

# **DEVELOPMENT OF THE 'ROMANTIC BELIEFS SCALE' AND EXAMINATION OF THE EFFECTS OF GENDER AND GENDER-ROLE ORIENTATION**

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Through a program of research, a scale was developed to measure beliefs that have been identified in the literature as constituting an ideology of romanticism. The final scale items were selected and subjected to several reliability and validity tests in a survey study conducted with 730 undergraduate students. The results provided strong support for the validity and reliability of the Romantic Beliefs Scale as well as for the four beliefs comprising the scale: Love Finds a Way, One and Only, Idealization, and Love at First Sight. Furthermore, romanticism was found to be related to gender and gender-role orientation. Men were generally more romantic than women, and femininity was a stronger predictor of romanticism than was masculinity. These findings are discussed as a function of both social structure and personal predispositions.

Love as the ideology of romanticism has recently been distinguished from other approaches to love, particularly love as the subjective feelings associated with a particular partner or ongoing relationship (e.g. Cunningham & Antill, 1981; Peplau & Gordon, 1983). Although descriptions vary, beliefs associated with the ideology of romanticism typically include the primacy of love as a basis for mate selection (over considerations of class, status or custom), love at first sight, only one true love, true love forever, and intrepid lovers can overcome obstacles that stand in their way (Cunningham &

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Antill, 1981; Knox & Sporkowski, 1968; Lantz et al., 1968; Peplau & Gordon, 1983).

To the extent that the ideology of romanticism is a relatively coherent individual orientation toward love, it may function as a cognitive schema for organizing and evaluating one's own behavior and the behavior of a potential or actual romantic partner. Indirect support for this assumption is found in research that demonstrates an association between romanticism and various aspects of relational affect and behavior (e.g. Athanasiou et al., 1970). Moreover, the strong effect on marital satisfaction for constructs analogous to romanticism, such as General Relationship Beliefs (Bradbury & Fincham, 1988), suggests that understanding the ideology of romanticism is an important contribution toward understanding the dynamics of close relationships.

The research reported here is a first step in that direction. The purpose of the present investigation is twofold: to develop and validate a new romanticism scale, and to identify patterns of association among romanticism, gender and gender-role orientation.

Development of a new romanticism scale was necessitated by two problems apparent in existing measures. First, several of the previous scales use language and express ideas that are somewhat dated. For example, the Hobart (1958) scale includes, 'A girl should expect her sweetheart to be chivalrous on all occasions' and 'The sweetly feminine "clinging vine" girl cannot compare with the capable and sympathetic girl as a sweetheart.'

Second, few existing scales adequately represent the full range of beliefs that appear to be associated with the ideology of romanticism. Unfortunately, those scales which do capture most of the components of the ideology of romanticism also include items measuring rational or conjugal love (e.g. Munro & Adams, 1978) and/or the subjective experience of love (e.g. Knox & Sporkowski, 1968). So these scales are inappropriate when attempting to draw conclusions about the ideology of romanticism and its constituent beliefs.

To guide scale development, we chose the comprehensive description of the ideology of romanticism found in the 'romantic love ideal' typology developed by Lantz and his colleagues (Lantz et al., 1968; Lantz et al., 1973), and summarized in Michener et al., (1986). The typology has been used exclusively as a category system for content analysis of literary sources and has not previously been operationalized for measurement of individual differences. The

romantic love ideal is composed of five beliefs about love: (1) True love can strike without prior interaction ('Love at First Sight'); (2) There is only one person we can truly love ('The One and Only'); (3) True love can overcome any obstacle ('Love Conquers All'); (4) Our true love will be perfect ('Idealization'); and (5) We should follow our feelings and base our choice of a partner on love rather than on other (more rational) considerations ('Follow the Heart'). Although this typology holds promise as a basis for measuring individual levels of romanticism, representative items for each of the beliefs need to be written and tested. In addition, the scale needs to be submitted to factor analysis in order to determine whether the conceptual distinction drawn between belief categories by Lantz et al. are meaningful distinctions in the romantic ideologies of lay people.

The second goal of this study — to explore how romanticism is affected by gender and gender-role orientation — was motivated by shortcomings and inconsistencies in previous research. Early studies of gender differences in romanticism found men to be more romantic than women (e.g. Fengler, 1974; Heiger & Troll, 1973; Hobart, 1958; Kephart, 1967; Knox & Sporakowski, 1968). When college students were asked their general attitudes about relationships, men were more likely than women to have beliefs such as that one should marry for love, and love will conquer all. These findings for gender have become so pervasive in the research literature that references to men as the more romantic gender are standard in scholarly reviews of interpersonal relationships and intimacy (e.g. Peplau & Gordon, 1983).

This difference is typically explained from a functionalist perspective (Dion & Dion, 1985). The essence of this position as it applies to gender differences in romanticism is that men can afford to be romantic because they have greater economic freedom to select a mate on the basis of love alone and, by implication, to view their relationships in idealistic terms.

Based on the functionalist perspective, we might expect that in the wake of increased educational and economic opportunities for women, gender differences in romanticism would become less pronounced or disappear (Dion & Dion, 1985). Two recent studies suggest that this may be the case. Cunningham & Antill (1981) found no significant differences between men and women on composite scores of Rubin's (1973) romanticism scale (based on Hobart, 1958) for a sample of adults in Australia. Similarly, Simp-

son et al. (1986) failed to replicate Kephart's (1967) finding that college men were significantly more likely than college women to answer yes to the question 'If a man or woman had all the other qualities you desired, would you marry this person if you were not in love with him or her?' Simpson et al. found that men and women were equally likely to endorse this belief.

The findings of Cunningham & Antill (1981) and Simpson et al. (1986) are consistent with a functionalist perspective which predicts that changes in social conditions are eventually reflected in modifications of role-relevant behaviors and attitudes for men and women (Dion & Dion, 1985). However, it does not necessarily follow that these recent findings of no gender differences confirm the presumption that changes in social conditions have, in fact, occurred or that they have had a significant impact on the romantic attitudes of American men and women. Cunningham & Antill used a sample of cohabiting couples who volunteered in response to advertisements in Australian media. We cannot be sure that their results are generalizable to American college samples, which have been used in most of the previous research. Simpson et al. did use a sample of American undergraduate students, but for purposes of comparison with Kephart's early study, used his single item measure of romanticism. As indicated previously, the ideology of romanticism is more adequately represented by a constellation of beliefs about love, only one of which concerns the role of love in mate selection. The question of whether men and women differ in the degree to which they endorse the various beliefs constituting the ideology of romanticism invites further study.

In addition, research into the effects of gender on romanticism can be strengthened if simultaneously accompanied by systematic research into the effects of gender-role orientation on romanticism. The only study, to our knowledge, that has considered the relationship between gender-role orientation and romanticism is the Australian study conducted by Cunningham & Antill (1981). They found scores on the femininity subscale of the Bem Sex Role Inventory to be significantly and positively correlated with romanticism for the male and female daters and marrieds in the sample (but not the cohabitators). Scores on the masculinity subscale and the variable of biological gender, however, were found to be unrelated to romanticism. The finding of a greater effect for femininity than masculinity and gender is consistent with other studies that have considered both gender and gender-role orientation in relation to a

number of other relational behaviors and attitudes. For example, research has considered how gender-role orientation is related to the experience and expression of love (Bailey et al., 1987; Coleman & Ganong, 1985), relationship beliefs and quality (Kurdek & Schmitt, 1986), and responses to dissatisfaction in the relationship (Rusbult et al., 1986). Generally, this research indicates that gender-role orientation is a more important predictor of relational behaviors and attitudes than is biological gender, and that feminine and androgynous persons love more, are more expressive, and have more positive attitudes and beliefs about their relationship than do masculine and undifferentiated subjects.

The significant main effect for gender-role orientation (i.e. femininity) in the Cunningham & Antill (1981) study and in related studies encourages additional examination of gender-role orientation in consort with gender as predictors of romanticism. Moreover, because of limitations in the design of the Cunningham & Antill study, two particular issues have not been adequately addressed.

First, we do not know if gender continues to have a significant effect on romanticism after controlling for the effects of gender-role orientation. Nor do we know if gender and gender-role orientation interact in their effects on romanticism. Although Cunningham & Antill (1981) correlated gender-role orientation scores with romanticism scores for both males and females within each relationship type (daters, cohabitators and marrieds) they did not perform multivariate analyses to examine separate and joint effects of gender and gender-role orientation simultaneously. This decision was unfortunate given the probability that gender and gender-role orientation are confounded. As Eagly points out, gender roles are 'prescriptions for appropriate male and female qualities' (1987: 21). As such, they may interact with gender in complicated ways. In a review of personality characteristics associated with love and romanticism, Dion & Dion advocate research focused on the 'separate and joint contributions of gender-role orientation (i.e. masculine, feminine, and androgynous) and gender (i.e. male versus female)' (1985: 232). The present investigation responds to this concern.

A second issue in need of attention is the inadequate understanding we have of how gender and gender-role orientation relate to the specific beliefs that constitute the ideology of romanticism. Cunningham & Antill (1981) performed their analyses on a composite score of Rubin's (1973) eight-item romanticism scale (adapted from

the original Hobart scale, 1958). While use of composite scores is a common practice and appropriate for many questions regarding romanticism, it also precludes the possibility of comparing effects across specific beliefs. It is quite possible that the several beliefs that constitute the ideology of romanticism are differentially affected by characteristics of social structure (as manifested in being male vs. female in our society) and characteristics of personality (as manifested in feminine vs. masculine gender-role orientations).

If, for example, social factors such as actual or potential economic status and the role of relationship initiator give men greater freedom to select a mate based on love alone, then we might expect gender to be an important variable in predicting belief in love as a prerequisite for marriage. This would be consistent with Eagly's (1987) recent argument that the different adult roles men and women have in society lead to gender differences in beliefs, skills and other phenomena. On the other hand, personality traits associated with femininity, such as sympathy, interpersonal sensitivity, caring and nurturance, might predispose certain individuals (both males and females) to believe that romantic commitment to another person can endure. Thus we might expect gender-role orientation to be an important variable in predicting the belief in only one true love. Whether this line of reasoning is accurate or, alternatively, whether the separate beliefs will simply reflect the same patterns that will obtain for overall romanticism has yet to be determined.

In sum, this research was designed to untangle the associations among gender, gender-role orientation and the ideology of romanticism. The first phase of research consists of the development of a scale which measures the beliefs comprising the ideology of romanticism. The second phase includes a large survey study conducted to examine the reliability and validity of the scale, including relating it to other scales in the literature (e.g. the Spaulding [1970] Romantic Love Complex Scale, Rubin's [1970] Liking and Love scales, and Hendrick & Hendrick's [1986] Love Attitudes Scale), and to examine the separate and conjoint effects of gender and gender-role orientation in a multivariate design.

## **Methods**

Several stages of scale construction were systematically conducted in order to develop a valid and reliable romanticism scale. Initially, several romanticism scales existing in the literature (e.g. Hobart, 1958; Spaulding, 1970) were examined for items that seem to measure the beliefs constituting the 'romantic love ideal' identi-

fied by Lantz et al. (1968). A few items were borrowed and rewritten from previous scales, although many more were written by the authors and a student assistant. We began with a pool of 32 items, which were designed to have high face validity. In a first pretest, 145 students responded to each of the 32 items on a 5-point response scale that ranged from strong agreement to strong disagreement. The statistical criteria used to select items from this pretest for further consideration included: item-to-total correlations above 0.50, variation in responses (minimal skewness), and high face validity of the item (i.e. the degree to which the item seemed, on the face of it, to measure one of the beliefs in the 'romantic love ideal'). Based on the results of the first pretest, some of the items were rewritten, and some were deleted and replaced with new items. Twenty-nine items were included in a second pretest that was conducted with 92 students. The same selection criteria were used to evaluate these items.

Based on the results of the second pretest, 10 items were selected for a version of the romanticism scale that was used in an initial study of the effect of gender and gender-role orientation on romanticism conducted with 536 students (see Sprecher et al., 1987). However, unexpected factor analysis results with the 10-item scale led to the decision to continue to revise the scale and add more items. At this point we also rewrote items so that the referent in all items was the self (e.g. 'If I truly love someone . . .') rather than a hypothetical other (e.g. 'If a person truly loves someone . . .'). We wanted the scale to measure personal attitudes rather than normative expectations about romanticism. Eighteen items were then tested with a sample of 166 students. The standard statistical criteria referred to earlier were used to evaluate the items, and once again some of the items were deleted.

Before finalizing our romanticism scale, we returned once again to the literature to see if there were any other important aspects of romanticism that we had missed by focusing exclusively on the beliefs contained in the 'romantic love ideal' (Lantz et al., 1968). At this point we decided to add items to measure the romantic notion that 'Love Lasts Forever', thus distinguishing it from the similar notion of 'One and Only', which is one of the beliefs in the 'romantic love ideal'. We also distinguished between idealization of the partner and idealization of the relationship, and wrote additional items for each. Finally, we changed the response scale for the romanticism items from a 5-point scale to a 7-point scale. Forty-two items were then tested with 213 students. At this point we considered not only the statistical criteria listed earlier, but also the results of factor analysis. If an item did not load above 0.50 on one of the five major factors that emerged from the factor analysis, it was deleted.

Based on these results, 21 items were selected for this study. However, as indicated in the results section which follows, only 15 of the 21 items subsequently met the statistical criteria used in this study, and thus the final *Romantic Beliefs Scale* we are introducing has 15 items.

In sum, scale development was extensive; it included several studies and a total of 1152 subjects. After scale development, we designed a survey study to demonstrate the validity and reliability of the final version of the romanticism scale, to examine how romanticism is related to other scales in the literature, and to examine differences in romanticism based on gender and gender-role orientation.

### *Sample*

A total of 730 undergraduate students (277 males and 453 females) at a midwestern university were the participants. Questionnaires were administered in a variety of classes in order to get a diverse sample of students. These classes were Introduction



to Sociology, Introduction to Mass Communication, Human Sexuality, and Introduction to Social Work (for nonmajors).

Two hundred participants (27.4 percent) were freshmen, 308 (42.2 percent) were sophomores, 181 (24.8 percent) were juniors, 36 (4.9 percent) were seniors, and 5 (0.7 percent) checked the 'other' category. The mean age of the sample was 19.55 ( $SD = 2.41$ ). Thus the modal respondent was a college sophomore who was 19 years old.

A majority of the sample (88.66 percent) was white. Black students accounted for 8.9 percent of the sample and other racial groups (e.g. Asian, Hispanic) for 2.5 percent. A large proportion of the students (85.6 percent) identified themselves as being raised in a middle- or upper middle-class family.

### *Measurement*

The first part of the questionnaire contained demographic questions (including gender), the romanticism scale, and the Bem (1974) Sex Role Inventory. Three different versions of the remainder of the questionnaire were written in order to include a wide variety of additional scales for assessing the criterion and construct validity of the new romanticism scale.

The first version of the questionnaire was completed by 235 students (112 males, 123 females) or 32.2 percent of the sample. The second version of the questionnaire was completed by 368 students (121 males, 247 females) or 50.4 percent of the sample. The third version of the questionnaire was completed by 127 students (44 males, 83 females) or 17.4 percent of the sample.

*Romanticism:* The 21 items that had been developed after extensive pretesting were included in random order in one section of the questionnaire. Each item was followed by a 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) response scale. The items that were selected for the final version of the *Romantic Beliefs Scale* are found in Table 1. Although reverse-scored items had been written throughout scale development, none met the final statistical criteria. Thus, all of the items are scored such that higher numbers indicate greater romanticism.

*Gender-role orientation:* The Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) (Bem, 1974) was used to measure gender-role orientation. Respondents are asked to indicate how well each of 60 personality characteristics describes them on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 = never or almost never true, to 7 = almost or almost always true. Twenty items reflect masculine traits (e.g. self-reliant, forceful, makes decisions easily), twenty items reflect feminine traits (e.g. affectionate, sympathetic, soft-spoken), and twenty are neutral (e.g. helpful, truthful, secretive). The twenty masculine items are summed for a total masculinity score and the twenty feminine items are summed for a total femininity score. Cronbach's alpha for the masculinity and femininity scales was 0.79 and 0.77, respectively.

Although Bem (1974) used the medians of the masculinity and femininity scores to classify subjects into one of four groups (masculine, feminine, undifferentiated and androgynous), this procedure has been criticized recently (Lubinski et al., 1983). Therefore we used a multiple regression approach in which the masculinity and femininity subscales are retained as continuous scores and androgyny is represented by the product of the two scores (Lubinski et al., 1983). Furthermore, some have argued that gender-role orientation should be conceptualized as multidimensional and operationally defined by factor scores derived from factor analysis (Kurdek,



1987). However, for our purposes, we believe that gender-role orientation is best represented by the two unidimensional scales (M and F). This allows for an examination of the effect of androgyny (product of M and F) and a comparison of our results with the results of previous studies in related areas of research.

*Scales to assess the validity of the Romantic Beliefs Scale:* To assess the criterion validity of the Romantic Beliefs Scale, we included an existing romanticism scale, the Spaulding (1970) Romantic Love Complex Scale. Example items of this 7-item scale include: 'A person can't help falling in love if he or she meets the right person', and 'True love leads to almost perfect happiness.' In order to assess the relationship between the Romantic Beliefs Scale and related beliefs about relationships, we included the Weis et al. (1986) Sex–Love–Marriage (SLM) Association scale. Someone who scores high on the SLM scale believes that sex is more appropriate among couples who are married and love each other.

The 33-item Marlowe–Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964) was also included in order to determine whether the Romantic Beliefs Scale is contaminated by a social desirability bias.

To assess the construct validity of the Romantic Beliefs Scale, several scales and questions were included that measure feelings for a current or most recent partner. These included Rubin's (1970) Liking and Love scales, Kanin et al.'s (1970) Love Reactions Scale, and Hendrick & Hendrick's (1986) Love Attitudes Scale (which measures the love styles Eros, Ludus, Agape, Storge, Mania, and Pragma). Also included were Hatfield & Walster's (1978) single-item measures of passionate love and companionate love, and the question, 'How many dates did you have before you felt love for the other person?'. For each of these scales or measures, the higher number indicated greater love.

Table 3 indicates how many subjects completed each of the scales or measures described above. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the scales ranged from 0.62 (Mania) to 0.99 (Social Desirability).

In order to determine test–retest reliability, the group that received the second version of the questionnaire responded to the romanticism items a second time, three weeks after they completed the scale the first time. A total of 156 students completed the Romantic Beliefs Scale both times.

## Results

The 21 romanticism items were subjected to a principal components factor analysis with varimax rotation. The factor analysis yielded six factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.00. However, determining the number of factors adequate to represent the data based on this mathematical criterion alone is generally not considered to be the best solution (McCroskey & Young, 1979). We considered four other criteria that are suggested in the literature: (1) at least two or three items must load high ( $>0.50$ ) on the factor; (2) the factor is interpretable and meaningful; (3) the factor is predicted theoreti-

cally; and (4) the factor passes Cattell's (1966) scree test of eigenvalues.

Taking all of these criteria into consideration, we accepted a four-factor solution. Although a scree plot of the eigenvalues suggested that there is a break between the first three factors and the rest of the factors, the fourth factor meets the other criteria and thus was also accepted. However, the fifth and sixth factors were dropped because they did not meet the criteria. The four factors that were accepted explain 46.8 percent of the variance.

Of the 21 romanticism items, six items were deleted from the final version of the Romantic Beliefs Scale because they did not load 0.50 or above on any of the four major factors. The 15 items that were retained for the final version of the scale had a factor loading of 0.50 or above on one of the four major factors and did not have a loading on any other factor of 0.45 or greater. (In fact, only two items had a secondary loading above 0.30.) The 15 items and their factor loadings are presented in Table 1.

The first factor that emerged from the factor analysis explained almost three times more variance than the next largest factor. The six items loading 0.50 or above on this factor included items written to measure the original notions that one bases a choice of a partner on love (Nos 2, 9), love conquers all (Nos 5, 11, 15) and true love lasts forever (No. 13). We called this factor *Love Finds a Way*.

Three items loaded on each of the other three meaningful factors that emerged from the factor analysis. These factors correspond with the other three romantic love ideal beliefs identified by Lantz et al. (1968). In the remainder of the paper, we will refer to these factors as: *One and Only*, *Idealization* and *Love at First Sight*. The idealization factor contained two items referring to the partner and one referring to the relationship. The mean of the items loading on each factor was used as the factor scale score.

### *Scale composition and reliability*

Table 1 also contains psychometric properties of the Romantic Beliefs Scale. The mean response to the 15 items was 4.03, which is the midpoint of the 1–7 response scale. However, there was a great deal of variation in the average response (or extent of agreement) to the items. The means for the individual items ranged from 2.61 (item 1) to 5.32 (item 2). The romantic belief with the highest mean was *Love Finds a Way* ( $\bar{X} = 4.96$ ), whereas *Love at First Sight* had the lowest mean ( $\bar{X} = 3.19$ ).

The correlations between the items and the scale mean were all significant beyond the 0.001 level and ranged from a low of 0.15 (item 1) to a high of 0.66 (items 5 and 11). The mean item-to-total correlation was 0.53. Table 1 also presents the correlation of each item with its respective factor (subscale) score. The average of these correlations was 0.74.

Table 2 presents two reliability coefficients for the total Romantic Beliefs Scale, as well as for each of the four subscales. Cronbach alpha coefficient, which was calculated with the entire sample, represents the internal consistency of the measures. The coefficient is 0.81 for the total scale and ranges from 0.57 to 0.80 for the subscales. The test-retest reliability coefficient, which was calculated with a subsample of respondents, is 0.75 for the total scale and ranges from 0.49 to 0.73 for the subscales.

#### *Validity results: correlates of the Romantic Beliefs Scale*

Table 3 presents the results of correlating the Romantic Beliefs Scale with other measures included in one or more versions of the questionnaire. The Spaulding (1970) Romantic Love Complex Scale was highly correlated with the Romantic Beliefs Scale (and all of its subscales), providing support for the criterion validity of the scale. However, the correlation is not so high as to suggest that one scale is completely conveying what is measured by the other scale. A comparison of the items constituting the two scales indicates that the Romantic Beliefs Scale measures more aspects of romanticism and generally has more items measuring each belief. Furthermore, the Spaulding scale contains items that refer to a hypothetical person (e.g. 'True love is known at once by the people involved'), whereas the items in the Romantic Beliefs Scale refers to the self ('When I find my "true love" I will probably know it soon after we meet.')

The Weiss et al. (1986) SLM scale was also positively correlated with the Romantic Beliefs Scale, indicating support for the construct validity of the scale. That is, it would be expected that a romantic person would believe in the association of love, sex and marriage. The SLM scale was significantly correlated with all of the subscales of the Romantic Beliefs Scale with the exception of Love at First Sight.

The Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability scale was not significantly correlated with the Romantic Beliefs Scale, although it was significantly correlated with two of the specific subscales, Love

**TABLE 1**  
**Psychometric properties of the Romantic Beliefs Scale**

	Factor one	Factor two	Factor three	Factor four	Mean	S.D.	Item-to-total corr.	Item-to-subtotal corr.
1. I need to know someone for a period of time before I fall in love with him or her.	-0.08	-0.09	-0.05	0.67	2.61	1.58	0.15	0.68
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.	0.58	-0.01	-0.01	-0.02	5.32	1.40	0.35	0.54
3. Once I experience 'true love', I could never experience it again, to the same degree, with another person.	0.07	0.78	0.12	0.06	2.91	1.83	0.51	0.78
4. I believe that to be truly in love is to be in love forever.	0.21	0.75	0.09	0.03	4.18	1.91	0.60	0.81
5. If I love someone, I know I can make the relationship work, despite any obstacles.	0.55	0.41	0.16	0.01	4.46	1.75	0.66	0.72
6. When I find my 'true love' I will probably know it soon after we meet.	0.17	0.30	0.15	0.62	3.65	1.56	0.58	0.72
7. I'm sure that every new thing I learn about the person I choose for a long-term commitment will please me.	-0.01	0.17	0.80	0.00	2.63	1.45	0.41	0.73
8. The relationship I will have with my 'true love' will be nearly perfect.	0.14	0.16	0.76	0.17	3.23	1.57	0.57	0.83
9. If I love someone, I will find a way for us to be together regardless of the opposition to the relationship, physical distance between us or any other barrier.	0.70	0.10	0.13	0.03	5.04	1.34	0.58	0.71

10. There will be only one real love for me.	0.18	0.69	0.08	0.10	3.62	1.78	0.60	0.80
11. If a relationship I have was meant to be, any obstacle (e.g. lack of money, physical distance, career conflicts) can be overcome.	0.75	0.22	0.05	0.11	5.00	1.63	0.66	0.80
12. I am likely to fall in love almost immediately if I meet the right person.	0.12	0.05	0.15	0.81	3.31	1.62	0.44	0.81
13. I expect that in my relationship, romantic love will really last; it won't fade with time.	0.56	0.20	0.07	0.23	4.78	1.53	0.62	0.68
14. The person I love will make a perfect romantic partner; for example, he/she will be completely accepting, loving, and understanding.	0.41	-0.03	0.53	0.14	4.48	1.53	0.54	0.72
15. I believe if another person and I love each other we can overcome any differences and problems that may arise.	0.72	0.18	0.07	0.05	5.16	1.44	0.63	0.77

Eigenvalue: 5.16 1.76 1.61 1.31

% Variance explained: 24.6 8.4 7.7 6.2

**TABLE 2**  
**Reliability of the Romantic Beliefs Scale and the four subscales**

	Cronbach alpha ( <i>n</i> = 714–724)*	Test– retest ( <i>n</i> = 153–156)*
Total score	0.81	0.75
<i>Specific beliefs:</i>		
Love finds a way	0.80	0.66
One and only	0.71	0.73
Idealization	0.64	0.66
Love at first sight	0.57	0.49

\* Exact *n* size varies depending on missing data.

Finds a Way and Idealization. This suggests that scores on these two subscales may be affected by a social desirability bias.

Table 3 also presents the correlations of the Romantic Beliefs Scale with scales and measures referring to feelings and behaviors in a relationship with a specific person. These analyses further address the issue of construct validity. The Romantic Belief Scale (total score) was significantly correlated in the positive direction with passionate love, Rubin's Love scale, Rubin's Liking scale, Kanin et al.'s Love Reactions scale, Eros love style, and Agape love style. It was negatively correlated with number of dates until in love and Ludus love style. Companionate love, and the love styles Storge, Mania and Pragma, were not significantly correlated with the Romantic Beliefs Scale.

For the most part, the subscales of the Romantic Beliefs Scale were correlated in similar way with the other variables, although there were some slight differences (see Table 3). Most notably, the belief in *Love at First Sight* seems to operate distinctly from the other romantic beliefs. For example, it was correlated with only two other behaviors/feelings (excluding the Spaulding scale), and these were number of dates until in love and Eros love style. In contrast, the other romantic beliefs were correlated with many more variables.

### *Effects of gender and gender-role orientation on the Romantic Beliefs Scale: multiple regression results*

To determine whether gender and gender-role orientation affect romanticism, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis was con-

TABLE 3  
Correlations of the Romantic Beliefs Scale with other measures

	Total score	Love finds a way	One & only	Idealization	Love at first sight	n
Spaulding Romantic Love Complex Scale	0.62**	0.47**	0.47**	0.43**	0.36**	487
S-L-M Association Scale	0.35**	0.32**	0.34**	0.22**	0.04	485
Social Desirability Scale	0.13	0.17*	0.09	0.16*	-0.10	232
Number of Dates Until in Love	-0.26*	-0.17	-0.21*	-0.07	-0.32**	122
Passionate Love	0.24*	0.20	0.22*	0.09	0.15	126
Companionate Love	0.19	0.22*	0.19	0.15	-0.09	126
Rubin's Love Scale	0.42**	0.40**	0.42**	0.22*	0.08	125
Rubin's Liking Scale	0.38**	0.38**	0.33**	0.24*	0.07	125
Kanin et al.'s Love Reactions Scale	0.32**	0.31**	0.30**	0.16	0.10	125
Hendrick & Hendrick's						
Love Styles Scales:						
Eros	0.48**	0.39**	0.37**	0.28**	0.32**	119
Ludus	-0.22*	-0.29**	-0.28*	-0.06	0.13	115
Agape	0.39**	0.37**	0.29**	0.26**	0.14	114
Storge	0.09	0.08	0.18	0.06	-0.09	115
Mania	0.20	0.15	0.12	0.14	0.17	115
Pragma	-0.01	-0.12	0.04	0.09	0.04	117

\* =  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\* =  $p < 0.001$ .



ducted (similar to Lubinski et al., 1983). The regression equation is the following:

$$Y = B_1G + B_2F + B_3M + B_4FG + B_5MG + B_6MF + A,$$

where  $G$  = gender (1 = male, 2 = female),  $M$  = masculinity subscale;  $F$  = femininity subscale. In the first stage, the three main effects (gender, femininity and masculinity) were entered in a stepwise incremental fashion. In the second stage the three interaction terms ( $F \times G$ ,  $M \times G$ ,  $M \times F$ ) were entered with the same procedure. The interaction terms,  $F \times G$  and  $M \times G$ , indicate whether femininity and masculinity, respectively, have the same effect for males and females. The  $M \times F$  interaction represents the effect of androgyny. This regression equation is conducted for the total score of the Romantic Beliefs Scale, as well as for each of the four specific romantic beliefs.

*Total romanticism:* Table 4 presents the partial  $r$ , the  $R^2$  change, and the cumulative  $R^2$  for each variable upon its point of entry into the hierarchical equation. The beta weights for the main effects from the simultaneous regression model that include the three main effects and no interactions are also presented.

The results in Table 4 for total romanticism indicate that femininity entered first and accounted for 5 percent of the variance. The direction of the partial correlation indicates that femininity is positively associated with romantic attitudes. Gender entered second and accounted for a  $R^2$  change of 0.053. The direction of the partial correlation indicates that males are more romantic than females. Separate analyses indicated that the mean scale score was 4.17 for males and 3.94 for females. Masculinity entered third into the stepwise regression and also increased the  $R^2$  significantly, though the  $R^2$  change was only 0.007. The effect of masculinity was positive. The beta weights for all three main effects (from the simultaneous model) are significant. The largest beta weight is for femininity.

After the main effects were entered into the equation, the interaction terms were entered, also in a stepwise fashion. One of the interaction terms ( $F \times G$ ) increased the  $R^2$  by a statistically significant amount, although the change was very modest — from 0.117 to 0.118. The direction of the interaction indicated that femininity had a greater effect on romanticism for females than for males. None of the other interactions increased the  $R^2$  significantly. All of the variables combined accounted for about 12 percent of the variance

in total romanticism, with almost all of this explained variance due to the main effects.

*Specific beliefs:* The results for Love Finds a Way are very similar to that of total romanticism; this is not surprising given that it was the primary factor in the scale. Both femininity and masculinity were positive predictors of Love Finds a Way, whereas gender was a negative predictor (the means for males and females, respectively, are 5.14 and 4.86). The betas indicated that femininity was the strongest predictor of Love Finds a Way. The femininity  $\times$  gender interaction was significant although it accounted for only a small amount of additional variance. The variables together accounted for approximately 13 percent of variance in *Love Finds a Way*.

Femininity also entered first in the equation for *One and Only*. In this case, however, femininity was the only significant predictor of romanticism. No additional variance in *One and Only* was accounted for by gender, masculinity, or any of the interactions. Only 3 percent of the variance in *One and Only* was accounted for by these variables.

The results for *Idealization* and *Love at First Sight* were similar. For both beliefs, gender entered first followed by femininity. The mean scores of these subscales were, respectively, 3.66 and 3.42 for men and 3.31 and 3.06 for women. Masculinity and the interactions did not explain any additional significant variance. For *Idealization*, 7 percent of the variance was explained, for *Love at First Sight* 4 percent was explained.

## Discussion and conclusions

The first purpose of this research was to construct a scale to measure the ideology of romanticism. Based on several pretests and the results of this study, 15 items were selected for the final version of the Romantic Beliefs Scale. Although the scale was originally designed to measure five beliefs that constitute the 'romantic love ideal' (Lantz et al., 1968), only four meaningful factors emerged from a factor analysis. The primary factor contained items measuring two of Lantz et al.'s original beliefs, 'Follow the Heart' and 'Love Conquers All', as well as the additional belief that 'Love Lasts Forever'. This factor was termed *Love Finds a Way* because it represents the belief that love can overcome barriers to marriage and obstacles that might cause a couple to break up. The three other



Idealization						Love at first sight					
step	variable	partial <i>r</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> change	beta	step	variable	partial <i>r</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> change	beta
1	G	-0.152	0.023	0.023***	-0.199***	1	G	-0.156	0.024	0.024***	-0.181***
2	F	0.187	0.058	0.035***	0.194***	2	F	0.106	0.036	0.011**	0.110**
3	M	0.062	0.062	0.004	0.066 n.s.	3	M	0.041	0.037	0.002	0.043 n.s.
4	F × G	0.068	0.066	0.005		4	M × G	0.015	0.038	0.000	
5	M × F	0.065	0.071	0.004		5	F × G	0.007	0.038	0.000	
6	M × G	-0.016	0.071	0.000		6	M × F	0.006	0.038	0.000	

*Note:* The three main effects were first entered in an incremental stepwise fashion and then the three interaction terms were entered using the same procedure. Partial *r* represents the partial correlation for that variable and the dependent variable after controlling for all the preceding variables in the equation. The *R*<sup>2</sup> change indicates how much additional variance is accounted for by adding this variable to an equation that already contains all preceding variables. In order more easily to compare the effects of masculinity, femininity and gender, the beta weights are also reported for the simultaneous regression model that contains all three main effects but not interaction effects.

\* =  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* =  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* =  $p < 0.001$ .

factors were identical to those of Lantz et al. (1968): *One and Only*, *Idealization*, and *Love at First Sight*. We interpret the factor structure as generally consistent with theoretical discussions of the multifaceted nature of the ideology of romanticism (e.g. Knox & Sporkowski, 1968; Peplau & Gordon, 1983).

In the major study conducted, the instrument was found to exhibit generally high reliability, both in terms of internal consistency (Cronbach Alphas for the entire sample) and test-retest consistency (for a subset of the total sample). Criterion and construct validity were demonstrated in patterns of association between the Romantic Beliefs Scale and related measures. The total score on the Romantic Beliefs Scale and the four subscales were correlated with Spaulding's (1970) Romantic Love Complex Scale. The total score and all subscales except Love at First Sight correlated with measures of constructs that might be expected to be related to romanticism (e.g. SLM and Rubin's Love Scale). The subscale Love at First Sight correlated negatively with the number of dates prior to falling in love and correlated positively with the Eros love style. In addition, the total score on the Romantic Beliefs Scale and the four subscales were not correlated with measures of constructs presumably less likely to be related to romanticism (e.g. companionate love, and Storage, Mania and Pragma love styles). Overall, the results suggest that a reliable and valid instrument has been developed that can be used in future research on romanticism.

The second purpose of this research was to examine how gender and gender-role orientation are related to romantic beliefs. Results of the regression analysis suggest the general conclusion that individuals high in femininity are more likely than individuals low in femininity to endorse the ideology of romanticism and that men are more likely than women to do so. Being feminine in gender-role orientation and being male were significant predictors of three of the four romantic beliefs: *Love Finds a Way*, *Idealization*, and *Love at First Sight*. As would be expected, being feminine and being male were therefore also significant contributors to total romanticism. In addition, femininity was the only significant predictor for *One and Only*. By contrast, masculinity and the interaction effect of gender by femininity were marginally predictive of the primary subscale, *Love Finds a Way*, and therefore also marginally predictive of total romanticism. Although both were statistically significant, they each accounted for less than 1 percent of additional variance explained after the effects of femininity and gender were removed.

Androgyny, as represented by the femininity  $\times$  masculinity product term, did not emerge as a predictor of romanticism, distinct from masculinity and femininity. Previous research examining the effects of gender-role orientation on relationship phenomena has generally used ANOVA or MANOVA with the four categories of gender-role orientation derived from the masculinity and femininity subscales. This previous research indicated, for example, that androgynous individuals are more loving (Coleman & Ganong, 1985) and have fewer dysfunctional beliefs about the relationship (Kurdek & Schmitt, 1986) than sex-typed or undifferentiated individuals. However, the present study and other research (e.g. Lubinski et al., 1983), using a hierarchical multiple regression analysis to examine the unique predictive properties of androgyny (relative to masculinity and femininity when they are entered in proper sequence), suggest that androgyny does not explain any additional significant variance in the criterion variable. Whether masculinity and femininity interact in relation to other relationship variables should continue to be examined.

The finding of this study that femininity is significantly related to romanticism is consistent with Cunningham & Antill (1981) and related research that has considered gender-role orientation as a variable in the dynamics of close relationships (e.g. Bailey et al., 1987; Coleman & Ganong, 1985; Kurdek & Schmitt, 1986; Rusbult et al., 1986). The influence of gender, though slightly less pronounced than gender-role orientation, is still significant in our study. This finding is not consistent with Cunningham & Antill (1981) or Simpson et al. (1986), who found no difference between males and females on measures of romanticism, but it is consistent with earlier research (e.g. Fengler, 1974; Heiger & Troll, 1973; Hobart, 1958; Kephart, 1967; Knox & Sporkowski, 1968).

The independent effects of gender-role orientation and gender demonstrated here underscore the need to examine both gender-role orientation and gender in multivariate analyses. Although we did not find strong support for some of our initial speculations, for example that gender and gender-role orientation interact or that romantic beliefs are differentially affected by gender and gender-role orientation, we did find support for a more complex interpretation of romanticism than has been offered in previous studies. The independent effects of gender-role orientation (i.e. femininity) and gender imply a duality inherent in the ideology of romanticism, at least as it is currently instantiated in American society. That is,

romantic beliefs may be a function both of social roles and status, and of personal disposition.

The fact that men are more likely than women to believe in love at first sight, in love as the basis for marriage and for overcoming obstacles, and to believe that their partner and relationship will be perfect is an idealized view that may reflect the different roles men and women have in the larger social structure (Eagly, 1987). Men are, or expect to be, in roles that give them greater social and economic security relative to women. Furthermore, men have traditionally held the position of relationship initiator, and women the position of recipient of a man's initiative. Although roles for men and women are becoming less distinct and social changes are occurring, men and women still enact different specific roles to some degree. For example, even though men may express positive feelings toward the prospect of being asked out by a woman, most relationships that last are still male-initiated (Kelley & Rolker-Dolinsky, 1987). To the degree that performing in the role of initiator both reflects social status and enhances personal power for men (Eagly, 1987), they may acquire a sense of control over the nature and direction of their romantic relationships that has not been enjoyed to the same degree by women. Furthermore, although we might expect that college women who, presumably, are career-oriented and optimistic about their role in society would hold romantic attitudes similar to their male cohorts, our findings do not confirm this expectation. Apparently, even in the wake of social and economic reforms, college women still reflect attitudes toward love in keeping with stereotypical role expectations found in the larger society.

On the other hand, both males and females who have a feminine gender-role orientation share a predisposition to believe that 'good things' are possible for those who fall in love. Examination of the traits associated with femininity in the BSRI indicate why this is so. Characteristic traits include: affectionate, childlike, gullible, loyal, tender, understanding, warm and yielding. Persons who score high on such traits are more likely to give themselves over to an idealistic view of love. This predisposition is reflected also in related attitudes, such as the experience and expression of love (Bailey et al., 1987; Coleman & Ganong, 1985), positive relationship beliefs (Kurdek & Schmitt, 1986), and responses to dissatisfaction with the relationship (Rusbult et al., 1986).

In short, romantic attitudes are held by those persons (i.e. men)



who can afford to be romantic because their economic security is not dependent upon their partner and because they have control and efficacy in the area of dating initiation, and by those persons (i.e. feminine individuals) who have a trusting, caring, nurturant orientation toward people and close relationships. Thus, romantic beliefs may be affected both by the roles we play in the larger social structure and by personal disposition. If this reasoning is accurate, we should find that social changes will modify gender differences in romanticism but have little effect on gender-role differences. We encourage longitudinal research with samples in other areas of the population such as dual career couples, single parents and never-married adults.

We also encourage future research to investigate other potential contributors to romantic attitudes. Although gender and gender-role orientation were both significant, the percentage of variance contributed was relatively small (12 percent). Apparently, variation in romantic attitudes is only partially explained by the combined effect of gender and gender-role orientation. Given the consistent effect of gender-role orientation across all subscales in the present study, we assume that other personality variables are also associated with romantic beliefs. Likely candidates in this regard are personality variables previously found to be associated with love and with gender-role orientation, e.g. self-esteem, self-actualization, defensiveness, and locus of control (Dion & Dion, 1985).

Finally, we suggest that future research focus more directly upon the role of the ideology of romanticism in close relationships. Longitudinal research with the Romantic Beliefs Scale will enable investigators to isolate changes in overall romanticism and in specific beliefs over the course of a relationship's development. Fengler, for example, found that 'males generally tend to become more romantic and females less romantic with increased involvement in courtship' (1974: 137). Whether this is still true and whether specific romantic beliefs are more likely to be affected by increased intimacy and commitment are empirical questions worth pursuing. The Romantic Beliefs Scale will also enable investigators to explore the influence of romantic beliefs on relationship quality and levels of satisfaction in established relationships. We are encouraged to pursue this line of inquiry based on the generally consistent association between the Romantic Beliefs Scale and other measures of relationship beliefs, both as generalized attitudes (e.g. Weis et al.'s

Sex–Love–Marriage Association scale) and as attitudes toward particular relationships (e.g. Rubin's Liking and Love scales).

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