Personality in Intimate Relationships

Socialization and Psychopathology

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To Peggy, my beautiful wife, best friend, amusing muse, faithful companion, competent collaborator, articulate colleague, unwavering and adamant supporter, and fearless critic, whose nurturing love gave ample space to my work in more ways than one.

Preface

"*Under whatever disciplinary flag, however, someone will always ask how individuals are different from each other, how behavior changes, how people perceive, think, and plan, how people experience reality, and even what might be going on in the regions of the mind usually hidden from view. The basic questions of personality psychology will simply not go away* (Funder, 2001, p. 216)."

The purpose of this work is to update, expand, examine, and evaluate a developmental, relational, and contextual theory of personality socialization and psychopathology in intimate and nonintimate relationships, family, friends, and other settings, namely: home, school/work, and surplus/leisure time activities (L'Abate, 1976, 1986, 1990, 1994, 1997, 2002, 2003a; L'Abate & De Giacomo, 2003). By intimate is meant relationships that are close, committed, interdependent, and prolonged. By close is meant relationships that are bound by emotional, physical, financial, legal, generational, and practical ties. By committed is meant a belief that the relationship will survive and that both partners and family members are involved in it reciprocally and mutually. By interdependent is meant that members of the unit, whatever that unit may be, have to depend on each other for survival and enjoyment. By prolonged is meant relationships that have been preserved and have survived the passage and test of time.

By the same token, nonintimate relationships are distant, spatially and temporally, uncommitted, by blood, or by any other means, short-lived and superficial, where other relationships are available to satisfy dependency needs. Closeness, commitment, interdependence, and prolongation in no way imply the level of functionality in a relationship. Satisfaction in a relationship may well be independent from those four characteristics. One could be close, committed, and interdependent for a prolonged period of

time and feel perfectly miserable in the relationship or the relationship itself could be eminently dysfunctional. As we shall find out in the course of this work, other factors account for the level of functionality in a relationship (Le & Agnew, 2003).

In the past, the family has been thought of as the major context for socialization in the development of functionality and dysfunctionality. As Phares (1996) has amply demonstrated in her monumental review, the level of functionality in fathers, and, by the same token, in mothers, relates (dares one to say causes?) to functionality and dysfunctionality in their offspring. With exceptions, functional parents or caretakers tend to produce functionality in their children. With exceptions, dysfunctionality in parents or caretakers tends to produce dysfunctionality in their children. Here, dysfunctionality will be viewed on a continuum ranging from levels of functionality, to levels of semifunctionality, as in personality disorders, and to levels of psychopathology, as in dissociation, severe depression, bipolar disorder, criminality, and psychopathology.

Following a theoretical framework close to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual-IV (DSM-IV; American Psychiatric Association, 1994), however, the classification used here will show continuity and contiguity between superior functionality and severe psychopathology. The discrete categories of the DSM-IV will be expressed into continuous, and when possible, relational dimensions, using prototypes to define extremes of each dimension (Kirmayer & Young, 1999), with functionality in the middle of each dimension. Criminality, dysfunctionality, and psychopathology may arise from genetic and hereditary factors. However, here the influence of socialization in intimate relationships will be stressed, even though there is no denying the influence of earlier factors.

The concept of intimate relationships instead of "family" is used here because the family as an intact unit or system is no longer tenable. Only circa 25% of domiciles in the United States are composed of a traditionally intact family, two long-married parents and two children. The rest are composed of single individuals, single parents, remarried couples and step-families, same sex couples, children raised by grandparents and by foster parents. Even though some units can be called "families" because its members all live under the same roof, this term has become relative. Although the term "family" might sometimes be used in this work, one should understand that family could also stand for "alternative" or "substitute" intimate relationships of the type mentioned above.

Indeed, in the past generation, the role of close friendships has taken over emotional and practical roles that were heretofore allocated to the family (Fehr, 1996). These relationships do have in common, in varying degrees and in varying qualities, some degree of closeness, some degree of

commitment, some degree of interdependence, and some degree of prolongation. Whether these four characteristics are necessary and sufficient remains to be seen throughout the pages of this work. Instead of the nuclear family as traditionally conceived, many alternatives and substitutes have assumed the same function, perhaps with a much greater degree of choice and freedom than may have existed in the past. In some cases, such as grandparents taking care of grandchildren, this is not a choice but a forced duty fostered by the inadequacy or absence of parental caretakers. Nonetheless, these alternatives indicate how important intimate relationships are, regardless of legal or traditional blood ties.

This theory can be evaluated through systematic administration of paper-and-pencil, self-report tests in the laboratory, enrichment programs in primary prevention, self-help, mental health workbooks in secondary prevention, and specific, theory-derived tasks and prescriptions in tertiary prevention or psychotherapy. Previous works cited above and various papers and chapters reviewed and summarized the nature of this theory with the evidence to support its validity and usefulness current at the time. However, more evidence needs to be added to expand and update the theory. Unless necessary, previous publications will not be mentioned again in this work. Serious limitations of space reduced significantly the number of primary references (originally over 2,000!) used to support most statements made in the course of this work. Many references supporting each statement had to be erased. They are retained when there could be a challenge to statements made here. In spite of necessary selectivity in choosing references, the most significant and recent ones are cited.

The major feature of this version is to focus in greater detail on the nature of models derived from the theory. Hence, this work deals with links between personality and intimate relationships, not in opposition but, if valid, in continuity with evidence gathered from contrived, short-lived, and superficial laboratory findings and applications of models of the theory in evaluation, and primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention approaches. To support the validity of theoretical models, in addition to self-report, paper-and-pencils tests, and preventive interventions, a great many references have been used way beyond what might be required. The main reason for such an inordinate number of references is to bolster the validity of each model and its allocation and placement within the DSM-IV framework. One could say that the theory attempts to provide a conceptual framework for a psychiatric classification found in the DSM-IV that, as a whole, lacks one. Consequently, it is crucial to summarize as much evidence as one can find to support such an allocation and placement, showing how the theory is isomorphic with the reality of functionality in continuity with dysfunctionality, criminality, and psychopathology, as viewed by the DSM-IV and its successors.

This theory has also been called "developmental competence theory" in past versions. Linking theory with evaluation and with specific interventions is difficult if not impossible to achieve when interventions take place verbally. This link is much easier to achieve when repeatable operations derived directly from the theory itself, through writing in the laboratory, with paper-and-pencil, self-report tests, or through repeatable interventions in three prevention approaches, primary, secondary, and tertiary. This link is relatively easier to obtain if the theory is evaluated with test instruments derived directly from the theory as well as by test instruments or interventions indirectly or independently related to the theory itself. A unique characteristic of this theory, for instance, is to suggest and show how self-help workbooks are and can become a way of evaluating models of the theory. Consequently, in addition to workbooks derived from previous versions of this theory, the whole theory is summarized into a parenting workbook available online with other workbooks (L'Abate, 1996). Workbooks can be used alone or in conjunction with primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention approaches. In preventive settings, models of the theory can be evaluated through structured enrichments programs in primary prevention, self-administered workbooks in secondary prevention, and therapeutic tasks in tertiary prevention. All of the above is in writing and it is reproducible, and therefore, replicable. This process cannot be achieved as easily through talk.

This theory proposes that hurt feelings and their avoidance are at the bottom of personality socialization in intimate relationships. Most, if not all, hurt feelings are produced within the context of intimate relationships. Even though other contexts (school/work, surplus leisure time) are important, *how* hurt feelings are experienced and expressed throughout the life cycle depends a great deal on how we learn to experience and to express them from our families of origin and past intimate relationships. Hurt feelings, however, are like the heart of an artichoke. One needs to peel off all the leaves and the choke (of anger and rage!) before getting to its heart, where hurt feelings are kept, and oftentimes remain, jealously and rigidly, unexpressed. Consequently, one needs to examine and to evaluate the validity and usefulness of looking at hurt feelings as being basic to personality socialization in functional and dysfunctional relationships.

Hurt feelings are still a taboo topic that has been bypassed or even ignored by many personality theorists, personal relationships experts, as well as by many therapists. Synonymous circumlocutions, like "distress," "trauma," "grief," or "negative feelings," have been used instead. Intimacy, the sharing of hurts and of fears to being hurt, has not been considered in many theoretical and therapeutic treatises until recently, thanks to the work of Pennebaker (2001) on expressive writing.

To support the isomorphy between theory and psychiatric classification, another feature of this book consists of using prototypes of personality disorders, as well as criminality and severe psychopathology to illustrate extremes that define dimensions related to specific models. For instance, an extreme of approach in a dimension of distance and the ability to love (Ch. 7) would be dependent and symbiotic personalities from Axis II, Cluster C. Gradual increases in the opposite side of avoidance in the same dimension of distance would be procrastination, social anxiety, social phobia, and in the extreme, the avoidant personality.

The extreme in the dimension of control (Ch. 8) and the ability to negotiate, bargain, and problem-solve (Ch. 17) would be discharge, as exhibited by impulsive and acting out personalities in Axis II, Cluster B. At the other extreme of delay in the same dimension, one could place the personality disorders from Axis II, Cluster C. Thus, an attempt will be made to illustrate each theory-derived dimension by prototypic examples of how that dimension is defined at opposite ends, initially by gradual extremes in personality disorders, and eventually, those disorders will be related to severe psychopathology, depression, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia (Ch. 12).

OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK

The introductory Chapter 1 reviews critically the nature of a theory and the fragmentation among diverse fields of personality, social psychology, personal relationships, developmental psychology, family therapy, and sociology of the family as far as intimate relationships are concerned. In their fragmentation from each other, they are continually ignoring deviant relationships, criminality, and psychopathology, as well as preventive and therapeutic applications to help change those very deviant relationships. Deviant relationships and preventive and therapeutic applications will be reviewed in their relevance to each model of the theory, summarized in one table.

Part I is devoted to the two necessary and possibly sufficient requirements for this or any theory. Chapter 2 focuses on one requirement for a theory of this nature, that is, reducibility from known, usually monadic psychological to relational constructs, proffering the thesis that most constructs dealing with relationships are already present in the extant psychological literature. However, they need to be viewed within the context of relationships rather than individually. Rather than using intrapsychic, mentalistic concepts or external behavioral concepts in a vacuum from their natural contexts, intimate and nonintimate relationships are the focus of this work. Intimate relationships, as already defined above, are usually called "communal." These ties, however, are not found in usually short-lived, superficial, nonintimate,

commercial, i.e., "exchange," relationships. Emphasis is placed on "relationships" rather than on "mind" or even "behavior," since behavior is the outcome of relationships among individuals as well as between individuals and objects in various settings and specific contexts.

Chapter 3 expands on the empiricist's credo that it is better to be specific and be *found* wrong or inaccurate on the basis of evidence gathered by those who are external to the theory, rather than being generally vague and claim to be right without evidence or, on faith, personal opinion, or on opportunistic whim or will. This position focuses on accountability as the second *conditio sine qua non* for developing a theory of personality in its natural contexts, the family, intimate relationships, and other settings. The theory, however, is broken down into models to make it more specific and more verifiable.

Part II summarizes the three metatheoretical assumptions of the theory, that is, assumptions that go above and beyond the theory itself, representing and summarizing past theories and views. Chapter 4 covers the horizontality of relationships according to their width, following an information processing model that includes five component resources of Emotionality, Rationality, Activity, Awareness, and Context (the ERAAwC Model[1]). Chapter 5 covers verticality, the depth dimension of relationships according to descriptive and explanatory levels and sublevels. Chapter 6 reviews the nature of settings according to a classification that distinguishes where intimate relationships take place, mostly in the home. Nonintimate relationships take place in school/work and leisure or surplus time settings necessary for survival as well as in settings that are not only necessary for survival but also for enjoyment.

Part III covers the two assumptions of the theory proper through two *processes*: the ability to love, and the ability to negotiate. An extra postulate about contents that mediate assumptions with the models of the theory proper is necessary. Chapter 7 stresses the ability to love, where space deals with *distance*, how close or how far people are and stay from each other. Here is where prototypes from Cluster C (in the DSM-IV) will be used to define extreme ends of this dimension. Chapter 8 covers time as viewed in the dimension of *control* basic to the ability to negotiate, how fast or how slow people respond to or with each other. Here is where prototypes from Cluster B will be used to define extremes of this dimension. Chapter 9 is the extra postulate necessary to deal with the *contents* of what is being exchanged, the three modalities of Being, Doing, and Having. Prototypes from both Clusters B and C will be used here. However, some prototypes not included in either cluster or even the DSM-IV classification will be added to demonstrate the continuity of each dimension rather than discrete categories without continuity or contiguity.

Part IV covers four major models derived from the metatheoretical assumptions as well as the two assumptions and postulate of the theory proper. Chapter 10 expands on the developmental continuum of likeness that was not as developed in past writings as it is here. This chapter shows how this continuum is basic to identity formation and differentiation, as it develops from the assumptions of the theory. Chapter 11 covers three major relational styles that derive directly from the likeness continuum and that describe intimate relationships, a functional one, two semifunctional, and a dysfunctional. Chapter 12 expands on the major model of the theory, selfhood, with its four personality propensities. The major implication of this model lies in its classification of functional intimate relationships seen in contiguity and continuity with dysfunctional ones, such as criminality, affective, psychosomatic, and addictive disorders as well as more extreme psychopathologies. Therefore, this chapter elaborates on this comprehensive (some would call it grandiose!) classification to detail even further how mental and behavioral disorders (listed in the DSM-IV) can be viewed as extremes of this model, along two orthogonal dimensions: (1) vertically, functionalities/dysfunctionalities, and (2) horizontally, externalizations/internalizations. Chapter 13 deals with priorities, a construct that derives from the assumption of importance basic to emotional and economical survival and enjoyment. One cannot love and negotiate without being well differentiated in identity and selfhood and having functional rather than dysfunctional priorities (self, partner, children, parents, etc.).

Part V includes chapters that are direct derivations and applications from the previous four chapters. For instance, Chapter 14 is an expansion of Chapter 7 to show how we regulate distance to avoid confronting hurt feelings. Chapter 15 is an expansion of previous models in Chapters 10 and 11 that cover the universal triad of Savior, Persecutor, and Victim as the beginning of dysfunctional relationships. Chapter 16 is an expansion of Chapter 12 to cover intimacy as the sharing of joys and hurts and of fears of being hurt, arguing that we are all needy, fallible, and vulnerable to hurt feelings, either in producing or in receiving them from loved ones. Chapter 17 deals with the structure and process of negotiation and problem solving, as derived from previous models, and especially the ERAAwC Model[1] in Chapter 4. Chapter 18 included a grand model including and integrating all the previous models, proposing also a comparison of the selfhood model from Chapter 12 with other models independent of the theory.

In the concluding Part VI, Chapter 19 summarizes up-to-date evidence to support models of the theory, while Chapter 20 prognosticates about how this theory may supersede traditional, *in vacuum* theories that have considered personality development and socialization as taking place apart from relationships with intimates, other human beings, or even objects.

Separate appendices available online (L'Abate, 1996) contain information necessary to support the theory. Appendix A contains a list of workbooks designed to evaluate various models of the theory in an interactive fashion. Appendix B contains items and scoring information to administer the Relational Answers Questionnaire (RAQ), developed by Mario Cusinato and his students at the University of Padua, to measure components of the ERAAwC model (Ch. 4). Appendix C contains a way to measure Likeness in intimate relationships (Ch. 10). Appendix D contains a Planned Parenting workbook, completely derived from the theory itself, available to evaluate the theory in clinics as well as in interactive laboratory and Internet applications.

INTENDED AUDIENCE FOR THIS BOOK

Who would be interested in a book of this kind? Hopefully, graduate courses in personality development and abnormal psychology classes should be interested in a more relational, contextual theory that is testable not only in the laboratory, but also in clinical and nonclinical settings. Mental health professionals, either preventers or therapists, as well as researchers, will be able to apply a theory with nonclinical and clinical applications by making the theory isomorphic with the DSM-IV. Since the theory links individuals with intimate relationships as well as with settings in which they live, individual, couple, and family therapists might be interested in a theory of this kind. This theory no longer looks at personality development in *a vacuum*, as personality has been viewed traditionally, but where it matters, in intimate relationships and in specific settings.

This theory breaks new theoretical, preventive, and therapeutic grounds that were not present in existing theories or therapies, that is: connecting theory with practice and developing specific and replicable ways and means to evaluate the theory and its outcome on hurting and troubled people. In the laboratory, the theory has been tested through paper-and-pencil, self-report tests (available in previous publications) that have been developed directly from the theory over the past 20 years of my academic tenure and retirement, as well as by my major collaborator, Mario Cusinato from the University of Padua, and his students. These instruments can be used as before-after measures to evaluate the outcome of theory-related or theory-independent interventions in primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention approaches (L'Abate, 1996).

Luciano L'Abate
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Contents

Chapter 1

Background for a Theory of Personality Socialization in Intimate Relationships and Psychopathology

"The creation of models is a mainstay of the scientific mind-set. . . . The idea is to capture the critical feature or essence of an otherwise slippery or complex phenomenon . . . the overall picture of a system (Greenfield, 2000, p. 21)."

"Intimate relationships are intense interactions, by definition, with emotions weaving through each interaction and often contributing heat to any light that cognition may shed (Sinnott, 2002, p. 229)."

The purpose of this chapter is to consider and review the background for a theory of personality socialization in intimate relationships, the family, and other settings. This background also includes a review of the considerable fragmentation that exists among various theoretical frameworks about personality socialization, a summary of the theory with past efforts to evaluate it in the laboratory and other settings, and look at workbooks as vehicles of theory/model evaluation.

THE ROLE OF THEORY IN MODEL CONSTRUCTION

American psychological literature, especially most peer-reviewed publications sanctioned and supported by the American Psychological Association,

is either devoid of theory or theory takes a second place to emphasis on small, repeatable experimental designs that bypass or ignore theory testing and discourage theory building (Omer & Dar, 1992). At best modest models are created without relationship to a larger, more encompassing theory. One does not receive a Ph.D. degree or obtain research grants to develop a theory. Both degrees and grants are given on the basis of empirical evidence or the need to obtain results based on some kind of evidence around small, researchable topics. Hence, theory construction, unless based on empirical evidence, is relegated to a secondary position, if not ignored altogether. As discussed further in Chapter 3, small and specific models can be evaluated. Large and vague theories are difficult if not impossible to evaluate. This is the reason why this theory has been broken down into smaller, more manageable models, each with its own matching way to evaluate itself.

Research without Theory

This conclusion is too important and relevant to leave without some support. In the first place, the same charge has been made by Baumeister and Tice (2001) in their criticism of the literature on sex research. While theory was paramount to psychological science, that no longer seems the case. Schore (2003), for instance, agrees with the foregoing conclusion: "In the life sciences, there has been almost an aversion to overarching theoretical schemas (p. xv)."

In the second place, Bergman, Magnusson, and El-Khourn (2003) commented on the same conclusion in developmental science:

> "Too often, developmental research is caught in the prison of piecemeal theories and/or sophisticated statistical models and methods, without the necessary reference to proper analysis of the phenomena at the appropriate level. . . . The remedy of this situation is the acceptance and application of research strategies in which empirical studies on specific developmental issues are planned, implemented, and interpreted with explicit reference to an overriding, common theoretical framework (p. 6)."

In the third place, Omer and Dar (1992) reviewed 252 empirical studies of psychotherapy published in the *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* in the years 1967/1968, 1977/1978, and 1987/1988. Articles were rated on their theoretical relevance, clinical validity, and methodology. These authors found that the major trend over the period of time was a decline in theory-guided and a rise in pragmatic, clinically oriented research. After highlighting the disadvantages of a purely empirical approach to psychotherapy research, Omen and Dar distinguished between the different purposes of pragmatic versus theory-driven research. The former is oriented toward

the solution of immediate human problems. The latter is oriented toward understanding the complexity of human problems before attempting to solve them. Jensen (1999) stressed the need for linking practice with theory and research, adding:

> "Evolving theories of behavior have several characteristics in common; namely: that they are developmental, transactional, contextual, malaptational, multilevel, and multidetermined (p. 553)."

Hopefully, this theory will join other theories in sharing the common characteristics listed by Jensen. What this theory will not join lies in his stress on intimate "relationships" rather than "behavior."

As we shall see below, the strategy of this work is to link theoretical models to *replicable* operations, such as: (1) specific paper-and-pencil, self-report tests; (2) to written-down enrichment programs for couples and families in primary prevention (L'Abate & Weinstein, 1987; L'Abate & Young, 1987); or (3) self-help workbooks in secondary prevention, and (4) specific therapeutic tasks. To be replicable, an operation must be written down for ease of application, as in the case of all the methods listed above.

In the fourth place, most textbooks on personality and personality theories are stuck in reporting and reviewing the old, tired, sometimes tried, and questionably true, monadic and a-contextual theories of personality, repeatedly from one textbook to another, the individual without or outside the context of intimate relationships (Cervone & Mischel, 2002; Feist & Feist, 2002; Hogan, Johnson, & Briggs, 1997; Mischel, 2004; Pervin & John, 1999). The sole exception to this conclusion is Bowlby's attachment model (Kenny & Barton, 2002; Schore, 2003), that has dominated a great deal of the psychological literature in the past decade. However, this model has not yet filtered down to most textbooks on personality theory cited above, or even couple evaluation treatises (Sperry, 2004). Again, all that is required is comparing two or more personality theories texts and the reader can evaluate whether this conclusion is valid or not, as well as explore current, refereed psychological journals and find whether this conclusion is valid or not. Instead of theories, models are modest and confined interpretations of specific relationships, as elaborated below.

Confusion between Theories and Models

Oftentimes, theories are confused with models and are made synonymous with models. Attachment theory, for instance, is but one example of a model that is called a theory, perhaps because it was derived from object relations theory (L'Abate & De Giacomo, 2003). Nonetheless, no matter what attachment theory is called, it still consists of one model that has produced a

plethora of studies around the world. Yet, in spite of being a model, it is still called a theory, demonstrating the synonymous use of both terms.

In addition to attachment theory, another example of a synonymous match between model and theory is found in social comparison theory, where the same charge could be leveled and has been leveled (L'Abate & De Giacomo, 2003). In spite of its fruitfulness as a model based originally on Fenstinger's social behavior theory, it still remains a model about a specific topic, and nothing else. It is a model but it is called a theory, as will be considered in Chapter 8. Relational models theory (Haslam, 2004) is an another example of a model that has been called a theory.

In this work, the terms theory and model are not used synonymously. This theory is composed of many models, as shall be shown throughout this work. A model is part of a theory. Without such a link, how can any model survive isolated from theory or from other models? As Cummings, Davies, and Campbell (2000) commented on this issue:

> "Theory-driven research on both prevention and treatment, while time-consuming and difficult to conduct, is really one of the only ways we have to test models that may identify etiological factors and causal pathways leading from early developmental risk to later maladjustment and diagnosable disorder (p. 414)."

Consequently, the result of this emphasis on research at the expense of theory has been the production of small, verifiable models that remain the province of a close-knit group of dedicated researchers. Their time and energy is spent to evaluate various implications of each model, oftentimes separate from other models or theories. There is a great deal to commend in model-building by knowing more and more about detailed aspects of any model. This is truly the experimental method at its best, as discussed further in Chapter 3. Yet, the issue remains: after a variety of models have been constructed and validated how are they going to be linked together? Who is going to do it, at the cost of being called "grandiose" or "irrelevant"? What happens after all these models have been built and tested? How and who is going to put them together into one overarching theory?

An example of this state of affairs is found in the work edited by Liddle, Santisteban, Levant, and Bray (2000). They stressed the importance of empirically based methods of treatment, presenting a variety of theoretical models unrelated with each other. More importantly, the models were unrelated to empirically based treatment approaches! Hence, the criterion of empirically based treatment models, amply supported in this work, needs to be paired with another criterion not considered by Liddle et al., as well as by many researchers who profess allegiance to empirically based treatments, and that is: *theory-derived, empirically replicable psychological interventions* (L'Abate, 2003a). Psychological models, therefore, not only need

to be empirically verifiable, as will be discussed in Chapter 3, they must also be theory-derived or at least, theory-related. Otherwise, many empirically based treatments would be free-standing, without any rationale behind them. This criterion will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

Another way to understand the weak link between theory and research would be the emphasis on testable empirical studies and models as being ahead of theory. As Barnett and Hyde (2001) have indicated, previous theories are irrelevant to present day conditions. Hence, one could say that theory has to catch up to research results and model-building. A theory has to be up-to-date with research in order to be viable. That means that a theory must be comprehensive enough to include as much as empirical evidence is available to support it. Past theories may not have been used by researchers because they may have found them irrelevant or inapplicable to present day evidence and models. In this regard, Dahlstrom (1995) argued that:

> "... contemporary theorizing about the nature of personality has neglected typological formulations. Instead, reliance has been placed on multidimensional geometric models that fail to capture the crucial configural nature of personality structure and functioning. As a result, there has been little progress in the development of a comprehensive taxonomy of human personalities or in the establishment of a personological systematics. Reasons for this neglect ... are related to a general aversion to 'pigeon-holing' people and the risk of applying stereotypes rather than theorotypes. ... Potential benefits for the science and art of personality assessment ... (can) be gained from a comprehensive personological taxonomy ... (p. 3)."

Whether this theory will live up to Dahlstrom's standards remains to be seen. However, robust links among theory, research, and practice would enable elaboration of a treatment framework that is practical in its development, effective in its methods, and compelling in its rationale (L'Abate & De Giacomo, 2003). All of the above is quite consistent with the aims and thesis of this work, except to express a repeated skepticism that few changes will occur as long as psychological interventions are based on talk (L'Abate, 1999b).

FRAGMENTATION IN PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES AND MODELS

This section will argue that the considerable fragmentation among theories and models of personality socialization, developmental, social, and adult psychology, as well as personal relationships makes it necessary to develop a theory that will attempt to integrate these specializations in a consistent framework.

Personalities without Intimate Relationships

Before beginning with the theory proper, however, it is important to consider the current status of personality theories, at least in the United States, to introduce a conceptual background that would allow comparing and contrasting this relatively new theory with existing personality theories. Most personality theories not only are a-contextual and nonrelational, but they also ignore intimate relationships as a basic unit for personality socialization, its development, and psychopathology. I have documented this frequently in the past but it needs further elucidation. Barnett and Hyde (2001), for instance, argued that in terms of all the changes in women's roles, past theories of personality are "obsolete." Further evidence will be presented here to support that conclusion. Most personality theories cited above or models of adult development (Demick & Andreotti, 2002) make few references to marriage and the family, as if individuals grew up suddenly as adults without any nurturing socialization from parents, siblings, relatives, and extended family, friends, foes, or lovers.

Personality development is still seen as a matter of internal factors, like genes and temperament, rather than an interaction between hereditary and family-derived factors. A survey (L'Abate & Dunne, 1979) of textbooks on personality, exceptional children, and developmental psychology found that to be true in 15% of developmental psychology textbooks to less than 1% of references on family-related topics (family, father, marriage, mother, parents, siblings) in theories of personality textbooks. The same survey repeated years later (1994), only with theories of personality textbooks, showed only .05% of references linked to family-related topics. A recent survey of personality theories gives two pages to the family constellation and no pages to other family concepts, like marriage, parenting, parent-child or sibling-sibling relationships (L'Abate & De Giacomo, 2003).

Ditto for social psychology, adults are considered as having never grown up developmentally. They are suddenly adults without any historical antecedents, no parents, no siblings, no relatives, and no extended family, or intimate relationships (Chaiken & Trope, 1999; Higgins & Kruglanski, 1996).

The field of personal relationships does consider intimate relationships at developmental stages in the life cycles, rather than focusing on contrived, short-lived, and superficial laboratory studies or paper-and-pencil reports with college sophomores. In all fairness, a treatise on personal relationships (Duck, 1988) did have seven pages (out of 702) devoted to family systems, 12 pages and seven footnotes devoted to marital distress, interaction, quality, satisfaction, therapy, and types, with one page and three footnotes devoted to parent-child relationships. A more recent text (Harvey & Weber, 2002), however, dedicated four pages (out of 249) to family and 19 pages

to marriage, but none to parent-child relationships, leading to the conclusion that this discipline is slightly more interested in intimate relationships than personality or social psychology, but in a selective, non-systematic fashion.

Developmental psychology does indeed acknowledge the importance of parents, siblings, relatives, and the extended family. However, it does stop short of adulthood, leaving theorizing and empirical studies to the other fields of personality and social psychology. Hence, we need a theory of personality socialization in intimate relationships that covers various stages of individual lifespan and family life cycles, functionalities and dysfunctionalities, as well as reproducible ways to prevent and treat the latter (Cummings et al., 2000).

Intimate Relationships without Personalities

In spite of sociologist Burgess's 1927 dictum (Loukas, Twitchell, Piejak, Fitzgerald, & Zucker, 1998) about the family as "a unity of interacting personalities," systems theory, one of the many fads in family theories "dismissed the importance of individual functioning and history (Lebow, 2001)." Family therapists and sociologists refer to the family without consideration of the personalities involved (Klein & White, 1996). Misleading or unnecessary dichotomies between psychological and sociological theories prolong the myth that there are indeed distinctions between the two types of theories. This dichotomy would lead to greater fragmentation: theories for individuals, theories for couples, and theories for families, leading to misguided and unnecessary chaos and confusion. The fact that there are separate textbooks for the assessment of individuals, couples, and families attests to this fragmentation in practice as well as in theory. This outcome would make it difficult to verify any model of intimate relationships.

In pursuing the conclusion of intimate relationships without personalities, an old hobby-horse of family therapists, that is, systems thinking, is appealing and seductive but not testable. It is a paradigm or metatheory rather than a theory. It is indeed focused on the family rather than on the individual personalities within the family. Furthermore, it is separate in concepts, constructs, and methodology (if any) from psychology as a science and as a profession. Hence the creation and existence of family psychology as a discipline dedicated to study individuals in the family, rather than the family qua family as in sociology and in family therapy, or personalities without intimate relationships, as already discussed.

Finally, all of the fields surveyed above ignore deviant relationships, leaving out from their considerations the most intense of all relationships,

those that lead to death, suicide, incarceration, and hospitalization, that is: criminality and psychopathology. All one has to do to verify this conclusion is to check contents and indices for the texts cited above and verify whether this conclusion is valid or not.

Additionally, as Bradbury (2002) has pointed out, not without controversy (Hendrick, 2002; Muehlhoff & Wood, 2002; Reis, 2002), all of the above theoretical frameworks have one characteristic in common, that is they all lack practical applications beyond self-report, paper-and-pencil tests and contrived laboratory experiments. None of them leads or has lead to preventive or therapeutic advances. The present theory aims at correcting such a shortcoming.

Integrating the Fragmentation

More recently, there is a movement afoot to add a new category of "Relational Diagnosis" to the DSM-IV, after early suggestions about its irrelevance to family therapy (Frances, Clarkin, & Perry, 1984). This step indicates the need to view psychopathology from the "outside" or "among and between individuals" rather than just "inside" the individual. This view results from how individuals relate specifically in certain intimate relationships, rather than how they behave in an interpersonal vacuum. This position is supported, among others, by what Hendriks-Jansen (1996) has called "interactive emergence," that relationships are the outcome of emergent interactions between two or more individuals, or between individuals and objects, a position championed years ago by J. R. Kantor's "inter-behavioral field." What here are called "relationships" have characteristics of their own that need to be evaluated in their own rights, as L'Abate and De Giacomo (2003), besides others (Gibbs, 2001) have proposed. Fiske and Haslam (1996) put it this way:

> "Social scientists may concern themselves with two kinds of variables when making sense of social relations. On the one hand, they may refer to the attributions of individuals, such as their genders, races, ages, and personalities. All of these attributes inhere in persons, or are socially constructed as inhering in them. These attributes are features of individuals. Some characteristics, on the other hand, cannot be ascribed to individuals, but only to the relations between them. Whereas individual attributes define kinds of people, these other characteristics define kinds of relationships (p. 141)."

Consequently, intimate relationships are the outcome of interactions between and among individuals who are emotionally close, committed to maintain the relationship over time, and interdependent in sharing common responsibilities. These relationships transcend the individual personalities of partners and members in functional cases. However, in dysfunctional cases, personality disorders and individual psychopathology may be the products

and producers of relationships that fail to work over time. Indeed, intimate relationships have become the focus of what is now called "relationship science" (Reis, Collins, & Berscheid, 2000).

REQUIREMENTS FOR A RELATIONAL THEORY OF PERSONALITY

Hence, this work will show how it is possible to link theory with practice not just in psychotherapy, i.e., tertiary prevention, but also in the laboratory and in primary and secondary prevention. To achieve this goal, one will need to expand on a theory of developmental, relational competence that has attempted to develop this link. Additional requirements for this theory concern its reducibility to known psychological constructs (Ch. 2), and its verifiability and accountability (Ch. 3).

Relational

In the first place, the theory must be relational, stressing the nature of intimate relations as functions of individual characteristics in transactions with demand characteristics of intimate others and of various settings across generations (Bergman et al., 2003; Gergen, 1994). This requirement means seeing both functional and dysfunctional relationships as being transmitted over generational lines. Furthermore, one cannot have a theory about how individuals behave separately from how they behave with their partners, parents, children, siblings, relatives, friends, neighbors, co-workers, and occasional salespersons. By the same token, nor can one have a theory of couples without considering their families. Furthermore, the breakdown of the traditional family (L'Abate, 2004c) has produced subgroups and alliances that were either minimal or ignored in the past, such as same-sex parents, adoptive or step-parents, grandparent-grandchild dyads, singles, or co-habiting couples. How can one have different theories for each of these subgroups? Perhaps models for each of these subgroups may be the answer. However, any attempt of this kind would be met by frustration and failure since no current theory could encompass them.

This theory, therefore, stresses relationships between and among intimate others, rather than having separate theories (or models!) for individuals, separate theories for couples, subgroups, or separate theories for families. Individuals are products and producers of the very relationships they live in, in a process of continuous and reciprocal exchange, giving and taking. What is exchanged? This is the crucial question attempted in vein by systems theories but never satisfactorily answered. What and how one learns

to behave in intimate relationships tends to generalize to other settings. This link between intimate relationships and other settings is especially visible in explanatory styles of optimism versus pessimism (Buchanan & Seligman, 1995; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Functional intimate relationships are optimistic. Dysfunctional intimate relationships are pessimistic, producing individuals who, very likely behave likewise.

Contextual

In the second place, the theory must be contextually ecological, relating to events within each setting and relationships among various settings: residence, school/work, and surplus time settings. We take our intimate relationships of origin and of procreation along with us and keep them inside everywhere we go in how we behave toward other intimates and non-intimates. Nonetheless, besides the family or its substitute system, other settings do influence personality socialization. Normatively speaking, intimate relationships may be primary, with other settings being secondary. However, in some individuals, secondary settings may become primary, as in the case of workaholics or Type A personalities. For instance, the latter are consumed by their work. Extreme athletes are consumed by their sport. Hoarders are consumed by amassing things, or tycoons are consumed by accumulating money.

Developmental

In the third place, this theory must be developmental. It must be applicable to most if not all major stages of the life cycle: (1) dependence in early childhood; (2) denial of dependence in adolescence; (3) interdependence-autonomy in adulthood; and (4) return to dependence in old age. By developmental is meant to also include various stages of the individual-family life cycle, i.e., getting married, having children, seeing them leave to produce their own families, retirement, death and its aftermath on the family.

This theory acknowledges the importance of specific developmental competencies as a function of interactions with specific people and settings. Acquisition of personal and interpersonal competence is a socialization process that acknowledges the importance of specificities peculiar to given people and to a given setting. These personal specificities are abilities and skills particular to the interaction between specific task characteristics and specific demands of settings and other individuals. Given a grocery store, for instance, one needs to know rules of entrance, layout of goods, their nature in comparison to similar goods, prices, and exit rules relating to check-out and payments. As discussed in Chapter 6, each setting has its own task

demands that change from one setting to another. By the same token, intimate relationships have their own explicit, spoken rules and rituals, and implicit, unspoken ones for entry and exit. These rules and rituals may well be transferred to the next generation without any awareness from those who practice them.

Applicable

In the fourth place, this theory must be applicable to a continuum of care presented in past publications, using all three media of communication—verbal, nonverbal, and written—rather than just the verbal. Included in this continuum, in addition to the laboratory, would be clinical (clinics, hospitals), criminal (jails, penitentiaries), and nonclinical, educational institutions (schools, colleges, universities). For instance, a recent review of principles regulating effective prevention programs (Nation et al., 2003, p. 452) found that programs for risky sexual behavior were "theory driven" in 73% of the cases reviewed. Substance abuse was theory driven in 58% of the cases. Delinquency was theory driven in 29%, while school failure was found to be theory driven in 0%. These percentages support the view that theory is inconsistently or weakly used to develop and apply preventive programs. This shortcoming will be addressed in this work. Interventions need to be theory derived and replicable to allow verification of the models of the theory, not only in the laboratory but also in schools, clinics, hospitals, and in the offices of private practitioners.

Encompassing Functional and Dysfunctional Relationships

In the fifth place, this theory must be sufficiently wide to encompass functional and dysfunctional aspects of personality socialization in intimate relationships. This width includes relationships more relevant to the administration of self-help workbooks, that is, functionality, externalizations, internalizations, and psychopathology. Severe psychopathologies consist of inconsistent and contradictorily extreme combinations of internalizations and externalizations (Ch. 12). For instance, Krueger (1999) found two factors basic to mental disorders: (1) externalizations, reflecting alcohol, drug dependence, and antisocial personality disorders; (2) internalizations included two components: (a) anxious misery, reflecting major depression, dysthymia, and generalized anxiety disorders, and (b) a fear component comprising social and simple phobia, agoraphobia, and panic disorders. Bradley (2000) also differentiated among internalizations, externalization, and psychopathologies. Here, more than one model in this theory shows how deviant patterns are continuous and contiguous with functional personality

propensities, and how this theory may be isomorphic, in many ways, with the DSM-IV.

What theory or model of personality will describe, "explain," or predict these four factors, functionality on one hand, and three different types and severities in internalizations, externalizations, and psychopathologies, on the other hand? Certainly, attachment theory achieves this purpose. However, its relationship to a selfhood model of personality, discussed in previous publications and evaluated by L'Abate et al. (2001), demonstrates the overlap between the two models. If these characteristics, functionalities and dysfunctionalities are not predicted by a model, above and beyond what is claimed rather than what is verified, what kind of specificity is then achieved? Without such specificity how can we intervene effectively? This writer prefers for the theory or any of its models to be specific and run the risk to be found empirically "wrong," rather than being vaguely general and claiming to be "right." Specificity can be evaluated. Vague generalities of the kind proffered by systems thinking or psychoanalysis, for instance, are difficult if not impossible to verify. Hence, the existence of models inside and outside this theory.

Verifiable

This theory, therefore, attempts to meet at least three requirements, to: (1) define and refine personality according to relational, ecological, developmental, and contextual concepts, including functionalities and dysfunctionalities, (2) reduce these concepts to known and accepted psychological constructs, and (3) verify these concepts empirically as well as applicatively. From the viewpoint of comprehensiveness and integration, this theory is admittedly quite ambitious in attempting to integrate earlier theories as well as the full range of functionalities and dysfunctionalities. However, it is quite simple in its structure and concrete in its stress on visible and measurable constructs.

This theory stresses individual *relational* characteristics that in turn are developed from the family of origin or past intimate relationships. Two individuals start a family by conceiving children and, hopefully, living under the same roof. Both individuals are the products of their respective families of origin. Both partners carry influences, positive and negative, from their families of origin into their new families of procreation. Individual characteristics must adapt to and adopt new demands from different settings, which in turn influence the functioning of their offspring.

This theory, therefore, straddles individual/couple/family perspectives by viewing individual socialization in the context of intimate relationships. This goal requires keeping the importance of the intimate relationships

context primary, relating individual determinants to the functioning of those relationships, and using relational rather than inferred or hypothetical intrapsychic or systems language. If the family, or its alternatives, is a unit(y) of interacting personalities, as Burgess wrote long ago, then we need to define personality within its various contexts, as in different settings (Ch. 6). How one behaves at home does not necessarily predict how one is going to behave at work. Thus, this theory defines socialization and functioning in intimate relationships as a set of competencies in diverse settings. Personality socialization and psychological theory have been strongly influenced by what has been called "interactionism" (Bergman et al., 2003; Magnusson, 1999), with personality being the product or outcome of a personality × situation interaction. Since both terms are quite vague and are usually left unspecified, it will be useful later on to break down a definition of personality into specific competencies × settings interactions.

THE FUNCTIONS OF THIS THEORY

Emphasis on contrived and detailed experimentation and development of "models," therefore, have left out "grand theorizing," that would integrate some, not all, existing models. Models are produced at an ever increasing rate. However, these models lack integration into a "overarching" theoretical framework. Even family psychology, for instance, lacks an integrative theoretical framework, even though a great many disconnected models are presented (Liddle et al., 2002), among others. We need to evaluate this theory in applied, clinical and nonclinical settings, through its applications where it matters, with intimates and nonintimates.

A Theory for Intimate Relationships

As argued throughout this work, we cannot have theories or models for individuals, however, that do not apply to couples anymore than we need theories or models for couples that are not valid for families. Nor can we have theories for individuals who live by themselves, for couples who live in same sex relationships, for grandparent/grandchild dyads, and so on. It would be impossible to develop theories or models that would encompass all of these alternative relationships. We need models of relationships among intimates and nonintimates. Hence, we need a theory that will deal with intimate (close, committed, interdependent, and prolonged) relationships, not just individuals, couples or families, since even single individuals live in relationships, no matter where they live. We are indeed the products and producers of relationships, intimate or otherwise.

The Functions of Any Theory

There are at least four functions performed by a theory, or at least this theory, as a: (1) map to describe the territory to be explored, i.e., personal relationships, however, as Korzybski (1949) was fond of assuring us: "A map is not a territory"; (2) compass to give direction in our search and letting us know whether we are headed in the right direction or not; (3) clothes-hanger in which we can put all sorts of disparate models into one single place; and (4) strait-jacket that might limit us in looking at parts of the map that might be discovered were we free of intellectual and conceptual biases and constraints.

In additions to serving as maps, theories also function as compasses to direct, understand, predict, and prescribe relationships. For instance, once a territory like "intimate relationships" is staked out as being part of the theory or the theory itself, compasses, in the form of probe bodies or test instruments, allow us to consider whether the map covers the territory adequately, or whether one is going in the wrong direction and being mislead into a territory outside the map. It would be an extra bonus if this theory were also applied to maps of similar territories. Test instruments calibrated in the laboratory can be validated on their own, in terms of concurrent and criterion validities, but now they can also be validated prescriptively through workbooks, as shown elsewhere and discussed below.

This theory serves also as a clothes-hanger, in which parts and pieces of this and similar, annexed, theories, theorettes, and models have been hung according to some systematic order. For instance, there are models of the theory that relate with and are similar to other models or other theories. By the same token, a theory may also become a strait-jacket, not allowing one to look outside of it, restricting one's vision to just one theory and that one alone, without paying attention to other theories, as in the case of psychoanalysis, or cognitive-behavioral theory, among others. This is the reason for always comparing a theory with others, lest one becomes so enamored of a theory to the point of making it into a religion rather than a fallible map vulnerable to faulty compasses. There is no perfect theory, just like there are no perfect maps. They are just condensed approximations awaiting improvements. They are never the territory itself. There is no way they can ever be.

Functions of This Theory

This theory, therefore, attempts to fulfill three functions that are common to any science, namely: understanding, predicting, and controlling individuals in their intimate relationships and other settings.