

MARKET METAPHORS FOR MEETING MATES

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Now they're looking at each other the way they shop for a new VCR.
—Judi Erlich, Matchmaker, talking about her clients

In recent decades, academics have noted the relevance of economic models to understanding mate selection (Becker 1973, 1974, 1976, 1981; Berardo 1980; Blood and Wolfe 1960; Edwards 1969; Elder 1969; Foa 1971; Foa and Foa 1973, 1974, 1980; Freidan 1974; Goode 1966; Murstein 1961, 1970, 1972, 1980, 1986; Parsons 1980; Safilios-Rothschild 1976; Taylor and Glenn 1976). This work has resulted in numerous exchange theories of mate selection, that explain romantic relationships as exchanges of tangible assets, such as economic resources, and intangible assets, such as love and empathy. As marketing and consumption have come to be understood as the study of exchange rather than the study of a particular business function, Levy and Zaltman (1975, p. xix) have termed this interpersonal exchange “intimate marketing,” and Bernard, Adelman, and Schroeder (1991), Belk and Coon (1991), Rucker et al. (1991),

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and Hirschman (1987) have built on a long research literature (for review see Ahuvia and Adelman 1991) to show how courtship can be studied as a special case of marketing and/or consumer behavior.

While the explanatory force of these theories has generally been supported,¹ the eric perspective on this topic has been largely ignored. The theorists cited above have limited their work to a discussion of how exchange models can explain mate-selection behavior, but they have been slow to determine whether singles understanding of their own behavior is influenced by the language and ideology of the marketplace. This paper addresses this question, determining whether and how exchange models shape singles' understanding of their courtship experience, and hence, their actions. In so doing, we explore one way in which the prominent status of marketing in our society affects our most personal thought and behaviors.

We find that in speaking about their own romantic lives, singles use the vocabulary of consumption and commerce to create market metaphors that are rooted in native exchange models of interpersonal relationships. Because metaphors tend to highlight particular aspects of the experience and downplay others (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), several types of metaphors may be needed to adequately describe a complex phenomenon. We identify two major groups of metaphors, each of which stems from a different model of love and marriage. The first set of metaphors expresses an exchange model of mate selection, which is practical and is used by singles to make calculated judgments regarding their best interests. These statements take the form of market metaphors such as the consumption imagery inherent in the phrase "shopping around" for the best spouse. The second group of metaphors stems from the romantic model, in which marriage is seen as the outgrowth of romantic love, which in turn is viewed as an affective state beyond the control of the individuals. The romantic model finds expression through metaphors of supernatural forces like magic, or physical forces such as electricity.

This paper is organized as follows. After presenting our methodology, an extensive explanation and interpretation of the market and romantic metaphors is given, followed by a discussion of how the two sets of metaphors differ and when each set is used. We then discuss some common reactions to market metaphors and interpret these reactions in light of the literature on the sacred and the profane. Finally, we will consider how the market and romantic metaphors may help shape the attitudes singles hold toward dating and mating.

METHODOLOGY

This paper presents findings drawn from a content analysis of 27 interviews (ranging from 1 to 3 hours) with adult singles. Respondents included 15 males

and 12 females, ranging from 25 to 38 years of age (Mean = 31 SD = 3). These singles were current or former clients of a nonprofit introductory service designed to facilitate potential matches with a lifelong partner. The introductory service was located in an upscale neighborhood in a large urban center. It catered exclusively to educated Jewish professionals, and contrary to the stereotype of dating service clients as lonely and desperate, research on this service (Bernard, Adelman and Schroeder, 1991) found its members were more outgoing and less shy, and had higher standards in a mate, than a closely matched comparison group (see also Darden and Koski 1988 for similar results in a study of singles ad users, but see Goodwin 1990 for conflicting results from a large British service). The only divorced member of the sample did not provide any quotes appropriate for citation in this study; therefore, all quotes come from respondents who have never married.

The interviews were conducted either in restaurants or in respondents' homes by a female professional interviewer. All interviews were taped and then transcribed. When quoting from the interviews, each subject will be identified by a pseudonym, followed by the subject's age in parenthesis. The interviews were originally conducted in order to investigate a variety of hypotheses regarding the experience of mate seeking and the use of introductory services²; they were not intended to be used in a study of dating as consumption. It was only after reviewing the interviews that the prevalence of metaphors comparing dating with commercial activities became apparent. Therefore we can say with reasonable certainty that these metaphors are a natural part of the respondents' speech and were not the result of leading questions. Because no questions were asked to solicit metaphors, 8 of the 27 respondents did not use metaphors germane to this analysis. In addition to data from these interviews, citations from other academic work and quotations from the mass media are used to provide a wider cultural context in which to understand our findings.

In order to create a framework for the analysis, the authors extracted all the examples of metaphors dealing with romantic relationships along with some surrounding text from the interview transcripts. These were classified into two basic categories, romantic quotes and market quotes, which, in turn, were broken down into smaller subcategories that are discussed below. The interpretations of these quotes are advanced from the perspective of both the consumer and the analyst.

In order to verify that specific quotes were assigned to the proper category and to determine the frequency with which various types of metaphors were used, the quotes were given to three independent judges who classified them either as romantic, market, or other. The judges agreed 74 percent of the time (Perrault and Leigh reliability index = .78; Perrault and Leigh 1989); ambiguous quotes were classified by majority rule. The results of this analysis are presented in the sections dealing with the market and romantic metaphors; however, caution must be exercised in interpreting these findings. Because the

number of times a metaphor is used is only one indicator of its importance, “the frequency of assertion is not necessarily related to the importance of that assertion” (Guba and Lincoln 1981, p. 242) and therefore it would be a mistake to strictly equate the number of times a metaphor is used with the significance of the sentiment expressed. Nonetheless, the quantitative analysis does serve to underscore the prevalence of consumer imagery for intimate relationships within the sample.

A related issue concerns the presence and importance of consumer imagery for dating in the general population. Because this research is not based on a random sample, direct generalizability is not possible. McCracken (1988) argues that attempts to quantify the results of this type of long interview analysis to allow for generalization are misguided from the start, and qualitative researchers should restrict their work to explicating the world views of their respondents without concern to the representativeness of their findings. The authors are sympathetic to this notion, but fear that the significance of this work would be lost if it was seen as irrelevant to populations of non-matchmaking service users. We therefore have adopted the notion of transferability (Green, 1990) in which the researchers’ responsibility shifts from “demonstrating generalizability to one of providing sufficient description of the particular context studied so that others may adequately judge the applicability of fit of the inquiry findings to their own context” (p. 236). To this end we have provided a description of the service and its clients, as well as specifically commenting on the fact that respondents were members of a matchmaking service and this could be important to the interpretation of their comments.

Since this analysis relies heavily on the use of the term *metaphor*, it is important to clarify our use of it. Fogelin (1988) writes that a “tendency to use the term ‘metaphor’ in a generic way that covers a wide range of tropes” and also in a specific way as the name of a particular trope is common practice in both recent and traditional literature” (p. 28). Following this lead we will broadly define the term *metaphor* for the purpose of this paper as including similes, synecdoche, metonymy, dead metaphors, and other related tropes.⁴

EXCHANGE: COURTSHIP AS CONSUMPTION

Around the turn of the century, middle- and upper-class American courtship took place in the home (Bailey 1988; Rothman 1987). Under this system, known as “calling,” the courting couple would spend the evening in the women’s home under parental supervision. Dating as an institution began around 1910 and was fully established during the 1920s. Under the new system, the courting couple left the home and went on dates to theaters, restaurants, and so forth. Bailey contends that by moving the setting of courtship out of the home and

into the commercial world, the language of love and courtship took on the economic language that described the other institutions of the public sphere. Hence the market metaphor, in its modern American manifestation, is shaped by the emergence of dating just after the turn of the century.

Bailey’s excellent history of courtship in twentieth-century America. *From Front Porch to Back Seat*, provides numerous instances of what we are calling market metaphors. For example, a 1941 *Senior Scholastic* discussion of going steadily included the comments of “two boys” who wrote, “Going Steady is like buying the first car you see—only a car has a trade in value later on” (p. 30). Dating as consumption from the women’s perspective can be seen in this excerpt from a May 1942 *Ladies’ Home Journal*, which reads, “It takes extra care in dressing and making up the raw material you were blessed with to do its best *selling job* for that personality of yours” (p. 72, emphasis ours). It is interesting to note that both these quotes frame men as consumers and women as products.

Bailey also suggests, however, that the market metaphor was replaced in the 1960s by “metaphors of revolution” (p. 142) that reflected the sexual revolution of that period. Bailey’s work focused on the period between 1910 and 1960, and her comments on the period between 1960 and the present are admittedly speculative. Yet it is in discussing the current state of affairs that the authors differ most significantly with Bailey’s analysis. Evidence from the interviews, as well as current citations from the popular press suggest that the market metaphor is far from a thing of the past.

The enumeration of the different types of metaphors shows that the use of various kinds of market metaphors was extremely common among the respondents. Because we did not specifically solicit metaphors, not every respondent used metaphorical language. Of the 27 interviews, metaphor use ranged from 0 to 8 metaphors per respondent, with 19 of the respondents using at least one metaphor. Of these 19 respondents, 18 used some form of market metaphor. While turning these figures into a precise percentage of respondents who use the market metaphor would constitute an over-interpretation of the data, these findings do show that market metaphors are generally prevalent within the interviews.

The exchange model produces three broad categories of metaphors, all of which fall under the heading of market metaphors. These are (a) consumption metaphors, in which singles see themselves as consumers of their dating partners; (b) production metaphors, in which singles see themselves as producing or marketing benefits to be consumed by their dating partners; and (c) macroeconomic metaphors, in which singles remark on the larger social structure in which the consumption of interpersonal resources takes place. Because these categories of metaphors are closely interrelated, many examples combine elements of each. Even so, the emphasis of a particular metaphorical statement usually falls into one of these three categories. Each of these

categories of market metaphors also contains several subcategories, which are discussed below.

Consumption Metaphors

The two most common consumption metaphors are (a) dating is shopping and (b) people are products. In 1960, when Smokey Robinson and the Miracles recorded "You'd Better Shop Around," part of the song's tremendous success was the clever use of the shopping metaphor to describe dating. Today, this metaphor is explicitly conveyed in the comments of Laurel (3), whose reported attitude toward men is, if "You don't like it [the way I look] shop elsewhere." The shopping metaphor is evidenced in the comments of Patiti (28), who described the matchmaking service as "buy-a-boy." And just as in the commercial sphere, when one only needs a product for a short time, low commitment options are often available. As Anne (32) noted, "If I have a wedding [to attend], there's always someone I can rent."

The other common set of consumption metaphors falls under the heading of people are products. In this case, the attitude toward the person is reflected in the type of product he or she portrays. When a person is portrayed as meat, this expresses the reduction of the person to his or her physical self. Therefore, *meat market* is a metaphor commonly used to describe institutions such as singles bars, where people are valued exclusively for their potential as physical-consumption objects. Several respondents mentioned that they were attracted to the introductory service as an alternative to the meat market. Yet, Gregg (30) claimed that he joined because "there's nothing like seeing fresh meat on the table" but then quickly apologized for being "so callous." A contrasting metaphor to people as meat is the more flattering food image of persons as candy. Two respondents, Anne (32) and Frank (38), used the cliché "a kid in a candy store" to describe the multitude of dates available through the matchmaking service.

One of the most common product images in dating is the car metaphor used to describe women. Bailey commented on the frequent use of cars as metaphors for women in mid-century America by saying, "both were property, both expensive; cars and women came in different styles and models, and both could be judged on performance. The woman he escorted, just as the car he drove, publicly defined both a man's taste and his means" (p. 70). As we show from the following 1989 singles ad, the car metaphor continues to contemporary times.

Custom female vehicle available! Smooth, sleek, honey colored racer, powerful engine, handles well on and off the road. Clean, attractive lines, built low, well maintained, expensive upkeep, exceptional ride. (Washington Post5)

A complementary explanation for the frequency of this metaphor comes from the notion of love as a union with other (Bataille 1962; Berl 1924; Freud 1951; Fromm 1956; Grant 1976; Greewald and Pratkanis 1984; Hatfield 1982; Hogg and Turner 1987; McDonald 1981; Schutz 1970; Wegner 1980), and the incorporation of the other into the self (Aron and Aron 1986). Lewis and Brooks (1978) and Seligman (1975) see the origin of human awareness of the distinction between self and other as stemming from the infant's experience of learning that some objects can be controlled directly by the will and others cannot. By the same reasoning McClelland (1951) argues that when we can control an external object in the same way we can control our own body, we come to see that object as part of the self. For an experienced driver, the car seems to respond directly to the driver's will and therefore is extremely integrated into his/her sense of self. This type of incorporation into the self involves the total dominance and control of the person over the car. The person and the car are one because the car, like the human body, responds instantaneously to the will of the person. When the metaphor of women as cars strikes a man as a fitting image for the type of romantic union he seeks we see the underlying power dynamics of certain aspired-for sexual relationships.

Comparisons by consumers of physical products tend to emphasize three dimensions: features, quality, and packaging. Coherent with the metaphor of people as products is the use of these dimensions in evaluating dating partners. For example, Jon (30) outlines the various "features" he was looking for in a woman. Another respondent, Marla (33), remarked that she informed the matchmaker to "only send me what you think are pretty much *quality* people because I'm not here because I need to go out with just anyone." The notion of quality people ranges from ads for video dating services—"We make meeting quality single people easy" (Great Expectations 1987)—to ads for Ford trucks—"Quality people, quality products."

Lastly, a number of respondents mentioned the idea that people, like products, come in packages. Anne (32) cast herself as a savvy comparison shopper when she said, "I know they [made dates] come in different *packages*.... so I'm just trying them all" (emphasis ours). Respondents who saw themselves as consumers rather than products spoke matter-of-factly about the importance of "a nice package" (Hank, 29). Conversely, the only person who spoke of packaging in *reference to herself* (Ruth, 28) was not comfortable with being judged in product terms. "People were more interested in... the package. What I looked like. Somebody commented that I was wearing nail polish... just people who seemed to be very into... things, you know if somebody was dressed in a particular way." Given the devaluation of a person implied by their commoditization, the basic desire to maintain one's self esteem may account for the tendency to only use these metaphors in reference to others.

References to packaging singles can also be found in the popular press. In an article for *Cosmopolitan* (Hirsch 1987), a noted New York matchmaker

advised a niche marketing strategy by saying, "Something can be said for packaging, but you have to know the man you're packaging for." Similarly, the jacket for a book entitled *You Are What You Wear* (Thousby 1989) proclaimed, "People are also products—are you packaged to gain attention, confidence and respect?" In one sense the term 'package' can refer to the entire bundle of a person's attributes, as in "a package deal", and this may be the sense in which the term is used by Anne when she talks about trying a number of different male packages. However, when the term is used to refer to the externally visible attributes of a person, it is generally used with reference to a woman. This gender specific usage is consistent with our cultures greater emphasis on the physical attractiveness of women, and with research that has shown that males place a higher priority than females on physical attractiveness in their dating partners (Feingold 1990). The stress in these examples on changing one's own packaging to increase one's attractiveness leads us to our next category of metaphors, production metaphors.

Selling Metaphors

Courtship is not just a shopping spree in search of the most desirable partner. In addition, the single's date must reciprocate interest in the relationship. To achieve this end, Mr. Gallatin, who counsels singles on how to meet eligible others, contends that the singles scene "is highly competitive. You must use sales and marketing skills to sell yourself" (Geist 1983, p. 1). Similarly, Jeffrey Ullman, head of America's largest chain of video dating services, contends that "You've got to put yourself out there, advertise yourself, promote yourself" (Sullivan 1988, p. 7).

While evidence from Rook (1985) supports the common belief that singles take active measures to become more sexually attractive, the respondents in this study tended to down play this behavior and instead saw selling themselves as a matter of "just being myself" and trying to find the right target market that would accept them as they were. Take for example Elliot (30), who casts himself as the "right product" in describing an increase in his self-confidence in attracting others. "There was a time in my life that I would have felt that anxiety [about dating], because I didn't feel I had very much worth to sell. But... that isn't my feeling now... I [have] a good product, so I'm not anxious about that. And I [know it's not] the right product for everyone, but I [know it is] a good product for those who were in that market."

Macroeconomic Metaphors

Macroeconomic metaphors reveal the speaker's conception of the larger social structure in which the consumption of interpersonal resources takes place. In general, the singles scene is described as a market. For example, several

of the respondents used the term "dating market." Pamela (30) remarked about the problem of having high standards for the men she dates, as she didn't "want to sound like I'm being picky or... setting myself up for a really very small nonexistent market." Since markets follow the law of supply and demand, the use of this metaphor implies that the courtship process also follows this law. The prevailing notion of attractive single males as scarce resources, and therefore of increased value, is vividly conveyed by Hank (29): "Correct me if it is myth that there's more women than men involved in this project [introductory service] right now and that us able-bodied men, so to speak, are at a premium."

The following quotes are classic examples of this widespread metaphor whose relatively long history has been extensively documented by Bailey. These quotes are also typical in that it is the women who is designated a product for the man's consumption.

Petting is a commodity in which there will never be a shortage. It's the usual girl, the average one, who permits it. It is the rare one who doesn't. Knowing this, why not make yourself a collector's item, rather than a bargain-counter article? (women's advice book 1937).

The boys find her easy to afford. She doesn't put a high value on herself... Your clothes can cost a lot, yet you'll look cheap with that loss of the head... Too many pokes and shoves, too many late hours lower your value. Reprice your line. Limit the supply of yourself, your time and interest. Make yourself scarce and watch your value go up" (LHJ teen advice column 1942, pp. 94-95).

Another macroeconomic metaphor concerns the type of market in which the exchange takes place. Some metaphors change the setting of exchange from the consumption of consumer goods to other markets (i.e., the stock market or job market) or other forms of exchange (i.e., gambling). By changing the setting of the exchange, the basic ground rules for the exchange are also transformed, and different perspectives on the mate-selection process are revealed.

The most common alternatives to the consumer-goods market are the job market and the stock market. Seeing the dating process as a job search is perhaps the most fitting of the metaphors discussed in this paper. In the job market, as in the marriage market, the prospective applicants/partners are trying to promote themselves, while simultaneously assessing the desirability of the "company." Most professional jobs (the respondents were all professionals) involve long-term commitments, as does marriage. In a good professional relationship, as in marriage, both parties see themselves as working together to achieve a common end, even if the relationship also contains elements of conflict. And finally, a job, like a marriage, requires a lot of work to be successful.

Perhaps because of these similarities, the job-market metaphor was taken more literally, and hence more seriously, by some of the respondents. Ruth (28) and Chuck (29) used almost identical wording to complain that "the dates

felt like I was on a job interview." As we discuss later, these complaints demonstrate the notion that an overemphasis on the practical considerations of finding a mate removes the romance from courtship. Another explanation for the prevalence of the job-market metaphor comes from the fact that the respondents were all members of a matchmaking service. By viewing the mate-selection process in the pragmatic and rational terms of a job search, the use of the matchmaker is legitimated. As Anne (32) noted, "I've realized that going through the natural course of a day or week I'm not meeting people and so I'm going to need a little help. Sort of like finding a headhunter and it just expedites the process."

The connection between the job-market metaphor and matchmakers was also in evidence outside of this study. For example, a matchmaking firm boasted that it used "classic executive search techniques" to locate prospective spouses for its clients (*Stanford Magazine* 1989, p. 25) and another article (Stern 1988) referred to a matchmaker, as a "heart-hunter," the personal equivalent to an executive search consultant in the career arena." Outside of the matchmaking field, Connelly (1989) writing in *Fortune* quoted Nancy Brinkers, the second wife of a prominent CEO, as saying, "In this marriage, the hours are long, but the pay is good."

In a shift away from the emphasis on work, several respondents compared the courtship process with the stock-market. This stock-market metaphor emphasizes the fact that singles see the time, money, and energy involved in dating as an investment toward a future return in the form of a relationship. And in dating, as in the stock market, a certain amount of risk is involved. For example, Patti (28) justified the spending of money on dating by saying, "I feel like I'm talking about this in a cold hard way, but it's true, it's like investing in the stock market." If the job market means that the matchmaker is a headhunter, similarly, the stock-market metaphor means that joining the matchmaking service is "like going to a stock broker to invest in stock" (Elliot, 30).

The use of the stock-market metaphor is also found outside of this study. For example, a romantic novel by Lisa Zeidner (1989) is entitled *Limited Partnerships*. The stock-market metaphor is also the basis of what is become a singles ad cliché. An ad in the *Chicago Dating Directory* (November 1988) began, "Seeking limited partnership," and in the same issue another ad proclaimed,

Wall Street's recommendation for 1988...for qualified female investor. Unique issue (ticker symbol: DJIA) 48 year history of solid (170b) growth (6). Strong balance sheet. Handsome physical structure. Few liabilities...little depreciation. Possible "take-over" candidate. Outstanding long-term investment. For prospectus send photo/letter. A lifetime opportunity!

THE ROMANTIC MODEL: LOVE AS A FORCE

It would be a serious distortion of the attitudes of singles in this study to imply that market metaphors were the only figurative language used to describe dating and marriage. Existing side by side with the exchange model is the romantic model of love. The plays of Shakespeare and the opera *Tristan and Isolde*⁶ are often cited as examples of the classic conception of romantic love. In these works, love is portrayed as a supernatural force, a conjured-up potion, a spell cast on hapless victims. While the metaphor of love as magic remains in use, the language of romantic passion has grown to reflect a predominantly scientific world view. This new technological language includes notions of love as chemistry or electricity. In the following example from Tom (30), we see a mixing of the modern metaphor of chemistry, with the older notions of love as magic.

[In] relationships, you're asking for some magic in there unfortunately. You're hoping to get turned on by someone. The formula is not quite so strict. There are a lot of things in the formula that you can almost measure but you know the chemistry goes all together to make this person attractive and wonderful to you.

This romantic conception of love provides the primary alternative to the exchange model. Scanzoni (1972) suggests that the romantic model dominates the exchange model.

These realities of courtship and marriage tend to be clouded (especially for the never-married) by the *romantic love complex*, which dictates that prospective partners are not supposed to weigh reward elements, at least consciously. Non-rational, romantic, person-centered considerations are supposed to be paramount—lesser elements too crass to be included (p. 54; emphasis ours.)

Our research clearly does not support the hypothesis that the romantic-love complex dominates other considerations. As stated above, of the 19 people who used metaphors, 18 of them used some form of market metaphor. On the other hand, only 4 of the respondents specifically used romantic metaphors. While it would constitute an misinterpretation of the data to conclude that exchange considerations were necessarily more important than romantic affect, it is safe to say that among our respondents romantic considerations did not obscure the importance of exchange.⁷

WHEN METAPHORS ARE USED

Given that both sets of metaphors are used in a complementary fashion to express different ideas, it is important to address the issue of when each type

of metaphor is used. The romantic metaphor allowed respondents to discuss their intuitive judgements about the prospects for a relationship, which are based primarily on the presence or absence of a warm affect and a sense of social comfort. Romantic metaphors convey information about the relationship itself and don't imply that a strong judgment is being made of the dating partner as a person. It is possible for two people "not to click" without either person being at fault. Furthermore, these metaphors referred to a positive affect or its absence, but in this sample they were not used to describe overtly negative affect.

The market metaphors on the other hand were used to discuss the conscious, strategic decision-making process by which singles evaluate potential partners. One potential benefit of market metaphors is that they could allow singles to consider the long-term benefits of a relationship in a way that would be difficult if singles were limited to considerations of chemistry. However, as they were used by the respondents in this study they tended to focus on the short term consumption value of the relationship. Furthermore, whereas romantic metaphors referred to the relationship between dating partners, market metaphors are sometimes used to label or describe the dating partner him/herself. Because of this difference, they can imply a judgment of the other party, or a comparison between the desirability of the speaker and the dating partner, in a way that romantic metaphors generally do not.

In this sample, the judgments implied by the market metaphors were often negative in nature. In part, this may be due to the fact that respondents rarely formed a successful romantic relationship with any of their dating partners. Therefore, it is not reasonable to expect respondents to give a tremendously positive evaluation of their dates. But, as we discuss at length below, there is a sense in which market metaphors are especially well suited for expressing negative affect. Even the most complimentary of the market metaphors (e.g., dates are candy) still conveys a sense of dehumanization. Hence, we find that the type of affect the speaker wishes to convey may influence the type of metaphor used.

The last determinant of when each type of metaphor is used is the stage of the dating process to which the speaker is referring. Because the romantic metaphors refer to the intuitive evaluation of the relationship itself, they require a face-to-face meeting of the two parties before they can be readily applied. Therefore, when the respondents are talking about aspects of dating that occur prior to meeting (e.g., ways they go about looking for dating partners, etc.) market metaphors may predominate. After the dating partners have met, romantic metaphors may come into play and coexist alongside market metaphors.

REACTIONS TO THE MARKET METAPHOR

In addition to using the market metaphor, some respondents also expressed their reactions to the prevalence of these comparative tropes. These respondent reactions, as well as reactions found in published sources outside the study and reactions expressed by colleagues, were all extremely negative and expressed a strong discomfort with the use of this language. Tom (30) clearly rejected the shopping imagery, "I don't see a woman as an asset, something I'm buying." When asked what "strategies" were used to find dates, several respondents objected to the use of this term and its premeditative implications by contrasting it with the spontaneous "I wouldn't call them strategies... It implies... smoke-filled rooms, a secret plan, covert action. Most of the time it [meeting someone] happens pretty spontaneously with me" (Frank, 38).

In the following excerpt from a singles ad (*Chicago Reader*, October 13, 1989), the market model is stripped bare of metaphor and serves as a foil by which the writer distinguishes himself from the attitudes of others he sees around him.

Men desire pretty women. Women desire powerful, wealthy men.... The best deal is made and somehow it's called a relationship, even love.

The entire market metaphor has been lampooned in *The New Yorker* (Johnson and Marcell 1988, see appendix) and in the *Time Reader* (Stivers 1989), and it has been attacked by Heyn (1986) is *Mademoiselle*:

You must also stop selling yourself. You are not a package to be perfected marketed and sold to any bidder who's male and single. It is too much work and ultimately a time-consuming process that has little to do with involvement, love, commitment, marriage and happiness. In other words, two perfect packages do not make a couple (p. 246).

The Sacred and the Profane

Why is it that many people find the use of these metaphors to be so offensive and upsetting? While a number of specific explanations can be offered for this reaction, they can all be subsumed under the general conceptual framework that supports the distinction between the sacred and the profane. It has already been mentioned that the romantic metaphor is used to discuss the intuitive judgments made by singles, and the market metaphor is used in more conscious and calculating judgments. But the two metaphors can also be distinguished in that the romantic metaphor represents the sacred aspects of love and marriage, and the market metaphor represents the profane. This distinction applies in two areas: the romantic model is based on the sacred meaning of both people and love; in the exchange model both people and love are considered entirely profane.

While the concept of sacredness is most commonly used in a specifically religious context, the work of Belk, Wallendorf and Sherry (1989) and Belk and Wallendorf (1990) demonstrate its applicability to a variety of other contexts. The most central feature of the sacred is its apartness from everyday reality. The word *special* gets at this notion of separateness, but it is too weak an adjective to be fully appropriate. This notion is so basic to the Western concept of sacredness that the world for “holy” in the Hebrew bible is *Kaddosh*, which is literally translated as “separate from.” Romantic love clearly has this sacred quality of transcending everyday experience. But the market metaphor negates this sense of specialness, because it applies everyday imagery to the search for a life partner.

The diminution of love implicit in the market metaphor can be partly explained by its association with the everyday or mundane. But what many people find offensive is not simply that love and courtship are made to seem routine but that people and love are seen as for sale. Belk et al. (1989) write that “the most general way the sacred is desecralized is to turn it into a salable commodity” (p. 23). This is because of the parallelism between the notions of the sacred versus the profane and the singular versus the commodity (Kopytoff 1986). While not everything that is singular or unique is sacred, singularity is one of the chief hallmarks of sacred status—due to the sense of specialness that characterizes the sacred. If two things are exchangeable, they must be in some sense comparable or equal. To say that something is exchangeable with something else is to reduce this sense of uniqueness. For something to be completely sacred, and hence completely unique, it must therefore be unexchangeable or priceless.

At the opposite extreme of the spectrum are pure commodities. These items are completely exchangeable for any other item. One of the implications of commodity status is that the item has no intrinsic value but possesses only use-and-exchange value. Kopytoff (1986) writes,

We usually take salability to be the unmistakable indicator of commodity status while non-salability imparts to a thing a special aura of apartness from the mundane and the common (p. 69).

In contemporary Western thought, we take it more or less for granted that things—physical objects and rights to them—represent the natural universe of commodities. At the opposite pole we place people, who represent the natural universe of individuation and singularization (p. 64).

The notion of the interchangeability of human beings implied by their commodity status within the market metaphor is expressed in the following story told by Pamela (30) about a friend of hers.

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This was someone who was engaged and broke off her engagement after she had the room and she had everything set. . . . She met a guy three weeks later, didn't get any of her deposits back, substituted the groom and continued.

From the above discussion we have seen that people and love are often considered sacred in our society. The market metaphor, by seeming to put the sacred up for sale, reduces people and love to a commodity status. This commoditization of love and dehumanization of people accounts for much of the discomfort that many people feel with this consumerist imagery. In addition to the symbolic diminution of people and love implied by the market metaphor, there are closely related ethical considerations. We have ethical obligations to people that we don't generally apply to commodities. For example, the metaphor of people as products makes them not only interchangeable, but also disposable. Elliot (30) reported a comment that his friend made regarding a woman: “If you don't like her you can throw her out.” And Patii (28) decried the fact that “we have a throw-away society and I think we throw relationships away.”

Partial Compatibility of Exchange and Sacredness

So far we have seen the sacred nature of the romantic model. We have also seen how the use of economic terminology to describe courtship threatens these sacred meanings by asserting the exchangeability of the individual or of love, and hence denying their singularity. All this is not to say, however, that the concept of exchange is completely incompatible with notions of the sacred. Kopytoff's work suggests two possible understandings of exchange within courtship that do not necessarily desecralize love and the human spirit. The first is based on gift giving.

Kopytoff writes that “while exchanges of things usually involve commodities, a notable exception is the exchanges [of gifts] that mark relations of reciprocity” (p. 69). Belk et al. (1989) go even further to suggest that not only are gifts able to transcend the commodity status, but that the process of giving a gift sacralizes an otherwise profane object. In this way, when love is given as a gift there can still be an expectation of reciprocity, but that expectation will not destroy the perception of love and people as sacred.

To understand the second type of sacred exchange one must be familiar with the notion of spheres of exchange. A phenomenon frequently noted by anthropologists in societies that lack a monetary system is the existence of several different spheres of exchange (Kopytoff 1986). Within any sphere, items may be freely exchanged for each other, but exchange across spheres is either impossible or only occurs in extreme situations. Kopytoff (p. 71) gives the example of the Tiv whose social system involves three discrete spheres: (a) “the sphere of subsistence items”—food, tools, and so on; (b) “the sphere of prestige

items"—slaves, ritual offices, and other items; and (c) "the sphere of rights-in-people, which included rights in wives, wards, and offspring." Our own society also has its separate spheres of exchange, a frequently used example being the fact that a dinner invitation is only reciprocated with a similar invitation, never with money. But in our society the commodity sphere is huge compared to the other spheres and therefore tends to obscure their existence.

Kopytoff sees the social definition of these spheres as stemming from a number of factors. In non-monetary societies, practical considerations make the creation of these spheres useful. For example, under non-famine conditions it is easy to imagine some number of yams equaling a chicken, but how many yams would it take to equal a ritual office? It seems likely that any person's use for yams would be satiated long before they equaled a potent status symbol. Subsistence items like yams are simply in a different league from status items like ritual offices. Therefore we can see how the practical need to exchange items for similar items can lead to the creation of multiple spheres of exchange in non-monetary societies. Kopytoff holds, however, that the introduction of money eliminates these practical problems, and therefore this is not a factor in the social creation of spheres of exchange within our own culture.

We believe, however, that the introduction of money did not eliminate all the technological limits to exchange. Money can buy behavior, but "one cannot buy genuine love with money" (Foa and Foa 1974, p. 135). This is because romantic love involves an element of respect that cannot be directly purchased. For this reason, the purchase of romantic love is one of the last things in our society that is beyond the grasp of our monetary system.

Even if love could be purchased for money (as could a dinner at a friend's house), there would still be social forces working to keep the spheres of exchange separate. As Kopytoff writes,

The exchange function of every economy appears to have a built-in force that drives the exchange system toward the greatest degree of commoditization that the exchange technology permits. The counter forces are culture and the individual, with their drive to discriminate, classify, compare, and sacralize (p. 87).

Hence the need to sacralize can itself cause the creation of multiple spheres of exchange. Once multiple spheres of exchange are created, the culture can define certain narrow spheres (e.g., the exchange of love for love) as sacred spheres of exchange. This can be maintained as long as the number of resources within the sacred exchange systems remains small (and hence set apart or special) and the boundaries of the exchange sphere remain intact. "Thus, we are adamant about keeping separate the spheres of material objects and persons" (Kopytoff 1986, p. 77).

Interesting experimental work has been done along these lines by Foa (1971) and later by Foa and Foa (1974). It provides a theoretical structure to explain

why certain resources are placed together in a given sphere of exchange. This work locates the resources exchanged within social relationships on a scale called the particularism-universalism continuum. The scale describes the degree to which a resource changes in value depending on from whom it is received. The most particularistic resource is love. Because its value is almost completely dependent on the relationship between the provider and the receiver. The most universal resource is money, since its value is largely independent of its source. A basic principle of Foa's theory is that the closer two resources are to each other on the particularism scale, the more suitable they are for exchange. Ideally, then, love would be exchanged for love and money only for very universalistic goods (i.e., commodities). Using Kopytoff's terminology, we would say that the greater the distance that two resources fall from each other on the particularism scale, the more likely they are to fall into different spheres of exchange.

By understanding the concept of spheres of exchange, we can easily see why, when love is exchanged for money, the transaction across the boundaries of the spheres of exchange creates social disapproval. But when love is offered in exchange for love, the relationship is socially sanctioned. Furthermore, when love is exchanged as a reciprocal gift within a relationship, the sanction is even stronger:

THE ANTI-ROMANTIC RITUAL

Up to this point we have discussed the structure of the market metaphor; we have seen that its primary alternative is the romantic metaphor, and we have seen that the market metaphor is sometimes found offensive because it threatens the sacred status of love and the individual. This section of the paper, while speculative in nature, is perhaps the most important. Based on the premise that the language we use shapes our understanding and is therefore not a neutral medium of expression, we go beyond description to discuss some possible relationships between the use of these metaphors and singles behavior in a dating context.

The importance of language (Burke 1966; Sherry and Camargo 1987; Whorf 1956), and in particular metaphorical language (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, for love in particular see Kovecses 1991), in shaping the way people think and hence act has become a well-established principle. As Schiappa (1989) states,

Though rhetorical theorists disagree on many issues, one thesis that has become axiomatic is that language is never a neutral vehicle of thought; to name a phenomenon is to suggest a set of attitudes and behaviors appropriate to the phenomenon (Kauffman 1989). The suggestive power of naming is magnified when it involves the use of *metaphor*.

Evidence for the relation between the choice of metaphors and relationship satisfaction comes from Murstein and MacDonald (1983) who found that a focus on exchange in marital relationships was strongly associated with dissatisfaction. However, the causal direction of this relationship (if any) is not ascertainable from the data. Another relevant study comes from Fletcher et al. (1987) who found that relationship satisfaction and love tend to be at their highest when both partners focused on the quality of the relationship itself as opposed to the traits of their dating partner. This is relevant to the current study due to our finding about that market metaphors generally focus attention on the traits of the partner ('he's overpriced'), whereas romantic metaphors tend to focus on properties of the relationship between partners ('there wasn't much chemistry between us'). Furthermore, longitudinal data from this study "suggested that attributions may have more influence on relationship happiness than vice versa" (p. 486).

Not surprisingly, most singles use both romantic and market metaphors because each system of metaphors highlights a particular aspect of their relationships with the opposite sex that is not adequately dealt with by the other group. But there is an inherent tension between the two sets of metaphors in how they suggest the single should act, feel, and make decisions within the dating context. Chemical combustion is spontaneous—it happens in a flash—but good marketing is strategic, the product of careful planning. A romance is a whirlwind that sweeps you up into a situation, but careful shopping requires that the shopper distance him/herself to make an unbiased appraisal. The fire of love leads to impulsive decisions, but an experienced shopper knows the danger of impulse purchasing.

This analysis stresses the rational decision-making process in economic contexts. We know from the work on impulse buying (Rook 1987) that many purchases follow a model more in line with romantic passion (i.e., falling in love with a product) than the careful rational comparison shopping stressed above. Even so, our informants' remarks suggest that when singles use the market metaphor, they are not referring to impulse buying. Rather they use the romantic model to understand impulsive decisions in both the interpersonal and commercial context. Similarly, they use the market terminology to refer to rational, conscious decision making in both contexts as well.

The tension illustrated above suggests that romantic and market metaphors promote different experiences in finding a mate. If the market model dominates, "dating efficiency" may result, where the goal in dating is the efficient exchange and processing of personal data to quickly and efficiently establish the future prospects for the relationship. In the words of Raymond (30), "You sort of spend that evening finding out all about the person." This emphasis on exchanging large amounts of personal information quickly affects the process of relationship formation in several ways.

Respondents frequently complained that an evening of systematic self-disclosure made for a boring, or otherwise unpleasant, date:

It just doesn't seem like (these dates) had a whole lot of fun light-hearted conversations (Pamela, 30).

The people I've met on these dates "are looking for the traits, instead of letting things go and having fun (Sidney, 30).

I hate dating. I will be the first to admit it. Dating? You might as well record it, put it on a cassette. When they come to the door you just press a button. Let him listen. If he's interested you talk, otherwise not (Lori, age unknown).

The romantic model, on the other hand, stresses passion and impulsiveness rather than the practicality of the market. Therefore, the dates that emphasized a businesslike efficiency in information exchange can be experienced as *anti-romantic*.

There's a lot less romance to this situation. This is just kind of like a job... It's kind of practical (Maria, 33).

This can cause problems, because the singles interviewed still considered chemistry essential for forming a relationship. Since, according to the romantic model, love is fated and beyond one's personal control, singles generally don't recognize that anything they do could affect the level of chemistry they feel with a dating partner. If our conjecture that this efficiency mode in dating can hinder the development of chemistry is correct, then behaviors that appear rational based on the exchange model may unwittingly prevent relationship formation. This might partially explain the complaint from some singles in our study that they meet a lot of nice, good, bright people—but "nothing clicked" (Nigel, 30; Sidney, 28). Or, as Melissa (34) said:

(It was) significant to have met a couple of dates who, by all viewpoints, we should have liked each other. Things in common, similar values, similar points in our lives, similar levels of attractiveness. But a blank feeling, no chemistry. Leaves me with confusion about why not? Is it me? My problem? Him? His Problem? Always seems like a shame to me, the chemistry situation.

In addition to hindering the development of chemistry, very large amounts of self-disclosure may hinder the formation of a relationship in other ways as well. The transition from a casual to a close relationship is usually a gradual process involving changes in the level of self-disclosure (Altman and Taylor 1973; Levinger 1983). Derlega and Grzelak (1979) show how reciprocal self-disclosure can increase mutual attraction. Research also shows, however, that extensive self-disclosure at early stages of a relationship can be too much of

a good thing and can inhibit relationship formation (Archer and Berg 1978, Parks 1982). This is particularly true if one person tends to dominate the conversation. Unilateral and high levels of disclosure may be viewed as promotional or symptomatic of emotional problems, particularly in initiating relationships. As Ruth (28) complained, "The [the men] were like salesmen. They were really showy people. I mean they were people I just wasn't interested in pursuing."

A related problem is that, in the process of disclosing large amounts of information about themselves, singles may inadvertently reveal some negative data. In established relationships, partners are able to interpret negative information in light of their shared history. But on a first date, inadvertently communicated negative self-disclosure may not be put into its proper perspective. This hypothesis is consistent with evidence that negative information is weighted more heavily than positive information (Kellermann 1984, Weinberger, Allen and Dillon 1981). Therefore, extensive self-disclosure on a first date can increase the risk of negative judgments being made about the disclosing party.

Perhaps the most speculative, but also the most interesting effect of the market metaphor is its impact on singles' expectations for their future spouses (Sabatelli 1988). At a recent conference for nonprofit professionals working with singles, Judi Erlich (1988), a Boston-based matchmaker, made the following remarks about her clients.

They think they're shopping for the perfect product. They have been raised in a consumer society and have developed expectations of near-flawless performance from products carefully designed to meet their needs. Now they're looking at each other the way they shop for a new VCR. But human beings aren't like that. They just can't live up to the standard of mass-produced perfection. The exactly perfect product just isn't for sale. So they go along, pushing their shopping carts farther and farther down an endless aisle, never being willing to buy because they can't let go of the hope that the perfect product awaits them just a little farther along.

These remarks illustrate the link between the respondents framing of their social relationships in market terms and the omnipresent impact of consumer society. While some of the prevalence of the market metaphor in our sample is probably due to the respondents membership in a matchmaking service (see conclusion), it seems unreasonable to assume that the pervasive values and experiences of consumer society would be hermetically sealed off from our love lives. As Telser (1990), a community service professional who has been working with singles outside of introduction services for several years has observed, many singles are looking for perfection and have an attitude she calls "shopping for a mate with a gold card."

Yet there were also favorable consequences of the market metaphor. In romantic love stories, people find their true love through fated chance encounters. Seeing dating through the market metaphor allows the single to

take assertive measures (like using a matchmaker) that might seem inappropriate if one exclusively followed the romantic model. "If you want a new job you have to go out and look for it. If you want a new apartment you have to look for it. Why do you feel that you don't have to do something to [find] a relationship?" (Maria, 33). Using an introductory service not only facilitates the pathways to romance but also ensures that relationship goals are explicit. Interestingly, Maria (33), who complained that "there's a lot less romance to this situation" (i.e., dating through a service) also noted that in meeting such dates, "you don't have to play any games" because you both know why you're there.

As mentioned above, another possible benefit of the marketing model is that it could provide a language to allow singles to make rational judgments about areas of legitimate concern. An over-reliance on the romantic model can lead a single into making shortsighted choices. But by thinking about relationships from the perspective of an exchange model, singles could take a more long-term and level headed look at their choices. Still, our respondents didn't tend to use market metaphors in this way, and it is possible to discuss the long-term practical aspects of relationships without the use of commercial terminology. Given the threats to the sacred meanings of love and of personhood implicit in the use of the market metaphor, non-commercial imagery for discussing commitment and reciprocity needs to be cultivated if we are to preserve the special status love and people hold in our society.

CONCLUSION

Where market metaphors were replaced in the 1960s by what Bailey calls "metaphors of revolution" (Bailey 1988, p. 142). Campbell (1987) argues that the 1960s were an era of renewed interest in the romantic ethic, and that its notions of revolution were an offshoot of its romantic ideology. Therefore, Bailey's metaphors of revolution can be categorized as romantic metaphors and their relative ascendancy during the 1960s can be understood as a byproduct of the romanticism of this period.

If it is the case that the market metaphor went into a hiatus during the 1960s and has only recently returned, its revival can be seen as a reflection of the cultural dominance of a more conservative and materialistic social ethic (Bellah et al. 1985). In their analysis of contemporary American society, Bellah et al. (1985) state that reasoning about private and public life rests on the "language people used to think about their lives" (p. 306). They observe that for middle-class mainstream culture, the therapeutic and utilitarian attitude toward love becomes "no more than an exchange" where both partners "... receive a reasonable return on their investment" (p. 108).

While this broad cultural change can be seen as the primary reason for the

prominence of the market metaphor, a complementary explanation for its return is the tremendous growth in formal mate-selection networks such as matchmakers, video dating, singles ads, etc. (Adelman and Ahuvia 1991; Ahuvia and Adelman 1991). The examples of the market metaphor from the popular press make it clear that this terminology is present in the general population and is not just a result of the particular sample used for this study. Nonetheless, market metaphors are particularly prevalent in connection with social-introduction services and singles ads. We have already seen how the use of the market metaphor can justify the use of a matchmaker as in the examples of the matchmaker as headhunter or stockbroker. It is also plausible that because our sample was drawn from a group of people who had engaged the services of a matchmaker, they may be more deliberate and rational about their dating behavior than a representative sample of all singles. Furthermore, the overt commercial nature of formal mate-selection networks invites general comparisons of dating to other commercial institutions. Therefore, the use of these services or singles ads may increase the use of market metaphors. Yet one need not use dating services but only be aware that they are a significant presence in our society, in order for their implicit commercialism to influence the language used to describe dating.

We have seen that the language of exchange theorists is not limited to scholarly explanations for mate seeking. While exchange theories can be found throughout academic works, native versions are evident in the market imagery of the dating experience. That this language is part of public discourse is evident in a prevailing and coherent network of native terms for describing the dating and mating scene. Because language is never a neutral vehicle for thought, and metaphor "can lead us to view the entailments of the metaphor as being *true*" (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, p. 157, emphasis in original), this terminology creates a metaphorical force that pervades both social and physical realities. As such, market metaphors not only reveal meanings but also shape behavior.

The reasoning processes reflected by the market metaphors reveal a depersonalization of the dating and mating experience. The metaphors of people as products and dating as shopping emphasize the commoditization of people and consumerist imagery of social relationships. This imagery makes explicit the pressure to package and sell the self. Behaviorally, these metaphors may stimulate dating efficiency, whereby potential partners are quickly assessed and disqualified in what may be perceived as an anti-romantic ritual. On the other hand, the market metaphors do allow for an open recognition of the exchange relations that play an important role in dating and marriage. Although the anti-romantic nature of the market metaphor may decrease the likelihood of singles being swept off their feet, at least they know where they stand.

APPENDIX

So Much More

A PROPOSAL FOR MARRIAGE... THE VOYAGE STARTS HERE!

Dear GIRLFRIEND...

I'd like to invite you on a very special voyage—one like you've never experienced. A voyage of love, adventure, and romance...

A VOYAGE THAT COULD CHANGE YOUR WHOLE LIFE!

I'll skip the hype, GIRLFRIEND, and come right to the point. I'd like you to join me, Ralph W. Balding, on an exploration of *Marriage*... the institution so relevant to today's life styles.

Marriage isn't for everyone, GIRLFRIEND. It's for the special person who wants to find rewards of love and happiness. And if you give me the chance to make *Marriage* a part of your life... I'll give you my personal guarantee that you won't regret it!

Just think of all you get with *Marriage!* A gorgeous dream wedding... A romantic dream honeymoon... And a dreamy pregnancy, childbirth, and motherhood...

AND, OF COURSE, SO MUCH MORE!

Best of all, GIRLFRIEND, it's so *easy* to say "I do" to *Marriage!* Just return the enclosed card... and I'll send you a ring personally bought by me, Ralph W. Balding. It's just the first step... on a voyage to *Marriage!*

Love,

RALPH W. BALDING

Suitor

P.S.: S.W.A.K.—I've made sure to "seal" this letter with a kiss. I can't live without you... and I'm willing to bet you can't live without *Marriage!*

A SPECIAL MESSAGE FOR RALPH W. BALDING

Dear RALPH W. BALDING...

You can throw this letter away now and give up the limitless potential for a lifetime rich in *romance, personal-growth possibilities, and dual-income benefits*...

...or you can read on, RALPH W. BALDING, to learn that I've *already said yes!*

YES TO MARRIAGE!

Our rating agency found our qualifications in the financial, personality, and commitment departments *too good* to be overlooked!

PRE-APPROVED!

What does it mean? It means you're entitled to a lifetime of *personal reward and satisfaction* in a *loving, learning relationship*. But not only that, RALPH W. BALDING! I'm willing to throw in with *no additional obligation*:

- A gilt-edged heart valued at \$55,000 per year!*
- Use of a 1984 Ford Tempo w/ options;
- A Hoboken co-op valued at \$95,000;
- And, of course, so much more!

Best of all, you don't have to wait until *Marriage* for these benefits! They're yours *right now*... during the *Trial Engagement* period!

So check the box marked "YES!" and return to me the detachable card as a token for your commitment to a June wedding in Secaucus. It's just that simple... and remember, I'm willing to say "I DO!"

Love,
LISA DECHERCHO
Fiancée

*Pre-tax.

WHEN YOU PLACE A HIGH PREMIUM ON MARRIAGE—LOVE-IN (SURANCE)

CONGRATULATIONS RALPH W. and LISA BALDING...

... on your recent wedding! We share the happiness and joy you truly must be experiencing. Now we'd like to share even more!

LOVE-IN(SURANCE)

Love-In(surance). Dr. Wesley M. Pertz's award-winning love-therapy program (as seen on "P.M. Magazine"). It's priceless advice for every married couple—but for one month only you can get *five* installments of this totally unique program absolutely *free* of charge!

WE KNOW YOU'RE HAPPY NOW...

...but did you know that almost 80 percent of married people become unhappy? The qualities that they once found attractive in their mates begin to repel them. And though we'd like to think *you'll* always be happy, Ralph W. and Lisa Balding, there is only one way to

BE SURE YOU'LL ALWAYS BE HAPPY

Love-In(surance). It's not just counselling—it's the down payment on your marriage. Take advantage of our remarkable offer and schedule an appointment with one of our trained Love-In Advisers *now*, before trouble troubles you. Simply return the attached card and check the box next to your most convenient meeting time.

At this happy time we extend our best wishes... and even something more. Love-In(surance): For better, for worse.

Sincerely,
DR. WESLEY M. PERTZ, M.A.
Founder, Love-In(surance)

P.S.: Return your card within two weeks of receiving this letter and you may be entitled to five *additional* counselling installments *or* five hours of free legal services with our one-the-premises law partners!

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NOTES

1. For criticisms of exchange theories see Abrahamson (1970), Etzioni (1988), Heath (1976), Nord (1968), Pryor and Graburn (1981), and Schwartz (1990).
2. Interview topics included experiences with the matchmaker, attitudes toward the service, experiences on dates, feelings about using a matchmaking service, and how the use of the service affected other parts of the respondents' lives. Questions did not include a comparison of profit with non-profit services, or issues directly related to money or commerce that might have primed the respondents to focus on market metaphors.
3. Seventeenth-century French rhetorician Bernard Lamy (reprint 1986) defines *troper* as "words transported from their proper significations, and applied to things that they signify but obliquely" (Fogelin, p. 28).
4. Some readers may question this broad use of the term metaphor on the grounds that its exact nature is still in dispute (Black 1962, 1979; Davidson 1978; Fogelin 1988; Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Searle 1975, 1979); these debates do not impact the thesis we wish to present in this paper. This is because our work is not a study of metaphor per se, but rather metaphors and other similar types of tropes are used to investigate the world views of our respondents.
5. The *Washington Post* is a Washington publication whose title satirizes the Washington Post.
6. One change that has occurred over time is that romantic love has come to be seen as quite sexual in nature, whereas the early notions of courtly love were much more chaste.
7. Respondents averaged 31 years of age. It is possible that the respondents' high level of experience at dating had brought home to these singles the importance of exchange elements.

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