When individuals age and/or leave the college environment, their interpersonal dating scripts may change to accommodate changing career and/or family goals, increased experience with dating, and a new pool of potential partners. For this reason, the interpersonal dating scripts we have discussed thus far cannot be said to be representative of midlife or older adults in the U.S., U.S.

adults who are divorced, widowed, or separated, or (in most cases) adults who never went to college.

Why are Gender Norms so Intractable in Dating Relationships?

Given the improvement in women's status and power over the last 35 years, the continued presence of strong gender stereotypes in dating beliefs, scripts, and behavior that portray or confirm women as passive recipients and men as active powerholders requires some explanation. Part of the reason for the tenacity of gender role norms in dating relationships may be because men and women are still not on equal footing in society. Women are persistently underrepresented in the highest leadership positions, including in public office, in academia, and in business (Rhode and Kellerman 2007). For example, while women earned 35.5% of MBAs in 2007, they currently represent just 3% of *Fortune* 500 CEOs, and are only 1.5% of CEOs in the world's 2,000 top performing companies (Angelo 2010; Catalyst 2009; Hansen et al. 2010).

Another reason for the persistence of gender stereotypes in dating relationships is that these long-held cultural scripts and stereotypes serve many cognitive and social functions. On the first few dates or romantic encounters, relying on cultural scripts and stereotypes may provide couples with a familiar and mutually agreed upon backdrop that helps to reduce the anxiety associated with getting to know a new person. The fact that this agreed-upon script relies so heavily on gender may now be mere convention, remnant of the explicit sexism that was more prevalent when the institution of dating was founded.

Second, following cultural standards and norms is one way to demonstrate to your partner that you are socially savvy and attentive to cultural rules– an impression most individuals yearn to make when getting to know a potential romantic partner. Finally, most early romantic encounters revolve around how to reduce uncertainty about the relationship and about the partner (Afifi and Lucas 2008). That may be why synchronization is important–the use of social scripts and stereotypes provides a common and low-effort vehicle for interpersonal synchronization in a situation otherwise full of ambiguity. However, scripts and stereotypes may be obstacles to developing an authentic relationship in so far as they artificially constrain behaviors and do not permit partners to express any counter-stereotypic feelings and preferences or any explicit evaluations (Vorauer and Ross 1996).

Equality in Romantic Relationships

Given that gender stereotypes serve some adaptive functions in structuring initial romantic encounters, how can we reduce our reliance on them? It may take many more decades before cultural beliefs about men's agency and women's communality change. Unless and until those stereotypes change, we propose that initial romantic encounters between men and women can become more egalitarian by increasing their use of alternative scripts. The framework we propose as a replacement for gender roles in initial romantic encounters is the friendship script.

The Friendship Script

Friendship is recognized as the most voluntary and least institutionalized of all social relationships (Blieszner and Adams 1992). In the absence of cultural and institutional obligations, friendships are created and maintained in the context of mutual, voluntary support and involvement, equality, and fairness (Rawlins 1992). Indeed, the characteristic of equality is likely to be present even in the early, formative stages of friendships (Fehr 2008). Although there is some evidence that same-gender and cross-gender friendships function differently (e.g., O'Meara 1989; Rose 1985) and there are some gender differences in close friendship patterns, (e.g., Elkins and Peterson 1993), research has shown that both male and female cross-gender friends typically perceive that power and control are shared equally within their friendship, or that power and control are simply irrelevant to the friendship (Monsour et al. 1994). Of course, not all friendships are invariably equal, but the friendship script seems to prioritize equality over and above other relationship scripts (see Fehr 1996, for a review). Moreover, both genders prefer cooperative over competitive styles of behavior in a romantic partner (Laner 1989), and both prefer equal-power friendships over unequal-power friendships (Veniegas and Peplau 1997). Thus, men and women seem to desire equality and cooperation in both romantic and friendship relationships.

An initial romantic encounter based on the friendship script would be characterized by mutual responsiveness and shared responsibility for all the date events, from asking for the date and paying for it, to monitoring the date conversation and its emotional undercurrent. Although there is abundant evidence that women are socialized to think more, and with more complexity, about committed romantic relationships (see Acitelli and Young 1996, for a review), women and men appear to be equally competent and socially skilled at initiating friendships - an important factor in the early stages of friendship formation (Fehr 2008). Moreover, while the gender wage gap continues to afford men more resources to pay for date activities than women (Hegewisch et al. 2010), friendship encounters do not necessarily include paid activities at all.

In order for the friendship script to replace the gender-stereotypic first date script, changes in both cultural and

interpersonal scripts are desirable from a feminist stand-point. As mentioned earlier, however, changing mainstream cultural stereotypes about gender and romance is a massive undertaking that requires not only social-structural changes but time and generational change. Interpersonal scripts, however, can be redefined by motivated individuals at any time, and wide-spread adjustment in interpersonal scripts can inform the cultural milieu. Luckily, interpersonal date scripts are primed for a transition from reliance on gender stereotypes to a reliance on friendship scripts.

Evidence of the Friendship Script in Romantic Relationships

It is feasible, at the interpersonal level, to transition from gender-typed initial romantic encounters to friendship-based initial romantic encounters. First, studies have shown that "friendship-based love" or "compassionate love" already exists in many intimate heterosexual relationships, including in the relationships of young, dating couples (e.g., Fehr et al. 2009; Grote and Frieze 1994). Hetero-sexuals highly value friendship in their romantic relation-ships and often cite their romantic partner as their closest friend (e.g., Hendrick and Hendrick 1993). There is also a good deal of overlap between the ideal characteristics of romantic partners and friendships at the interpersonal level (e.g., Cann 2004). Men and women agree on the qualities that are most important in a spouse (being communicative, honest, trusting, sensitive, etc.) and the qualities that are important to both men and women in a spouse are, for the most part, the same as those that are desired in a best friend (Laner and Russell 1998). Finally, men and women expect similar intimacy-promoting behaviors from their romantic partners and friends (e.g., Fuhrman et al. 2009), though research shows that we tend to have higher standards and expectations for romantic partners (e.g., Flannagan et al. 2005; Fuhrman et al. 2009; Sprecher & Regan, 2002). Thus, heterosexual romance is already well-aligned with friendship in terms of desired and actual relationship qualities and dynamics.

Second, a section of the population is already using friendship scripts as the basis for early and long-lasting egalitarian romantic relationships, namely, gay and lesbian partners (e.g., Rose and Zand 2000; Rose et al. 1993; Nardi 1999). Research has shown that committed gay and lesbian couples tend to be more egalitarian than heterosexual couples (e.g., Blumstein and Schwartz 1990; Connolly and Sicola 2005; Kurdek; 1993; Peplau 1991). This includes equality in the division of roles and responsibilities and in terms of relationship maintenance efforts (for a review see Peplau and Fingerhut 2007), and is likely due to same-sex couples' reliance on friendship as the basis for the relationship (e.g., Peplau 1979; Rose 2000; Schwartz 1994). Romance that is based in deep friendship is cooperative, compassionate, synchronous, and close (e.g., Gottman 1998; Rose 2000; Schwartz 1994) and serves the goals of intimacy, deep friendship, and mutual respect (Schwartz 1994).

Lesbian and gay couples are also especially aware of issues regarding power and equality (e.g., Eldridge and Gilbert 1990; Reilly and Lynch 1990; Shechory and Ziv 2007). Dating scripts of lesbians and gay men reflect a lack of gender roles that appear to presage the egalitarianism of established relationships (Klinkenberg and Rose 1994). Date activities tended to be mutually decided. Orchestrating and paying for the date was either done by the person asking for the date or shared as it would be between two friends. Similarly, either party initiated physical contact. There is also some evidence that same-sex couples are especially likely to use positive communication styles like negotiation and compromise that promote equal sharing and weighing of opinions (Gottman et al. 2003).

Implications for Change and Future Research

Gendered power patterns in relationships must be trans-formed if heterosexual couples are to move towards equality, including during the dating or initiation phase of the relationship. Dating research suggests this will be difficult, particularly for first dates or initial encounters. Individuals tend to conform more closely to cultural scripts in situations of uncertainty, such as interacting with someone new and desiring to make a good impression. In addition, the formal and informal institutionalized power of men is still stronger than many people recognize. Thus, the prevailing gendered dating script is likely to be adhered to most strongly on a first date.

As the research in *Sex Roles* has shown, gender-typed dates remain the predominant script in the collective and personal consciousness of young adults today. Future research aimed at encouraging more egalitarian dating practices would benefit from more closely examining the social and cognitive variables that reinforce or reduce our reliance on gender-typed norms in interpersonal scripts. Interpersonal script enactment is controllable at the indi-vidual level and appears to be primed for change. Possibly, interpersonal scripts could be manipulated experimentally. For example, couples brought together in a speed-dating study might be provided with the activities and tone of their first initial romantic encounter by researchers to see whether going on a traditional "date" vs. "hanging out" lends to different levels of intimacy, interpersonal emotions, gender role trajectories, or relational longevity.

Research done 15 to 17 years ago suggests that most young people have experienced some counter-stereotypic

behaviors on heterosexual dates, believe that either gender should be permitted to initiate a relationship, and feel that is acceptable for a woman to initiate intimacy or pay for a date (Lottes 1993; Ross and Davis 1996). Even so, personal experience with and endorsement of egalitarian dating behaviors has not loosened gender-typed restrictions on interpersonal scripts substantially. One reason for this discrepancy may be the result of aversive sexism, but this remains to be determined. Individuals who genuinely espouse egalitarian beliefs still may experience subtle and nagging discomfort when encountering gender atypical behaviors as a result of heavy and long-term exposure to sexist ideology (Gaertner and Dovidio 1986). Because sexism is consciously aversive to these individuals, they might rationalize their reactions using nonsexist justifications. Still, their negative reaction to an atypical date interaction may irreparably and/or unconsciously taint the relationship and their future interaction goals.

Alternatively, perhaps the reason that individuals who espouse egalitarian norms fail to enact them with regularity is because of pluralistic ignorance (Katz and Allport 1931). They may believe they are part of a minority and that their dating partner most likely does not share their progressive beliefs. Therefore, these progressive individuals may suppress the egalitarian behaviors and attitudes that they hold dear in an attempt to not offend or confuse a new potential romantic partner. This failure to actively depart from the gender-typed script could cause a cycle of gendered reciprocal behaviors that upholds the belief that traditional dates are preferred.

Still, some heterosexuals regularly and successfully deviate from gender stereotypes in their initial romantic encounters. These individuals are worth studying in-depth for the more general principles and relations their behaviors may provide. For example, perhaps highly egalitarian daters have developed similar strategies for finding like-minded partners, or for comfortably introducing counter-stereotypic behaviors on first dates. Or, perhaps highly egalitarian daters share certain psychological features that can be encouraged in or enjoyed by the typical single heterosexual. And of course, continued examination of the romantic relationships of gay men and lesbians, especially young adults, will shed light on how power dynamics in early romantic relationships can be navigated without relying on gender roles.

Conclusion

The past 35 years of dating research in the journal Sex Roles selectively reviewed here provides a snapshot of findings and trends from each decade, rather than a comprehensive review of all published work during this period. However, this limited body of work revealed that there is a high and continuing social interest among feminist psychologists in how romantic relationships are formed. This interest has found a reliable outlet in Sex Roles and Sex Roles in turn has been influential in defining this area of research.

Feminist research has emphasized the costs and consequences of gender roles in dating, as well as sought insight concerning what features promote egalitarian relationships. Gender roles have remained extremely consistent and robust over the past several decades. However, some exceptions to gender roles and rules exist, providing evidence that–with effort–we can avoid "doing gender" (West and Zimmerman 1991). Research on same-sex relationships and on the similarities between romantic heterosexual relationships and friendships suggests that a friendship script can serve as a useful and egalitarian interpersonal substitute for gender roles in dating.

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