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**LONELINESS AND DEPRESSION
AND THEIR RELATION
TO PARASOCIAL INTERACTION**

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
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ABSTRACT

This research attempted to ascertain which individuals may enter into a parasocial interaction (PI). Specifically, loneliness, depression, types of television programs watched and uses and gratifications were studied for their relationship to PI. 226 questionnaires were distributed to college students. These questionnaires included a PI scale used by Rubin and others, the UCLA Loneliness Scale, the Depression scale from the Center of Epidemiological Studies, demographic information and items that suggest specific uses and gratifications and which programs the respondent viewed.

It was found that loneliness, and type of program viewed had virtually no relationships to PI. Depression exhibited a significant but not meaningful relationship. However, while the original hypothesis that passive viewing would be related to PI was rejected, active uses of television seemed to be a significant predictor.

This study also found a three factor solution for the PI scale, as opposed to the one factor solution found in other studies. These factors were called, guidance, attraction and companionship, which research shows are the three of the primary characteristics of a friendship. Prior research suggests that individuals derive the most value from a companionship type friendship. This study found that the guidance factor of PI was most related to depression and uses and gratifications.

It was concluded that a PI is not a type of friendship at all. One can attain guidance from friends or non-friends. Previous research suggests that PI is a one-way friendship between the viewer and the media persona. This research suggests that PI is not a friendship in any meaningful manner. A reexamination of the concept of PI was suggested.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Turning on the television is often an act taken quite for granted. It has become as much a part of our day as the morning coffee. Moreover, we all bring an agenda to our actions. Turning on the television and the programming we choose may well serve specific functions. It is possible that those characteristics, both psychographic and demographic, that we bring into the interaction between viewer and medium, may affect what we get out of it.

Our emotional state and our physical environment give us a perspective by which we establish our needs at any given moment. Charon (1979) states that perspectives are guides to our perceptions. If a television viewer's perspective is borne of emotional needs that are manifest in depression, then the role of the medium may become one of companion or a voice to fill a void. If media use is indeed goal directed, as suggested by much of the uses and gratifications research, (Tan, 1985 and Severin, 1988) then the viewer may hope to ameliorate depression by using television.

The media provide people who talk. Sometimes they talk to each other, as with dramas and some news programs. Sometimes they seem to talk to the viewer directly. Horton and Wohl (1956) theorized that if a media persona is perceived as talking to the viewer, the viewer might be given to responding in one form or another. The viewer may acquire some affinity for the media persona. Horton and Wohl described this relationship as parasocial interaction. Among the definitions given for the prefix para is "resembling or similar" (American Heritage Dictionary, 1973, p.950). Thus, a parasocial interaction would be defined as an interaction that resembles actual interaction. Horton and Wohl provide the technical definition: parasocial interaction is the product of the "simulacrum of conversational give and take" between the viewer and the performer. (p. 215) Horton and

Wohl primarily considered the interaction to be with a persona that seems to talk right to the viewer, such as a newscaster. Research with parasocial interaction has been extended to consider interactions with media persona that talk to each other, such as in soap operas and sit-coms. (Rubin and McHugh, 1987; Perse and Rubin, 1988.)

On the surface, a parasocial interaction, a one-way relationship with a media persona, may seem ludicrous. However, if the functions of a friend, such as companionship and guidance, are considered, it is certainly possible for a media persona to fulfill these functions. If a person brings needs such as companionship and positive reinforcement to the viewing experience, then the importance of television becomes a function of "what television tells or reflects back to viewers about themselves and of the ways that such information is integrated." (Newton and Buck, 1985, p. 309) Popular media persona often project positive feelings about themselves. Such positive feelings may be reflected back to the viewer. The persona may offer a degree of self-disclosure which may set up a feeling of intimacy, another building block of friendship. The stimuli of the program and the persona within are integrated in terms of the perspective the viewer brings to the interaction with the media.

Charon (1979) defines perspectives in a number of ways. In broad terms a perspective is a "point of view...that guide our perceptions of reality." (p. 8) A perspective may be that of a devout Christian, or a college student, or an accountant. Our perspective may well be formed by our emotional or physical state.

In demographic terms, our self-perceptions of our appearance may affect behavior. Feedback pertaining to appearance may affect behavior. Being an only child, oldest child or adopted child certainly adds another dimension to a given perspective. Certainly demographic characteristics provides a perspective or an interaction of perspectives that guide behavior.

Psychographic characteristics may also provide perspective. Depression is considered an affective disorder (Davison and Neale, 1982) which can be associated with or precipitated by other emotional or physical conditions. Depression can also occur due to perceived inadequacies between the desired and actual environment (physical or emotional) of the person. Nonetheless, depression is an affective disorder recognized within the DSM III (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association; Davison and Neale, 1982).

While loneliness is not recognized as an affective disorder, loneliness can be quite profound in its impact. Both depression and loneliness are characterized by certain behaviors. Often, a significant other may soothe or erase such feelings associated with depression and loneliness. It is logical to analyze the relationships between loneliness and depression with parasocial interaction. Both loneliness and depression include symptoms that would make conventional friendship formation difficult. An alternative form of friendship may be sought that would not force the individual to utilize poorly developed social skills.

It may be that the psychological and demographic perspectives we bring into a media interaction may effect our behavior with the media. Many studies point to the existence of parasocial interaction (Allen, 1988; Levy, 1979; Perse and Rubin, 1987 among others). It may well be that certain perspectives may provide indicators of those most amenable to a parasocial interaction.

The primary purpose of this study is to ascertain whether specific psychographic characteristics are related to parasocial interaction (PI) and whether program choices and specific uses of television are related to PI.

A PI is a perceived friendship. Certainly it is not a traditional friendship. However, it is likely that a PI is perceived to serve many of the same benefits of a

traditional friendship. Rook (1987) has attempted to categorize the many functions of a friend. She differentiates between social support and companionship functions.

Rook (1987) argues that the social support/informative functions provide less enjoyment and pleasure than the companionship functions of friendship. Newscasts and other informative programming provide persona that serve the social support and informative functions. Non-informational programming, such as dramas, sitcoms and soap operas, provide personae that can be perceived as well-rounded, open people willing to self-disclose and share their happiness and their troubles. While newscasters, game show hosts and sports announcers react to situations and may explain them, personae from non-informational programming have things happen to them and then react to them. What happens to them would inspire empathy while their reactions would involve self-disclosure. The acts of engaging empathy and allowing self-disclosure would be consistent with friendships of a companionship nature. Personae from non-informational programming would be more likely to be perceived as providing companionship. If one is seeking friendship, it would most likely be that of a companionship nature, since these are more satisfying. If a parasocial interaction is a type of friendship, the individual would seek out that individual that could supply companionship, which would be personae from non-informational programming.

Further, if an individual is lonely or depressed, he or she may lack friendships that would assuage these feelings. Characteristics of loneliness and depression may make it difficult to form friendships in the real world. The viewer's existing support networks are perceived as inadequate. An alternative to actual friendships may be sought. That alternative may be a parasocial interaction.

This study seeks to find out some of the characteristics of those most amenable to a parasocial interaction.

Hypotheses

H1: The degree of parasocial interaction will be greater for those interactions with non-information persona than with persona from informational programming.

H2: The degree of measured loneliness will be positively correlated with the degree of measured parasocial interaction.

H3: The degree of measured depression will be positively correlated with the degree of measured parasocial interaction.

H4: The combined effects of loneliness and depression will be better predictors of parasocial interaction than loneliness and depression will be individually.

While the viewer may actively seek television as a means to lessen negative feelings, is it likely that the viewer would actively seek a PI or be conscious of its formation? It may be that the medium filled some perceived gap, a way to fill time, and continued perceived interaction with a media persona led to a PI. If so:

H5: Parasocial interaction will be related to passive uses of television, as measured by items six through eight of the uses and gratifications section of the questionnaire.

The preceding has offered a brief introduction to this study and the hypotheses. Following are discussions of the primary components of this study: depression, loneliness and friendship along with a discussion of the role that television may play in all of this.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this study is to ascertain if certain psychographic variables of the viewer may lead the viewer to seek a vicarious one-way relationship with media persona known as parasocial interaction. Before this phenomenon is explained in greater detail, the psychographic variables used in this study will be elaborated.

The idea of being alone involves several connotations depending on the term used. Reisman (1979) suggests twenty terms to describe the state of being without the company of other individuals. He argues that the term alone has a neutral connotation while solitude suggests a positive state of introspection. Most other means of describing the concept of being alone involve negative images.

Being alone does not mean the individual is lonely. The term lonely brings forth strong images of hollow moments of despair. Reisman (1979) defines loneliness as a "feeling of sadness or despondency brought on by our feeling alone." (p. 168) Perlman and Peplau (1982) describe loneliness as an "unpleasant experience that occurs when a person's network of social relations is deficient in some important way, either quantitatively or qualitatively." (p. 4) Such clinical definitions are continued by authors such as Sermat (1978) who define loneliness as "an experienced discrepancy between the kinds of interpersonal relationships the individual perceived himself as having at the time, and the kinds of relationships he would like to have, whether in terms of his past experience or some ideal state that he has actually never experienced." (p. 274) Those that have experienced loneliness to some significant degree may have difficulty in accepting such detached clinical definitions. Freida Fromm-Reichman seems to attempt a definition in human rather than purely clinical terms. She defines loneliness as, "...such a painful,

frightening experience that people will do practically anything to avoid it." (Weiss, 1973, p. 10)

Many of the adjectives used to describe loneliness imply a state of great intensity. Sullivan suggests that loneliness can be such a driving force that it may lead individuals who are painfully shy to aggressively attempt to become involved in social activity. (Weiss, p. 9) This motivation for the individual to cure his or her loneliness by engaging in forms of social interaction may be thwarted by the very cause of the loneliness.

A number of studies have suggested that social skill deficits are often antecedents of depression. (Libet and Lewinsohn, 1973) Loneliness, therefore, may be a function of an inability to react to social demands and a dynamic environment. Even if individuals can adapt to changing situations, they may lack qualities such as empathy and warmth that would leave the objects of their search with a positive reaction. (Zakahi and Duran, 1982) Lonely individuals may not possess the social skills that would enable them to enter into satisfying interpersonal encounters. Loneliness may become a downward spiral as loneliness has been correlated to depression. The symptoms of depression often include, according to DSM III, "a shift in activity level, becoming either lethargic or agitated" and an inability to become actively involved in a conversation as attention levels diminish. (Davison and Neale, p. 230) Thus as the symptoms of depression manifest themselves, the individual may become increasingly unable to engage in the interaction that would lessen perceived loneliness. Buhrmester, et. al (1988) discusses a relationship between depression and loneliness, though he stresses the direction of the relationship is difficult to ascertain. Thus, loneliness and depression become additive, or mutually reinforcing, in their effect on the individual. As social skills or attempts at accessing such skills decrease, the intensity of the loneliness and depression increase. This notion has led to increased study in the social skill levels of the depressed and lonely.

A number of studies have analyzed the social skill levels of the lonely. Those who are lonely have been shown to exhibit deficient social skills. Jones and Hobbs (1982) found that those that measure high in degree of loneliness show deficiencies in their interpersonal communication. Lonely individuals ask fewer questions of their partner, is less likely to progress with a particular conversation topic and refer to their partners less. Chelune, Sultan and Williams (1980), Buhrmester, et al. (1988) and Zakahi and Duran (1982) suggest that the lonely have increased difficulty in allowing themselves to disclose information about themselves. Jounard (1971) states that such self-disclosure is important in the building of interpersonal bonds.

The nature of their loneliness may preclude sufficient self-disclosure. Those who are lonely often describe themselves as anxious, depressed and bored. These traits may be unattractive to the receiver. (Zakahi and Duran, 1982) What might be more inhibiting is the tendency toward self-deprecation and interpersonal hostility that these individuals exhibit. (Jones and Hobbs, 1982) Self-reported behaviors of lonely people seem to reinforce the idea of depressed individuals suffering from social skill deficits. Those who are lonely were most likely to report difficulty in making friends in a simple, natural way, which includes meeting people in parties and other such behavior which would initiate the desired interpersonal relationship. Hokanson, et al. (1989) have found that depressed people tend to limit social contact with their college roommates. Even when they do interact, both parties describe the activity as involving low enjoyment. Hokanson notes that the findings of this study are consistent with prior research. If we generalize this study, not only do lonely and depressed people have trouble making friends, but the interaction necessary in making friends is found to be of limited enjoyment. The fact that the receiver does not enjoy the interaction suggests that the depressed/lonely person may be exhibiting negative traits that turn off the prospective friend. Poor social skills may inhibit successful participation in other situations as well.

Zakahi and Duran (1982) conclude that lonely people display an inability to adapt to dynamic social situations, thus inhibiting their socializing. Horowitz and De Sales French (1979) argue that the self-descriptive statement, I am lonely "seems to arise, at least in part, when people observe multiple problems of inhibited sociability withinthemselves." (p. 763) Riskind, et al (1987) reports that poor expectations of happiness tend to be prophetic. Individuals who are depressed and report negative expectations of the future, tend to be more depressed than those who are a bit more optimistic. This poor prognosis is consistent with Buhrmester's finding that lonely people tend to self-report poor interaction skills. Thus the lack of self-confidence and the expectation of failure may inhibit the socializing of the lonely person. Although Buhrmester could not state the direction of the relationship between loneliness and depression, the lesser activity level of the depressed coupled with poor expectations would make prospects for successful socialization quite bleak.

Thus, lonely people may have problems breaking the ice. Even if the individual can make contact, he or she may lack the skills necessary to develop the friendship past the superficial level.

It would seem that the symptoms of loneliness contribute cyclically to perpetuation of the condition. Loneliness is correlated to depression. (Buhrmester, et al. 1988) Depression involves symptoms that are counterproductive to the desire of the lonely to establish relationships. Loneliness is also cyclical in that the individual may lack the social skills necessary to establish such relationships or may exhibit such negative characteristics in the interpersonal communication that the potential friend is left with a negative perception of the individual. Rejection by potential friends reinforces the negative self-concept. The lonely individual has been found to exhibit tendencies to project that negative self-concept to others. (Jones and Hobbs, 1982) Negativity towards others deters future attempts at establishing successful relationships.

It has been suggested that the cyclical pattern of loneliness mentioned previously is not solely the product of intrapersonal communication. Horowitz and Vitkus (1987) contend that loneliness may be perpetuated by the social role perceived by the individual. For example, a lonely person suffering from depression is prone to exhibit passivity in interpersonal relationships. Such passivity invites the partner of an interpersonal communication to behave in a dominant manner. Such dominance forces increased submissiveness and thus perpetuates the depression. The depressed person is less likely to engage in productive interaction, thus the loneliness is perpetuated. (Horowitz and Vitkus, 1987) The depressed person learns his role in interpersonal communication as that of the passive individual. The difficulty of the lonely person in extracting himself from his state (or trait) is increased as Rook (1987) has found that individuals without certain social relationships may be perceived negatively. Thus, in initiating interaction, the individual may already have one strike against him.

Passivity leading to depression may be a tough cycle to break. Horowitz and Vitkus (1987) discovered that even after taking part in successful interpersonal communication, the lonely person is likely to evaluate himself in a negative manner. That negativity seems to persist despite the individual's experiencing positive interaction. The authors suggest that even if the lonely person realizes or is taught social skills, depression and resulting anxiety may preclude successful relationships. A negative self-image may manifest in a perception that negative events are caused by internal, stable and global causes. Such feelings of helplessness have been found to be related to depression. (Riskind, et. al., 1987) Further, the authors point out that the lonely person may already possess the necessary social skills but is too insecure to utilize them, fearing ultimate failure.

Friendship: more than a feeling

It would be a great oversimplification to state that loneliness is cured when the lonely person finds a friend. Research shows that there is more than one type of loneliness and more than one type of friend.

Weiss (1973) suggests a scenario in which a recently divorced or widowed parent joins a Parents Without Partners organization. Although the individual may find a support system during the meetings, these relationships and support system do not suffice to ease the loneliness as the person may be seeking a replacement for the departed spouse. Often the relationships formed within these organizations lack intensity and do not sufficiently fill the void that the spouse would have. The individual leaves the support group atmosphere and returns to the empty shell of a house and to the same problems. The lonely person needed more than just a friend.

On the other hand, Weiss also suggests a scenario, based on his own pilot study, in which a happily married couple move into a new community. While the husband struggles to establish himself in his new job, the wife is left home with no social network to help occupy her time. The intensity of the loneliness can be as significant as the Parents Without Partners until the newcomers to the neighborhood establish new friends and social networks. In the latter case, the individual had a significant other, yet needed a network of friends to fulfill perceived needs.

The latter scenario is not unlike the problems faced by college students leaving home to go to school. A number of the studies analyzed for this paper involved college students. Although college students often comprise the experimental group as an act of convenience, it is difficult to deny the anxiety that the freshman--or returning graduate student--may feel upon entering a school far from the family and social network.

House and Kahn (1985) described four different types of social support: emotional support (actions that convey esteem), appraisal support (feedback about one's views or

behaviors), informational support (information or advice that facilitates problem solving) and instrumental support (tangible assistance).

As with the two Weiss scenarios, individuals, at various times, may need different forms of support, or a combination of the four in varying degrees. Rook (1987) suggests that the social support systems described here are primarily utilitarian. Some individuals may desire support for its own sake-for the pleasure of another's company.

Rook refers to this sort of relationship as companionship, differentiating it from the social support categories defined above. Companionship relationships involve someone to pal around with and engage in recreational activities.

Rook states that an individual needs both social support and companionship. Both provide "equally important but complementary contributions to psychological well-being." (Rook, p. 1134). Rook presented five studies which analyzed the attributes of both social support and companionship and their relative benefits to those experiencing high and low stress and varying degrees of loneliness. These studies conclude that for those individuals enduring significant stress, relationships of a companionship type were significantly more beneficial than those of a social support type. The advisory board that social support provides help the individual deal with the anxieties that may arise in day to day activities. While these individuals are necessary, it is the companion who provides the company for activities that may be more enjoyable. Rook concluded that individuals perceive greater satisfaction with friendships when the friend fulfills the role of companion as opposed to the social or instrumental (tangible assistance) support group.

This suggests that the lonely person is in need of something more than someone to pour his heart out to. There is a need for someone to engage in enjoyable activities with. The Rook study does not investigate the possibility that one friend may provide both social support and companionship. Yet it is not inconceivable that one individual may

provide both, thus providing a needed buffer to the external threats of the world and companionship to share what the world has to offer.

Lonely persons who do not have or can not express social skills necessary to find such companionship may find themselves consistently lonely. The ability to express fears and emotions may provide short term relief, but the enduring problem of loneliness may remain. Buhrmester has found that poor self disclosure and initiation skills may be related to loneliness. Thus, the lonely person may not be able to engage in the social interactions that would serve to ameliorate his pain. Different situations elicit different needs and often call for different types of friends.

Reisman (1979) differentiates two types of friendship. Associative relationships may consist of a dyad or large group of individuals who can chat. Those who attempt to push this relationship toward something of more depth may find their efforts thwarted. Associative relationships often stagnate at this level. Self-disclosure is limited or non-existent. Such self-disclosure is often met with resistance and negative reactions.

Reciprocal relationships are those of more depth. Self-disclosure would not be unwarranted. This reciprocal relationship seems to involve what the external spectator would call friendship. Reisman provides a definition of friendship as suggested by a fifteen year old interviewee, "A friend is a person whose company you enjoy, and who you can talk to openly, and who you can depend on." Reisman notes that this definition does not explicitly note affection or trust, though such traits can be inferred. It is this type of friendship that can often vault the individual beyond the realms of loneliness. The existence of social support may not suffice. Rook's studies provide strong evidence that loneliness lessens in the presence of companions. Loneliness is not lessened significantly when only a support system is present. To fulfill all the functions of a friend, the individual must offer more than advice. Research has suggested several criteria that

friends must meet before they are accepted as friends. Of course, a degree of reciprocity would assist the formation of the friendship.

Friendships: How To Get One

Friendships and love relationships seem to just happen. When an individual is asked why his best friend is his best friend, you may get vague statements such as: "He knows me better than I know myself." Psychologists and sociologists have attempted to be more specific about the process of friendship formation.

Personality factors are of obvious importance to the formation of friendships. However, Baron and Byrne (1981) have suggested other external factors that are necessary. These are propinquity, emotions and a need for affiliation. A number of studies have suggested that the location of a person's home may be predictive of the choice of friends. Propinquity means physical closeness of the person. Interpersonal attraction has been found to increase as contact increases with that person. Ebbesen, Kjos and Konecni (1976) found that best friends live closer together than people thought of as good friends. Such propinquity allows a greater likelihood of contact, increasing interaction and the likelihood of a companionship forming. A number of studies have suggested that repeated exposure to any stimuli will increase the likelihood of the stimulus receiving favorable attitudes. (i.e. Moreland and Zajonc, 1979 and Zajonc, 1968)

However, repeated exposure does not guarantee that there will be a liking. Carson and Adams (1980) have found that the mood of an individual upon entering a task or interaction affects the degree of like or dislike to the stimulus. When depression is induced prior to the interaction, a more negative interaction is noted by the respondent. This would seem to have significant implications for the depressed and lonely. If an individual enters into an interaction with a negative attitude, such negativity may preclude any attraction to the other person. Thus, as suggested earlier, loneliness and depression

remain cyclical. The prior state of feelings and emotions preclude the formation of such relationships that might end the suffering.

Emotions and feelings are thought to be indicators of whether a stimulus (potential friend) will be regarded positively or negatively. Griffitt (1970) found that factors such as the conditions of the room where an initial contact is made can have effects upon the degree of like or dislike for the other person. In this case, two rooms were used for meeting areas. Those that had interaction in a hot, humid room perceived the interaction more negatively than those who had such interaction in a comfortable setting. How we feel as we enter into an interaction would seem to effect how we will feel during the interaction.

A third factor to consider in how friendships are formed is the need for affiliation. In the movie *Funny Girl*, Barbara Streisand sings that, "People who need people are the luckiest people in the world." This would seem to make sense since males who test high in the need for affiliation are more likely to enter into discussion with attractive strangers. (Crouse and Mehrabian, 1977) The need for affiliation is defined as the "motive to seek interpersonal relationships and friendships." (Baron and Byrne, p. 150) People that are lonely exhibit lower degrees of need for affiliation and are less likely to engage in behaviors that would facilitate the formation of friendships. (Russell, Peplau and Cutrona, 1980) This study of the negative correlation between depression and the need for affiliation utilized a revised version of the UCLA loneliness scale.

Among the tests used to ascertain the discriminant validity of the UCLA Loneliness Index was a test for need for affiliation. The loneliness index was negatively correlated to the need for affiliation as well as social risk taking. Although the risk taking is a social function that would seem necessary to achieve relationships, one must also have the motivation to engage in such a relationship. The low need for affiliation seems indicative of an individual who is unwilling or unable to become involved in significant

social interaction. However, a low need for affiliation does not necessarily mean that the individual is miserable. The individual may have strong desires to maintain independence and be content with the degree of interaction currently enjoyed. (Baron and Byrne, p. 134.)

The factors discussed to this point pertain to the internal state of the individual considering involvement in an interpersonal relationship. However, the characteristics of the other person involved in such a relationship must be analyzed. Baron and Byrne suggest that physical attractiveness, attitudes, personality and overall evaluations are relevant factors in determining that two people will become involved in a friendship.

Physical attractiveness is, of course, a factor in establishing a relationship. It is often said that only the superficial care about looks. Apparently, most people do indeed care about looks when considering establishing a relationship. The matching hypothesis (Baron and Byrne, p. 36) suggests that people often associate with people who are roughly equal in terms of quality of looks. While an individual may seek the best looking person to associate with, it is usually realized that relationships with people of equal physical attractiveness are the most logical to pursue.

While we seek people of similar physical attractiveness, we often seek individuals with similar attitudes also. Schonemann, Byrne and Bell (1977) have established a precise mathematical formula to illustrate the relationship between the proportion of attitude similarity and the degree of liking. A strong positive correlation was found. The 1980 study by McGinley, cited by Baron and Byrne (1981), found that the individuals need not be explicitly aware of the similarities between them for the friendship to be forged.

In terms of personality, similarity is not always the most relevant factor. Outgoing people are generally more popular than shy people. (Krulwicz and Nash, 1980). Baron and Byrne state that some personality and behavioral similarity is important to the establishment of a relationship.

The degree of self-disclosure is also relevant to the establishment of a friendship. Studies have suggested that we tend to seek people who self-disclose as much as we do. Kleinke and Kahn (1980) have found that males who disclose a great deal are perceived negatively while women who self-disclose the same material are perceived positively. Snell, Belk, Flowers and Warren (1988) found that such sex role stereotyping carried over to dialogues with friends and therapists. Women were found to be more comfortable than men in discussing "expressive behaviors" and "global femininity" with either males or females. Men were able to discuss their male characteristics with a male friend, but that is apparently when the self-disclosure ends for males.

Logically enough, we also tend to like people that speak well of us. If we are complimented, we react positively. (Baron and Byrne, p. 145)

Finally, people with similar needs tend to get together. Baron and Byrne suggest that similarity of needs is a greater predictor of future friendship than the existence of complementary needs. (p. 144)

A number of characteristics have been discussed that are relevant in the establishment of friendships. These factors involve both internal feeling-states and characteristics of the other person.

In predicting who will engage in parasocial interaction and who will be the subject of such an interaction, it may well be that the same factors will serve as predictors. It may also be possible that a low need for affiliation is symptomatic of a person who merely lacks necessary social skills. The low affiliation need may be deemed a rationalization-a public means of hiding poor social skills. Thus loneliness is rationalized. If the person is too shy or socially inept, a parasocial interaction would seem to be a logical end result. The subject of a parasocial interaction may well be chosen using the same factors, suggested above, by which the individual would choose a conventional friend. The type of

support needed may also be a factor in who is chosen as the subject of a parasocial interaction. The nature of such a relationship will be discussed in the next chapter.

Loneliness: Types and Degrees

Loneliness can be perceived as either being state or trait. The scenario presented earlier of the person in a new neighborhood suggests that loneliness can be a transient state, concluding when the individual finds a social circle to fill the gap. Associative relationships may suffice to lessen immediate loneliness, though reciprocal relationships are more desirable.

Members of Parents Without Partners would probably desire reciprocal relationships. These individuals are seemingly capable of finding such relationships. Both of these examples would suggest loneliness of a state or situational type.

An individual who lacks, or is unable to utilize, proper social skills would be more unlikely to successfully find reciprocal relationships. Loneliness is perpetuated. This suggests loneliness of a trait or chronic nature.

Gerson and Perlman (1979) conducted a study which found that situationally lonely people have better social skill functions than the chronically lonely. Sender skills were more apparent in the situationally lonely person. (Depression was correlated with insufficient sender skills.)

With the potential for developing meaningful relationships seemingly diminished for the lonely and/or depressed, other relationships may be explored. Perse and Rubin (1989) have found that lonely people are less likely to exploit interpersonal communication opportunities. It would seem that the lonely or depressed may seek a relationship that would not challenge their poor interaction skills. A parasocial interaction may provide such a relationship.

A parasocial relationship is a vicarious friendship with a media persona. In a recent study, loneliness was found not to be significantly related to degree of parasocial

interaction toward newscasters. (Rubin, Perse and Powell, 1985) However, the authors did ascertain a significant negative relationship between loneliness and information motive for watching television. This would be consistent with studies which suggest that the lonely desire more than the support system, of which informational support is a part, out of a relationship. The lonely benefit most from a companion.

Perse and Rubin (1988) have found a positive relationship between reported satisfaction with soap operas and measured degree of parasocial interaction. This is consistent with studies on viewers' uses of soap operas. McQuail (1969) cites a 1944 study by Herzog which found that women derived emotional release and stimulus as well as vicarious compensation for their own hardships. Four years later Warner found that serials reduced women's feelings of futility and increased feelings of acceptance for their position in 1948 society.

Soap opera viewing has historically been correlated with the viewer's needs for some modeling as well as to keep the viewer company. Both of these functions would seem to serve the role of the friend as described previously. Therefore, it is not surprising that newscasters would not be as likely as soap opera characters to be the subject of a parasocial interaction. The newscaster provides information, thereby serving the function of a support system. The research presented here argues that degrees of measured loneliness lessen significantly more as a result of companionship than a support system. (Interestingly, a 1988 study by Allen ascertained that viewers exhibited stronger tendencies toward parasocial interaction with the newscasters if the newscaster elicits qualities such as "friendliness, naturalness and warm and fuzziness," qualities that would seem most desirable in a friend.)

Horton and Wohl (1956) suggest that a parasocial interaction develops in much the same manner as a friendship grows. Increased viewing leads to greater knowledge and understanding of the persona. That the development of a parasocial relationship would

take a period of time, would seem to make such relationships more likely for the chronically lonely. The situationally lonely person would likely outgrow such a relationship before it had progressed significantly if the viewer had found an actual social circle. The chronically lonely would seem the most needing of such an undemanding relationship. The media persona would not exploit the social skill deficits of the viewer. The situationally lonely were found not to differ from the chronically lonely in their ability to receive messages in an interpersonal relationship. However, as stated, the chronically lonely are not as adept at sending messages. Parasocial interaction would exploit the positive ability of viewers to receive and not demand that they send messages, making such a relationship attractive to the chronically lonely.

Ability to attain a social circle based on reality diminishes the need for parasocial relationships. Contact with the outside world has been correlated to reduced degree of acceptance of television as depicting reality. (Potter, 1988) Thus, as the viewer develops an actual social circle, the degree to which the media persona may be perceived as real diminishes. Since a parasocial interaction is based on a degree of acceptance of the persona as a real friend, contact with reality would seem to diminish the likelihood of a successful parasocial interaction.

A parasocial relationship seems to require some degree of acceptance of the media persona as real. The relationship develops as the result of extended exposure to the persona. The persona should provide the qualities of a companion, instead of merely fulfilling the role of a support system, if the friendship needs that led the lonely person to seek a parasocial interaction are to be met.

In conclusion, it would seem logical that the chronic, long-term-lonely individual would be most amenable to a parasocial relationship. The subject of such a relationship would be someone with whom the viewer can attain lasting contact. Rubin and McHugh (1987) found a correlation between duration and intensity for parasocial interactions.

While a newscaster provides the viewer with his or her consistent presence, the perceived function of the newscaster is often that of an information source. As a result, the newscaster is often perceived as part of a support system. Horton and Wohl suggested that news reporters would be likely to be the focus of a parasocial relationship. Subsequent studies dealing with loneliness shed doubt on that likelihood. The lonely person is seeking a companion, rather than a support system. Soap opera characters would seem to be likely subjects of such a relationship.

Parasocial relationships have been suggested as an alternative to the actual relationships that would lessen the degree of measured loneliness. However, quantification and alternatives to the needed solution do not lessen the impact of the end result--loneliness.

It has been argued that the chronically lonely are more likely to pursue a parasocial relationship than the situationally lonely. It has been further contended that media persona who elicit qualities of a companion are more likely to be the subject of a parasocial interaction. Those who perceive themselves as lacking, or who actually do lack, sufficient social skills would benefit most from such a relationship.

Future research in this area is necessary to discover whether any positive benefits are derived from such a relationship. Perhaps some social skill development (by way of modeling or other means) may result from parasocial relationships. On the other hand, such relationships may only serve to further the isolation felt by the lonely, thereby serving to further the spiral of loneliness and depression. Additional research into the uses of television by the lonely is called for. First, a determination of those psychographic and demographic groups most amenable to a parasocial interaction must be made. Parasocial interaction is not an all or nothing proposition. Instead, the strength of such a relationship can be measured by degrees. This study seeks to find out the characteristics of those that are most open to a parasocial interaction. Although previous studies have focused on

specific program types, the varied types of programming are viewed for a variety of reasons. Thus, analysis of the programs viewed and the characters therein that may be the focus of a parasocial interaction, becomes necessary. Horton and Wohl, Rubin, Perse and Powell, Levy and other have focused on newscasters and other studies have focused on daytime serials, but it is entirely reasonable that Cliff Huxtable, Leland McKenzie or Suzanne Sugarbaker may be the focus of a parasocial interaction. Horton and Wohl contend that newscasters faced the camera and thus gave the viewers the illusion of the reporter speaking directly to them. But, it has never been suggested that talking to the camera was a necessary prerequisite for a parasocial interaction to occur. In fact, the limited research on soaps tends to argue to the contrary.

Parasocial interaction was first introduced by Horton and Wohl (1956). The authors suggested that the new mass media-radio and television-"give the illusion of face-to-face relationships with the performer." (p. 215) An individual may view this one-way relationship, the media-persona speaking to the viewer- as an interpersonal encounter and may go so far as to include the persona among his actual primary group. Horton and Wohl referred to this quasi-friendship as a "parasocial interaction."

The idea of viewing a television star as an actual friend may seem like the product of a delusional mind. However, it is not unheard of for people to fantasize that they are living the lives of the of people they view on television to escape what they perceive as a mundane, unexceptional life. Popular programs such as Love Boat, Fantasy Island and Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous are examples of programs that would appeal to this desire. If the media persona is considered to be a friendly, sensitive person, a lonely person may well desire that the persona become a part of his actual social circle. Horton and Wohl suggest that "nothing could be more reasonable or natural than that people who are isolated and lonely should seek sociability and love wherever they can find it. It is only when the parasocial relationship becomes a substitute for autonomous social participation,

when it proceeds in absolute defiance of objective reality, that it can be considered pathological." (p. 223) Parasocial interaction can provide some temporary comfort to the lonely, and is only viewed as pathological when the relationship is viewed as a panacea.

The theory of parasocial interaction transcends the boundaries of uses and gratifications. The medium and the persona within serve more than as parts of an external world that is used for convenience. Parasocial interaction would seem to be the outcome of internalizing a medium and its product.

Parasocial Interaction: Uses and Gratifications and Symbolic Interaction Joined

According to Christ and Medoff (1984) most watch television to reduce stress. However, some "people may be too preoccupied with their state (of anxiety) to want to change (this state)" (p. 52) thereby changing the uses the individual makes of the medium. Perse and Rubin (1990) suggest that lonely people use television to fill idle time and they tend to be passive and apathetic.

However, Dorr (1981) "assumes people are sufficiently conscious of their need to choose (specific) content within a medium to satisfy them." (p. 342) The individual will consciously choose the medium, the shows within and the characters within them by which the viewer can achieve the desired goal. Herzog (1944) suggests that catharsis may be one desired end result. Another function of the media may well be to form what has been deemed parasocial interactions. Parasocial interactions, as stated earlier, are vicarious friendships formed with media persona. That such friendships, as one sided and illusory as they are, exist is neither pathological (unless carried to extremes) or surprising, according to Horton and Wohl (1956).

For a parasocial interaction to take place the media persona must become more than a character that entertains for 22 or 48 minutes per week. Blumer (1969) suggests that a character in a television show can represent more than that character. According to

Blumer, "A gesture is any part or aspect of an ongoing action that signifies the larger act of which it is part." (p. 9)

Levy (1979) explains the importance of gestures as part of the bigger picture when analyzing a parasocial interaction, "To demonstrate that news audiences interact on a parasocial level with news persona, it is necessary to show not only that viewers interpret and evaluate the behavior or gestures of the newscasters, but that audiences also act or react based on those attributed meanings." (p. 70) By this reasoning, the watching of a television show and the acceptance and affinity that may develop for any character can involve something greater than mere affinity for a fictional character. For the symbolic interaction that seems to coincide with the concept of parasocial interaction to occur, Blumer believes that the individual must consciously or subconsciously assume the role of the character. By assuming the role, it is suggested that the viewer understands the motivations and intentions of the actions portrayed. If the viewer accepts that the persona has implicit motivations and intentions, the viewer must be projecting traits onto the persona that are outside the realm of the script. The viewer ascribes complex traits onto the persona of the character. The persona symbolizes more than a fictional, unidimensional person. The viewer forms a parasocial interaction with a persona who is perceived as a real person whose future actions can be predicted. If this persona should have traits ascribed to him that would make the persona similar in nature to the viewer, then a criterion for forming a friendship--attitude similarity--has been created. The repeated interactions that enhance a friendship are provided by the regular scheduling of the program. The propinquity of the character to the viewer may be conceived as the distance of the viewer to the television screen-not a very long distance. Another way to measure this propinquity is the frequency with which the viewer interacts with the persona. In the case of soaps, the interaction may be up to five hours a week. A syndicated show may well allow the viewer to interact seven days a week or many times in a day. Programs such as

Star Trek and MASH may be available more than once a day due to cable television. The viewer can interact with this fictional neighbor more often than he can interact with this actual next door neighbor. Indeed, the media provide individuals who satisfy many of the criteria for friendship. The media is thus used as a means of finding a friend. The media provides persona that may be perceived as fulfilling the criteria that a new friend would be expected to meet.

This would seem a synthesis of uses and gratifications and symbolic interactionism. Altheide (1985) postulated such a synthesis. The uses and gratifications approach to media use suggests that specific content is actively pursued by the viewer to fulfill some need. The medium is not in itself symbolic and can have only one meaning to the viewer. The medium itself becomes a passive vehicle for the interaction. Theoretically, the medium would symbolize nothing more than a means to gain access to fictional representations of reality. This aspect of the uses and gratifications model would seem to limit the potential for parasocial interaction.

Altheide suggests extending uses and gratifications to the effect that, "the communication product is itself part of the process of interaction and symbolic meaning. This would include a specific medium independent of its content...People would appear to have images of what various media do and what their purposes are, and that these can be analytically separated from the other media activities of the actor" (Altheide, p. 79). The medium is more than a passive vehicle for transmission, but also an integral part of the communication process. Allowing the medium to have greater meaning would facilitate uses that extend beyond such transmission of fictional characters. The medium and the persona contained within can interact (Altheide, p. 79) and thus transcend its fictional nature and fulfill some greater purpose. "Communication takes place in a context, and to a significant extent, lends meaning and interpretation to symbolic utterances. In this sense, communication is always a kind of symbolism plus" (Altheide, p. 78) Different situations

and needs may elicit different reactions to the medium. If the viewer should bring a need for affiliation to the viewing, then among the potential uses of the medium may be a parasocial interaction.

It would seem that the more reality-ascribed to the medium itself, the greater the potential for that medium and its content to have greater meaning to its viewers. When parasocial interaction is viewed as a synthesis of uses and gratifications and symbolic interaction, its potential to serve a relevant purpose to the viewer increases. The potential for the medium to supply companionship would similarly increase.

The preceding has sought to offer a theory about the components of parasocial interaction. A discussion of the efforts to quantify the concept follow.

Operationalizing Parasocial Interaction

Horton and Wohl (1956) put forth the theory of parasocial interaction. A number of authors have sought to prove its existence.

An early study into the phenomenon of parasocial interaction found an inverse relationship between degree of the parasocial relationship and the potential for actual social interaction. (Rosengren and Windahl, 1972) Parasocial interaction was operationalized by a 6 point "degree of involvement" index. The index used was derived from interviews with individuals from two Swedish towns. Their findings are consistent with the hypotheses to be put forth, but the authors admit that their operationalization of parasocial interaction, and the methodology of the study as a whole, was too crude for a great deal of information to be derived.

Despite the significant theoretic progress made in the Rosengren and Windahl study, operationalizing of parasocial interaction remained inadequate.

McQuail, Blumler and Brown (1972) suggested a relationship between viewing by the socially isolated and viewing for reasons of companionship. The authors found that viewers may use a serial such as the British offering *The Dales* for vicarious relationships

with the persona. During interviews, viewers offered their reactions to the media persona, including:

"The characters have become like close friends to me."

"It is good company when you're alone."

"I like the sound of the characters' voices in my house."

It is noteworthy that the authors categorize viewing that leads to the development of parasocial interactions as companionship since earlier it was theorized that the companionship needs of the lonely become a primary cause leading to the development of the parasocial relationship. However, the authors provided little insight into the development of a method to operationalize the intensity of the parasocial interaction. It was 29 years after Horton and Wohl suggested the concept, that a generally agreed upon means to test the intensity of the phenomenon was developed.

Rubin, Perse and Powell (1985) sought a relationship between local television news viewing and parasocial interaction. The authors pursued a means of empirically verifying the existence of parasocial interaction (PI). Rubin, et. al. (1985) noted only three relevant studies dealing with the topic (unpublished theses by Gregg, 1971, Miller in 1983 and a Journal of Broadcasting study by Levy in 1979). The authors sought to create a scale that would successfully measure the phenomenon. Twenty-nine items were constructed. The respondents would answer each item on a five point scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to strongly agree (5). After elimination of redundant and irrelevant items, a 20 question measure was created. The Cronbach Alpha for the scale was .93. Oblique-rotated factor analysis "confirmed a single factor solution that accounted for 45.7% of the total variance." (Rubin, et. al., 1985, p. 166).

This compares favorably to the four question index created by Levy (1979) which had a reliability of .68, as measured by a coefficient alpha. Some of Rubin's questions do bear a striking similarity to some of the items offered by Levy.

The scale used by Rubin was slightly modified for use by Allen (1988) and 2 unpublished 1986 studies.

Allen reported that parasocial interaction with Denver newscasters indeed existed. While Rubin et al. found means ranging from 2.14 ($sd=.95$) to 3.49 ($sd=1.01$) for the twenty question scale, Allen's analysis of such reaction to specific newsteams derived means ranging from 3.2 ($sd=.14$) to 4.03 ($sd=.08$). Degree of parasocial interaction was strongly related to overall television ratings. Allen found that the viewers' ability to "get to know" the anchors and their "down-to-earth" qualities were regarded highly by the respondents.

Rubin, et al. (1985) found no relationship between television news viewing and a need to lessen perceived loneliness. Parasocial interaction was linked with perceived realism and information seeking. Television news affinity was positively correlated with parasocial interaction with the anchorpeople. The more an individual liked television news programs, the greater the degree of PI. Though it was stated earlier that a newscaster does not offer companionship, but merely social support, this does not preclude the possibility that the viewer can form a PI with a newscaster. Degree of measured loneliness accounted for less than one percent of the variance. However, the study found that television was relied upon during periods of loneliness.

In the discussion of loneliness and friendships, it was suggested that the support system that provides information is not as fulfilling to the lonely person as companionship. The lack of correlation between television news viewing and loneliness is thoroughly consistent with the specific uses of PI by the lonely discussed earlier. Newscasters supply a support system, not the companionship desired by the lonely. Further, Rubin ruefully admits that the study's respondents just weren't very lonely. However, the Rubin study does provide additional support for the premise that a synthesis exists between uses and

gratification and PI with its findings of strong relationships between viewing behavior and their motivations.

Other researchers have attempted to explore the relationships between PI and other types of programming. Unpublished studies discuss the relationship between parasocial interaction and soap operas. While the means of each item were not as striking as the Allen study, the study found that viewing for social utility, excitement, escapism and voyeurism were predictors of parasocial interaction. Parasocial interaction was also found to be strongly related to the degree of interpersonal, social and physical attraction.

The parasocial interaction scale developed by Rubin, Perse and Powell (1985) has supplied the first glimpses into the phenomenon of parasocial interaction.

Of more immediate importance, Rubin seems to have developed a scale that can be modified quite easily to fit different types of programming without losing any of its reliability.

In terms of validity, it is always a question of whether respondents react to the questions figuratively, as the media persona resembles a friend, or whether the respondent reacts to an individual that is considered part of the actual social circle. Levy (1979) notes that some of the individuals in his focus groups verbally responded to the news anchors when the anchors would say "Hello" or "Good evening." Was this response out of politeness or out of dark sarcasm? It seems extremely difficult to differentiate the motivations behind these responses

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In the Spring 1991 semester a combined total of 226 college students from three universities were given a questionnaire (see Appendix). The nature of these students will be discussed in the "Findings" section. Introductory courses were sought as these classes offer the students with the greatest diversity of majors.

These questionnaires included items pertaining to demographic information, including some information on their families. Other questions ascertained general uses of television including what types of programs they prefer and how often they watch television.

A parasocial interaction (PI) index was utilized to measure the degree of parasocial interaction between the respondent and his or her favorite television character. This index is discussed in the previous chapter. Loneliness and depression were measured to examine the psychographic characteristics of the respondents.

Psychological Factors

Perloff and Krevans (1987) suggest, at least with older respondents, that "psychosocial factors accounted for variance above and beyond that of demographic and situational factors....Emotional loneliness and locus of control proved particularly significant predictors of television behavior." (P. 365) This study seeks to ascertain if this statement can be extended to include college age individuals.

Perloff and Krevans derived psychological data from a series of between 4 to 8 items that tapped perceived loneliness, locus of control, shyness and need for sociability.

Social desirability will be measured by an index developed by Crowne and Marlowe (from their book *The Approval Motive*, 1964). This thirty question index will be analyzed for its correlations to specific questions. The index has been accepted as a means

to ascertain whether certain responses may be demand characteristics based on perceived social acceptability instead of honest responses to the questions. Crowne and Marlowe (1964) reported significant correlations between their social desirability scale and Edwards social desirability scale ($r=.56$) as well as a significant negative correlation with the Independence of Judgment scale ($r=-.54$). Buhrmester (1988) reported a relationship between social desirability and self-reported competence in emotional support and conflict management. Buhrmester asserts that the Crowne and Marlowe (1964) scale "will assess a person's concern about negative evaluation by others; this concern may, in fact, facilitate conflict management and the provision of emotional support." (p. 1003) Thus, high scores on the social desirability scale do not necessarily invalidate a response, but may indicate a predisposition to certain behavior.

Loneliness was measured by the revised UCLA Loneliness Scale. The revised scale has achieved a high internal consistency with a coefficient alpha of .94. (Russell, Peplau and Cutrona, 1980) The authors reported significant positive relationships with self-labelled loneliness, depression and anxiety and negative correlations with self-esteem, affiliative tendency, introversion-extraversion and assertiveness. These results lend further evidence of the validity of this scale.

Another appealing aspect of this scale is the ease of interpreting the scores. Further, no significant sex differences were found for the scale. The twenty questions are scored on a 1 to 4 point scale from never (one point) to often (four points). The twenty questions are given in the sample questionnaire included in the appendix.

Russell et al. (1980) found a one-factor solution upon analysis of the scale with a reliability of .94. However, Zakahi and Duran (1982) analyzed the responses to the index and uncovered a two factor solution which accounted for 40% of the variance. (The eigenvalues of the two factors were 4.214 and 3.774, respectively. The eigenvalue of the one factor solution of the scale was 6.803.) The authors labelled these two factors intimate

other and social network. It is noteworthy that these two categories may well summarize the two types of friendships that are desired by most individuals. It is not unreasonable to collapse these two factors as Zakahi and Duran ultimately did for their study. Of the twenty questions on the scale, the first ten questions were included in factor one while the second ten questions were included in factor two. It may be worthwhile to analyze these two sets of questions separately and collectively.

Depression is defined as an "emotional state marked by great sadness, and apprehension, feelings of worthlessness and guilt; withdrawal from others, loss of sleep, appetite, sexual interest or interest and pleasure in usual activities; and either lethargy or agitation." (Davison and Neale, p. 771.) Thus, loneliness can be symptomatic of depression, or the reverse can be true. While depression and loneliness are highly correlated, they are distinct traits that bear separate analysis.

Depression is a condition which can have a number of causes, both situational and biological. The correlation measured between loneliness and depression as measured by Beck's depression inventory is .62. Loneliness can be a temporary transient state or a chronic condition. Measured depression can have its etiology in situational, self-perception or biological factors. Thus, a separate measure of depression is offered in this study. The depression scale designed by the Center for Epidemiological studies (Radloff, 1977) was utilized. This twenty question index is noted for its high internal consistency (coefficient alpha and Spearman Brown split-halves method findings of .85 for the general population and .90 for the clinical sample) and its ease of interpretation. Radloff (1977) ascertained the validity of the scale by comparing the CES-D scale with other accepted self-report scales. The CES-D scale was found to be significantly correlated to the eleven scales it was measured against. The scale is offered in the included questionnaire.

The parasocial interaction scale is derived from the study from Rubin, Perse and Powell (1985). The scale is discussed in the previous chapters and presented with the

questionnaire.

Demographics

The demographic questions included sex, age, number of siblings, respondent's rank in siblings (first born, second, etc.), parents' marital status, estimated socio-economic status of parents. Data to ascertain television usage and programming choices was derived from a listing of categories of television programming developed by Potter and Chang (1990). They measured television viewing by listing twelve categories and asking how many hours of each type of program they would watch in a typical week. (The categories are: sitcoms, action/adventure, primetime soaps operas, daytime soap operas, news, movies on television, sports, talk shows, music on television, games shows, cartoons and other.)

From this a total number of hours viewed per week can be ascertained along with the types of program viewed. Since lonely people tend to watch television more for passing the time (Perse, 1990) and not as much for information gathering, some relationships can be expected between reported hours viewed within certain categories of programming and specific uses of television. Items suggesting specific uses and gratifications are also included within the study.

Data Analysis

Pearson correlations will be sought between the parasocial interaction, loneliness and depression scales. Regression analysis will be used to analyze demographic and psychographic factors most predictive of parasocial interaction.

Demographic and psychographic factors will be analyzed both separately and together. The interaction of depression and loneliness will be entered into the model.

Individual questions of the parasocial interaction scale will be analyzed using factor analysis and Pearson correlations to discuss the validity of the scale. This analysis will allow ascertainment of whether certain questions clustered together may form a better

index and thus become a more accurate dependent variable. If this is found, analysis of the parasocial interaction scale will be adjusted accordingly.

Media use will be analyzed quantitatively and by types of programming. Analysis of types of programming will necessitate categorical analysis. This variable (type of programming preferred) will be entered into the regression analysis as a psychological factor.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

RESULTS OF SAMPLE ANALYSES

In May of 1991, 60 questionnaires were distributed to students in three classes at Alabama State University (ASU). The students were in an advanced television production class, a communications law class and an introduction to theater class. The following month, 127 questionnaires were distributed to an introduction to journalism class at the University of Georgia (UG). An additional 41 questionnaires were distributed in a Survey of Mass Communications class at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). All of the respondents were debriefed as to the purpose of the questionnaire and given information on how to inquire about the findings of the study.

Of the 228 questionnaires distributed, two were unusable due to incomplete replies. Thus, there were 226 questionnaires used in the analysis--125 from UGA and 101 from the two Alabama schools.

It was hoped that the samples from the three schools could be combined. Each questionnaire was coded for respondent's school. This facilitated comparisons of the samples from each of the three schools. The schools were compared two at a time starting with the two Alabama schools, UAB and ASU. There were no statistically significant differences on selected measures between the students from UAB and ASU. Demographic variables were found not to be statistically related to parasocial interaction (PI), nor are they integral to analysis of the hypotheses. Therefore, the focus will be on the psychographic variables and degree of television use.

Table I offers a comparison of the two Alabama schools on these measures. Note that the two Alabama schools were not statistically different in regard to PI and the

Table I: Comparison of UAB and ASU on Primary Variables

school	N	mean	stdev	t-test	df	p
Parasocial Interaction						
ASU	60	54.43	19.063	0.80	82.2	.423
UAB	41	51.19	20.389			
Depression scale						
ASU	60	16.13	9.838	1.06	91.9	.292
UAB	41	14.17	8.825			
Loneliness scale						
ASU	60	38.77	9.814	1.03	88.7	.307
UAB	41	36.78	9.356			
Total Hours Television Viewed						
ASU	60	20.82	11.17	1.07	82.1	.286
UAB	41	18.29	11.91			

psychographic variables. Thus, the two Alabama schools were combined for analysis. However, the two Alabama schools were statistically dissimilar from the Georgia respondents on some of these same variables. See table II for this analysis.

Table II shows that responses from the two Alabama schools were statistically different from the Georgia sample on two of four variables given (loneliness and hours viewed). Note that a third variable, depression, was not technically statistically different, though the t-test of 1.95 (df=223) approaches significance at .052. Thus, the combined Alabama sample was analyzed separately from the Georgia sample. All subsequent statistics include analyses from both samples.

One aim of this study was to ascertain a demographic and psychographic group most amenable to a parasocial interaction.

Analysis of variance tests on the demographic variables showed no statistically significant differences when parasocial interaction, depression and loneliness were the dependent variables. Demographic variables were year in school, order of birth, parents' marital status and year in school. Less than 4 percent of the total variance was accounted for when all demographic variables were regressed against PI. Regression analysis for demographic variables yields an F score of .992 for the Georgia sample and 1.009 for the Alabama sample with probabilities of .459 and .446, respectively.

Factor analysis was performed on the parasocial interaction and the uses and gratification items. Analysis of the uses and gratifications items will be discussed later in conjunction with hypothesis five. Factor analysis on the parasocial interaction items was performed to ascertain the feasibility of employing the PI items as a single factor, and to search for factors within the items, the factors that may suggest the components of parasocial interaction. Both analyses--search for single factor and multiple factor solutions--are offered here.

Table II: Comparison of the Two Alabama Schools Combined (AL) with the Georgia Respondents (UG).

school	N	mean	stdev	t-test	df	p
Parasocial Interaction						
UG	125	55.49	18.37	.93	208	.352
AL	101	53.12	19.58			
Depression Scale						
UG	125	17.96	10.82	1.95	223	.052
AL	101	15.33	9.45			
Loneliness Scale						
UG	125	35.04	10.55	2.17	221	.031
AL	101	37.96	9.63			
Total Television Hours Viewed						
UG	125	14.32	11.32	3.57	213	>.0001
AL	101	19.79	11.45			

Parasocial Interaction as a Single Factor Solution

For both samples, a single factor solution is suggested by the analysis of the parasocial interaction (PI) items. (See table III) For the Georgia sample, the fifteen PI items yielded an alpha coefficient of .9038. All items contributed as the alpha would decrease if any item were deleted.

The unrotated factor analysis matrix showed that 13 of the 15 factors loaded highest on the first factor. The two items that showed stronger loadings on other factors loaded .51 and .40 on the first factor (See table III). Kerlinger (1985) has questioned the meaningfulness of the principal factor matrix. He paraphrases Thurstone in stating, "A principal factors matrix and its loadings account for the common factor variance of the test scores, but they do not in general provide scientifically meaningful structures." (p.579)

For the Alabama sample, the rotated factor analysis did yield three factors. However, the fifteen items together yielded an alpha coefficient of .8837 with all items contributing to the measured reliability.

A number of studies have utilized a one factor solution for the PI index, including Auter (1992), Rubin, Perse and Powell (1985), Perse and Rubin (1988) and Perse (1990). Thus, while this data yields three factors, results for the one factor solution will be included for discussion purposes.

Factor Analysis: PI as a Sum of Multiple Factors

As discussed earlier, friendship has three distinct components-companionship, guidance and physical attraction. Factor analysis seeks to discover whether the PI items would yield factors similar to these components.

In testing hypotheses, analysis was performed on the parasocial interaction items as a 15-item additive scale and the factors suggested by the rotated factor matrix. Following is analysis of the rotated factor matrix.

The Alabama sample yields four factors after varimax rotation, however both

Table III: Unrotated Factor Analysis Matrix For Parasocial Interaction Items

item	factor 1	factor 2	factor 3
Georgia sample (n=125)			
issue	.6222	-.3884	.1288
mistake	.5117	-.1124	.5896
part	.6577	-.2776	.2791
compare	.7217	-.0899	.1770
comfort	.8063	-.3760	-.1328
natural	.6176	.0447	-.4099
company	.6958	-.3766	.0016
appear	.5587	.2956	.0076
unders	.8166	-.2693	-.0772
mag	.5895	.4347	.2478
personal	.7305	.2643	.1024
friend	.7796	.1917	-.1759
cute	.3901	.5790	.4195
belike	.6259	.2610	-.4088
juslike	.6927	.2610	-.4088
eigenval.	6.609	1.438	1.257
variance	44.1	9.6	8.4
Alabama sample (n=101)			
issue	.5441	.3958	.0392
mistake	.4154	.3402	.6500
part	.5483	.5971	.2263

Table III (cont.)

item	factor 1	factor 2	factor 3
compare	.6112	.3557	.1231
comfort	.8070	.2876	-.0964
natural	.6496	-.1429	.0878
company	.6968	.3136	-.2376
appear	.5354	-.3653	.0419
unders	.6724	.1940	-.2983
mag	.5754	-.4703	.3534
personal	.6761	-.4033	.0874
friend	.8020	-.2945	-.0877
cute	.4874	-.3952	.3454
belike	.5007	.0221	-.5810
juslike	.6850	-.3403	-.2858
eigenval.	5.829	1.871	1.333
variance	38.9	12.5	8.9

samples yield the three distinct components of friendship. (see table IV)

The factor analysis for both samples included a number of items that loaded highly in two factors, thus these items were not considered when arranging factors.

Factor one, is labelled 'guidance', because the factor suggests the persona is providing advice or a standard by which to compare behavior, includes four items.

The four items that comprise the 'guidance' factor follow: (the term in the parentheses is how the variable was entered in the computer, the number before each item is the number as it appeared in the questionnaire):

1. When my favorite character shows me how she or he feels about an issue or problem, it helps me to make up my mind about that issue or problem. (issue)
3. When I watch my favorite program, I feel as if I am part of the story. (part)
4. I like to compare my ideas with what my favorite character says. (compare)
9. My favorite character seems to understand the kind of things I want to know. (unders)

The second factor suggests companionship. As stated earlier, friendships are often based on commonality of experience. The four items of this factor seem to suggest such commonality. The coefficient alpha of this factor was .7943 for the Georgia sample (n=125) and .7707 for the Alabama sample n=101). Deleting any item would have lowered the alpha.

6. I see my favorite character as a natural, down to earth person (natural)
12. I think my favorite character would be a good friend (friend)
14. I would like to be just like my favorite character (juslike)
15. I would like to have a friend who was just like my favorite character (belike)

The reliability alpha of this factor is .8176 for the Georgia sample (n=125) and .7763 for the Alabama sample (n=101), with all items contributing to the reliability.

Table IV: Rotated Factor Analysis Matrix For PI Items

item*	guidance	companion	attraction	factor 4**
Georgia (n=125)				
issue	.7199	.1771	.0702	
mistake	.5993	-.1557	.4889	
part	.7147	.1180	.2508	
compare	.6002	.2848	.2508	
comfort	.7562	.4872	-.0012	
natural	.2614	.6938	.0425	
company	.7229	.3198	.0328	
appear	.1791	.4176	.4395	
unders	.7080	.4818	.1093	
mag	.1788	.2967	.6913	
personal	.3447	.4436	.5464	
friend	.3423	.6599	.3505	
cute	-.0007	.0874	.8098	
belike	.1616	.7252	.1778	
juslike	.1665	.7987	.2224	
Alabama (n=101)				
issue	.8158	.0288	.1581	.1148
mistake	.1792	-.0682	.1215	.8496
part	.5355	.2010	-.0742	.6187
compare	.5822	.1928	.1609	.3643
natural	-.0272	.5032	-.4029	.4308

Table IV (cont.)

item*	guidance	companion	attraction	factor4 **
company	.3963	.6571	.0440	.3115
appear	.2863	.0916	.6720	.1085
unders	.6780	.4096	.2339	-.0619
mag	.0784	-.0586	.8481	.1114
personal	.1681	.2645	.7321	.0826
friend	.1517	.5690	.6139	.1680
cute	-.1887	.1791	.6019	.3896
belike	.1543	.7790	.0382	-.0985
juslike	.0852	.6331	.5217	-.0267

* For explanation of items that comprise each factor, see pages 56 and 61.

** Factor 4 for Alabama sample only

Factor loadings are highlighted as utilized in study. While some items were excluded for analysis via factors, all fifteen items were included in analysis of PI as a single factor solution. Eigenvalues and variance accounted for by each factor are given in Table III, except for the eigenvalue of factor 4 for the Alabama sample. The eigenvalue for factor 4 was 1.03 and accounted for 6.9 percent of variance.

The third factor suggests attraction or curiosity about the persona. This factor is labelled 'attraction'. The two items are:

10. If I saw a story about my favorite character in a magazine or newspaper, I would read it. (mag)

13. I find my favorite character to be attractive. (cute)

The coefficient alpha is .5484 for the Georgia sample (n=125) and .6008 for the Alabama sample (n=101).

Results For Hypotheses

Parasocial interaction (PI) is the dependent variable for all hypotheses. PI will be analyzed as a single factor, with all fifteen items being added to form an index. It will also be analyzed by the three factors extracted by rotation. These factors will be called, as suggested earlier, 'guidance', 'companionship' and 'attraction'. As stated, analysis of the PI index as a one factor solution will be offered for discussion purposes.

Further, all findings will be based on analysis of the two samples, the two Alabama schools combined and the Georgia sample. As stated earlier, statistical differences between the two samples made it difficult to combine the samples.

Hypothesis 1: The degree of parasocial interaction will be higher for those who list non-informational programming as their favorite program choice than those that list informational programming.

Favorite program selections were coded by the type of program noted in an open-ended question in the questionnaire. The respondent noted his or her favorite program. During analysis, the program choices were coded into the specific type of program, i.e. "Cosby" would be listed as a sitcom, "60 Minutes" as a news program, etc. Program choices that did not fit into the program categories (listed below) were called other. Three

responses were labelled 'other'. These three respondents chose 700 Club or PTL Club. These responses were dropped from analysis for this hypothesis, as religious programming could arguably be classified as both informational and non-informational based on the nature of the show and the individual's beliefs.

Following coding, the types of program were then collapsed into two categories, informational and non-informational, as stated in figure 1.

A series of T-tests analyzed the differences in PI and its three factors between those who specified informational programming and those who specified non-informational programming as their favorite programming choice. Results of this analysis

informational	non-informational programming
game shows	sitcoms
news	action
sports	daytime soap
	primetime soap
	drama
	MTV*

* No respondents chose MTV.

Figure 1: Program category divisions

and the N of each group are provided in Table V.

All differences are in the predicted direction, but none of the differences approach significance. This hypothesis is rejected.

Table V: Parasocial Interaction (Single Factor Solution and Three Factor Solution)
Analyzed by Reported Favorite show

	N	mean PI	sd
PI-single factor solution			
Georgia (n=125)			
non-information persona	93	56.57	18.15
game show, sports, news	31	51.58	18.70
T-test=1.3 df=50.19 p=.201			
Alabama (n=101)			
non-information persona	85	53.53	19.77
game show, sports, news	14	49.21	19.69
T-test=.76 df=17.6 p=.458			
Paral (guidance)			
Georgia			
non-information persona	93	13.20	5.83
game show, sports, news	31	12.87	6.65
T-test=.25 df=46.33 p=.804			
Alabama			
non-information persona	85	9.51	4.91
game show, sports, news	14	9.36	4.52
T-test=.11 df=18.45 p=.458			

Table V: (cont.):

	N	mean PI	sd
Para2 (companionship)			
Georgia			
non-information persona	93	14.62	6.12
game show, sports, news	31	12.75	5.74
T-test= 1.55 df=54.5 p=.126			
Alabama			
non-information persona	85	8.59	4.90
game show, sports, news	14	8.36	5.34
T-test= .15 df=16.80 p=.881			
Para3 (attraction)			
Georgia			
non-information persona	93	9.82	3.11
game show, sports, news	31	8.81	3.03
T-test= 1.60 df=52.65 p=.116			
Alabama			
non-information persona	85	16.54	6.30
game show, sports, news	14	16.14	7.38
T-test= .19 df=16.27 p=.851			

Hypothesis 2: Individuals' loneliness will be positively and significantly correlated with their degree of parasocial interaction.

Loneliness was measured using the UCLA "Loneliness Scale." (Kuttrano and Peplau, 1979) Pearson correlations were performed between loneliness and PI and its three factors. Regression analysis was also performed with PI and its factors as the dependent variables.

The Pearson correlation between measured loneliness and PI (one factor solution) for the Georgia sample (n=125) was .114 (p=.102). For the Alabama sample (n=101) the correlation was .149 (p=.069). For both samples the strength of the relationship was similar. Combining the two samples yields a correlations of .107, with the probability approaching significance (.054).

The results for each school with the individual PI factors as dependent variables differ. (see table VI) The meaning and further analysis of these differences will be discussed in the following chapters. Note the significant relationship between the 'guidance' factor of PI and loneliness for the Alabama sample. This would seem to suggest that the Alabama sample may be aware of a specific need in their lives that the media fulfill. The Alabama sample tested less lonely than the Georgia sample, yet the Alabama group may well be better able or willing to ascertain specific needs or uses derived from television. Both UAB and ASU are urban campuses with a high number of commuters. College life may not provide the social opportunities for commuters as it would for students who live on campus and can interact with dorm-mates. Thus, lonely individuals from the Alabama sample may seek guidance from media outlets if they lack real world social opportunities.

Analyzing PI by its factors yields non-significant relationships, save for the one noted above. Table VII shows that little variance was accounted for by loneliness in either sample. The weak relationship noted earlier between loneliness and PI as a single factor

Table VI: Pearson Correlations: Loneliness With PI Factors

		guidance	companion	attract
Georgia (n=125)				
Loneliness	r=	.096	.043	.119
	p=	.143	.318	.094
Alabama (n=101)				
	r=	.202	.103	-.016
	p=	.022	.155	.439

Table VII: Regression Analysis: Loneliness with PI and the Three PI Factors.

dependent var.	ss	df	ms	f	signif./f	r ²
Georgia sample (n=125)						
PI (1 factor)	545.2	1	545.2	1.62	.20	.013
companionship	8.46	1	8.46	.23	.64	.002
guidance	37.14	1	37.14	1.15	.28	.009
attraction	16.77	1	16.77	1.76	.19	.014
Alabama sample (n=101)						
PI (1 factor)	837.0	1	837.0	2.23	.14	.022
companionship	44.4	1	44.4	1.04	.31	.010
guidance	159.6	1	159.6	4.18	.04	.041
attraction	.3	1	.3	.02	.87	>.001

solution will be discussed in following chapters. Though the relationship was in the predicted direction, this hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 3: Individual's depression will be positively and significantly related to the degree of measured parasocial interaction.

Depression was measured using the depression scale of the Center for Epidemiological studies. (Radloff, 1977) As with the previous hypothesis, Pearson correlations and regression analysis were performed.

Pearson correlations between depression and PI as a single factor solution yields a small but significant relationship in both samples. The Georgia sample registered a correlation of .157 ($p=.04$, $n=125$) while the Alabama sample yields a slightly stronger correlation of .239 ($p=.008$, $n=101$). Pearson correlations between depression and the three PI factors are shown in Table VIII..

When depression was regressed against PI as a single factor, the models for each school suggest that depression is somewhat of a predictor of PI (see table IX). However, when the relationships between depression and the three factors of PI are analyzed, the Georgia sample shows that only the 'attraction' factor is significant. For the Alabama sample, the attraction sample is the only factor NOT significantly related.

To explain why depression is significantly related to PI as a single factor, but not necessarily to its component factors, Pearson correlations between depression and the individual items of the PI scale were performed for both samples. For the Georgia sample, depression was significantly related to only four items, two of which comprise the attraction factor. (The other two items, are 'mistake' and 'part'. 'Mistake' loaded well on more than one factor during factor analysis and thus was not included in any factor in the Georgia analysis). For the Alabama sample, depression was significantly related to five PI items including 'compare' which loaded on the 'guidance' factor and 'belike' and 'friend' which loaded on the 'companionship' factor.

Table VIII: Pearson Correlations: Depression With Three PI Factors

		guidance	companion	attract
Georgia sample (n=125)				
depression	r=	.157	.142	.204
	p=	.040	.319	.011
Alabama sample (n=101)				
depression	r=	.203	.195	.177
	p=	.021	.026	.039

Table IX: Results of Regression Analysis of PI and its Factors. Independent Variable: Depression.

dep. var.	ss	df	ms	f	signif./f	r ²
Georgia sample (n=125)						
PI (one factor)	1029.2	1	1029.2	3.10	.08	.024
companionship	8.35	1	8.35	.22	.64	.002
guidance	98.62	1	98.62	3.10	.08	.024
attraction	49.49	1	49.49	5.34	.02	.042
Alabama sample (n=101)						
PI (one factor)	2145.2	1	2145.2	5.95	.02	.057
companionship	159.67	1	159.67	3.86	.05	.038
guidance	161.16	1	161.16	4.22	.04	.041
attraction	38.49	1	38.49	3.17	.08	.031

Though the relationship is not strong, this hypothesis is accepted. Further discussion will analyze how the nature and type of depression and loneliness may explain the nature of the relationships analyzed in the previous two hypotheses.

Hypothesis 4: The combined effects of loneliness and depression will be better predictors of parasocial interaction than loneliness and depression will be individually.

The cyclical nature of depression and loneliness were discussed earlier. The behaviors and self-perception associated with depression would be counter-productive to the individual trying to cure feelings of loneliness. Thus, the feelings of loneliness persist which lead to greater feelings of depression which in turn further lessens the individual's ability to make friends. Thus, the combined effects of loneliness and depression should be better predictors of PI. In fact, an ordinal interaction should occur as increased levels of depression and increased levels of loneliness should combine in their effects.

Depression and loneliness are indeed strongly related. The Pearson correlations for depression and loneliness for the Georgia and Alabama samples are .609 and .622, respectively, with $p < .001$.

That the relationship between loneliness and depression is far from perfect is not surprising. As discussed earlier, depression can be state (transient) or trait (consistent). Loneliness can also be state or trait in nature. The various degrees of depression and loneliness may be mutually reinforcing, but the relationship will not be perfect.

Regression analysis was performed to test this hypothesis. The combined effects of loneliness and depression were entered together. This was compared to separate regression analyses performed with loneliness and depression as the independent variables. Table X and Table XI show that the combined effects were not better predictors of PI than the individual effects. For both samples, depression provided the most efficient model. Kerlinger and Pedhazur (1973) discuss the difficulty of interpreting regression analysis when the independent variables are highly correlated. To facilitate visualization of

Table X: Regression Models for the Combined Effects Depression and Loneliness and the Individual Effects of Loneliness and Depression. (Georgia sample, n=125).

dep. var.	ss	df	ms	f	signif/f	r2
independent variable=loneliness and depression						
PI (one factor)	1052.32	2	526.16	1.57	.21	.025
companion	10.45	2	5.22	.14	.87	.002
guidance	98.63	2	49.31	1.54	.21	.024
attraction	49.54	2	24.77	2.65	.07	.041
independent variable=depression						
PI (one factor)	1029.2	1	1029.2	3.10	.08	.024
companionship	8.35	1	8.35	.22	.64	.002
guidance	98.62	1	98.62	3.10	.08	.024
attraction	49.49	1	49.49	5.34	.02	.042
independent variable=loneliness						
PI (1 factor)	545.2	1	545.2	1.62	.20	.013
companionship	8.46	1	8.46	.23	.64	.002
guidance	37.14	1	37.14	1.15	.28	.009

Table X (cont.):

dep. var.	ss	df	ms	f	signif/f	r ²
attraction	16.77	1	16.77	1.76	.19	.014

Table XI: Regression Models for the Combined Effects of Depression and Loneliness and the Individual Effects of Loneliness and Depression. (Alabama sample, n=101).

dep. var.	ss	df	ms	f	signif./f	r ²
independent variable=loneliness and depression						
PI (one factor)	2145.85	2	1072.92	2.94	.06	.057
companionship	161.55	2	80.77	1.93	.15	.038
guidance	198.89	2	99.44	2.60	.07	.050
attraction	68.81	2	34.30	2.88	.06	.036
independent variable=depression						
PI (one factor)	2145.2	1	2145.2	5.95	.02	.057
companionship	159.67	1	159.67	3.86	.05	.038
guidance	161.16	1	161.16	4.22	.04	.041
attraction	38.49	1	38.49	3.17	.08	.031
independent variable=loneliness						
PI (one factor)	837.03	1	837.03	2.23	.14	.022
companionship	44.41	1	44.41	1.04	.31	.010
guidance	159.66	1	159.66	4.18	.04	.041

Table XI(cont.):

dep. var.	ss	df	ms	f	signif./f	r ²
attraction	.3	1	.3	.02	.87	>.001

analysis when the independent variables are highly correlated. To facilitate visualization of any interaction, see Figure 2. Figure 2 shows that the expected ordinal relationship is not present. This hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 5: Individuals' parasocial interaction will be positively and significantly related to passive viewing of television. Passive viewing of television will be measured by items five-through-seven of the uses and gratifications questions.

Full discussion of the factor analysis of the U & G items will be discussed next chapter. The three items comprising passive viewing did indeed combine to form a single factor in both samples. (Alpha for Georgia and Alabama samples respectively, .8536 and .7958.) See table XII for factor loadings of the three items included in this factor.

This factor is the only of the U & G factors which suggest passive viewing. The viewing filled a perceived vacuum in their life. The medium was not sought out to fill a viewing showed similarly weak, non-significant relationships with each of the PI items. This hypothesis is rejected. In fact the opposite is true. More active viewing is strongly related to PI. In fact, of the uses and gratification factors analyzed, only passive viewing was NOT significantly related to PI. The U & G factors turned out to be better predictors of PI than the psychographic variables. The implications of this are among the topics to be discussed in the next chapter.

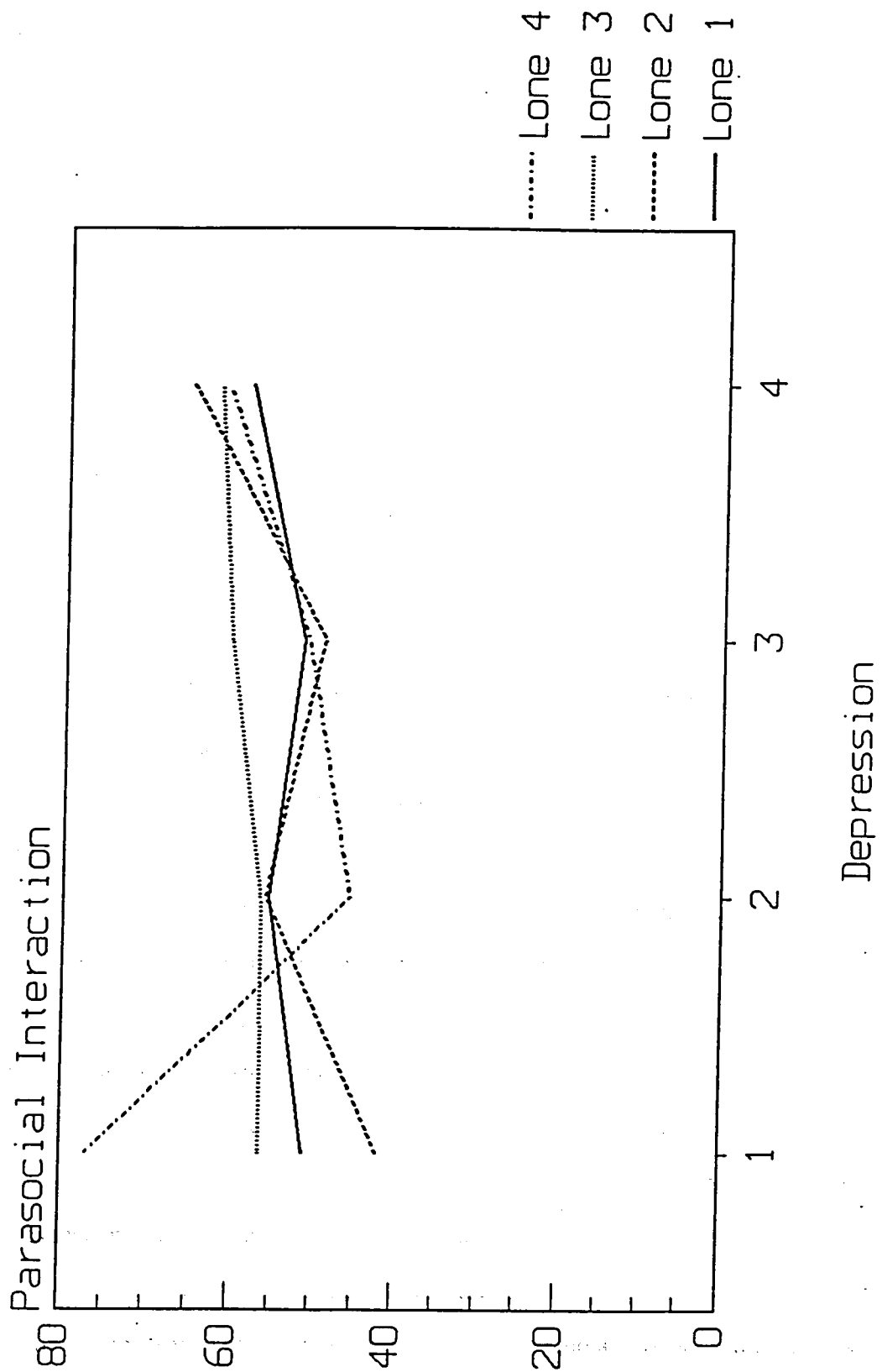


Figure 2: Graph of Interaction Between Levels of Depression and Loneliness

Figure 2: (cont.)

Depression (n=226):

level	1	2	3	4
mean	48.43	54.73	53.48	61.73
N	56	59	62	48

Loneliness (n=226)

level	1	2	3	4
mean	53.08	50.00	58.88	55.93
N	59	59	...52	...55

loneliness:

level	1	2	3	4
depression				
level: 1	50.96	42.04	56.29	77.00
n	(25)	(23)	(7)	(1)
level 2	55.20	55.93	56.53	45.57
n	(20)	(15)	(17)	(7)
level 3	51.50	49.00	60.42	50.89
n	(10)	(14)	(19)	(19)
level 4	58.25	65.43	62.11	61.18
n	(4)	..(7)	(9)	..(18)

Table XII: Factor Loadings From Rotated Factor Matrix for Items 5 Through 7 Of the Uses and Gratifications Questions.*

school	item5	item6	item7	reliab. (Alpha)	EIGEN
Georgia	.8242	.9118	.8737	.8536	2.6002
Alabama	.8773	.8880	.7030	.7958	2.614

* item 5: I watch my favorite television show because it passes the time away.

item 6: I watch my favorite television show when I have nothing better to do.

item 7: I watch my favorite television show just because it's on.

These items did not load well on any other factor, nor did any other item load on this factor.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

While depression is somewhat related to PI as expected, loneliness does not seem to be. If a PI is indeed a friendship, then some relationship would be expected, since lonely and/or depressed people would presumably seek a friend by whatever means they were able. At least a peaked relationship would be expected. This type of relationship would feature an increase in loneliness and depression increase as PI increases, then loneliness and depression decrease as the PI fills the perceived need. Instead, we are left with a minimal relationship which leads to the question of what is a parasocial interaction? Is it a friendship at all? A few observations concerning this and other questions follow.

This study also sought to ascertain the relationships between PI and specific uses and gratifications. The following chapter analyzes these relationships and includes a discussion of the implications for future research on the relationships between psychological factors and PI as well as the impact of the number of hours of television viewed by the sample upon the findings.

Horton and Wohl (1956) suggest that a PI provides an alternative to two-way interaction. "This function of the parasocial (interaction) can properly be called compensatory, inasmuch as it provides the socially and psychologically isolated with a chance to enjoy the elixir of sociability." (p.222) Neither the depression nor loneliness scale differentiate between state and trait. If these conditions are long term (trait), then individuals may look to sources other than real friends to fill the gaps in their lives. A parasocial interaction may serve as one of the alternatives.

If a PI is indeed one of the possible alternatives then it would be expected that the amount of hours viewed would be greater for those who are lonely and/or depressed. Hours viewed accounted for 7.6% of the variance of PI (single factor) for the Georgia

sample. At least for the Georgia sample, hours viewed was a better predictor of PI than either of the psychographic variables. A significant number of hours viewed would suggest some dependence on television. Note that for the Georgia sample, the relationship between hours viewed and PI was stronger than the relationship between depression and PI. Similarly, hours viewed had a stronger relationship with PI than loneliness. (see table XIII)

Recall that the Alabama sample watched significantly more television than the Georgia respondents, while the Georgia sample reported higher levels of depression. A significant difference between the two samples appears when the relationship between hours viewed and depression is analyzed. For the Georgia sample, there was a slight, non-significant relationship between depression and hours viewed ($r=.130$, $p=.075$). The Alabama sample showed a slight, non-significant negative correlation between depression and hours viewed ($r=-.046$, $p=.322$).

Thus, dependence on television seems to be independent of degree of measured loneliness and depression. The discussion on uses and gratifications later in this chapter will further analyze the nature of this dependence.

Depression or a feeling of loneliness that was temporary in nature, would not lend itself to a PI, as the respondent would find real friends, instead of counting on a vicarious friendship.

Those who are lonely and are interpersonally able will certainly seek friends from the real world. Loneliness without depression would allow the individual to seek real friends. Further, depression that was transient in nature would not feature the characteristics that make it so difficult to form real friendships. (As stated earlier, these characteristics can include lethargy, a shift in activity levels and an inability to become actively involved in conversation, <Davison and Neale, paraphrasing DSM III>).

A depression can be caused by many factors. The respondents were college

Table XIII: Pearson Correlations for Depression, Hours Viewed and PI and Its Factors.

factor		para	guide	compan.	attract.
Georgia (n=125)					
hours	r=	.279	.243	.183	.235
	p=	.001	.013	.007	>.001
depression	r=	.157	.157	.042	.204
	p=	.040	.040	.319	.011
loneliness	r=	.114	.096	.043	.119
	p=	.102	.143	.318	.094
Alabama					
hours	r=	.149	.080	.217	-.027
	p=	.069	.215	.015	.293
depression	r=	.239	.203	.195	.177
	p=	.008	.021	.026	.039
loneliness	r=	.149	.202	.103	-.017
	p=	.069	.022	.155	.439

students tested in May and June, toward the end of the semester. It is likely that, for some, their feelings of depression were related to impending final exams or the ever-frustrating search for summer employment or any other situational factors. Thus, for many, the depression may have been of a transient nature, negating the need for a PI.

Depression and loneliness can indeed have many causes. Loneliness does not axiomatically preclude the presence of adequate social skills necessary to make 'real' friends, particularly in the transient state.

Given all this, the lack of a strong relationship between depression, loneliness and parasocial interaction is understandable. In fact, the relationships do seem strong enough to warrant further investigation, focusing on whether the depression or loneliness was state or trait in nature. Comparing the two groups, state and trait, for each psychographic factor, may yield significant information toward predicting those most amenable to a parasocial interaction.

Throughout this study, analysis has been provided for the Georgia and Alabama samples. There may be a number of reasons for the differences between the two samples. The nature of the two Alabama campuses differed from the UG campus. The two Alabama schools were located in the middle of the city. Neither school offers many activities for nights or weekends. The UG campus is a large campus with a number of activities available, other than television viewing. There are other factors that may explain the differences between the two samples. What is reinforced, nonetheless, is the strong relationship between hours viewed and PI and the lesser but still relevant relationships between the psychographic measures and PI.

Television may provide the depressed individual with an alternative to real world interactions that he/she may be lacking. Whether the attraction to the persona predated the depression would be a question to consider. Was the persona a source of passive enjoyment until the need for a friendship became manifest? Or did the attention to the

persona occur after the onset of depression? Future studies should include a few questions inquiring how long viewers have watched the persona with which they have formed a PI.

Parasocial Interaction As a Function of Program Choice

If the depressed or lonely watch a program and develop a parasocial interaction, the question of what show they choose arises. Is there a type of show that the depressed or lonely seek? The alternative is that viewing habits predated the need for a PI.

Horton and Wohl suggest that PI would be most likely with persona that look into the camera and 'at' the viewer, such as newscasters do. However, as discussed earlier, the type of program viewed did not seem to be an adequate predictor of PI.

Psychographics were not related to program choice. Chi squares were performed using program choice and depression and loneliness. Depression was not related to program choice (Chi-square=.16, df=16, p=.92 for Alabama; chi sq=.04, df=49, p=.97 for Georgia). Loneliness showed a similarly weak relationship. (Chisq=.72, df=18, p=.482 for Alabama; chisq=.04, df=51, p=.640 for Georgia) This suggests that the choice of favorite television program or program type exists before a PI-and that the need for a PI does not mold the choice of programming. (It is unlikely that an individual would actively seek a PI, as this would appear an irrational act from the perspective of the viewer.) This suggests that some affinity for the persona may exist before a need to utilize the persona for a PI. These questions are certainly sources of future study.

Parasocial Interaction As A Function of Uses and Gratifications

By far the greatest contributors to predicting PI were the uses and gratifications questions. The hypothesis stating that passive viewing was related to PI was soundly rejected, rather the opposite was true.

Table XIV and Figure 3 show the factor analysis for the U & G items and explains the terms used for statistical analysis. Depression and loneliness can be of varied

durations, multiple causes and feature a range of behaviors. This is in contrast to the finite nature of the U & G factors.

It is noteworthy that the more active uses of television are greater predictors of PI than the passive. It was expected that passive viewing motives and depression would both be related to PI. Since depression is often characterized by lethargy or other behavior which makes it difficult for the individual to focus his attention, it was hypothesized that such individuals would engage in passive viewing and that the PI would form over time with repeated interactions with the media persona. The results show that psychological factors are generally unrelated to viewing motives. Passive viewing was essentially unrelated to PI. However, the U & G factors measuring the viewers' desire to learn (analogous to PI factor suggesting guidance), have fun (companionship) and attraction are strongly related and are moderately good predictors of PI. The U & G factors suggesting passive uses of viewing contribute little to explained variance. Viewers seem to actively seek the media for specific purposes, the most prevalent of which is the desire to learn how to do things, analogous to the guidance factor of PI. The viewer does not seem to seek companionship from the PI. The PI provides a social support function which is, of course, a component of a friendship.

It may be difficult for viewers to admit that they are seeking or engaging in such a one-way relationship with specific media persona. (see tables XV-XVIII)

Finally, this study included the Crowne-Marlowe Social Desirability (S-D) Index. It was suggested earlier that some individuals might be hesitant to admit feelings of friendship for fictional characters, or for that matter any media persona who is clearly not in the viewers' actual social circle. Further, the need for approval may lead to the respondents giving what is perceived to be the correct answers to the loneliness and depression scales, instead of stating their responses accurately. Responses to the PI, depression and loneliness scales must be analyzed as to whether the respondents answered

Table XIV: Rotated Factor Analysis Matrix for U & G Items.

item	fac1	fac2	fac3	fac4	fac5
Georgia					
enjoy	-.1313	-.0671	.8524	-.0470	.2804
enter	-.0845	-.0402	.8719	-.0452	.2574
excite	.2429	-.0039	.6882	.1383	-.3103
amuse	-.2960	.1118	.4084	-.2432	.2779
pass	.0171	.8242	.1088	.0802	.2374
nothing	.0827	.9118	-.0608	-.0529	-.0256
on	-.0320	.8737	-.0740	.0598	-.0248
sexapp	.0411	.0876	.0033	.9412	.0632
attract	.1137	.0350	-.0385	.9327	.1329
unwind	.1347	-.0153	.1789	.1230	.8433
forget	.2360	.1575	.1659	.0580	.7132
learn	.9063	-.0194	-.0248	.0420	.1436
howto	.8728	.1317	.0021	.1281	.1163
myself	.8379	.0328	-.0653	.0161	.1386
comeover*	.2366	.3904	-.0429	.1530	.3789
Eigenval	3.440	2.60	2.258	1.653	1.096
variance	22.9	17.3	15.1	11.0	7.3
Alabama					
amuse	.8097	.0583	.0214	-.0303	-.1607
pass	.0075	.8773	-.0067	-.1117	.1290
nothing	-.0457	.8880	.0122	.1260	.0452

Table XIV (cont.):

item	fac1	fac2	fac3	fac4	fac5
on	-.1415	.7030	.0777	-.0114	-.0351
sexapp	-.1165	.0625	.0325	.9449	.0893
attract	-.1231	-.0194	.0968	.9183	.1188
unwind	.2820	.1290	.1143	.0605	.7524
enjoy	.8080	-.2803	-.0328	-.2548	.1094
enter	.9047	-.1270	-.1023	-.1665	.1230
excite	.6450	-.0346	.0439	.0323	.1968
forget	.0108	.0282	.0511	.1141	.8916
learn	-.0168	.0001	.8731	.0870	-.0082
howto	-.1999	.1333	.6196	.1471	.2489
myself	.1514	.0429	.8774	-.0621	.0333
comeover*	-.1430	.4619	.2336	.2541	.3506
Eigenval.	3.584	2.613	1.960	1.611	1.049
variance	23.9	17.4	13.1	10.7	7.0

* not included in any factor

Figure 3: Explanation of Terms Used For Statistical Analysis With U & G Factors.

The three items that yields 'how to' (term for factor used in analysis-U & G how to) are:
(item name in parentheses)

I watch my favorite television show...

12. so I can learn about what might happen to me..(learn)
- 13 so I can learn how to do things I have not done before..(how to)
14. because it helps me learn about myself and others..(myself)

(coeff. alpha-Alabama=.7309, Georgia=.8864)

The three items that yields 'fun' (term for factor used in analysis-U & G enjoy) are:

I watch my favorite television show...

1. because it's enjoyable (enjoy)
2. because it entertains me (enter)
3. because it's exciting (excite)
4. because it amuses me (amuse)

(coeff. alpha-Alabama=.8010, Georgia=.5973)

The three items that yields 'pass the time' (term for factor used in analysis-U & G passive) are:

I watch my favorite television show..

5. because it passes the time away, especially when I'm bored (pass)
6. when I have nothing better to do (nothing)
7. just because it's on (on)

(coeff. alpha-Alabama=.7958, Georgia=.8536)

The two items that yields 'attraction to the characters' (term for factor used in analysis-U & G attracted) are:

I watch my favorite television show..

Figure 3 (cont.):

8. because of the sex appeal in the program (sexapp)

9. because the characters are sexually attractive (attract)

(coeff. alpha-Alabama=.9040. Georgia=.9042)

The two items that yields 'unwinding" (term for factor used in analysis-U & G Relax) are:

I watch my favorite television show..

10. because it allow me to unwind (unwind)

11. so I can forget about work, school or other things (forget)

(coeff. alpha-Alabama=.6693, Georgia=.7320)

Table XV: Summary of Multiple Regression Results Using Stepwise Selection-
Georgia Sample.

U & G Factor*	ss	ms	df	r ²	f	signif/f
parasocial interaction as a one factor solution						
U & G how to	8390.6	8390.6	1	.20	30.8	>.0001
U & G enjoyable	9932.9	4966.5	2	.24	18.8	>.0001
PI factor 1 (guidance factor)						
U & G how to	586.7	586.7	1	.13	18.0	>.0001
PI factor 2 (companionship factor)						
U & G how to	722.0	722.0	1	.18	26.9	>.0001
U & G enjoyment	916.1	458.0	2	.23	18.0	>.0001
PI factor 3 (attraction factor)						
U & G attraction	228.5	228.5	1	.19	29.6	>.0001
U & G how to	313.6	156.8	2	.27	22.2	>.0001

*Only those items which met .05 criteria are included.

Table XV (cont.):

Key: U & G how to: factor which states television used to explain how to act or do things.

U & G enjoyment: factor which states that television viewing is source of pleasure or fun.

U & G attracted: factor which states that the actors are attractive.
not included as did not meet .05 criteria for entering in stepwise solution:

U & G relax: television is used to help individual unwind.

U & G passive: television is when bored or nothing else to do.

Table XVI: Summary of Multiple Regression Results Using Stepwise Selection-
Alabama Sample.

U & G Factor*	ss	ms	df	r ²	f	signif/f
parasocial interaction as a one factor solution						
U & G how to	7470.0	7470.0	1	.20	24.4	>.0001
U & G attracted	9585.9	4793.0	2	.26	16.7	>.0001
U & G enjoyment	11817.6	3957.2	3	.32	14.8	>.0001
PI factor 1 (guidance factor)						
U & G how to	517.9	517.9	1	.12	13.8	>.0001
U & G attraction	819.7	410.0	2	.19	11.7	>.0001
PI factor 2 (companionship factor)						
U & G how to	758.4	758.4	1	.19	23.7	>.0001
PI factor 3 (attraction factor)						
U & G attraction	88.2	88.2	1	.07	7.6	.0070
U & G enjoyment	212.6	106.3	2	.17	10.2	.0001

*Only those items which met .05 criteria are included.

Table XVI (cont.):

Key U & G how to: factor which states television used to explain how to act or do things.

U & G enjoyment: factor which states that television viewing is source of pleasure or fun.

U & G attracted: factor which states that the actors are attractive.
not included as did not meet .05 criteria for entering in stepwise solution:

U & G relax: television is used to help individual unwind.

U & G passive: television is when bored or nothing else to do.

Table XVII: Pearson Correlation Matrix-Five Uses and Gratification Factors with Depression and Loneliness.

	U & G attract	U & G how to	U & G passive	U & G relax	U & G enjoy
Georgia sample (n=125)					
depression	.0094	.0225	-.0215	-.1845*	.0232
loneliness	-.0455	-.0226	-.1778*	-.1430	-.0072
Alabama sample (n=101)					
depression	.0396	.2276*	.0291	.0598	-.0342
loneliness	.1495	.1624	.0168	.0297	.1483

*=signif. LE .05

Table XVIII: Pearson Correlations: Uses and Gratifications (U & G) Factors, PI and PI Factors.

U & G Factor	PI	guidance	companion.	attract.
(One factor)				
Georgia (n=125)				
U & G factor: r= to have fun	.235**	.271**	.141	.111
U & G factor: r= to pass time	-.056	-.090	-.001	-.018
U & G factor r= if relax	.186*	.227**	.152*	.107
U & G factor: r= learn how to do	.440***	.419***	.345***	.372***
U & G factor: r= persona attractive	.203*	.042	.075	.389***
Alabama (n=101)				
U & G factor: r= to have fun	.174*	.132	-.085	.233**

Table XVIII (cont.):

U & G Factor	PI	guidance	companion.	attract.
(One factor)				
U & G factor r=	-.017	-.008	.022	.011
to pass time				
U & G factor: r=	.284**	.141	.257**	.296***
if relax				
U & G factor: r=	.422***	.474***	.299***	.278**
learn how to do				
U & G factor: r=	.328***	.183*	.399***	.236**
persona attractive				

* p=.05

** p=.01

*** p=.001

the items honestly, or in a manner they perceived as being socially desirable. The results can be seen in table XIX.

These results suggest that social desirability had little relationship with the PI or loneliness scales. The relationship between the S-D scale and the depression scale is statistically significant but not large enough to lessen the validity of the responses.

To summarize the results of the study to this point:

1. Depression has some relationship to PI.
2. Loneliness has some relationship to PI, though to a non-significant degree.
3. Hours viewed has some relationship to PI.
4. Active uses and gratification factors have some relationship to PI.
5. Hours viewed, depression, loneliness, U & G factors are not significantly or consistently related to each other. (see table XX, note that the U & G factors are significantly related to hours viewed for the Georgia sample but not the Alabama sample)

Is there a common element that ties these seemingly unrelated elements together? Research to uncover this common element appears warranted.

Table XIX: Pearson Correlations between Crowne-Marlowe Social Desirability Index and PI Index and Psychographic Measures (n=226).

		PI	depsec	lonely
social	r=	.015	-.126	-.024
desirability	p=	.411	.029	.358
index				

Table XX: Pearson Correlations Between Hours Viewed and Uses And Gratifications
(U & G) Factors

U & G Factor	Hours Watched TV in Past Week
Georgia (n=125)	
U & G factor: enjoyment	r= .0946
U & G factor: to pass time	r= -.0670
U & G factor: relaxing	r= .1622*
U & G factor: learn how to do	r= .2210**
U & G factor: persona attractive	r= .1943*
Alabama (n=101)	
U & G factor: enjoyment	r= .1168
U & G factor: to pass time	r= .0233
U & G factor: relax	r= .1049
U & G factor: learn how to do	r= .1597
U & G factor: persona attractive	r= .1426

** p=.01

* p=.05

Comments

A goal of this study is to find some of the psychographic characteristics of those amenable to a parasocial interaction. Although this has not been a thoroughly successful attempt, the findings do lead to some conclusions that may further develop our knowledge of PI and suggest future research.

Horton and Wohl (1956) suggest that, "For the great majority of the audience the parasocial (interaction) is complementary to normal social life....(However) nothing could be more reasonable or natural than that people who are isolated and lonely should seek sociability and love wherever they think they can find it." (p. 222) Thus, a PI is conceptualized as a friendship. The lonely and/or depressed may seek such a relationship with a media persona if their actual social contacts are inadequate due to circumstances or personality traits. However these findings suggest that a PI is not a friendship in any meaningful sense. The persona provide guidance-one of the functions of a friend-but little more. These findings suggest that lonely and depressed people are not pursuing a PI as might be expected if the PI truly was a friendship. Perhaps parasocial interaction needs to be reconceptualized. Following are some conclusions drawn from this study.

Depression is related to PI as predicted, yet explains little of the variance. Consistent with Rubin's findings, loneliness was not related to PI. It can be concluded that the nature of a PI must be reexamined. Is PI a friendship in any sense of the word, and if so, what friendship functions would a PI serve?

Presumably, lonely people would pursue a friendship if they had a chance to get one. However, a PI would be an attractive possibility for the lonely and depressed: those with insufficient quality or quantity of social interactions and/or those lacking sufficient social skills and/or lacking the self-confidence or energy to engage in true social interaction. As suggested earlier, the relationship between PI and loneliness would presumably yield at least a peaked curve, as loneliness might increase before the PI is

developed and then lessen as the PI friendship develops. However, as shown, PI and loneliness were not related.

This is because a PI is not a developing friendship of any sort. PI may suggest a thoroughly utilitarian view of the media persona. Recall that there was a significant relationship between PI and the uses and gratification factor suggesting that the media teaches viewers how to do certain things. This argues that the media persona teaches but does not befriend. The companionship factor of PI had the least relationship to the psychographic measures.

The relationship that did exist was largely between depression and the social support factor of PI. Research indicates that lonely people would not pursue a social support system as much as a companionship type friendship. It seems clear that a PI does not provide such a relation-ship. Since PI does not involve companionship, then the lack of a relationship between PI and loneliness becomes predictable. It is evident that a PI is not a multi-dimensional friendship. Future research must examine just what a PI is and what function it serves.

Future research may want to vary the sample population away from the college student. The findings of this study are consistent with the nature of the population under investigation. College students watch the least television of all age groups (see table XXI). Hours viewed was related to PI. It may be that college age students do not engage in consistent enough viewing to develop a PI the way other demographic groups would. Perhaps greater variance would be explained utilizing demographic groups that spend more time viewing television.

The relationship between PI and depression indicates that more research can be profitably conducted, also using different demographic groups. College students seem to have greater opportunities for actual interactions and spend less time watching television.

Table XXI: Average Hours Viewed By Age Group *

sex	age	total hours viewed /seven day period
male	12-17	15:01
male	18-24	16:57
male	25-54	22:02
male	55+	27:01
female	12-17	16:20
female	18-24	13:15
female	25-54	17:51
female	55+	27:01

* source: The World Almanac and Book of Facts, 1992.

p.304. Pharos Books: New York.

Consequently the loneliness of the college student is probably more transient in nature than that of the general population. Therefore, a PI would have neither much time nor much opportunity to develop in this population.

Depression seems to be a necessary but not sufficient condition in the formation of a PI. Other research should investigate the causes of the depression. Depression has a variety of causes, only some of which may lead to a PI. The reactions of an individual who breaks up with a girlfriend as opposed to one who fails an exam are certainly different. They would manifest themselves in different ways. As stated by McQuail and Windahl (1972):

Problems, resulting in motives will, thus, cause action either in the form of media consumption or in other behavior. As needs, problems and motives are different for different individuals and groups, the result will be different patterns of behavior. Some people will seek entertainment material, others will attend to information, and some people will not use mass media content at all. (p.78)

Obviously, it is difficult to find a simple reason a person is lonely or depressed, though certainly some contributing factors can be identified. Perhaps a PI is a form of self-treatment. Perhaps it is a crutch, either temporary to fulfill the needs of a person in transition, or long-term. A long-term PI may well be indicative of other problems. Is a parasocial interaction a symptom or a cure?

The implications of PI may involve other issues. For example, if the subject of a PI is used for guidance purposes, then the question must be posed, 'What if the advice is bad.' What if the media persona should romanticize suicide, drugs or other aberrant behavior? If the media persona fulfills the role of friend, that role may include behavior guidance. The implications of this are relevant and obvious, especially among the young who may not have a clear picture of the distinction between fantasy and reality. Young people may not understand that the media persona is not acting according to a script. The actor is

perceived as behaving in a reasoned manner, having weighed the options. If that persona becomes the source of a PI for a young viewer, then the potential for modelling is significant. Others have suggested that the line between fantasy and reality is vague for young people. In *The Tyranny of Magical Thinking*, George Serban discusses that teenagers do not understand that suicide is permanent. They may think that after suicide, people will treat them better. If the distinction between reality and fantasy is blurred when it comes to television (or film), then the persuasiveness of a media persona becomes more intense in its possible impact.

Many studies point to the existence of parasocial interaction. It seems quite clear that it does exist. This study suggests that our conception of what a PI is may have to be altered. Horton and Wohl suggested a PI can serve as an alternative source of friendship for the "socially isolated." This study suggests that a PI is a friendship in only the most utilitarian aspects. Future research should attempt to ascertain just what a PI is and pursue the questions "For whom and with whom?" and "At what cost, or benefit?"

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APPENDIX

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR DETERMINING DEMOGRAPHICS, PSYCHOGRAPHICS
AND PARASOCIAL INTERACTION**

Please complete the following questionnaire. Be assured that all responses will be kept confidential. Only the person conducting the study will ever see your responses and no attempt will be made to identify any of the respondents. Thank you for your cooperation.

1. Please indicate your sex:

- a. male b. female

2. Please state how many brothers and sisters you have, including step-brothers and step-sisters.

- a. zero b. one c. two d. three e. four or more

3. If you have brothers and/or sisters and/or step-brothers and/or step-sisters, are you the...

- a. oldest b. youngest c. neither

4. Please indicate the combined income of all the wage earners in your family.

- a. 10,000-19,999 b. 20,000-29,999 c. 30,000-39,999
d. 40,000-49,999 e. 50,000 or more

5. Please estimate how many hours you watch d each of the following types of television programming within the past week.

- a. situation comedies (i.e. 227, Murphy Brown, Newhart) ____
b. action/adventure (i.e. MacGyver, Six Million Dollar Man) ____
c. primetime soap operas (i.e. Dallas, Twin Peaks, Knots Landing) ____
d. daytime soap operas (i.e. Days of Our Lives, All My Children) ____
e. news (i.e. local newscasts, network newscasts, 60 Minutes, 20/20) ____
f. movies on television ____
g. sports (basketball, football, etc. and/or Wide World of Sports, Sportscenter) ____
h. movie videos ____
i. game shows (i.e. Price is Right, Jeopardy) ____
j. cartoons ____
k. other ____

6. Are your parents divorced or separated?

- a. yes b. no

Please check your current status:

- a. freshman b. sophomore c. junior d. senior

What is your favorite television show? _____

If you do not have a favorite television show, is there a show that you are particularly likely to watch? _____

The following questions pertain to your favorite television show or one which you are most likely to watch, given the opportunity. Please reply to the following statements by circling one of the numbers from numbers one through seven. One will mean strongly DISagree while seven will mean strongly agree.

Each statement begins with: "I watch my favorite television show..."

- | | | |
|-----|---|---------------|
| 1. | because it's enjoyable. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 2. | because it entertains me. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 3. | because it's exciting. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 4. | because it amuses me. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 5. | because it passes the time away, especially when I'm bored. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 6. | when I have nothing better to do. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 7. | just because it's on. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 8. | because of the sex appeal in the program. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 9. | because the characters are sexually attractive. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 10. | because it allows me to unwind. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 11. | so I can forget about work, school or other things. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 12. | so I can learn about what might happen to me. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 13. | so I can learn how to do things I have not done before. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 14. | because it help me learn about myself and others. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |

15. because it's something to do when friends come over. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

The following statements pertain to your favorite television character or the lead or main character on your favorite television program. If you do not have a favorite television program, please answer the questions referring to the main or favorite character of a show you are most likely to watch given the opportunity.

Please answer the statement using the following choices by circling one of the numbers from one through seven. One means strongly DISagree while seven means strongly agree.

1. When my favorite television character show me how she or he feels about an issue or problem, it helps me to make up my mind about that issue or problem. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2. I feel badly for my favorite television character when he or she makes a mistake. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3. When I watch my favorite program, I feel as if I am part of the story. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4. I like to compare my ideas with what my favorite says. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5. My favorite television character makes me feel comfortable, as if I am with a friend. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6. I see my favorite character as a natural. down to earth person. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
7. My favorite television character keeps me company when the program is on. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8. If my favorite television character appeared on another program, I would watch the program. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9. My favorite character seems to understand the kind of things I want to know. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
10. If I saw a story about my favorite character in a 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

magazine or newspaper, I would read about it.

11. I would like to get to know my favorite character on a personal level. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
12. I think my favorite character would be a good friend. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
13. I find my favorite television character to be attractive. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
14. I would like to be just like my favorite character. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
15. I would like to have a friend who was just like my favorite television character. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Next Page Please

Below is a list of the ways you might have felt or behaved in the past. Please tell how often you have felt this way during the past week.

Please check the most appropriate answer after each statement from the following selection:

- a. rarely or none of the time (less than one day)
- b. some or a little of the time (1-2 days)
- c. occasionally or a moderate amount of the time (3-4 days)
- d. most or all of the time (5-7 days)

"During the past week....."

- | | | |
|-----|---|---------|
| 1. | I was bothered by things that usually don't bother me. | a b c d |
| 2. | I did not feel like eating, my appetite was poor. | a b c d |
| 3. | I felt that I could not shake off the blues even with help from my family and/or friends. | a b c d |
| 4. | I felt that I was just as good as other people. | a b c d |
| 5. | I had trouble keeping my mind on what I was doing. | a b c d |
| 6. | I felt depressed. | a b c d |
| 7. | I felt hopeful about the future. | a b c d |
| 8. | I thought my life was a failure. | a b c d |
| 9. | I felt that everything I did was an effort. | a b c d |
| 10. | I felt fearful. | a b c d |
| 11. | My sleep was restless. | a b c d |
| 12. | I talked less than usual. | a b c d |
| 13. | I was happy. | a b c d |

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------------------|---------|
| 14. | I felt lonely. | a b c d |
| 15. | People were unfriendly. | a b c d |
| 16. | I enjoyed life. | a b c d |
| 17. | I had crying spells. | a b c d |
| 18. | I felt sad. | a b c d |
| 19. | I felt that people dislike me. | a b c d |
| 20. | I could not "get going." | a b c d |

Below is a list of the ways you might have felt at some time or another. Using the responses given, please tell how often you feel that way.

- | | | | | | |
|-----|---|------------------|---------------------|-----------------|--|
| | a. never | b. rarely | c. sometimes | d. often | |
| 1. | I felt in tune with the people around me. | a b c d | | | |
| 2. | I lack companionship. | a b c d | | | |
| 3. | There is no one I can turn to. | a b c d | | | |
| 4. | I do not feel alone. | a b c d | | | |
| 5. | I feel part of a group of friends. | a b c d | | | |
| 6. | I have a lot in common with the people around me. | a b c d | | | |
| 7. | I am no longer close to anyone. | a b c d | | | |
| 8. | My interests and ideas are not shared by those around me. | a b c d | | | |
| 9. | I am an outgoing person. | a b c d | | | |
| 10. | There are people I feel close to. | a b c d | | | |
| 11. | I feel left out. | a b c d | | | |

- | | | |
|-----|--|---------|
| 12. | My social relationships are superficial. | a b c d |
| 13. | No one really knows me well. | a b c d |
| 14. | I feel isolated from others. | a b c d |
| 15. | I can find companionship when I want it. | a b c d |
| 16. | There are people who really understand me. | a b c d |
| 17. | I am unhappy being so withdrawn. | a b c d |
| 18. | People are around me, but not with me. | a b c d |
| 19. | There are people I can talk to. | a b c d |
| 20. | There are people I can turn to. | a b c d |

Listed below are a number of statements concerning personal attitudes and traits. Please read each item and decide whether the statement is true or false as it pertains to you personally. Circle either the "T" or "F" following each statement.

- | | | |
|----|---|-----|
| 1. | Before voting, I thoroughly investigate the qualifications of all the candidates. | T F |
| 2. | I never hesitate to go out of my way to help someone in trouble. | T F |
| 3. | It is sometimes hard for me to go on with my work if I am not encouraged. | T F |
| 4. | I have never intensely disliked anyone. | T F |
| 5. | On occasion I have had doubts about my ability to succeed in life. | T F |
| 6. | I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way. | T F |
| 7. | I am always careful about my manner of dress. | T F |
| 8. | My table manners at home are as good as when I eat out in a restaurant. | T F |

9. If I could get into a movie without paying and be sure I was not seen, I would probably do it. T F
10. On a few occasions, I have given up doing something because I thought too little of my ability. T F
11. I like to gossip at times. T F
12. There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right. T F
13. No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener. T F
14. I can remember "playing sick" to get out of something. T F
15. There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone. T F
16. I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake. T F
17. I always try to practice what I preach. T F
18. I don't find it particularly difficult to get along with loud mouthed obnoxious people. T F
19. I sometime try to get even, rather than forgive and forget. T F
20. When I don't know something I don't at all mind admitting it. T F
21. I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable. T F
22. At times I have really insisted on having things my own way. T F
23. There have been occasions when I felt like smashing things. T F
24. I would never think of letting someone else be punished for my wrongdoings. T F
25. I never resent being asked to return a favor. T F

26. I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own. T F
27. I never make a long trip without checking the safety of my car. T F
28. There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others. T F
29. I have almost never felt the urge to tell someone off. T F
30. I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favors of me. T F
31. I have never felt that I was punished without cause. T F
32. I sometimes think when people have a misfortune they only got what they deserved. T F
33. I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings. T F

Thank you very much for your cooperation in completing this questionnaire. Again, let me assure you that individual results will be kept in the strictest confidence. I would be glad to discuss the purpose of this questionnaire upon its completion as well as results of the tabulations.

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VITA

Richard David Vogel was born in Auburn, New York on September 21, 1959. He attended elementary schools in the Syracuse and Yonkers school districts and graduated from Roosevelt High School in Yonkers in 1977. In August of that year, he entered the State University of New York at Oswego. In May of 1981 he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication with a concentrate in broadcasting.

In August of 1985, he entered Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, from which he would receive his M.A. two years later. He returned to school in August of 1987 at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville.

He is presently employed as an Assistant Professor of Communication Studies at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.