

Personality in Intimate Relationships

Socialization and Psychopathology

Luciano L'Abate

*Georgia State University
Atlanta, Georgia*



Springer

Contents

Chapter 1. Background for a Theory of Personality Socialization in Intimate Relationships and Psychopathology	1
Part I. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE THEORY	25
Chapter 2. Reducibility to Known Psychological Constructs	27
Chapter 3. Verifiability and Accountability: Applications to Nonclinical and Clinical Populations	35
Part II. METATHEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS	77
Chapter 4. The Horizontality of Relationships: A Width Model ¹	79
Chapter 5. The Verticality of Relationships: A Depth Model ²	117
Chapter 6. Settings as Contexts for Intimate Relationships: Model ³	137
Part III. ASSUMPTIONS OF THE THEORY: PROCESSES AND CONTENTS	153
Chapter 7. Space and the Ability to Love: Model ⁴	157
Chapter 8. Time and the Ability to Negotiate: Models ^{5,6}	177
Chapter 9. Modalities of Exchange: The Triangle of Living, Model ⁷	195
Part IV. MODELS OF THE THEORY: BACK TO PROCESSES	209
Chapter 10. Developmental Identity-Differentiation: Model ⁸	211
Chapter 11. Styles in Intimate Relationships: Model ⁹	235

xviii Contents

Chapter 12. Selfhood: The Attribution of Importance: Model ¹⁰	251
Chapter 13. Priorities: What Is Really Important?: Model ¹¹	305
Part V. APPLICATIONS OF THE THEORY	317
Chapter 14. Distance Regulation: Model ¹²	319
Chapter 15. The Drama Triangle: Model ¹³	327
Chapter 16. Intimacy: Sharing Hurts and Fears of Being Hurt: Model ¹⁴	333
Chapter 17. Negotiating How to Solve Problems: Model ¹⁵	353
Chapter 18. A Concluding Model ¹⁶ and a Comparative Model ¹⁷	363
Part VI. CONCLUSION	367
Chapter 19. Testing the Theory in the Laboratory and Prevention Settings	369
Chapter 20. The Future of the Theory	379
References	383
Index	463

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,

2 Chapter 1

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, Omer 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

4 Chapter 1

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 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 dys-functionalities, as well as reproducible ways to prevent and treat the latter (Cumings 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,

8 Chapter 1

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

10 Chapter 1

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

12 Chapter 1

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 dysfunctions 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 dysfunctions, (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 dysfunctions. 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 \times 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 \times 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 misled 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, theoretttes, 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.

Understanding Individuals in Intimate Relationships

The purpose of this theory is to understand how individuals learn to socialize in intimate, prolonged, close, interdependent, and committed relationships, usually but not always, found in families or family substitutes. This is the purpose of family psychology in contrast to family sociology. The latter wants to understand families as wholes and not as parts. Since psychology is devoted to the study and understanding of individuals, alone and in groups, family psychology, by the same token, studies and tries to understand the individual in intimate relationships.

Predicting What Individuals Will Do in Intimate Relationships

Prediction is a test of how understanding translates itself into the accuracy of predictions. If our understanding is general, vague, and not verifiable, then one's predictions, without evidence, will be usually thought to be correct, at least qualitatively. If our understanding is specific enough, then predictions will tend to be specific as well, and, if verifiable, found to be either valid or not. One example is found in the preliminary evaluation of L'Abate, L'Abate, and Maino (in press) about the use of workbooks in psychotherapy with individuals, couples, and families. Against frequent claims of cost-effectiveness for self-help, mental health workbooks, for instance, were tentatively found to prolong rather than shorten the number of psychotherapy sessions. L'Abate's "clinical," qualitative, impressionistic judgment was completely wrong, at least in this exploratory study.

Controlling What Individuals Will Do in Intimate Relationships to Improve Them

There are sciences that can understand and predict but cannot control, like astronomy. Psychology, however, does want to improve the human condition, and therefore needs to control relationships that have been lead by or lead to both functionality and dysfunctionality. Control, in this book will be achieved through the administration of self-help workbooks, administered at a distance rather than traditional talk and face-to-face (f2f) contact between a professional helper and people in trouble, as discussed at greater length below. This new paradigm aims to add or substitute distance writing for the old one instead of f2f talk.

SUMMARY OF THE THEORY

The purpose of this section is to preview the theory summarized in Table 1.1. A concluding Chapter 19 will explicate this table, that at first blush

Table 1.1. Summary of a Theory of Personality Socialization in Intimate Relationships and Other Settings#

A. Requirements

1. Reducibility to Psychological Constructs (Chapter 2)
2. Verifiability
3. Accountability in the Laboratory, in Primary (Enrichment), Secondary (Workbooks), and Tertiary (Psychotherapy) Prevention (Tasks)

Models	Tests	Enrichment	Workbooks	Tasks
B. Metatheoretical Assumptions				
1. Horizontality in Relationships ERAawC ¹	RAQ*	Negotiation Potential	Negotiation	
2. Verticality of Relationships to be evaluated	Levels of Observation/Interpretation ²	in Relationships		
3. Settings ³ (home, school/work, leisure time, transit, and transitory). Time estimates objectively and semantic differential subjectively.				
C. Theoretical Assumptions				
4. Ability to Love ⁴	WATMTIAW?*			
5. Ability to Negotiate ^{5&6}	WATMTIAW?*	Negotiation Potential	Negotiation	
6. Modalities ⁷			Assignment in Negotiation	
D. Theoretical Models				
7. Likeness: Model ⁸	Likeness Scale Likeness Grid WATMTIAW?*		Who Am I?	
	Likeness Questionnaire (Appendix C)			
8. Styles in Relation- ships ⁹	PIRS***	Negotiation Potential	Negotiation assignment	f2f interviews
9. Selfhood ¹⁰	SOPC+ PIRS*** DRT++		Self-Other Codependency	Drawing lines
10. Priorities ¹¹	Grid, Inventory	Negotiation Potential	Negotiation assignment	
E. Applications of Theoretical Models				
11. Distance Regulation ¹²			Depression assignment	3HC
12. Drama Triangle ¹³			Depression assignment	

(Continued)

Table 1.1. (Continued)

13. Intimacy ¹⁴	SOHS+++		Intimacy	Sharing hurts
14. Negotiation ¹⁵		Helpfulness	Negotiation	
15. Toward a Classification of Relationships: Model ¹⁶		Difficult to evaluate unless one were to develop a workbook based on the diagnostic instrument		
16. Integration of Selfhood with other models ¹⁷	Partially evaluated			

[†]From L'Abate and De Giacomo, 2003. Reprinted with permission.

*Relational Answers Questionnaire (Appendix A).

**What Applies To Me That I Agree With? (L'Abate & De Giacomo, 2003).

***Self-Other Profile Chart (L'Abate, 1992, 1994, 2001, 2002, L'Abate & De Giacomo, 2003).

†Problems in Relationships Scale and Matching Assignments (L'Abate, 1992, 1996, McMahan & L'Abate, 2001).

††Dyadic Relationships Test (Cusinato & L'Abate, 2003, 2004).

†††Sharing of Hurts Scale (Stevens & L'Abate, 1989).

may seem like a very complex array of a completely new framework. Briefly, the theory consists of two requirements, reducibility to psychological constructs (Ch. 2) and verifiability and accountability in the laboratory as well as in applied and clinical settings, primary through enrichment programs, secondary, through self-help workbooks, and tertiary prevention, through prescriptive tasks (Ch. 3).

Three metatheoretical assumptions attempt to integrate past psychological theories in ways that will allow us to relate the present theory to past ones that form the basis for this model. As discussed at great length in Chapter 4, the first model views relationships along a horizontal axis in terms of their width. Here, a model is a simplified, usually visual, summary simplification and representation of more complex concepts or patterns derived from the assumptions and postulates of the theory. For instance, the two assumptions of the theory, space and time, become more concrete and visible when distance and regulation with their respective polarities are visualized as two orthogonal dimensions, making them into a first model. By the same token, the three modalities of Being, Doing, and Having can be visualized as an equilateral triangle with Presence at the bottom, Performance on the left, and Production on the right, making them also into a second model.

Using an information processing approach, this model includes *Emotionality, Rationality, Activity, Awareness, and Context* (ERAAwC). It can be evaluated with the Relational Answers Questionnaire (RAQ), a Negotiation Potential enrichment program (L'Abate & Weinstein, 1987; L'Abate & Young, 1987), and a Negotiation workbook (L'Abate, 1996).

A second metatheoretical assumption deals with the depth or verticality of relationships according to two levels of observation/interpretation,

descriptive and explanatory, as discussed in Chapter 5. Description of relationships occurs at two sublevels, presentational/public and phenotypical/private. Explanation of relationships occurs at two sublevels, genotypical/hypothetical, and historical/developmental. These levels can be evaluated through tests genotypically, and intergenerationally and developmentally through family and individual history.

A third model (Ch. 6) deals with settings that define Context in the ERAAwC model, composed of: home, school/work, leisure settings, transit, and transitory. They can be evaluated through time analyses objectively and through the semantic differential subjectively.

The theory itself is composed of two assumptions about the ability to love (Ch. 7) and to negotiate (Ch. 8) processibly with modalities about how these processes are exchanged and through contents and modalities of Being, Doing, and Having, the Triangle of Life (Ch. 9).

Models of the theory proper include self-differentiation according to a likeness continuum (Ch. 10), which has been evaluated with the Likeness Grid, Likeness Inventory, and the method developed by Scilletta (2002). This model is also contained in two assignments of the parenting workbook in Appendix A. Styles in intimate relationships (Ch. 11) can be evaluated through the Problems in Relationships Scale and program, where partners' discrepancy scores in conflict areas are matched with specific, written homework assignments. A selfhood model (Ch. 12) has been evaluated most frequently with the Self-Other Profile Chart, the Problems-in-Relationships Scale (PIRS) (McMahan & L'Abate, 2001), and the Dyadic Relationships Test (Cusinato & L'Abate, 2003), as well as a workbook matching the two dimensions of the test, self and intimate others. A Priorities model (Ch. 13) has been evaluated with the Priorities Grid and Priorities Inventory (L'Abate, 1994), while distance regulation (Ch. 14), the drama triangle (Ch. 15), intimacy (Ch. 16), and negotiation and problem-solving (Ch. 17), can be evaluated through couple and family enrichment programs and workbooks. The theory concludes with a chapter (18) integrating all the models of the theory into a comprehensive model, and comparing the selfhood model (Ch. 12) with relational models extraneous to the theory itself but that contain common characteristics inviting invidious comparisons.

WORKBOOKS AS INSTRUMENTS OF THEORY TESTING

Control of deviant and troubled behavior has been established in the past century through f2f, talk-based psychotherapy, while prevention of deviant and troubled behavior has been established through a variety of structured programs devoted to parenting, assertiveness training, marriage preparation,

and so forth. However, it is my opinion that both the fields of psychotherapy and prevention will not advance as long as they rely on f2f talk between professionals and respondents. Why? Because f2f talk is both difficult and expensive to record and replicate. Furthermore, as long as psychological interventions are based and dependent on talk, a great many troubled people will not be able to be helped, especially in the case of children (Kataoka, Zhang, & Wells, 2002). Talk is nonspecific, extremely variable, and uncontrollable (L'Abate, 1999b). Hence, all attempts, including those I have previously made to make psychotherapy and prevention into separate sciences are bound to take a great deal of time and expense. Furthermore, research about psychotherapy and its process as well as prevention will remain in the hands of few researchers who qualify for grants. Research will be out of reach from Main Street professionals. Recording, transcribing, and classifying psychotherapy or prevention audio recordings are very time-consuming jobs left in a handful of grant-supported researchers.

Hence, there is no way advances can take place unless the whole process of psychotherapy and prevention occurs through the writing medium between professionals and respondents. Why? Because only through writing one can keep records of the process about what is going on between professionals and respondents. Instead of talk, respondents should be required to rely as much as possible on their writings rather than just on talk, as done by Gould (2001) with thousands of patients for years. Written protocols can be completed by respondents at home and sent to professionals through the Internet or fax (Esterling, L'Abate, Murray, & Pennebaker, 1999; Lepore & Smyth, 2003).

Science, law, industry, medicine, architecture, and most fields of endeavor rely on the written record to serve as a background from the past and an advance for the future of each field. Skyscrapers are not built on talk. They are built on solid blueprints based on mechanical, scientific bases. It is difficult if not impossible to improve the human condition as long as talk remains the main or sole medium of healing. To attempt to help and heal all the people who hurt through f2f talk is simply impossible. Psychotherapy and prevention are the last remaining fields of endeavor where only f2f talk is required. The outcome is a veritable Tower of Babel, where extreme, unproven, and even ridiculous remedies are administered by duly licensed professionals who, for whatever reason, have forgotten and left behind their scientific heritages.

As a result, the only record of what has happened between professionals and their respondents is found in the notes of professionals. These notes are kept private and there is no way one can find how accurate or complete these notes are. They cannot be used to prove whether improvement in respondents has taken place or not. They are naturally self-serving and not

shared by being kept in the professional's private office. There is no way that those notes are going to be used to improve one's professional practices. Furthermore, there is no way to find out how self-serving those notes are, even if they supposedly document process and progress in psychotherapy or prevention.

Consequently, only through research it is possible to advance the fields of psychotherapy and prevention in the hands of university-affiliated researchers whose findings are usually ignored by professionals on Main Street. Who can forget decades ago clinicians claiming that evaluation would interfere with the process of therapy? By how many years has that unfounded claim delayed and derailed linking evaluation with intervention? As a result, research and practice in psychotherapy remain and are destined to remain separate fields of endeavor, with no hope of being united and integrated for the betterment of humanity's ills. Through writing it will be possible to keep records of what professionals and respondents feel, think, and do. This conclusion does not mean that f2f talk should be eliminated from the process of healing. It would be impossible. It means that an additional medium should be added to f2f talk in a way that will increase synergistically the power of both media, f2f talk and distance writing. In most cases, however, in the not too distant future, writing, instead of just supplementing f2f talk, will most likely supplant it, especially in preventive interventions.

Writing varies along four levels of structure: (1) *open-ended*, as in journals and diaries; (2) *focused*, as in the expressive writing paradigm of Pennebaker (2001) about one's undisclosed past traumas or autobiography; (3) *guided*, written questions to be answered in writing, and (4) *programmed*, as in self-help workbooks (L'Abate, 1996). Among the four structures, the most amenable to research is programmed writing.

Rather than rely solely on paper-and-pencil, self-report tests that, as indicated above, abound in this theory, one unique and additional way in which this theory can be evaluated is through self-help, mental health workbooks that derive directly from the theory, as shown in a parenting workbook, among others. A workbook consists of a series of written homework assignments around a specific topic to be answered in writing by respondents. Workbooks supposedly are cost-effective, mass-producible, versatile, and specific enough to allow evaluation of the theory or model from which they were derived. However, recent results, already mentioned, raise serious questions about the cost-effectiveness of workbooks in psychotherapy (L'Abate, L'Abate, & Maino, in press). Instead of shortening the number of psychotherapy sessions with individuals, couples, and families, workbooks were found to lengthen it significantly. Hence, one can no longer claim that they are cost-effective, even though much more research will be needed to reach a definite conclusion on this matter. Whether the increased number of

psychotherapy sessions would lead to greater efficacy is an open question that could not be answered in that research.

Mass-orientation for workbooks is a given, because questions asked on a piece of paper or on a computer through the Internet are a much cheaper approach than if the same questions were asked by a professional helper. Professional time and expertise are a hundred times more expensive and less replicable than one or two pages of questions. Versatility means being used under different conditions in different settings. For instance, workbooks can be used f2f as structured interviews between professionals-in-training and respondents, in spite of their cost. They can be used at a distance from respondents when assigned as homework in addition to f2f talk-based sessions for children, youth, adults, couples, and families. They can be used in prevention, where mass-orientation and cost-effectiveness are important criteria to consider. They can be used solely or in conjunction with psychotherapeutic practices or medication (L'Abate, 2004a, 2004b).

There is no way that current preventive (Weinberg, Kumpfer, & Seligman, 2003) and psychotherapeutic practices based on f2f talk are going to meet all the mental health needs of this or any other nation. Interventions will need to occur with a minimum of professional contact and time (Stevenson, Stevenson, & Whitmont, 2003). An evolutionary shift from talking to writing media will allow expansions to populations that were heretofore unreachable through f2f talk but that become reachable once writing, computers, and the Internet become the vehicles of delivery and possible healing (Ritterband et al., 2003; X Day & Schneider, 2002).

The specificity of workbooks is achieved by their matching a referral question, a test profile, or a test score with a diagnostic label or a reason for referral. Given the diagnosis of depression, for instance, there are at least half a dozen workbooks designed to deal with such a diagnosis. There is now a workbook for practically any known clinical and nonclinical condition for children, youth, adults, couples, and families (L'Abate, 1996, 2004a). This specificity allows us to fulfill a major desideratum of mental health practices, and that is: matching treatment with diagnosis in a way that cannot be reached and will not be reached when f2f talk is the sole medium of exchange between professionals and respondents. If and when that match is reached, as noted repeatedly, it is due to grants to few researchers whose findings are usually irrelevant to practicing clinicians.

Finally, one way in which workbooks become interactive instruments of theory testing is through the construction of workbooks directly from test instruments. This link is achieved through a very simple, easy device. One can take all the items from any test or from any list of factorially- or research-derived items and transform them into a workbook. This transformation is

obtained easily by asking respondents to define (in writing, of course!) each item in the list and give two examples for each item. After completing this task, respondents are asked to rank-order the items according to how much each item applies to them, from a great deal to nonapplicable. The rank-order is then used to administer all the subsequent assignments according to a standard format. This format is the same from one assignment to another, but with a different title for each assignment that follows the original sequence of rank-ordered items. Since all the tests used were copy-written, special permission (and fees!) was required to convert them into workbooks (L'Abate, 2002).

In this fashion, therefore, workbooks can be nomothetic as well as idiographic. They can fulfill research functions in the sense that all respondents can answer the same number of assignments, usually no more than six. They are also idiographic, in the sense that the sequence of homework assignments follows specifically what individual, couple, or family respondents have deemed as applying uniquely to them. For example, one can take and use all the rating scales, symptom checklists for adults, checklists for children and adolescents, functional impairment or disability, and quality of life or psychological well-being, to evaluate social anxiety disorder (Feldman, & Rivas-Vazquez, 2003, p. 402). By the same token, workbooks could be developed from a whole list of test instruments available to evaluate risk in sex offenders (Beech, Fisher, & Thornton, 2003, p. 346).

Consequently, one can then transform most tests into active and interactive vehicles of theory-testing from a relatively inert, static, and passive collection of paper-and-pencil, self- or other-report instruments, as already done for both single or multiple score tests (L'Abate, 1996). Once a workbook has been derived from a theoretical or empirical model, it becomes a direct instrument of theory- or model-testing. This advantage adds to the versatility of workbooks.

Hence, through workbooks, the link between evaluation and intervention is straightforward and direct, in a way that would be difficult if not impossible to achieve verbally. If a workbook is derived from a validated list of items defining depression, as in the case of the Beck Depression Inventory or Hamilton Depression Scale, for instance, they are now directly linked to the diagnostic label of depression. Therapists would not need to demonstrate that, verbally or through therapy notes, they have followed a treatment plan that derives from the original diagnosis. The workbook itself will fulfill this function, allowing direct demonstration and documentation that there is indeed a direct link between evaluation and intervention. No wonder that the market for self-help workbooks has increased exponentially in the past decade (L'Abate, 1996, 2004a).

There is another clinical advantage implicit into this transformation from statically inert tests into interactive workbooks. By administering a list of items defining any psychological construct or symptom, and asking respondents to define them and give two examples, one seems able to bridge the considerable semantic gap between professionals and respondents (L'Abate, 2004d). Instead of giving a diagnostic label with serious and likely threatening connotations, i.e., depression, anxiety, or even bipolar or schizophrenic disorder, the administration of a workbook constructed from test items or any other list of items would allow respondents to know exactly what is meant by labels or diagnoses assigned to them by professionals. This process would demythologize a great deal of the professional jargon that keeps respondents distant from professionals in a one-down position. The use of diagnostic labels ascribes the professional attributes and powers that respondents likely do not have (L'Abate, 2004b).

Furthermore, instead of just one feedback change loop from professionals to respondents through f2f talk, workbooks increase the number of feedback change loops available to respondents. They now have to answer questions that may have never been asked before. This process could be conceived as a form of self-monitoring, especially if it takes place at specific, predetermined times and places as homework (Craske & Tsao, 1999). Respondents now have to think on their own about how to answer each question, rather than talking to a professional. If they have partners or family members who are answering the same set of questions, partners or family members can set appointment times to exchange, compare, contrast, and discuss their answers with those of others. Even if respondents have no one to discuss their answers, like single adults or single parents, their completed assignments can become grist for discussions with professionals who administered the workbook, as would be the case with couples and parents (Appendix D).

In this regard, evidence to support or invalidate the models of this theory will be broken down into three possible levels between evidence and theory. Workbooks have been developed from: (1) constructs, concepts, tests, or evaluative instruments that are conceptually similar but completely independent from the models of the theory, as, for instance, those on depression or anxiety, among many others; (2) constructs or concepts that are conceptually similar and somewhat related to the models of the theory, as, for instance, codependency, and (3) constructs or concepts that are completely and directly derived, i.e., driven from models of the theory itself, as seen in the Depression, Negotiation, and Intimacy workbooks (L'Abate, 1986), and in the Planned Parenting workbook (Appendix D). Consequently, there are workbooks that are independent of the theory but that are deemed

to be conceptually similar to some of its models. There are workbooks that are in some way related to the models of the theory. There are workbooks that are completely and directly derived or driven from models of the theory.

In this way, workbooks become another, interactive way to verify the validity of theoretical models, in addition, of course, to relatively static and inert paper and pencil, self-report tests. Consequently, under these three levels, workbooks can and are active and interactive vehicles of validation for models of the theory, as shown throughout this work.

CONCLUSION

Personality development, as conceived by some theorists (in the United States) is strictly physical, internal growth based on genetic and physiological variables. Personality socialization, on the other hand, consists of all the interactions with intimates over time who matter and who furnish and receive nurturance emotionally, physically, financially, and materially. Consequently, the purpose of this book is to present a theoretical framework that integrates personality socialization in functional and dysfunctional intimate relationships, along the whole individual and family life cycles, in continuity with evidence generated from sources internal and external to the framework.