1989

Soap opera viewing motivations of college students and the cultivation effect

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San Jose State University

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31979/etd.c9gv-29yx>
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Shaikh, Farah, M.S.

San Jose State University, 1989

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SOAP OPERA VIEWING MOTIVATIONS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS
AND THE CULTIVATION EFFECT

A Thesis
Presented to the Faculty
of the Department of Journalism and Mass Communications
San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science

By
Farah Shaikh
August, 1989

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APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In completing this project, I would like to extend my deepest appreciation to the faculty members at San Jose State University who have helped make my graduate career both enjoyable and worthwhile.

I would also like to express my warmest admiration to two mass communications researchers for their pioneering contribution to media studies: Dr. George Gerbner and his Annenberg colleagues who first formulated the cultivation hypothesis; and Dr. Alan Rubin whose studies on media gratifications have had an enormous impact on the understanding of audience effects. The work from both of these distinguished researchers provided the impetus for me to pursue my studies.

My sincerest gratitude belongs to Dr. Serena Stanford for her valued guidance, patience and inspiration--without her this thesis could not have been completed.

I also wish to thank Dr. Dennis Brown whose enthusiasm for the field of mass communications served as a great source of inspiration.

Most importantly, I would like to thank my parents to whom I am forever indebted. Without their undying love, patience and generosity, graduate school would not have been possible.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

There is probably no other genre of television that allows the audience member more intimate, vicarious participation than the daytime soap opera. Day after day, year in and year out, millions of loyal fans thrust themselves into a miasma of deceit, treachery, infidelity, divorce, illegitimacy or death. Is there some surrogate mother alter ego or voyeuristic demon lurking within us that whets our appetite for melodramatic fare? And from a mass communications perspective, what do soap operas teach us about the world in which we live? Is it possible that exposure to such programs can influence our perceptions of the "real world?"

As many social scientists have discovered, it is difficult to measure, with any degree of accuracy, just how much of what we know about the real, observable world comes from personal experience, information from other people, observation, or from channels of communication such as the mass media (McLeod & Chaffee, 1972). Throughout the course of our lives, our brains subconsciously digest vast amounts of data, which are then transformed into "symbols" (Gerbner & Gross, 1976). Moreover, these symbols interact with one another to form messages or "formally coded symbolic or

representational patterns" (Gerbner, 1972, p. 153). Finally, these symbols and messages act as mediators between the actual physical environment and our own subconscious realities; it is the symbiosis of these two elements which help shape our values, attitudes and feelings about the world.

If human communication is contingent upon the transmission and interaction of symbols and messages, and the mass media in modern society provide the necessary functions to facilitate this process, is it not reasonable to assume that the prevalence of the media and their underlying messages work in some way to influence our individual concepts of reality? For instance, if we are persistently bombarded with distorted presentations of the real world, such as the fantasy world portrayed on soap operas, is it not possible that at some point, we could mistake the world of television with reality itself?

In an attempt to establish some relationship between media reality and audience effects, the following investigation will focus on two mass communication models: uses and gratifications and cultivation. Four hypotheses will be tested here, but all are based upon the assumption that the mass media play a significant role in constructing our individual concepts of social reality.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

The Uses and Gratifications Approach

The uses of the mass media and the various gratifications that audience members receive from the media have been a prevalent topic in mass communications research for over four decades. Harold Laswell's (1948) pioneering interpretation of the mass media as functional entities paved the way for interest in the gratifications that media provide for audience members (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974). Laswell's classification of communication activities included: 1) surveillance of the environment, 2) correlation of the parts of society in responding to the environment, 3) transmission of the social heritage from one generation to the next, and finally, 4) entertainment, a fourth function that was suggested by Wright (1960).

The uses and gratifications theory offers an audience-centered perspective of the mass media (Katz et al., 1974) in which audience members are assumed to be "active selectors and interpreters" (DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1982, p. 188) of media messages to gratify their individual needs--a position which elevates the role of the audience members (Jeffres, 1986). Katz et al. (1974) describe the uses and gratifications model as one concerning: 1) "the social and psychological origins

of 2) needs, which generate 3) expectations of 4) the mass media and other sources which lead to 5) differential patterns of media exposure (or engagement in other activities), resulting in need gratifications and 7) other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones" (p. 20).

Rosengren, Wenner and Palmgreen (1985) have created a generalized uses and gratifications paradigm which incorporates several important assumptions: 1) "the audience is active, thus 2) much media use can be conceived as goal-directed, and 3) competing with other sources of need gratification, so that when 4) substantial audience initiative links needs to media choice, 5) media consumption can fulfill a wide range of gratifications although 6) media content alone cannot be used to predict patterns of gratifications accurately because 7) media characteristics structure the degree to which needs may be gratified at different times, and further because, 8) gratifications obtained have their origins in media content, exposure in and of itself, and/or the social situation in which exposure takes place" (p. 14).

A balanced presentation of the uses and gratifications approach would not be complete without at least some mention of criticism. Researchers such as Palmgreen (1984) have criticized the assumption that audience members can readily articulate their

motivations for using the mass media. Moreover, Elliott (1974) and McQuail (1987) both argue that the audience-centered component of the uses and gratifications approach treats mass communication in isolation from other forces. Consequently, some researchers have attempted to broaden the uses and gratifications theory in an attempt to allay some of the criticisms. For example, DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1982) have created the dependency model which related mass communication within a social framework. The researchers asserted that the nature of the media influence on the audience was determined by the interaction between society, the audience and the media.

Uses and Gratifications of Radio Listening and Television Viewing

Early investigations of radio listeners examined audience characteristics. Herzog (1944) cited three major reasons for listening to radio soaps: emotional release, wishful thinking and advice. Mendelsohn (1964) extended Herzog's research by identifying several generalized functions of radio listening: 1) changing mood, 2) companionship, 3) bracketing the day, 4) counteracting loneliness or boredom, 5) providing useful news and information, 6) allowing vicarious participation in events, and 7) aiding in social

interaction. In 1970, Blumler and his colleagues interviewed radio listeners of "The Dales," a British radio soap (Blumler, Brown and McQuail, 1970). The researchers discovered six major gratifications that audience members derived from listening to the broadcast: 1) personal reference, 2) reality exploration, 3) reinforcement of family values, 4) companionship, 5) reinforcement of the social role of women and 6) emotional release.

With respect to television gratifications, communication research has focused on typologies of television consumption as well as the association between these uses, the individual's social condition and television viewing attitudes and behaviors (Rubin, 1973). For example, McQuail, Blumler and Brown's (1972) examination of the television audience resulted in a media interaction typology which included diversion, personal relationships, personal identity and surveillance. Greenberg (1974) established six motivations for child and adolescent viewing: 1) habit, 2) relaxation, 3) learning, 4) escape, 5) companionship, and 6) arousal. Finally, Palmgreen and Rayburn (1979) observed seven gratifications from public television viewing: 1) relaxing, 2) communication utility, 3) learning about things, 4) forgetting, 5) passing time, 6) companionship, and 7) entertainment.

Uses and Gratifications of Soap Opera Viewing

The appeal of soap operas is undeniable, yet the reasons why people watch daytime serials is still an area that warrants further investigation. For example, Compesi (1980) found entertainment to be the most important motivations for the viewers of "All my Children." Viewers also cited habit, convenience and social utility as other reasons for watching the program. However, unlike the early radio investigations conducted by Herzog (1944), Mendelsohn (1964) and Blumler (1970), Compesi's subjects did not seem to perceive "All My Children" as a particularly valuable social vehicle through which they could receive advice or insight into their own lives (Compesi, 1980, p. 158).

In the tradition of other pioneering uses and gratifications research, Rubin's (1983) secondary analysis of television viewing patterns and motivations revealed two distinct viewer types: 1) those who used the television medium for time consumption and entertainment, (p. 48) and 2) those who used the television medium for nonescapist, information-seeking reasons (p. 50). Moreover, Rubin's study provided at least partial support for the uses and gratifications argument that viewers actively seek out particular media content to gratify individual needs (Rosengren et al., 1985). In a similar study of viewing motivations, Rubin

(1985) identified four primary reasons for watching television; 1) orientation: "an instrumental reality motive for watching, seeking to ascertain how others think and act" (p. 248); 2) avoidance: "an escapist, tension release, time consumption motive for watching" (p. 248); 3) diversion: a multifaceted motive combining entertainment, relaxation and amusement; and 4) social utility: a social interactive motive. Rubin also found a relationship between life satisfaction of the viewer and particular viewing motivations. For example, students who watched soap operas for "nonescapist diversionary reasons" seemed more satisfied with their lives than students who watched soap operas to escape from "problems, concerns or boredom" (Rubin, 1985, p. 256).

Lemish's (1985) participant observation study of college students and soap opera viewing revealed two primary motives: preference and attachment to a particular program and time consumption. Like Rubin (1983), Lemish distinguished between viewer types: 1) primary viewers were defined as those engaged in "purposeful and regular viewing in terms of location, time of day, and program choice" (p. 281); and 2) secondary viewers were defined as those engaged in other activities, such as eating or doing homework, while watching television. Moreover, Lemish found that viewers differed on two major dimensions: 1) "the manifestation of positive and negative attitudes towards

soap operas viewed, and 2) a preference for a major orientation towards television versus the social situation" (p. 281). The researcher concluded that students were greatly involved with both the context of viewing and the viewing situation itself.

In Babrow's (1987) elaborate investigation of soap opera viewing motivations, the researcher obtained his data using two methods: 1) by asking respondents to list their reasons for exposure or gratifications sought, and 2) by asking students to list their expectations regarding soap opera viewing. As a result, Babrow's study identified sixteen gratifications and expected outcomes of exposure, with time considerations, diversion, program quality and social interaction as being the most frequently cited viewing motives among college students. Furthermore, Babrow's investigation revealed three additional categories which seem to be unique to soap operas: serial format, sex and romance, and character development.

Finally, Perse and Rubin's (1988) study emphasized the importance of audience activity in media effects. The researchers found that soap opera viewing satisfaction was related to more instrumental orientations toward soap opera content. In essence, the study suggested that as viewer satisfaction increased, television viewing became "more planned and intentional" (p. 375).

The Cultivation Hypothesis

Like the uses and gratifications model, the cultivation theory has made a significant contribution to the understanding of audience effects. Since 1967, George Gerbner and his colleagues at the Annenberg School of Communications, University of Pennsylvania, have been studying television and its relationship to viewer perceptions of social reality (Gerbner & Gross, 1976). By analyzing the dramatic content of television, and thereby formulating a representational picture of the "television world," Gerbner attempted to study the ways in which television exposure influenced audience attitudes, values and behaviors (Morgan, 1983).

After extensively reviewing prime-time television content, Gerbner and his associates found that such programming was largely distorted, unrealistic and predictable (Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Jeffres, 1986; and Ogles, 1987). Furthermore, Gerbner asserted that heavy television exposure to this type of content was dangerous because it cultivated standardized, stereotypical values which were often inconsistent with the "real world" (Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Cantor, 1983; Jeffres, 1986; Severin & Tankard, 1988). In sum, the crux of Gerbner's argument was that the more viewers were exposed to television's distorted images, the more likely they would be to perceive the world as it was

portrayed on television (Gerbner & Gross, 1976).

Television Exposure and "Social Paranoia"

In Gerbner and Gross' pioneering investigation of the cultivation hypothesis (Gerbner & Gross, 1976), the researchers found that heavy television viewers (defined as those who watched an average of four hours of television a day or more) were more likely than light viewers (defined as those who watched an average of two hours a day or less) to perceive the world as it had been portrayed on television. Specifically, heavy viewers were more likely to overestimate the actual number of violent incidents which occurred per week (when their answers were compared with actual crime statistics), were more afraid to walk alone at night in their own neighborhoods and were generally more distrustful when compared to the light-viewing group. Even after income, education, and other variables were statistically controlled, the relationship between television exposure and the perception of the world as "a mean and scary place" persisted (Gerbner & Gross, 1976).

In their study of television violence and its possible relationship to viewer anxiety, Bryant, Carveth and Brown (1981) found that students subjected to large doses of action-adventure programming, in which the

violent transgressions went unpunished, experienced greater anxiety than those exposed to the justice-depicting action films. Moreover, both heavy-viewing groups expressed a greater fear of personal victimization than did the light-viewers--a finding which seems to support Gerbner's cultivation hypothesis.

Similarly, Ogles and Hoffner (1987) exposed male college students to two situations: one group viewed two R-rated films over a one week period and the second group viewed five R-rated films over a two-week period (the control group saw no films). The researchers found that the participants in the five-film category reported significantly higher estimates of the likelihood of personal victimization as compared with the two-film group and the control group (Ogles, 1987).

Wakshlag, Vial and Tamborini (1983) manipulated the apprehension levels of their subjects by exposing one group to a crime documentary (which was especially designed to evoke viewer apprehension about crime) and another group to a National Geographic documentary (this was the control group). After viewing the films, the subjects from both groups were asked to choose a number of films from a designated list which they would enjoy watching (the list described the degree of violence and justice restoration in each film). The result revealed that those subjects exposed to the crime documentary were more likely to choose films that had less violence

and greater restoration. Although the researchers argued that the cultivation theory should consider the reasons why audience members make certain media selections, the study did seem to partially support the cultivation hypothesis since apprehension was induced by the exposure to the crime documentary.

Wakshlag, Bart, Dudley, Groth, McCutcheon and Rolla (1983) assigned subjects to one of two apprehension conditions--high and low--based on their responses of their fear of victimization, which was hidden in a more general questionnaire. The researchers discovered that those who were more apprehensive about crime were more physiologically aroused when exposed to the crime dramas than those who were less apprehensive. Variables such as heart rate, blood pressure and skin temperature were used as direct measures of excitement or physiological arousal. Wakshlag and his colleagues concluded that enhanced excitement may have been all that was required for selective exposure to occur.

Weaver and Wakshlag (1986) divided their research subjects into three groups: 1) those who had previous, personal experience with crime; 2) those who had not experienced crime themselves, but knew someone who had been a victim; and 3) those who had only experienced crime via the mass media. Though Weaver and Wakshlag found no significant differences among the personal experience group and the secondhand knowledge group,

there did appear to be a correlation between anxiety and crime-related viewing for the respondents who had experienced violence solely through the media.

Perceived Reality and the Cultivation Effect

The relationship between television exposure and perceptions of social reality is an integral aspect of the cultivation theory. Slater and Elliott (1982) found evidence to suggest that perceived law enforcement program realism--not the total amount of law enforcement programming watched--was strongly associated with attitudes toward safety, understanding of law enforcement, and acceptance of television characters and situations. Furthermore, Slater and Elliott argued that viewing a particular program--which was perceived as being highly realistic--could produce "a noticeable influence on social reality independent of all other viewing behaviors" over a long period of time (Slater & Elliott, 1982, p. 79).

Potter (1986) divided television reality into three different categories: 1) the "magic window" dimension represented the degree to which a viewer believed that television content was an unaltered, accurate representation of reality; 2) the "instruction" dimension represented the degree to which viewers believed that television was an instructional aid which

"augments and expands their direct personal experiences" (p. 162); and 3) the "identity" dimension represented the degree of similarity that the viewer perceived between the characters and situations on television and the people and circumstances in real life. Potter found that although television viewers in certain categories expressed a much higher belief in a "mean and violent world," perceived reality measures seemed to be more strongly related to the fear of victimization than the total amount of television exposure--an argument that seems to contradict Gerbner's original cultivation hypothesis.

Finally, two studies on television news and perceptions of social reality deserve mention. Adoni, Cohen and Mane (1984) examined three aspects of network news: complexity, intensity and solvability, and then investigated their relationship to three perceptions of social conflict: integration, economics and politics. The researchers concluded that television news tended to: 1) simplify conflicts by concentrating on events and ignoring the steps which lead up to the events; 2) intensify conflicts by focusing only on the critical moments of an event; and 3) present conflicts as solvable problems instead of complex, ongoing situations. Most importantly, Adoni et al. found that Israeli adolescents had the ability to distinguish between television and social reality. In sum, the

researchers concluded that the amount of television exposure did not affect the ability to differentiate between the "real world" and the media world.

In another study involving television news and cultivation, O'Keefe and Reid-Nash (1987) found a strong relationship between those who pay more attention to crime news and a greater fear of victimization. However, the same relationship did not prove to be statistically valid when comparing newspaper crime news and fear of crime or television crime drama and fear of victimization.

Soap Opera Viewing and the Cultivation Effect

Following Gerbner's cultivation framework (Gerbner & Gross, 1976), Buerkel-Rothfuss and Mayes (1981) found that the more people watched soap operas, the higher the estimates of the number of doctors and lawyers (for both men and women), businessmen, and of the men and women who have had affairs, divorces and illegitimate children--even after variables such as age, scholastic performance, gender and self-concept were statistically controlled. However, in a similar study, Carveth and Alison (1982) found that prime-time television viewing was related more to distorted estimates of professional occupations and lifestyles than to soap opera viewing.

In Rouner's (1984) study of active television viewing and cultivation, the researcher made two general inferences: 1) that "people may not always view tv in the same manner, and 2) total exposure may not be as important in influencing one's social reality as the activity one exerts while watching television" (p. 174). Carveth and Alexander (1985) concluded that viewers who frequently and ritualistically select soap operas as an undemanding activity may be most vulnerable to the cultivation effect. Both of these studies suggest that active television viewing may actually inhibit the cultivation effect (Rouner, 1984; Carveth and Alexander, 1985; Ogles, 1987). By contrast, Perse (1986) found that the limited cultivation effect observed in her study was actually associated with more instrumental viewing motivations, as well as higher soap opera viewing levels, longer viewing duration and higher levels of affinity and perceived reality.

Mainstreaming and Resonance

George Gerbner's original cultivation study (Gerbner & Gross, 1976) met with a great deal of criticism from many mass communications scholars. (Wober, 1978; Hirsch, 1980, 1981; Hawkins & Pingree, 1980; Wober & Gunter, 1982; Bryant, 1986). For reasons to be disclosed in the next section, Gerbner and his

colleagues at the Annenberg School of Communications modified the original cultivation hypothesis to include two new dimensions: mainstreaming and resonance (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan & Signorielli, 1982).

"Mainstreaming" is a convergence of outlooks among heavy television viewers who are in otherwise separate and homogeneous social subgroups (Gerbner et al., 1982). The researchers asserted that television had a tendency to blend otherwise divergent social orientations--and to modify political extremes--by creating a mainstream viewpoint. For example, Gerbner and his colleagues found that heavy television viewers were more likely to label themselves "moderate" rather than "liberal" or "conservative." Moreover, heavy viewers were also less likely to think of themselves as "working class"--they preferred to call themselves "middle class" instead (Gerbner et al., 1982). Morgan (1986) also found a relationship between heavy television viewers and diversity of traditional regional cultures in the United States. Morgan argued that heavy television viewers from different geographical regions tended to have more homogeneous attitudes as compared with light viewers. Similarly, Gerbner asserted that television viewing:

blurs traditional differences, blends them into a more homogenous mainstream, and bends the mainstream into a "hard line" position on issues dealing with minorities and personal rights. Hard-nosed commercial populism, with its mix of restrictive conservatism and pork-chop liberalism, is the paradoxical--and potentially volatile--

contribution of television and political orientations (Gerbner et al., p. 126).

In sum, Gerbner believed that since television "cultivated" middle class attitudes and values, heavy viewers were more prone to the "mainstreaming" effect than were light viewers.

"Resonance" occurs when a given feature of the television world is most congruent with the real-life circumstances of the viewer (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan & Signorielli, 1980). Furthermore, resonance causes individuals to get a "double dose" (Ogles, 1987, p. 50) of the messages which, in turn, enhances the cultivation effect. To illustrate, Gerbner et al. (1980) found that the correlation among television viewing and the fear of crime was strongest among low-income urban dwellers, even after statistical controls are administered.

Cultivation and Methodology

The controversy over the cultivation hypothesis has been a hot topic of debate among mass communications researchers. In recent years, there have been a number of criticisms launched at Gerbner's original cultivation thesis, but most of the controversy has focused on the methodology. After reanalyzing the data from the National Opinion Research Center (the same data that Gerbner used in his study), Paul Hirsch (1980, 1981) found some interesting inconsistencies in Gerbner's

study. Hirsch's most stinging accusation was that Gerbner and his colleagues failed to employ the proper statistical controls in testing the cultivation hypothesis. Consequently, Hirsch made the following argument:

In failing to ensure cross samples comparability, introduce multiple controls and report items where the data do not support the argument for television's "cultivation" of beliefs and attitudes, the Annenberg group has itself contributed to distorting scientific reality (1980, p. 544).

Surprisingly, when Hirsch replicated Gerbner's study using multiple statistical controls on the relationship between hours of television watched and its correlates, he found the "separate and independent" effect of viewing to be nonexistent (in fact, the expected relationship--that heavy viewers are more likely to give the "television answer"--moved in the opposite direction, according to Hirsch). Other researchers who have investigated cultivation, such as Wober (1978), Doob and McDonald (1979), Hughes (1980), Wober and Gunter (1982), and Potter (1986) also found that statistical relationships disappeared when multiple controls were added.

Another major criticisms launched at Gerbner and his colleagues was that the researchers failed to acknowledge the influence of a possible third variable (or variables) which could better explain the cultivation effect (Hirsch, 1980; 1981). The notion that

cultivation may be attributed to factors other than heavy television exposure has been investigated by a number of researchers (Doob & McDonald, 1979; Hawkins & Pingree, 1980; Hirsch, 1980; Hughes, 1980; Slater & Elliott, 1980; Carveth & Alexander, 1985; Weaver & Wakshlag, 1986). These studies indicate that demographic, socioeconomic, personal influence and attitudinal variables may heighten the cultivation effect (Perse, 1986).

Soap Opera Viewing Motivations and the Cultivation
Hypothesis: An Integrated Approach

The present study will investigate the possible relationship between viewing motivations and cultivation. Although the cultivation hypothesis presumes that all viewers bring the same motivations and derive similar gratifications from television viewers, researchers such as Rubin (1983, 1984, 1985, 1986) have argued that distinctions need to be made between ritualistic viewing motivations (i.e., focusing on the medium of television to gratify particular needs such as relaxation) and instrumental use (i.e., viewing television as a goal-directed activity such as watching for information). This investigation will rely upon Rubin's arguments that audience members derive individual gratifications from television use. Moreover,

Gerbner's original hypothesis--that the frequency and duration of heavy television viewing will heighten the cultivation effect--will also be tested in the this study. It is important to note that the original cultivation analysis was conducted on mostly prime-time television; however, Buerkel-Rothfuss and Mayes (1981) have applied cultivation to daytime soap operas by proposing the following argument: "it can be assumed that heavy television exposure to any systematically distorted view of the world will result in similarly distorted viewer perception" (p. 108). In the present investigation, cultivation will be studied within the context of daytime soap operas. Finally, it must be mentioned that the most important departure from Gerbner's hypothesis will be that viewing motivations may serve as predictors of cultivation.

Hypotheses

- H1: There will be a positive relationship between frequency of soap opera viewing and cultivation.
- H2: There will be a positive relationship between duration of soap opera viewing (i.e., the number of years a person has been watching soap operas) and cultivation.

H3: The relationship between ritualistic uses of soap operas and cultivation will be stronger than the relationship between instrumental uses of soap operas and cultivation.

H4: There will be a positive relationship between perceived reality and cultivation.

CHAPTER 3

Method of Study

Sample

Questionnaires were administered to college students at San Jose State University during the spring 1989 semester. Although this study was essentially exploratory in nature, classes were chosen to provide a mixture of class standing and major fields of study (general education courses such as Art Appreciation, Humanities, Statistics, Political Science, and Mass Media and Culture were selected). In addition, questionnaires were distributed at a variety of times during the day to further ensure representation of students from San Jose State. From the initial 296 responses, 10 participants either failed to follow the survey directions properly or claimed that they did not watch television at all; therefore, these surveys were excluded from the sample, leaving 286 cases for analysis.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was composed of three sections (Appendix A). Since the purpose of this investigation was to study soap opera viewing motivations with respect to cultivation, those respondents who said they watched

television, but did not watch soap operas were asked to skip the first two parts of the survey and begin with the third section (with item #32).

The first portion of the survey was designed to determine the specific uses and gratifications that viewers obtained from watching soap operas. Soap opera viewers were asked to answer either "well," "somewhat well," or "not well" to a series of short statements. The statements used in this study were derived from Rubin's (1983) study of media uses and gratifications which identified nine distinct television viewing motivations: 1) relaxation: using television to rest and unwind; 2) companionship: watching television to avoid being alone; 3) habit: watching television as a routine activity; 4) pass time: watching television to occupy the time; 5) entertainment: use of the program for fun or as a leisure activity; 6) social interaction: watching television as a social activity with friends or family members; 7) information: watching television as a learning tool; 8) arousal: watching television because it is psychologically stimulating or exciting; and 9) escape: watching television to escape from reality (p. 41).

The purpose of this section was to help establish whether or not certain soap opera viewing motivations predisposed respondents to the cultivation effect. First, it is important to reiterate that Gerbner's

original cultivation hypothesis was expanded in this study. Instead of using heavy television exposure as the only prerequisite for cultivation, viewing motivations, in conjunction with heavy viewing, were suggested as possible predictors of cultivation (Cantor, 1983; Carveth & Alexander, 1985; Ogles, 1986). Respondents were also asked to estimate the average time a day they spent watching television as well as the average amount of time a day they spent watching soap operas (in hours). To further ensure that participants reported the correct amount of time that they watched soap operas, each individual daytime soap opera was listed in the survey (eleven daytime soap operas were aired during the time of this study) and students were then asked to indicate the number of episodes watched per week for each program. Finally, since cultivation has been considered to be a cumulative effect (Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Gerbner et al., 1980, 1981a, 1981b, 1982), students were asked to estimate the length of time they had been watching soap operas (in years).

Since it seems plausible that those viewers who perceive soap operas as realistic may be more likely to be highly "cultivated," the second part of the survey was intended to establish some link between perceived reality and the cultivation effect. Respondents were asked to answer either "most," "some," or "none" to four reality statements: 1) How many of the problems that

people have on soap operas are realistic? 2) How many of the people on soap operas are typical of real people? 3) How many of the situations people find themselves in on soap operas are realistic? and 4) How many of the problems on soap operas are solved in realistic ways? Each respondent then received a particular score based upon the answers to the perceived reality questions. The scoring was determined using the following criteria: those viewers who answered "most" to a particular question, received a score of "3" for that question; those subjects who answered "some" received a score of "2"; and those participants who answered "not" received a score of "1." Consequently, a perceived reality index was constructed based upon the composite scores of the respondents, with 4 being the lowest possible score (viewers who felt that soap operas were not at all realistic) and 12 being the highest possible score (viewers who felt that soap operas were highly realistic).

The final portion of the questionnaire contained the standard demographic inquiries about age, sex and class standing of the survey participants, as well as ten cultivation questions. Three multiple choice possibilities were given for each cultivation question: answer one was designated as the "control answer" and was simply an arbitrarily chosen imaginary number; answer two was designated as the "real world" answer or

the actual statistic; and answer three was designated as the "cultivation" answer or the answer based on the content analysis of daytime soap operas (Katzman, 1972; Ramsdell, 1973; Downing, 1974; Cassata, Skill & Boadu, 1979; Greenberg, Neuendorf, Buerkel-Rothfuss & Henderson, 1982) [Appendix B]. The cultivation statements, which consisted primarily of questions about societal demographics and lifestyle statistics (e.g., students were asked to estimate the number of marriages that end in divorce), were obtained from studies conducted by Buerkel-Rothfuss and Mayes (1985) and Perse (1986). For each cultivation question, participants were instructed to choose the one best answer from the three answer choices. Respondents then received a particular score on each of the ten questions in accordance with their answers to the cultivation items. The scoring was determined in the following manner: those viewers who gave the "control" answer, received a score of "1" for that particular question; those subjects who chose the "real world" answer, received a score of "2"; and those participants who picked the "television" answer, received a score of "3." The aggregate scores were then used to construct a cultivation index, with 10 being the lowest possible score (viewers who were not at all "cultivated") and 30 being the highest possible score (viewers who were highly "cultivated"). The discrepancy between the respondents' answers and the actual

statistical answers--in essence, a high cultivation score versus a low one--was suggested to be a function of television exposure, viewing motivations or a combination of these two variables.

Note: The standard .05 level of significance was used consistently throughout this investigation.

CHAPTER 4

Results

Viewer Typology

Among the 286 students who participated in the study, 127 (44%) said they were soap opera viewers. The majority of the survey respondents were women (59%) between the ages of 18-25 (70%). With respect to class standing, seniors (34%) were slightly more prevalent than juniors (30%).

The typical soap opera viewer in this investigation watched an average of one episode per week of their favorite program, but 62% said they watched 1-3 hours per week. Furthermore, 53% of the subjects said they had been watching daytime serials anywhere from 1-5 years; interestingly, 62% reported that they had been watching soap operas for 10 years or more.

Viewing Motivations

The majority of soap opera viewers cited three major reasons for watching soaps: fun, boredom and relaxation (Table 1). These findings are consistent with Rubin's studies on uses and gratifications of television (1983, 1984, 1985, 1986). Two other motivations, watching soap operas to keep from being alone and watching soaps to learn about the world, were also

mentioned by the subjects; however, weak factor loadings excluded them from the analysis.

TABLE 1
Factor Loadings for Statements Describing
Soap Opera Viewing Motivations (N=127)

STATEMENTS	FACTOR 1 FUN	FACTOR 2 BORED	FACTOR 3 RELAX
because it's enjoyable	.83	-.12	.16
because they entertain me	.73	-.01	.27
because I just like to watch	.65	.00	.11
because it amuses me	.62	.03	.21
when I have nothing better to do	-.10	.71	.03
because it passes the time away, particularly when I'm bored	.01	.70	.07
because it gives me something to do to occupy my time	.18	.66	.09
just because they are there	-.15	.64	-.00
because it allows me to unwind	.25	.01	.92
to relax	.23	-.02	.68
so I can forget about school or other things	.17	.18	.57
Eigenvalue	3.79	2.64	1.37
% Variance	36.9	25.7	13.3
Alpha	.82	.79	.80

Perceived Reality

One of the goals of this investigation was to determine whether the degree of perceived reality experienced by soap opera viewers was related in some way to the cultivation effect. From a possible score of 12 on the perceived reality index, the typical soap opera viewer scored close to 7 ($M=6.91$). In addition, although few of the subjects answered "most of the time" to all four of the perceived reality questions, 71.8% answered either "most" or "some," perhaps suggesting that the majority of daytime serial viewers in this study seemed to associate some degree of reality to their favorite programs.

Cultivation

Contrary to the proposed arguments presented in this investigation, there was no significant difference in the way nonviewers ($M=20.3$) and soap opera viewers ($M=20.3$) answered the ten cultivation questions ($t(284)=.03$, $p=.98$) on the 30-point cultivation index. However, when crosstabulations compared soap opera viewers and nonviewer responses to each cultivation item, two significant differences between the groups were revealed. Viewers were more likely to choose the "tv answer" in two specific instances: when asked to estimate the percentage of housewives (Table 2) and the

percentage of people suffering mental illness (Table 3).

TABLE 2
 Crosstabulations for Viewers and Nonviewers
 by Cultivation Item #43
 (the percentage of women who are housewives)*

	Control Answer	Real World Answer	Tv Answer	N
Survey	.52	.15	.29	286
Nonviewers	.27	.28	.45	158
Viewers	.16	.27	.57	127

$$\chi^2(2) = 6.06, p = .05$$

*
 See Appendix for source of cultivation questions

TABLE 3
 Crosstabulation for Viewers and Nonviewers
 by Cultivation Item #48
 (the percentage of people who suffer from mental
 illness) *

	Control Answer	Real World Answer	Tv Answer	N
Survey	.33	.15	.22	286
Nonviewers	.22	.53	.25	159
Viewers	.13	.45	.42	127

$$\chi^2 (2) = 11.58, p = .05$$

*

See Appendix for source of cultivation answers

Secondly, when the mean cultivation scores were compared between men ($M=20.6$) and women ($M=20.2$), there was also no difference in the way the two sexes answered ($t(125)=.73$, $p = .46$).

Among the 127 soap opera viewers, 17 were designated to be "highly cultivated" because they chose the "television answer" 8 out of 10 times. Of these 17 "cultivated" individuals, 12 were female, 16 were between the ages of 18-25 and 9 were junior classmen.

Hypotheses

In an effort to establish some connection between media reality and audience effects, George Gerbner and his colleagues formulated the cultivation theory which was based on the assumption that excessive exposure to the fantasy world presented on television could eventually cause viewers to confuse the "real world" with the "television world." The present investigation has been a departure from the Gerbner et al. original cultivation hypothesis because variables other than heavy television exposure have been assumed to play a role in the cultivation process.

The first hypothesis predicted that there would be a positive relationship between the frequency of soap opera viewing and cultivation. Specifically, subjects were asked to estimate the amount of time they spent

watching daytime soap operas per week (in hours) and then their responses were correlated with their answers to the cultivation questions. There was no significant relationship between hours watched and cultivation; in fact, there was an inverse relationship between the two variables (Table 4).

The second hypothesis suggested that there would be a positive relationship between duration of soap opera viewing (i.e., the number of years watched) and cultivation. Like the first hypothesis, no significant statistical relationship was established between the two variables; instead, an inverse relationship appeared in the analysis (Table 4).

TABLE 4

Pearson Product-Moment Correlations for Total
Television Exposure, Total Soap Opera Viewing Time,
Duration of Soap Opera Viewing and Cultivation
(N=127)

	Watch Tv	Daytime	Years	Culti- vation
Watch Tv	1.0 p=***	-	-	-
Daytime	.49 p=.001	1.0 p=***	-	-
Years	.07 p=.191	.05 p=.266	1.0 p=***	-
Culti- vation	-.09 p=.150	-.10 p=.129	-.08 p=.183	1.0 p=***

Table 4 Variable Key

Watch Tv= The total amount of hours spent watching television per week

Daytime= The total amount of hours spent watching soap operas per week

Years= The total number of years spent watching soap operas

Cultivation= The cultivation index

The third hypothesis predicted that there would be a stronger relationship between ritualistic uses of soap operas and cultivation than the relationship between instrumental uses and cultivation. As previously mentioned, three primary viewing motivations were cited: fun, boredom and relaxation. In Rubin's (1984) study of ritualistic and instrumental television viewing habits, boredom and relaxation were presented as more ritualistic motives while entertainment or fun was regarded as more instrumental (p. 71). The correlations showed a significant positive relationship between boredom and cultivation, but when fun was correlated with cultivation, a significant inverse relationship was found. If Rubin's (1983) definitions of ritualistic and instrumental motives are implemented here, a partial confirmation between ritualistic uses (with the motive boredom) and cultivation does exist. However, relaxation, another motivation presented as ritualistic by Rubin, is not negatively related to cultivation--a situation which contradicts the given hypothesis. The data also reveal a significant inverse relationship between fun (an instrumental use) and cultivation; this finding does seem to confirm the third hypothesis (Table 5).

TABLE 5
 Pearson Product-Moment Correlations for Ritualistic
 and Instrumental Viewing Motivations and Cultivation
 (N=127)

	Fun	Culti- vation	Boredom	Relax
Fun	1.0 p=***	-	-	-
Culti- vation	-.18 p=.018	1.0 p=***	-	-
Boredom	-.03 p=.348	.14 p=.051	1.0 p=***	-
Relax	.41 p=.001	-.14 p=.050	.11 p=.105	1.0 p=***

Fun, boredom and relaxation were also correlated with perceived reality (Table 6). Relaxation and fun were positively associated with perceived reality, while boredom was inversely related to perceived reality. The findings also revealed an interesting positive relationship between fun and relaxation; however, the correlations between boredom and fun and relaxation and boredom were not significant (Table 6). Similarly, fun, boredom and relaxation were correlated with: 1) total amount of hours spent watching soap operas per week and, 2) the total number of years spent watching soap operas (Table 7). Watching soap operas for fun was significantly related to the number of hours spent watching soap operas per week as well as the number of years spent watching soap operas. In addition, relaxation was positively related to the number of hours spent watching soap operas per week, but not related to the number of years spent watching daytime soaps. Boredom as a motive for watching soap operas was unrelated to either viewing measure.

TABLE 6
 Pearson Product-Moment Correlations for Viewing
 Motivations and Perceived Reality (N=127)

	Fun	Boredom	Relax	Real
Fun	1.0 p=***	-	-	-
Boredom	-.03 p=.348	1.0 p=***	-	-
Relax	.41 p=.001	.11 p=.105	1.0 p=***	-
Real	.30 p=.001	-.20 p=.011	.16 p=.034	1.0 p=***

TABLE 7
 Pearson^s Product-Moment Correlations for Viewing
 Motivations, Total Soap Opera Viewing Time and
 Duration of Soap Opera Viewing (N=127)

	Fun	Boredom	Relax
Daytime	.41 p=.001	-.08 p=.181	.17 p=.023
Years	.23 p=.004	-.03 p=.333	.09 p=.141

Table 7 Variable Key

Daytime= The total amount of hours spent watching soap operas per week

Years= The total amount of years spent watching soap operas

Finally, if Rubin's definitions of ritualistic and instrumental uses are modified in this investigation (i.e., that boredom and relaxation are ritualistic motivations and that fun is an instrumental use), the third hypothesis can be interpreted in a very different way. Based upon the analysis, it seems more reasonable to assume that fun and relaxation are instrumental motives while boredom is a ritualistic use. The new classifications of ritualistic and instrumental motivations would explain the inverse relationship between relaxation and cultivation (Table 5). Specifically, if relaxation is considered to be a instrumental use rather than a ritualistic motive as defined by Rubin, then the hypothesis that instrumental viewing motives are not as strongly related to cultivation as ritualistic motives is fully supported.

The final hypothesis proposed that there would be a positive relationship between perceived reality and cultivation. No statistical relationship was found. However, three interesting positive correlations were discovered between: 1) the total amount of hours spent watching television per week and perceived reality; 2) the total amount of hours spent watching soap operas per week and perceived reality; and 3) the total number of years spent watching soap operas and perceived reality (Table 8). As previously mentioned, the perceived reality index was also significantly related

to fun, relaxation and boredom (Table 6).

TABLE 8

Pearson Product-Moment Correlations for Perceived Reality, Total Television Exposure, Total Soap Opera Viewing Time, Duration of Soap Opera Viewing and Cultivation (N=127)

	Watch Tv	Daytime	Years	Culti- vation	Real
Watch tv	1.0 p=***	-	-	-	-
Daytime	.49 p=.001	1.0 p=***	-	-	-
Years	.07 p=.191	.05 p=.266	1.0 p=***	-	-
Culti- vation	-.09 p=.150	-.10 p=.129	-.08 p=.183	1.0 p=***	-
Real	.16 p=.034	.21 p=.007	.26 p=.001	-.05 p=.476	1.0 p=***

Table 8 Variable Key

Watch Tv= the total amount of hours spent watching television per week

Daytime= the total amount of hours spent watching soap operas per week

Years= The total number of years spent watching soap operas

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

Summary and Discussion

The cultivation argument that overexposure to the fantasy life portrayed on television somehow causes viewers to confuse the "real world" with the "television world" was not supported in this investigation. However, some interesting inferences can be made as to why particular results were obtained.

By asking respondents to estimate the number of hours per week that they watched soap operas as well as the number of years they had been watching, the first and second hypotheses attempted to link total exposure with cultivation. Interestingly, negative correlations were found in both cases. When these results are taken at face value, it appears that the more often viewers watch soap operas, the less likely they are to become "cultivated." However, given the small, purposive sample of 127 soap opera viewers, the results cannot be interpreted in absolute terms. For example, the inverse relationships found in both exposure hypotheses may be a function of the narrow demographic sample of college students used in this study. In future investigations, these negative correlations should be confirmed using a larger sample frame and broader demographic characteristics.

The third hypothesis, that ritualistic viewing motivations will be more strongly related to cultivation than instrumental uses, can be interpreted in two different ways depending upon the definition of ritualistic and instrumental motives. For instance, if Rubin's assumption that relaxation and boredom are ritualistic motivations and fun is an instrumental one, then the third hypothesis is only partially supported by the positive correlation found between boredom and cultivation. However, if Rubin's assumptions are challenged, then a case can be made to support the third hypothesis. For example, Rubin defined instrumental viewing motives as "goal-directed use of media content" in contrast to ritualistic motives which are "habitualized use of the medium to gratify diversionary needs." (Rubin ,1984, p. 69). It can be argued that relaxation is an instrumental motive since viewers are making an active, conscious decision as why they are watching soap operas. In addition, this revised perspective would better explain the strong correlation found between relaxation and fun that did not exist between boredom and relaxation (which, according to Rubin, were both ritualistic motivations). Moreover, the inverse relationships found between relaxation and cultivation and fun and cultivation would confirm the third hypothesis that instrumental motivations are not as strongly related to cultivation as ritualistic

motivations.

Perhaps the most important findings of this study are related to the perceived reality measure. Although no correlation was found to exist between perceived reality and cultivation, perceived reality was significantly related to the all three exposure measures: total amount of hours spent watching television per week, the total amount of time spent watching soap operas and the total number of years spent watching soap operas, as well as to all three viewing motivations--relaxation, boredom and fun. In essence, the findings suggest that viewers who are frequent consumers of television, and specifically soap operas, and who watch daytime serials for long periods of time (when measured in years) are far more likely to perceive the characters, situations and problems portrayed on soap operas as being real. Moreover, viewers who watch for fun, relaxation or out of boredom also appear more likely to perceive soap operas as being realistic. The fact that the intended use is instrumental or ritualistic does not seem to affect the relationship between viewing motivations and perceived reality.

It is clear that the cultivation measures used in this study were not successful in revealing a "cultivation effect." In formulating the cultivation questions, every attempt was made to represent the various stereotypes that are typical of daytime serials;

however, it is possible that the specific cultivation questions used or the way in which the cultivation items were calculated were inappropriate or unreliable methods of measuring viewer perceptions of reality. Indeed, the degree of perceived reality experienced by the viewer appears to hold the most promise for understanding the relationship between media reality and viewer influences. The conclusion that might be drawn based on the findings of this study, is that the degree of reality a viewer associates with television says more about his/her perception of the world than does the ability to choose the "tv answer" over the "real world" statistic. In sum, it seems that perceived reality is a better measure of viewer perceptions and attitudes than is cultivation.

Limitations of the Study

The sample was purposely drawn from a population of students at San Jose State University, San Jose, California. Because this investigation was exploratory in nature, the demographic variances in the sample were too narrow to draw generalized conclusions. Instead, only broad inferences can be formulated from the results.

Directions for Future Research

Although this investigation failed to uncover any significant relationships to support the cultivation hypothesis, it is clear that more research is needed in order to determine whether cultivation is a valid media-effects argument. The results in this study were limited by the sample of college students; however, if this investigation were to be replicated using a broader demographic sample, it is possible that different conclusions would be drawn.

The importance of using multiple variables in testing cultivation theory cannot be overemphasized; the archaic notion that overexposure is the only criterion for cultivation is naive and unrealistic. In this investigation, viewing motivations and perceived reality, in conjunction with total exposure, were assumed to be predictors of cultivation. However, other factors which have not been considered here, such as viewer disposition (i.e., life satisfaction, self image) and program affinity, may also be related to cultivation. In addition, the diversity of media content should be scrutinized in future studies since it seems possible that certain types of programming (i.e., soap operas versus game shows) could have different effects on audience members. Finally, the ritualistic or instrumental use of the medium also demands further

examination. More research is needed to determine whether the intended use of television is somehow related to viewer perceptions of reality.

However, in light of the results found in this investigation, future researchers may want to consider abandoning the cultivation theory altogether. To illustrate, viewing motivations and total exposure were found to be strongly related to perceived reality, but not to cultivation. Consequently, it seems reasonable to assume that if viewers are perceiving soap opera characters, situations and problems as being real, then the content itself must be having some "effect" on their perceptions of reality. Whether researchers can actually test the nature of these perceptions is an area that certainly warrants further investigation. Nevertheless, the application of perceived reality to the audience effects hypothesis should not be overlooked. In sum, the contradictory nature of past cultivation studies suggests that mass communication scholars need to find alternative methods to better understand the link between perceived media reality and audience effects.

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APPENDICES

Q U E S T I O N N A I R E

KEEPING YOUR FAVORITE PROGRAM IN MIND, PLEASE INDICATE HOW WELL THE STATEMENTS BELOW DESCRIBE YOUR REASONS FOR WATCHING DAYTIME SOAP OPERAS. FOR EACH STATEMENT, PLEASE ANSWER EITHER "VERY WELL," "SOMEWHAT WELL," OR "NOT WELL." PLEASE GIVE ONLY THE ONE BEST ANSWER TO EACH QUESTION BY PLACING A CHECK MARK UNDER THE APPROPRIATE COLUMN. IF YOU ARE NOT A SOAP OPERA VIEWER, PLEASE SKIP OVER TO PAGE 3 AND BEGIN THE QUESTIONNAIRE WITH ITEM #32.

I watch my favorite soap opera(s)	Very (3)	Some (2)	Not (1)
1) to relax	----	----	----
2) so I don't have to be alone	----	----	----
3) when I have nothing better to do	----	----	----
4) just because they are there	----	----	----
5) because they entertain me	----	----	----
6) because they help me learn about myself and others	----	----	----
7) because it is something to do when my friends come over	----	----	----
8) because they are thrilling	----	----	----
9) so I can forget about school or other things	----	----	----
10) because it allows me to unwind	----	----	----
11) when there is no one else to talk to or be with	----	----	----

I watch my favorite soap opera(s)	Very (3)	Some (2)	Not (1)
12) because I just like to watch	----	----	----
13) because it passes the time away, particularly when I'm bored	----	----	----
14) because it's enjoyable	----	----	----
15) so I can talk with other people about what is going on	----	----	----
16) so I can learn how to do things which I haven't done before	----	----	----
17) because it's exciting	----	----	----
18) so I can get away from the rest of the family or others	----	----	----
19) because it's a pleasant rest	----	----	----
20) because it makes me feel less lonely	----	----	----
21) because it's a habit, just something that I do	----	----	----
22) because it gives me something to do to occupy my time	----	----	----
23) because it amuses me	----	----	----
24) so I can be with other members of the family or friends who are watching	----	----	----
25) so I can learn about what could happen to me	----	----	----

I watch my favorite soap opera(s)	Very (3)	Some (2)	Not (1)
26) because it peps me up	----	----	----
27) so I can get away from what I'm doing	----	----	----

FOR ITEMS 28-31, PLEASE ANSWER EITHER "MOST," "SOME,"
OR "NONE" BY PLACING A CHECK MARK UNDER THE APPROPRIATE
COLUMN.

	Most (3)	Some (2)	None (1)
28) How many of the problems that people have on soap operas are realistic?	----	----	----
29) How many of the people on soap operas are typical of real people?	----	----	----
30) How many of the situations people find themselves in on soap operas are realistic?	----	----	----
31) How many of the problems on soap operas are solved in realistic ways?	----	----	----

NOTE: FOR THOSE SURVEY PARTICIPANTS WHO DO NOT WATCH
DAYTIME SOAP OPERAS, PLEASE BEGIN THE QUESTIONNAIRE HERE
WITH ITEM #32 AND CONTINUE TO THE END. SOAP OPERA
VIEWERS SHOULD PLEASE CONTINUE TO THE END.

- 32) In a typical week, about how many hours do you spend
watching tv? (record 0 if none or the nearest whole
number if more)
- 33) In a typical week, about how many hours do you spend
watching daytime soap operas? (record 0 if none or the
nearest whole number if more)

- 34) If you do watch daytime soap operas, please indicate how many years you've been watching (record 0 if none or the nearest whole number if more)
- 35) From the list of soap operas, please circle the number of episodes you watch in a typical week. (IF YOU DO NOT WATCH DAYTIME SOAP OPERAS, PLEASE ANSWER 0 TO EACH ITEM).

<u>Soap Opera</u>	<u>Episodes watched per week</u>					
All My Children	0	1	2	3	4	5
Another World	0	1	2	3	4	5
As the World Turns	0	1	2	3	4	5
The Bold and the Beautiful	0	1	2	3	4	5
Days of Our Lives	0	1	2	3	4	5
General Hospital	0	1	2	3	4	5
Guiding Light	0	1	2	3	4	5
Loving	0	1	2	3	4	5
One Life to Live	0	1	2	3	4	5
Santa Barbara	0	1	2	3	4	5
The Young and the Restless	0	1	2	3	4	5

- 36) Please indicate your sex by circling the appropriate category:
1) Male 2) Female
- 37) Please indicate your age by circling the appropriate category:
1) 18-25
2) 26-35
3) 36-45
4) 46-55
5) 56-65
6) over 65

PLEASE CONTINUE QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE NEXT PAGE

38) Please indicate your class standing by circling the appropriate category:

- 1) Freshman
- 2) Sophomore
- 3) Junior
- 4) Senior
- 5) Graduate

TO THE BEST OF YOUR ABILITY, PLEASE ESTIMATE THE ANSWERS TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS. PLEASE CHOOSE ONLY THE ONE BEST ANSWER.

39) The percentage of marriages that end in divorce.

- 1) 75%
- 2) 47%
- 3) 22%

40) The percentage of doctors who are women.

- 1) 25%
- 2) 14%
- 3) 19%

41) The percentage of lawyers who are women.

- 1) 22%
- 2) 13%
- 3) 7%

42) The percentage of illegitimate births in a year.

- 1) 40%
- 2) 22%
- 3) 66%

43) The percentage of women who are housewives.

- 1) 52%
- 2) 15%
- 3) 29%

44) The percentage of doctors who are men.

- 1) 70%
- 2) 85%
- 3) 81%

45) The percentage of lawyers who are men.

- 1) 60%
- 2) 87%
- 3) 93%

46) The percentage of blue-collar workers in the U.S. (i.e., construction workers, mechanics, factory workers, ect)

- 1) 20%
- 2) 32%
- 3) 6%

47) The percentage of people who die from violent deaths in a year (i.e., car accidents, fires, drownings, ect.)

- 1) 46%
- 2) 39%
- 3) 65%

48) The percentage of people who suffer from mental illness.

- 1) 33%
- 2) 15%
- 3) 22%

APPENDIX B.

The cultivation section of the survey consisted of 10 questions, each containing three multiple choice categories. For reasons of simplicity, answer 1 was designated as the "other" answer (best described as the control answer), answer 2 was the "real world" answer and answer 3 was the "tv answer."

34) The percentage of marriages that end in divorce.

- 1) 66% (the control answer).
- 2) 47% (the "real answer" found in the Statistical Abstract of the United States (1988). Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census, p. 83).

Calculation:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Total Divorces} &= \frac{1,169}{2,477} = 47\% \\ \text{Total Marriages} &= 2,477\end{aligned}$$

- 3) 22% (the "tv answer" found in Katzman, N. (1972). Television soap operas: What's been going on, anyway? Public Opinion Quarterly, 36, p. 208)

39) The percentage of doctors who are women.

- 1) 25% (the control answer).
- 2) 15% (the "real answer" found in Statistical Abstracts of the United States (1988). Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census, p. 95). 14.6% was the cited number but the figure was rounded up to the nearest whole number).
- 3) 19% (the "tv answer" was found in Greenberg, S., Nuerendorf, K., Buerkel-Rothfuss, N. & Henderson, L. (1982). What's going on and who cares? Journal of Broadcasting, 26 (2), p. 526).

Calculation:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Female Doctors cited in study} &= \frac{11}{58} = 19\% \\ \text{Total Doctors cited in study} &= 58\end{aligned}$$

40) The percentage of lawyers who are women.

- 1) 22% (control answer).
- 2) 13% (the "real answer" found in Statistical Abstract of the United States (1988). Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census, p. 170).

Calculation:

$$\begin{array}{lcl} \text{Female Lawyers Reported} & = & \frac{85,542}{655,191} = 13\% \\ \text{Total Number of All Lawyers} & = & \end{array}$$

- 3) 7% (the "tv answer" found in Greenberg, S., Nuerendorf, K., Buerkel-Rothfuss, N. & Henderson, L. (1982). The soaps: What's going on and who cares? Journal of Broadcasting, 26 (2), p. 526).

Calculation:

$$\begin{array}{lcl} \text{Female Lawyers cited in study} & = & \frac{2}{28} = 7\% \\ \text{Total Number of Lawyers cited in study} & = & \end{array}$$

41) The percentage of illegitimate births in a year.

- 1) 40% (the control answer)
- 2) 22% (the "real answer" found in Statistical Abstract of the United States (1988). Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Census, p. 62).
- 3) 66% (the "tv answer" found in Ramsdell, M.L. (1973). The trauma of tv's troubled soap families. Family Coordinator 22, p. 301).

42) The percentage of women who are housewives.

- 1) 40% (the control answer)
- 2) 14% (the "real world" answer found in The World Almanac and the Book of Facts (1989). New York: Pharos Books, p. 157).

Calculation:

Total Civilian Labor Force + Total Not in Labor Force
Wives + Women Who Maintain Families (under "Keeping House Category)

$$\begin{array}{rcl} 18,407 + 2,840 & = & \underline{21,247} = 14\% \\ 97.775 + 50,127 & = & 147,882 \end{array}$$

- 3) 29.5% (the "tv world" answer found in Downing, M. (1974). Heroine of the daytime serial. Journal of Communication, 24 (2), p. 133).

- 43) The percentage of doctors who are men.

- 1) 60% (the control answer)
- 2) 85% (the "real world" answer was found in the Statistical Abstract of the United States (1988). Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census, p. 95). The actual figure was rounded down from 85.4% to 85%).
- 3) 81% (the "tv answer" found in Greenberg, S., Nuerendorf, K., Buerkel-Rothfuss, N., & Henderson, L. (1982). The soaps: What's going on and who cares? Journal of Broadcasting, 26 (2), p. 526).

Calculation:

$$\begin{array}{rcl} \text{Male Doctors Cited in Study} & = & \underline{47} = 81\% \\ \text{Total Doctors cited in Study} & = & 58 \end{array}$$

- 44) The percentage of lawyers who are men.

- 1) 60% (the control answer)
- 2) 87% (the "real world" answer from Statistical Abstract of the United States (1988). Washington D.C.:U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census, p. 170).

Calculation:

$$\begin{array}{rcl} \text{Number of Male Lawyers} & = & \underline{569,649} = 87\% \\ \text{Total Number of Lawyers} & & 655,191 \end{array}$$

- 3) 93% (the "tv answer" from Greenberg, S., Nuerendorf, K., Buerkel-Rothfuss, N., Henderson, L. (1982). The Soaps: What's going on and who cares? Journal of Broadcasting, 26 (2), p. 526).

Calculation:

$$\begin{array}{rcl} \text{Male Lawyers Cited in Study} & & \underline{26} = 93\% \\ \text{Total Number of Lawyers in Study} & & 28 \end{array}$$

- 45) The percentage of blue-collar workers in the U.S.
- 1) 20% (the control answer)
 - 2) 32% (the "real world" answer from Statistical Abstract of the United States (1988). Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census, p. 394).

Calculation

Precision Production Workers Category (mechanics and repairers, construction trades and other miscellaneous jobs) was added to the Operators, Fabricators and Laborers Category (machine operators, assemblers, inspectors, transportation and moving materials, handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, laborers, farming, fishing and forestry) and then divided by the total number of full-time wage and salary workers for 1986 to come up with the 32% figure for blue collar workers.

$$10,851 + 14,342 \text{ divided by } 78,727 = 32\%$$

- 3) 6% (the "tv world" answer from Katzman, N. (1972). Television soap operas: What's been going on anyway? Public Opinion Quarterly, 36, p. 209).
- 46) The percentage of people who die from violent deaths in a year (i.e., car accidents, fires, drownings, ect.)
- 1) 46% (the control answer)
 - 2) 39% (the "real world" answer from Statistical Abstract of the United States (1988). Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census, p. 82).
 - 3) 65% (the "tv world" answer from Cassata, M.B., Skill, T.D., & Boadu, S.O. (1979). In sickness and in health. Journal of Communication, 29, p. 76).
- 47) The percentage of people who suffer from mental illness.
- 1) 33% (the control answer).

- 2) 15% (the "real world" answer from Wickelgren, I., Firming the figures on mental illness, Science News, November 12, 1988, p. 311).
- 3) 22% (the "tv world" answer from Cassata, M.B., Skill, T.D., & Boadu, S.O. (1979). In sickness and in health. Journal of Communication, 29, p. 75).

Calculation:

Total occurrences of psychiatric disorders cited divided
by Total occurrences of diseases by the organ system +
health conditions

$$\frac{25}{112} = 22\%$$