EXPLORING THE CONSCIOUS AND UNCONSCIOUS FIT BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE: AN EXAMINATION OF MENTAL REPRESENTATIONS, ATTACHMENT STATUS, AND INTIMACY WITHIN THE MARITAL SYSTEM

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Psychology
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2004

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Abstract

Exploring the Conscious and Unconscious Fit between Husband and Wife: An Examination of Mental Representations, Attachment Status, and Intimacy within the Marital System

by

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Adviser: Diana Diamond, Ph.D.

This dissertation combined projective and objective measures to assess the relationship between married individuals' mental representations, attachment status, and satisfaction with marital intimacy. This study also assessed the fit within couples by comparing married partners' levels of mental representations and attachment status. Data was collected from 51 heterosexual couples married at least 10 years. Participants were administered the Object Representation Inventory (ORI), a projective measure, and asked to describe their mother, father, spouse, and self. These narratives were rated for their degree of self-other differentiation using the Differentiation-Relatedness Scale of Self and Object Representations. Participants completed the Experiences in Close Relationships Measure (ECR), an objective self-report attachment measure in order to identify their attachment status. In addition, participants reported their satisfaction with marital intimacy by completing the Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships Inventory (PAIR), an objective self-report measure. The results showed that husbands and wives within each couple demonstrated a similar level of differentiation-relatedness. In addition, participants' differentiation-relatedness scores vis-à-vis their parents were significantly related to their differentiation-relatedness scores vis-à-vis spouse. No relationship was found between mental representations and attachment status; securely attached

individuals as measured by the ECR were not significantly better differentiated and related than insecurely attached individuals as measured by the ECR. Within most couples, partners were either both identified as being securely attached or both identified as being insecurely attached according to the ECR. However, there was no specific pattern found between the attachment statuses of husbands and wives classified as insecurely attached. Furthermore, no significant relationship was found between satisfaction with intimacy and the capacity for differentiation and relatedness. Among male participants, there was a significant relationship between satisfaction with marital intimacy and attachment status. For female participants, this was not the case. The lack of overlap between self-other differentiation and attachment measures in this sample suggests that these two dimensions may tap somewhat different aspects of relatedness, a finding which warrants further research. Results were discussed in terms of the differences between attachment status and the capacity for differentiation and relatedness and the implications of these two constructs for marital therapy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For me, the desire to become a clinical psychologist emerged at the age of 12. I knew that I would pursue a Ph.D. but I was not aware of the many people who would help me along the way. The faculty at CUNY enlightened me to innovative ways of understanding intrapsychic processes and the subtle implications that can be gleaned by observing interpersonal exchanges. Steve Tuber ushered me into graduate school and taught me to how to carefully synthesize the many aspects of an individual's personality. While engaging in this project, he actively supported me every step of the way and yet, in a gentle manner, always ensured that my goals remained realistic. Kate Oram supervised my clinical work and assisted me in developing kernels of an idea into a full-fledged dissertation. She supported my process in a way that enabled me to move forward when I felt unsure of myself. Elena Lesser Bruun and Rebecca Land Soodak, my family therapy mentors, modeled a way of examining the conscious and unconscious processes of couple interactions. They believed in me and continue to have faith in my abilities as a marriage and family therapist—and *that* has made all the difference. Diana Diamond, my adviser, guided me through this dissertation obstacle course by reading my work with a critical eye and helping me to clarify difficult theoretical concepts. She empowered me to complete this project with her enthusiasm and constant encouragement.

Thank you to all of the wonderful couples who gave of their time and energy, and shared personal moments with me, thereby contributing an invaluable richness and authenticity to this research. Finding people willing to take part in this study was one of the greatest challenges of this project. I want to especially thank the people who put forth great effort to recruit couples for my study and helped me to complete this project: Karen

Abrams, Toni Blustein, Elena Lesser Bruun, Tami Chelst, Chinazo Cunningham, Noemi Ebenstein, Ruth Ebenstein, Len Epstein, Louis Garb, Clara Gelbard, Bruce Goldberger, Jack Goldfarb, Shelly Goldklank, Toni Gordon, Wendy Heller, Efrat Lichtenstadt, Rebecca Levine, Madeline Lippman, Ali Moller, Dalia Nagel, Laura Romanoff, Michael Rosenthal, Kamal Singh, Jessica Steinberg, Rebecca Warkol, Robin Weinstein, and Lenora Zeitchik.

I am blessed with outstanding friends and an exceptional family: without them this dissertation would not be possible. I had the good fortune of meeting Debby Gillman when I began this the doctoral dissertation journey in 1998. Debby accepted phone calls at all hours of the night and, even all over the country, acting as my secure base when I needed a friend and/or colleague (she is special in the way that she is both) to get me over a hump—and there were many—and through to the next day. She pushed and pulled at all the right times with her intellect, generous spirit, and loving support. The importance of her role in this process cannot be overstated. She is a kindred spirit. And Roni, my helpmate, he only came on the scene during the final stages, but he showed up just in time. Lastly and most importantly, my family: Abba, Ema, Ruti, Donny, Deb, and Avi. My family has taken part in my desire to become a psychologist every step of the way, from the application process to editing draft upon draft of my dissertation. Above and beyond helping me with the nitty-gritty, knowing that I have you standing beside me and cheering me on is an incredibly reassuring feeling that cannot be adequately described in words. The confidence that enabled me to write this dissertation from start to finish is largely due to their unwavering faith in me. Thank you to my parents and siblings: even at the age of 12, you helped me to internalize a strong belief in

myself. I learned from you that one must be brave and bold to pave one's way in the world. And now I hope to take this training and personal development and do just that—continuing to grow as a scholar and clinician.

For all these kindnesses and support, I am grateful. Here's to the next stage.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and cleaves to his wife: and they become one flesh." Genesis 2:24

This thesis is an empirical analysis of the psychic histories that facilitate, underlie, and maintain long-term intimate relationships.* My interest in this topic was inspired by the treatment of an older woman who was referred to me in 1999. Although this woman was conscious of being unhappily married, she remained in her marriage—despite the absence of emotional reward, or compelling economic or social reasons (the couple was childless). She constantly toyed with leaving her husband, but felt that she had to stay. Though I met this woman only in individual therapy, much of our three-and-a-half year treatment focused on her relationship with her husband. It became clear to me that the "glue" in this marriage was psychological—a set of interlocking needs that the relationship fulfilled, despite lacking the more familiar rewards of companionship. The strength of this connection sparked my interest in the nature of the "glue" that binds couples together and maintains their bond over time.

In this particular case, this woman's personality included pronounced narcissistic features (as did her husband's). Thus, I began reading the literature on disturbed couples and focused my attention on marital interaction in narcissistic couples. It became clear to me that the interlocking relational templates of couples with personality disorders could contribute to the "glue" in their relationship, even as they undermine the capacity for flexibility and growth (Dougherty, 1997). This woman noted that her husband would constantly pressure her to take part in his personal hobbies. He seemed to believe that

* This dissertation refers exclusively to heterosexual married couples.

closeness stemmed from having the same interests. He urged her to join him in his exercise routine and felt rejected when she explained that it was bad for her back. She reported feeling unwanted when she would invite him to go for a walk and he would decline. There was little tolerance for independence in the relationship. When either of them asserted a sense of separateness, the other would feel rejected. As they struggled with boundaries in the relationship, this woman complained of feeling lonely and longing for companionship. She was often preoccupied with her husband's feelings for her, despite having been married for 20 years. She wondered if he remained with her because he loved her or rather due to his need for the physical care and financial support that she provided him. She rarely turned to him for comfort or care. Their relationship consisted of intermittent conflict, isolated moments of closeness, and long periods of emotional distance. I wondered what function this relationship served for each of them and why they remained married.

Theorists such as Scharff and Scharff (1991) have commented on how some individuals unconsciously pair off in some sense because the two partners are a good fit for acting out core conflicts. A marital "dance" is common to most couples, but in distressed couples, it tends to bring about greater dysfunction. The mechanism keeps the couple together, because each partner expresses the unexpressed parts of the other. Interactional patterns emerge from deeper relational templates, laid down in early childhood and modified over the course of later experiences. Realizing that individuals can be drawn to each other due to their relational styles, I began to wonder about other ways in which people are attracted to each other to form and sustain long-term romantic relationships.

My clinical practice and academic reading led me to reflect on three distinct but related ways in which interlocking psychological predispositions cement a relationship. Together, these are at the heart of my empirical inquiry.

Object relations theory offers a framework for understanding the role of the representational world in the conscious and unconscious in mate selection. Individuals are likely to be drawn to partners who fit into and activate the patterns of self-conception and primary ways of relating that developed in childhood. Thus, a romantic relationship provides an arena in which one can reenact unresolved early childhood experiences. This formulation provides a link between primary relationships within one's family of origin and romantic relationships established in adulthood. Consequently, one would expect an association between aspects of the images people have of their parental figures and that of their spouses. Due to the unconscious fit within couples in terms of object relations, partners are likely to match up according to the thematic content of their relational templates.

Partner choice can also be conceptualized as an attachment process. Attachment status, originating in early childhood and evolving thereafter, displays one's level of comfort with relying on a romantic partner and remaining emotionally available vis-à-vis one's partner. Specifically, a couple's capacity for healthy interdependence and satisfying intimacy—determined by each partner's attachment status—implicitly shapes the course of their marriage. Partners may be drawn to each other based on a similar sense of ease or discomfort with dependence in romantic relationships. Studies have shown that married partners' attachment styles are often complementary (Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994).

The experience of intimacy within a marriage can be examined to further understand the fit within a couple. Often, people are drawn into relationships in the hope of achieving intimacy. Yet, if partners are ambivalent about the experience of intimacy and the vulnerability it entails, they may very well collude to keep this experience at bay (Middleberg, 2001). Thus, partners may be drawn to each other because of their matching stances toward intimacy, and an implicit contract to maintain intimacy at a level comfortable to both. This dynamic, shaped by attachment status and relational styles, would be another example of how interlocking psychological predispositions bring romantic partners together.

Of course, all three of these themes are intertwined. In short, the underlying relational styles and attachment statuses of each member within a couple, as well as the fit between their respective stances, determine the experience of marital intimacy. The marital system can be examined according to these elements as a means for understanding the ties that bind couples together.

The woman I was treating complained that she no longer experienced intimacy with her husband. Together, she and her husband maintained emotional distance from each other, due to their fear of closeness. This position was sustained by their interlocking relational patterns and diffuse boundaries. At home and at work, she pursued situations that left her feeling exploited and unappreciated. This tendency fit neatly with her husband's manipulative approach that enabled him to drain people of their physical and emotional resources (this was his third marriage in which he again was financially dependent on his spouse). Her need to idealize him suited his grandiose view of himself. She regularly felt rejected by him, confirming her unconscious belief that she

felt unworthy of attention and gratification. They took turns playing the role of pursuer and distancer, a dance possibly driven by their difficulties with attachment. The power of this marital connection, causing this woman to stay married despite her wish to leave, highlighted for me the significance of underlying psychological mechanisms within a marriage. My analysis of this woman within her marriage worked as a springboard for my interest in and conceptualization of the marital bond. However, the dynamic interplay of unconscious processes occurs even in the absence of severe character pathology or marital distress. Consequently, the purpose of this study is to examine features of object relations, attachment, intimacy, and fit within relationships that serve to form the "glue" of long-term marriages.

Statements about interlocking needs forming the bond of a relationship are so common that they have become part of lay discourse. Yet, in trying to explore them more systematically, I was struck by the absence of good empirical psychoanalytic material on the topic. While there is an abundance of research on romantic relationships from a systems perspective, psychoanalytic literature has been focused primarily upon the individual. As a result, little has written about family therapy from an analytic perspective. Although there have been some psychoanalysts who specialize in family and couples work, few have been involved in empirical research. Instead, those clinicians have written papers based on experiences in private practice. The hope is that this research will widen the scope of analytically-informed inquiry into the marital dyad and encourage others to research marriage using psychoanalytic measurement techniques.

Within the family systems literature much research has focused on the conscious and unconscious aspects of mate selection. Psychologists have developed theoretical

frameworks as a way of understanding the psychological match within a marriage. Harville Hendrix, a contemporary couples therapist and the founder of Imago Therapy, asserts that individuals seek out a partner who can provide for the needs that were unmet during childhood. Murray Bowen, a pioneer of family therapy, believes that married partners are at the same level of differentiation in relation to their families of origin. Although these couples therapists (and many others) note that there is an unconscious fit of some sort between members of a couple, little empirical attention has been given to these unconscious elements of partner choice. The empirical research that has been conducted with regard to Bowen's theory of differentiation has rarely demonstrated a statistically significant relationship between level of differentiation and match between married partners.

This study makes empirical inroads into a psychodynamic conceptualization of marital dynamics by using measures that identify each of the three issues discussed above: object relations, attachment, and intimacy. The methodological approach is described in greater detail in the methods section but will be briefly outlined here.

This thesis explores whether spouses do indeed fit together in terms of their unconscious psychological development by assessing participants in terms of object representations. In this study, I assessed psychological development by examining an individual's capacity for differentiation and relatedness as reflected in the quality of his or her object representations. "Differentiation is your ability to maintain your sense of self when you are emotionally/and or physically close to others—especially as they become increasingly important to you" (Schnarch, 1997, p. 56). Schnarch elaborates that "well-differentiated people can agree without feeling like they're losing themselves, and

can disagree without feeling alienated and embittered" (Schnarch, 1997, p. 56). Relatedness can be defined as the ability to engage in reciprocal relationships that are characterized by empathic attunement as well as an appreciation for the other person's perspective (Blatt & Auerbach, 2001). An individual's capacity for differentiation and relatedness can be measured using a projective technique in which participants describe their family members. Themes and patterns in the narrative reflect aspects of the participant's relational template. The narratives in this study were scored using the Differentiation-Relatedness Scale of Self and Object Representations to determine level of psychological development (Diamond, Blatt, Stayner, & Kaslow, 1992). Within each dyad, partners' differentiation-relatedness scores for description of spouse were compared. This analysis provided a way to test whether spouses are at similar levels of psychological development in terms of their capacity for differentiation and relatedness.

According to attachment research, partners tend to be matched in terms of attachment status. Individuals classified with a secure attachment status are better able to turn to their partner for comfort and reassurance when distressed than those classified as insecurely attached (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002). Studies have shown that within couples both partners are commonly identified as securely attached or as insecurely attached. For the purposes of this study, I administered the Experiences in Close Relationships questionnaire (ECR) to identify participants' attachment status (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998). These results were used to test (a) whether those in the secure category tend to be married to each other and (b) whether those who are preoccupied tend to be married to those who are dismissing. Participants who demonstrated higher levels of differentiation and relatedness were expected to identify themselves as securely

attached because these two facets of psychological development have been considered critical aspects of functioning in interpersonal relationships.

To further investigate the quality of the marital bond, I asked participating couples to rate their experience of marital intimacy by completing the Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships questionnaire (Olson & Schaefer, 1981). Those who received higher scores on their level of object representations were expected to describe their marital intimacy as more satisfying than those who displayed a lower level of psychological development. Presumably, those who were better related would have the capacity to feel satisfied with their marriage and would be able to develop a fulfilling relationship. I expected that those who identified themselves as being securely attached would attain higher scores on their level of object representations than those classified as insecurely attached. Additionally, research has shown that attachment status is associated with relationship satisfaction (Brennan & Shaver, 1995). Individuals who identified themselves as being securely attached as measured by the ECR were expected to report greater satisfaction with marital intimacy than those who identified themselves as being insecurely attached as measured by the ECR.

This research is designed to demonstrate the types of dyads who are likely to report satisfaction with intimacy in a long-term relationship. Relying on anecdotal evidence, couple therapists have often espoused theories about the marital system and apply them in a clinical setting without any type of empirical support. Inferences from this research can guide clinical work with adult patients who are unable to engage in a long-term romantic relationship by considering the types of individuals who are likely to sustain a lasting marriage. In addition, this study aims to provide a link between the

capacity to metabolize parental figures and the capacity to offer an integrated view of a spouse.

People generally marry with the intention of sustaining a satisfying and everlasting relationship. However, couples often separate, as evidenced by the high divorce rate in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002). Furthermore, there are many distressed couples that remain together despite their unhappiness. In-depth research about the nature of marriage and marital intimacy may help show which couples are likely to remain married, information which can be used to guide the work of couples therapists.

There are two limitations to this research design. First, this study is based on a particular value system that is espoused by Western culture. Specifically, that the capacity to feel an independent sense of self separate from one's family increases the capacity for intimacy and the chances for a successful marital relationship. In certain Eastern cultures, this sort of independence may be discouraged because it is not culturally syntonic and developmentally normative; consequently, it may hinder the success of a romantic relationship as opposed to bolstering it. Moreover, one ought to keep in mind that the nature of a happily married couple may vary across cultures. The results of this study may not be applicable to all cultures. Second, this study looks at a normative sample rather than couples in distress. Ideally, one would compare a normative sample to a sample of couples in treatment. Due to limited resources and time constraints, this study does not compare two groups of couples.

This thesis examines the marital dyad through the application of an object relations paradigm, attachment theory, and an exploration of marital intimacy.

Individuals are drawn to each other in order to find emotional satisfaction and fulfillment. Yet, most couples struggle in, and even at times wrestle with, their relationship. Among those who sustain long-term marriages, some are happy while others remain married despite their dissatisfaction. The goal of this research is to uncover aspects that constitute the "glue" of long-term marriages. This empirical psychoanalytic investigation of long-term relationships offers insight into the relational world of the married individual and the marital system.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study is predicated on the commonly-held view in psychoanalytic literature that the achievement (or failure) of certain early developmental tasks is highly predictive of the adult's capacity for intimacy in romantic relationships. This literature review aims to inform the reader of the most relevant theories regarding psychological development and intimacy in order to provide the conceptual context from which the hypotheses and methodology are drawn.

Overview

The first section will focus on object relations theory and the premise that the achievement of early developmental tasks is highly predictive of the adult's capacity for intimacy in romantic relationships. In particular, this approach presumes that a person's capacity to negotiate the parent-child relationship will influence the ability to negotiate the marital relationship. The next section presents a theory of differentiation and describes its importance for the formation and functioning of the married couple. Attachment theory, the third section, discusses the concept that a secure attachment shapes the capacity for healthy, satisfying relationships. The final section proposes a theory of intimacy which includes an overview of some of the major conceptualizations of intimacy that have emerged thus far in the research literature with a focus on the connection between the capacity for differentiation and the experience of intimacy.

Each of these areas will be discussed at length below.

Domains

Object Relations Theory and the Married Couple

In *Marital Tensions*, Henry V. Dicks (1967) applies an object relations approach to the marital dyad. Dicks was one of the first psychoanalysts to conduct extensive research on the marital system as a unit, rather than separately diagnosing each member of the couple. A couple consists of two individuals coming together to form a union—a whole that is different from simply the sum of its parts (Dicks, 1967). This union includes two separate identities as well as a third identity often referred to as the couple identity. Dicks conceptualizes marriage as "the interplay of largely unconscious developmental histories of two persons so closely confronting each other" (Dicks, 1967, p. 8). By exploring each partner's object relations history, Dicks develops hypotheses about the joint psyche of the married couple.

Dicks (1967) developed his ideas while working at the Tavistock Clinic. He asserts that the married couple is influenced by three sub-systems that shape the level of cohesion within the dyad: (a) socio-cultural values and norms; (b) each partner's individual developmental history and capacity for reciprocal relationships; and (c) the unconscious forces, whether positively or negatively charged, which influence the capacity for the ego to sustain gratifying relations. For a marriage to survive, the couple must experience positive aspects in relation to at least two of the three categories, leading to a sense of satisfaction that outweighs feelings of dissatisfaction.

Dicks argues that the third sub-system, namely unconscious interaction, is most directly related to the quality of long-term marriages. He examines the inner world of each partner as a way of understanding the forces that guide the unconscious processes

within the married couple. Dicks' approach to understanding couple dynamics provides a link between early development, mental representations, and the marital dyad.

Object Relations Theory

Each partner's individual development directly impacts the health and stability of the marital couple. This section will describe early psychological development according to object relations theory. The existing literature on object relations is vast. My review will focus on the process of separation and individuation. The most germane area within this domain is the formation of mental representations, which promote the child's progress through stages of separation and individuation. These same representations contribute to the unconscious forces within the marriage as well as the experience of intimacy within the married couple.

Early Psychological Development

Object relations theorists maintain that the fundamental drive behind human behavior is the individual's need to connect with another person and develop a relationship (Scharff & Scharff, 1987). This desire to bond with others begins in infancy and continues throughout the life cycle. A baby is reliant upon mother for sustenance, care and nurturing. During this pivotal time in development, the child develops a model for social interaction that is derived from experiences with his or her parental figures. Fairbairn (1952) emphasizes that healthy development requires that the child feel loved as a person and that child must internalize that his or her love is accepted by parental figures. Otherwise, the child is unable to develop the capacity for independence and consequently separation will be experienced as threatening. The nature of the

relationship between the infant and primary caregivers determines the child's sense of self.

In response to interactions with parental figures, the infant progresses from the early stages of symbiosis (feeling as one with mother) and successfully moves through the various phases of separation-individuation. Mahler, Pine, and Bergman (1975) describe the maturation process of the two interlocking developmental tracks of separation and individuation. "One is the track of individuation, the evolution of intrapsychic autonomy, perception, memory, cognition, reality testing; the other is the intrapsychic developmental track of separation that runs along differentiation, distancing, boundary formation, and disengagement from mother" (Mahler et al., 1975, p. 63). This encoding process occurs in a primitive manner during the early years of life, and most likely takes place outside of conscious awareness. Over the course of this 'psychological birth' the baby embarks on a path that consists of four subphases: differentiation, practicing, rapprochement, and object constancy. During differentiation, the infant becomes aware of the separateness between the self and the primary caregiver. The practicing subphase is characterized by the infant's delight in mastering autonomous functions, especially locomotion. The child experiencing rapprochement struggles with separations from mother and develops ways to cope with her absence. When rapprochement is successfully resolved the toddler develops object constancy and is able to carry the image of the mother while apart from her. This ability to symbolize enables the toddler to gain a sense of independence while still feeling attached. Essentially, the process of internalization allows the child to tolerate distance from the mother. Through

the course of separation-individuation the child gains an awareness of separateness from the mother and develops an individuated autonomous identity.

During the final stages of separation-individuation, the child develops self-constancy and object constancy, which are developmental pre-requisites for the establishment of intimate fulfilling relationships (Kernberg, 1995; Siegel, 1992). Self-constancy refers to the child's capacity to experience a stable sense of self that is separate from primary caregivers. Initially, the internal representations of self and other are seamlessly merged; however, with time the images become distinct and separated by clear boundaries. The child's identity now emerges as its own entity. This achievement reflects the attainment of self-constancy. The child experiences the self in a realistic manner and is able to accept all parts of the self. The child's newfound ability to integrate the best and worst aspects of the self stands in sharp contrast to the previous mode of splitting.

Prior to object constancy the child organizes mental representations, of both self and other, in a polarized manner of 'all good' and 'all bad' clusters. Gradually, the child begins to combine the opposing internal images into whole representations that include both the good and the bad (Mahler et al., 1975). Once object constancy is achieved, the child can simultaneously keep in mind both satisfying and frustrating qualities of external objects and their representations. The child can now manage feelings of longing or discomfort, despite mother's absence. The internalized image of mother enables the child to function separately.

Fundamental to object constancy is the formation of introjects. Introjects are internal representations experienced as distinct from the self, yet belonging to the self

(Siegel, 1992). They play a critical role in enabling the child to establish a sense of separateness from primary external objects (Sandler & Rosenblatt, 1962). When the child is not in the presence of these significant objects, the introjects provide a way of staying connected to them while protecting the child from experiencing a sense of abandonment. Moreover, an introject allows the child to stay attached to the external object in the face of frustrating experiences. Similar to the actual objects, introjects assist in regulating emotions and creating a feeling of connectedness (Siegel, 1992). This capacity demonstrates that the child is further along in the process of separation-individuation and can experience a stable connection to a primary caregiver via these introjects. Individuals who do not complete this process of differentiation are likely to excessively rely on these introjects in an exaggerated manner for a sense of emotional stability.

Separation-Individuation and the Married Couple

Just as the infant must learn how to feel connected to and separate from the primary caregiver, so to the married couple must cultivate a sense of connectedness while maintaining individuality within the marital relationship. Diamond, Heinicke, and Mintz (1996) apply the developmental task of separation-individuation to the married couple and refer to it as marital individuation. They conceptualize this family relational pattern as the balance between mutuality and autonomy.

Diamond et al. (1996) devised a rating scale based on three aspects of marital individuation: (1) the balance between individual autonomy and couple cohesion; (2) the degree of differentiation in couple communication; (3) the degree of couple differentiation from family of origin. They assessed levels of marital individuation

within 46 married couples prior to the birth of their first child. Results of the study indicate that "the more individuated the couple is before the birth of their child, the higher the child's expectation of being cared for and sense of separate self at both 6 and 12 months" (Diamond et al., 1996, p. 34). This study demonstrates that a couple's level of marital individuation plays a significant role in early family development. Similarly, each partner's capacity for separation-individuation stems from experiences within his or her family of origin. Thus, parents tend to replicate patterns of interaction learned in their family of origin and transmit these relational models to their children.

Mental Representations

Mental representations are internalized early in life and become a set of blueprints for ways of relating to others. Although formed during early childhood, mental representations unfold throughout the life cycle. They shape the identity and personality of the individual as well as his or her perceptions of others. Siegel (1992) defines the representational world as a place where "the images of self and loved caretakers are stored and utilized in order to provide a foundation for the evaluation and development of all subsequent relationships" (p. xvii). Thus, the representational world acts as a link between an individual's past and present by joining the intrapsychic and interpersonal.

Mental representations are developed through memory traces, which result from pleasurable and painful interactions in the world (Sandler & Rosenblatt, 1962). Imbued with cognitive and affective elements, these memory traces are then translated into conscious and unconscious mental images of self and other (Blatt, Auerbach, & Levy, 1997). "These cognitive-affective schemas can involve veridical representations of consensual reality, idiosyncratic and unique constructions, or primitive and pathological

distortions that suggest psychopathology" (Blatt et al., 1997, p. 351). Eventually, the images become stable and enduring. Thereafter, the individual's experiences of self and other are processed in relation to the condensed representations.

Mental representations can be modified in response to a healthy nurturing relationship. Diamond, Kaslow, Coonerty, and Blatt (1990) found that the mental representations of adolescents diagnosed with borderline personality disorder reflected a greater sense of empathic relatedness and self-other differentiation following a successful inpatient treatment. Thus childhood experiences do not solely determine a person's level of emotional development as expressed through mental representations. Wallerstein and Blakeslee (1995) state that a good marriage has the power to transform an individual's sense of self and other. Jackson (1993) found that a positive marital relationship can heal early vicissitudes that stem from trauma or developmental immaturities.

Significantly, mental representations reflect an individual's level of psychological development (Blatt et al., 1997), affect the way in which a person regulates emotional experiences, and guide behavior in interpersonal relationships. Therefore, mental representations can be examined to assess psychological capacities critical to the marital relationship, specifically differentiation and relatedness.

Mental Representations and the Married Couple

An intimate union, like marriage, engenders a reorganization of the mental representations of each member of the couple (Siegel, 1992). Due to the intimacy intrinsic to the marital union, it may be the only relationship that is truly comparable to the parent-child bond. Thus, early childhood memories and experiences are evoked by the intimacy shared by the married couple.

Within the marital system, each partner acts as a new love object that is capable of deeply affecting the other. Just as the parental figure is generally able to soothe the infant and provide mirroring necessary for healthy self esteem, so too the lover has the power to regulate those functions. In some sense the lover embodies the omnipotent, idealized, and magical qualities ascribed to a primary caregiver through mental images. In the same way, the lover is endowed with "bad" elements appropriated from the representational world. Essentially, feelings and associations that were internalized in response to previous intimate relationships, such as those regarding parental figures, are now projected onto the new lover. These unconscious images are projected onto the adult couple to create the "unconscious matrix of the couple" (Karpel, 1994). Consequently, the present relationship is impacted by expectations, satisfied needs, and deficiencies of earlier relationships.

Thus, partners form expectations of their spouse based on certain fantasies and internal models. Dicks (1967) asserts that disappointment and resentment often arise when one or both members of the couple realize that the other does not perform the role of a preconceived figure from the spouse's fantasy world. While this tends to occur in most couples, the response to this realization varies depending on the level of development of each member of the couple.

As mentioned earlier, self constancy allows the individual to integrate good and bad aspects of the self. In healthy couples, each partner progressively lets go of the fantasied mate and comes to accept the actual other. Partners consistently see each other in a realistic manner, without excessive idealization and can accept each other's flaws (Scharff & Scharff, 1987). This fosters a secure environment which allows each

individual to regress at times, without damaging the overall bond. For example, when repressed aspects of the personality are expressed and one member of the couple attempts to project unwanted parts of the self onto his or her lover, the projections are contained, reworked, and returned. Successfully negotiating these emotional crises promotes growth and as a result the marriage matures.

The content of the representational world is critical because it influences an individual's identity and his or her capacity for intimacy (Siegel, 1992). Couples in which partners have well developed representations and a strong sense of self are more flexible and better able to face the interpersonal challenges of marriage. In other words, through trial and error they can adapt to new ways of handling anxiety and discord, a fundamental task of marriage (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1995). This capacity bolsters the marriage and aids the couple when it is faced with unexpected crises.

Couples with poorly developed representations of self and other are more likely to avoid feelings of vulnerability and resort to defensive maneuvers (Middleberg, 2001). Slipp (1984) asserts that some individuals will attempt to induce their partner to behave in ways that match their internal reality in order to cohere their internal fantasies and external world. Consequently, couples in which at least one member lacks a cohesive self "will be limited in their ability to make or maintain change" (Middleberg, 2001, p. 342).

Each partner needs to complete the process of separation-individuation from his or her own parents in order to fully adopt an adult autonomous role in the marital relationship (Dougherty, 1997). When the separation-individuation process is not successfully resolved, reality testing is generally compromised, resulting in dysfunction.

For example, introjects of past images can distort the present relationship. Blinder and Kirschenbaum (1967) explain that partners in unhealthy relationships tend to misperceive each other and see the other according to unexpressed hopes rather than actual experiences or capabilities. "They may attribute to their spouses many of their own unconscious attitudes which in turn are internalizations of important childhood figures, or they may project aspects of their own personality that rebel against these introjects" (Blinder & Kirschenbaum, 1967, p.45). In other words, without realizing it, the mates within the marital system are responding to internal representations rather than each other and these misperceptions lead to faulty communication.

Object constancy enables members of a couple to sustain a connection even during times of conflict or frustration. When husband and wife are apart, each can evoke an image of the other. Significantly, the attachment is maintained even when needs are not gratified because the married individual is sustained by the loving and affirming introjects associated with the mental representation of his or her spouse (Siegel, 1992). Thus, partners value one another above and beyond the satisfaction they derive from the relationship. Furthermore, each member of the couple can keep in mind a broader sense of the other that transcends any one particular disappointing moment.

Mental representations reflect an individual's level of psychological development and play a direct role in couple dynamics. These templates, activated by the intimate marital bond, are originally established in response to interactions with early caregivers. This thesis argues that there should be an association between the image people have of their parental figures and the image that they have of their spouse.

Mental representations offer a window into the inner psychological world of the married couple. Within couples, partners are likely to match up according to their patterning of mental representations because they tend to select partners with whom they can reenact the same frustrating and/or pleasurable relational patterns (Karpel, 1994). In other words, individuals may be drawn to each other because their mental representations somehow fit together.

Differentiation and Fusion within the Married Couple

According to Bowen Family Systems Theory, the level of differentiation within the couple significantly shapes marital intimacy and in turn marital satisfaction (Bowen, 1978). On an intrapsychic level, differentiation is the capacity to distinguish feelings from intellect. More specifically, those who are well differentiated can discriminate between their emotions associated with an experience and the objective reality of that event. From an interpersonal perspective, differentiation can be defined as the ability to experience a separate identity while feeling connected to another (Schnarch, 1997).

Unhealthy couples, incapable of differentiation, tend to engage in collusive processes whereby the partners cannot feel psychically separate from each other. Willi (1982) elaborates upon the concept of collusion whereby "disturbed partners encourage each other's pathological behavior and develop an unconscious arrangement" (p. 52). Rather than identifying one member of the couple as the "identified patient" or discriminating between an aggressor and a victim, the theory of collusion considers the interacting pair a struggling unit. Each member of the couple is an agent responsible for evoking certain behaviors and producing the problematic dynamic. The conflicts that arise from these feelings are enacted through different roles in the couple that often seem

to be opposites but in actuality are "polar variants of the same theme" (Willi, 1982, p. 56).

While most adults tend to regress at times with their spouse, some couples develop a joint identity rooted in unconsciously shared feelings that foster collusion. Dicks (1967) explains that married partners will identify each other as "the replica of the incorporated parental figure" (p. 58). In other words, spouses will displace conflicts about their family of origin onto one another. Each partner then feels compelled to play the role of the opposite parent. They begin to treat each other as if the other actually is the parental object. Consequently, the marital partners regress and behave as the children they once were, fighting with their parents all over again. Similar to the experience of the actual parent, each spouse is forced at various points to take on the role of the 'bad object.' When transferred back and forth within the couple on a regular basis, this process is known as collusion. The couple essentially works together to deny their unacceptable qualities.

Morgan (1995) refers to this kind of relationship as "the projective gridlock." Couplehood requires that two individuals maintain separate identities. However, these couples merge together to form a comfortable sense of fusion. This situation eliminates the possibility of growth within the relationship and eventually members of the couple begin to feel trapped or imprisoned. The fantasy is that by negating separateness in the relationship, members of the couple can feel that the relationship is predictable and safe. This form of gridlock tends to occur because of intrusive internal representations that are not being contained. Just as the individual feels the need to control the introject, so too

there is an attempt made to control the external object that is reminiscent of that internal object.

Studies of long-term marriages suggest that couples fare best when they are able to acknowledge a sense of separateness while feeling connected. Robinson and Blanton (1993) interviewed 15 couples who had been married for at least 30 years and assessed which strengths each couple perceived to be most important in sustaining their marriage. Notably, each couple reported that intimacy balanced with autonomy was one of several factors that greatly contributed to the success of their marriage. Dickson (1995) analyzed life story narratives of couples who had been married for at least 50 years. Happy couples had developed relational patterns that promoted awareness and validation of one another as their relationship evolved, aspects central to the capacity for differentiation.

Differentiation promotes closeness without fusion. Partners must be capable of differentiation in order to sustain a truly intimate relationship. Schnarch (1997) believes that one must be able to make self-other distinctions in order to develop intimacy with another. This distinction hinges on the awareness that one is separate from one's partner. The likelihood of emotional fusion within a couple is determined by the quality of the identities of the two people who form the dyad. Within healthy couples, each individual has a firm sense of self. A well defined personal identity allows the married partner to foster intimacy without the risk of undifferentiated fusion. Under conditions of intense closeness and sexual intimacy, there may be momentary losses of the self that are integral to a functional relationship (Alperin, 2001). "In the midst of passion—whether angry or ecstatic—boundaries are lost. Sometimes such merging is delightful; sometimes it is horrendous. Healthy couples experience this just as dysfunctional ones do. However, the

fortunate marital pair can regroup, clear up the boundaries, and reestablish effective dialogue between two sovereign persons" (Beavers, 1985, p.78). In other words, these moments are healthy as long as the couple is able to (a) separate successfully while still feeling a bond and (b) experience a connection without merger (D. Diamond, personal communication, August 6, 2003).

Separateness and differences are accepted and respected within the couple; this ensures that each partner can retain his or her unique identity without undermining closeness in the relationship. Furthermore, adults who have attained object constancy are likely to remain differentiated from their partners. Thus, due to affirming mental representations, they can feel connected to each other even when the other is temporarily frustrating or unavailable (Middleberg, 2001).

Intimacy becomes destructive when it leads to a sense of undifferentiated fusion lending support to Schnarch's (1997) emphasis on the couple's capacity to make self-other distinctions. He asserts that individuals with a capacity for differentiation are more able to engage in satisfying intimate relationships than those who are incapable of differentiation. Those who are not well differentiated may lean on their spouse for assistance in regulating overwhelming emotions or bolstering their self-esteem.

One's level of differentiation stems from experiences in the family of origin and is consolidated within the context of marriage (Bowen, 1978). Presumably, the capacity for differentiation vis-à-vis parental figures influences the married individual's level of differentiation experienced with his or her spouse. Furthermore, Bowen identifies differentiation of the self as a critical piece in the match between husband and wife. Those with a greater capacity for differentiation are able to engage in deeper levels of

intimacy. Individuals who struggle with differentiation are likely to avoid personal relationships altogether or form relationships exclusively for the purposes of fulfillment of their own emotional needs. Bowen asserts that people at different levels of differentiation are unlikely to marry each other because their lifestyles are so different that they will not be drawn to each other.

Studies on differentiation within married couples have yielded mixed results with respect to Bowen's theory that people at similar levels of differentiation tend to be married to each other (Skowron, 2000). However, previous research regarding differentiation and couples has focused on self-report questionnaires that assess married partners' conscious experience of their relationship. This study examines mental representations, a preconscious aspect of personality to determine each married partner's level of differentiation.

Attachment Theory and Romantic Relationships

Attachment theory postulates that early childhood experiences between mother and child determine future interactional patterns. Bowlby (1973), one of the founders of attachment theory, observed the emotional and behavioral reactions of toddlers who had been temporarily separated from their maternal figures, placed in institutional settings, and were later reunited with their families. He noted that children, like primates, protest when separated from their parents. The separated children expressed feelings of despair that often developed into a sense of detachment. Given that children behave in ways similar to primates who alert their caregivers when threatened by predators, Bowlby deduced that an infant's reaction to separation is also an evolutionary phenomenon designed to signal to caregivers that the distressed infant is in need of protection, thereby

ensuring its survival. Furthermore, he concluded that the attachment relationship between mother and child has the power to shape the future psychological functioning of the child. The child's early experiences of attachment became the cornerstone of his developmental theory. Infants will turn to their mother in the face of distress for protection or comfort. The mother's level of attentiveness in response to the child's needs determines the child's experience of safety and security in the world. If the mother is consistently responsive, the child comes to assume that mother is reliable and will always be available for care and nurturing. If the mother is inconsistently attentive (or intrusive) the child becomes anxious and fearful of abandonment or neglect, although those feelings may not be openly expressed by the child. Over time, the child's interactions with the primary caregiver are translated into mental images. These images are consolidated and internalized into working models which influence the child's sense of self as well as his or her experience vis-à-vis attachment figures. The child develops a prototype for relationships based on these mental models.

Working from Bowlby's belief that attachment unfolds throughout the life cycle, Hazan and Shaver (1987), two social psychologists, conceptualized romantic love as an attachment process. In support of their position they compare the parent-infant connection to that of adult lovers. Parents and infants develop a human affectional bond; similarly, adults who become romantically involved engage in this process. Just as the infant feels a sense of safety and comfort in the presence of the primary caregiver, so too lovers prefer to be in close proximity to one another.

As noted earlier, Bowlby (1973) introduced the idea of internal working models, developed during early childhood, that shape facets of one's personality. Hazan and

Shaver (1987) believe that these mental models include a template for intimate relationship styles. Aspects of the internal working models are conscious while certain aspects remain out of awareness. Like cognitive scripts, the mental models form the basis for beliefs about romantic love. Similarly, behavior patterns enacted in intimate relationships reflect early childhood experiences. Though the template may be altered as a result of certain social experiences, the mental models tend to endure throughout adulthood.

Hazan and Shaver (1987) adapted Ainsworth's attachment status classification system for the purpose of studying adult attachment styles within romantic relationships. They designed the love-experience questionnaire by converting patterns of infant attachment into descriptions of romantic love styles. The questionnaire is a one-item self-report measure in which adults are asked to specify which of three different love styles best describes their feelings about intimate relationships. Each category includes a short description that corresponds to Ainsworth's three attachment classifications: secure, anxious/ambivalent, and avoidant.

In their first study, Hazan and Shaver (1987) published the love-experience questionnaire in a newspaper, along with several other measures that assessed experiences of love and childhood relationships. They predicted that similar to the infants Ainsworth classified, approximately 60% of respondents would identify themselves as secure while the rest would split fairly evenly between the avoidant and anxious/ambivalent categories. About half of the participants (56%) classified themselves as secure, while the remaining respondents were roughly split between the avoidant (25%) and anxious/ambivalent (19%) categories. Furthermore, they discovered

that the relationships of 'secure' respondents had endured on average significantly longer than those in the anxious/ambivalent and avoidant groups. The responses of the secure participants reflected differences in love experience, differences in mental models, and differences in attachment history from those in the avoidant and anxious participants.

Bartholomew (1990) studied Hazan and Shaver's (1987) model of adult attachment within intimate relationships as well as Main and Goldwyn's (1985) classification of adult attachment patterns based on representations of early childhood experiences. Bartholomew (1990) combined the two approaches and constructed a two-dimensional four-group model of adult attachment style based on Bowlby's conceptual framework of internal working models. Bowlby proposed that the infant's mental model consists of two critical elements: a sense of the primary caregiver and a sense of self. Bartholomew explains that adult attachment style can be best understood by examining beliefs about the self and beliefs about the other. Prior to describing Bartholomew's model, it is necessary to understand the conditions that shape experiences of self and other.

The child acquires a sense of self worth and an impression of the outside world in response to experiences with primary caregivers during the early years. Specifically, the parent's level of attentiveness as a caregiver determines the child's future experience and expectation of others in social settings. For example, a consistently attentive parent communicates to the infant that he or she is worthy of care and lovable. Furthermore, the child comes to expect others to also behave in a nurturing manner. This emotional experience carried into adulthood engenders a positive self-concept and a belief that people will be caring, responsive, and reliable. In contrast, a neglectful or intrusive

parental figure conveys to the child that he or she is unworthy of care and deserves to be ignored as well as an expectation that people tend to be rejecting and untrustworthy. Consequently, as an adult this individual will harbor a negative self-concept and assume that others are uncaring and distant. According to this perspective, feelings about self and other develop in early childhood and shape future interactions within adult intimate relationships.

Bartholomew (1990) proposes that attachment can be organized around models of self and other and dichotomized as either positive or negative. She offers four attachment prototypes: secure, preoccupied, fearful, and dismissing.

The secure category is common to the models offered by Hazan and Main. Within Bartholomew's conceptualization, a secure attachment style includes a positive view of self and a positive view of others. Securely attached individuals believe they are worthy of love and that others will support them. Those identified as preoccupied have a negative sense of self while feeling a positive sense of the other. The preoccupied pattern of behavior corresponds to Main's preoccupied style and Hazan's ambivalent style. These individuals tend to be overly dependent, seek approval from others, and feel unworthy of love. The secure and preoccupied adults are able to depend on others and engage in intimate relationships.

The fearful and dismissing adults avoid close relationships and are therefore classified as avoidant. The fearful character has a negative view of the self and the outside world. Fearful individuals feel unworthy and experience apprehension in social situations. Despite their desire for intimate relationships they tend to avoid social relations because they fear rejection. Those who are dismissing have a negative view of

others; however, they have a positive view of self. Consequently, they tend to be high achievers, independent, self-reliant, and uninterested in intimate relationships.

		MODEL OF SELF (Dependence)	
		Positive (Low)	Negative (High)
MODEL OF OTHER (Avoidance)	Positive (Low)	**Article I. SECURE** Comfortable with intimacy and autonomy	**Article II. PREOCCUPIED** Preoccupied (Main) Ambivalent (Hazan) Overly Dependent
	Negative (High)	**Article III. DISMISSING** Denial of Attachment Dissmissing (Main) Counter-dependent	**Article IV. FEARFUL** Preoccupied (Main) Avoidant (Hazan) Socially Avoidant

Note. From "Avoidance of Intimacy," by K. Bartholomew, 1990, *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 7*, p. 163. Copyright 1990 by the Journal of Social and Personal Relationships. Reprinted with permission.

Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) emphasize that the model is not strictly categorical rather it is a theoretical approach for understanding patterns of behavior. People may carry elements of the different attachment styles. Those with an avoidant attachment style tend to fear intimacy while those who are securely attached are generally comfortable with intimacy.

Attachment studies conducted using Main's Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) indicate that individuals can develop a secure attachment status, commonly referred to as 'earned-secure' attachment. These individuals endured childhood experiences and parenting histories that often result in an insecure attachment status. However, they were able to produce coherent narratives that demonstrate the capacity to reflect in a flexible manner and were therefore classified as securely attached (Siegel, 1999). "These individuals often appear, from impressions of the information contained within their AAI

narratives, to have had a significant relationship with a close friend, romantic partner, or therapist, which has allowed them to develop out of an insecure status and into a secure/autonomous AAI status" (Siegel, 1999, p.91). Evidently, attachment status is not solely determined by early relationships with primary caregivers. A romantic relationship has the power to foster a secure attachment status.

Kirschner and Kirschner (1986) emphasize that dyadic attachment is a primary need throughout the life cycle. When adults marry, they transfer attachment needs from their parental figures onto their spouse. The research on adult attachment styles offers a way of understanding why some couples succeed in maintaining fulfilling long-term relationships while others are unable to achieve this relational experience (Mikulnicer, Florian, Cowan, & Cowan, 2002). Studies show that couples in which both members are securely attached are more satisfied with their relationship (Mikulnicer et al., 2002). This study assessed the link between attachment status and experience of intimacy by examining whether those who were securely attached experienced more satisfying levels of intimacy.

Studies show that married partners tend to be nonrandomly paired with regard to attachment style (Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994). Kirkpatrick and Davis assessed heterosexual couples in serious dating relationships and found that individuals with certain attachment statuses were more likely to pair off with one another. Significantly, none of the couples in their sample consisted of two anxious partners or two avoidant partners. Anxious partners were generally paired with avoidant partners and vice versa. Kirkpatrick and Davis believe that anxious and avoidant partners are likely to pair off with each other rather than with a partner with the same attachment style because each

one confirms the other person's preconceived notion about the level of emotional availability and support that can be expected from a significant other.

In general, studies of attachment status tend to include few participants with either an anxious attachment or avoidant attachment. Kirkpatrick and Davis (1994) point out that those engaged in a serious long-term relationship are more likely to be securely attached. A secure attachment contributes to an individual's ability to participate in a long-term relationship and a serious relationship may help foster a secure attachment status.

This study compared the attachment status of husband and wife within each couple in order to replicate previous findings of complementarity.

Internal Working Models and Mental Representations

Object relations theory and attachment theory both offer theoretical formulations regarding early relationships and their impact on social, emotional, and cognitive development. Each theory underscores the role of parent-child interactions as central in shaping early psychological development. Furthermore, both viewpoints posit that these recurrent interactions are translated into internal cognitive-affective representations that serve as heuristic guides for subsequent relationships that contribute to developmental continuity (Levy & Blatt, 1999). Though these two perspectives overlap in important ways, there are notable differences between the two schools of thought.

Attachment theory is grounded in an evolutionary approach. Attachment theorists maintain that the child's goal is to achieve the desired degree of physical proximity to the primary caregiver (Fonagy, 2001). This physical experience regulates the child. Over the course of early development the goal of physical proximity transforms into an attempt

to secure a psychological sense of closeness; this new aspect to the relationship is modulated by the emotional availability of the caregiver. Internal working models—a construct defined by attachment theory—originate primarily from actual attachment related experiences, rather than fantasies associated with those events (Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy, 1985). Internal working models are not related to all aspects of the parent-child relationship. Rather, these models arise from the repeated interactions that occur when the child seeks out the caregiver. The parent's level of responsiveness, when sought out by the child, shapes the development of the child's internal working models. Thus, models of self and other begin to develop concurrently in response to these recurrent exchanges. They are not necessarily consistent or coherent (Levy, Blatt, and Shaver, 1998).

Object relations theory is based on the premise that the child is object-seeking and his or her foremost wish is to establish a relationship with the caregiver. While a biological basis to the infant's behavior is noted by object relations theory, the psychological urge to connect with the caregiver is considered primary. Though object representations are constructed in response to early interactions between caregiver and infant, they are also influenced by drives, defenses and impulses (Kernberg, 1995). The child's internal experience, especially with regard to conflicts and fantasies, play an integral role in the formation of object representations. Mental representations of self and other develop independent of one another, unlike internal working models of self and other which develop in tandem. As they proceed through a developmental sequence, these representations become increasingly complex, symbolic and integrated (Levy & Blatt, 1999).

"Individuals classified as having the same attachment organization may vary in the degree of differentiation, integration, and internalization of their self and other object representations" (Levine, 2002). Previous research offers conflicting evidence regarding the relationship between internal working models and mental representations. Levy et al. (1998) assessed the relationship between attachment style and mental representations of parental figures. Using Hazan and Shaver's (1987) attachment styles categories, Levy et al. found that among a sample of 189 securely attached participants' mental representations of mother and father were characterized by higher levels of differentiation and relatedness than those of the avoidant and anxious-ambivalent participants. They also administered Bartholomew's four-category self-report attachment measure to 54 participants from the original sample. In this case, securely attached individuals did not score higher than insecurely attached individuals on the differentiation-relatedness scale for representation of mother. Among the insecurely attached respondents, they found that fearful individuals scored much higher than dismissing individuals for representation of mother on the Differentiation-Relatedness Scale. Those identified as secure and those identified as fearful had more differentiated representations of father than those classified as dismissing. Despite their insecure attachment style, fearful avoidant individuals—like the secure individuals—were able to reflect on their parents in a complex and integrated manner. Based on these findings, the relationship between attachment status and psychological development as measured by the Differentiation-Relatedness Scale remains unclear.

Intimacy

Intimacy is a central and vital aspect of marriage (Bagarozzi, 1997). Studies show that intimacy is a key determinant of marital satisfaction (Greeff & Malherbe, 2001; Schaefer & Olson, 1981). This assertion is reinforced by the fact that couples in distress often begin marital therapy because they feel intimacy is lacking in their relationship. Aware that couples commonly struggle with intimacy, researchers and clinicians seek a better understanding of intimacy. Clear and comprehensive definitions of intimacy have been operationalized for research purposes and marital enrichment programs. Yet, there is little consensus regarding the exact meaning of intimacy.

Definitions of intimacy vary depending on the approach used to understand the term. There are various ways of conceptualizing intimacy. Some identify it as a capacity that is located within the individual (Erikson, 1963). Others understand it as a phenomenon or process that occurs between people and evolves over time (Schaefer & Olson, 1981). According to a relational model, intimacy is co-created (McMahon, 1997). Based on these different perspectives, it seems that intimacy refers to an experiential process, an interpersonal dynamic as well as an individual's potential for connecting with another person. Examining intimacy from different vantage points affords a fuller understanding of the term.

Erikson (1968) considers intimacy both a normative developmental crisis that occurs during early adulthood and an individual's ability to connect with another. According to Erikson, identity formation is a prerequisite for the capacity for intimacy. Subsequent to the identity formation, the individual begins to seek out others with whom s/he can unite. Due to the tension between identity formation and closeness with another,

intimacy challenges the individual's sense of self. Each adult must be prepared to face the fear of losing one's self, whether emotionally or physically, by coming close to another. Often a person will avoid intimate experiences due to a fear of engulfment. Warding off intimacy often results in isolation and possibly self-absorption, which can lead to psychological disturbance.

Erikson (1980) explains that many young people marry in the hopes that they will find themselves by finding another. However, becoming a mate and having to fulfill the new role that accompanies being married may limit the individual from further developing the self. Specifically, in order to create a sense of 'twoness' one must have a sense of oneself as an individual. Those who lack a consolidated identity often engage in relationships for the purposes of narcissistic mirroring in which case "to fall in love then often means to fall into one's mirror image, hurting oneself and damaging the mirror" (Erikson, 1980, p.134). The experience of an emotional merger results in identity diffusion often accompanied by primitive aggression. In contrast, a person with a flexible ego can be immersed in a relationship without losing a sense of self.

Since Erikson, many have considered the relationship between identity and the capacity for intimacy. Lerner (1989) understands intimacy as the ability to stay connected to all aspects of the self and the other without having to distort or control the other. Ehrenberg (1975) believes that one must have an intimate understanding of oneself in order to experience an intimate relationship with another person. According to Firestone and Catlett (1999), individuals with a firm sense of their own identity are more capable of intimacy because they are not dependent on their partner for affirmation. Furthermore, they assert that empathy and understanding directly impact one's potential

for intimacy. "Each partner must learn to identify with the other, and both together to identify with the marriage" (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1995, p.63). Mutual empathy results from engaging in self-disclosure, truly listening to one's partner, and responding accordingly. Empathic identification fosters intimacy and deepens the relationship.

Feeling close while acknowledging separateness is a challenge for those pursuing intimate relationships. Members of most couple systems grapple with the "inherent paradox in intimate partnerships, i.e. how can I have a sense of myself (autonomy) while still being in a relationship with you (connection)?" (Miehls, 1999, p. 341). This question is the essence of the conflict between intimacy and independence (Willi, 1982). Partners attempt to establish a satisfying measure of closeness without feeling submerged.

When there is sufficient differentiation, this new object relationship holds the possibility of expanding one's sense of self to incorporate new possibilities. Intimate interpersonal interactions with a new object afford an opportunity for a new experience of the self. "A new identity is created as the self is experienced as a loved object, a sexual object, a loving and dependent self, and a partner in a relationship that causes the self to be redefined by others" (Siegel, 1992, p. 18). Each partner in the relationship must contend with these previously unknown parts of themselves emerging as they experience the intimate self.

Intimacy can be understood as the ability to experience both positive and negative aspects of closeness with another without trying to change the other. Positive aspects would consist of closeness, relatedness, empathy, acceptance and the ability to share one's most vulnerable self. Negative aspects include expressing aggression, sharing feelings that are uncomfortable such as shame or guilt, and behaving in ways that expose

the intolerable parts of the self. Intimacy can exist without experiencing both types of elements. The fullest experience of intimacy includes both the positive and negative aspects. The marriage should allow a certain flexibility that allows each partner to change his or her role in response to a particular need at any given moment in the relationship, whether it is a moment of frustration or one which calls for emotional support. "The same need for flexibility could also be demonstrated as applying to aggressive and to sexual needs: to tolerate and respond appropriately to the partner's varying mood for activity, passivity, a quarrel or tender reconciliation" (Dicks, 1967, p. 72). In other words, the capacity to manage aggression is fundamental to sustaining intimacy within the relationship. Dicks believes that "the ability to 'contain hate in a framework of love'" is essential for the married couple as well as a critical piece in all human relationships (Dicks, 1967, p. 31). Kwawer (1982), citing Melanie Klein, highlights this point. He states that "the central developmental achievement of intimacy (and indeed of life) is the capacity for whole object relations, that is, where love and hate can be tolerated in a relationship dominated by mutual concern. Destructiveness can be lived with and survived." (Kwawer, 1982, p. 56).

Schaefer and Olson (1981) focus on the experiential aspects of intimacy. They understand intimacy as a multi-faceted process that is actualized through appropriate self-disclosure of intimate topics and the sharing of intimate experiences. They distinguish intimate moments from an intimate relationship. Moments of intimacy include feelings of closeness that result from sharing an experience, which may be emotional, social, intellectual, sexual, or recreational. An intimate relationship develops as a result of the long-term experience of sharing intimate moments through the five domains listed above.

By completing a self-report measure, married partners can give an account of their relationship in terms of the five categories delineated by Schaefer and Olson. This description of intimacy is easily applied for research purposes because it corresponds to the individual's conscious perception of the relationship. Furthermore, this inventory does not prescribe an ideal amount of intimacy. Dickson's (1995) research on long-lasting marriages found that some couples were happy with little closeness or intimacy while others enjoyed a higher level of intimacy in their marriages. In conclusion, this measure allows participants to report the extent to which they are satisfied with intimacy in their relationship.

Relevant Research on Object Relations, Attachment, and Intimacy

There is little previous research that has focused on the relationship between object relations, attachment status, and marital intimacy. While there are relatively few journal articles related to this subject, there are several dissertations that address themes associated with this topic. For example, Calabrese (1998) investigated object representations as they relate to adult attachment, intimacy, and self-esteem. Using the Social Cognition and Object Relations Scale, she assessed university students' representations of mothers, fathers, lovers, and themselves. These students also completed the Reciprocal Attachment Questionnaire, Hazan and Shaver's self-report attachment measure, and the Fear of Intimacy Scale. Calabrese did not find a significant relationship between the quality of participants' object representations and their attachment status. Furthermore, her study did not find an association between participants' level of object representations and their fear of intimacy. In another dissertation, Sweeney (1986) examined the relationship between object representations

and marital satisfaction. Using Krohn's Dream Scale, he explored the object relatedness of married couples through their reported dreams. He administered the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test to assess couples' marital satisfaction. Sweeney did not find a significant relationship between level of object representations and participants' experience of marital satisfaction. These studies did not demonstrate a link between object representations, attachment status, and marital satisfaction. This topic remains an important area in the literature on marital dynamics and must be further researched in order to validate or disconfirm previous findings.

Summary

As discussed in this literature review, while there are many ways of studying the match between members of a couple, looking at the level of object representations within a dyad affords a view into unconscious aspects of the marriage. In addition, a comparison between the attachment status of members of the same couple can provide further insight into the nature of enduring relationships. Finally, intimacy offers a way of measuring a couple's conscious experience of marital satisfaction. In attempt to provide empirical data on the theories presented, this study examined the link between the conscious intimate dynamic and unconscious relational template via the assessment of object relations, attachment status, and marital intimacy.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Participants

This sample consisted of 51 heterosexual couples married at least 10 years. The mean for length of marriage was 26 years (*SD* = 13).

The male participants ranged from 33 to 79 years of age. The average age of participants was 55.6 years of age (*SD* = 12.4). Regarding marital status, 24.6% had been married previously. In terms of race, 96.1% classified themselves as Caucasian, 2.0% as African American, and 2.0% as Latino. Concerning religion, 78.4% identified themselves as Jewish, 11.8% as Catholic, 5.9% as Protestant, 2.0% as other, and 2.0% reported that they had no religious affiliation. The husbands represented a highly educated group. Of the total sample, 60.8 % had some graduate or professional training, 37.3% had attended college, and 2.0% had only completed high school.

The female participants ranged from 33 to 77 years of age. Their average age was 52.9 years (*SD* = 12.3). Regarding marital status, 23.6% had been married previously. In terms of race, 90% identified themselves as white, 3.9% as black, and 5.9% as Latino. Concerning religion, 71% identified themselves as Jewish, 9.8% as other, 7.8% as Protestant, 7.8% as Catholic, and 3.9% of the sample reported that they had no religious affiliation. The wives also represented a highly educated group. Of the total sample, 51% had some graduate or professional training, 43.1 % had attended college, 3.9 % completed only high school, and 2% had not finished high school.

Recruitment

Couples were recruited from Connecticut, New Jersey, and New York. Most couples heard about the study through the investigator's personal contacts and the word-of-mouth or "snowball" sampling technique that these initial contacts created. Also, flyers were posted around two university campuses and in New York City apartment buildings informing couples of the opportunity to participate in a study about couples communication. Ads were placed in two weekly newspapers for a period of one week.

This study included couples in long-term marriages. A relationship that has demonstrated longevity is more suitable for research regarding object relations and intimacy. Those who have been married for a significant period of time are likely to have developed stable, enduring images of each other. Though marriage can end in divorce at any time, couples who have been married for at least nine years are less likely to separate (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1995). Therefore, the sample consisted of heterosexual couples who had been married for at least 10 years.

Couples were not eligible if they were pregnant or raising an infant because studies show that women tend to respond differently while pregnant. Marital assessments based on the responses of pregnant woman cannot be generalized to non-pregnant woman (Kestenberg, 1976). In addition, couples who lost a child were excluded from the study because they are likely to experience the marital relationship in a significantly different manner from couples who have not endured that type of trauma (Bernstein, Duncan, Gavin, Lindahl, & Ozonoff, 1989).

Measures

Object Representations Inventory:

Differentiation-Relatedness Scale of Self and Object Representations

The Object Representations Inventory (ORI) afforded an exploration of the unconscious and preconscious representations of individuals (Blatt, Chevron, Quinlan, Schaffer, & Wein, 1988). The mental representations of couples were examined by administering the ORI in order to assess the thematic content of participants' mental representations. The concept of object representations grew out of an integration of psychoanalytic theory of object relations and projective testing. Krohn and Mayman (1974) examined interpersonal aspects of the object representational world by analyzing Rorschach responses, early memories, and dreams. These authors concluded that the "level of object representation appears to be a salient, consistent, researchable personality dimension that expresses itself through a relatively diverse set of psychological avenues" (Krohn & Mayman, 1974, p. 464). Building upon this principle Blatt et al. (1988) developed a measure that assesses the level and quality of self and other representations. The ORI is a self-report measure in which the respondent is asked to verbally describe his or her mother, father, self, therapist, and another significant person in his or her respondent life. This can be conducted by interviewing the participant or by requesting written responses from the participant. In this study, participants were asked exclusively about their mother, father, spouse, and self.

Responses to the ORI can be assessed in terms of self-other differentiation and intersubjectivity using the Differentiation-Relatedness Scale of Self and Object

Representations developed by Diamond et al. (1992). In an earlier paper, Diamond et al. (1990) operationalized Mahler et al.'s (1975) concepts of separation-individuation and Stern's (1985) theory of intersubjectivity to evaluate representations of self and other. "The scale views psychological development as progressing simultaneously toward the emergence of a consolidated, integrated and individuated sense of self-definition as well as empathically attuned, reciprocal modes of interpersonal relatedness" (Diamond et al., 1992, p.11). According to Diamond et al.'s (1992) formulation, self-definition and interpersonal relatedness develop simultaneously in an interactive manner to facilitate personality development. As representations of self and other become increasingly cohesive, differentiated, and integrated, the individual attains a more mature level of empathically attuned, reciprocal interpersonal relatedness. Diamond et al. (1999) compared ratings of self-other differentiation and relatedness between two judges. They rated 60 protocols, which included 30 protocols independent of their study as well as a subsample of 30 protocols from their study, and obtained an intraclass correlation coefficient (*ICC*) = .96.

This measure can be used to assess levels of differentiation and relatedness within couples. The ORI was verbally administered separately to married partners. Partners' scores on representation of spouse were compared to determine whether or not married couples' representations tend to reflect similar levels of differentiation-relatedness. As stated earlier, levels of representation directly impact intimate relationships. Individuals who have experienced healthy personal development are likely to experience their partner in a realistic manner. Early development can be examined by looking at scores on descriptions of parental figures. Those who

demonstrate the capacity for object constancy vis-à-vis their parents are likely to have attained a similarly high level of differentiation-relatedness with respect to their spouse. Individuals who receive low scores on representation of spouse may be more likely to struggle with intimacy causing them to experience marital distress. Object relations couples therapists maintain that partners tend to 'fit' together. The results of this investigation may help to extend this theory.

Experiences in Close Relationships

Brennan et al. (1998) developed the Experiences in Close Relationships questionnaire (ECR) in order to provide researchers with a reliable and easily administered attachment instrument. This self-report measure includes 36 statements concerning feelings and experiences in romantic relationships. The respondent is asked to rate how much he or she agrees/disagrees with each statement using a seven point Likert scale. The statements are representative of two higher-order attachment dimension scales: avoidance and anxiety. Respondents can score high or low on each of the dimensions resulting in four possible attachment style categories: secure, fearful, preoccupied, and dismissing. The "secure" cluster respondents are those who score low on both the avoidance and anxiety dimensions while participants in the "fearful" cluster score high on both avoidance and anxiety. Those classified in the "preoccupied" cluster score low on avoidance and high on anxiety and those in the "dismissing" cluster score high on avoidance and low on anxiety.

Brennan et al. (1998) constructed the ECR to establish a self-report attachment measure capable of yielding statistically strong results. They compiled every multi-item scale available, including Hazan and Shaver's (1987) original love

questionnaire and Bartholomew and Horowitz's (1991) relationship questionnaire. Their questionnaire was a single measure that included aspects of each scale, while excluding redundant items. The resulting 323 item measure was administered to over 1,000 undergraduate students enrolled in a psychology course. Based on correlations among the 60 attachment subscales, the two factors of avoidance and anxiety emerged. Those items demonstrating the highest absolute value correlations with the avoidance and anxiety factors were selected and used to construct the two 18-item scales of the ECR.

Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships

The Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships Inventory (PAIR), developed by Schaefer and Olson (1981), is a systematic tool used to identify and evaluate problems with intimacy among couples in distress. The authors provide a working definition of intimacy as "a process and an experience which is the outcome of the disclosure of intimate topics and sharing of intimate experiences" (Schaefer & Olson, 1981, p. 51). Based on factor analyses of data from their pilot study, which supported the idea of intimacy as a multi-faceted experience, Schaefer and Olson organized their measure of the concept around five subdimensions.

The PAIR consists of 36 items encompassing five types of intimacy: emotional, social, sexual, intellectual, and recreational. There is an additional subscale, referred to as conventionality, developed to assess the extent to which a participant may be offering socially desirable biased responses. The PAIR asks participants to indicate on a 5-point Likert scale the extent to which they agree or disagree with each item. The 36 items are considered twice: first the participant

responds to all items according to his or her present experience of the relationship (perceived) and then the participant responds to the item in terms of his or her desired level of intimacy (ideal).

The PAIR presumes that there is an association between couples whose scores demonstrate few discrepancies between perceived and ideal levels of intimacy and couples who tend to have well adjusted marriages. However, this measure is not an assessment of whether or not a couple has an adequate level of intimacy. Rather, it highlights areas in the relationship in which the couple's expectations are not being met. In contrast to other inventories that determine whether or not a couple is sufficiently intimate, the PAIR is based on the assumption that marital satisfaction is linked to the degree to which a person's expectations are being satisfied through the relationship. It is difficult to accurately define the "adequate" level of intimacy or even to create an absolute measure of intimacy because intimacy is an extremely subjective experience. Harper and Elliott (1988) administered the PAIR to 185 randomly selected couples and found that couples with small discrepancies between their perceived and expected levels of intimacy were happiest regardless of whether they reported high or low levels of intimacy. People desire different types of intimacy with varying degrees of intensity. Consequently, the PAIR is a preferable measure of intimacy because it does not impose an ideal standard, instead the sufficient level of intimacy is determined by the respondent. In this study, the PAIR was administered in order to assess each married partners' perceived and expected levels of intimacy in their relationship.

Social Desirability

Originally, participants who received scores above 60 on the conventionality scale of the PAIR were going to be eliminated from the hypotheses regarding the PAIR. According to the authors of the measure, those who score above 60 on that scale are "faking good" and providing responses that they believe will appear socially desirable. In general, participants scored above 60 on the conventionality scale. The mean score for conventionality for male participants was 70.46 (SD = 19.76) and the mean score for conventionality for female participants was 66.98 (SD = 22.89). Instead of eliminating these participants from the analyses, a partial correlation was conducted to control for the effect of social desirability.

Procedure

The investigator met participating couples at their home or in a public place in order to administer the three inventories. The consent form was given at the beginning of the interview process. Participants completed a series of questions about demographics following their completion of the consent form. At that point the investigator interviewed one member of the couple using the ORI. The other member of the couple was asked to sit somewhere out of earshot. During the ORI, the investigator informed the respondent that he or she would be given five minutes to respond to each question. While responding to the ORI, participants were timed with a stopwatch. Those who spoke for 5 minutes in response to any of the ORI questions were interrupted and asked to respond to the next question. All responses were audiotaped using a microcassette recorder and a microphone. Following the ORI interview, that member of the couple was asked to complete the PAIR and the ECR.

The ORI was then completed by the other member of the couple who subsequently completed the PAIR and the ECR. At the end of the administration, the couple received a $10 gift card to either a bookstore or a music store.

The investigator transcribed all of the ORI interviews. The verbatim transcripts of the ORI responses were then coded by two doctoral students in clinical psychology trained in the scoring of the ORI using the D-R Scale. The coders were blind to the hypotheses and were given the ORI responses in a random order, thereby limiting their ability to identify which participants' responses belonged to members of the same couple. The scores given by the two coders were averaged in order to calculate the final ORI differentiation-relatedness scores for participants' mental representations.

Hypotheses and Data Analysis

There are certain complicated aspects of conducting statistical analyses due to the nature of the study. While some hypotheses examined the couple as a unit by comparing husbands and wives, other hypotheses related to characteristics of participants as individuals. However, the statistical software utilized for this study assumes that the 102 participants are a group of random individuals. In fact, they are not because the group consists of 51 married couples who are nonrandomly paired with each other, violating the assumption of an independent sample. To circumvent this issue, the respondents were tested as two groups of 51 individuals separated by gender, eliminating the problem of subjects being related to each other. These results may be less reliable because each group consisted of a smaller sample.

Hypothesis 1

Spouses in a relationship tend to have similar levels of differentiation and relatedness. This hypothesis is based on Bowen's theory of differentiation that people with similar levels of differentiation tend to marry each other, and can be shown by comparing scores on the Differentiation-Relatedness Scale (D-R). Married partners will have at most a one-point difference between their scores on representation of spouse as rated by the D-R scale of the ORI.

According to the first hypothesis, the average discrepancy between husbands' and wives' scores on description of spouse should not be significantly different from an average value of one. A *t* test was performed on the difference between husband's score on representation of spouse and wife's score representation of spouse.

Hypothesis 2

Those who are highly differentiated and related vis-à-vis their parents will have a similar relational stance toward their spouse. People who have a score of 7 or above on the D-R for representation of at least one of their parents will have a 7 or above on the D-R for representation of spouse. A score of 7 or higher indicates that the respondent is capable of object constancy and is considerably better related than those who receive below a 7.

The D-R scores for representation of parental figure and representation of spouse were recoded into two groups. Those who received D-R scores from 1 to 6 were labeled as 0 and those who received D-R scores ranging from 7 to 10 were labeled as 1. The *Kappa* test for inter-rater agreement, a chance corrected agreement statistic, was applied to determine whether or not husbands' and wives' D-R scores

frequently coincide. The higher the statistic the more agreement there is between the cases. When the statistic yielded is a high value, then it demonstrates that people who receive 7 or higher on representation of one parental figure also received a 7 or higher on representation of spouse. Since the hypothesis refers to the individual as a unit of study rather than the couple the sample was divided into two groups for this test. The groups were determined by gender: a group of males and a group of females.

Hypothesis 3

Those who receive a score of 7 or higher on the D-R will identify themselves as being securely attached on the ECR because their capacity for relatedness will allow them to express their sense of being able to depend on others and feel close to others.

Participants' scores on the D-R were recoded with 1-6 = 0 and 7-10 = 1. According to the stated position, people coded as 1 in terms of the D-R will identify themselves as being securely attached on the ECR. The proportion of subjects who see themselves as securely attached as measured by the ECR will be higher among those who receive a score of 1 on the D-R. The sample was divided according to gender. A Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated using the data for each group.

Hypothesis 4

Husbands and wives who identify themselves as being predominantly securely attached based on scores on the ECR will be married to others who also present themselves as being primarily securely attached as measured by the ECR.

For this hypothesis, the unit of comparison was between husband and wife in each couple. The sample was divided into two groups of secure respondents and non-secure respondents according to their scores on the ECR. Participants were recoded: insecure = 0 and secure = 1. The *Kappa* test was applied to determine if there is agreement regarding secure attachment status between husbands and wives as measured by the ECR, meaning that husbands who described themselves as being securely attached were married to wives who described themselves as being securely attached.

Hypothesis 5

Individuals who identify themselves as having a primarily preoccupied attachment status based on the ECR will be married to people who present themselves as having a mainly dismissing attachment status according to the ECR and vice versa.

This approach is similar to the prior test. The sample was divided into two groups of preoccupied and dismissing respondents according to their scores on the ECR. Participants were recoded: preoccupied = 0 and dismissing = 1. The *Kappa* test was used to assess whether or not those who described themselves as being preoccupied tend to be married to those who described themselves as dismissing based on their ECR scores.

Hypothesis 6

Individuals who identify themselves as having a primarily fearful attachment status based on the ECR will be married to those who are identified as being securely attached according to the ECR.

The sample was divided into two groups of fearful and secure respondents according to their ECR scores. Participants were recoded: fearful = 0 and secure = 1. The *Kappa* test was used to assess whether those identified as fearful on the ECR tend to be married to those identified as secure on the ECR.

Hypothesis 7

Those with a higher D-R score on the ORI description of spouse will report greater satisfaction with intimacy as evidenced by smaller discrepancies as determined by subtracting expected intimacy from actual intimacy across five subscales on the PAIR.

A Pearson correlation was estimated between respondent's D-R scores on the ORI and their discrepancies on the PAIR. According to the hypothesis, there will be a negative correlation between these two variables. As the D-R scores increase, the PAIR discrepancies should decrease demonstrating that those who are better related report greater satisfaction with intimacy in their relationship. The sample was separated according to gender for this analysis.

Hypothesis 8

Those who identified themselves as being securely attached on the ECR will report greater satisfaction with intimacy as evidenced by smaller discrepancies across five subscales on the PAIR.

A Pearson correlation was estimated between each respondent's attachment status on the ECR and his or her discrepancies on the PAIR. According to the hypothesis, there will be a negative correlation between being classified as secure on the ECR and high discrepancies on the PAIR. The PAIR discrepancies should be

lower for those who described themselves as being securely attached according to the ECR demonstrating that those who describe themselves as securely attached report greater satisfaction with intimacy in their relationship. The sample was separated according to gender for this analysis.

Power Analysis

Prior to conducting the study, a power analysis was conducted to determine the number of couples necessary to yield substantial results. Therefore a minimum of 50 couples were recruited to participate in the study. For the purpose of statistical analyses, this sample has the undesirable property that the 102 observations are not truly independent because each individual is non-randomly paired with another individual in the study. As an approximation it is presumed that the power of the study will yield a power similar to that of 75 independent observations. Assuming a significance level of .05, a moderate effect size of .30, and a sample size of 75, the power probability is .76. In other words, there is a 76% chance of correctly rejecting the null hypothesis at an alpha level of .05.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

For the most part, male and female participants, for whom this was their first marriage, had gotten married during their 20s. Couples, on average, were married approximately 26 years (*SD* = 13.5) and had two children (*SD* = 1.36) from their current marriage. Regarding religiosity, over half of the men and women described themselves as religiously observant. In terms of employment, a large majority of the men reported that they were employed full time. In contrast, most women worked either part-time or were not employed.

Family of Origin

Participants reported their parents' current marital status. Among males, the average length of their parents' marriage was 43.3 years (*SD* = 12.3). Over 75% of men reported that their parents' marriage had ended in death, 10% of their parents' divorced and the rest stated that their parents were still married. Over 80% described their parents' marriage as either "very happy" or "fairly happy." Approximately 75% of male participants characterized their relationship with their mother prior to marriage as including "quite a bit" of closeness, with the rest stating their relationship was either moderately close or involved little closeness. Nearly 50% of male participants characterized their relationship with their father prior to marriage as including "quite a bit" of closeness, with 45% stating that their relationship was moderately close and the rest reported "little" closeness. In terms of conflict, 62.7% of men reported that they experienced "little" conflict with their mothers prior to marriage while approximately 20% described their relationship with their mother as including "quite a bit" or a

"moderate" level of conflict and the rest stated that they experienced no conflict with their mother before getting married. Over half of the male participants reported that they experienced "little" conflict with their fathers prior to getting married, 40% described their relationship as including a "moderate" level or no conflict, and the remaining 3.9% stated that they experienced "quite a bit" of conflict with their father before getting married.

Among females, the average length of their parents' marriage was 39 years (*SD* = 16.2). Approximately 50% of the women reported that their parents' marriage ended in death, while approximately 20% of the parents' marriage ended in divorce, and the rest were still married. As many as 70% of women described their parent's marriage as "very happy" or "fairly happy," the rest stated that their parents' marriage was "rather unhappy" or "very unhappy." Over 60% of the female respondents stated they experienced "quite a bit" of closeness with their mother prior to getting married, 27.5% indicated a "moderate" level of closeness and the remaining 9.8% felt little closeness with their mother before marriage. Approximately 47% of female participants reported "quite a bit" of closeness with their father prior to marriage, 25.5% described their relationship as moderately close, and 23.5% reported little closeness; the rest experienced no closeness with their father before marriage. Approximately 43% of female participants reported "little" conflict with their mother prior to getting married, 19.6% described their relationship as including a "quite a bit" of conflict, 19.6% stated that they did not experience conflict with their mother before marriage. Approximately 30% of female respondents reported "little" conflict with their father prior to getting married, 25.5% did not experience conflict with their father, and the rest described their

relationship as characterized by either a "moderate" level or "quite a bit" of conflict before marriage.

Table 1. Demographics of Religion, Ethnicity, Education, and Employment

	Males		Females	
	Frequency	Valid Percent	Frequency	Valid Percent
Religion				
Jewish	40	78.4	36	70.6
Catholic	6	11.8	4	7.8
Protestant	3	5.9	4	7.8
Other	1	2.0	5	9.8
N/A	1	2.0	2	3.9
TOTAL	51	100.0	51	100.0
Level of Religious Observance				
Observant	29	56.9	30	58.8
Nonobservant	20	39.2	19	37.3
N/A	1	2.0	2	3.9
Missing	1	2.0	0	0.0
TOTAL	51	100.0	51	100.0
Ethnicity				
Caucasian	49	96.1	46	96.1
African American	1	2.0	2	3.9
Latino	1	2.0	3	5.9
TOTAL	51	100.0	51	100.0
Education				
Grade School	0	0	1	2.0
High School	1	2.0	2	3.9
College	19	37.3	22	43.1
Graduate School	31	60.8	26	51.0
TOTAL	51	100.0	51	100.0
Employment				
Full Time	37	72.5	14	27.5
Part Time	5	9.8	21	41.2
Not Employed	9	17.6	15	29.4
Missing	0	0	1	2.0
TOTAL	51	100.0	51	100.0

Table 2. Marital Demographics I

Males

	M	SD	Min	Max	N
Age	55.61	12.43	33.00	79.00	51
Age Married	26.35	8.18	22.00	60.00	51
Years Married Currently	25.98	13.17	10.00	55.00	51
Years Married Previously	9.45	6.35	1.00	50.00	11
Children from Current Marriage	2.22	1.36	.00	7.00	51
Children from Previous Relationship	1.33	.98	.00	3.00	12
Length of Parents' Marriage (Years)	43.3	12.3	14.00	63.00	51

Females

	M	SD	Min	Max	N
Age	52.89	12.33	33.00	77.00	51
Age Married	26.63	6.77	18.00	45.00	51
Years Married Currently	26.04	13.14	10.00	55.00	51
Years Married Previously	7.71	6.75	.50	20.00	12
Children from Current Marriage	2.25	1.32	.00	7.00	51
Children from Previous Relationship	.92	1.08	.00	3.00	12
Length of Parents' Marriage (Years)	39.0	16.2	1.00	68.00	50

Table 3. Marital Demographics II

	Males		Females	
	Frequency	Valid Percent	Frequency	Valid Percent
Marital Status				
First Marriage	39	76.5	39	76.5
Second Marriage	11	21.6	11	21.6
Third Marriage	1	2.0	1	2.0
TOTAL	51	100.0	51	100.0
Parents' Marital Status				
Married	9	17.6	17	33.3
Divorced	5	9.8	11	21.6
Ended in Death	37	72.5	23	45.1
TOTAL	51	100.0	51	100.0
Description of Parents' Marriage				
Very Happy	15	29.4	13	26.5
Fairly Happy	26	51.0	21	42.9
Rather Unhappy	6	11.8	8	16.3
Very Unhappy	4	7.8	7	14.3
Missing	0	0.0	2	3.9
TOTAL	51	100.0	51	100.0
Description of Childhood				
Very Happy	26	51.0	24	47.1
Fairly Happy	20	39.2	22	43.1
Rather Unhappy	4	7.8	3	5.9
Very Unhappy	0	0.0	2	3.9
Missing	1	2.0	0	0.0
TOTAL	51	100.0	51	100.0

Table 4. Relationships within one's Family-of-Origin

	Males		Females	
	Frequency	Valid Percent	Frequency	Valid Percent
Closeness with Mother Prior to Marriage				
Quite a bit	38	74.5	31	60.8
Moderate	9	17.6	14	27.5
Little	4	7.8	5	9.8
TOTAL	51	100.0	51	100.0
Closeness with Father Prior to Marriage				
Quite a bit	25	49.0	24	47.1
Moderate	23	45.1	13	25.5
Little	3	5.9	12	23.5
None	0	0	1	2.0
Missing	0	0	1	2.0
TOTAL	51	100.0	51	100.0
Conflict with Mother Prior to Marriage				
Quite a bit	5	9.8	10	19.6
Moderate	5	9.8	8	15.7
Little	32	62.7	22	43.1
None	9	17.6	10	19.6
Missing	0	0	1	2.0
TOTAL	51	100.0	51	100.0
Conflict with Father Prior to Marriage				
Quite a bit	2	3.9	11	21.6
Moderate	10	19.6	12	23.5
Little	28	54.9	15	29.4
None	11	21.6	13	25.4
Missing	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	51	100.0	51	100.0

Inter-rater reliability

A chance-corrected analysis for ordinal or interval ratings was used to calculate inter-rater agreement between the two coders who scored the Object Representations Inventory (ORI) responses using the Differentiation-Relatedness Scale (D-R). This analysis defines agreement in terms of three categories: ratings that are exact matches, ratings that are within one point of each other, and ratings that are within two points of each other.

The chi-square scores for inter-rater agreement on all ORI responses were statistically significant. In other words, the correspondence between the scores given by the two coders were within one point of each other more often than would occur by chance.

Interpretive Standards for the T Index :

<0.00 = POOR
0.00 – 0.20 = SLIGHT
0.21 – 0.40 = FAIR
0.41 – 0.60 = MODERATE
0.61 – 0.80 = SUBSTANTIAL
0.81 – 1.00 = ALMOST PERFECT

Using the above interpretive standards, the T Index indicates to what extent the ratings given by the two coders were in agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977). In this case, agreement refers to scores that were within one point of each other. All T Index values fall within the "Almost Perfect" range. The coders' ratings were uniformly in agreement.

Table 5. Inter-rater agreement for Mental Representations of Significant Figures

T INDEX	MALE RESPONSES	FEMALE RESPONSES
ORI – MOTHER	0.89	0.89
ORI – FATHER	1.00	1.00
ORI - SPOUSE	0.92	0.86
ORI - SELF	0.94	0.97

Table 6. Means and Standard Deviations of Differentiation-Relatedness Scale Scores for Descriptions of Significant Figures

Males

Differentiation-Relatedness	M	SD	Min	Max	N
Representation of Mother	6.48	.68	5.00	8.50	49
Representation of Father	6.70	.72	5.00	8.50	49
Representation of Spouse	6.39	1.01	4.00	8.00	49
Representation of Self	6.77	.56	6.00	8.00	47

Females

Differentiation-Relatedness	M	SD	Min	Max	N
Representation of Mother	6.65	.91	4.00	9.00	51
Representation of Father	6.74	.84	4.00	9.00	51
Representation of Spouse	6.51	.92	4.00	9.00	51
Representation of Self	6.79	.67	5.00	8.50	51

Differentiation-Relatedness

Hypothesis 1

Husbands and wives within each couple were expected to be at a similar level of differentiation-relatedness regarding their representation of spouse on the Object Representations Inventory (ORI). Specifically, the average discrepancy between husbands' and wives' scores on description of spouse should not be significantly different from a value of one.

A *t* test analysis demonstrated that the absolute value of the difference between the two spouses on their differentiation-relatedness scores for representation of spouse was not significantly different from 1.00. On average, couples differed by 0.88, i.e. less than 1.00 ($t = -1.014$, $df = 48$, $p = 0.32$). This hypothesis was supported.

Table 7. Mean Difference between Husbands' and Wives' Scores for Mental Representation of Spouse

Absolute value of the difference between scores for Mental Representation of Spouse	N	Missing	Mean	Standard Error
	49	2	.8776	.1207

Table 8. Results for *t* test: Difference between Husbands' and Wives' Scores for Mental Representation of Spouse

	One Sample t test			
Absolute value of the diff. between scores for Mental Representation of Spouse	*t*	*df*	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
	-1.014	48	.315	-.1224

Hypothesis 2

Participants who are at a higher level of differentiation and relatedness on the ORI vis-à-vis at least one parental figure were expected to demonstrate a comparable level vis-à-vis their spouse. According to this hypothesis, participants who attained at least a 7 or higher for description of either mother or father should receive a score of 7 or higher on their description of spouse.

Since this hypothesis concerns the individual as a unit of study rather than the couple, the sample was divided into two groups according to gender. Among male participants there was a statistically significant, "moderate" level of chance-corrected agreement between ratings of their parents and ratings of their spouse on the D-R (*Kappa* = 0.53, $t = 3.76$, $p < .001$). See tables 9 and 10.

After conducting the statistical analyses for the original hypothesis, an additional test was conducted to assess whether or not the relationship between scores of 7 or higher on parental representations and spouse representation was due to males' scores on differentiation-relatedness for the same-sex parent and spouse. This post-hoc analysis revealed a statistically significant "substantial" level of chance-corrected agreement between male respondents' ratings of their father and ratings of their spouse on the D-R, however the significance of the relationship was only somewhat better than the result of the original hypothesis (*Kappa* = 0.61, $t = 4.27$, $p < .001$). See tables 11 and 12.

Among female participants, there was a statistically significant "fair" level of chance-corrected agreement between ratings of their parents and ratings of their spouse on the D-R (*Kappa* = .35, $t = 2.66$, $p < .001$). See tables 13 and 14. After conducting the statistical analyses for the original hypothesis, an additional test was conducted to assess whether or not the relationship between scores of 7 or higher on parental representations and spouse representation was due to females' scores on differentiation-relatedness for

the same-sex parent and spouse. This post-hoc analysis revealed a statistically significant "fair" level of chance-corrected agreement between female respondents' ratings of their mother and ratings of their spouse on the D-R, however the significance of the relationship was essentially the same as the result of the original hypothesis (*Kappa* = 0.34, $t = 2.41$, $p < .02$). See tables 15 and 16.

A *Kappa* test for inter-rater agreement demonstrated that this hypothesis was supported for both male and female participants.

Table 9. Males' Differentiation-Relatedness Scores for Parent and Spouse

			D-R: Representation of Parent		
			<7	>=7	Total
D-R: Representation Of Spouse	<7	Count	24	7	31
		% of Total	49.0%	14.3%	63.3%
	>=7	Count	4	14	18
		% of Total	8.2%	28.6%	36.7%
Total		Count	28	21	49
		% of Total	57.1%	42.9%	100%

Table 10. Level of Agreement between Males' Differentiation-Relatedness Scores for Parent and Spouse

		Value	Approx. T	Approx. Sig.
Measure of Agreement	*Kappa*	.533	3.764	p=.000
N of Valid Cases		49		
Missing		2		

Table 11. Males' Differentiation-Relatedness Scores for Mental Representations of Father and Spouse

			D-R: Representation of Father		
			<7	>=7	Total
D-R: Representation Of Spouse	<7	Count	26	5	31
		% of Total	53.1%	63.3%	63.3%
	>=7	Count	4	14	18
		% of Total	8.2%	28.6%	36.7%
Total		Count	28	21	49
		% of Total	61.2%	38.8%	100%

Table 12. Level of Agreement between Males' Differentiation-Relatedness Scores for Father and Spouse

		Value	Approx. T	Approx. Sig.
Measure of Agreement	*Kappa*	.609	4.270	p=.000
N of Valid Cases		49		
Missing		2		

Table 13. Females' Differentiation-Relatedness Scores for Parent and Spouse

			D-R: Representation of Parent		
			<7	>=7	Total
D-R: Representation Of Spouse	<7	Count	15	13	28
		% of Total	29.4%	25.5%	54.9%
	>=7	Count	4	19	23
		% of Total	7.8%	37.3%	45.1%
Total		Count	19	32	51
		% of Total	37.3%	62.7%	100%

Table 14. Level of Agreement between Females' Differentiation-Relatedness Scores for Parent and Spouse

		Value	Approx. T	Approx. Sig.
Measure of Agreement	*Kappa*	.350	2.659	p=.008
N of Valid Cases		51		

Table 15. Females' Differentiation-Relatedness Scores for Mother and Spouse

			D-R: Representation of Mother		
			<7	>=7	Total
D-R: Representation Of Spouse	<7	Count	18	10	28
		% of Total	35.3%	19.6%	54.9%
	>=7	Count	7	16	23
		% of Total	13.7%	31.4%	45.1%
Total		Count	25	26	51
		% of Total	49.0%	51.0%	100%

Table 16. Level of Agreement between Females' Differentiation-Relatedness Scores for Mother and Spouse

		Value	Approx. T	Approx. Sig.
Measure of Agreement	*Kappa*	.335	2.406	p=.016
N of Valid Cases		51		

Hypothesis 3

Participants identified as securely attached according to the ECR were predicted to receive a 7 or higher on level of differentiation-relatedness regarding spouse.

For the purposes of this test, the sample was divided into two groups according to gender. Among males, a Pearson correlation coefficient revealed that there is no significant relationship between being securely attached on the ECR and receiving a 7 or higher on level of differentiation-relatedness ($r = .01, p = .97$). See table 17. Even when controlling for the effect of response bias due to social desirability, a partial correlation coefficient indicated that the relationship between male participants identified as securely attached as measured by the ECR and those with a 7 or higher on the D-R for spouse was not significant ($r = .08, p = .60$). See table 18.

Among females, a Pearson correlation coefficient revealed that there is no significant relationship between being identified as securely attached on the ECR and receiving a 7 or higher on level of differentiation-relatedness regarding description of spouse ($r = -.13, p = .37$). See table 19. Even when controlling for the effect of response bias due to social desirability, a partial correlation coefficient indicated that the relationship between female participants identified as securely attached as measured by the ECR and those with a 7 or higher on the D-R for spouse was not significant ($r = -.03$, $p = .87$). See table 20.

Further analyses were conducted to test this hypothesis using the ECR as a dimensional measure such that lower scores on the two scales of avoidance and anxiety indicate that a participant is more securely attached because researchers generally agree that continuous measures of attachment are more precise (Shaver & Mikulnicer, 2002). The hypothesis was not supported using the ECR as a dimensional measure for either

male or female participants. Among males, an independent samples t-test demonstrated that there is no significant relationship between scores of 7 or higher on the D-R for representation of spouse and scores on the avoidance and anxiety scales of the ECR (Anxiety: $t = .63$, $df = 45$, $p = .53$ ns; Avoidance: $t = -.11$, $df = 47$, $p = .92$, ns). Among females, an independent samples t test demonstrated that there is no significant relationship between scores of 7 or higher on the D-R for representation of spouse and scores on the avoidance and anxiety scales of the ECR (Anxiety: $t = .-.877$, $df = 47$, $p = .39$ ns; Avoidance: $t = -.719$, $df = 48$, $p = .48$ ns).

This hypothesis was not supported for either males or females.

Table 17. Relationship between Secure Attachment Status and Level of Differentiation-Relatedness for Mental Representation of Spouse (Males)

Pearson Correlation Coefficients

	Secure Attachment	D-R Representation of Spouse	Conventionality
Secure Attachment	r = 1.0000 (0) p=	r = .0062 (45) p=.967	r = .4120 (45) p=.004
D-R Representation of Spouse	r = .0062 (45) p=.967	r = 1.0000 (0) p=	r = -.1566 (45) p=.293
Conventionality	r = .4120 (45) p=.004	r = -.1566 (45) p=.293	r = 1.000 (0) p=

Table 18. Relationship between Secure Attachment Status and Level of Differentiation-Relatedness when controlling for Conventionality (Males)

	D-R Representation of Spouse
Secure Attachment	r = .0786 (44) p=.604

Table 19. Relationship between Secure Attachment Status and Level of Differentiation-Relatedness for Mental Representation of Spouse (Females)

Pearson Correlation Coefficients

	Secure Attachment	D-R Representation of Spouse	Conventionality
Secure Attachment	r = 1.000 (0) p=	r = -.1299 (47) p=.374	r = .7128 (47) p=.000
D-R Representation of Spouse	r = -.1299 (47) p=.374	r = 1.000 (0) p=	r = -.1580 (47) p=.278
Conventionality	r = .7128 (47) p=.000	r = -.1580 (47) p=.278	r = 1.000 (0) p=

Table 20. Relationship between Secure Attachment Status and Level of Differentiation-Relatedness when controlling for Conventionality (Females)

Partial Correlation Coefficient

	D-R Representation of Spouse
Secure Attachment	r = -.0250 (46) p=.866

Attachment Status

Hypothesis 4

Participants identified as securely attached according to the ECR were expected to be married to individuals who were also identified as securely attached according to the ECR.

The sample was divided into two groups of secure respondents and non-secure respondents for this test. There was a statistically significant moderate level of chance-corrected agreement between husbands and wives with regard to the security of their attachment statuses (*Kappa* = .51, $t = 3.50$, $p < .001$). See tables 21 and 22. This hypothesis was supported.

Table 21. Attachment Status within Couples

Husband Attachment Category		Wife Attachment Category				
		Secure	Fearful	Preoccupied	Dismissing	Total
Secure	N	27	0	4	1	32
	%	57.4%	.0%	8.5%	2.1%	68.1%
Fearful	N	1	0	1	1	3
	%	2.1%	.0%	2/1%	2.1%	6.4%
Preoccupied	N	3	1	3	3	10
	%	6.4%	2.1%	6.4%	6.4%	21.3%
Dismissing	N	1	0	0	1	2
	%	2.1%	.0%	.0%	2.1%	4.3%
Total	N	32	1	8	6	47
	%	68.1%	2.1%	17.0%	12.8%	100.0%

Table 22. Kappa Test for Level of Agreement between Attachment Status of Husbands and Wives

	Value	T statistic	Significance
Measure of Agreement *Kappa*	.310	3.07	.002
N	47		
Missing	4		

Hypothesis 5

Participants identified as preoccupied according to the ECR were expected to be married to those identified as dismissing according to the ECR. This test was applied to those in the sample who were considered either preoccupied or dismissing according to the ECR.

There was less agreement between preoccupied/dismissing and dismissing/preoccupied combinations of husband-wife attachment status than one would expect even by chance (*Kappa* = -.27, t = -.09, p = .35). See tables 23 and 24. This hypothesis was disconfirmed based on the data.

Table 23. Couples in which both Husbands and Wives are identified as being either Preoccupied or Dismissing

			Female Attachment Category		
			PREOCC	DISMISS	Total
Male Attachment Category	DISMISSING	Count	0	1	1
		% of Total	.0%	14.3%	14.3%
	PREOCCUPIED	Count	3	3	6
		% of Total	42.9%	42.9%	85.7%
Total		Count	3	4	7
		% of Total	42.9%	57.1%	100%

Table 24. Kappa Test for Level of Agreement within Couples in which both Husbands and Wives are Identified as being either Preoccupied or Dismissing

		Value	Approx. T	Approx. Sig.
Measure of Agreement	*Kappa*	-.273	-.935	p=.350
N of Valid Cases		7		

Hypothesis 6

Participants identified as fearful according to the ECR were expected to be married to those identified as secure according to the ECR.

This hypothesis was not testable because there were no female participants in the sample identified as fearful according to the ECR.

Intimacy

Table 25. PAIR: Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships Inventory

Males

	N	M	SD	Min	Max
Emotional Intimacy					
Actual	51	77.10	16.30	36.00	96.00
Expected		86.82	3.05	40.00	96.00
Social Intimacy					
Actual	51	73.25	15.73	28.00	96.00
Expected		79.49	11.86	52.00	96.00
Sexual Intimacy					
Actual	51	67.76	23.52	8.00	96.00
Expected		86.27	13.16	40.00	96.00
Intellectual Intimacy					
Actual	51	74.35	15.96	36.00	96.00
Expected		81.73	13.46	44.00	96.00
Recreational Intimacy					
Actual	51	74.98	16.33	32.00	96.00
Expected		84.10	11.66	48.00	96.00
Conventionality	51	70.46	19.75	24.00	96.00

Table 26. PAIR: Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships Inventory

Females

	N	M	SD	Min	Max
Emotional Intimacy					
Actual	51	70.86	21.79	16.00	96.00
Expected		87.21	10.52	48.00	96.00
Social Intimacy					
Actual	51	73.80	15.54	40.00	96.00
Expected		79.49	11.86	52.00	96.00
Sexual Intimacy					
Actual	51	71.84	20.44	12.00	96.00
Expected		83.45	14.40	48.00	96.00
Intellectual Intimacy					
Actual	51	73.41	17.92	28.00	96.00
Expected		84.78	10.76	52.00	96.00
Recreational Intimacy					
Actual	51	74.98	19.66	32.00	96.00
Expected		82.75	13.56	48.00	96.00
Conventionality	51	68.98	22.89	16.00	96.00

Hypothesis 7

Participants who attained higher scores on level of differentiation-relatedness regarding description of spouse were expected to report greater satisfaction with intimacy in their marriage according to their responses on the PAIR.*

The sample was divided into two groups according to gender for this test. Among males, a Pearson correlation coefficient initially revealed a significant relationship between participants who received at least a score of 7 for differentiation-relatedness on description of spouse and those who reported less satisfaction with intimacy based on the PAIR ($r = .32, p = .03$), counter to the hypothesis. See table 27. However, after controlling for the effect of response bias due to social desirability, a partial correlation indicated that there is no significant relationship between participants who received a score of at least 7 on differentiation-relatedness and those who reported greater satisfaction with intimacy based on the PAIR ($r = .20, p = .17$). See table 28.

Among females, a Pearson correlation coefficient revealed that there is no significant relationship between participants who received at least a score of 7 for differentiation-relatedness on description of spouse and those who reported greater satisfaction with intimacy based on the PAIR ($r = -.01, p = .94$). See table 29. Even when controlling for the effect of response bias due to social desirability, a partial correlation indicated that there is no significant relationship between female respondents who scored at least 7 for differentiation-relatedness on description of spouse and those who reported greater satisfaction with intimacy based on the PAIR ($r = -.21, p = .15$). See table 30.

This hypothesis was not supported for male or female participants.

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* Greater satisfaction is indicated by smaller discrepancies between actual level of intimacy and desired level of intimacy.

Table 27. Relationship between Satisfaction with Intimacy based on the PAIR and Level of Differentiation-Relatedness Scores for Representation of Spouse (Males)

Pearson Correlation Coefficients

	D-R Representation of Spouse	PAIR	Conventionality
D-R Representation of Spouse	1.000 (0) p=	.3209 (47) p=.025	-.2972 (47) p=.038
PAIR	.3209 (47) p=.052	1.000 (0) p=	-.5401 (47) p=.000
Conventionality	.-.2972 (47) p=.038	-.5401 (47) p=.000	1.000 (0) p=

Table 28. Relationship between Satisfaction with Intimacy based on the PAIR and Level of Differentiation-Relatedness Scores for Representation of Spouse while controlling for Conventionality (Males)

Partial Correlation Coefficient

	D-R Representation of Spouse
PAIR	r = .1995 (46) p=.174

Table 29. Relationship between Satisfaction with Intimacy based on the PAIR and Level of Differentiation-Relatedness Scores for Representation of Spouse (Females)

Pearson Correlation Coefficients

	D-R Representation of Spouse	PAIR	Conventionality
D-R Representation of Spouse	1.000 (0) p=	-.0105 (49) p=.941	-.2206 (49) p=.120
PAIR	-.0105 (47) p=.052	1.000 (0) p=	-.6468 (49) p=.000
Conventionality	.-.2206 (49) p=.120	-.6468 (49) p=.000	1.000 (0) p=

Table 30. Relationship between Satisfaction with Intimacy based on the PAIR and Level of Differentiation-Relatedness Scores for Representation of Spouse while controlling for Conventionality (Females)

Partial Correlation Coefficient

	D-R Representation of Spouse
PAIR	r = -.2060 (48) p=.151

Hypothesis 8

Participants who identified themsevles as securely attached according to the ECR were expected to report greater satisfaction with intimacy.

The sample was divided into two groups according to gender for this test.

Among males, a Pearson correlation coefficient demonstrated a significant relationship between participants identified as securely attached according to the ECR and those who reported greater satisfaction with intimacy based on the PAIR (r = -.53, p = .00). See table 31. After controlling for the effect of response bias due to social desirability, a partial correlation indicated that there is still a statistically significant relationship between male respondents identified as securely attached according to the ECR and those reporting greater satisfaction based on the PAIR (r = -.35, p = .01). See table 32.

Initially, among females, a Pearson correlation coefficient demonstrated a significant relationship between participants identified as securely attached according to the ECR and those who reported greater satisfaction with intimacy based on the PAIR (r = -.56, p = .00). See table 33. After controlling for the effect of response bias due to social desirability, a partial correlation revealed that there was no longer a statistically significant relationship between female respondents identified as securely attached according to the ECR and those reporting greater satisfaction with intimacy based on the PAIR (r = -.18, p = .21). See table 34.

This hypothesis was supported for male participants, but not for female participants.

Table 31. Relationship between Satisfaction with Intimacy based on the PAIR and Secure Attachment Status (Males)

Pearson Correlation Coefficients

	Secure Attachment	PAIR	Conventionality
Secure Attachment	1.000 (0) p=	-.5260 (47) p=.000	.4512 (47) p=.001
PAIR	-.5260 (47) p=.000	1.000 (0) p=	-.6134 (47) p=.000
Conventionality	.4512 (47) p=.001	-.6134 (47) p=.000	1.000 (0) p=

Table 32. Relationship between Satisfaction with Intimacy based on the PAIR and Level of Differentiation-Relatedness Scores for Representation of Spouse while controlling for Conventionality (Males)

Partial Correlation Coefficient

	PAIR
Secure Attachment	r = -.3536 (46) p=.014

Table 33. Relationship between Satisfaction with Intimacy based on the PAIR and Secure Attachment Status (Females)

Pearson Correlation Coefficients

	Secure Attachment	PAIR	Conventionality
Secure Attachment	1.000 (0) p=	-.5619 (47) p=.000	.7128 (47) p=.000
PAIR	-.5619 (47) p=.000	1.000 (0) p=	-.6505 (47) p=.000
Conventionality	.7128 (47) p=.000	-.6505 (47) p=.000	1.000 (0) p=

Table 34. Relationship between Satisfaction with Intimacy based on the PAIR and Level of Differentiation-Relatedness Scores for Representation of Spouse while controlling for Conventionality (Females)

Partial Correlation Coefficient

	PAIR
Secure Attachment	r = -.1844 (46) p=.210

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study support object relations theory and the premise that partners fit together in terms of their developmental level of self and other representations. Specifically, husbands and wives within each couple demonstrated a similar level of differentiation and relatedness. Moreover, these data suggest that participants' capacity for differentiation and relatedness vis-à-vis either mother or father is associated with their capacity for differentiation and relatedness in their marriage. Although participants who were better differentiated and related were expected to identify themselves as being securely attached as measured by the Experiences in Close Relationships measure (ECR), this hypothesis was not supported by the data.

In terms of attachment status within couples, the findings were commensurate with the predictions; most partners either both described themselves as being securely attached or both described themselves as being insecurely attached according to the ECR. Among couples identified as insecurely attached as measured by the ECR, preoccupied and dismissing individuals were expected to be married to each other. In fact, there was no specific pattern between the attachment statuses of husbands and wives classified as insecure based on the ECR.

This study predicted that an individual's satisfaction with intimacy would be positively related to his or her level of object relations. No relationship was found between satisfaction with intimacy and the capacity for differentiation and relatedness. Secure attachment status was also expected to be associated with satisfaction with intimacy. In fact, a significant relationship was found between male participants

classified as securely attached according to the ECR and those who reported greater satisfaction with marital intimacy. Yet, this was not found to be true for female participants.

The following sections discuss these findings at length.

Differentiation and Relatedness

Overall, spouses within each couple demonstrated a similar level of differentiation-relatedness. Thus, married partners' internalized representations of self and other were equally complex. This finding lends support to the theory that married partners are at a comparable level of object relations because their internal worlds bind them together (Dicks, 1967).

These data are consistent with Bowen's (1978) theory of differentiation that members of the same couple are likely to be at a similar level of differentiation. Bowen explains that individuals at different levels of differentiation are unlikely to be drawn to each other because they approach intellect and emotions in such dramatically different ways that they would not be interested in sharing a life. Willi (1982) asserts that those who are less emotionally mature are unlikely to become involved with someone more mature because feelings of inferiority could threaten the relationship. Yet, it is possible that the husbands and wives in this study were not at similar levels of differentiation when they were first attracted to each other. Instead, partners within each of the couples may have been at very different levels of differentiation when they first married, but due to their ongoing relationship and a process of mutual adjustment the gap between their levels of differentiation decreased (Willi, 1982).

Partners' comparable levels of differentiation and relatedness can best be illustrated by quoting excerpts from two couples in the sample in which the spouses obtained similar scores on representation of spouse. The first citation is from an interview of a couple in their 60s who had been married for over 25 years. They had both been married previously and had no children. Within this couple, the wife received a score of 4 and the husband received a score of 5 on the Differentiation-Relatedness Scale (D-R). When describing her husband, the wife remarked:

> He is an archangel. He's the most fabulous, wonderful person on the planet. And I'm so fortunate, because he's so wonderful. I mean, he's a gift. He's my gift. I don't know what else to say about him either because he's just…words would only detract from how I feel about him.

The husband described his wife with this language:

> I love her dearly. I don't know. I don't…there's not a lot of words that need to be said. Uh. I don't know what else I can say… a very caring person, a loving person. I don't know what else. Well I'll say it this way: there's not enough words I can say about her. Maybe that's a better way to put it.

The wife represented her husband in a completely idealizing manner. Although, the husband is somewhat better related because he did not speak in absolute terms, he still did not portray his wife in a nuanced way. Their expression of being at a loss for words when describing their love for one another may reflect an enmeshed quality to their relationship and a difficulty with acknowledging differences between them.

The next example cites a couple in their late 40s. They had been married for 14 years and had two children. The husband had been married once before. Both the

husband and the wife in this couple received a score of 7.5 on the D-R for representation of spouse. The wife described her husband in the following manner:

> S is a very good-natured man who is, um, I would not say conceited, but he has no self-esteem problem. This man has no self-esteem problem. Um, he feels that he, you know, he knows what he can do, or he thinks he knows what he can do. I think sometimes he sells himself short, um, but in general he has no self-esteem problems and he can take generally take things on the chin and it takes a lot to get him angry. But he's generally very fair, not perfect, but generally very fair.

The husband provided the following description of his wife:

> My spouse, um…my spouse is, um, is bright, uh, attractive, uh, hardworking, a good cook, really good at pretty much whatever she wants to do. Doesn't have the self-confidence to realize how good she is. That's always been a problem for me. But her confidence has gotten a lot better, my perception is, since meeting me. And one would wonder with everything she's accomplished and done. But it's almost like she's always proving, you know, as opposed to knowing what she could do. It's like proving that she could do it kind of thing.

Both members of this couple described each other in positive terms. However, each partner was able to acknowledge the other person's limitations. Each qualified his or her impression of the other, as reflected in the wife choosing the words, "very fair, not perfect" while the husband noted, "her confidence has gotten a lot better." Additionally, each member of the couple was able at some point to state that this description was a viewpoint rather than an objective fact. The wife said, "I think." The husband noted, "My perception is."

Many previous studies testing this hypothesis have been unable to establish empirical support for comparable levels of differentiation within married couples. This investigation did yield statistically significant results, and in contrast to other studies that used objective self-report measures of differentiation, it employed a projective measure, to ensure that participants would not able to predict how their answers shaped their scores and respond accordingly. The Object Representations Inventory (ORI) was used to assess differentiation and relatedness. This inventory includes open-ended questions which do not clearly illustrate the constructs that are being measured. During data collection, participants regularly expressed surprise by the ORI questions and wondered aloud how this inquiry was related to the study. Thus, their responses could not be shaped by the need to appear socially desirable or by their personal perception of their capacity for differentiation or relatedness. This supposition was empirically supported by the partial correlation which demonstrated that, for the most part, there was no significant relationship between social desirability response bias scores and differentiation-relatedness scores.

While partners within couples demonstrated a similar capacity for differentiation and relatedness, in general participants did not demonstrate an especially high level of psychological development based on their ORI scores. Since couples have all sustained a long term relationship, there was an expectation that most participants' representation of spouse would indicate the capacity for object constancy. A child's capacity for object constancy refers to the ability keep in mind a person who is not physically present because the child has internalized an image of that person. However, with regards to adults, object constancy refers to the capacity to perceive and describe another individual

in a multi-faceted way. According to the D-R, a score of 7 reflects having achieved object constancy. However, among male participants the mean score for description was 6.39 (*SD*=1.00) and among female participants the mean score for description of spouse was 6.51 (*SD*=0.92). Based on these preliminary findings, object constancy may not be a critical factor for these couples and their ability to maintain a long term relationship. A score of 6 demonstrates tentative movement towards an individuated sense of self and other (Diamond et al., 1992). Bowen (1978) acknowledges that people at lower levels of differentiation may marry and sustain a stable life together. However, according to Bowen, they will be more vulnerable to stress and less equipped to manage anxiety. Perhaps due to the nature of this small self-selected sample, these couples were not representative of most long term marriages in which perhaps spouses are generally capable of object constancy. Alternatively, the D-R may not be accurately assessing the capacity for object constancy among adults.

Participants who attained higher scores of differentiation-relatedness vis-à-vis one parent generally demonstrated a comparable level vis-à-vis spouse. These data offer support to object relations theory which posits that early bonds with primary caregivers directly shape the capacity for relatedness and the quality of future relationships. Moreover, Bowen (1978) states that a person's level of differentiation is directly influenced by his or her parents' capacity for differentiation vis-à-vis their own families of origin. Within this sample, those participants whose narratives reflected having achieved object constancy in their family of origin were able to do the same in their marriage. As noted earlier, the cutoff score for object constancy is a score of 7. Narratives that receive a score of 7 or higher reflect an integration of different

experiences of self and other (Diamond et al., 1996). Thoughts, feelings, needs, and fantasies tend to be more differentiated in these responses. These individuals were able to present their representations in more qualified terms rather than speaking in absolutes. On an interpersonal level, they were able to consider the role of specific situational factors that may contribute to people's actions or viewpoints, whether it was their own or that of another. These individuals were able to express a sense of agency about their experiences.

The relationship found between scores for representation of parent and representation of spouse will be illustrated using excerpts from a respondent's descriptions of her mother and husband. This female participant, who scored a 7.5 on level of differentiation-relatedness for her mother as well as a score of 7 for her spouse, displayed the capacity to see the other's viewpoint, even when it differed from her own. While describing her mother she stated:

> Um, very smart and probably didn't use that part—always felt that she didn't use that, um, intellect to its capacity. I think she probably is...always felt that she didn't really amount to much, like, you know, just not a good, um, sense of self, I guess.

While she sees her mother as smart, she realizes that her mother did not experience herself as smart. She is able to consider her mother's self-perception, though she does not share this opinion of her mother. Regarding her spouse she also demonstrated that she is able to consider multiple perspectives. While describing her spouse she remarked, "He's, uh, he can be, he seems to be aloof and.... But I don't think he—he wouldn't say

that—but sometimes I think he is." In this case, she clearly states that she and her husband perceive his behavior differently.

These preliminary findings suggest that a person's ability to negotiate relationships with parental figures is associated with the capacity to balance closeness and autonomy with one's spouse. This is not to say that one must have a satisfying relationship with his or her parents in order to attain and maintain a satisfying marriage. Rather, a sense of separateness and understanding regarding one's parents' identity will likely translate into that same approach within a marriage. In other words, the respondents discussed above were able to come to terms with the fact that in addition to the roles of their mother and father as caregivers, their parents were individuals who were influenced by their own experiences and life circumstances. While these participants have likely sustained disappointments about choices made by their parents, they have the sense that relationships include multiple perspectives. Although they may not always be in agreement with their parents, they can still understand their parents' position. This capacity for intersubjectivity and empathy, which enables an individual to separate thoughts and feelings and distinguish between self and other, is fundamental to marital satisfaction. More importantly, given that resolving conflict is more easily achieved when both members of the couple are able to differentiate between their position and their partner's position, this level of psychological development has been found to directly influence marital adjustment. Using the Differentiation of Self Inventory, Skowron (2003) found that married couples who were more differentiated in such a way that they tended to be less reactive, less fused, and better able to take I-positions in

relationships, experienced the greatest levels of marital satisfaction. Those who were less differentiated tended to indicate greater marital distress.

This study did not empirically demonstrate a relationship between levels of differentiation-relatedness according to the ORI and attachment status as classified by the ECR. This finding is in agreement with previous research regarding object representations and security of attachment status (Calabrese, 1998). The nature of this particular sample, in which the majority of participants described themselves as being securely attached, may have contributed to this finding. Significantly, this sample included individuals who tend to portray themselves as socially desirable as indicated by their high scores on the Conventionality scale of the PAIR. Therefore, it is possible that some of the participants who would have been more accurately classified as insecurely attached presented themselves as being securely attached based on their ECR responses. Perhaps if the sample had included individuals who were more comfortable revealing their difficulties with closeness and emotional availability, more participants would have identified themselves as being insecurely attached. A sample that included a larger number of participants classified as insecurely attached may have produced findings that establish a relationship between attachment status and differentiation-relatedness.

Alternatively, this finding may reflect the nature of the two measures; the ORI is a projective measure which partially examines unconscious processes associated with object relations and the ECR is an objective self-report inventory which assesses attachment related behaviors and feelings in romantic relationships. While both measures are self-report instruments, the ORI is a fairly unstructured projective technique in which the responses partially reflect unconscious processes. Consequently, the questions were

ambiguous and the purpose of the task was not clear to the participants, effectively limiting the influence of social desirability. The ECR is a fairly straight forward objective measure in which participants can easily discern the aim of the questions and respond in a manner that will result in their preferred attachment classification. Responses to items on the ECR are based upon the participant's conscious experience in romantic relationships. Attachment status may be more accurately determined using a projective measure. Using the Adult Attachment Interview, a projective attachment instrument, may have yielded results that demonstrate a significant relationship between attachment status and level of object relations (Main & Goldwyn, 1985). Therefore, the extant results may be due to the particular methods employed by this study.

Nevertheless, despite these findings, there may be a relationship between the Object Representations Inventory and attachment status. Mental representations may be used to assess an individual's relational template, including one's internal working model. It may be the case that the constructs of differentiation and relatedness in particular are distinct from and unrelated to attachment status. However, other aspects of mental representations may be significantly associated with attachment status.

The fact that no significant relationship was found between participants who received scores of 7 or above on the differentiated-relatedness scale and those classified as securely attached according to the ECR may be attributed to a difference in the nature of mental representations and internal working models. The qualities associated with a secure attachment status may not be related to the capacity for differentiation and relatedness. A secure attachment status suggests that an individual has internalized a sense of self worth and expects that others will generally be emotionally available and

supportive. Yet, this does not necessarily translate into the capacity to give a well differentiated, multi-faceted description of self and other or take into account multiple perspectives.

Taking the ORI and ECR scores of individual respondents into consideration may explain why this hypothesis was not confirmed. Although the two couples quoted earlier received scores that differed by as much as 3 scale points on the D-R, both were identified as securely attached based on the ECR. The husband and wife in the first couple did not offer an integrated representation of spouse, while both members of the second couple characterized each other in a cohesive and modulated manner. However, both couples reported that they feel comfortable with closeness and are able to rely on their partner as a source of support.

While the constructs of attachment status and differentiation-relatedness overlap in certain respects and are often grouped together, they seem to diverge in important ways. Attachment status is based on an internal working model of self and other in interpersonal relationships. According to this model, one will experience the self as either lovable or unlovable and one expects others to be either emotionally available or emotionally unavailable. These assumptions translate into particular behaviors and a set of rules for processing and interpreting interaction with others. Additionally, this prototype guides partner choice and an overall appraisal of the relationship as either anxiety provoking or reassuring. In contrast, relatedness directly influences the quality of the connectedness during moment to moment interactions within a relationship. The capacity for differentiation would enable a person to feel connected to one's sense of self and the other person in the face of disagreement or tension. Moreover, a well related

individual may have the capacity to acknowledge another person's perspective while being mindful of his or her own position. Yet, this same person may still have an insecure attachment status due to the internalization of the belief that the self is not lovable or an expectation that an intimate partner will not be emotionally available. Notably, a person can develop an observing ego and an awareness of his or her insecure attachment status and yet still be unable to develop a secure attachment. Because internal working models become firmly embedded during childhood, an insecure attachment status can only be modified through a long term ongoing relationship with a significant other who is consistently emotionally available. Over the course of a long term marriage a person may develop a secure attachment status, but that does not necessarily affect the capacity for differentiation and relatedness. Conversely, a securely attached individual's experience of self and other may not be well integrated.

One female participant offers a good example of being highly differentiated and related, yet insecurely attached. She was one of the few participants who received a score as high as 9 for level of differentiation-relatedness regarding description of spouse. Though she received an exceptionally high score on the ORI, she was identified as preoccupied on the ECR. She even alludes to her attachment status within her description of spouse. The following quote includes a few excerpts from the longer description she provided for representation of spouse.

> My spouse. He is an extremely complicated person. And, um, he's very conscientious and energetic about everything that he does, which can be both delightful and not so delightful. I…I…I know that he loves me very much.

And I think that the fact that we are so different sort is one of the things that attracted us to each other. And he has become much more sort of open and accessible emotionally over time. And I have become much better able to express myself, um, particularly since we've been together. So we've sort of, you know, not intentionally, sort of taught each other. You know, or opened up, opened each other up in those ways, which has been sort of lovely, and of course enhanced the relationship. Cause he's gotten better at that, and I've gotten better at this, and we connect more. Um, and uh, you know, there's—there's tremendous passion between us, and intensity. I mean we're both very, um...you know, sort of focused, uh, present people, um, most of the time.

He has a hard time being intimate in the way that husbands and...that I think husbands and wives are—in the sense that I know he used to feel that expressing any sort of need was a sign of weakness. You know, I don't. He says he doesn't feel that way anymore, sometimes he acts as if he still feels that's the case. But, he's working on it and we talk about it. And not that I tell him what he should do, but you know, he's aware of that. He'd like that to shift and it has shifted. Um, it's shifting. Uh, um, but there are times when, um, he's just, uh, not responsive. And I think one of the reasons I was drawn to him subconsciously is because he can be emotionally very distant like my parents are, or are with me. And, um, so it's a nice tikkun (repair) that I count as a chance to sort of work through that. Uh, it can be very challenging and very painful because some small hurt with him taps into that deep well of upset that I had growing up with my parents. So I have to be really careful to really just, you know, try and focus my response on what's

going on in the moment as opposed to, you know, bringing up all this old stuff. Because invariably it ends up happening…lots of heavy baggage, um….

This woman was able to differentiate between her husband's feelings for her and her own experience of his behavior. Intellectually, she believes that he loves her; however, she does not always feel loved. Furthermore, she specifically describes moments with her husband that activate painful memories from interactions with her parents, adeptly portraying the role of mental representations in her marriage. She is conscious of this happening and makes an effort to respond to the here-and-now, rather than react to her husband based on internalized images of her parents.

In terms of attachment status, her sense of feeling unloved suggests a preoccupied attachment status. On the ECR, this woman indicated that she wished her husband's feelings for her were as strong as her feelings for him. In her description of spouse, she explained that she feels unloved at times, though she states that she is loved. Despite her understanding that they share a deep connection, she feels a strong need for her husband to be more responsive. Preoccupied individuals tend to be overly dependent with an insatiable desire for the approval of others and a strong sense of unworthiness (Bartholomew, 1990). While she displays a developed capacity for autonomy and a strong sense of separateness, she does not feel confident that her husband will always be there for her in times of distress.

Based on this woman's description of her husband, he appears dismissing, and is thereby likely to reinforce her preoccupied stance. This inference regarding his attachment status is further supported by the husband's classification of himself as dismissing on the ECR. This woman's responses on the ORI and ECR may illustrate

some of the differences between what is being assessed by these two measures. While she is cognizant of multiple perspectives and the distinction between self and other, she identifies herself as being insecurely attached due to anxiety about closeness and a fear that her partner will not be there for her when she turns to him for comfort.

Assessing the individual scores of these five people—namely, the two couples who identified as securely attached and the female participant classified as preoccupied according to the ECR—cannot completely account for the fact that the hypothesis linking object relations and attachment status was not confirmed. However, these examples may provide a better understanding of the possible differences between attachment status and level of differentiation-relatedness. One's level of comfort with intimacy and autonomy, inherent to the construct of attachment, may not necessarily be related to one's level of psychological development. Yet, there is considerable overlap between attachment theory and the concept of mental representations. One's attachment status, when assessed during early childhood, is based on the infant's ability to tolerate separations from and reunite with the primary caregiver. During these separations, mental representations—which include images of the primary caregiver—can enable the infant to tolerate time apart from the caregiver. As a result, the child is likely to successfully manage the feelings that arise while away from the primary caregiver and will thereby develop a sense of autonomy and the capacity for intersubjectivity.

Attachment status reflects the way one anticipates (or one's assumptions regarding) how people will respond in attachment related social situations based on previous experiences. Consequently, the person generally pursues relationships that

confirm that expectation. An awareness of one's internal working model does not necessarily prevent a person from engaging in behaviors associated with that model.

Differentiation and relatedness operate on a developmental continuum in which people can always move closer to the upper end of the scale while the lower end reflects psychopathology. Attachment status can be understood in a continuous manner, based on levels of anxiety and avoidance, but it is most informative as a discrete characteristic of relationships. Those who are secure perceive themselves and others in a positive manner and are consequently classified as secure. They readily turn to significant others for comfort and support. While people can earn a secure attachment status, they are usually not identified as becoming increasingly secure. Once the secure model has been internalized it is considered a constant prototype, rather than a progressive developmental sequence.

The fact that these data did not support an empirical relationship between level of object relations and attachment status as measured by the ECR may be due to the nature of the D-R. A scale point of 6 or 7 is more associated with differentiation and less affected by the capacity for relatedness, an aspect of the measure which is more reflected by a score of 8 or higher (D. Diamond, personal communication, June 9, 2004). Teasing apart the constructs of differentiation and relatedness may clarify the link between level of object representations and attachment status. It may be that well differentiated individuals are capable of being separate and autonomous, but still could be identified as being insecurely attached. Conversely, those who are well related and capable of empathically attuned mutuality may be more likely to indicate a secure attachment status than those who are poorly related. This hypothesis cannot be tested using these data

because this sample did not include many participants who received a score of 8 or higher for representation of spouse.

Shaver and Mikulnicer (2002) assert that attachment research lacks empirical data on the relationship between objective self-report attachment inventories and projective measures which more directly assess unconscious processes associated with relationships. This study makes a contribution to the attachment literature by drawing a possible distinction between certain aspects of object relations and internal working models.

Attachment Status

In terms of the overall sample, 64 participants (68 %) were identified as securely attached according to the ECR. The composition of this sample is fairly similar to other studies regarding attachment status and romantic relationships. However, this percentage is slightly higher than in studies where engaging in a romantic relationship was not a criterion; in those examples, between 55% and 60% of the respondents identified themselves as securely attached (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994). It is not surprising to find that most participants in this study reported a secure attachment status as measured by the ECR. Individuals who have been able to maintain a marriage for longer than ten years are likely to be securely attached due to their comfort with intimacy and autonomy. Research shows that those who are securely attached are more likely to sustain a long term relationship and less likely to divorce than those who are insecurely attached (Hill, Young, & Nord, 1994; Klohnen & Bera, 1998). Nonetheless, Bartholomew (1997) found that a secure attachment is not necessarily associated with maintaining a long term relationship because secure individuals are more comfortable being alone and may be more capable of terminating a dissatisfying relationship.

Insecurely attached individuals may be more likely to remain in a long-term relationship, despite their desire to separate.

Notably, it is not clear whether all participants who were classified as securely attached based on the ECR measure are in fact securely attached. The ECR measure is a fairly straight-forward objective self-report questionnaire in which participants are able to understand the ways in which they should respond if they wanted to present themselves as feeling a high level of comfort or discomfort with closeness in romantic relationships. Brennan et al. (1998), the developers of this inventory, clearly state that "self-report measures are subject to response biases, and they rely on research participants' honesty and self-insight, which are probably limited in any case but especially so when fears and defenses are at issue" (p.68). While the measure is designed to limit the influence of biased responding, it is likely that some participants responded to the items in an attempt to present themselves as securely attached or, alternatively, due to a lack of insight into their own discomfort with closeness. It seems likely that those who present themselves as insecurely attached are responding based on a genuine perception of themselves, as this is not a socially desirable presentation.

The sample consisted of 30 insecure participants (32%) as measured by the ECR and most were classified as preoccupied. This sample included very few fearful and dismissing participants according to the ECR. Insecurely attached individuals tend to be underrepresented in studies of intimate relationships because they are less likely to meet the criterion of being involved in a romantic relationship. Individuals with a fearful attachment status tend to avoid intimate relationships because they see themselves as unworthy of love and have a negative view of the outside world. Dismissing individuals

are also wary of pursuing a romantic relationship because although they have a positive view of self, they minimize the need for others. Thus, the qualities associated with being fearful or dismissing are not common to individuals who sustain a long-term marriage. Alternatively, these results may reflect the fact that fearful and dismissing adults are less willing to volunteer to participate in a study regarding marriage because they may experience their romantic relationship as fragile and are therefore reluctant to engage in a discussion about their marriage. In contrast to fearful and dismissing individuals, preoccupied individuals are commonly involved in intimate relationships, as emphasized in the attachment literature.

In general, securely attached participants as measured by the ECR were married to each other. This finding confirms previous research with heterosexual couples in long term relationships (Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994). This result might not have been the case had participants been assessed when they first married. Some of the participants from the securely attached couples may have been insecurely attached prior to getting married, but later earned a secure attachment status through the experience of having an emotionally available and reliable partner.

Participants identified as insecurely attached based on the ECR were generally married to spouses who also identified themselves as insecurely attached. Among the insecure respondents, no particular pattern of fit between insecure attachment statuses was noted. Bartholomew (1990) explains that insecure individuals are likely to marry someone who is either similarly insecure or insecure in a complementary manner. For example, the dismissing partner's avoidant attachment status can be conceptualized as a defensive process in which the individual chooses a partner who either requires a certain

level of safe interpersonal distance or an avoidant mate who is emotionally unavailable. "Alternatively, avoidant individuals may choose dependent or preoccupied partners in order to validate their perceived need to maintain psychological distance—a preoccupied partner may in fact desire a pathological level of closeness with romantic partners" (Bartholomew, 1990, p.172). This premise was not supported by the results of this study. However, the sample of participants identified as insecurely attached as measured by the ECR was limited and not sufficient to effectively test this theory.

Intimacy

Initially, there was a significant negative relationship between levels of differentiation-relatedness and males' satisfaction with intimacy. After controlling for the effect of social desirability, there was no relationship between males' object relations and their satisfaction with intimacy. The initial statistic was misleading because of the significant relationship for men between receiving a higher score on the D-R and a lower score for the conventionality scale of the PAIR. The conventionality scale assesses response bias due to social desirability and the extent to which participants are trying to appear satisfied. Thus, among males, there was a significant relationship between being poorly related and "faking good." One aspect of being well related is the capacity to acknowledge the nuances in relationships such that one can admit his or her marriage is not perfect.

No relationship was found between level of object relations and satisfaction with intimacy for males or females. Those who received scores of a 7 or above on the D-R were no more likely than the rest of the sample to report that their experience of marital intimacy closely resembled their desired level of intimacy. It may be that differentiation

and relatedness are not associated with marital intimacy. Alternatively, the PAIR may not assess aspects of intimacy that would be bolstered by a greater capacity for self-other distinctions. The PAIR focuses on the experiential aspects of intimacy, rather than the nature of the couple's bond. Various aspects of intimacy are not included in the PAIR, such as feeling accepted, management of aggression within the relationship, and the flexibility to balance different roles—as nurturer or challenger—that accompany being a lover. The PAIR assesses dimensions of intimacy accessible through the conscious experience. However, key facets of intimacy are embedded in one's preconscious or unconscious feelings and may be best analyzed using a projective method.

Among males, a significant relationship was noted between attachment status and satisfaction with intimacy. Thus, men who identified themselves as securely attached according to the ECR generally reported smaller discrepancies between the actual level of intimacy in their marriage and their ideal level of intimacy than men classified as insecurely attached according to the ECR. Previous research has documented that attachment security is associated with relationship satisfaction (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). For women, after controlling for social desirability, this was not the case. These findings resonate with gender differences that have been noted in a previous study and this parity merits greater analysis. Rivera (1999) assessed married couples without children, who had been married on average for three and a half years. Using the Calgary Attachment Questionnaire and the Marital Satisfaction Scale, she found a significant relationship between husbands' attachment status and their level of marital satisfaction. For wives, there was no relationship between these two factors. Based on these findings, attachment status is not a mediating factor for marital satisfaction among women. There are different

ideas about what constitutes intimacy. Maybe the PAIR was more relevant for a man's perception of intimacy whereas for women it was not as useful a measure of intimacy. Perhaps for women their attachment status is not significant for their experience of marital intimacy whereas their husband's attachment status does mediate their level of satisfaction with intimacy.

Limitations of the Study

The D-R used in this study was originally designed for the assessment of severely disturbed patients, including those with Borderline Personality Disorder. Specifically, this scale was implemented for the purposes of differentiating between levels of object development for adults diagnosed with a serious mental illness. Consequently, the lower end of the scale is applicable to primitive adults who are poorly related due to an emotional disturbance. The D-R is a 10 point instrument when used with a sample that includes mentally ill individuals. However, this sample included high functioning individuals who are not suffering from a severe mental illness. None of the participants in this sample received a score lower than 4 on any of their representations. For this population, the scale was actually a 7-point scale, which decreases the possible range of scores.

Partners' received comparable scores for description of spouse. However, in terms of the overall sample, differentiation-relatedness scores for description of spouse did not vary greatly. Approximately 65% of male and female participants received scores between scale points of 6 and 7 for representation of spouse. The 7 point range of the scale, rather than the 10 point range built into the measure, may have contributed to this result. The limited variability within the sample is notable. Perhaps it is not that

members of each couple were similarly differentiated and related, but rather that all individuals who are capable of sustaining long term marriages tend to be at a certain minimum level of object relations—because the qualities associated with a score of 6 are essential for maintaining an enduring relationship. Alternatively, if distressed couples or individuals who are more psychologically mature had taken part in the study, then perhaps the study would have a yielded greater variability in ORI scores. If so, then married partners may be at similar levels of differentiation-relatedness, but due to the nature of this self-selected group there was little variability in the scores for description of spouse in this sample.

The PAIR is a measure that was designed to assess intimacy in distressed couples. Schaefer and Olson (1981) developed the measure to use as a tool with couples who present for treatment in order to determine therapeutic goals. While the measure has been widely used for research purposes, it is more relevant for studies which assess distressed couples. This sample consisted of healthy couples who are generally satisfied with their experience of marital intimacy as indicated by the high mean scores for all five perceived subscales of intimacy on the PAIR, which were above a score of 60. Schaefer and Olson (1981) found that perceived scores of intimacy fell within the range of 42 and 58 for a non-clinical sample of couples. The PAIR was also somewhat inadequate because many participants reported that they found the measure confusing, especially the second half of the questionnaire in which they were asked to report their desired level of intimacy. Finally, intimacy was circumscribed by this inventory. Participants were not afforded an opportunity to reflect on the characteristics of marital intimacy that they most value, which may have differed from the items included in the questionnaire.

The ECR was to some degree limited for this sample because many of the questions relate to an individual's behavior outside of a romantic relationship. Many of the participants had been married for over 25 years and felt that they could not answer those questions in an honest manner because they were not certain of how they would behave outside of an intimate relationship. A more suitable attachment measure would include items which are relevant to all marriages, regardless of the length of the relationship. One item in particular was confusing for older couples: "I worry about being abandoned." Older participants thought about the term "abandoned" in terms of a separation caused by death, rather than divorce, a realistic fear considering their stage in life.

Participants were not asked if they had taken part in individual treatment or couples therapy. A long term treatment is likely to influence an individual's level of differentiation-relatedness. Diamond et al. (1990) found that patients diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder showed an improvement in level of differentiation-relatedness following a successful therapeutic experience. Both partners may have had positive experiences in psychotherapy which enabled them to become better related, thereby contributing to their comparable levels of emotional maturity. Members of a couple who attend therapy together may be similarly related due to the therapeutic process, not necessarily the fit between them.

Sampling Bias

Participants in this study were generally couples who heard about this study from friends who had participated in the study or were told about the study by friends of the investigator. Many couples who heard about the study did not volunteer to participate.

Couples with young children were less likely to participate because they did not have time, while older and retired couples were able to find time to participate. Some people who had initially volunteered to participate later declined because their spouse did not want to participate. Clearly, this sample is a very self-selected group of married couples. Moreover, this study did not provide great incentives to encourage people to volunteer. Most who participated did so because (a) they value research and wanted to contribute; (b) they thought they might find it interesting; (c) they participated because they were contacted by a personal friend and may have felt some sense of obligation toward this friend to take part in the study. It is relevant to note that couples who were willing to participate in the study generally perceived themselves as happily married. Married couples who consider themselves unhappily married are unlikely to participate in a study about marriage, especially when it involves a direct interview with a stranger about their personal lives. Additionally, some couples feared the interview would include questions about sex and did not feel comfortable with the possibility that they would be asked to speak about their sexual relationship. This sample was fairly homogeneous with regard to race, religion, and education. Focusing on couples who had been married for at least 10 years further reduced the chance of variability in the couples. Consequently, these results may not be applicable to couples who differ in term of the demographics of this sample.

Directions for Future Research

While the results of this exploratory study are useful and informative, the validity of these findings cannot be determined at this time because the results have not been replicated. This study should be repeated using the same method while including

additional instruments which also measure these constructs. If the findings of this study were replicated, then the validity of this study could be established.

This study included a homogeneous sample of long term marriages. A more diverse group of couples in terms of race, religion, education, and length of marriage would yield results that are more likely to be generalizable to the overall population. Using newlywed couples as a comparison group would bolster the findings of this research. For example, a cross-sectional study of married couples would help to address whether partners are just as likely to be similarly related at the beginning of their marriage as they are after many years of marriage. Couples who have been married for only a short time may be less likely to match up according to levels of differentiation-relatedness and attachment status. One could conduct a longitudinal study of newlywed couples and assess their object relations and attachment status every five years to track whether spouses' level of mental representations and attachment status change over the course of the relationship. Similarly, married couples in therapy could be assessed at different points in their treatment to determine whether their relational templates and internal working models are affected by couples therapy.

Differentiation, the capacity to acknowledge differences and maintain a sense of connection, may be best predictive of a couple's ability to manage anxiety and marital distress. A future study might record a couple during a stressful situation or while discussing an emotionally charged topic to demonstrate the link between differentiation and a couple's level of functioning. Coding a videotape of a couple's interaction has the benefit of displaying both conscious and unconscious communication through

conversation as well as body language. This would be especially use for examining the role differentiation plays in processing aggression within a relationship.

Attachment status can be assessed in a more thorough manner by using both an objective self-report measure designed by social psychologists as well as a projective instrument, such as the Adult Attachment Interview, developed by clinical psychologists. Using two different measures would clarify the ways in which romantic relationships are mediated by conscious and unconscious aspects of internal working models.

This study assessed each partner's individual perceptions of marital intimacy. However, intimacy is a co-created experience. A more comprehensive assessment would include a joint interview in addition to administering inventories to each member of the couple. A relational interpretation of intimacy would be utilized for the joint assessment. The interview would include questions concerning attraction, sexual intimacy, fantasy, and conflict. A joint interview could be coded for both conscious and unconscious processes by examining the perceptions of husband and wife as well as the interplay between the two. This type of exploration may be better suited for accessing aspects of intimacy that are mediated by psychological development vis-à-vis self and other.

Implications for clinical practice

Couples therapists, especially those analytically trained, commonly believe that there is a match between the relational templates within a couple. This assumption is drawn from a systemic approach, analytic theory, as well as from published examples of clinical anecdotes. Notably, the findings of this study provide empirical data to support this longstanding tenet of object relations and family systems theory. Additionally, this study may help substantiate the claim that an individual's capacity to differentiate from

one's parental figures relates to the ability to differentiate from one's spouse. Therapists can assist couples in distress by helping partners develop better boundaries vis-à-vis their family of origin, which will in turn reinforce healthier levels of differentiation in their marriage. With the rise of evidence-based practice, empirical support for clinical theory and technique offers a significant contribution to the practice of marriage and family therapists (Patterson, Miller, Carnes, & Wilson, 2004).

Finally, these data suggest that there might be a distinction between attachment status and psychological development. When presenting for treatment, a therapist can be mindful of the category of attachment status and level of differentiation-relatedness for each member of the couple. Some couples might seek treatment due to a gap in differentiation and/or relatedness that cannot be explained by attachment status. Thus, treatment would employ a relational approach by helping the couple develop the capacity for self-other distinctions, especially with regard to intersubjectivity. Other married couples are fairly psychologically sophisticated; however, they display insecure attachment statuses. In this case, a therapist would work on repairing the attachment status of one or both members of the couple. Emotionally-focused couple therapy is a clinical technique currently used to treat couples who have endured a stressful incident that results in an attachment injury, possibly exacerbating the insecure attachment status of either one or both partners (Johnson, Makinen, & Millikin, 2001). Since this study found that attachment status is significantly associated with the extent to which men are satisfied with marital intimacy this treatment may be especially salient for husbands who are identified as being insecurely attached. Thus, couples therapists may benefit from

differentiating between internal working models and mental representations and their impact on marital processes.

Conclusion

The goal of this study was to ascertain aspects of the "glue" that play a part in the fit and sustained union within healthy couples. This study suggests that on a fundamental level early experiences with primary caregivers shape the relational template which guides partner choice and informs one's capacity to sustain a romantic relationship. Furthermore, complementarity between underlying psychological mechanisms, such as differentiation, relatedness, and attachment style enable couples to maintain a stable and lasting relationship. For husbands, attachment status is directly related to satisfaction with marital intimacy. This study further underscores a tenet long held in the therapeutic community: the "glue" vital to sustaining a long-term marriage is an admixture of the conscious and unconscious experiences of the couple.

APPENDIX A

Differentiation-Relatedness Scale of Self and Object Representations

Level/Scale Point	Description
1. Self/other boundary compromise	Basic sense of physical cohesion or integrity of representation is lacking or is breached.
2. Self/other boundary	Self and other are represented as physically intact and separate, but feelings and thoughts are amorphous, undifferentiated, or confused. Description may consist of a single global impressionistic quality or a flood of details with a sense of confusion and vagueness.
3. Self/other mirroring	Characteristics of self and other, such as physical appearance body qualities, shape, or size, are virtually identical.
4. Self/other idealization	Attempt to consolidate representations based on unitary or unmodulated idealization or denigration. Extreme, exaggerated, one-sided descriptions.
5. Semi-differentiated, Tenuous consolidation of representations through splitting (polarization) and/or by an emphasis on concrete part properties or denigration	Marked oscillation between dramatically opposite qualities or an emphasis on manifest external qualities.
6. Emergent, ambivalent constancy (cohesion) of and an emergent sense of relatedness	Emerging consolidation of disparate aspects of self and other in a somewhat hesitant, equivocal, or self ambivalent integration. A list of appropriate conventional characteristics, but they lack a sense of uniqueness. Tentative movement toward a more individuated and cohesive sense of self and other.
7. Consolidated, constant self and other in unilateral relationships	Thoughts, feelings, needs, and fantasies are (stable) differentiated and modulated. Increasing tolerance for integration of disparate aspects. Distinguishing qualities and characteristics. Sympathetic understanding of others.

Differentiation-Relatedness Scale of Self and Object Representations (continued)

Level/Scale Point	Description
8. Cohesive, individuated, empathically related self and others	Cohesive, nuanced, and related sense of self and others. A definite sense of identity, an interest in interpersonal relationships, and a capacity to understand the perspective of others.
9. Reciprocally related Integrated unfolding self and others	Cohesive sense of self and others in reciprocal relationships that transform both the self and the other in complex, continually unfolding ways.
10. Creative, integrated constructions of self and other in empathic, reciprocally attuned relationships	Integrated reciprocal relations with an appreciation that one contributes to the construction of meaning in complex interpersonal relationships.

APPENDIX B

Consent Form for the Couples Communication Study

I understand that I am being asked to take part in a study on couples communication. I understand that the study explores the ways in which individuals communicate in their marriage.

If I choose to participate I will be asked to answer some questions about myself and others in my life. Specifically, I will be asked about my marriage and about my spouse. Some questions will be asked aloud to me by an interviewer and my responses to those questions will be audiotaped. Other questions will be administered in written format and will require me to write down my responses. I understand that my participation will require one hour.

Neither I nor anyone I mention will be named or identified in this study. I understand that all of my responses, whether on audiotape or in writing, will be labeled with a participant identification number instead of my name to preserve my confidentiality. The document, which includes the names and corresponding identification numbers, will be locked in the desk of the investigator's home office. The audiotapes, which include my recorded responses, will also be locked in the investigator's home office.

I have been given the opportunity to ask any questions I have about this study and about my participation in this study. All of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that what I discuss during the interview may cause me some discomfort. I may stop taking part in this study at any time. I may refuse to answer any question that I do not wish to answer. I understand that the interview process may also afford me an opportunity to learn more about myself and my relationship. I may develop a new way of reflecting upon my marriage. While I may find the interview interesting and learn something about myself from it, I understand that the purpose of this research is not for my immediate benefit.

I understand that if I have further questions about the study I may contact Yael Ebenstein at (646) 382-4621, or Dr. Diana Diamond, Professor of Psychology at the City College of the City University of New York at (212) 650-5662. I understand that if I have any questions or complaints about my rights as a participant, I may contact Ethel Breheny, Institutional Review Board Administrator, at (212) 650-7903 during business hours.

I understand that my participation in this study may contribute to research about married couples and their relationships. My participation may benefit society's understanding of couplehood and the many facets of the marital relationship.

The use of human participants in this study has been approved by the CUNY Institutional Review Board. I have been given a copy of this form to keep. I consent to take part in the Couples Communication Study.

Consent Form for the Couples Communication Study

Name (Print): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

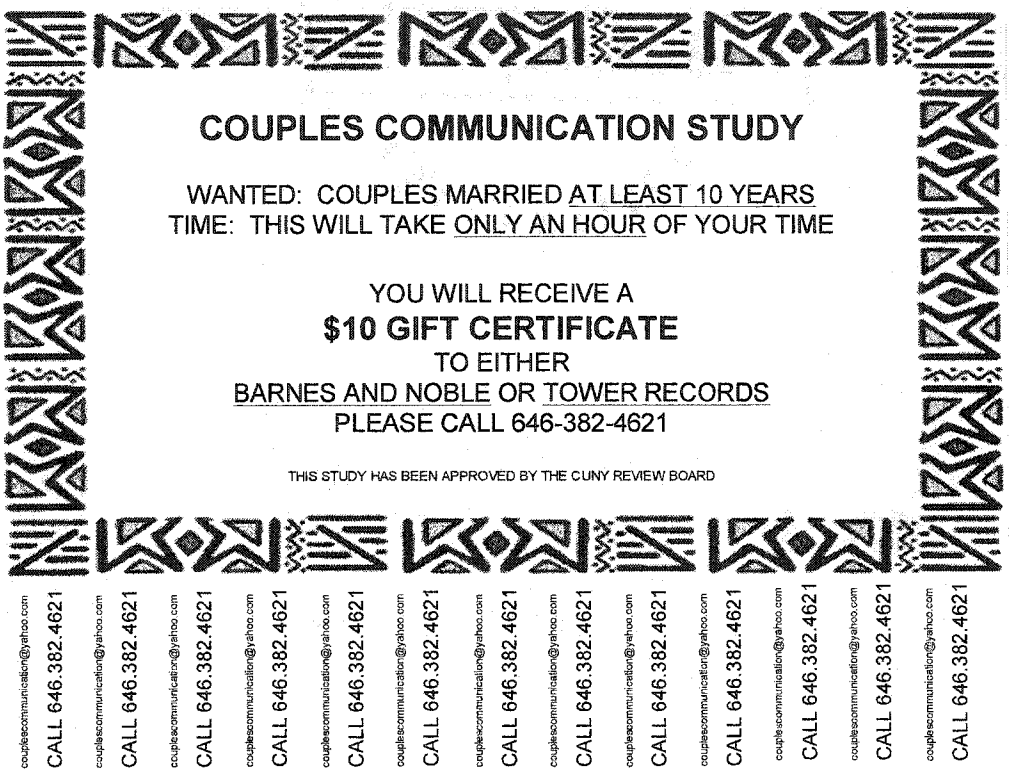
Phone : _____

APPENDIX C

Below is an oral script that was used when speaking to potential participants:

Hello, my name is Yael Ebenstein. I am a clinical psychology doctoral student at City University of New York. I would like to tell you a little about my study and see if you would like to participate. I would like to separately interview you and your spouse about significant people in your lives. I will also give you two questionnaires to fill out that will include questions about your relationship. The interview will take approximately two hours, one hour for you and one hour for your spouse. I am happy to come to your home or meet you wherever it would be convenient for you and your spouse. I would be more than happy to answer any questions you may have regarding your participation in the study.

APPENDIX D



APPENDIX E

Measures

Demographics Questionnaire

Please check one:

☐ I would like to be mailed a summary of the results of the study.

☐ I would not like to be mailed a summary of the results of the study.

Please provide the following information (please print):

General Information

A. Personal Data

1. Sex: (1) female ___ (2) male ___

2. Age ___

3. Religion:

(1) Protestant ___ (2) Catholic ___ (3) Jewish ___
(4) Moslem ___ (5) Other _____

4. (1) Observant ___ (2) Nonobservant ___

5. Race/Ethnicity (check more than one if appropriate):

(1) White/Caucasian___ (2) African-American___ (3) Latino ___

(4) Afro-Caribbean ___ (5) Other _____

6. Highest Level of Schooling:

(1) Grade school ___ (2) High School ___
(3) College ___ (4) Post graduate ___
(5) Other ___

7. Do you work?

(1) Yes, full-time ___ (2) Yes, part-time ___ (3) No ___

Occupation: _____

8. Your economic status:

(1) Excellent ___ (2) Very good ___ (3) Good ___
(4) Fairly Good ___ (5) Bad ___ (6) Very Bad ___

9. How would you assess your physical health compared with others in your age group?

(1) Very good ___ (2) Good ___ (3) Moderate ___
(4) Bad ___ (5) Very Bad ___

10. How was your childhood on the whole (until age 10)?

(1) Very happy ___ (2) Fairly happy ___
(3) Rather unhappy ___ (4) Very unhappy ___

B. Relationship with Parents Before Marriage

1. How much closeness was there between:

You and your mother: (M)	You and your father: (F)
(1) Quite a bit ___	(1) Quite a bit ___
(2) Moderate ___	(2) Moderate ___
(3) Little ___	(3) Little ___
(4) None ___	(4) None ___

2. How much conflict was there between:

You and your mother: (M)	You and your father: (F)
(1) Quite a bit ___	(1) Quite a bit ___
(2) Moderate ___	(2) Moderate ___
(3) Little ___	(3) Little ___
(4) None ___	(4) None ___

C. History of Parents' Relationship

1. Length of your parents' marriage: ___

2. Your parents' current marital status:

(1) Still married ___
(2) Ended in divorce ___
(3) Ended in death ___

3. Please give your appraisal of your parents' marriage:

(1) Very happy ___	(2) Fairly happy ___
(3) Rather unhappy ___	(4) Very unhappy ___

D. History of Your Marital Relationship

1. How long had you known your mate at the time of your marriage?

(1) ___weeks
(2) ___months
(3) ___years

2. Did you live together before marriage?

(1) ___ not at all	(2) ___ weeks
(3) ___ months	(4) ___ years

3. How old were you at the time of your marriage? ___

4. Did you get married under pressure?

(1) Yes ___ (2) No ___

If yes, indicate for which of the following reasons:

(1) family ___ (2) economic reasons ___

(3) pregnancy ___ (4) escape from parental home ___

(5) other ___

5. Marital Status

(1) First marriage ___ (2) Second marriage ___

(3) 3 or more marriages ___ (4) Separated ___

(5) Divorced ___ (6) Widowed ___

6. Number of years married (current): ___

7. Number of years married (previously): ___

8. Number of children from your present marriage: ___

9. Number children from your previous marriage: ___

10. Ages of children: _____

Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships Inventory

PLEASE MAKE SURE TO READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY BEFORE PROCEEDING. PLEASE MAKE SURE TO ASK QUESTIONS IF YOU ARE UNSURE HOW TO PROCEED AT ANY POINT WHILE COMPLETING THE INVENTORY.

Instructions: This inventory is used to measure different kinds of intimacy in your relationship. You are to indicate your response to each statement by using the following scale.

0	1	2	3	4
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree

There are 36 items. You have 5 possible choices in responding to each item ranging from 0 to 4, Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. You are to indicate the most appropriate number that best represents your feeling or attitude about the item by writing it in the space provided.

In Part I, you are to respond in the way that you feel about the relationship at present. Part I of the questionnaire is labeled "HOW MY RELATIONSHIP IS NOW." After you have completed Part I there will be instructions that explain how to complete Part II.

Take as much time as you need. There are no right or wrong answers.

PART I: HOW MY RELATIONSHIP IS NOW

0	1	2	3	4
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree

1. _____ My partner listens to me when I need someone to talk to.
2. _____ We enjoy spending time with other couples.
3. _____ I am satisfied with our sex life.
4. _____ My partner helps me clarify my thoughts.
5. _____ We enjoy the same recreational activities.
6. _____ My partner has all of the qualities I've always wanted in a mate.
7. _____ I can state my feelings without him/her getting defensive.
8. _____ We usually "keep to ourselves."
9. _____ I feel our sexual activity is just routine.
10. _____ When it comes to having a serious discussion, it seems that we have little in common.
11. _____ I share in few of my partner's interests.
12. _____ There are times when I do not feel a great deal of love and affection for my partner.
13. _____ I often feel distant from my partner.
14. _____ We have few friends in common.
15. _____ I am able to tell my partner when I want sexual intercourse.
16. _____ I feel "put-down" in a serious conversation with my partner.
17. _____ We like playing together.
18. _____ Every new thing I have learned about my partner has pleased me.
19. _____ My partner can really understand my hurts and joys.

PART I: HOW MY RELATIONSHIP IS NOW

0	1	2	3	4
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree

20. _____ Having time together with friends is an important part of our shared activities.
21. _____ I "hold back" my sexual interest because my partner makes me feel uncomfortable.
22. _____ I feel it is useless to discuss some things with my partner.
23. _____ We enjoy the out-of-doors together.
24. _____ My partner and I understand each other completely.
25. _____ I feel neglected at times by my partner.
26. _____ Many of my partner's closest friends are also my closest friends.
27. _____ Sexual expression is an essential part of our relationship.
28. _____ My partner frequently tries to change my ideas.
29. _____ We seldom find time to do fun things together.
30. _____ I don't think anyone could possibly be happier than my partner and I when we are with one another.
31. _____ I sometimes feel lonely when we're together.
32. _____ My partner disapproves of some of my friends.
33. _____ My partner seems disinterested in sex.
34. _____ We have an endless number of things to talk about.
35. _____ I feel we share some of the same interests.
36. _____ I have some needs that are not being met by my relationship.

Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships Inventory

PLEASE MAKE SURE TO READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY BEFORE PROCEEDING. PLEASE MAKE SURE TO ASK QUESTIONS IF YOU ARE UNSURE HOW TO PROCEED AT ANY POINT WHILE COMPLETING THE INVENTORY.

Instructions: The second part of this inventory is also used to measure different kinds of intimacy in your relationship. You are to indicate your response to each statement by using the following scale.

0	1	2	3	4
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree

There are 36 items. You have 5 possible choices in responding to each item ranging from 0 to 4, Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. You are to indicate the most appropriate number that best represents your feeling or attitude about the item by writing it into the space provided.

Please note: In Part II, you are to answer the item in the way you would like the relationship to be. Part II is labeled "HOW I WOULD LIKE MY RELATIONSHIP TO BE." Take as much time as you need. There are no right or wrong answers.

PART II: HOW I WOULD LIKE MY RELATIONSHIP TO BE

0	1	2	3	4
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree

1. _____ My partner listens to me when I need someone to talk to.
2. _____ We enjoy spending time with other couples.
3. _____ I am satisfied with our sex life.
4. _____ My partner helps me clarify my thoughts.
5. _____ We enjoy the same recreational activities.
6. _____ My partner has all of the qualities I've always wanted in a mate.
7. _____ I can state my feelings without him/her getting defensive.
8. _____ We usually "keep to ourselves."
9. _____ I feel our sexual activity is just routine.
10. _____ When it comes to having a serious discussion, it seems that we have little in common.
11. _____ I share in few of my partner's interests.
12. _____ There are times when I do not feel a great deal of love and affection for my partner.
13. _____ I often feel distant from my partner.
14. _____ We have few friends in common.
15. _____ I am able to tell my partner when I want sexual intercourse.
16. _____ I feel "put-down" in a serious conversation with my partner.
17. _____ We like playing together.
18. _____ Every new thing I have learned about my partner has pleased me.
19. _____ My partner can really understand my hurts and joys.

PART II: HOW I WOULD LIKE MY RELATIONSHIP TO BE

0	1	2	3	4
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree

20. _____ Having time together with friends is an important part of our shared activities.
21. _____ I "hold back" my sexual interest because my partner makes me feel uncomfortable.
22. _____ I feel it is useless to discuss some things with my partner.
23. _____ We enjoy the out-of-doors together.
24. _____ My partner and I understand each other completely.
25. _____ I feel neglected at times by my partner.
26. _____ Many of my partner's closest friends are also my closest friends.
27. _____ Sexual expression is an essential part of our relationship.
28. _____ My partner frequently tries to change my ideas.
29. _____ We seldom find time to do fun things together.
30. _____ I don't think anyone could possibly be happier than my partner and I when we are with one another.
31. _____ I sometimes feel lonely when we're together.
32. _____ My partner disapproves of some of my friends.
33. _____ My partner seems disinterested in sex.
34. _____ We have an endless number of things to talk about.
35. _____ I feel we share some of the same interests.
36. _____ I have some needs that are not being met by my relationship.

Experiences in Close Relationships Measure

Instructions: The following statements concern how you feel in romantic relationships. Respond to each statement by indicating how much you agree or disagree with it. Write the number in the space provided, using the following rating scale:

Disagree strongly			Neutral/mixed		Agree strongly	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

1. ____ I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down.
2. ____ I worry about being abandoned.
3. ____ I am very comfortable being close to romantic partners.
4. ____ I worry a lot about my relationships.
5. ____ Just when my partner starts to get close to me I find myself pulling away.
6. ____ I worry that romantic partners won't care about me as much as I care about them.
7. ____ I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner wants to be very close.
8. ____ I worry a fair amount about losing my partner.
9. ____ I don't feel comfortable opening up to romantic partners.
10. ____ I often wish that my partner's feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for him/her.
11. ____ I want to get close to my partner, but I keep pulling back.
12. ____ I often want to merge completely with romantic partners and this sometimes scares them away.
13. ____ I am nervous when partners get too close to me.
14. ____ I worry about being alone.
15. ____ I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with my partner.
16. ____ My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away.
17. ____ I try to avoid getting too close to my partner.
18. ____ I need a lot of reassurance that I am loved by my partner.
19. ____ I find it relatively easy to get close to my partner.

Disagree strongly			Neutral/mixed			Agree strongly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

20. ____ Sometimes I feel that I force my partners to show more feeling, more commitment.
21. ____ I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on romantic partners.
22. ____ I do not often worry about being abandoned.
23. ____ I prefer not to be too close to romantic partners.
24. ____ If I can't get my partner to show interest in me, I get upset or angry.
25. ____ I tell my partner just about everything.
26. ____ I find that my partner(s) don't want to get as close as I would like.
27. ____ I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my partner.
28. ____ When I'm not involved in a relationship, I feel somewhat anxious and insecure.
29. ____ I feel comfortable depending on romantic partners.
30. ____ I get frustrated when my partner is not around as much as I would like.
31. ____ I don't mind asking romantic partners for comfort, advice, or help.
32. ____ I get frustrated if romantic partners are not available when I need them.
33. ____ It helps to turn to my romantic partner in times of need.
34. ____ When romantic partners disapprove of me, I feel really bad about myself.
35. ____ I turn to my partner for many things, including comfort and reassurance.
36. ____ I resent it when my partner spends time away from me.

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