AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF ADULT ROMANTIC ATTACHMENT AND SEXUALITY

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The manuscript has been read and accepted for the
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Abstract

AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF ADULT ROMANTIC ATTACHMENT AND SEXUALITY

by

Belinda Carrasco

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The purpose of this dissertation was to empirically explore the relationship between adult romantic attachment and sexual functioning in a sexual partner who is viewed as an attachment figure, a target of caregiving or both. Guiding this dissertation was the expectation that underlying the four prototypical patterns of adult romantic attachment is a distinct pattern of positive and negative working models of attachment of self and other that shape the way individuals experience and engage in sexuality.

We analyzed the responses of 81 female students and young adult community volunteers from the New York City area and Westchester County, who responded to self-report measures regarding sexual satisfaction, capacity for stability of sexual relationships and functioning in the sexual response cycle, in addition to responding to adult romantic attachment questionnaires.

Results revealed that secure attachment is related to sexual satisfaction, low permissiveness and tendency to seek sex in committed relationships. The findings also indicated that the capacity to experience pleasure and stability of sexual relationships, in combination with the physical aspects of sex, such as arousal, excitement and orgasm, are the essence of a securely attached relationship. By contrast, insecure attachment was found to be positively correlated with little commitment and dependency in romantic relationships, as well as sexual dissatisfaction. In specific, dismissive and fearful women downplayed the importance of sexual relationships, reported higher levels of aggression, as well as reported optimal sexuality functioning in areas that only entail physical aspects of sex and do not include components of affection, tenderness and mutuality between people.

Results also indicated that women who have a preoccupied attachment status showed less sexual satisfaction than other insecure women, and more sexual dysfunction defined by a lower capacity for orgasm, arousal, sexual excitement and openness to varied sexual practices. Overall, the results indicated that ambivalent/preoccupied women are attuned to their attachment needs and gear their sexual behavior towards getting those needs gratified. In other words, in anxious women the hyper-activation of the attachment system overrides the capacity to experience sexual pleasure, satisfaction, commitment to a relationship and the experience of orgasm, and thus experience and interpret sexual activity as a reflection of their relationship status.

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CHAPTER 1.

Introduction

Historically, research in the area of sexuality has had a physiological or clinical viewpoint, with studies traditionally focusing on typical or aberrant sexuality experienced by individuals. Particularly, most empirical research done in this area simply describes sexual difficulties in the context of the behavioral sequence of sexual activity and/or inhibition of the sexual response cycle (desire, excitement, orgasm, and resolution). In fact, the current diagnostic system DSM-IV TR (American Psychiatric Association, 1994) reflects this relative neglect. Studies that follow the DSM diagnostic system have focused on prevalence and the behavioral characteristics of Sexual Dysfunctions (disturbance in sexual desire, arousal and orgasm), Paraphilias (unusual sexual objects, activities or situations), and Gender Identity Disorders.

Increasingly, however, rooted in an integration of psychoanalytic tenets with recent developmental findings, a new model of human erotic experience has been proposed. This model defines sexuality as a complex behavioral system that is molded by repeated environmental experiences with others from infancy to adulthood. (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2007., Diamond, 2007., Fonagy, 2007., Eagle, 2007). In this regard, current research in sexuality builds heavily upon the importance of adult romantic attachment patterns in the development of intimate and stable sexual relationships. (Mikulincer and Saver, 2007., Hazan and Shaver, 1988, 1994., Birhbaum, 2007., Brirbaum et al., 2006., Brassard et al, 2007., Tracy et al, 2003).

Adult attachment theory stems from Bowlby's premise that the interactions of children with primary caregivers during infancy shapes their help seeking behaviors in adulthood, as well as their internal working models of representing themselves and others. Central to adult attachment theory is the desire to be close to another person who is perceived as having a potential to engender a sense of comfort and

security, a dynamic that Bowlby was convinced is an integral part of human nature. (Bolwbly, 1969, 1973). In this vein, adult romantic and sexual relationships show the same attachment features as those that define infant-caregivers interactions. That is, romantic partners are motivated to seek care and/or provide protection and comfort to a significant other who acts as an attachment figure. Moreover, models of attachment are stored in memory and create the representation of attachment figures (working model of others) and representation of the self's lovability and competence to deal with environmental stressors (working models of self).

Guiding this research was the expectation that attachment experiences lead to the formation of mental models of self and other which later influence relationships by shaping responses to romantic and sexual partners. Thus, this study suggests that individual adults with different attachment patterns behave and perceive sexuality differently because they think and feel differently about themselves and others.

Unlike other available studies in the literature which primarily assess the relationship between one or a few dimensions of sexual behavior and attachment (Hazan and Shaver, 1988, 1994., Birhbaum, 2007., Brirbaum et al., 2006., Brassard et al, 2007., Tracy et al 2003), the current study attempts to emphasize the multidimensionality of sexuality in young adult women and its intricate relationship with adult attachment. The rationale for including young adult female participants was to explore the relationship between the variables of interest (sexuality and attachment) within one age cohort who were likely to have had similar dating and relationship experience, and that were probably exposed to similar cultural messages about gender norms. Moreover, research shows that dating and sexual experiences, and the experiences of adult romantic attachment greatly differ among young men and women (Cooper, 2006). Hence, this dissertation will identify areas of convergence and divergence

between adult romantic attachment in young women, and different quantitative and qualitative indexes of sexuality.

Central to the thesis of this study is the idea that attachment security is often associated with more developmentally robust sexual/intimate relations. In this view, this study proposes that securely attached women will report better sexual adjustment and sexual functioning than insecurely attached women. Specifically this study suggests that secure attachment is characterized by the capacity for stability of sexual relationships characterized by sexual satisfaction, good functioning in the sexual responses cycle (arousal, drive, orgasm and sexual fantasy) and a preference to have sex in committed relationships, the integration of aggression in a sexual relationship, integration of love and sensuality, and capacity for mutuality, as well as affectionate feelings towards a sexual partner who is viewed as an attachment figure, a target of caregiving or both.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

I. Adult Attachment theory and notions of sexuality

1. Origins of adult attachment

Adult attachment theory emerged from Bowlby's (1969, 1973) observation of infants that had been separated from their caregivers. By considering an array of sources ranging from psychoanalysis to primate ethnology, he concluded that a person's sense of safety and security depended on an innate behavioral system that gets internalized through the early interactions with caregivers or attachment figures. Bowlby argued that infants, like all mammals, are wired to seek proximity, cling to a caregiver and send distress signals when encountering stressors or possible threats. Thus, the attachment behavioral system, organizes behavior in ways that it increases the chances of survival and reproduction despite stressors and environmental threats.

According to Bowlby, the quality of the attachment system depends on the availability of a caregiver in times of pain and stress, and on the caregiver's responsiveness and sensitivity to alleviate stress and provide a secure base. When a caregiver is available and responsive, the child is likely to experience the world as safe. In addition the child acquires an inner sense of security that prepares him to respond to future threats. In this vein, an individual that internalizes a *secure working model* of attachment acquires important *procedural* knowledge about distress that ends up organizing all relational interactions. In contrast, when a caregiver is emotionally unavailable or is unresponsive, the attachment strategies fail to accomplish its goals. As a result the *internal working models* of attachment are imprinted and stored in memory in ways that make the individual prone to felt insecurity and fear (Bowlby, 1969, 1973).

Bowlby (1969, 1973) believed that both secure and insecure models of attachment are stored in memory and create the representation of attachment figures (working model of others) and representation of the self's lovability and competence to deal with environmental stressors (working models of self).

Stemming from Bowlby's original ideas, Ainsworth developed a laboratory based procedure –the strange situation- for observing infants' internal working models of attachment. She found through numerous observations that when children were separated from their mothers in a situation unfamiliar to them, they exhibited three patterns of behaviors. These patterns or styles told invaluable information about the relationship between the caregiver and child, and about the child's ability to explore the world and regulate upsetting emotions. Through her observations, Ainsworth (1978) identified three major patterns of infant-caregiver attachment, which she called secure, anxious and avoidant. Ainsworth classified infants as secure when they seemed to fit Bowlby's prototype of security; infants were distressed when their mothers left them, sought comfort upon reunion with their mothers and explored their environment in the presence of their caregiver. Systematic observations of mother-infant interactions indicated that mothers of securely attached infants were sensitive and responsive to their infants' signals for attention. In contrast, mothers of anxious/ambivalent infants were observed to be inconsistently responsive to their infant's signals being sometimes unavailable and sometimes intrusive. In the strange situation, the typical anxious child was clingy before separation, extremely upset when the mother left and sought contact when the mother returned, but was angry upon reunion. Thus, anxious children had difficulties with separation and in exploring the world even in the presence of the mother. Lastly, avoidantly attached infants were observed to explore their environment, exhibited little distress upon separation, and showed avoidance by turning away or moving away when reunited with

their caregiver. Mothers of avoidant infants were characterized as aloof, and physically and emotionally unavailable in regards to the infant's attempts to establish contact or signal distress.

Longitudinal studies that followed Ainsworth's empirical findings have shown that secure children are more resilient, independent, self-reliant, socially oriented and display higher self-esteem. (Main, et al, 1985). In contrast, studies have shown that insecure and disorganized children often have histories of physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and usually display in later childhood academic difficulties, issues with social interactions and behavioral problems. Similarly, longitudinal attachment studies suggest that elevated rates of disorganized attachment patterns are associated with family risk conditions such as maternal depression and adolescent parenthood. (Carlson et. al, 1989, as cited in Fonagy, 2000).In this regard, maladaptive early experiences of care giving influence development by limiting the individual's ability to process or understand information related to mental states, which is critical for adaptive functioning in a stressful environment.

Along the same lines, researchers have noted associations between insecure attachment and severe psychopathology in individuals that have history of relational trauma. Evidence has shown that unresolved attachment is frequently associated with pathological dissociation (Liotti, 1992.), borderline personality disorder, psychosis and severe anxiety disorders. (Fonagy et al, 1995). Conversely, longitudinal studies suggest that insecurely attached individuals are unable to regulate strong upsetting feelings or experiences of emotional pain and frustration. As a result the individual responds to threats by using primitive defense mechanisms and other maladaptive emotion regulatory processes (Fosha 2000, as cited in Fonagy, 2004).

2. Adult Romantic Attachment/ Attachment and romantic love

Bowlby was primarily interested in understanding the nature of the infant-caregiver relationship. However, he believed that attachment characterized human experience from "the cradle to the grave." In the mid-1980's, social psychologists Phillip Shaver and Cindy Hazan (1987, 1994) extended attachment theory from research on parent-infant dyads to the study of adult interpersonal relationships. Specifically, they extended Bowlby's attachment theory to examine how adult love relationships are associated with internal working models of attachment. They determined that the emotional bond that develops between adult romantic partners is partly a function of the same motivational system--the attachment behavioral system--that gives rise to the emotional bond between infants and their caregivers.

According to Shaver and Mikulincer (1999, 2007), there is a core attachment pattern formed in infancy that is flexible and malleable in the context of subsequent experiences. Environmental changes and new attachment figures, such as friends, romantic partners etc., can produce revisions in attachment representations. In this vein, the development of adult attachment depends on two kinds of working models: current working models of attachment and "early" prototype models. Similarly to Bowlby, Shaver and Mikulincer believe that "early" models are formed in the early years of life and shape attachment patterns across the lifespan, while current working models can be revised and updated by attachment-related experiences that deviate from previous experiences and preexisting knowledge.

According to Mikulincer and Shaver (2007), the attachment system in adulthood, as in childhood, typically gets activated after signs of real or imagined threat. As a result, individuals seek proximity to external or internalized attachment models. Typically when the internal mental representation or external figure is available, attentive and responsive, the individual experiences security and relief. The availability of a secure representation of self and/or other builds up the circle of attachment security.

This cycle of security encourages the formation of intimate and interdependent bonds with others, without the need of using reality-distorting defenses.

On the other hand if the individual has a negative interaction with unavailable attachment figures –external or internalized-, the individual's attachment system tries to adjust through the utilization of *secondary attachment strategies* or defenses that delve from excessive attachment anxiety or avoidance. Shaver and Mikulincer (2007) referred to "hyperactivating strategies", to those coping mechanisms that stem from excessive attachment anxiety. These strategies reflect ambivalent tendencies, and overwhelming anger and hostility towards unavailable attachment figures together with an intense need for proximity. In contrast, "deactivating" strategies are associated with attachment avoidance. When hypo-activating or deactivating strategies are used, there is a predominance of a detached and aloof attitude towards others. Hypoactivation also leads to a "compulsive self-reliance" that is evident at a conscious level and high levels of ambivalence and unresolved attachment-related distress at an unconscious level (Kobak, 1988., Belsky and Cassidy, 1994., Mikulincer and Shaver, 2007).

According to Shaver and Mikulincer's approach, mental models of attachment function like schemas, influencing interpersonal perceptions, expectations, and behaviors. Thus, adults with different attachment styles behave towards adult romantic relationships differently depending on the experience of themselves and others. Individuals with a secure attachment style are proposed to be confident and trusting of their romantic partners. These individuals develop close relationships because they feel stable and rarely worry about being abandoned. Because attachment security is associated with a positive view of self and a positive view of others, secure individuals have relationship oriented behaviors, including positive beliefs and attitudes towards romantic love and sex.

In contrast, attachment anxiety, is associated with a negative model of self (the belief that the self is unworthy of love and affection) and preoccupation with being abandoned by significant others.

Hence, anxious individuals perceive romantic partners as unreliable and manifest behaviors that usually involve demands for attention, affection and assistance. Thus, anxious individuals demonstrate clinging and controlling behaviors. Similarly, anxious subjects overly depend on others as a source of security and emotional regulation. In contrast, attachment avoidance is associated with a negative model of others (the belief that others cannot be trusted) and a tendency to avoid closeness and dependency. These strategies therefore involve denial of attachment needs, compulsive self-reliance and avoidance of intimacy and closeness in romantic relationships.

3. Attachment and sexuality

Bowlby (1969/1982) borrowed from the field of ethnology the concept of "behavioral system" to refer to innate patterns or neural programs that organize human behavior in ways that it increases chances for survival and reproductive success. Bowlby assumed that these motivational systems included affiliation, attachment, sex, aggression, exploration and caregiving. Although Bowlby believed that sexual desire and attachment were often experienced simultaneously, he argued they were fundamentally distinct subjective experiences which had distinct "*routes to relationships and objects with no need of one system to activate the other*" (Diamond, 2006. pp. 5).

In this regard, Bowlby maintained that each behavioral system served as an organizer of experiences and behaviors in different situations, but believed these systems overlapped in later stages of development. While he did not elaborate on the complex transaction between the behavioral systems of sex and attachment, he clearly reflected on their relationship over the adult life cycle. Bowlby (1973) stated:

Sexual behavior and attachment share certain eliciting and controlling mechanisms… overlaps between attachment and sexual behavior are commonplace… For example, it is not uncommon for one

individual to treat a sexual partner as a parent, and the partner may reciprocate by adopting a parental attitude in return" (p. 233),

Along these lines, Bowlby (1973) believed that all behavioral systems –including sex and attachment- are molded by repeated environmental experiences and encounters, and stored as mental representations of self and others in memory. These representations or working models, operate, according to Bowlby, consciously and unconsciously, and become part of the behavioral system's programming.

Hazan and Shaver (1988) developed a theory of adult romantic attachment drawing heavily upon Bowlby's writings in regards to the importance of "behavioral systems" and internal working models. Similarly to Bowlby, they maintain that close romantic relationships show the same attachment features as those that define infant-caregivers interactions, and that attachment and sexuality are separate but overlapping behavioral systems. In the realm of romantic relationships optimal functioning of the motivational systems facilitates the formation and maintenance of close and sexual romantic relationships, whereas the malfunctioning of these systems creates significant relational conflicts and tension. Therefore, the degree of felt security becomes the foundation for all forms of sexual expression that include normative and mutual, or pathological and perverse sexuality (Diamond and Blatt, 2007).

Shaver and Hazan (1988) also suggest that adult attachment integrates attachment behaviors with caregiving behaviors and sex. In other words, they maintain that the experience of establishing a pair bond based on the notion of romantic love is made up of the integration of three separate behavioral systems of ***attachment, care giving, and sexuality*.** Of the three behavioral systems said to compose adult romantic relationships, the attachment system is seen as primary. As Shaver and Hazan (1988) explained:

The attachment system is the first of the socially relevant behavioral systems to appear in the course of development, and it lays the foundation for the others. The attachment system –including the models of self and others- is shaped by interactions with primary caretakers, so by the time care giving and sexuality become relevant, the person has already constructed major parts of his or her social style" (p. 486).

Similarly, Fonagy and colleagues (1996) recognize the complex overlap between attachment and sexuality by suggesting that early attachment to caregivers is the foundation by which early sexual and sensual experiences in childhood are processed or "mentalized". Thus, early sensual experiences to caregivers become the platform from which adult sexuality develops. According to Fonagy and Target (1996) the parent brings "sexual resonances" to the parent-child dyad and it is through these experiences that adult sexuality is connected to early attachment. On the same vein, Holmes (cited in Diamond et al. 2006), argues that sexuality is intrinsically related to early parent-infant attachments because pleasurable caregiving antedates sexuality. Holmes goes on saying: *Nevertheless, pleasurable, touch mediated interaction between caregiver and infant is clearly central to good caregiving. Although the experience for mother and infant of lusty breastfeeding may be in some ways only analogous to enjoyable love making, pleasure is inescapably the appropriate word to apply to kissing, cuddling tickling, holding, mutual gazing, stroking, patting and all that goes on to cement a secure attachment bond between parents and their infants*" (pp. 142).

According to Shaver and Hazan (1994) attachment style is expected to influence caregiving behaviors and sexual feelings and behaviors. The quality of attachment that each sexual partner brings to a relationship influences his or her expression of sexuality. Theoretically, adult romantic relationship partners are typically motivated to seek care and provide comfort or caregiving to another. Shaver and Hazan (1994) propose that prototypical adult attachment relationships satisfy partner's needs for

comfort and security, caregiving and sexual gratification. However, attachment, caregiving and sex are likely to vary in importance and intensity over the course of a relationship. For instance, sexual attraction and passion are particularly important in the initial phases because they are primary motivational forces that bring two adults together. In this context, sex is what may keep individuals long enough for an emotional bond to form. Once an attachment bond is established, the quality of sexuality will play a significant role on increasing comfort and emotional closeness. According to Hazan and Shaver (1994) once a pair bond is established, sex continues to play a meaningful role in that it will "*strengthen and maintain the emotional and psychological bond –the attachment – between two paired adults* " (p172).

Along these lines, Lisa Diamond (2004), stipulates that romantic love and sex are distinct subjective experiences that derive from different evolutionary origins. Drawing heavily in empirical evidence that indicates that sexual desire is mediated by gonodal estrogens and androgens, she argues that sexual desire is not a prerequisite of romantic love. Diamond suggests that sexual desire evolved from the context of sexual mating and thus argues hormones are not related to the formation of romantic bonds. In this vein, Diamond (2004) believes affectional bonding and romantic love stems from the same opioid and oxcitocin based circuits that mediate infant-caregiving bonding. Hence, Diamond argues that there are distinct neurobiological substrates that explain sex and attachment. Moreover, like Hazan and Shaver, she maintains that in some cases sexual desire and pair bonding appear simultaneously under conditions of proximity. She explains that sexual desire may provide a powerful motive for extended proximity and the development of an affectional bond that elicits comfort and security. Although sex and attachment seem to be functionally independent, they still influence one another and contribute jointly to the formation and development of a romantic relationship.

Similarly, Eagle in his paper “Attachment and Sexuality” (cited in Diamond and Blatt, 2007) suggests that sex and romantic attachment are independent motivational systems. However, the integration of these two systems involves a developmental challenge that is successfully negotiated through the development of a secure base. Eagle argues that attachment insecurity can rigidly enmesh or segregate the two systems. In this vein, he agrees with Shaver’s and Hazan’s assumption that adult relationships show the same features as those that define infant-caregiver relationships. An individual who is emotionally attached to a spouse or lover a) will want to be close to his or her significant other in times of distress b) derives a sense of comfort and security from this relationship and c) experiences anxiety when experiencing separation or threats of a separation. According to this perspective, one’s romantic relationship becomes one’s attachment figure.

Moreover, Eagle (2007) believes that the ability to integrate sexual and romantic feelings depends on the capacity to move away from early parental figures and towards a romantic partner. He explains that the ability to shift from a parental imago to an external object is facilitated by attachment security. A secure person’s comfort with closeness and self-disclosure speaks of the ability to move away from parental imagoes and creates a positive foundation for sexual engagement and mutuality. A positive view of the self and others, a central feature of attachment security, also allows individuals to enjoy closeness and feel competent in their ability to gratify one’s own and the partner’s sexual needs. Conversely, attachment insecurity or unresolved attachment to one’s caregivers will impede the transition from a parental figure to a sexual partner because the selection will be responded as a forbidden incestuous object. In these instances, the integration of sexuality and attachment is never achieved in the context of attachment insecurity because anxiously and avoidantly attached subjects react to current partners as if they were parental figures.

Along the same lines, Mikulincer (2006) maintains that dysfunctions of the sexual behavioral system can also be conceptualized in terms of hyper and hypo-activating strategies. Hyperactivation involves attempts to seek sexual closeness with a partner. An overly anxious individual can overemphasize the importance of sex and can use sex in the service of caregiving and sense of security. Similarly, hyperactivation can result in the exaggeration of heightened sexual anxiety, concerns about one's sexual attractiveness, exaggeration of the partner's sexual needs and worries around the partner's responses to sex. These concerns in turn generate responses aimed at pressuring a romantic partner to have sex, which can lead to rejection and/or sexual dysfunction and dissatisfaction.

In contrast, excessive attachment avoidance is often associated with sexual inhibition and a decrease in the desire to have sexual relationships. Thus, hypoactivating strategies involve the separation of emotions and sex. Such strategies, involve dismissal of sexual needs, suppression of sexual thoughts, memories and fantasies, and sexual dysfunction, such as low sexual drive, orgasmic experiences and sexual enjoyment. This to say, that hypoactivating strategies may promote selfish sexual behavior and dismissal of the partner's wishes for sex. Similarly, avoidance may promote promiscuity or sexual behaviors that do not require an interpersonal engagement, such as masturbation and activities that eliminate intimacy and cooperation with another person (Hazan and Shaver, 1988, 1994).

4. Empirical evidence concerning attachment and sex

Social psychologists, Philip Shaver, Mario Mikulincer and Cindy Hazan, and other authors before and after them, have outlined the ways in which sexuality may consolidate, foster, converge or conflict with attachment. In this regard, vast empirical evidence suggests that the different prototypical styles of adult romantic attachment relate to working models of sexuality that include behaviors, attitudes, emotions and cognition. Hereafter are the most important findings:

a. Attachment and motives for sex

In their study of attachment style, individual differences and motivations for sex, Davis and Shaver (2004) found that anxious individuals are more likely to desire sex when experiencing attachment insecurity. In specific, they found that attachment anxiety is strongly correlated to desire for emotional closeness, reassurance, stress reduction, exertion of power, desire for eliciting care giving from a partner and desires of taking care of a partner. Conversely, the same study found sexual pleasure is not a potent motive for sex in anxiously attached subjects. Similarly, other studies have shown that anxiously attached individuals tend to equate sex with love, and therefore measure relationship quality or status with the level of sexual involvement (Davis, 1994). Along the same lines, Allen et al (2004) and Ridge and Feeny (1998), found that anxiety is often related to having sex outside of a primary relationship. These authors found that attachment anxiety predicts infidelity as means of regulating negative affect and dealing with feelings of loneliness.

In contrast, avoidant individuals tend to separate sex and emotions. These individuals report brief sexual encounters (Brennan and Shaver, 1995) and activities that indicate low emotional intimacy such as one-night stands, extra-relationship sex and sex without affection, as well as less enjoyment of sexual and physical contact. (Hazan et al, 1994). Consistent with these findings, other studies have found that avoidance is strongly negatively associated with emotional closeness, reassurance and having children

as motives for sex (Davis and Shaver, 2004). Furthermore, evidence suggests that avoidance was positively correlated with the use of sex to manipulate and exert power over their partner and to protect oneself from a partner's negative affect. Similar findings suggest that avoidant individuals experience and use sex as a way of obtaining self-affirmation and self-enhancement rather than getting closer to a romantic partner. Thus, reports indicate that avoidantly attached people are more likely to have sexual intercourse to foster their self-esteem, and in some cases to fit with a social group or comply with peer pressure (Schachner and Shaver, 2004).

Other studies have found that avoidant men and women use casual and uncommitted sex for slightly different reasons (Cooper et al., 2006). In this regard, Cooper and colleagues found that avoidant women were more likely to use sex to bolster their self-image, while avoidant men were more likely to have sex to enhance their self-esteem and cope with distress, negative affect, and achieve social power and status. Copper also found interesting results when comparing anxious men and women. In the 2006 study involving a longitudinal analysis of the effects of attachment anxiety and sexual motives in adolescents, he found that women who were anxious were more likely to have sex to regulate negative affect, achieve feelings of closeness and intimacy with a partner, and to appease or please their partners. At the same time, anxious women were more likely to cheat on their partners to attain feelings of safety and desirability. In contrast, anxious males were less likely to use sex to handle emotional distress and were less likely to cheat on their sexual partners during young adulthood. Whereas anxious women's' intense desire for closeness made them seek sex within and out of committed relationships, anxious men's desire for closeness and approval may have cause them to be more compliant to their partner's wishes. These findings suggest that attachment anxiety generates in both genders need for attention and the use of sex in order to achieve emotional closeness. However,

gender differences and gender-specific norms may play a significant role on how individuals show compliance to the other gender's expectations or demands for sex (Cooper, 2006).

b. Attachment , sex and attitudes towards commitment and intimacy

Several studies have assessed attitudes towards commitment and sex in insecurely attached individuals. An impressive amount of evidence has shown that attachment avoidance is associated with more positive attitudes towards casual sex. Specifically, avoidant lovers report fear of intimacy and tend to remain distant from their partners. They are also more likely than secure individuals to fantasize about sex with someone else other than their partner and to engage in relatively brief sexual encounters and affairs. (Brennan and Shaver, 1995., Allen et al. 2004., Feeney et al., 2003). Other studies have found that avoidant individuals are more accepting of casual and uncommitted sex, and a preference for short-term sexual mating over longer-term sexual mating than other attachment groups (Feeny, Noller and Patty, 1993). Avoidant individuals report activities that indicate low emotional intimacy such as one night stands, extra-marital sex and sex without affection (Cooper, et al.,1998; Feeney et al., 2003). Lastly these individuals express less enjoyment of physical contact and reported avoiding sex or having sex less with their spouses or partners (Brassard et al., 2007). Consistent with these findings, in a sample of American adolescents, Tracy, Shaver and Cooper (2007) found that avoidant teens were less likely to have sex and reported engaging in non coital sexual activities, such as kissing, petting, etc., before trying intercourse. In contrast anxiously attached individuals reported having sex at a younger age, reflecting a need of being approved and loved (Cooper et al., 1998). Consistent with these findings Gilliath and Schachner (2006) found in a sample of adults that attachment anxiety was strongly associated with long-term mating strategies, presumably because of the desire for a reliable and lovable partner.

c. Attachment and the subjective experience of sex

Substantial evidence suggests that attachment anxiety and avoidance are associated with negative affect during sex (Birnbaum, 2007, Birnbaum et al., 2006., Brassard et al, 2007., Tracy et al 2003). In this regard, several studies have found a positive correlation between attachment insecurity, sexual anxiety, and difficulty achieving sexual arousal and sexual pleasure. Similarly, Davis et al. (2006) found a strong association between attachment insecurity and sexual dissatisfaction. In this study, insecure Individuals reported less positive orgasmic experiences and overall lower sexual satisfaction.

Particularly, avoidance has been found to be associated with the incapacity to demonstrate loving feelings and incapacity for emotional involvement during sexual intercourse (Hazan et al, 1994). In a study that looked at attachment orientation, sexual functioning, and relationship satisfaction, Birnbaum (2007) found that avoidance was negatively related to the relational aspects of sexuality, including, sexual intimacy, excitement, perception of the partner as caring, and the belief that sexual activity enhances the emotional bond. In addition, attachment avoidance was not significantly associated with sexual arousal, orgasmic responsivity, and sexual satisfaction, after controlling for attachment anxiety. Similarly Davis (2004) found an association between avoidance and negative conceptions of sex. In this study avoidant individuals reported increased dissatisfaction with the physical aspects of sex, as well as less enjoyment over touching kissing and cuddling, reflecting not only an effort to distance themselves from emotional aspects of sex but suggesting that avoidance is associated with dissatisfaction of certain physical aspects of sex. These subjects also reported difficulties integrating feelings of love and affection for their partners during sex.

Lastly, empirical evidence shows that anxious individuals report higher emotional and physical dissatisfaction during sex. In contrast with avoidant individuals, these subjects want closeness and emotional involvement at all costs, however worries about one's lovability and desire to be taken cared of often enables negative affect and dissatisfaction (Birnbaum, 2007).

d. Attachment and sexual self-esteem.

Attachment security has been associated with a positive representation of the self and others, while insecurity has been linked to distorted perceptions of the self and the world. In this vein, data from several studies suggest that secure attachment is associated with a positive sexual self-esteem, higher sexual confidence, and the ability to gratify the sexual needs of a partner (Davis et al., 2004., Tracy, 2004., Gentzler, et al., 2004). Tracy et al. (2003) found in a sample of adolescents that insecurity was associated with the perception of lower self-competence around sex. Results indicated that avoidant adolescents were particularly unable to experience positive emotions during sex, while anxious individuals felt less efficacious and less confident during sex. In contrast, secure teens were less likely to report concerns about their sexual competence, and were able to experience positive emotions during sex indicating a positive model of self and of the other. Taken together these studies, suggest that attachment anxiety is strongly associated with concerns about one's own sexual performance, while avoidance is negatively associated with sexual intimacy, indicating that anxious individuals primarily have a negative view of the self and avoidant individuals have a negative view of the other. (Feeney et al., 2000., Tracy et al., 2003).

e. Attachment and sexual satisfaction

Substantial empirical evidence has shown that sexual satisfaction contributes to relationship satisfaction and stability, while sexual dysfunction leads to relational conflicts and decreased relationship satisfaction. In this vein, several studies have indicated that attachment style moderates the relationship between relationship quality and sexual satisfaction. For instance, Birnbaum (2006) found that attachment anxiety amplifies the effects of sexual experiences on perceived relationship satisfaction. These findings indicated that positive feelings over sexual relationships in anxious

individuals have a significant positive effect on the experience of relationship satisfaction. Based on these results, Birnbaum inferred that anxiously attached individuals equate good sexual relationships with the sense of being loved and valued. Thus, positive feelings and experiences around sex in anxious individuals bolster relationship quality and decrease relational worries about being abandoned or rejected. Interestingly, this study also revealed that positive feelings around sex on one day had a significant impact on the perception of the relationship on the following day. Hence, indicating that anxiously attached individuals tend to focus on the here and now when assessing relationship quality because they assign greater significance to present events that signal approval or rejection. In contrast, this study found that avoidance was associated with a split between aspects surrounding sex and relationship quality. Avoidantly attached individuals presumably do not rely on sexual experiences when assessing relationship quality.

Furthermore, overall studies that focus on relationship quality have shown that secure individuals report more favorable relationship experiences, including greater relationship satisfaction, trust and communication (Feeney, 1999., Hazan and Shaver, 1994). Most of these studies however have focused on the effects of attachment in intrapersonal interactions. That is, they have focused on attachment style and the individual's experiences of relationship satisfaction. Only a number of studies have focused on the interpersonal effects of attachment. These studies have indicated that individuals who have insecure partners report more negative relationship experiences that those with secure partners (Banse, 2004., Kaen et al., 2007). Along these lines, in a study that included 200 couples, Kaen (2007) found that secure partners create more loving and secure relationships, and therefore their partners feel more positively about the relationship quality. In contrast, he found that attachment insecurity fosters one's partner dissatisfaction in the context of poor caregiving abilities. In relation to his findings, Kaen (2007)

concluded that secure individuals are able to incorporate social support and caregiving experiences in their relationship, thus enabling their partner's sense of security and satisfaction.

In summary, studies that examine attachment and relationship quality have shown that attachment style of one partner predicts the relationship experiences and satisfaction of both members of the couple, and that security of attachment is related with more positive relationship outcomes for both individuals and their partners.

f. Attachment and sexual aggression

Attachment theory provides a useful theoretical framework for exploring developmental aspects of sexual aggression and sexual offending behavior. According to this view, insecure internal working models of attachment give rise to sexual behaviors that are prone to disorganization. Bowlby (1988) proposed that an individual's angry reaction to the disappearance of an attachment figure may be functional because such a reaction is likely to discourage the caregiver from further attempts to separate. Similarly, Mayseless (1991) posits that the expression of anger may be an expression of strong feelings of attachment. According to this perspective, aggression is likely to be inflicted in situations where one partner feels that the stability or future of the relationship is threatened by the other partner and/or feels a lack of control over the availability of that partner.

Empirical research suggests that disruptive sexual behaviors, as well as sexual coercion are often associated to insecure attachment. Similarly attachment insecurity has been implicated in victim's responses to sexual aggression and coercion. (Tracy, 2003., Impett et al., 2002., Smallbone and David, 2000., Brassard et al. 2007). For example, Bookwala and Zdaniuk (1998) compared the attachment styles of individuals engaged in reciprocally aggressive dating relationships. After controlling for relationship satisfaction, length of relationship and interpersonal problems they found that individuals who were involved in reciprocally aggressive relationships scored higher on the preoccupied attachment style than

those who reported being involved in nonaggressive romantic relationships. Likewise, Noller (1998) found that higher scores on anxiety were associated with the expression of more physical and emotional aggression from men and women in intimate relationships. Along the same vein, Tracy (2003), Impett et al (2002) and Gentzler (2004) found that attachment anxiety is strongly correlated with higher rates of physical coercion, physical force during sex, unwanted and non-consensual sex, and the presence of unwanted sex to avoid rejection and abandonment. In contrast avoidance was linked to avoidance of intimacy during sex and sexual coercion was reported to be used as a way to avoid mutuality and psychological intimacy (Davis, 2004).

Along these lines, insecure attachment is hypothesized to be a vulnerability factor for criminality in general. Numerous studies have compared adult attachment in incarcerated rapists, child molesters, violent nonsexual offenders, and nonviolent nonsexual offenders. The results of these studies have consistently shown that sexual offenders are insecurely oriented to adult intimate relationships. In this regard, the obtained frequencies of insecure attachment indicate that 69% of the rapists and 78- 82% of child molesters have an insecure attachment. (Ward et al., 1996., Smallbone and Dadds, 1998). Moreover, these studies also found that individuals that have a dismissive style exhibit more aggression in their interaction because they perceive others in a hostile and deprecatory manner.

Lastly, in a more recent study, Davis (2006) found that attachment is associated with acceptance of rape. He found that anxious and avoidant men and women were more likely to see rape as justified both in the context of an ongoing relationship, and in the context of an alleged stranger rape.

g. Attachment and safe sex

Several studies indicate that attachment insecurity interferes with the practice of safe sex in teens and adults (Bogaert, 2002., Hazan, et al., 2004., Feeney et al. 2000). Specifically, findings suggest that individuals that report insecure working models of attachment are more likely to engage in unsafe sexual practices and tend to contract sexually transmitted diseases (STD's) more frequently than secure individuals. Specifically, attachment anxiety has been found to be strongly associated with negative beliefs about condoms, less use of condoms, perceived low risk of contracting HIV and less willingness to change risky sexual behaviors (Bogaert, 2002., Hazan, et al., 2004). Feeney et al. (2000), in a study assessing sexual attitudes and behaviors among late adolescents found that insecure attachment was linked to increased drug use before sexual contact, and overall sexual recklessness. Similarly, a study by Ciesla et al. in 2004, found that attachment anxiety in HIV positive individuals was associated to higher rates of unprotected sex, suggesting that anxiously attached individuals perceive closeness as a priority, which leads them to put their health and other's health at risk.

II. Qualitative aspects of sexuality

1. Sexual Fantasy

Early literature on sexuality depicts sexual fantasy as a form of sexual dysfunction or sexual deviation. According to this view, sexual fantasies are said to reflect the individual's masochistic nature, sexual inhibitions, attempted escape from sexual excitement and need for submission or dominance (Deustch, 1944., Holleneder, 1963., Hoerney, 19767., Maslow, 1942., Reich, 1942 cited on Spector, 1995,1999). Thus, most of the negative interpretations of sexual fantasy available in the traditional clinical literature have assumed what might be termed a deficiency state or conflictual model.

By contrast, contemporary psychoanalytic theory understands sexual fantasy as a complex and multidimensional phenomenon that often speaks of scripts deployed in support of a wish fulfillment that is erotic, aggressive, or self-aggrandizing by nature. According to this view, sexual fantasies are comparable to symptoms or behaviors; Spector (10995) a major contributor to the literature on sexual fantasy suggests that sexual fantasies are compromise formations, and are abundant, profuse and persistent because they are organizing fantasies that condense and incorporate in their scripts information about internal mental representations of oneself and the other, and thus are meant to achieve mastery of events and a correction of an unsatisfying reality. Along the same lines, substantial contemporary theory that sparked from Freud's early writings, sustains that fantasy life is closely related to one's childhood history, early identifications, experiences and solutions to early conflicts. For instance, Kahr (2007) explains "*one's fantasy objects derives in large measure from one's earlier lovers of infancy and childhood*" (p. 43). Kahr, maintains that childhood experiences are the foundation of sexual fantasies and sexual arousal in later life.

a. The scope of sexual fantasies

Leading British psychologist Brett Kahr, defines sexual fantasy as *" a first and foremost , a conscious thought or set of thoughts that contain a depiction of a sexual act or acts, a sexual scene or scenes, sexual imagery, and often sexual language, which will in many instances produce pleasurable sensations ranging from mental enjoyment, physical stimulation and an array of emotional reactions such as happiness, shame and guilt*" (p 30). Like many other psychoanalytic authors, Kahr (2007) believes that sexual fantasies can take many forms and have different meanings. He argues sexual fantasies may last long periods of time and may be accompanied by masturbation and orgasm. Similarly, sexual fantasies may occur in the context of interpersonal interactions and sexual intercourse with another person, or may occur in social isolation. For some, sexual fantasies may be particularly durable when they become a prerequisite to sexual arousal.

Moreover, Kahr posits that fantasies are highly "personalized' and exist at several levels of consciousness. He believes that while most sexual fantasies are conscious, many are deeply unconscious and unknown. He explains that individuals often have unknown sexual fantasies, ideas and thoughts that are not easily accessible but that nonetheless guide their behavior. Kahr borrows Ana Freud's concept of "central masturbatory fantasy" to talk about the universality of sexual fantasies and their connection with early experiences. He argues that most individuals have "pivotal" erotic fantasies to which they return again and again. In this vein, Kahr believes sexual fantasies provide key information about the functioning of the human psyche and one's internal world. Along the same lines, Spector (1995) believes that adults have an specific erotic pattern or "sex print" that "*includes specific sexual fantasies that are invoked as means to arousal in masturbation and often as an ancillary or obligatory aid to intercourse and other kinds of interpersonal sex*" (p. 75).

Furthermore, according to contemporary psychoanalysis, adults have a wide range of erotic fantasies. Fantasy variables may include factors such as: partner or love object specifications (such as age, race, loved or stranger, etc.) and place of preference (public, private etc). Fantasy scenarios may also vary and may incorporate a wide array of attached emotions and themes, such as shame, excitement, humiliation, degradation, pain, nurture, etc. (Spector, 1995., Bader, 2002). According to this view, sexual fantasies are often recipients of secondary and subsidiary fantasies. Some fantasies can include early developmental sexual content or include non-sexual fantasies. In the same lines, Ethel Spector (1995) argues that fantasy infuses all of our choices and behavioral patterns, not just neurotic and sexual ones. She maintains that fantasy is a source of adaptation as it provides gratification for what is lacking in one's life. Sexual fantasies provide a channel for unmet desires and wishes, but can also play an important role in emotional regulation, self-soothing, formation of psychopathology, and identity formation. In addition, according to Spector, sexual fantasies can act as an expression of instincts, rehearsals for future actions and provide templates for life choices that may be translations of enactments or symbolic expression of the fantasy's narrative content. Thus, from this perspective, sex and sexual fantasy constitute an arena in which unfulfilled wishes are enacted, but also a place where relational issues are played out. According to Spector (1995) fantasy predates genital activity. Hence, sexual fantasies may incorporate eroticism associated with intense interpersonal experiences of sensual pleasure and pain that are non-sexual. Spector (1995) explains: "*because sexuality involves contact between and mutual penetration of bodies, it presents a premier stage for the symbolic enactment of fantasies related to intense interpersonal impulses and longings- submission, soothing, merger and a host of others. Moreover the sense of driveness in sexuality provides body language to express high-voltage interpersonal dynamics- conflict, passion, rage*." (pp. 82).

As noted earlier, sexual fantasies may also play out non sexual issues. Hence, fantasy is an ideal channel by which to express a variety of conflicts. Because sexual fantasy is often accompanied by gratification, it ensures that a variety of conflicting wishes become expressed. In other words, sex can help actualize non-sexual fantasies by embedding them with sexual scripts. In this regard, sexual fantasies become an imaginative story or an internal dialogue that serves a more or less wish fulfilling function, that includes the stabilization of one's sense of self, the restoration of self-esteem or the gratification of sexual, aggressive or grandiose wishes (Spector, 1995).

Because sexual fantasies are considered a narrative, Spector (1995) and Kahr (2006) believe these have a manifest and a latent content. The surface or manifest content, like a dream, is the result of a compromise formation between wishes and prohibitions against them. Like dreams, fantasies cannot be solely understood in terms of surface meaning, but must be translated into the language of desire. Spector (1995, 1999) maintains that because a wish or desire is usually disguised, the person who fantasizes can enjoy his fantasy. Hence, fantasy is a safe place where desires are met; fantasies give a narrative and a structure to longings, conflicts and desires. Along the same lines, fantasies provide safety and place individuals *" in a position where they can enjoy their own daydreams without self-reproach or shame*" (pp. 195). Fantasy, includes the capacity to think about possibilities beyond the evidence of immediate sense of perception. Imagination helps individuals contemplate alternatives to their experiences in the real world while providing safety. The use of sexual fantasy is therefore a unique kind of imaginative process that serves both a psychological and an emotional purpose.

b. Infantile sexuality and sexual fantasy

Classical psychoanalytic theory considers dreams, and conscious and unconscious fantasies as a disguised expression and partial fulfillment of repressed instinctual wishes. According to this view, the internal world's prime mover is the unconscious wish disguised in dreams and fantasies. In contrast, contemporary psychodynamic theory that draws heavily upon contemporary Freudian theory and French psychoanalysis conceives fantasies as unconscious thought and as the "psychic representative" of an instinct (Widlocher, 2002., Laplanche, 2001., Isaacs, 1952). According to this view, fantasy reflects not so much desire which has been repressed and disguised, but reflect direct and immediate expression of the infant's concrete and bodily expression of an instinct. In this regard, the concept of infantile sexuality becomes a privileged object of study because it entails unconscious fantasies that emerge from the excitement of the body. Thus, infantile sexuality plays a significant role on adult sexuality when events of the environment, including attachment relationships, are transformed with the help of fantasy (Laplanche, 2001., Widlocher, 2002).

Widlocher (2007) distinguishes infantile sexuality and primary love. He believes infantile sexuality is associated with an early form of creativity and with pleasure originating from the excitation of the erogenous zones. In contrast, Widlocher argues that primary love involves an innate program that promotes a bond to a caregiver. In this regard, infantile sexuality does not involve a relational pattern or a genetically predisposed organizing attachment system but involves "*pure subjectivity proper to fantasmatic activity*" (pp. 19) that may include the subjective experience of attachment figures. Thus, infantile sexuality involves an unconscious fantasy or hallucination of the relationship with an object that is separate from the external environment. When the experience is inscribed in the unconscious it becomes an active participant in the individual's adult life. In other words, an individual seeks to reproduce the initial experience transforming a real situation into an imaginary one. In this regard, a

scene from reality becomes part of one's fantasy life and a wish to be fulfilled. Widlocher explains *"infantile sexuality, the hallucinatory reprise of a physical relational experience of another kind of satisfaction, is brought about only secondarily in the repetition of this experience"* (pp. 19, 2002).

Along the same vein, Weinstein (2007) argues that infantile sexuality emerges from the relationship between bodily excitement and language, therein, it is not experienced as part of the external world but as part of one self. Infantile sexuality is rooted in the body, comprises a system of "fantasy relationships" and is not interpersonal in nature. Thus, it makes use of external experiences to shape and master inner experience. Weinstein (2007) explains "*thus infantile sexuality deals with experience retroactively, restructuring and reevaluating external events in memory. Once the revision of the external, now experiences in the context of the child's own bodily excitement, is laid down as memory, it exerts a pressure to reproduce the experience in the external world*…"(pp. 118., cited on Diamond, 2007).

Moreover, Weinstein suggests that infantile sexuality and the attachment system are separate but overlapping systems that can be understood as attempts to regulate and master the excitements and needs of the body. While attachment will impact the content of one's sexual fantasies by affecting the experience of pleasure and displeasure, infantile sexuality will use fantasy to transform and change environmental events in memory. These events will later be reproduced in adult sexuality (Weinstein, 2007).

c. Sexual fantasies and sexual desire

Following Freud's initial ideas that fantasies derive from frustration and the desire to achieve gratification, the wish fulfillment theory has played a central role in understanding sexual fantasy. Most notably, Kahr and Spector have emphasized the role of fantasy in conscious and unconscious wish fulfillment. In this regard, they maintain sexual fantasies have an intricate relationship with sexual

desire. Spector believes that sexual desire is usually experienced as a motivation in an individual to "*seek out or become receptive to sexual experience*" (1999, pp, 214), and maintains that conscious sexual fantasy frequently initiates sexual desire, while it may not lead to sexual arousal and excitement. According to this view, fantasy is the precursor of desire, and desire is generally the precursor to sexual excitement.

Spector's view of desire is similar to Robert Stoller's (1979) definition of sexual excitement. Stoller believed that desire -sexual excitement- is a perceived complex sensation that one senses is the product of fantasy which involves anticipation of psychic excitement or expectation of being gratified or aroused. Stoller argued that desire is the subjective experience of physical arousal that is triggered by conscious or unconscious fantasies. Similarly, Spector argues that sexual desire is triggered by multiple internal and external factors and therefore sexual fantasies serve multiple purposes. She maintains that sexual fantasy is seldom restricted to a substitute of gratification or self-soothing but can serve as a vehicle to express a wish or an actualization of some kind, and the recreation of early conflicts (1999). Spector (1995, 1999) further explains: "*Once a fantasy is invoked, the fantasizer savors, lingers on, or revises the most exciting, pleasing or soothing part of his or her mental creation, whirling it around in the mind until arriving at a version that is the most gratifying… but sexual fantasies are also important, profuse and most pertinent because they are organizing fantasies that condense and incorporate in their scripts unfulfilled wishes and desires of our early identifications, childhood sexual histories and fantasies, solutions and experiences to childhood conflicts*"" (pp. 35, 226).

d. Sexual fantasies and the communication of inner conflict

Spector (1995), Kahr (2007) and Bader (2002) agree on the centrality of sexual fantasies as organizers of internal experience, that go beyond the immediate use of achieving pleasure or emotional

relief. According to these authors, sexual fantasies can become the depositary of internal conflicts and psychopathology. Hence, sexual fantasies are considered to be a window of assessment of one's internal world and constitute a primary arena in which relational struggles and issues are played out.

Kahr argues that fantasies have the purpose of disguising a conflict emanating from an internal wish that is frustrated by internal or external prohibitions. According to this formulation, frustration may arise from prohibitions. Fantasy becomes a way in which these wishes are disguised and transformed to prevent conflict and thus allowing gratification that is guilt and punishment free (Kahr, 2007). Similarly, Spector maintains that unconscious conflicts are turned as a source of fantasy and gratification, and therefore forbidden sexual and aggressive drives are expressed without consequences to the ego. "*fantasy substitutes for a pleasure we long for: pleasure associated with the imaginary satisfaction of heavily disguised erotic and aggressive impulses, often laced with jealousy or the desire for revenge'* (pp. 36, 1995).

e. Sexual fantasies and mastery of relational trauma

In addition to mediating psychic conflicts and providing gratification and a channel for fulfilling wishes, sexual fantasy may also be associated with an attempt to master trauma. Kahr, argues that fantasies are organized around one's experience of conflict and traumatic real life experiences that occur in early childhood. In this vein, he maintains that sexual fantasy involves the undoing of trauma by releasing unconscious sadism, or by generating a solution to a painful life event.

In respect to the erotization of trauma in order to master traumatic events, Kahr explains that childhood memories may be transformed and sexualized in the form of sexual fantasies to be elaborated and mastered. He suggested that individuals that were traumatized sexually or by the result of physical, emotional or psychological abuse may derive sexual pleasure from a distorted "*version of their most scary childhood experiences*". By mastering the trauma this way, sexual fantasies protect the individual

from a painful reality, thus avoiding the exploration of what is behind the fantasy. By turning passive into active in sexual fantasies, trauma survivors are able to cope and master their past traumatic memories. In this vein, Kahr argues that the sexual fantasies of traumatized individuals contain themes in which the person is identified with the aggressor or where the person avoids sex, yet someone else enjoys sex. In other words, by scripting fantasies where trauma is undone and where a painful reality is avoided, individuals master their traumatic experiences and obtain gratification.

f. Sexual fantasies, safety and attachment

Drawing heavily on attachment theory and contemporary relational psychoanalysis, Bader (2002) argues that safety is at the center of psychological life. According to this view, the mind is continuously working in pursuing the satisfaction of needs and wishes in the safest way possible. Bader believes that in the midst of threat and insecurity, the attachment systems gets automatically activated. Thus, when faced with fear people tend to seek the proximity of attachment figures that may provide a safe haven. In cases in which actual proximity is impossible, unsafety may instead activate fantasies or thoughts about one's attachment figures. These thoughts may include sexual fantasies that help serve attachment needs and wishes. Hence, sexual fantasies may be recruited in the service of eliciting safety, closeness, approval, and reassurance of a partner's lovability and availability.

In line with this view, a few studies have found that when individuals are exposed to threat, they cling to sexual fantasies about one's partner (Davis, et al., 2003, Hicks and Leitenberg, 2001, and Birnbaum, 2008). In specific, the study by Davis et al (2003), showed a significant link between relationship threat and the use of sexual fantasy as a coping mechanism. While Davis did not examine the content of sexual fantasies, he proved that attachment activation goes beyond the realm of behavior. He found that hyper-activating and hypo-activating strategies can be expressed cognitively in heightened and decreased accessibility to sexual fantasies (Davis, 2007).

In a similar study, Hick and Leitenberg (2002) found that sexual fantasies were associated with relationship burnout and sexual boredom, suggesting that individuals that were more satisfied with their current partner were less likely to fantasize that the individuals that reported relationship distress.

Furthermore, in a recent study that included a sample of 179 college students, Birnbaum (2008) found that sexual threat led to heightened desire to sexually satisfy others, along with a decreased desire for intimacy in both men and women. Specifically, he found that anxiously attached individuals were particularly likely to use relationship maintaining strategies, such as pleasing one's sexual partner following relational threat. In anxious individuals, emotional threat by comparison, leads to fantasies involving self-enhancement and as perceiving others as being affectionate and pleasing. In contrast avoidant individuals were more likely to reflect distancing coping mechanisms. In specific, the sexual fantasies of avoidant individuals reflected interpersonal distance and hostility, in addition to perceiving themselves as more alienated. Not surprisingly, avoidant individuals also reported in their fantasies more negative views of others.

g. Fantasy, mentalization and secure attachment

Fonagy and colleagues (1999) coined the term mentalization to refer to the capacity to think about one's mind and the mind of others. According to Fonagy, mentalization helps an individual interpret actions of himself/herself and others as meaningful on the basis of intentional mental states such as desires, needs, feelings and reasons. Mentalization is therefore intrinsically associated to the ability to give meaning to psychological experiences and requires a set of intact cognitive skills that enables individuals to imagine mental states and to integrate cognitions with emotions. In particular, Fonagy (1997, 1999) believes that when a child uses a representational system, or as Bowlby called it – an internal working model of self and others- he is able to predict intentions and move away from the world of behaviors to the world of representations. Along the same lines, Sharp, Fonagy, & Goodyer,

(2006) suggest that a secure attachment context where the caregiver shows interest in the infant's mental state, can be expected to engender secure attachment and advance the development of mentalization. Furthermore these authors suggest that later in development it is not attachment per se but features of the social environment analogous to a secure parenting environment – particularly an adult mind taking an interest in a child's mental state – that are critical for the establishment of mentalizing capacity. Hence, mentalization develops in the context of a parent-child relationship, where feelings, thoughts, wishes and fantasies are experienced by the child as significant aspects of his or her internal psychological experience and as not being of the same order as physical reality. The parent's capacity to understand, empathize with and represent the contents of the child's mind is the matrix in which mentalization develops. In this same vein, Fonagy created a developmental model where mentalization unfolds in the setting of a secure base with caregivers. Fonagy et al. (2002) further explained: "*secure attachment is not only conducive to exploring the outer world but also conducive to exploring the inner world – the mind of the self and the mind of the other"* (pp. 66).

Fonagy and Bateman (2004) maintain that the caregiver's mirroring of the child's state that is both marked –the caretakers' capacity to represent and symbolically transpose the child's affect, and contingent –the caretaker's capacity to respond accurately to the child's affect- facilitates the development of the internal mental states of the child. Thus, mirroring plays a significant part in the child's capacity for emotional regulation and mentalization.

In addition to emphasizing the importance of the caregiver's mirroring on the development of the child's subjectivity, Fonagy and Bateman (2004) posit that playful parenting is also responsible for helping the child integrate the pretend and psychic equivalent modes of representing internal mental states. They maintain that young children understand the world through pre-mentalistic modes (pretend mode and psychic equivalence) of experience before they are able to acquire the capacity to

differentiate mental states from objective reality. For this matter, they argue there is a developmental transition from a split mode of experience to mentalization, which is facilitated by the playful attitude of the attachment figure.

According to Fonagy and Bateman (2004) very young children usually rely on "psychic equivalence" to understand the world and as they grow up use "pretend mode" to represent their experiences. When using a "psychic equivalence mode" the child equates the internal world to the external world; what exists in the mind, exists in the external world and vice versa. The other mode - "pretend " in relation to mental states-, helps the child distinguish the internal reality from the external reality. As noted earlier, in normal development, and when caregivers mirror affect effectively and provide a safe haven, children integrate these two modes of experiencing the world to arrive at a reflective mode or mentalization. Hence, mentalization is reached when inner and outer realities are experienced as linked and separate at the same time (Fonagy, 2004).

According to Fein (1981) the pretend mode of experience marks the beginning of representational thinking and the capacity to use fantasy. A wide variety of studies have found that pretend play in children is highly correlated with imaginative thinking, positive social behavior and playfulness (Lieberman, 1965, 1977 cited on Fein, 1981). Thus, pretend play is thought to be the foundation for social rituals, drama, and other symbolic activities. In this regard, Fonagy (2008) argues that secure, playful and mutually gratifying interactions with the caregiver nurtures the imagination of an infant, which later in development becomes a precondition of the kind of intersubjectivity that mature romantic relationships entail. According to Fonagy (2008) in the context of attuned secure parenting, fantasy and the capacity to explore one's mind and the mind of the other in terms of mental states is used in the service of developing the capacity of mutually pleasurable interactions with others. In this vein, in the context of sexuality playful, affirming, and interactive exploration of the others mind

and body gets translates to erotically imaginative intercourse; It is through the use of fantasy that one is transported into the mind of the other resulting in pleasurable eroticism. According to this view, one's own pleasure can be experienced only when it has been placed into the other in the realm fantasy. Hence, it is not experiencing oneself as the other that is inherently pleasurable. Fonagy (2008) maintains that mutuality is the foundation of sexual pleasure and it is experienced at finding and possessing the pleasure of the other through taking control momentarily of the other's thoughts and feelings. This process is similar to projective identification; the mental state that was originally one's own is represented in the other. According to Fonagy (2008) this experience triggers the pleasure of orgasm. Moreover, Fonagy (2008) argues that after the externalization of these aspects of self, there is a phase of re-internalization of what was projected that is necessary for the development of a long standing bond. In this vein, the re-internalization results in a strong attachment or bond in the psychosexual experience. The split-off aspects of the self that are experienced and accepted by another mind generate intense feelings of bonding, belonging, understanding, and gratitude.

2. Stability of sexual relationships

a. Erotic desire, love and mutuality

Freud made indirect contributions about love, when writing about the origins and path of the libido. In "Instincts and their vicissitudes", Freud stated that loving implies opposites that include loving-hating, loving-indifference and loving and being loved. In this regard, he argued that the experience of love results from the total integration of the ego, this is, the development of the libido from narcissism to object love. Freud (1915) maintained that in early stages of development love is enmeshed with hate and is primarily directed to the self. During this stage of primary narcissism, the self is the recipient of the entire libido, until parental prohibitions redirect the libido to the ego ideal. Then Freud thought the

ego ideal is projected outwards and is placed in an external object which he called the sexual ideal. In this regard, Freud believed that love for another entailed a search or yearning of what one was (Freud, 1915).

Drawing heavily on Freud, Chausseguet-Smirgel (1976) (Cited on Bergmann, 1980), maintains love implies a "*yearning of the ego to be reunited with its ego ideal*" (pp. 66). Lovers exchange their ego ideal for another person, until the ego ideal ceases to exist in the other and gets replaced by the precursor of a new super ego. In this vein, Chausseguet-Smirgel (1976) stressed the importance of idealization in love relationships, and suggested that mature love, in contrast with adolescent love, entails a limited projection of a toned down ego ideal into the idealized love object and the enhancement of the self as a result of the sexual gratification provided by the love object.

Along the same vein, object relations theorist Otto F. Kernberg, maintains that sexual excitement is rooted in both biological and psychological functions. According to Kernberg, sexual excitement encompasses a total response that includes physiological responses –genital excitement- and specific subjective and cognitive experiences of sexual experiences, such as arousal and orgasm. Drawing heavily on empirical evidence conducted with primates and humans, Kernberg argues that androgens are a prerequisite for the capacity for sexual response. However, he maintains that sexual behavior is independent from hormonal changes, and that the dominant factors for determining the intensity of sexual desire are both cognitive and affective. Sexual excitement is thought to include the conscious awareness of sexual interest reflected in sexual fantasies, memories and alertness to sexual stimuli. In turn, these affective and cognitive memories activate the limbic system, and stimulate the spine resulting in the experience of genital sexual excitement.

According to Kernberg, the subjective experiences and the cognitive aspects of arousal, genital excitement and orgasm derive from pleasurable and unplesurable experiences in early childhood. He

argues that sexual excitement develops in the relationship between infant and caregiver, and later culminates in the form of genital experiences of sensuality in puberty and adulthood. From Kernberg's view, sexual excitement is a differentiated affect that has its origins in the integration of erotically charged experiences resulting from stimulus of the various erogenous zones. He maintains that sexual excitement like other affects gets converted into affective memory when it gets linked to an affectively imbued object relation. Hence, sexual excitement includes an internalized object relation and a particular object representation of the self and other that is integrated under the impact of an affect. Kernberg further explains "*the diffuse excitability of the skin involved in early attachment behaviors, the sexually exciting qualities of the erotogenic zone and the cognitive imprints and unconscious fantasy developments linked to intense pleasurable affect activation from infancy forward culminate in the specific cognitive affective experience of sexual excitement*" (pp. 15).

Furthermore, Kernberg maintains sexual excitement like other state affects is not object-less but exists in relation to a part-object that is linked to an erotogenic zone. He argues that with the development of integrated of "all good and "all bad" object relations, sexual excitement evolves from being a diffuse psychic experience to a differentiated affect. When this is achieved, sexual object choice transforms sexual excitement into erotic desire, which entails a wish for "*a sexual relationship with a particular object*" (PP. 16). Hence, erotic desire is characterized by sexual excitement linked to an object, which according to Kernberg entails the capacity for mature love. According to Kernberg (1995), mature love involves the integration of split off aspects of the self and others, and the capacity to link sexual excitement to particular internalized object relations. Thus, erotic desire directed to a particular object –mature love- includes integrated object relations and the capacity for mutuality and intimacy. Kernberg (1995) explains:

"*Mature sexual love is a complex emotional disposition that integrates 1-sexual excitement transformed into erotic desire for another person, 2-tenderness that derives from the integration of libidinally and aggressively invested self and object representations, with a predominance of love over aggression and tolerance of the normal ambivalence that characterizes all human relations, 3- an identification with the other that includes both a reciprocal genital identification and deep empathy with the other's gender identity, 4- a mature form of idealization along with a deep commitment to the other and the relationships, and 5- the passionate character of the love relations in all three aspects: the sexual relationship, the object relationship and the superego investment in the couple*" (pp. 32).

On a similar note, Kernberg (1995) argues that erotic desire and mature love involves the active unconscious search of an early object. He explains: "*activation of unconscious relationships with a specific person in which the activation of unconscious relationships from the past and conscious expectations of the future life as a couple combined with the activation of a joint ego ideal*" (pp. 16).

Along the same lines, and drawing heavily in object relations theory, Spector (1995) posits that erotic desire and exclusivity and mutuality in a close relationship derives from early infant-caregiver relationships. In this regard, Spector introduces the concept of "love shadow". Spector believes that love is a fantasy based emotion connected to an object. She argues that the most significant element of a fantasy is the choice of a lover, which depends on the ideal of another. In this regard, she believes the love shadow is the result of representations of early life perceptions of one's parents and the experiences with them. Thus, the lover-shadow constitutes the foundation for all future relationships, and also the foundation for which experiences with the world add to that initial representation of a "loved one". According to Spector, falling in love is bringing the perception of the actual lover into alignment with the internal mental representation of the lover-shadow. This alignment requires an imaginative act, in which the love object is transformed by this image and vice versa.

Drawing heavily on Mahler's phase of separation-individuation, Bergmann (1971) argues that love is a developmental achievement. It firstly involves the development of a symbiotic experience with the love object and lastly a phase of separation-individuation; when a person falls in love, she or he secretly searches a lost oedipal object. Thus, falling in love entails a reparation of an early relationship though symbiotic fusion with a new object. Along the same lines, Bak (1971) stated that love implies separation. He maintained that being in love is frequently preceded by separation or object loss. He argued that self love and the narcissistic libido are completely absorbed by the object, hence the self becomes impoverished and vulnerable. In other words, when being in love, the object replaces the ego ideal and the self is left vulnerable to injury. Moreover Bak, argued that being in love entails the over-valuation of an object, which naturally counteracts aggression. Bak explains " *the exalted position of the object is negation of ambivalence which is not tolerated because the object has to be protected as part of the self*" (pp. 3). Thus, Bak (1971) explained that the acceptance of object loss is particularly painful in love relations because it entails self-injury and feelings of guilt.

On a different note, and drawing heavily on attachment theory, Laschinger (2004), states that a two-person sexuality, in which we can recognize the other as a separate agent moves psychoanalysis beyond the realm of object relations and into the relational world. In this vein, he believes that the capacity for mutuality and sexual erotic desire derives from attachment security, and from the capacity to recognize the other as a separate and different locus of agency. According to Laschinger attunement and attachment are profoundly erotic intersubjective experiences and while they do not involve adult sexuality, they often evoke primary erotic attachments from early infancy. In other words, internal working models of early attachment relationships include internal representation of early erotic attachment relationships. Hence, primary erotic attachments are affected by past losses, sexual intrusion and abandonment. According to Laschinger (2004) individuals often have multiple internal

working models of dominance and submission, intruder and being intruded upon, being penetrated and intruding, controlling and being controlled, and seducing and being seduced. According to, Laschinger these patterns get enacted in love relationships.

b. Integration of love and sex

Kernberg (1995) believes tenderness reflects the capacity to integrate the libidinal and the aggressive self and object representations, and the capacity to establish an intimate relationship with a differentiated and integrated object. According to Kernberg, sexual desire is characterized by the infusion of aggression in the service of love. In mature romantic relationships, an integration of sex and love is possible when the fusion of aggression with love results in the capacity for concern for the love object. Hence, tenderness expresses love for the other by virtue of protecting the object from dangerous aggression and by tolerating ambivalence. Kernberg (1995) suggests that idealization in the context of integrated object relations, and the corresponding capacity to feel guilt and concern facilitates the integration of sexual excitement with an idealized object and the integration of erotic desire with tenderness. In this regard, idealization preserves the sexual disposition toward the idealized object and protects sexual excitement from being overwhelmed by aggression. He explains: "*evolving idealization processes eventually culminate in the capacity for reconfirming the linkage between desire and romantic idealization of the same person and at the same time represent the integration of the superego at a higher level, including sophisticated capacity for integrating tender and sexual feelings, which reflects the overcoming of the oedipal conflict"* (pp. 40, 1995).

Along the same lines, Stoller (1979) believed that sexual excitement is a defense against anxiety and therefore involves a relational dilemma in which safety and danger oscillate. According to this view sexuality involves hostility, fantasy, the partial dehumanization of the object, risk, illusion, secrecy,

frustration and the hope for triumph. Without the illusion of danger and hostility, boredom takes over love relations. Secrecy, in contrast increases intimacy and stability in love sexual relations, in that sexual excitement establishes contrasts between knowing and not knowing, seeing and not seeing and safety and danger.

According to Bergmann (1971) erotic desire and the wish for intimacy, and fusion are an expression of the longings for one's mother. Hence, he maintains that the mother is the child's first love object. Falling in love involves the revival of feelings from early stages of symbiosis and the capacity to integrate love and sex. Moreover, drawing heavily on Freud's writings, Bergmann argues that during early childhood the sexual drive is divided in a sensuous and a tender current. The sensuous strivings become repressed and the tender usually remains part of the conscious mind. When a child develops successfully and reaches adolescence, the old love object is replaced by a new object. Thus, the sensuous and tender currents are reunited. Like Freud, Bergmann argues that falling in love entails re-finding an object. Hence, sexual love entails the capacity to recall an old object without the reawakening of guilt and incestuous prohibitions. In this regard, gratifying sexual love becomes a pathway in which castration anxiety decreases and the individual is thus able to restore the happiness that was lost.

Furthermore, Bergmann (1971) posits that in the context of psychopathology, individuals are unable to transfer their libido to non-incestuous love objects. Hence, a split between love and sexual desire prevails. In her paper "*on the intrapsychic function of falling in love*", he quotes Freud to illustrate this paradigm "*Our love objects form series, one is a recurrence of another and each one is the reactivation of an unconscious infantile love, but this love must remain unconscious; as soon as it is aroused to consciousness, it holds the libido fast instead of guiding it onward, and a new love becomes impossible"* Freud goes on saying *"in neurotics impotence makes its appearance whenever an object which has been chosen with the aim of avoiding incest recalls prohibited objects through some feature,*

often an inconspicuous *one... Where they love they do not desire and where they desire they cannot love*" (pp. 356).

Moreover, Waelder (1930) described the act of love as the capacity to combine physical gratification and happiness. He believes that love is the result of the fulfillment of the instinctual needs, a repetition compulsion, a satisfaction of the demands of the super ego and the claims of reality. Hence, mature love involves the integration and negotiation of several ego functions, as well as the prohibitions of the super ego. Waelder maintains that mature love requires the capacity to re find an old object in a new one by virtue of bridging gaps between the ego and the ego ideal , and by counteracting the demands of the id on re-finding the replica of the old object (Waelder, 1930). Altman, drawing heavily on Freudian theory, argues that love consists on the union of two currents, the affectionate and the sensual, and an intensive participation of the super ego. Altman (1971) believed that the affectionate current delays immediate gratification and takes into consideration the well-being of the object. In contrast, the sensual current implies self-seeking gratification without any regard of the wishes of the object. Altman (1977) like Freud, maintained that complete or mature love involves a convergence of the affectionate and the sensual currents and the active participation of the ego and superego. He believed the ego imparts to love a sense of duration and lasting ties with the object, making love longstanding and mutual. He further explained "*without the influence of the ego functions, love would be merely an exercise in erotic as well as sadistic techniques, or a repertoire of perversions. It lends love the toleration of differences and the ability to endure frustration*" (pp. 38).

Similarly, Altman (1977) argued that without the prohibitions of the super ego, love is devoid of compassion, guilt and remorse. The superego, lends the subject the capacity to obtain satisfaction and pleasure even when one's desires are not being gratified. In this regard, healthy super ego functions make loving a source of satisfaction and not a moral burden. Altman (1977) maintained that object

relations stability does not equate love. He believed that individuals may be wedded to objects for long periods of time without experiencing satisfaction and pleasure. In this regard, he believed that long standing relationships can result from loyalties to early objects that can cause unhappiness. In this regard, Altman (1977) suggested that mature love and durability are usually found simultaneously in the context of genital love. This is, the capacity to integrate erotic impulses and inhibitions.

c. Love, sex and the otherness.

Drawing heavily on relational psychoanalysis, Martin Stephen Frommer (2006) argues that erotic experiences derive from the experience of otherness within the self. He believes that lust, and the capacity to integrate love and sex is contingent to the capacity to bring the otherness of the self in the context of an attachment relationship. In this vein, he argues that traditional psychoanalytic theory puts special emphasis in the role of the desirability of the object when addressing issues of eroticism, but ignores the role of the self in connection to the other. To this, he proposes that lust involves otherness as a self-state. Thus, he maintains that lust is not merely a physical or bodily state of arousal but a "*highly complex, dynamic state of consciousness of self and other-other relations, as well as psychic experiences in which the boundaries between the self and other that bolster identity become permeable"* (pp. 641). In agreement with Bromberg's and Mitchell's ideas of multiple self-states, Frommer argues that the ability to combine lust and love within a relationship is contingent on psychic multiplicity. Hence, the capacity to integrate love and sexuality entails a normative dissociative process that transgresses the boundaries of selfhood. According to Frommer, integrating tenderness and love implies the capacity to transit between states of mind that feel radically different to the experience of the self and requires solid identity formation in order to tolerate injury and fractures of the self.

Similarly to Frommer, Crastnopol (2006) maintains that sexual intercourse emphasizes the otherness in that it involves the experience of oneness and separateness. She argues that the essence of romantic love is the capacity to integrate closeness, connectedness and opposition with the enjoyment of the other's goodness. Hence, sexual love involves friction and obstruction, and the integration of the sexual with the aggressive. According to Frommer, opposing another or being opposed is critical to the self's affirmation and emotional attachment.

Along the same vein, Mitchell (2001) suggests that in the heart of sex and love lays the experience of the otherness. In his controversial book "*Can love last*?", Mitchell argues that love and passion degrade in long standing relationships because they are inherently dangerous and risky to the sense of self and one's identity. Unlike other authors who believe that security and safety fuel romantic passion, Mitchell believes that intimacy involves a profound state of dependency and helplessness. Hence, the deadening of romantic love is inevitable and is by nature a defensive strategy because vulnerability ignites detachment and a decrease in passionate emotions.

In contrast to Mitchell, Virginia Goldner suggests that long term relationships include safety, comfort and danger. Hence sex and attachment cannot exclude one another. Goldner (2006) firmly believes that safety in romantic bonds is a source of passion and lust. She explains *"safety and adventure oscillate as each partner provides a secure base for the adventure and sexual exploration, freeing the otherness of one's desire to encounter the strangeness of the lover's subjectivity*" (pp. 628). Goldner agrees with relational theory regarding the primacy of multiple self-states in romantic and sexual relationships. In this regard, Goldner argues the capacity of the self to transform into a transgressive self-state of the erotic subject is central to the sexual state of mind.

d. The capacity for sexual pleasure and stability of romantic relationships

Kernberg (1995) argues that in addition to sexual pleasure, and the capacity for tenderness and idealization, a mature love relation includes the capacity for genital identification. Kernberg explains that identification with the love object entails a full identification with the other's interests, wishes and shortcomings, without losing one's sense of self. According to this view, genital identifications derive from oedipal and pre-oedipal conflicts and involve homosexual and heterosexual identifications. Hence, identification implies a union and a set of emotional reactions that derive from sexual excitement and the experience of orgasm. Kernberg (1995) maintains that the capacity to provide gratification involves a heterosexual oedipal identification. In contrast, excitement as a result of the love object's orgasm reflects an unconscious homosexual identification with that partner. According to this view, simultaneous identifications with one's sexual role and the love object's sexual role represents the capacity for becoming one with another person physically and emotionally. Hence, integration of homosexual and heterosexual identity components result in emotional closeness and empathy. According to Kernberg, at the level of sexual pleasure, normal love relations involve the capacity for broadening and deepening the experience of sexuality and orgasm with the expanded sexual eroticism, derived from the integration of aggression and bisexuality –homosexual and heterosexual identifications- in an erotic relationship. In addition to genital identifications to the self and the love object, hatred and aggression are toned down in the context of a loving relationship. This involves the capacity to become one with another person by tolerating ambivalence and experiencing concern and gratitude. Kernberg believes that in normal love relations the super ego is developed enough to assume adult ethical values, sense of responsibility, and moral commitment and mutuality with the love object. Kernberg particularly believes that the super ego plays a crucial role in love relations. According to this view, a love relationship activates in a couple both partners conscious and unconscious super ego functions, resulting in the acquisition of a shared superego system. This system depends on both

partners super ego's maturity and is the foundation for the feelings of concern to one self and the partner. Healthy super ego development fosters love and commitment, as a result of toned downed primitive and pre-oedipal idealizations and the internalization of post-oedipal prohibitions. The integration of pre and post oedipal levels of superego facilitates individuation and evolves in the capacity for gratitude. According to Kernberg (1999) gratitude plays a crucial role in mature, pleasurable and stable love relationships. In this vein, gratitude sets the foundation for reciprocity and the capacity to see in the partner a gratifying love object.

Furthermore, Kernberg believes that overcoming fears and inhibitions connected with genital eroticism brings about sexual pleasure and the capacity for sexual freedom. He maintains that sexual freedom is connected to enjoyment and results from the integration of partial sexual drives, aggressive impulses and sublimated homosexual identifications, into libidinal eroticism. He emphasizes the importance of total object relations; this is, integrated self and other representations as a precondition of satisfactory romantic relationships. Thus, the capacity for total object relationships protects and expands the continuing renewal of genital eroticism.

Moreover, in agreement, with Stoller (1977), Kernberg (1974, 1995) states that the stability of romantic relationships is also associated with the successful negotiation of closeness and distance. In this vein, he believes that intimacy threatens the release of aggression. In this respect, extreme openness is compensated by areas of mystery and secrecy, and maintenance of the couple's boundaries. Kernberg (1974, 1995), believes that mature sexual love, implies some level of ambivalence and secrecy, distance and intimacy, and predominance of love over hatred as a precondition for a mutual sexual experience

Summary

This literature review emphasizes the multidimensionality of sexuality and the intricate relationship of adult attachment with the development of an integrated view of self and others. Sexuality is conceptualized and defined as a complex behavioral and relational system that is molded by repeated environmental experiences with others from infancy to adulthood, characterized by behaviors, cognitions, attitudes, as well as developmental and psychological factors.

Further, we have identified findings and delineated theoretical foundations suggesting that the integration of adult romantic attachment and sexuality is a developmental challenge that is more or less achieved by different individuals, in part depending, upon their individual attachment style and self-concept. In this regard, adults with different attachment patterns behave and perceive sexuality differently because they think and feel differently about themselves and others (Eagle cited on Diamond, 2007., Mikulincer and Shaver, 2007).

Building heavily on attachment and object relations theory, this review suggests that adult romantic attachment derives from the earliest relationship between infant and caregiver, particularly when the infant experiences intense affect. Memories of these experiences with caregivers, in the context of felt security, are at the core of the individual's self-concept under the impact of pleasurable or unpleasurable affect. (Kernberg, 1978., Fonagy, 2008). In other words, actual experiences with attachment figures during times of need, pleasure and distress, are cognitively encoded, processed and stored in the form of mental representations of self and others. The achievement of an integrated concept of self and significant others, largely depends on the balance between libidinally determined and aggressively determined self and object images. Integrated and nuanced mental representations are the foundation of a coherent sense of self and a pattern of behavior that reflects self-coherence. A coherent sense of self is not only basic to self-esteem, but involves the capacity to derive enjoyment

from close relationships and the capacity to form mutually satisfactory close relationships. (Bowlby, 1969, 1973., Shaver & Hazan, 1988., Kernberg, 1978). In this regard, actual availability or the symbolic availability of comforting and caring figures evokes positive views of the self and others and consequently evokes feelings of safety that lead to the engagement of pleasurable sex and the experience of optimal sexual functioning (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2007).

Along the same vein, availability of a consistent caregiver in times of need and fear, results in the capacity to derive pleasure from others because the self is seen as worthy of love, and the other is perceived as capable of providing love and care. Experiences of warm and responsive caregiving promote secure attachment, together with the capacity to give and receive care, and to strive for mutual intimacy and sexual pleasure (Bowlby, 1969, 1973., Shaver & Hazan, 1988).

Moreover, the capacity to experience pleasure from a relationship derives from the longings for closeness to one object, which permits the identification with the other's pleasure. In the context of security, this process of identification causes people to focus on the other's arousal and enjoy satisfying genital sex rather than focus on the need for protection and safety. (Frommer, 2006, Kernberg, 1978, Stoller, 1978). Further, in addition to the capacity to experience reciprocity with one's romantic partner, secure attachment is predicated by the ability to envision oneself and the other as both attachment and sexual objects, and to integrate the disparate mental states related to both experiences (Diamond, 2007). The capacity to integrate closeness and connectedness with the enjoyment of the other's arousal, leads to the integration of sexual passion and attachment. (Fonagy, 2008., Frommer, 2006, Kernberg, 1978, Stoller, 1978). Similarly, the capacity to envision others in terms of mental states facilitates the capacity to use fantasy and the capacity to playfully explore different erotic experiences in the service of sexual excitement, but also in the service of one's attachment needs. To this end, in the context of attachment security, sexual fantasies are recruited in the service of eliciting safety, closeness, approval, and reassurance of a partner's lovability and availability (Bader, 2002., Fonagy, 2007).

Moreover, this literature review has identified empirical evidence and theory that indicate that securely attached individuals show a combination of a positive self-model and a positive model of others, and thus have an internalized sense of self-worth. Specifically, it has been suggested that securely attached individuals are more likely to have achieved an internal sense of felt security and adopt strategies that support their goals of establishing intimacy, while achieving a balance between closeness and distance. (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2007). Most markedly, secure individuals negotiate support-seeking and support-providing effectively, and thus are able to engage in mutual negotiation in response to couple conflict. In this vein, the secure person's comfort with closeness, self-disclosure and interdependence create a positive foundation for sexual relations. As empirical evidence has shown, securely attached individuals report more positive emotions during sex, more commitment, more sexual satisfaction, increased sexual excitement and better sexual functioning in the sexual response cycle (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2007).

By contrast, a negative self-model and a positive model of others characterize anxious attachment. This makes individuals anxiously seek to gain acceptance and validation from others, seeming to persist in the belief that they could attain safety, or security, if they could only get others to respond properly toward them. Supporting these assumptions, evidence has found that anxious individuals tend to focus on signals of approval or rejection, and thus their sexual responses and experiences are particularly tied to achieving closeness and reassurance. As a result, these individuals report more sexual problems, less relationship satisfaction, negative affect during sex, and less positive appraisals of sexual aspects of oneself (Davis et al., 2004., Feeney, J. A, and Noller., 1992).

Moreover, a negative model of other, which is conducive to negative expectations towards sex, and avoidance of intimacy to avoid the pain of loss or rejection characterize attachment avoidance. Hence, avoidant individuals manifest important deficits in establishing and maintaining an attachment bond as

well as a relative disjunction between sex (desire) and attachment (love). Evidence indicates that subjects who show higher levels of attachment avoidance are more likely to endorse acceptance of multiple relationships, limited involvement and commitment, and the use of sex for fun rather than as an expression of emotional depth. (Fenny and Noller, 1992., Levy & Kelley, 2005., Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

Lastly, this literature review will highlight what needs to be further explored and what has been omitted in regards to some of the emotional and psychological aspects of sexuality in connection to adult romantic attachment. To date, most research efforts have defined sexuality as a set of behaviors, responses or attitudes. To this end, empirical research in this area simply describes sexual difficulties in the context of the behavioral sequence of sexual activity and/or inhibition of the sexual response cycle (desire, excitement, orgasm, and resolution). Hence, sexuality has not been identified as a multilayered dyadic construct that includes a set of developmental challenges, and emotional and psychological responses.

Although the recent infusion of developmental research findings pertaining to adult romantic attachment has led to considering sexuality as a behavioral system that is partly influenced by past and present relationships, no studies have attempted to look at the integration of different aspects of the human erotic experience in the context of romantic attachment. (Fenny and Noller, 1992, Levy & Kelley, 2005, Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). For instance, very little is available in the literature that speaks of a specific configuration of attributes that leads to an optimal sexual experience in the context of attachment security. Relevant to this, research has neglected the relationship between the capacity to achieve integrated self and other representations, and mature psychosexuality. The latter is surprising given the enormous amount of theory that derives from the field of psychoanalysis that alludes to the connection between the development of an integrated self-concept, and the capacity to form stable

close relationships and derive pleasure from relationships. (Eagle cited in Diamond, 2007., Kernberg, 1978., Fonagy, 2008., Stoller, 1978., Crastnopol, 2006., Frommer, 2006).

On a similar vein, this literature review suggests that sexual fantasy is a distinctive characteristic of the human erotic experience that is tightly linked to the development of a secure attachment. According to psychoanalytic theory, sexual fantasies are related to early experiences of secure, playful and mutually gratifying interactions with an attachment figure. (Kahr, 2008., Fonagy, 2008). According to this view, sexual fantasies condense and incorporate in their scripts information about internal mental representations of oneself and the other, and are recruited in the service of eliciting safety, closeness, approval, and reassurance of a partner's lovability and availability. Hence, the capacity to use fantasy becomes a precondition of the kind of intersubjectivity that mature psychosexuality entails. (Kahr, 2008., Fonagy, 2008) According to Fonagy (2008), in the context of attuned secure parenting, fantasy is used in the service of developing an erotically imaginative intercourse. It is through the use of fantasy that one is transported into the mind of the other, through the process of identification, resulting in pleasurable eroticism.

Unfortunately, despite the amount of theory that links sexual fantasy to developmentally robust sexuality and secure attachment, few empirical studies have addressed these associations. Researchers have paid little attention to attachment-related goals of fantasies that may provide a unique insight into the intimate desires that motivate sexual behavior. Previous research has been limited to the investigation of issues pertaining to how sexual fantasy can enhance or inhibit sexual responsivity to any form of sensory stimulation (Birbaum, 2007). However, no studies have conceptualized sexual fantasy as a window of assessment of the quality of one's internal representations of self and the other in the context of attachment security. Similarly, no studies have attempted to understand the role of sexual

fantasy in the development and maintenance of a secure and intimate, and pleasurable sexual relationship with an attachment figure in adulthood.

Moreover, the role of aggression is also an area that needs to be further explored. Extensive psychoanalytic theory suggests that optimal sexual love involves friction and the negotiation of healthy boundaries, as well as the integration of the sexual with the aggressive. (Frommer, 2006, Kernberg, 1978, Stoller, 1978). However, no research efforts have been made to explore this relationship. Apart from the studies that have focused on the prevalence of Paraphilias (unusual sexual objects, activities or situations), and the relationship between sexual aggression and attachment patterns (Tracy, 2003., Impett et al., 2002., Smallbone and David, 2000., Brassard et al. 2007), no research attempts have been made to examine how aggression enters into the normative sexual experience and is integrated and/or negotiated with the capacity to experience loving feelings.

Statement of the Problem

The present study is built on the work of Foelsch and Gordon-Lendvay (2000, 2003) by using their measure of sexual functioning -The Intimate Relations Inventory of Sexuality (IRIS)-, which includes emotional, developmental and psychological indexes of functioning. While their initial study provided several important preliminary findings about the relationships between sexual functioning and personality organization using a sample composed by men and women recruited in universities, and in the inpatient and outpatient services of a major teaching hospital with a specialization of personality disorders, the present study provides an important first look into the understanding of how adult romantic attachment may be related to different indexes of sexuality functioning in a non-clinical sample of young adult female community volunteers and students recruited in different universities in New York City and Westchester County.

Objective

Guiding this research was the expectation that attachment experiences lead to the formation of mental models of self and other that influence romantic and sexual relationships. Thus, this study suggests that adults with different attachment patterns behave and perceive sexuality differently because they think and feel differently about themselves and others.

Unlike other available studies in the literature that primarily assess the relationship between one or a few dimensions of sexual behavior and attachment, the current study aims to explore sexuality comprehensively. Thus, the present study sought to add to what is known about the relationship between different aspects of the human sexual functioning and adult romantic attachment by defining sexuality as a complex subjective and dyadic experience that includes a set of developmental challenges, and behavioral, emotional and psychological responses. The variables of interest for the present study include several greatly researched constructs (attachment style in adulthood, sexual satisfaction, sexual agression, and perceptions and attitudes towards commited sexuality) and several constructs drawn from the psychoanalytic literature and objects relations theory (sexual fantasy, capacity for mutuality, integration of love and sex, and capacity for sexual pleasure) that are comparatively under-researched.

The overall objective of this study is to empirically describe the relationship between adult romantic attachment and different areas of sexuality functioning including the capacity to experience sexual desire and excitement, the integration of aggression in a sexual relationship, use of sexual fantasy in the service of attachment needs, capacity for mutuality, positive attitudes towards committed sexuality, sexual satisfaction, and affectionate feelings towards a sexual partner who is viewed as an attachment figure, a target of caregiving or both.

Specifically the objective of this study is to propose that secure attachment is associated to better sexual adjustment and optimal sexual functioning defined by 1- Stability of sexual relationships characterized by a preference to have sex in committed relationships, the capacity to integrate passionate and loving feelings, optimal integration of aggression to sexuality, and the capacity to sustain a committed intimate relationship based on mutuality and responsiveness, 2- capacity for sexual satisfaction/pleasure, and 3-Good functioning in the sexual response cycle (sexual arousal, openness to various sexual activities, sexual drive and sexual fantasy).

Figure 1 depicts how this study defined sexual adjustment and optimal sexual functioning, as well as how the associated constructs were operationalized.

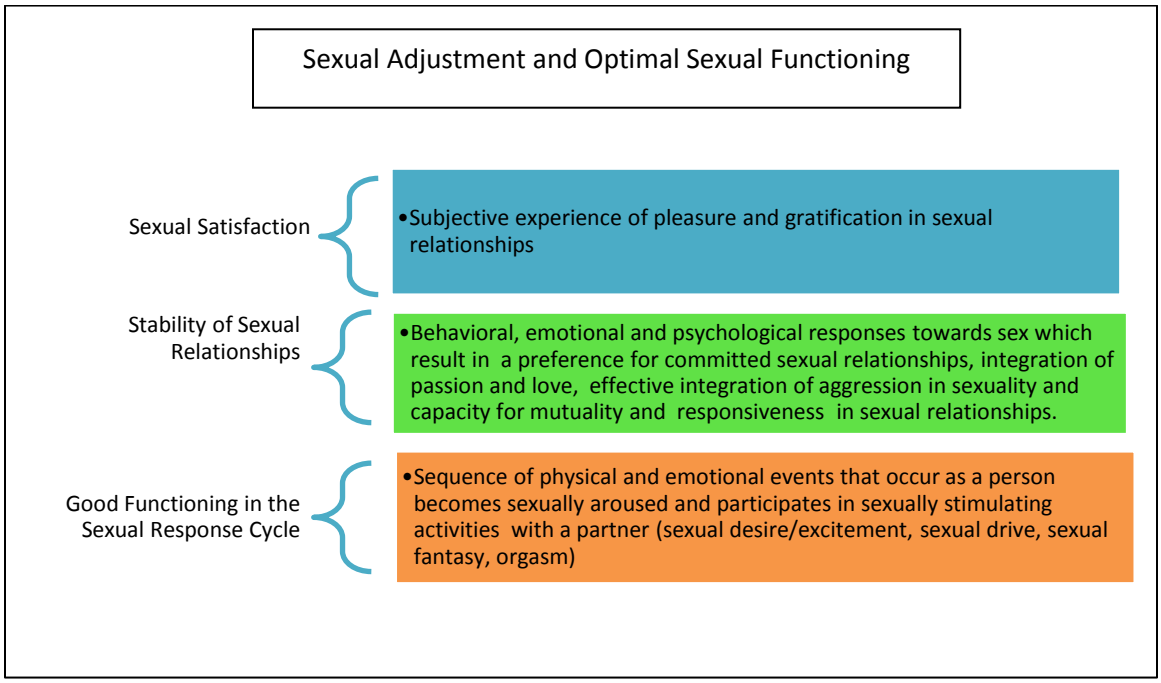

Figure 1

Research questions and hypotheses

Will individuals who show higher levels of attachment security report better sexual functioning and better sexual adjustment in romantic relationships?

H1- Participants who report higher levels of attachment security will report higher levels of sexual satisfaction and pleasure than will insecurely attached subjects.

H2- There is a positive association between secure attachment and the capacity for stability of sexual relationships, such that participants who report higher levels of attachment security will report a preference to have sex in committed relationships, and a higher capacity to integrate love and sex, integration of aggression in a sexual relationship and capacity for mutuality, than will insecurely attached subjects.

H3- Participants who report higher levels of attachment security will report better functioning in the sexual response cycle (capacity for sexual arousal, openness to various sexual activities, sexual fantasy and orgasm), than will insecurely attached subjects.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

The overall objective of this study is to empirically describe the relationship between adult romantic attachment and different areas of sexuality functioning including sexual satisfaction, stability of sexual relationships, and functioning in the sexual response cycle (orgasm, desire, sexual fantasy and drive) in young adult women.

This is an archival study that looks at the responses of 81 female students and young adult community volunteers from the NYC area and Westchester County, who responded to self-report measures regarding sexual behavior, attitudes and sexual functioning, in addition to responding to adult romantic attachment questionnaires.

The data used in this dissertation were collected as part of a larger study that explored the relationship between sexual fantasy, sexual behavior and level of personality organization/ psychopathology in normal, neurotic, and borderline individuals. The original study recruited 181 male and female subjects in different universities in New York City and Westchester County, and in the inpatient and outpatient services of a major teaching hospital with a specialization of personality disorders. As part of this study, a detailed questionnaire of sexual behavior was developed, the IRIS or the Intimate Relations Inventory of Sexuality, to explore the relationship between personality organization and sexuality. Different areas of sexuality including the capacity for sexual pleasure, ability to combine love and sex, infusion of aggression into sexuality, sexual fantasies and stability of sexual relations were examined in the context of level of personality functioning. Convergent and divergent validity was also established by correlating several instruments that measure different areas of sexual functioning and sexual satisfaction with the IRIS. The original study was approved by the Institutional

Review Board (IRB) of The New York Presbyterian Hospital Weill Medical College of Cornell University. The preliminary findings were published on the IPA website by the principal investigators.

1. Design

A non-experimental descriptive cross-sectional design using quantitative methods was used to investigate the questions of interest.

2. Participants

The current study recruited a total of 81 English-speaking adult females. The data were collected over one year in universities and educational institutions in the Westchester –and NYC area. The preliminary analyses indicated the presence of three outliers for the variable of age, thus, 78 female subjects were included in the statistical analyses.

The rationale for including young adult female participants was to explore the relationship between the variables of interest within one age cohort who were likely to have had similar dating and relationship experience, and that were probably exposed to similar cultural messages about gender norms. Particularly, research shows that dating and sexual experiences and the experiences of adult romantic attachment greatly differ among young men and women (Cooper, 2006). This study intended to minimize the gender effects on the results by looking at the responses of women but not men.

Moreover, as mentioned earlier, we eliminated three cases from our initial sample of 81 female subjects because we did not want to include participants that were significantly older in age. It has been widely reported that as age increases, women have different experiences around dating, relationships and sexuality. To avoid a possible interference of emotional and physiological variables related to aging in women, the study did not include pre-menopausal or menopausal female subjects. Studies that have included women of disparate ages have found a pattern of an incremental decline in sexual functioning in midlife. Particularly research shows a decline in several aspects of female sexual functioning with both age and the menopausal transition (Dennerstein, 1999).

Tables 1 and 2 contain demographic information about participants who completed the self-report questionnaires.

Table 1. Sample Demographics for Continuous Variables						
Characteristic	**N**	**Range**	**Minimum**	**Maximum**	**Mean**	**SD**
Age	78	19	18	37	23.95	4.23
Education by number of years	78	78	12	18	15.84	1.63

Table 2. Sample Demographics for Categorical Socio-demographic Variables			
Characteristic		**N**	**%**
Ethnicity			
	Caucasian	49	63
	African American	11	14
	Asian	7	9
	Hispanic	3	4
	Other	8	10
Living situation			
	Living alone	65	83
	Living with partner	13	17
Marital Status			
	Married	14	18
	Single	61	78
	Separated	1	1.4
	Divorced	2	3
Sexual Orientation			
	Heterosexual	76	97
	Bisexual	2	2.6
	Homosexual	0	0
Dating Situation			
	Dating more than one person	22	28
	Not dating	13	17
	Dating a single person	43	55
Education			
	College graduate	29	37
	Graduate degree	22	28
	Some college	26	33
	High school	1	1.3
Religion			
	Protestant	25	32
	Jewish	7	9
	Catholic	6	8
	Buddhist	1	1.3
	Muslim	2	2.6
	Other	37	47

The sample composed by 78 women ranged in age from 18 to 37, with a mean age of 23.95 (SD = 4.23). 63 percent of the women were Caucasian (N = 49), 14% were African American (N = 11), 9% were Asian (N = 7), 4% were Hispanic (N = 3), and 10% were from other races than the four race types mentioned above (N = 8).

Of the 78 female participants 83% reported to be living alone (N=65) and 17% to be living with a romantic partner (N=13). In regards to marital status, 18% were married (N=14), 78% single (N=61), 1.4% separated (N=1) and 3% divorced (N=2). Of these women, 97% identified themselves as being heterosexual (N=76) and 2.6% Bisexual (N= 2). In our sample of 78 women, none reported homosexuality as their sexual orientation, which is surprising given the fact that the incidence for homosexuality in the United States has been reported to be as high as 4% (Gates, 2011). Moreover, 28% of the participants (N=22) reported to be currently dating more than one person, 17% reported not to be dating (N= 13) and 55% reported to be currently dating one single person (N=43).

The sample ranged in number of years of education from 12 to 18, with a mean of 15.84 years (SD = 1.63). Moreover, 37% reported to be college graduates (N=29), 28% to have a graduate degree (N=22), 33% to have some college (N=26) and 1.3% to have a high school diploma (N=1).

Religiously, this sample was diverse: 32% of the subjects identified themselves as Protestant (N=25), 9% as Jewish (N=7), 8% Catholic (N=6), 1.3% Buddhist (N=1), 2.6% Muslim (N=2), and 47% as practicing other religions or as being agnostic/atheist (N=37).

Lastly, the proportion of majority-to minority groups in the present study (63% Caucasian vs. 37 other ethnicity) was compared to the most recent NYC Census to assess how representative the participants in the present study were of the distribution of race/ethnicity in the population. According to the most recent census in New York City, White/European Americans made up 40% of the population, while 20% were of Black/African American descent, 15% were identified as Asian American, 20% as Hispanic and the rest were “all other” racial groups. Retrieved from *http://www.NYC.org*. Although the

proportions of minority groups in the present study do not reflect the exact distributions of minority racial and ethnic groups in the NYC Census, the overall proportions suggest that a reasonable amount of racial/ethnic diversity was achieved in the present study. Moreover, when comparing education, we found that our sample was significantly more educated than the overall population in NYC; Statistics show that 16% of individuals have a college degree, while 12% possess a graduate degree. Retrieved from *http://www.NYC.org*. Our sample in comparison is highly educated, as most subjects have some college, a college degree or a graduate degree. However this finding is not surprising as the recruitment of subjects took place in universities in New York City and the Westchester County.

3. Procedures

The Principal Investigator (PI) of the study recruited community volunteers as well as students of graduate and postgraduate educational institutions in New York City and the Westchester County. Female student and community volunteers were approached to participate in this study through a flyer posted at Pace University Law School and School of Nursing in Westchester, at the School of Social Work at Columbia University and at the Student Health Center at Hunter College in NYC. Before approaching prospective students, permission was sought from the appropriate school administrators in person by the PI. All the community and student volunteers were asked to call the principal investigator or research assistant if they were interested in participating, mentioning that their anonymity could not be guaranteed at the time of the call. After calling, the prospective participant's names and phone numbers were kept in a locked file cabinet. After describing the general goals of the study and the consent process, interested subjects were sent a package by mail that included consent forms and questionnaires. All individuals were asked to sign two consent forms and keep one for their own personal records. All individuals in the sample completed the same set of measures and were asked to fill them out while alone, and return them by mail in the return envelope provided, along with one of

the two consent forms included in the package. A separate return envelope was included in the package for the consent form.

Upon receipt, the packets were checked for completeness. The questionnaires did not bear names but they included an identical code to the signed consent form. The signed consent forms were kept separately from the questionnaires and only approved research staff had access to the documents. The documents were secured in a locked closet at the Personality Disorders Institute at Weill Cornell Medical College in White Plains, NY. The data was entered into the computer files, which contained codes and not names. The information was only accessible to those members of the research staff of the Personality Disorders Institute who was authorized by the IRB to use the data and had the appropriate password to open the files.

The current study used data that was collected over one year starting in the summer of 2005. No social, environmental or political events are thought to have interfered with the recruitment of subjects. The total time for subjects to complete all measures was between 60 and 90 minutes. Subjects received a $20.00 book certificate from BORDERS bookstore as a token of appreciation for their efforts. The Principal Investigator was available by phone or in person for counseling in case the subject experienced any psychic distress. The principal investigator also provided referrals if indicated.

4. Measures

This study aims at investigating the relationship between adult romantic attachment and different areas of sexuality functioning including: 1- Pleasurable sexuality/sexual satisfaction, 2- Stability of sexual relationships which entails a preference to have sex in committed relationships, capacity to integrate passionate and loving feelings, integration of aggression to sexual relations and the capacity to sustain a mutual sexual relationship, and 3- Good functioning in the sexual response cycle (sexual arousal, drive, sexual fantasy, orgasm and openness to varied sexual experiences). Depicted in the figure below (Figure 2.) are all the constructs of sexuality functioning that are measured through self-report questionnaires.

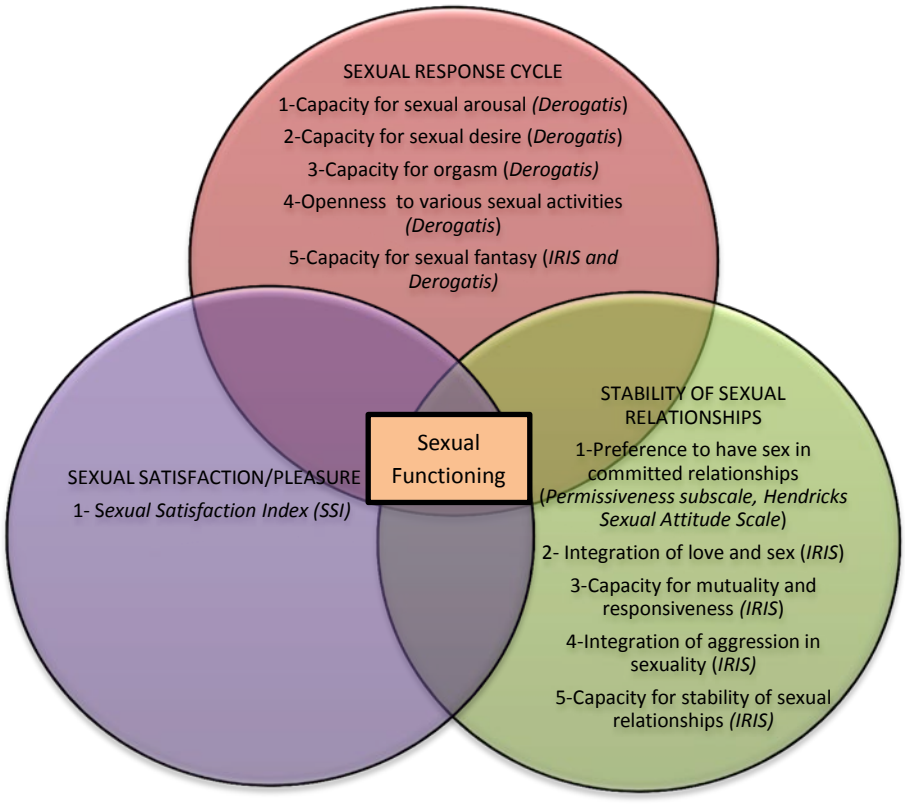

Figure 2

In order to accomplish its goal, the current study includes 8 self-report questionnaires: a demographic information questionnaire, two self-report measures of adult romantic attachment and five scales that measure different aspects of sexuality functioning. Below is the description of the measures:

1-Demographic Questionnaire

This is a questionnaire that was developed by the Principal Investigators of the original study. It includes 20 open-ended questions where subjects provided information about their age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, marital status, religious affiliation, and education. This questionnaire also asked information regarding their current and previous sexual relationships; the subjects gave the number of same sex and opposite sex sexual partners they had in the last five years.

2-*Hendrick Sexual Attitude Scale (HSAS)*

The HSAS is a 43-item instrument (Hendrick and Hendrick, 1987) that examines 4 sexuality-related factors: *permissiveness, sexual practices, communion (i.e. participation and involvement) and instrumentalism (i.e. pleasure-oriented sexuality).* 1- *Permissiveness (n=21)* is the general acceptance of open, casual sex and multiple partners (e.g., "Casual sex is permissible," "I would like to have sex with many partners," and "Sex without love is meaningless"). 2-*Sexual Practices (n=7) reflects* responsible sexuality (i.e., birth control) and a tolerance for varied sexual practices (e.g., "Birth control is part of responsible sex," "Masturbation is alright," and "Sex education is important for young people"). 3-*Communion (n=9)* is concerned with sexual activity as the ultimate form of human communication and the joining of two persons in close physical and spiritual harmony (e.g., "At its best, sex seems to be the merging of two souls," and "Sex is the closest form of communication between two people"). 4-*Instrumentality (n=6)* reflects the attitude that sexual behavior is primarily a pleasurable physical event

with little or no commitment between the participants. (e.g., “The main purpose of sex is to enjoy oneself,” and “Sex is primarily physical”. The HSAS uses a 7-point Likert-response scale and respondents are asked to indicate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement. Respondents have a choice from a) Strongly Disagree, b) Disagree, c) Mildly Disagree, d) Neutral, e) Mildly Agree, f) Agree, g) Strongly Agree. A high score indicates stronger agreement with the construct that is being assessed. The mean of the items for each of the four subscales was computed to assess each construct.

Hendrick, et al, (1987) reported good internal reliability. Alphas for each scale were reported as follows : Permissiveness .94, Sexual Practices .80, Communion .82, and Instrumentality .82. Corcoran and Fischer (2000) found that scores on each subscale correlate with other measures of sex, love, and sensation seeking implying good concurrent validity. Criterion validity has been substantiated through examination of relationships with the Sexual Attitudes Scale, the Sexual Opinion Survey, the Reiss Male and Female Premarital Sexual Permissiveness Scales, and the Revised Mosher Guilt Inventory (Corcoran and Fischer, 2000). Hendrick (1987) also reported good test-retest reliability (correlations from .66 to .88) for the subscales. Lastly for our sample we found good internal reliability; Cronbach Alphas for the scales ranged from .80 to .94.

3-The Intimate Relations Inventory of Sexuality (IRIS)

The IRIS (Gordon-Lendvay & Foelsch, 2000) compromises 80 items and examines an array of dimensions of sexual functioning which include emotional, developmental and psychological indexes of functioning including: 1. Capacity for Sexual Pleasure (n=13); 2. Ability to Combine Love and Sexuality (n=13); 3. Capacity to Fantasize (n=7); 4. Capacity for Mutual Sexual Responsiveness (n=8); 5. Stability of sexual relations (n=9); 6. Infusion of Aggression into Sexuality (n=12), and two scales of Lack of

Polymorphous Perverse Sexuality: 7. Voyeurism (n=9) and 8. Behavior (n=9*)*. The IRIS uses a 6-point Likert scale that ranges from 1- Always, to 5- Never and 6-uncertain/not relevant.

1-The Capacity for Sexual Pleasure measures the capacity to enjoy sex and the activities that precede sex, and to obtain gratification from a sexual relationship. (e.g., "I enjoy sexual intercourse", "I enjoy foreplay", "I find sex disgusting "). 2- The Ability to Combine Love and Sex involves the capacity to feel emotionally connected and invested in a partner while being able to experience pleasure during sex. (e,g., "I have difficulty getting sexually excited with the person I love", I enjoy sex with the person I'm in love with). 3- The Fantasy subscale involves fantasy of actual details of the sexual act and also potential unconscious fantasy derivatives, polymorphous perverse fantasies and sexual fantasies that entail the quality of object relations of the person. (e.g., "My thoughts and fantasies about sex involve other people" "My thoughts and fantasies about sex involve a detailed story", "Fantasies about hurting my partner during sex add to my excitement"). 4- Capacity for Mutual Sexual Responsiveness involve the interpersonal aspects of mutual sexual responsiveness, and the experience that a sexual partner is sensitive to one's needs and the capacity to be sensitive to the partner's sexual needs. (e.g., " I like my partner to take responsibility for directing our sexual activity", "During sexual activity, my partner is attentive my physical responses and what makes me feel good", "I am able to say "no" to my partner's sexual advances"). 5-Stability of Sexual Relations involves promiscuity but also measures chaos <u>within</u> the relationship, pseudo-stability (avoidance of conflict, masochism) and tolerance of tension within the relationship (e.g., " I change partners quickly when my sexual interest fades", "I have been in love with more than one person at a time", " I fall in an out of love easily"). 6- Infusion of Aggression into Sexuality involves physical and emotional pain during sex (e.g., " My physical pain adds to the enjoyment", "I must be in circumstances of physical danger to be turned on"). Lastly the Polymorphous Perverse Sexuality scale involves the presence of voyeurism and perverse behaviors such as fetishism, exhibitionism,

sadism/masochism etc. (e.g., " I need to humiliate my partner in order to reach orgasm", ""I use objects to increase sexual excitement", "I secretly enjoy watching others undress"). In our study we found good internal reliability with the following Cronbach alphas: Ability to Combine Love and Sexuality *.73,* Capacity for Sexual Pleasure *.88,* Capacity to Fantasize *.84,* Capacity for Mutual Sexual Responsiveness *.89*, Stability of Sexual Relations *.92*, Infusion of Aggression into Sexuality *.85*, Voyeurism *.95* and Polymorphous Perverse Behavior *.96*.

In regards to the directionality, high scores on the IRIS subscales indicate higher level of the construct that is being measured.

4-Index of Sexual Satisfaction (ISS)

The ISS (Hudson et al., 1981) includes 25 items that measure the degree of dissatisfaction an individual perceives in his/her sexual relationship with their spouse or partner. The resulting 25 items are rated on a 7-point Likert scale. Respondents choose a scale from 1 (none of the time) to 7 (all of the time). All items are then summed with higher scores indicating higher levels of sexual satisfaction. Sample items of this questionnaire include ''I think that our sex is wonderful,'' I feel like my sex life is lacking in quality'' "My partner is very sensitive to my sexual needs and desires " and "I feel that our sex life really adds a lot to our relationship." The authors of the measure have reported evidence for reliability and validity; A Cronbach's alpha coefficient for reliability was reported to be . 916 and Internal consistency and test-retest reliability was found to be approximately .90. The scale also was reported to have a discriminant validity coefficient of .76 (Hudson, W. W., Harrison, D. F., & Crosscup, P. C. , 1981). In our sample, we found a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of .93 indicating good internal consistency of the items in the scale.

5-Derogatis Interview for Sexual Function (DISF-SR, female version)

The Derogatis Interview for Sexual Functioning (DISF-SR) (Derogatis, 1997) is a 26 item self-report questionnaire that is designed to provide an estimate of the quality of an individual's current sexual functioning. The DISF-SF represents quality of current sexual functioning in a multi-domain format, which to some degree parallels the phases of the sexual response cycle (Masters & Johnson, 1966). The items are arranged into five *domains* of sexual functioning: *1-. Sexual Cognition /Fantasy, 2-. Sexual Arousal, 3-. Sexual Behavior/Experience, 4- Orgasm, and 5- Sexual Drive/Relationship.*

1- The sexual cognition/fantasy domain of the DISF-SR includes five items regarding thoughts or fantasies about sexual or romantic persons or situations. (e.g., How often have you had thoughts , dreams or fantasies about erotic or romantic situation?, How often have you had thoughts , dreams or fantasies about a sexually attractive person?)

2- The sexual arousal domain includes five items regarding subjective experiences of sexual arousal or vaginal lubrication (e.g., How often have you felt aroused while alone? How often have you felt sexually aroused by a partner?).

3- The sexual behavior domain includes five items regarding engagement in various sexual activities (including masturbation, foreplay activities, and intercourse) (e.g., How often did you engage in masturbation?, How often have you engage in sexual foreplay?).

4- The orgasm domain includes 6 items regarding satisfaction with one's timing, intensity or ability to achieve orgasm (e.g., How satisfied have you been with the ability to have an orgasm?, How satisfied have you been with feeling relaxation and well-being after an orgasm).

5- The drive and relationship domain includes four items regarding levels of sexual interest, desire and sexual/ romantic relationship quality (e.g., What would represent the best description of the quality of your current sexual functioning ? How satisfied are you with your sexual partner?)

In addition, the DISF-SR Total Score is computed, which summarizes the quality of sexual functioning across the five primary domains. The DISF-SR has distinct gender-keyed versions for men and women. Total scores can be converted to standardized *T*-scores to compare with the community population norm of *T* = 50 (*SD* = 10; Derogatis, 1997). Derogatis (1997) reported acceptable internal reliability. Alphas for each scale are: Sexual cognition and fantasy .79, Sexual arousal .76, Sexual behavior .77, Orgasm .80, Sexual drive and relationship .74. The test-retest coefficients for the subscales are also reported. Alphas for each scale are: Sexual cognition and fantasy .90, Sexual arousal .82, Sexual behavior .81, Orgasm .83, Sexual drive and relationship .80. Lastly, the stability coefficient for the DISF-SR Total Score was reported to be .86 (Derogatis, 1997). The discriminant validity has been demonstrated by several studies as being excellent. In these studies groups of women with sexual dysfunctions have been compared at several points in time showing that mean scores for each of the seven domains were statistically significantly lower ($P < 0.0001$) in surgically menopausal women with low libido compared with age-matched control women, and in naturally menopausal women with low libido compared with naturally menopausal control women. In our study we found similar Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients, to those reported by the author of the scale (Derogatis, 1997): Sexual cognition and fantasy .79, Sexual arousal .64, Sexual behavior .70, Orgasm .76, Sexual drive and relationship .72.

6-Socio-sexual Orientation Inventory (SOI)

The Sociosexual Orientation Inventory (SOI) (Simpson and Gangestad, 1992) is a self-report questionnaire that assesses sociosexual orientations along a single dimension from "restricted" (indicating a tendency to have sex exclusively in emotionally close and committed relationships) to "unrestricted" (indicating a tendency for sexual relationships with low commitment and investment,

often after short periods of acquaintance and with changing partners). The SOI consists of five self-report indices: (*a*) number of different sex partners in the past year; (*b*) number of different sex partners foreseen in the next five years; (*c*) number of times having engaged in sex with someone on one and only one occasion; (*d*) frequency of sexual fantasy involving partners other than the current one (responded to an 8-point scale, where 1 = never and 8 = at least once a day); and (*e*) three aggregated items tapping attitudes toward engaging in casual, uncommitted sex (e.g., "I can imagine myself being comfortable and enjoying casual sex with different partners"; answered on 9-point scales, where 1 = strongly disagree and 9 = strongly agree). The five indices were standardized by the authors (through *z*-score transformation) separately for men and women. Higher scores indicate an unrestricted socio-sexual orientation. An individual with a highly unrestricted socio-sexual orientation needs little commitment, love, dependency, and is more likely to have sex earlier in a relationship. The authors reported low to medium internal consistency (Cronbach α = .74). In addition, discriminant validation evidence reveals that socio-sexuality does not correlate highly with sex drive, sexual satisfaction, sex related anxiety, or sex-related guilt. The SOI correlates approximately .40 with gender, with men typically scoring higher than women (Simpson and Gangestad, 1992). This study found a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of .73, indicating that this measure shows acceptable internal consistency.

7-Relationship Questionnaire (RQ)

The RQ was developed by Bartholomew & Horowitz in 1991. Unlike other attachment self-reports, the RQ uses a four attachment categories instead of three. This measure includes a fearful category in addition to the secure, preoccupied and dismissing category. The four prototypic attachment patterns are based on a person's self-image (positive or negative) and image of others (positive or negative). In this regard it is proposed that secure individuals have a secure model of self

and of others, and thus demonstrate, high self-confidence, positive approach to others and high intimacy in relationships. In contrast the fearful individuals have a negative model of self and others, and demonstrate low self-confidence and avoidance of intimacy due to fear of rejection, and conflicting motives of both wanting and fearing intimacy. The dismissive individuals have a positive model of self but have a negative model of others and as a result they downplay the importance of relationships, and demonstrate high self-confidence, avoidance of intimacy and compulsive self-reliance. Lastly the preoccupied attached individuals have a negative view of self and a positive view of others and usually are highly dependent on others for self-esteem.

The RQ is a single item measure made up of four short paragraphs, each describing a prototypical attachment pattern as it applies in close adult romantic relationships. Participants are asked to rate their degree of correspondence to each prototype on a 7-point scale ranging from 1- Not at all like me to 7-very much like me. Participants rate attachment prototypes corresponding to the categories secure, dismissing, preoccupied and fearful, according to the extent to which a description of romantic attachment corresponds to their general relationship style". For example the dismissive type reads as follows: I am comfortable without close emotional relationships. It is very important to me to feel independent and self-sufficient". Using the RQ an individual might rate him or herself something like: Secure 6, Fearful 2, Preoccupied 1, Dismissing 4. These ratings (or "scores") provide a profile of an individual's attachment feelings and behaviors. A high score indicates stronger agreement with the construct that is being assessed. The RQ obtains continuous ratings of each of the four attachment patterns. However, the RQ can also be used to categorize participants into their best fitting attachment pattern. The highest of the four attachment prototype ratings can be used to classify participants into attachment categories.

There is moderate stability of self-classification (see Table 1 in Scharfe & Bartholomew, 1994). In a large study of college students, the authors found some gender variation, as men classified themselves

as dismissing more often than women, and women were more likely to classify themselves as secure (Scharfe & Bartholomew, 1994). Lastly, Bartholomew in 1991 conducted 2 studies with a total of 203 young adult subjects in order to test the Relationships Questionnaire discriminant and convergent validity. In this study the attachment dimensions from the RQ were highly correlated to the ratings from the Peer Attachment Interview and the Family Attachment Interview. (Barthelomew, 1991).

8-Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR)

The Experience of Close Relationships (ECR) scale was developed by Brennan, Clark and Shaver in 1998 to assess romantic attachment in adults. It is a self-report measure that derives from a factor analysis of 60 constructs represented by 482 items extracted from an extensive literature review of previous attachment measures. The ECR consists of 36 items tapping the dimensions of attachment anxiety and avoidance. Combinations of anxiety attachment and attachment avoidance can be used to define the four attachment styles defined by Bartholomew and Horowitz. The secure style of attachment is characterized by low anxiety and low avoidance; the preoccupied style of attachment is characterized by high anxiety and low avoidance; the dismissive/avoidant style of attachment is characterized by low anxiety and high avoidance; and the fearful/avoidant style of attachment is characterized by high anxiety and high avoidance.

Participants rate the extent to which each item was descriptive of their feelings in close relationships on a 7-point scale ranging from *not at all* (1) to *very much* (7). Eighteen items involve attachment anxiety (e.g., “I worry about being abandoned,” “I worry a lot about my relationships”), and 18 items involve attachment avoidance (e.g., “I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down,” “I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner wants to be very close”). A high score on the anxiety and avoidance scales indicate a stronger agreement with the construct that is being assessed.

Brennan et al. (1998) reported that the ECR had a high level of internal consistency in a sample of undergraduates, with coefficient alphas of .91 and .94 for the Anxiety and Avoidance subscales, respectively. Two studies have administered the ECR to samples of college students and reported test-retest reliability. One conducted by Brennan, Shaver, and Clark (2000), reported that test-retest reliabilities over a 3-week interval were .70 for both the Anxiety and Avoidance subscales. The other study by Lopez and Gormley (2002) indicated that the test-retest reliabilities over a 6-month period were .68 and .71 for the Anxiety and Avoidance subscales, respectively. Moreover, in our sample we found excellent internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .90 for both the anxiety and avoidance subscales.

In regards to discriminant and convergent validity numerous studies have shown that ECR measures of anxiety and avoidance as strongly positively correlated .40-.48, $p < .001$. Similarly, studies have shown that the ECR and RQ measures of anxiety are positively correlated, $r(298) = .60$, $p < .001$, as are the measures of avoidance, $r(298) = .62$, $p < .001$ (Brennan et al. 1998). The ECR and the RQ measure similar constructs for the dimensions of attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance. However, the Relationship Questionnaire (RQ) directly measures security of attachment and fearful attachment. In contrast, the Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR) *presumes* attachment security when both the scale of avoidance and the scale of anxiety are low, and *presumes* fearful attachment when both the dimensions of avoidance and anxiety are high. In other words, unlike the ECR, the Relationship Questionnaire measures security of attachment and fearful/dismissing attachment directly.

5. Data Analysis

Data management

All questionnaires were entered to a SPSS database and scored by research assistants. Missing individual items were imputed using mean substitution if less than 10% of items were blank. All data was double entered for accuracy.

Data Analysis

Initial frequencies were examined for outliers. Descriptive statistics were generated for all demographic items, variables of sexual behavior (e.g. number of sexual partners) and subscale scores of attachment and sexual functioning. This included means and standard deviations, and values of skewness (*S*) and kurtosis (*K*). Means were computed to obtain total scores for all of the subscales of the self-report questionnaires.

Preliminary analyses were performed in order to explore the relationships of the socio–demographic variables and the sexual behavior patterns reported by the participants, and the variables of romantic attachment and sexual functioning. However, before proceeding with these exploratory analyses, all the variables regarding socio-demographic information and sexual behavior were tested for normality. In this vein, in order to reduce the likelihood of spurious results, reduce the likelihood of committing Type I errors and erroneously rejecting the null hypotheses, variables that did not show a normal distribution through the values of skewness and kurtosis were normalized using Natural Log transformations. Descriptive statistics were performed after variables where transformed to confirm that they were normally distributed.

Moreover, in order to maximize the power of the analyses and increase the number of subjects compared, the variables that continued to show a non-normal distribution after the mathematical transformations were dichotomized (reduced to fewer categories) Similarly, some of the nominal/categorical socio-demographic and sexual behavior (e.g. number of sexual partners) variables were converted to dimensional variables or were dichotomized (reduced to fewer categories) to increase the number of subjects compared. This was also done to maximize the power of the analyses.

Before testing the hypotheses, preliminary analyses (correlation matrices) were utilized to assess the relationships between the nominal sexual behavior variables and dimensions of adult romantic attachment. Partialized Pearson correlations were utilized in all the analyses to control for age. Similarly, the dichotomized socio-demographic variables and sexual behavior variables were compared on the dimensions of attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance on the Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR) and the dimensions of secure attachment and fearful attachment according to the relationship Questionnaire (RQ) using a One-way ANOVA. These comparisons were performed to examine the effect of the covariates.

Further, we also conducted analyses in order to explore the construct validity of some of the measures of sexuality functioning and adult attachment. Firstly we proceeded to assess the correspondence between our two attachment measures of attachment, Experiences in Close Relationship (ECR) and Relationship Questionnaire (RQ), through correlation matrices. Secondly, we looked at the associations between the subscales of the Intimate Relations Inventory of Sexuality and the subscales of the rest of the sexual functioning measures. Because the IRIS is a relatively new instrument we decided to examine its construct validity by correlating its subscales with other measures of sexuality that have shown exceptional reliability and validity (e.g Derogatis Sexual Functioning Scale).

The study comprises a great number of variables and a reduced number of subjects. Thus, it was determined that a factor analysis was not feasible to test the hypotheses. In this regard, we proceeded to use correlations to test our hypotheses. Correlation matrices were used to examine the relationships between the dimensions of attachment security and the dimensions attachment insecurity (anxiety, fearful and avoidant attachment) –according to the Experiences in close relationships (ECR) and the Relationship Questionnaire (RQ)-, and all the areas of sexual functioning. In particular, correlation matrices examined the hypotheses, that higher levels of reported attachment security are positively correlated with better sexual functioning characterized by a preference to have sex in committed relationships, stability of sexual relationships, sexual satisfaction and better functioning in the sexual response cycle.

Lastly, the sample was divided into attachment categories according to the results from the Relationship Questionnaire; the 78 female subjects were divided into secure, preoccupied, dismissing and fearful categories. One-way ANOVA and post-hoc Tukey tests were utilized to test the differences between the attachment groups on the different areas of sexual functioning. These analyses were performed to test the hypotheses that securely attached subjects report better sexual functioning than the insecurely attached subjects. Effect sizes (partial Eta-squared) were calculated for all the One-way ANOVAS. These measures were performed to control for Type II errors and to address the issue of power since we have a reduced sample size on each of the attachment groups.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

1- PRELIMINARY ANALYSES

a- Preliminary analyses for the dimensions of attachment and attachment style.

Means, ranges and standard deviations were computed for each of the dimensional attachment variables of interest. Values are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Means of total Scores, standard deviations, and ranges of the dimensions of romantic attachment according to the ECR and RQ.

Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR)	**N**	**Possible ranges of scores**	**Mean**	**SD**
Attachment anxiety/ambivalence scale	78	(1-7) Mean	3.64	1.00
Attachment avoidance scale	78	(1-7) Mean	2.72	1.10
Relationship Questionnaire (RQ)				
Secure attachment scale	78	(1-7) Mean	3.43	.64
Fearful attachment scale	78	(1-7) Mean	3.60	.92

As can be seen in Table 3, according to the Experiences in Close Relationships self-report (ECR), the mean for the overall sample for attachment avoidance was of 2.72 (SD=.10) and the mean for attachment anxiety was reported 3.64 (SD=1.00). This sample appeared to be only slightly above (.14 points) the scale midpoint score for anxiety of 3.5, and had lower scores of avoidance (with mean scores .78 points below the scale midpoint). According to the Relationship Questionnaire self-report (RQ) the overall mean sample for attachment security was of 3.43 (SD= .64) and the mean for fearful attachment was of 3.60 (SD=.92). For the dimension of attachment security this sample appeared to be

slightly below (7 points) the midpoint score of 3.5 and for the dimension of fearful attachment the sample was 10 points above the midpoint score of 3.5.

Moreover, using Bartholomew's Relationship Questionnaire (RQ) the 78 female subjects were divided into four attachment groups as depicted in Table 4. The total sample was also divided into two attachment classification groups by placing the fearful, dismissing and preoccupied individuals in a group composed by insecurely attached individuals. The frequencies and the percentages of securely vs. insecurely attached individuals are also shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Adult romantic attachment style according to the Relationship Questionnaire (RQ)

4-way classification		
Classification	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Secure	34	44
Fearful	20	26
Preoccupied	15	19
Dismissing	9	12
Total	78	100.0
2-way classification		
Secure	34	44
Insecure	44	56
Total	78	100.0

Prior to exploring the relationships between the variables of attachment and the demographic variables, correlations were calculated to explore the correspondence between the dimensions of attachment on the Experiences in Close Relationships Questionnaire (ECR) and the Relationship Questionnaire (RQ). These correlations were performed to confirm the construct validity of the attachment measures and explore the associations between their subscales. As depicted in Table 5, the ECR measures of anxiety and avoidance were not correlated with each other. However, the dimensions of anxiety in the RQ (preoccupied) and ECR (anxiety) were positively correlated with each other (r= .637,

p < .001) as were the measures of avoidance/dismissing (RQ) and dismissing attachment (ECR) (r= .368 p, <.001). Similarly, the dimensional score of attachment security was significantly negatively correlated with measures of anxiety (r= -.470, p,.001) and avoidance (r= -.584, p,.001) on the ECR, and with the dimensions of fearful (r= -.721′ p,.001) and dismissing attachment (r= -.257, p,.001) on the RQ. As noted earlier the Relationship Questionnaire (RQ) and the Experiences in Close Relationships measure the same constructs for the dimensions of anxious/preoccupied attachment and dismissive/avoidant attachment. However, The ECR presumes attachment security and fearful/dismissive attachment, while the RQ measures these constructs directly.

Table 5. Correlations matrices: Correspondence between the dimensions of Adult romantic attachment

	Experiences in close relationships (ECR)		**Relationship Questionnaire (RQ)**			
Rel. Questionnaire (RQ)	Avoidance	Anxiety	Secure	Fearful	Preoccupied	Dismissing
Secure	-.584**	-.470**	1	-.721**	-.176	-.257*
fearful	.638**	.408**	-.721**	1	.047	.338**
Preoccupied	-.214	.637*	-.176	.047	1	-.168
Dismissing	.368**	-.093	-.257*	.338**	-.168	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlations is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

Further, the findings on the correspondence among attachment dimensions are consistent with the attachment model presented by Bartholomew in 1991 that asserts that attachment classifications that can be placed in a quadrant depending on the model of self and other. Bartholomew explains that there are two groups of attachment theoretically described as having a positive self-model that differ, and negatively correlate on measures of self-concept from the two groups theoretically described as having a negative self-model. The two groups theoretically described as having a positive model of others differ on measures of sociability from the two groups described as having negative model of others. In this regard, Bartholomew proposed that secure individuals have a secure model of self and of

others, and thus demonstrate better sexual adjustment characterized high self-confidence, positive approach to others and high intimacy in relationships. In contrast, fearful individuals have a negative model of self and others, and demonstrate low self-confidence and avoidance of intimacy due to fear of rejection, and conflicting motives of both wanting and fearing intimacy. The dismissive individuals have a positive model of self and a negative model of others. As a result dismissive individuals downplay the importance of relationships, and demonstrate high self-confidence, avoidance of intimacy and compulsive self-reliance. Lastly, the preoccupied attached individuals have a negative view of self and a positive view of others and usually are highly dependent on others for self-esteem (Bartholomew, 1991).

Figure 3 depicts Bartholomew's model of attachment based on the model of self and other, with its corresponding relationship patterns.

		MODEL OF SELF	
		Positive	**Negative**
MODEL OF OTHER	**Positive**	**SECURE** Comfortable with intimacy and autonomy Optimal sexual adjustment and sexual functioning	**PREOCCUPIED** Preoccupied with relationships
	Negative	**DISMISSING** Dismissing of intimacy Counter-dependent	**FEARFUL** Fearful of intimacy Socially avoidant

Figure 3

b- Preliminary analyses: Relationships between the socio-demographic variables and adult romantic attachment

In addition to examining the means and the correlations of the attachment variables under investigation, four sets of analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were performed to explore the significant differences in attachment among the covariates of: living situation (living with partner vs. not living with partner), among ethnicity groups, among religious groups, and among marital status. For purposes of more meaningful comparison and in order to maximize the power of our analyses, data related to socio-demographic information were collapsed into smaller groups for comparison.

Living situation was collapsed into Group 1 (Living with partner; n=13) and Group 2 (Not living with partner; n= 65). Relationship status was collapsed into Group 1 (married/partnered/dating; n=14), and Group 2 (single/alone/divorced; n=64). Religion was collapsed into Group 1 (religious; n=47) and Group 2 (nonreligious/agnostic; n=31). Ethnicity was collapsed into Group 1 (Caucasian; n=49) and Group 2 (minority; n=29).

Four dependent variables of interest were tested, including attachment anxiety, fearful attachment and attachment avoidance, and the dimension of secure attachment from the Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR) and Relationship Questionnaire (RQ).

As can be seen in Tables 6, 7, 8, and 9, no significant differences on the dimensions of attachment emerged among the demographic variables of: living situation, marital status, sexual orientation ethnicity, and religion. However, as Table 10 shows, we found a significant difference between the attachment groups for sexual orientation. That is, the security score for heterosexual women of 3.46 (*SD = .615)* was significantly higher that the security score for bisexual women 2.50 (SD= 1.27). Although an interesting finding, this result should be interpreted with caution because the small number of subjects in the bisexual cell (n=2) in comparison with the heterosexual group (n=76) may

generate a false positive result. In this instance, a bigger sample is needed to establish this difference with enough confidence. Although no conclusions should be made in regard to this finding, this certainly leads to interesting questions about the relationship between bisexuality and attachment that could be further explored in future research efforts.

Table 6. Comparison of Means by Living Situation

Subscales	Attachment style categories Mean (SD)		Mean Square	F	P
	Not living with partner (*n*= 65)	Living with partner (*n*= 13)			
Secure Attachment (RQ)	3.42 (.627)	3.51 (.738)	.092	.636	.639
Fearful Attachment (RQ)	2.67 (.939)	2.27 (.800)	2.016	.160	.160
Attachment Anxiety (ECR)	3.71 (.990)	3.26 (1.04)	2.165	2.166	.145
Attachment Avoidance (ECR)	2.79 (1.04)	2.37 (1.076)	1.94	1.609	.208

**. significant at the 0.01 level
*. significant at the .05 level

Table 7. Comparison of Means by Marital Status

Subscales	Attachment style categories Mean (SD)		Mean Square	F	P
	Single/Divorced /Separated (*n*= 64)	Married/partnered (*n*= 14)			
Secure Attachment (RQ)	3.42 (.632)	3.50 (.709)	.082	.196	.659
Fearful Attachment (RQ)	2.68 (.939)	2.23 (.781)	2.31	2.754	.101
Attachment Anxiety (ECR)	3.72 (.996)	3.26 (1.08)	2.407	2.416	.124
Attachment Avoidance (ECR)	2.81 (1.101)	2.31 (1.060)	2.942	2.459	.121

**. significant at the 0.01 level
*. significant at the .05 level

Table 8. Comparison of Means by Ethnicity					
Subscales	**Attachment style categories Mean (SD)**		**Mean Square**	**F**	**P**
	Caucasian (*n*= 49)	**Minority (*n*= 29)**			
Secure Attachment (RQ)	3.40 (.626)	3.48 (.677)	.125	.586	.677
Fearful Attachment (RQ)	2.67 (.948)	2.48 (.886)	.628	.395	.765
Attachment Anxiety (ECR)	3.64 (.997)	3.63 (1.042)	.006	.005	.941
Attachment Avoidance (ECR)	2.79 (1.123)	2.61 (1.081)	.595	.485	.488
**. significant at the 0.01 level *. significant at the .05 level					

Table 9. Comparison of Means by Religion					
Subscales	**Attachment style categories Mean (SD)**		**Mean Square**	**F**	**P**
	Non-Religious/Agnostic (*n*= 31)	**Religious (*n*= 47)**			
Secure Attachment (RQ)	3.46 (.469)	3.41 (.739)	.059	.140	.709
Fearful Attachment (RQ)	2.63 (.942)	2.58 (.922)	.045	.052	.820
Attachment Anxiety (ECR)	3.46 (.872)	3.75 (1.081)	1.577	1.566	.215
Attachment Avoidance (ECR)	2.63 (.947)	2.78 (1.203)	.433	.352	.555
**. significant at the 0.01 level *. significant at the .05 level					

Table 10. Comparison of Means by Sexual Orientation					
Subscales	**Attachment style categories Mean (SD)**		**Mean Square**	**F**	**P**
	Heterosexual (*n*= 76)	**Bisexual (*n*= 2)**			
Secure Attachment (RQ)	3.46 (.615)	2.50 (1.273)	1.778	4.507	.037*
Fearful Attachment (RQ)	2.58 (.916)	3.25 (1.414)	.869	1.017	.316
Attachment Anxiety (ECR)	3.64 (1.017)	3.58 (1.007)	.006	.006	.939
Attachment Avoidance (ECR)	2.70 (1.083)	3.36 (2.239)	.842	.687	.410
**. significant at the 0.01 level *. significant at the .05 level					

To further explore the relationship between the socio-demographic variables and the dimensions of attachment, Chi-Square tests were performed to explore for significant differences between attachment categories, and levels of relationship status, age, sexual orientation, educational level and ethnicity. To accomplish this, the sample composed by 78 female participants was divided into four groups using the Relationship Questionnaire (RQ); Participants were divided into secure, preoccupied, dismissing, and fearful attachment categories. However, results (not shown) from the Chi- Square statistical analyses found no significant differences between the attachment groups and the socio-demographic variables.

Moreover, in order to increase the power of the analyses, the variable of education -originally a nominal variable- was transformed to a continuous variable (years of education). Correlations were performed to identify associations between the dimensional socio-demographic variables of age and years of education, and attachment.

Table 11, shows the relationships between the socio-demographic continuous variables and the dimensions of attachment. In this regard, age was not correlated to the dimensions of adult romantic attachment. However, as Table 11 shows, number of years of education was significantly negatively

correlated with the dimension of attachment avoidance, such that our participants report less attachment avoidance if they have a higher level of education (.760, p>.01).

	Table 11. Correlations matrices: Continuous Socio-demographic Variables and Adult romantic attachment	
	Experiences in close relationships (ECR)	
Rel. Questionnaire (RQ)	Avoidance	Anxiety
Age	-.123	-.013
Years of Education	-.296**	-.026
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). *. Correlations is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)		

c- Preliminary analyses: Relationships between adult romantic attachment and sexual behavior

This study included variables that measured sexual behavior reported by the subjects in the last 5 years. Descriptive statistics were performed for the variables of: number of opposite sex partners, number of same-sex partners, number of "one night stand/casual sex" partners, number of partners with whom the subject engaged in sex 2-10 times, and number of partners with whom the subject engaged in sex more than 10 times.

As shown in Table 12, the sample ranged in number of opposite sex partners in the last 5 years from 0 to 30, with an average number of opposite sex partners of 4.46 (SD= 4.62). The sample ranged in number of same sex partners in the last 5 years from 0 to 6, with a mean number of same sex partners of 0.29 (SD= .968). The sample ranged in number of "one night stand/casual sex" partners from 0 to 30, with a mean of 1.19 (SD= 3.57). Similarly, the number of partners with whom they had sex 2 to 10 times ranged from 0 to 20, with a mean of 1.92 (SD= 3.40) and the number of partners with whom they had sex more than 10 times ranged from 0 to 10 with a mean of 1.81 (SD= 1.53).

Moreover, as Table 12 shows, we found a non-normal distribution for the variables of sexual behavior depicted by high levels of kurtosis and a tendency for the data to be skewed to the right. In order to avoid Type I errors and the likelihood of spurious results, the sexual behavior variables were normalized using mathematical transformations (LN) (Table 13).

Table 12. Descriptive Statistics for Sexual Behavior Variables

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Number of partners of opposite sex	78	0	30	4.46	4.623	3.064	13.114
Number of partners of same sex	78	0	6	.29	.968	4.477	22.047
Number of partners with whom subject engaged in sex once "one night stands"	78	0	30	1.19	3.571	7.052	56.416
Number of partners with whom subject had sex 2 to 10 times	78	0	20	1.92	3.407	3.695	15.909
Number of partners with whom subject had sex more than 10 times	78	0	10	1.81	1.538	2.047	9.163

Table 13. (LN) Descriptive Statistics for Sexual Behavior Variables

Natural Log (LN) value for sexual behavior variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Natural Log (LN) number of partners opposite sex	78	-.69	3.42	1.2754	.84177	-.349	.510
Natural Log (LN) number of partners had sex twice-10 times	78	-.69	3.02	.3415	.98995	.537	-.395
Natural Log (LN) had sex more than 10 times	78	-.69	2.35	.6088	.72861	-.570	-.302

The variables that were not normalized through natural log transformations were dichotomized. In this regard, for purposes of more meaningful comparison, and in order to maximize the power of our analyses, data related to *number of "one night stand/casual sex"* partners and *number of same sex partners were* collapsed into smaller groups to compare participants on attachment.

"Number one night stands/casual sex" was collapsed into Group 1 (has engaged in "casual sex/one night stands"; n=29) and Group 2 (never engaged in one night stands/casual sex; n= 49). "Same sex partners"

was collapsed into Group 1 (Has had a same sex partner; n=11), and Group 2 (Has not had same sex partner; n=67).

This study did not formulate hypotheses regarding the relationships between attachment styles and the sexual behavior reported by the participants. However, we decided to explore the associations between these variables hoping these would elucidate the nature of the sexual functioning of individuals with different attachment styles. In this regard, groups of individuals with similar sexual behavior patterns were compared on the dimensions of romantic attachment; four dependent variables of interest were tested, including attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance from the Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR), and the dimension of secure attachment, and fearful attachment from the Relationship Questionnaire (RQ). As depicted in Table 14, when using analyses of variances (ANOVAS) we found that subjects who have engaged in "*casual sex/one night stands*" report higher levels of attachment avoidance. Further, we found no significant differences between the dimensions of attachment and the variable of "*same sex partners*".

Table 14. Comparison of Means by "casual sex/one night stands"

Subscales	Attachment style categories Mean (SD)		Mean Square	F	P
	Has engaged in "casual sex/one night stands"; n=29	Never engaged in one night stands/casual sex; n= 49			
Secure Attachment (RQ)	3.31 (.730)	3.50 (.580)	.669	1.636	.205
Fearful Attachment (RQ)	2.67 (.989)	2.56 (.892)	.246	.286	.595
Attachment Anxiety (ECR)	3.79 (.927)	3.55 (1.051)	1.011	.996	.321
Attachment Avoidance (ECR)	3.11 (1.25)	2.49 (.941)	7.102	6.219	**.015***

**. significant at the 0.01 level
*. significant at the .05 level

Moreover, the sexual behavior variables that were normalized successfully through natural logarithms were correlated with the dimensions of attachment to further explore the relationship between attachment and sexual patterns (Refer to Table 15). The results from the partial correlations indicated that subjects who report high levels of attachment security report fewer sexual partners of the opposite sex (r= -.263, p< .05). By contrast, women who report high levels of fearful, dismissing and avoidant attachment report greater number of partners of the opposite sex (r= .256, r=.251, r=.280., p< .05).

Table 15. Correlations matrices: Adult romantic attachment dimensions and sexual behavior

	Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR)		**Relationship Questionnaire (RQ)**			
	Avoidance	Anxiety	Secure	fearful	Preoccupied	Dismissing
Number of opposite sex partners	.280*	.157	-.263*	.256*	-.016	.251*
Number of partners with whom subject engaged in sex 2 to 10 times	.189	.057	.211	.215	-.117	.204
Number of partners with whom subject engaged in more than 10 times	.079	.071	.124	.212	.212	.107

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlations is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

d- <u>Correspondence between the sexual functioning measures, and the relationships between sexual behavior and sexual functioning</u>

Prior to conducting analyses for the hypotheses and research questions below, correlations were calculated to explore the relationships between the variables of sexual functioning and patterns of sexual behavior reported by the participants (e.g. number of opposite sex-partners). Correlations among the different sexual functioning measures were also performed to examine the construct validity of the IRIS- Intimate Relations Inventory of Sexuality-, which is a relatively new instrument.

This study includes measures that evaluate different indexes of sexual functioning. Most of the measures selected -including the Derogatis Sexual Functioning scale, the Index of Sexual Satisfaction,

the Scale of Socio-sexual Orientation and the Hendricks Sexual Attitudes Scale- have been used extensively in the field of sexual functioning research and have yielded excellent validity and reliability. This study also included the IRIS or the Intimate Relations Inventory of Sexuality in order to investigate emotional and psychological variables associated to sexuality. The IRIS was developed by Gordon-Lendvay and Foelsch in 2000 in accordance to object relations theory that posits optimal sexuality encompasses the integration of the libidinal and the aggressive self and object representations, and the capacity to establish an intimate relationship with a differentiated and integrated object. As previously described, the IRIS is a relatively new instrument because it was developed by its authors for a study comprised by 73 female inpatient and outpatient subjects with the intention of examining the relationship between sexual functioning and the level of personality organization. To date there are no published measures that, like the IRIS, evaluate the integration of sensual, cognitive, and relational aspects of sexuality.

In line with the objectives of the original study, this dissertation used a sample from the Gordon-Lendvay and Foelsch follow-up study composed by community and student volunteers, and aims at exploring sexuality in the context of attachment. As in the original study, this dissertation also aims to further establish and investigate the IRIS's validity by correlating its subscales with other measures of sexuality functioning.

The findings in this study yielded important associations between the subscales of the Intimate Relations Inventory of Sexuality and various sexuality measures that have been previously validated and that are highly reliable. Although further research is needed to thoroughly analyze the IRIS's construct validity, the correlations found in this study suggest that the IRIS has acceptable validity. Table 16 shows the correlations coefficients for all the subscales of the sexuality measures including the Intimate Relations Inventory of Sexuality (IRIS), Index of Sexual Satisfaction (ISS), Derogatis Interview for Sexual Function (DISF-S, female version) and the Hendrick Sexual Attitude Permissiveness subscale (HSAS).

Table 16. Correlations between the variables of sexual functioning and the subscales of the Intimate Relations Inventory of Sexuality (IRIS)

IRIS	Permissiveness	Sexual Cognition	Sexual Arousal	Openness	Orgasm	Sexual Drive	ISF total	Sexual satisfaction	Preference Casual Sex
Sexual Pleasure	-.283*	.266*	.424**	.192	.349**	.396**	.412**	.189	-.154
Combine love & sex	-.232*	.065	.025	.149	.119	.119	.075	.010	-.250*
Sexual Fantasy	-.191	.263*	.278*	.085	.206	.219	.284*	.020	-.108
Mutuality in sexual relationships	-.225*	.375**	.538**	.254*	.352**	.564**	.537**	.507**	-.119
Stability of sexual relationships	-.452**	.175	.435**	.329**	.086	.345**	.346**	.003	-.582**
Infusion of aggression in sex	.362**	-.383**	-.451**	-.344**	-.229*	-.441**	-.492**	-.006	.487**
Voyeurism	.429**	-.312**	-.320**	-.316**	-.193	-.328**	-.393**	-.080	.719**
Polymorphous perverse behavior	.515**	-.309**	-.325**	-.230*	-.036	-.334**	-.331**	-.070	.609**

A high score indicates stronger agreement with the construct that is being assessed.

The study found that the subscales of sexual pleasure, stability of sexual relationships and mutuality on the IRIS were significantly negatively associated to the subscale of permissiveness of the Hendrick Sexual Attitude Scale (r=-.283, p< .05., r=-.2452, p<.01., r= -.225, p<.05). Results indicate that subjects who report high levels of acceptance of casual sex and high levels of permissiveness on the Derogatis, report lower scores on the following subscales of the IRIS: 1) capacity to enjoy sex (capacity for sexual pleasure), 2) stability of sexual relationships and 3) capacity for reciprocity and mutuality in sexual relationships (mutuality). These findings seem to support theory and empirical evidence that suggests that preference for casual sex is often related to the incapacity to maintain investment in one love object and difficulties with intimacy and relationships and sexual satisfaction (Davis, 2006).

Along these lines, and as it would be expected, the capacity to experience sexual pleasure/satisfaction on the IRIS was consistently correlated with most of the subscales of the Derogatis Sexual Attitudes Scale. In this vein, individuals who report high levels of sexual pleasure on the IRIS report: more sexual fantasy (r= .266, p<.01), more capacity for emotional and physical arousal (r=.424, p<.01), more capacity for orgasm (r=.349, p<.01) and more sexual drive (r=.396 p,.01) on the Derogatis.

Similarly, the IRIS subscale of mutuality was consistently associated with all the subscales of the Derogatis Scale (Arousal r=.538, p<.01, Fantasy r=.375, p<.01., Openness for varied sexual practices r=.254, p<.05, Orgasm r= .352 p< .05, and Sexual Drive r= .564, p<.01). These findings indicate that individuals who report high levels of mutuality report better functioning in the sexual response cycle (arousal, fantasy, sexual drive and openness for varied sexual practices).

Furthermore, the subscale of stability of sexual relationships on the IRIS was correlated with the Derogatis subscales of arousal (r=- .435, p<.01), openness to varied sexual behaviors (r= .329, p<.01) and sexual drive (r=-.345, p<.01).). These findings indicate that individuals who report high levels of sexual arousal, more openness to varied sexual practices and more sexual drive report high levels of stability of sexual relationships.

Similarly, we found that individuals who report high levels of aggression, voyeurism and infantile perverse sexuality on the IRIS, report a preference for casual sex as measured by the permissiveness scale of the Hendrick Sexual Attitude Scale(r=.462, r=.429, r=.515, p<.01,).

In line with theory that proposes that aggression and sexual coercion is related to sexual dysfunction in the sexual response cycle, this study found that individuals who report high levels of aggression and voyeurism on the IRIS reported more impaired functioning in the sexual response cycle (Impett, E. A., & Peplau, L. A., 2002). That is, aggression and voyeurism on the IRIS were negatively correlated with the subscales of the Derogatis Sexual Functioning Scale of : 1) sexual cognition (r=-.383, r=-312, p<.01), 2) the capacity for emotional and physical arousal (r=-.451, r=-.320, p<.01) 2) tolerance for varied sexual practices (r=-.344, r=-.316, p<.01), and 3) sexual drive (r=-.441, r=-.328, p<.01).

Moreover, individuals who reported high levels of mutuality and reciprocity in sexual relationships on the IRIS reported high levels of sexual satisfaction as measured by the Sexual Satisfaction Scale (r= .507, P,>01). In contrast, individuals who reported having an unrestricted socio-sexual orientation (SOI) indicating a preference for sexual relationships with low commitment and investment, reported: low levels of stability in sexual relationships (r=-.582, p<.01), and reported high levels of aggression (r=487, p<.01), high levels of voyeurism (r=.719, p<.01) and high levels of infantile perverse sexuality (r=.609, p<.01) in sexual relationships on the IRIS.

As described earlier, the study also aimed at exploring the relationships between sexual functioning, socio-demographic variables, as well as the patterns of sexual behavior reported by the participants. Although we did not formulate hypotheses that included the nature of these associations, we hoped that the exploration of these variables would illuminate the nature of the relationships between reported sexual behavior, socio-demographic variables and sexual functioning. In this vein, as Table 17 shows, age was found to be significantly correlated with the IRIS subscale of the capacity to fantasize (r=-.248, p< .05) and significantly correlated with the Derogatis subscale of cognition and

sexual fantasy (r= -.265, p<.05). The IRIS fantasy scale measures actual details of the sexual act but also potential unconscious fantasy derivatives, infusion of aggression and polymorphous perverse fantasies. In contrast, the Derogatis sexual fantasy/cognition scale measures the presence of conscious fantasies regarding thoughts or fantasies about sexual or romantic persons or situations. In both instances sexual fantasy activity increased with age. Moreover, age was also positively correlated to the capacity to integrate love and sexuality in a relationship. Age was not found to be significantly associated with sexual satisfaction, tendency to have casual sex (SOI), and the psychological and emotional indexes of sexuality functioning (IRIS).

As shown in Table 17, age was correlated with the number of partners with whom the subject had sex more than 10 times. This finding are somewhat expected as we suspect that women will have more stable partners with whom they have sex regularly as they age.

After controlling for age, partial correlations coefficients indicated that subjects who report high levels of stability in sexual relationships report fewer number of sexual partners and fewer number of partners with whom they engaged in sex 2 to 10 times (r= -585, r-.399, p, .01). Similarly, the results found that subjects who report more capacity for sexual pleasure report having more partners with whom they engaged in sex more than 10 times (r= .399, p< .01).

Lastly, it was found that subjects who report high levels of aggression report having more sexual partners with whom they engaged in sex 2-10 times (r=.291, p<.01). Lastly, our results indicated that subjects who report high levels of voyeurism and high levels of polymorphous perverse infantile sexuality report having more opposite sex partners (r=.700, p<.01, r= .539, p,.01), having more partners with whom they had sex 2 to 10 times (r=.499, p,.01, r= .453, p<.01) and having more partners with whom they had sex more than 10 times (r=.297, p<.01, r=.298, p<.01).

Table 17. Correlations matrices: Age, Sexual behavior and IRIS				
	Number of opposite-sex partners	**Number of partners with whom they had sex 2 to 10 times**	**Number of partners with whom they had sex more than 10 times**	**Age**
Age	.167	.006	.317**	1
Stability of Sexual Relations Scale	-.585**	-.404**	-.407**	-.024
Capacity for Sexual Pleasure Scale	-.130	-.055	-.399**	.112
Ability to Combine Love and Sexuality Scale	.213	.174	-.005	.368**
Capacity to Fantasize	.056	.021	.261*	.248*
Capacity for Mutual Sexual Responsivity Scale	-.135	-.129	-.122	-.016
Infusion of Aggression into Sexuality Scale	.374**	.291**	.105	.175
Voyeurism: LPPIS Scale	.700**	.499**	.267*	.152
Behavior: LPPIS Scale	.539**	.453**	.298**	.163
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				
*. Correlations is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)				

2- TEST OF HYPHOTESES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

H1- Participants who report higher levels of attachment security will report higher levels of sexual satisfaction and pleasure than will insecurely attached subjects.

Hypothesis 1 was supported by the data. Partial correlations controlling for age were used to identify significant associations between the dimensions of attachment and sexual satisfaction (Table 18). The results indicated that individuals who report high levels of attachment security on the Relationship Questionnaire (RQ) report high levels of sexual satisfaction measured by the Index of Sexual Satisfaction (ISS) ($r = .285$, $p < .05$).

By contrast, sexual satisfaction negatively correlated with the some of the dimensions of attachment insecurity, such that Individuals who report high levels of fearful attachment ($r = -.305$,

P<.01), attachment avoidance (r= -.306, p<.01) and attachment anxiety (r= -.368, p<.01) report low sexual satisfaction (Table 18).

Table 18. Correlations matrices: Adult romantic attachment, sexual satisfaction (ISS) and socio-sexual orientation (SOI)

	Relationship Questionnaire (RQ)				**Experiences in close relationships (ECR)**	
	Secure	fearful	preoccupied	dismissing	Avoidance scale	Anxiety scale
Sexual Satisfaction (ISS)	.285*	-.305**	.199	.029	-.306**	-.368**
Preference for casual sex (SOI)	-.257*	.263*	-.070	.233*	.278*	.142

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

H2- There is a positive association between secure attachment and the capacity for stability of sexual relationships, such that participants who report higher levels of attachment security will report a preference to have sex in committed relationships, and a higher capacity to integrate love and sex, integration of aggression in a sexual relationship and capacity for mutuality, than will insecurely attached subjects.

As described earlier, this study defined stability of sexual relationships as an important feature of optimal sexual functioning and good sexual adjustment. In this vein, stability of sexual relationships includes different constructs drawn from research on sexual functioning and theory that delves from the psychoanalytic literature. Therefore, stability of sexual relationships in this study is defined by behavioral, emotional and psychological responses towards sex which result in a preference for committed sexual relationships, integration of passion and love, effective integration of aggression in sexuality and capacity for mutuality and responsiveness in sexual relationships.

Partial correlations controlling for age were used to identify significant associations between the dimensions of secure attachment and the stability of sexual relationships. The results indicated that

individuals who report high levels of secure attachment on the Relationship Questionnaire (RQ) report more preference to have sex exclusively in emotionally close and committed relationships (r= -.257 , p<.05) (restricted socio-sexual orientation –SOI-) (Table 18).

By contrast, as shown in Table 18, attachment avoidance, and dismissing and fearful attachment significantly correlated with an "unrestricted" socio sexual orientation (r= 2.78, r=.233, r=2.63, p<.05) These findings indicate that individuals who show high levels of fearful attachment or high levels of attachment avoidance report lower commitment and investment in sexual relationships (casual sex), often after short periods of acquaintance and with changing partners. Interestingly enough, there was no relationship between attachment anxiety and the dimension of preoccupied attachment, and preference to have casual sex.

Moreover, as shown in Table 19, partial correlation coefficients indicated no relationships between attachment security and: capacity for mutuality, capacity for integration of love and sex, capacity for sexual fantasy and capacity for sexual pleasure. However, results show that individuals who report more attachment security report more capacity to form stable sexual relationships (r=.226, p< .05) and report lower levels of voyeurism and polymorphous perverse sexuality (r=-.299, p<0.01, and, r=-.354, p<0.01 respectively), indicating a good integration of aggression in sexual relationships.

By contrast, individuals who report high levels of fearful attachment as measured by Relationship Questionnaire (RQ) report more infusion of aggression in sexual relationships (r= .230′ P<.01) and higher levels of voyeurism (r= .225, p< .01). Similarly, women who report more dismissing/avoidant attachment report more voyeurism (r= .289, p <.01) and report higher levels of perverse polymorphous sexuality (r= .243, p< .05) (Table 19).

Table 19. Correlations matrices: Adult romantic attachment dimensions and sexual functioning (IRIS)

	Relationship Questionnaire (RQ)				Experiences in close relationships (ECR)	
IRIS	Secure	fearful	preoccupied	dismissing	Avoidance scale	Anxiety scale
Sexual Pleasure	.014	-.080	.179	-.126	-.037	-.041
Combine Love and Sex	.074	-.052	-.036	-.083	-.015	-.158
Sexual Fantasy	-.032	-.099	.059	-.210	-.064	.092
Capacity for Mutual sexuality	.035	.008	.189	-.070	.084	.119
Stability of Sexual Relations	.226*	-.145	-.007	-.112	-.131	-.141
Infusion of Aggression	-.147	.230*	.095	.143	.183	.062
Voyeurism Scale	-.299**	.225*	.028	.289**	.197	.141
Polymorphous perverse sexuality	-.354**	.212	.090	.243*	.349**	.026

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

Further, a one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the attachment groups in the capacity for stability of sexual relationships. When grouping subjects into secure, preoccupied, dismissing and fearful attachment classifications the following findings emerged:

1- The results indicated that the secure females reported significantly less permissiveness in relationships (F= 3.30, P=.02). Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that secure females reported lower acceptance of casual and open sexual relationships (M= 3.55, SD= .64) than preoccupied females (M= 4.12, SD=.52). However, the secure, dismissing, and fearful individuals did not significantly differ in permissiveness. Taken together, these results suggest that attachment style has an effect on the perception of casual sex. However, it should

be noted that the preoccupied attachment classification, must be present to see an effect. (Refer to Table 20).

Table 20. Mean differences on the Hendricks Sexual Attitude Scale

Subscales	**RQ attachment style categories Mean (SD)**				*F*	Partial Eta squared
	Secure (*n*= 34)	**Dismissing (*n*= 9)**	**Preoccupied (*n*= 15)**	**Fearful (*n*= 20)**		
Permissiveness subscale	3.55 (.64)+	3.42 (.96)	4.12 (.52)+	3.73 (.61)	3.30*	.110

**.significant at the 0.01 level
*. significant at the .05 level
+. Significant differences between groups

2- We found no significant differences between the groups in the capacity for mutuality, capacity to integrate love and sex, capacity to integrate aggression in sex and capacity for sexual stability on the IRIS (Table 21).

Further, as Table 21 shows, the partial Eta square values for the subscales of sexual functioning on the IRIS indicated small effect sizes, suggesting that we may not have enough strength to detect differences between the attachment groups. The small effect sizes may be related to the reduced number of subjects in each attachment cell, and thus we may not have enough power to detect differences. Additionally, our sample is limited to a range of age and education because all female subjects were recruited in universities. Hence, our sample may also lack enough variability to show differences between the groups for sexual functioning on the IRIS. Of note, the IRIS was originally developed by its authors to be used in a study comprised by female inpatient and outpatient subjects with the intention of examining the overlap of sexual functioning in the context of personality pathology. In this vein, the IRIS may be more efficient in detecting differences in samples that manifest a higher level of personality pathology and that show more variability in regards to overall functioning.

Table 21. Mean differences on the IRIS						
Subscales	**RQ attachment style categories Mean (SD)**				*F* *Tukey*	Partial Eta squared
	Secure (*n*= 34)	**Dismissing (*n*= 9)**	**Preoccupied (*n*= 15)**	**Fearful (*n*= 20)**		
Sexual Pleasure	2.51 (.670)	2.76 (.703)	2.94 (.943)	2.58 (.633)	1.37	.051
Combine Love and Sex	2.03 (.603)	2.18 (.396)	2.13 (.396)	1.92 (.589)	.610	.021
Sexual Fantasy	3.05 (.591)	2.87 (.612)	2.99 (.536)	2.96 (.584)	.269	.011
Capacity for Mutual sexuality	2.58 (.773)	2.88 (.786)	3.06 (1.29)	2.65 (.712)	1.163	.011
Stability of Sexual Relations	4.56 (.512)	4.51 (.710)	4.64 (.559)	4.62 (.529)	.148	.061
Infusion of Aggression	4.45 (.467)	4.41 (.558)	4.38 (.710)	4.25 (.462)	.598	.023
Voyeurism Scale	4.81 (.362)	4.74 (.468)	4.91 (.385)	4.82 (.348)	.484	.019
Polymorphous perverse sexuality	4.82 (.258)	4.68 (.448)	4.89 (.272)	4.86 (.239)	1.136	.044

H3- Participants who report higher levels of attachment security will report better functioning in the sexual response cycle (capacity for sexual arousal, openness to various sexual activities, sexual fantasy and orgasm), than will insecurely attached subjects.

As depicted in Tables 19 and 22, correlation coefficients did not show a relationship between the dimension of attachment security on the Relationship Questionnaire (RQ) and better functioning in the sexual response cycle as measured by the Derogatis Sexual Functioning Scale and the IRIS Sexual Fantasy Subscale. However, a partial correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the dimensions of insecure attachment and sexuality functioning in the sexual response cycle suggesting that types of insecurity relate to specific areas of sexual dysfunction (Table 22). When controlling for age the results suggested the following:

1- Individuals who report high levels of preoccupied attachment on the Relationship Questionnaire (RQ) and on the ECR, report less capacity for orgasm (r=-.308 p< .01, r= -.265, p< .05), less capacity for sexual arousal (r= -.266, p<.05), less openness to varied sexual practices (r=-.300, p< .01, r= -.252, p< .05), lower sexual drive (r= -.385, p<.01,. r= -.252, p< .05), and more impairment in sexuality functioning on the Derogatis sexual functioning scale (r= -.341, p< .01).

2- Individuals who report high levels of dismissing attachment on the Relationship Questionnaire (RQ) report more capacity for orgasm (r= .318, p< .01), more sexual drive (r= .246, p< .05), more sexual arousal (r=.264, p<.01) and overall better sexuality functioning (r=.362, p< .01) on the Derogatis Sexual Functioning Scale.

3- Subjects who report more sexual fantasy and cognition on the Derogatis Sexual Functioning Scale, report high levels of: fearful attachment (r=.283, p< .05), dismissing attachment (r= .310, p<.01) and avoidant attachment (r= .276, p<.05) attachment. There was no relationship between sexual fantasy and preoccupied/anxious attachment.

4- As shown in Table 21, we found no associations between the Sexual Fantasy subscale from the IRIS and insecure attachment.

Table 22. Correlations matrices: Adult romantic attachment dimensions and sexual functioning (Derogatis Sexual Functioning Scale)

	Relationship Questionnaire (RQ)				**Experiences in close relationships (ECR)**	
Derogatis sexual functioning scale	Secure	Fearful	Preoccupied	Dismissing	Avoidance scale	anxiety scale
Sexual cognition/fantasy	-.114	.283*	-.134	.310**	.276*	.064
Sexual arousal	-.099	.181	-.266*	.264*	.121	-.136
Openness for sexual behavior	-.085	.067	-.300**	.190	.004	-.252*
Orgasm	.223	-.102	-.308**	.318**	-.021	-.265*
Sexual drive	-.004	.064	-.385**	.246*	.105	-.268*
DISF total score	-.034	.155	-.341**	.362**	.152	-.189

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

Further, a One-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the attachment groups on functioning on the sexual response cycle measured by the Derogatis Sexual Functioning Scale and on the Sexual Fantasy subscale from the IRIS. When grouping subjects into secure, preoccupied, dismissing and fearful attachment classifications the following findings emerged:

5- We found no significant differences between the groups on the IRIS Sexual Fantasy scale. As in other instances, and as indicated in Table 21, the partial Eta square values for sexual fantasy on the IRIS show small effect sizes, suggesting that we may not have enough strength or magnitude to detect differences between the attachment groups.

6- As shown in table 23, there were significant differences between the groups for the following subscales from the Derogatis: Sexual Arousal ($F= 2.94$, $P< .05$), Sexual Behavior ($F= 5.366$, $P<.01$), Orgasm ($F= 4.75$, $p< .01$), Sexual Drive ($F= 5.43$, $p< .01$), Sexual Fantasy ($F= 2.913$, $P<.05$) and the Derogatis sexual functioning total scale ($F= 5.25$, $p< .01$).

Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that preoccupied females report significantly lower sexual arousal and less acceptance for varied sexual behavior ($M=13.13$, $SD= 7.42$., $M=7.81$, $SD= 4.08$) than the secure females ($M= 18$, $SD= 4.21$., $M= 15.72$, $SD= 6.89$). However secure, dismissing and fearful women did not differ in the capacity for sexual arousal and acceptance for varied sexual practices (Refer to Table 24).

Moreover, post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that secure females report higher capacity for orgasm ($M= 16.63$, $SD= 5.81$) than all the insecurely attached women. Insecurely attached women, this is, fearful ($M= 10.75$, $SD= 6.40$), dismissive ($M= 10.75$, $SD= 6.40$) and preoccupied ($M= 10.25$, $SD= 6.52$) women did not significantly differ in the capacity for orgasm. Taken together, these results indicate that attachment insecurity has an effect regarding satisfaction with one's timing, intensity or ability to achieve orgasm (Refer to Table 24).

In regards to sexual drive, the results indicated that preoccupied females report significantly lower sexual interest and desire in sexual/ romantic relationships (M= 13.31, SD= 5.01) than secure females. (M= 17.26, SD= 2.59). However, the secure, dismissing and fearful women did not significantly differ in the capacity to experience sexual desire or sexual drive (Table 24).

Moreover, Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test revealed that preoccupied (M= 65.47, SD= 30.54) females reported lower scores on the measure of overall sexual functioning from the Derogatis (sexual fantasy, arousal, behavior, orgasm and drive) when compared with the secure women (M= 90.80, SD= 20.40). However, we found now differences between the secure, dismissing and fearful women on the overall measure of sexual functioning from the Derogatis (Table 24).

Lastly, the results revealed that there are differences between the attachment groups for the capacity for sexual fantasy/cognition on the Derogatis sexual functioning scale. ($F= 2.913$, $P<.05$). (Table 24). Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that fearful females reported significantly higher sexual fantasy and cognitions (M= 30.56, SD=9 .54) than the secure females (M= 23.03, DS=9.09). However, the secure, dismissing, and preoccupied individuals did not significantly differ in the use of sexual fantasy or sexual cognition. Taken together, these results suggest that attachment style has an effect on the use of sexual fantasy. However, it should be noted that the fearful attachment classification, must be present to see an effect (Table 24).

Table 23. Mean differences on the Derogatis Sexual Functioning Scale (DISF-F)						
Subscales	**RQ attachment style categories Mean (SD)**				*F* *Tukey*	Partial Eta squared
	Secure (*n*= 34)	**Dismissing (*n*= 9)**	**Preoccupied (*n*= 15)**	**Fearful (*n*= 20)**		
Sexual cognition/fantasy	23.03 (9.09)	25.75 (10.83)	21.81 (11.58)	30.56 (9.54)	2.913*	.190
Sexual arousal	18 (4.31)	17.13 (7.77)	13.13 (7.42)	18.22 (5.44)	2.947*	.096
Sexual behavior	15.72 (6.89)	16 (9.36)	7.81 (4.08)	15.17 (7.44)	5.366**	.171
Orgasm	16.63 (5.81)	10.75 (6.40)	10.25 (6.52)	10.75 (6.40)	4.752**	.132
Sexual drive/relationship	17.26 (2.59)	17.50 (4.07)	13.31 (5.01)	17.61 (3.68)	5.434**	.162
DISF total Score	90.80 (20.40)	87.13 (29.67)	65.47 (30.54)	96.22 (21.17)	5.258**	.156
**. significant at the 0.01 level *. significant at the .05 level						

Table 24. Comparison of the Derogatis Sexual Functioning Scale (DISF-F) by Attachment Categories					
Derogatis Subscale	**Attachment categories**	**Comparison Groups**	**Mean Difference**	**SE**	**P**
Sexual cognition/fantasy	**Secure**	**Fearful**	-6.67*	2.77	**.046**
		Preoccupied	.916	2.95	.993
		Dismissing	-1.86	3.77	.959
Sexual arousal	**Secure**	**Fearful**	0.20	1.67	1.00
		Preoccupied	4.67*	1.82	.05
		Dismissing	1.11	2.25	.969
Sexual behavior	**Secure**	**Fearful**	.863	2.04	.95
		Preoccupied	7.96**	2.17	**.003**
		Dismissing	.023	2.75	1.00
Orgasm	**Secure**	**Fearful**	1.63*	1.80	**.045**
		Preoccupied	5.37*	1.92	**.033**
		Dismissing	5.55*	2.43	**.025**
Sexual drive/relationship	**Secure**	**Fearful**	-.337	1.07	.989
		Preoccupied	3.73**	1.14	**.009**
		Dismissing	-.227	1.44	.999
DISF total Score	**Secure**	**Fearful**	-4.28	6.91	.929
		Preoccupied	23.11**	7.52	**.014**
		Dismissing	4.81	9.29	.955
**. significant at the 0.01 level *. significant at the .05 level					

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The discussion of this dissertation builds upon the tenet that underlying each of the four prototypical patterns of adult romantic attachment is a distinct pattern of positive and negative representations of self and other that shape the way individuals experience and engage in sexuality. Internal representations are defined as the building blocks of perceptions of self and other derived from one's own accomplishments, approvingly mirrored by attachment figures under the predominance of positive affect, and from receipt of others' love and encouragement over the course of development. In turn, these working models influence thoughts, feelings, behaviors in close relationships, including sexual/intimate relationships.

Further, sexuality and attachment in this study are defined as separate but overlapping behavioral systems that have distinct origins, functioning and underpinnings, and thus become opposing forces or get integrated in every romantic and interpersonal interaction in adulthood, normative or pathological. Also, central to the discussion of this research is the idea that through the integration of the three behavioral systems –attachment, caregiving (mutuality) and sexuality - is that mature sexuality is possible. In other words, this study is based on the fundamental premise that optimal sexuality involves sexual satisfaction, good functioning in the physical and emotional responses that occur as a person becomes sexually aroused and participates in sexually stimulating activities with a partner (sexual desire/excitement, sexual drive, sexual fantasy, orgasm), as well as the ability to experience stable affectionate feelings towards a sexual partner who is viewed as an attachment figure, a target of caregiving or both. Lastly, a central thesis of this study is that the integration of sexuality and attachment is a developmental challenge that is more likely met in the context of having positive and integrated mental representations of self and other, and under the predominance of attachment security.

This chapter is organized into two segments. It begins with the discussion and review of preliminary analyses, this is, the characteristics of the sample and the associations found among socio-demographic and sexual behavior variables. In this section, we also discuss the correspondence found among the measures of sexuality, as well as the examination of the construct validity of the IRIS. It then moves to a discussion of the findings of the major hypotheses which explore the convergence and divergence of different aspects of sexuality and adult romantic attachment. Here, the discussion closely examines the findings related to the differences in sexual functioning among the four attachment groups. Limitations of the current study are also addressed, followed by the theoretical implications of the findings, with particular attention given to implications for future research and clinical practice.

1- Characteristics of the sample

a. *Dimensions of attachment*

The 78 female subjects were allocated into four different groups according to Bartholomew's (1991) attachment prototypes defined by dimensions of positivity vs. negativity of a person's model of self and a person's model of others. The total sample was also divided into two attachment classification groups by placing the fearful, dismissing and preoccupied individuals into a group composed by insecurely attached individuals. The results suggested that 44% (N=36) of the women in our sample reported a secure adult romantic attachment indicating that they are comfortable depending on, and feeling close to others because they have a positive sense of self-worth. In contrast, 56% of the individuals reported an insecure adult romantic style which entails the tendency to seek out or avoid closeness in relationships with the purpose of achieving a sense of internal safety and achieving self-regulation.

Previous research findings reveal that in non-clinical samples the percentage of secure adult romantic attachment classification for both men and women ranges from 55% to 79%. (Schmitt, et al.,

2004). Although our findings show a lower proportion of secure women than previously reported data, this difference may be attributed to the nature of our sample which is composed by young females most of whom are single and live alone. Extensive empirical evidence shows that single women rate themselves as being less secure than women who are in a relationship or married (Hazan and Shaver, 1987). Similarly, more securely attached persons have been found among seriously committed dating couples or married couples than in samples of single individuals; subjects who report a secure attachment style are usually more likely to attain marriage/cohabitation and less likely to experience divorce than insecure persons. Also, supporting our findings, other studies using categorical measures of attachment have reported a tendency for secure classifications to show greater stability than insecure classifications and a tendency for subjects to be more likely to change in the direction of security than insecurity as they age. These findings propose that secure attachment is more developmentally robust than insecure attachment and that most individuals strive for security. According to this perspective, security of adult romantic attachment is observed more often in older rather than younger individuals (Hazan and Shaver, 1987).

However, there is an alternate explanation that can account for the elevated percentage of insecure attachment in our sample (56%). That is, that our sample is atypical for a community and student sample, indicating that women in this study are insecurely attached towards romantic relationships regardless of their age or marital status. In other words, it is possible that our subjects have negative mental models of attachment that stem from experience with others who are perceived as unresponsive and unavailable. These perceptions or mental models of others are sometimes shaped by current and/or past unfortunate life experiences, and function like schemas influencing perceptions, expectations and behaviors. Extensive evidence suggests that insecure attachment and unfortunate early life experiences are often associated to each other and to the presence of psychopathology in adulthood (Cassidy, 1999). A number of studies suggest that insecure attachment is often exhibited in

individuals who suffer from a personality disorder, depression, anxiety, PTSD etc., who in turn, frequently report histories of abuse, trauma, and interpersonal loss (Levy, 2005, Hull., J. W., Clarkin, J. F., &Yeomans, F., 1993). However, we can only speculate a connection between the high incidence of insecure attachment, and psychopathology and unfortunate life experiences since this study did not measure presence of childhood trauma or loss, or presence of AXIS II or AXIS II psychopathology. Therefore, it is impossible to determine the degree to which psychopathology and unfavorable life experiences compound to insecurity of attachment and sexuality dysfunction for this sample.

In regards to the sub-classifications of insecure adult romantic attachment classification we found that 12% of the individuals reported a dismissive/avoidant style, 26% reported a fearful attachment style and 19% reported an anxious/preoccupied style. A number of empirical studies, using Hazan and Shaver's (1987) as well as other measures of adult romantic attachment, have found that the distribution of insecure adult attachment styles is as follows: 25% of individuals are classified as avoidant and 11-20% as anxious (Shaver & Clark, 1994, and Shaver &Hazan, 1993, Mickelson, et al, 1997). These published findings are somewhat different to those in our study, such that we found a higher incidence of preoccupied attachment and a lower incidence of dismissive attachment. However, most of these published studies include the frequency of attachment classifications for both men and women, and it has been reported that women tend to self-identify as being more preoccupied, while men tend to be more dismissive in adult romantic relationships. In this vein, we speculate that the higher percentage of preoccupied attachment vs. the dismissive attachment is related to the fact that the sample in this study is only comprised of women. Evolutionary psychology posits that insecure attachment has different adaptive values for men and women. In specific, it's been suggested that gender differences in mating, reproduction and parenting lead to different attachment styles between men and women. Psychosocial stress and the development of an insecure attachment act as cues of environmental risk and thus tend to guide development towards reproductive strategies that favor a

higher mating effort and higher means of reproduction. However, due to sex differences in areas such as mating and parenting, insecure males adopt avoidant strategies, whereas insecure females tend to adopt anxious strategies, which maximize investment from kin and mates. (Del Giudice, 2009).

Moreover, the total percentage of fearful women in our sample (26%) was an interesting and unexpected finding. Fearful attachment, unlike other insecure attachment prototypes, entails a negative model of self, as well as high levels of anxiety and of avoidance. In this regard, fearful individuals depend on the feedback of others but tend to avoid relationships because they fear rejection. Along these lines, Bartholomew (1990) argues that strong and unresolvable approach/avoidance may underlie the behavior of chronically fearful people. Hence, perceived threats of abandonment lead to tendencies to approach an attachment figure who rejects physical contact, thus generating withdrawal accompanied by anger and a tendency to down play relationships. According to this perspective, dysphoric states such as anxiety and anger are central affective features of the fearful attachment pattern (Alexander, 1992).

In regards to the insecure attachment dimensions according to the experiences in close relationships self-report (ECR), the mean for the overall sample for attachment avoidance was of 2.7 (SD=.107) and the mean for attachment anxiety was 3.62 (SD=.102). Prior studies with female community and female student participants have shown means that range for the dimension of anxiety from 2.16 (SD=1.08) to 3.07 (SD=1.23) and avoidance from 1.73 (SD=.94) to 2.06 (SD= 1.13) (Fraley et al., 2000., Brassard et al., 2007). In both instances, our means were higher indicating that the women in our sample report more anxiety and avoidance in romantic relationships in comparison with norms taken from non-clinical samples. Again, we estimate that the elevated means for both the dimensions of anxiety and avoidance may be related to either contextual variables (marital status and living situation) or to the fact that the study is composed by women who have experienced attachment figures as

rejecting and unresponsive resulting in contradictory and opposing behaviors characterized by withdrawal/avoidance and a strong need for attachment.

b- Adult romantic attachment, socio-demographic variables and sexual behavior.

In regards to demographic variables, age was not significantly correlated to the dimensions of adult romantic attachment. However, age was found to be significantly correlated with the IRIS subscale of the capacity to fantasize, as well as significantly correlated with the Derogatis subscale of cognition and sexual fantasy. The IRIS fantasy scale measures actual details of the sexual act but also potential unconscious fantasy derivatives, infusion of aggression and polymorphous perverse fantasies. In contrast, the Derogatis sexual fantasy/cognition scale measures the presence of conscious fantasies involving thoughts or fantasies about sexual or romantic persons or situations. In both instances sexual fantasy activity increased with age. Previous research findings indicate that sexual fantasy increases with age in women until the middle thirties, then leveling off, and then dropping for older women (Brown and Hart, 1977). In other words, like our findings, previous studies have found a curvilinear relationship between sexual fantasy and age in women.

Moreover, some of socio-demographic variables were collapsed into smaller groups to compare participants on attachment and maximize our power. The results did not find associations between the dimensions of adult romantic attachment and: religious affiliation, sexual orientation, ethnicity and living partner situation. Possibly because of sample restriction, our research and previous research have failed to identify important socio-demographic correlates of adult attachment styles. For example, although there is suggestive evidence from previous studies that married respondents are more likely than non-married subjects to report a secure attachment style (Hazan & Shaver, 1987), most studies have focused on students (the majority of whom are single). Consequently these studies have not investigated correlations between adult attachment and marital status. Our study is no different in that

regard; our sample shows little variability; 75% of the individuals in our sample are single, their age mean is 24 years-old and at least 60% of them are in college or are recent college graduates.

Further, we have been unable to locate any published studies that examined the relation of adult attachment styles to other important socio-demographic variables such as race or religion. We do know, however, that SES may be related to attachment. Some studies have found that infants in lower SES homes experience less continuity in their attachments than children in higher SES homes (Shaver &Hazan, 1993), suggesting that lower SES may be related to insecure attachment.

The only significant finding that emerged from exploring the relationships between attachment and the socio-demographic variables, was when the variable of education, originally a categorical variable, was converted to a continuous variable (years of education) to maximize our power. In this instance, our results found that women who report more years of education report less attachment avoidance. As theory suggests, greater years of education implies greater discipline, cognitive openness, self-control, positive attitudes towards learning and problem solving and more self-regulatory skills when dealing with academic tasks. In this vein, attachment security supports such self-regulatory skills and contributes to academic success. By contrast, avoidant attachment, and consequently the use of hypo-activating strategies including compulsive self-reliance and isolation may inhibit effective engagement and persistence in challenging academic activities, as well as divert mental resources away from academic tasks (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2007).

In regards to sexual behavior, individuals who reported high levels of attachment security reported fewer numbers of partners of the opposite sex, and fewer numbers of partners with whom subjects had casual sex “one night stands”. By contrast, women who reported high levels of attachment avoidance and high levels of dismissing attachment reported greater number of sexual partners. These findings suggest that in contrast with secure adults, dismissing and avoidant adults may downplay the

importance of committed relationships. In line with our findings, prior studies have found that avoidant attachment is associated with a greater acceptance of and engagement in casual sex (Brennan& Shaver,1995; Feeney, Noller, & Patty, 1993). Numerous studies have found that adolescent and young adults with a dismissive/avoidant attachment are more likely to have sex once with a stranger than secure individuals (Cooper, Shaver, et al., 1998), and avoidant college students to have had more hookups or "one night stands" than secure or anxious individuals. (Paul, 2000). For sexually active avoidant and dismissing individuals, the preference for casual sex partners is consistent with their relatively low desire for emotional intimacy and closeness in romantic relationships.

Another factor that may compound to casual sex and higher number of sex partners in dismissive individuals is the presence of carelessness for the other and the tendency to perceive others in a hostile and deprecatory manner. We assume that having more casual sex speaks of detachment from the other who is seen negatively in comparison with the self. In this regard, their lack of experience in close relationships, in association with their lack of interest in the feelings of others is likely to result in profound empathy deficits. Along the same vein, research shows that dismissive attachment is related to sexual disinhibition and impulsivity. For instance, studies have indicated that, externalization of conflicts, high risk sexual behaviors; promiscuity and unsafe sex are associated with avoidant/dismissing attachment (Bogaert and Sadava, 2002).

An interesting finding is that fearful individuals unlike dismissive did not report having more casual sexual or "one night stand" partners. As noted earlier, fearful attachment is characterized by a negative model of others, as well as a negative sense of self-worth which results in social insecurity, fears of rejection, lack of assertiveness and isolation. Although fearful and dismissing attachment are both characterized by avoidance of relationships, our results suggest that dismissive subjects avoid closeness by engaging in more "one night stands" casual relationships, while fearful subjects are less interested in casual sex because they possess a negative view of self and thus may fear rejection.

2- Discussion of main study

In general, the results of the current study suggested important differences in sexuality functioning among securely and insecurely attached individuals. In this section the findings are discussed by addressing how securely attached individuals differ from insecurely attached individuals in sexual satisfaction, preference to have sex in committed relationships, stability of sexual relationships and functioning in the sexual response cycle.

a- Attachment security and sexual functioning

In line with Bowlby's (1969/1982) claim that the activation of the attachment system inhibits or distorts the operation of other behavioral systems, such as the sexual behavioral system, our findings suggest that insecure individuals usually respond to attractive, sexually desirable prospective partners with worries about one's lovability and sexual performance. In this vein, in the context of attachment insecurity, individuals seek care and safety, and therefore are more likely to appraise others as possible caregivers or "protectors" rather than sexual partners. For such people, worries about the availability and approval of others override the capacity for pleasurable and mutually exclusive sexual relationships. By contrast, in the context of attachment security individuals are able to be attentive to actual signs of sexual arousal and sexual attraction, and are therefore able to engage in mutually satisfying genital sex.

As hypothesized, the study found that women who report high levels of attachment security report more sexual satisfaction, as well as the preference to have sex in committed relationships. There is now a vast amount of empirical data that supports our findings, suggesting that comfort with closeness and the internalized sense of safety in secure people creates the foundation for positive erotic experiences (Cooper, et al.,1998; Feeney et al., 2003). A secure person's comfort with closeness, self-

disclosure and interdependence creates a positive foundation for satisfying sexual engagement, which is one of the most intimate of all human activities. In addition, evidence suggests that effective emotional regulation allow the secure person to be comfortable, relaxed and be free of worries that interfere with enjoyable and pleasurable sex (Shaver, cited in Diamond et al., 2007). The sense of attachment security also favors cognitive openness and relaxed exploration of novel possibilities, which allow for mutually satisfying sexual exploration.

Beyond supporting openness and sexual satisfaction, the findings of this study also suggest that "felt security" inclines a person to establish stable long term couple relationships rather than preferring casual sex. Thus, secure people are more likely to find romantic partners/sexual partners with whom they can satisfy their sexual desires within a long-term relationship. Further, theory and research have suggested that secure individuals have learned from previous relationships with supportive attachment figures that exclusivity and intimacy are mutually beneficial and rewarding. Connected to the secure individuals' ability to experience sexual satisfaction in committed relationships is the notion that they have positive mental representations of self and other that have been developed through early interactions with caregivers (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2007). Supporting our findings, theory posits that experiences with attachment figures during times of need, pleasure and distress, are cognitively encoded, processed and stored in the form of separate mental representations of self and others, together with their corresponding positive and negative affect. Under conditions of attachment security, and the predominance of positive affect, these mental representations of self and object become integrated. Integrated mental representations are the foundation of a coherent sense of self and a pattern of behavior that reflects self-coherence. To this end, a coherent sense of self is not only basic to self-esteem, but involves the capacity to evoke internalized security based-representations under conditions of threat and/or danger, and entails the capacity to derive enjoyment from close

relationships and the capacity to form mutually satisfactory close relationships. (Bolwbly, 1969, 1973., Shaver & Hazan, 1988., Kernberg, 1978).

The process of identification with attachment figures and incorporation into the self-concept of these figures qualities and responses causes people to treat themselves and others the way attachment figures treated them. In this regard, actual availability or the symbolic availability of comforting and caring figures evokes positive views of the self and others, which allows for having enough confidence to gratify one's own and the partner's sexual needs, and consequently evokes feelings of safety that lead to the engagement of pleasurable sex. In other words, experiences with consistent caregivers in times of need and fear, results in the capacity to derive pleasure from others because the self is seen as wordy of love, and the other is perceived as capable of providing love and care. (Bolwbly, 1969, 1973., Shaver &Hazan, 1988). Moreover, positive representations of self and other make securely attached people more tolerant to interpersonal conflict because they are able to retain their sense of worth and are capable of establishing a balance between maintaining autonomy, and achieving intimacy and closeness. (Mikulincer and Goodman, 2007).

Further, our results suggest that positive representations of self and other by virtue of attachment security provides a subjective feeling of stability, solidity and allows a securely attached person to feel consistent and clear minded under threatening or unpredictable conditions. These qualities which include comfort with intimacy contribute to forming long standing relationships in secure individuals. Previous research findings have consistently found that secure individuals ultimately want to maintain committed, faithful and satisfying long term relationships. Positive sexual schemas of self and the desire for long standing relationships, contribute to the securely attached individuals' preference to have sex in emotionally and intimate relationships. (Birbaum, 2007). In line with their preference of establishing faithful and monogamous long standing relationships, our findings like other research findings, also suggest that securely attached people prefer relationship stability, and are able to remain

sufficiently interested and invested in one love object. In this regard, our findings suggest that securely attached women experience of the self as worthy of the other's love, and that the other as trustworthy and reliable. (Mikulincer and Goodman, 2007).

Interestingly in our study, security of attachment and stability in sexual relationships correlated with other important sexual functioning variables. These associations shed light into the complexity of what stability of sexual relationships may entail in the context of attachment security. Specifically, stability and attachment security were positively significantly associated to commitment, capacity for sexual arousal, capacity for orgasm, capacity for sexual drive and openness to different sexual practices, and negatively correlated to the instrumental use of sex, casual sex and pathological infusion of aggression in sexuality. Taken together these results suggest that attachment security encompasses the capacity to form a longstanding relationship with another and involves the ability to experience pleasure and arousal while focusing on the partner's state of mind and subjective experience of pleasure. The capacity for stability not only entails that a securely attached person is able to forecast psychological availability from others in the context of interpersonal tension, but that is able to identify with the other's pleasure, which leads to the reconfirmation of emotional closeness and the development of a fully committed and mutual relationship.

Further, in addition to the capacity to experience stability and reciprocity with one's romantic partner, secure attachment is predicated by the ability to envision oneself and the other as both attachment and sexual objects, and to integrate the disparate mental states related to both experiences (Diamond, 2007). The capacity to integrate closeness and connectedness with the enjoyment of the other's arousal leads to the integration of sexual passion and attachment. (Fonagy, 2008., Frommer, 2006, Kernberg, 1978, Stoller, 1978).

Similarly, stability of sexual relationships entails an individual's capacity to maintain sustained emotional investment in a sexual relationship while tolerating and appropriately confronting conflict. In

this view, our findings and previous research data suggests that security of attachment is associated to the ability to tolerate negative affect within a relationship because the individual has acquired an internalized sense of safety and security, resulting in the perception of the other as reliable and trustworthy (Milkunlicer, 2002, 2007., Kobak, 1991).

Further, secure attachment also positively correlated with low levels of voyeurism and polymorphous perverse sexuality. These findings suggest that women who are securely attached show little infusion of unmetabolized and unintegrated aggression in the context of a romantic relationship. From a theoretical standpoint, the capacity for broadening the sexual experience and achievement of orgasm derives from the integration of libidinal and aggressive object relationships (Kernberg, 1976). More specifically, according to object relations theory, aggression in the form of sadomasochism is present in all healthy romantic relationships. However, as Kernberg (1976) and Stoller (1979) have hypothesized aggression is integrated in loving relationships through sexual excitement, arousal and erotic desire by virtue of being intimately connected with the libidinal aspects of body-surface stimulation in the context of the affectionate relation with an attachment figure. In this vein, the capacity for broadening and deepening the experience of sexual intercourse and orgasm derives from the idea that the integration of aggression generates an "*intense pleasurable relation, the peak affect state that reproduces symbiosis, synthesizes love and hatred under the dominance of love, and permits the expression of sadomasochism in the context of a mature object relationship*". (Kernberg, 1991).

b- Attachment insecurity and sexual functioning

The dimensions of insecure attachment, including fearful attachment, dismissing/avoidant and anxious attachment were negatively correlated with sexual satisfaction. Insecurely attached individuals use secondary attachment strategies to deal with the experience of an unreliable and unlovable partner and/or in the context of experiencing doubts about their own sense of being loved by others. As a result, these strategies have a negative impact on relationship satisfaction and sexual satisfaction (Mikulincer, 2006).

For insecurely attached people, frustrating, frightening or disappointing interactions with unavailable, inconsistent or rejecting attachment figures raised doubts about the degree to which they are esteemed and loved by these important people. Unavailability of attachment figures contributes to a reservoir of negative memories of ineffective stress management and negative mental representations of the self and other, as well as a deficit in procedural knowledge concerning emotion regulation and coping with stress. As a result, insecure individuals often get overwhelmed by distress aroused by actual and perceived dangers and threats in the environment that trigger mental and behavioral processes that jeopardize emotional wellbeing and the optimal adjustment in close relationships. Along the same lines, negative affect also jeopardizes the effective functioning of other behavioral systems including the sexual behavioral system. To this end, the painful series of distress and insecurity caused by early interactions with attachment figures forces a person to adopt secondary attachment strategies, based on hyper-activation, hypo-activation or a combination of the two strategies. (Shaver and Mikulincer, 2007). In the case of individuals who suffer from attachment anxiety, the main goal of the hyper-activating strategies is to get an attachment figure, including romantic partners, to pay more attention, and provide protection or support. These strategies consist on overdependence on a partner, and attempts to minimize cognitive, physical and emotional distance from a partner. Although these strategies are aimed at garnering affection and reduce distress, they result in negative affect which

eventually has an effect on the perception of others, the perception of oneself and influence the way information from the environment is encoded in memory in terms of simple, undifferentiated features, such as the extent to which the information is threatening or implies rejection. As a result, hyperactivating strategies create a volatile memory network that is pervaded by negative emotions which interfere with the optimal functioning of other behavioral systems including sexuality and the capacity for caregiving by impeding their activation and diverting them to serve the goals of the attachment system (Mikulincer, 2006).

Our results are consistent with theory and previous research, suggesting that individuals who report high levels of attachment anxiety report high levels of sexual dissatisfaction. (Cooper, et al.,1998; Feeney et al., 2003). Due to their sensitivity to cues that may connote rejection and their tendency to experience negative thoughts and feelings about sexuality, women with higher levels of attachment anxiety may use their sexual experiences as indicators of their overall relationship quality, and as a way to foster closeness to their partners. Hence, in the context of attachment anxiety, sexual satisfaction is highly dependent on the activation of the hyper-activating secondary strategies which are aimed at increasing a sense of security, intimacy and closeness. Moreover, the presence of negative affect makes the capacity to experience sexual satisfaction very difficult.

Particular to avoidance, hypo-activating strategies are adopted when proximity is perceived as dangerous or is disallowed. Hypo-activating strategies include the denial of attachment needs, distance, control and compulsive self-reliance, in order to suppress fears or thoughts related to rejection, separation or abandonment. Further, attachment avoidance and the use of hypo-activating strategies are associated to mental strategies that have distorting effects on self-perception and the perception of others. Avoidant individuals tend to over-inflate their sense of self, and tend to distrust and denigrate partners, as well as dismiss or downplay their partner's needs (Mikulincer, 2006., Shaver and Mikulincer, 2007).

The current findings are supported by theory that stipulates that hypo-activating strategies have the goal of maximizing psychological distance from a partner and of avoiding interactions that encourage closeness, intimacy and self-disclosure, including experiences of sexual and relationship satisfaction. The findings of this study also support previous research suggesting that sexual dissatisfaction and avoidant attachment are strongly linked (Gentzler, A. L., & Kerns, K. A., 2004., Feeney, J. A., Peterson, C., Gallois, C., & Terry, D. J., 2000., Davis, D., Shaver, P., Widaman, K., Veron, M., Follete, W., Beitz, K., 2006). In line with the excessive use of hypoactivating attachment strategies, avoidantly attached women find intimate and sexual relationships uncomfortable and unrewarding, and tend to withhold commitment or experiences of pleasure with partners because this makes them dependent and vulnerable to rejection.

Although this study did not investigate the reasons for why avoidant subjects have sex, previous findings seem to support that in the context of avoidant attachment, the partner's satisfaction and the capacity for intimacy are not integrated to the whole sexual experience. In this regard, avoidant individuals use sex to avoid closeness, have sex to impress their peer group (as opposed to having romantic goals for sex), and have higher numbers of casual, uncommitted sex partners (Butzer and Cambell, 2008). The desire to avoid closeness and the tendency to downplay the importance of relationships, in avoidant women results in sexual dissatisfaction.

On a similar note, the chronic deactivation of the attachment system in fearful individuals is manifested by a combination of hyper-activating and hypo-activating strategies which result in relational worries and a sense of disconnection. Fearful individuals' experience sexual activity is linked to their negative perception of others and of themselves, which in turn, exacerbate their sex- and attachment-related worries, and generate sexual dissatisfaction and emotional distance from romantic relationships (Cooper, et al.,1998; Feeney et al., 2003).

As noted earlier, sexual satisfaction is intrinsically connected to the capacity to sustain and maintain stable and mutual relationships. In line with previous research, the findings of this dissertation suggest that sexual satisfaction is related to the capacity to experience stable sexual relationships, a hallmark trait of securely attached individuals. By contrast, our results indicate that highly dismissive/avoidant and anxious individuals' attempts to deactivate their attachment system are manifested by sexual dissatisfaction as a way to deal with the feelings of rejection or the fears of closeness. As a result, sexual dissatisfaction is associated to relatively unstable relationships, which are characterized by low levels of emotional involvement and mutuality, and the incapacity to satisfy the sexual partner's needs (Davis, 2004).

In addition, our findings indicated that attachment avoidance is positively correlated with sexual relationships with low commitment and investment, often after short periods of acquaintance and with changing partners. Sexual activity, with its inherent demand for physical and psychological intimacy, may create discomfort for avoidant people, who habitually seek physical and emotional distance from their partners. Consequently, they may attempt to deactivate the attachment system. In this regard, avoidantly attached individuals paradoxically use sex to avoid closeness and to maximize control even in the most intimate interactions. In line with the findings of this study, previous research shows that in adulthood, relatively avoidant subjects tend to dismiss motives related to the promotion of emotional closeness while emphasizing relationship irrelevant motives such as manipulation and control, protection of the self from partners' negative affect, stress reduction and prestige among peers (Cooper et al., 2006; Davis, Shaver, & Vernon, 2004; Schachner & Shaver, 2004). Hence, in line with their habitual seeking of physical and emotional distance from partners, highly avoidant individuals may limit intimacy in sexual activity by preferring casual sex and short term sexual partners.

By contrast, the study findings show that preoccupied females are more accepting and have more positive attitudes towards permissiveness and casual sex than the secure and dismissive women.

Unlike avoidantly attached individuals and securely attached individuals who usually have a positive sense of self, preoccupied individuals have a negative model of self. Research suggests that the negative sense of self and the fear of abandonment contribute to the beliefs and attitudes that preoccupied individuals have about committed sexual relationships. (Birnbaun, 2007). Paradoxically, this study also found that preoccupied attachment is NOT correlated to the preference to have casual sex (unrestricted socio-sexual orientation), which indicates that anxious women are NOT more likely to engage in casual sex than other women. Interestingly, these findings point to an incongruence between attitudes and behavior in anxious women. Because these women look for security and closeness at all costs, we presume they have more positive attitudes towards permissiveness because these attitudes guarantee acceptance from their romantic attachment figures. In this way the attitude that anxious women have towards socio-sexual orientation shifts to fit their unfulfilled attachment needs. Like in other instances, these findings suggest that in anxious/ambivalent subjects, sexual motives and attitudes are geared by their immediate attachment needs and worries about closeness and security.

In addition, our results indicated that attachment insecurity is strongly related to different aspects of sexual function and dysfunction. First and contrary to what we expected, we found a positive correlation between the use of sexual fantasy and cognition, with the dimensions of fearful, dismissing and avoidant attachment. In the literature, there are no reports indicating that these subjects use more sexual fantasy in the service of romantic relationships or as means of achieving closeness. On the contrary, substantial empirical evidence shows that avoidance in women is often associated to fantasies that involve casual sex as means of diminishing intimacy in relationships (Birnbaum, 2007). Thus, we speculate that dismissive subjects frequently use sexual fantasies to distance themselves from others. In this vein, the findings of this study suggest that the increased use of sexual fantasies in these subjects do *not* indicate better sexual functioning which entails the capacity to use sexual fantasy as an organizing force that helps individuals represent paradigms for relating to others, as well as fostering attachment

security. To the contrary, although speculative, we suggest that the use of sexual fantasy in dismissive and fearful subjects is a manifestation of the hypo-activating attachment strategies. These strategies are activated in the presence of threat and are aimed to regulate negative affect by denying the need for support and intimacy, especially in stressful situations.

Furthermore, when comparing the attachment groups we found that fearful individuals were more likely to report *conscious* sexual fantasies than the dismissive/avoidant, secure and preoccupied subjects on the Derogatis fantasy scale. Fearfully attached subjects, like dismissive, subjects avoid intimacy. However, fearful subjects also have a negative model of self and other, and thus are extremely sensitive to negative external feedback. As a result these subjects tend to withdraw and prefer isolation, and perhaps more so than dismissive subjects, rely on their internal world for support. In this vein, we speculate that fearful women fend off fears of rejection by depending on their fantasy world for gratification. In other words, our findings suggest that fearful women use fantasy when they are confronted with a rejecting reality to enhance their self-worth but also to avoid intimacy. Of note, it's important to mention that the Derogatis fantasy scale assesses presence and quantity of conscious sexual fantasies rather than measuring quality and content. The study did not look at the content of the fantasies of each participant. Thus, the study did not identify specific fantasies that were used more frequently by subjects with different attachment classifications.

Although some differences were found on the Derogatis sexual fantasy scale, the study was unable to locate significant differences between the attachment groups for the fantasy subscale on the IRIS. These findings perhaps indicate that the two measures used to evaluate sexual fantasies assess different constructs. Unlike the Derogatis which measures conscious fantasies about sexual or romantic persons or situations, the sexual fantasy scale on the IRIS intends to measure inhibition/preoccupation about sexual fantasies, and part-object and sado-masochistic fantasies. Apart from

inhibition/preoccupation other areas are meaningful only when acknowledged. Otherwise absence of these fantasies may result from repression rather than indicate non-existence. In other words, high scores on the sexual fantasy subscale on the IRIS suggest an overpopulation of sexual fantasies that contain derivatives of part-objects and polymorphous perverse sexuality which in normal circumstances –absence of pathology- remain repressed. Supporting these assumptions, the authors of the IRIS found in a study composed by 181 male and female subjects recruited in an inpatient and outpatient unit that individuals with a neurotic personality organization reported less sexual fantasy on the IRIS (Foelsch & Gordon-Lendvay, 2001). In contrast, subjects who frequently used primitive defenses and who showed a low borderline organization manifested high levels of sexual fantasy on the IRIS. Although our study did not look at personality pathology, the results indicated that elevated scores on the fantasy subscale on the IRIS are significantly associated with more aggression and with having more short term partners. Interestingly, the insecure women in our sample did not show higher fantasy levels than the secure women. These findings suggest that the insecure women in our sample show a higher level of functioning than the borderline women described by Foelsch and Gordon-Lendvay in 2001, who were identified as having a poor quality of self and object representations, and a low level of personality organization.

In regards to aggression in the context of romantic relationships, subjects who reported high levels of fearful attachment reported high levels of aggression in sexual relationships as well as high levels of voyeurism. Similarly, subjects who reported high levels of dismissing attachment and high levels of attachment avoidance reported significantly higher levels of voyeurism and higher levels of perverse polymorphous sexuality. Empirical evidence shows that insecure attachment results in deficits in interpersonal skills, self-confidence, and empathy. Dismissive and fearful attachments are particularly conducive to deficiencies in the acquisition of skills required to engage successfully in intimate

relationships. For example sexual coercion and sexual violence have been long related to avoidant/dismissive attachment. Individuals who have a dismissive attachment style tend to exhibit high levels of aggression in their interactions with other people and can use violence to assert their difficulties with intimacy (Tracy, 2003., Impett et al., 2002). Particularly findings from previous studies have found that the expression of anger through violence, coercion, acceptance of rape and violence in a relationship may be an expression of strong feelings of attachment. According to this perspective, aggression is likely to be inflicted in situations where one partner feels that the stability or future of the relationship is threatened by the other partner and/or feels a lack of control over the availability of that partner. In other instances aggression has been described as an attempt to control distance and avoid intimacy in relationships, particularly when others are seen as not being trust worthy (Tracy, 2003., Impett et al., 2002., Smallbone and David, 2000., Brassard et al. 2007).

Furthermore, the study found that subjects who reported high levels of dismissing attachment reported more sexual arousal. Sexual arousal entails emotional and physical arousal regardless of one's relationship status. Research in the area of sexuality has extensively described that dismissive people tend to think of sex instrumentality and as means of obtaining gratification. Similarly, empirical evidence suggests that dismissive individuals avoid behaviors that create intimacy within a sexual encounter (Cassidy, J.& Shaver, P., 1999). Our findings indicate that avoidant/dismissive women are less likely to enjoy affectionate activities and closeness in relationships; however, they report a higher capacity to experience subjective experiences of sexual arousal or vaginal lubrication. It appears that dismissive women are able to compartmentalize sexual arousal and the capacity for sexual pleasure from intimacy. Although they express no desire for emotional closeness, they are able to experience more sexual arousal than other insecurely attached women.

Moreover, the findings of this study yielded important associations between the subscales of the Intimate Relations Inventory of Sexuality and various sexuality measures that have been previously

validated and that are highly reliable. Although further research is needed to thoroughly analyze the IRIS's construct validity, the correlations found in this study suggest that the IRIS has acceptable validity.

However, it is important to note, that when comparing sexuality functioning among the different attachment groups we found that some self-report measures or questionnaires were more sensitive than others to detect differences. For instance, we did not find differences among the groups for sexuality functioning on the IRIS, but found plenty of differences among the attachment groups on the Derogatis Sexual Functioning Scale. It is possible that the Derogatis subscales are more robust than the subscales of the IRIS, and thus are more efficient at identifying significant differences, particularly in the context of having a reduced number of subjects on each attachment cell. The Derogatis Sexual Functioning scale measures current sexual functioning and conscious thoughts, feelings and physiological responses to sex. Additionally, it has been subject to extensive revisions since it was published in 1975 and has been utilized as an outcome measure in approximately 50 empirical studies of sexual functioning in different populations. By contrast, the IRIS is a newer instrument that draws heavily on object relations theory and examines an array of dimensions which include emotional, developmental and psychological indexes of sexual functioning in the context of personality organization. Further, the IRIS was developed to be used in a study that investigated personality pathology and sexuality in a clinical sample composed by female participants recruited in an inpatient and outpatient setting. For this reason, the IRIS may be more sensitive at identifying differences in sexuality functioning in populations that show more psychopathology and therefore exhibit a lower level of functioning.

According to the Derogatis Sexual Functioning Scale our results indicated that secure, fearful and dismissive women reported better sexual functioning than the preoccupied subjects in areas such as arousal, openness to varied sexual experiences, and sexual drive. These are interesting findings since it was expected that insecure women would be more sexually impaired than the securely attached women. However, when looking closely at the findings, the areas where dismissing, fearful and secure subjects

report similar functioning are largely related to physiological responses. In this vein, the capacity for sexual arousal, sexual drive and acceptance for varied sexual practices do not necessarily require intimacy or closeness to another person. Taken together the findings suggest that fearful and dismissive women, report acceptable sexual functioning in areas that can be split off from an intimate relationship such as sexual interest (desire), sexual excitement (physiological arousal) and openness to varied sexual activities ranging from masturbation to sexual intercourse. In this regard, the findings are supported by previous findings that have found that highly avoidant and fearful people are motivated by non-relational goals in the sexual realm and are less likely to enjoy emotional aspects of sex (Cooper et al., 2006; Davis et al., 2004).

Supporting our results, previous studies have found that higher levels of anxiety and avoidance are associated with less frequent orgasm (Cassidy, J. & Shaver, P, 1999).These findings are consistent with evidence that shows that female orgasmic responsiveness involves emotional intimacy and satisfaction, and that attachment insecurity is related to less enjoyment of physical sex, low satisfaction and intimacy in relationships, and relationships of shorter duration (Cooper et al., 2006; Davis et al., 2004).

Furthermore, as predicted, attachment anxiety was more detrimental to overall sexual functioning and related to negative cognitions when compared with other forms of attachment. In this regard, preoccupied attachment was negatively associated to the capacity for sexual arousal. Also, as expected, we found that anxious/preoccupied individuals in comparison with the secure, fearful and dismissive subjects demonstrated significantly lower interest and desire in sexual/ romantic relationships. Research findings show that attachment anxiety is associated to negative affect which deters the capacity to experience arousal and positive experiences during sex. Supporting our findings, studies have shown that attachment-related worries habitually experienced by anxiously attached

persons during sexual intercourse interfere with sexual functioning, the experiences of arousal and the physiological changes during sexual stimulation (Birnbaum, 2007., Tracy et al, 2003). It appears that in an attempt to fulfill unmet attachment needs, anxiously attached individuals are more likely to engage in sex to avoid abandonment which, in turn, may lead to more unwanted sexual behaviors.

In addition, in order to fulfill security needs anxiously attached women engage in behaviors that interfere with the experience of positive emotions during sex and are less likely to experience openness in varied sexual practices than other insecurely attached women. Supporting our findings, empirical evidence suggests that highly anxious women show low self- efficacy for sexual negotiation, fears that requests for sexual discussions will alienate partners, negative beliefs about condoms, lower levels of orgasmic responsivity, and propensity to be involved in unwanted sexual experiences. Similarly, anxiously attached women use sex to achieve emotional intimacy, approval, and reassurance, to elicit a partner's caregiving behaviors, and to defuse partner's anger. As a result their sexuality is limited to sexual manifestations that will assure the physical and emotional availability of a partner (Mikulincer, M., & Goodman, G. S, 2006).

Taken together, the findings of the study suggest that unfulfilled relational expectations or their inappropriate channeling into the sexual realm, when combined with worries about their partner's reactions, make anxiously attached women more prone to disappointing and dissatisfying sexual interactions, and be prone to experience more sexual dysfunction, including difficulties in the capacity for arousal, orgasm, and openness to varied sexual practices.

3- Summary and concluding remarks

In general, the results of the current study suggest that underlying each of the four prototypical patterns of adult romantic attachment is a distinct pattern of positive and negative representations of self and other that shape the way individuals experience and engage in sexuality.

First, the findings revealed that secure attachment is related to sexual satisfaction, low levels of permissiveness, tendency to seek sex within a committed relationship and overall stability of sexual relationships. The study also found that secure women have fewer sexual partners, and have fewer sexual partners with whom they had casual sex. Hence, consistent with their goals of maintaining close and intimate relationships, these women report sexual activity in committed relationships and with long term stable partners.

By contrast, the findings suggested that dismissing/avoidant attachment and fearful attachment were positively correlated with little commitment and dependency in romantic relationships, as well as significantly associated to sexual dissatisfaction. Surprisingly, dismissive women reported similar sexuality functioning to the securely attached women, including higher capacity to achieve arousal, sexual excitement and acceptance of varied sexual practice than was the case with the fearful and preoccupied women. These aspects of functioning reflect physical aspects of sex and do not include components of affection, tenderness and mutuality between people. It has been largely documented that avoidant individuals use sex instrumentality to avoid closeness and intimacy, and thus are able to focus on the physical aspects of sex. In addition, aggression interferes with intimacy. As noted earlier, the presence of aggression and polymorphous perverse sexuality is strongly associated to attachment avoidance and negatively correlated with the stability of sexual relationships. In light of these findings, this study suggests that adult romantic attachment patterns that entail avoidance of relationships and most importantly a negative model of the other are significantly associated with the use of aggression in

the service of sex. A negative model of other interferes with the capacity for empathy and concern, resulting in the objectification of the other and the use of aggression to fulfill attachment needs.

On a similar end, our findings indicate that fearful women report more voyeurism in their romantic relationships and perceive others more negatively. The presence of voyeurism involves the turning of the other into an image that is devalued and deposed from human attributes. By appropriating the other as an object and by destroying its physical and emotional integrity, the voyeur makes it an object of pleasure, while remaining uninvolved in the other.

Moreover, connected to the underestimation of relationships and intimacy, the findings indicated that dismissive/avoidant attachment and fearful attachment are significantly associated with the use of sexual fantasy. Overall this is a surprising finding, as it was expected that secure women would use more sexual fantasy than insecure women.

Theory suggests that the capacity to envision others in terms of mental states facilitates the capacity to use sexual fantasy and the capacity to playfully explore different erotic experiences not only in the service of sexual excitement and arousal, but also in the service of one's attachment needs. To this end, in the context of attachment security, sexual fantasies are recruited in the service of eliciting safety, closeness, approval, and reassurance of a partner's lovability and availability (Bader, 2002., Fonagy, 2007). Previous findings have shown that sexual fantasies in secure individuals appear to be deliberate patterns of thought designed to stimulate or enhance pleasurable sexual feelings regardless of whether the fantasies involve reminiscing about past sexual experiences, imagining anticipated future sexual activity, and engaging in wishful thinking. Numerous theorists also believe that because secure individuals have internalized a sense of security they are able to use fantasies for achieving closeness with a partner but also to obtain normal sexual stimulation used to promote sexual arousal and

enjoyment. In other words, secure individuals are less dependent on using sexual fantasy solely for attachment purposes.

Further, our findings suggest that compulsive self-reliance, distrust and difficulty connecting with others results in increased use of fantasy in insecurely attached subjects. In turn fantasy assures interpersonal distance. In these cases, sexual fantasy may stem from their negative representations of the other and may be used to avoid closeness. Along the same vein, the study found that fearful women reported more use of fantasy than the dismissive women. Fearful women have a negative sense of self and other, and are extremely sensitive to external rejection; hence, sexual fantasies may also help fearfully attached women bolster their self-esteem.

Interestingly, only secure attachment was related to stability of sexual relations and a higher capacity for orgasm. Stability of sexual relations entails an integration of libidinally and aggressively determined pregenital "part" object relationships, into a "total" object relation. That is, the capacity to integrate sensuous stimulation of erogenous zones into a total object relation in which full genital enjoyment incorporates earlier body-surface erotism. From a theoretical standpoint the capacity for stability of sexual relationships and mature love relations involve the capacity for orgasm. In this vein, the intense identification with one's own sexual role and the complementary one of the object during orgasm represents a capacity for transcendence of self and transient merger with the other. The identification with the sexual partner during orgasm also represents the ability for transient psychological merger with the other and the other's pleasure in a psychological as well as physical sense. In turn, these intense identifications lead to the reconfirmation of emotional closeness, linked to the activation of the biological roots of human attachment and the capacity for intimacy (Kernberg, 1978).

On a similar end, our results suggest that the capacity to experience pleasure and stability of sexual relationships, in combination with the physical aspects of sex, such as arousal, excitement and

orgasm, are the essence of a positive and secure romantic relationship. Within a secure relationship the three systems referred by Bowlby as attachment, caregiving (mutuality) and sex are integrated in dyadic relationships both in an intra-psychic and an interpersonal level. Taken together the study indicated that for highly avoidant/dismissive and fearful women, areas of sexual functioning such as arousal and sexual desire, and the relational and caregiving aspects of sexuality are relatively disconnected, while for secure women, they seem to be inseparable.

By contrast, our findings indicate that preoccupied attachment is significantly more detrimental in the context of overall sexual functioning. It appears that women who have a preoccupied attachment status show more sexual dysfunction defined by a lower capacity for orgasm, arousal, sexual excitement and openness to varied sexual practices. These women also experience less sexual satisfaction than other insecure women. In light of these findings, it appears that ambivalent/preoccupied women are more likely to be attuned to their attachment needs of safety and needs for closeness, and thus use hyper-activating strategies in the service of other behavioral systems, including the sexuality behavioral system. As a result, women who report high levels of attachment anxiety gear their sexual behavior towards getting those attachment needs gratified. In other words, our findings perhaps suggest that anxiously attached women experience and interpret sexual activity as a reflection of their relationship status. The hyper-activation of the attachment system overrides the capacity to experience sexual pleasure, satisfaction, commitment to a relationship and the experience of orgasm.

Lastly, we found evidence that shows that attachment-related needs and worries of anxious women may fuel an ambivalent approach to sex and greater attitude-behavior inconsistencies. This study found that anxious women have greater positive attitudes towards permissiveness than other insecure women. However, their behaviors are inconsistent, in that they do not report more casual sex (unrestricted socio-sexual orientation) than the other insecure women.

4- Discussion of the limitations of the study

Self-reporting

The study was limited by the recruitment process such that the participation of subjects depended on a variety of factors that were outside of the control of the study. These included the possibility of underreporting of behaviors, feelings and cognitions associated with sex. Self-report bias also affected the validity of the study. Self-report measures were used with the advantage of being easy to administer and score, and as they directly assess the participants conscious feelings and perceptions about themselves and others in the context of close relationships. However, like all self-reports that demand personal information there is always an issue with underreporting of information. Some participants may be defensive or even self-serving in their description of their relationship style, sexual attitudes, sexual fantasies and motives. Factors that can bias responses include conscious motives such as embarrassment and shame, and wishes to conceal or embellish specific attachment styles or sexual behaviors, cognitions and fantasies. Moreover, unconscious feelings, sexual fantasies and attitudes about sex, as well as social desirability were not measured and therefore this study may be limited by its focus on participant's general and conscious perceptions of their attachment and their sexuality, which may be intentionally or unintentionally inaccurate.

Correlational Data

An additional limitation is the correlational nature of the data. Thus, it is difficult to make casual statements about relationships between attachment styles and sexual functioning. Although adult romantic attachment theory argues that attachment patterns predict sexual behavior and sexual attitudes, it is impossible to know if this is occurs vice versa. That is, that sexual behavior perhaps affects how individuals report on their adult romantic attachment. For example, one's experience of sexual

dissatisfaction may influence one's sense of confidence over their romantic relationship, which may in turn influence one's feelings of security in romantic relationships.

An additional limitation is the magnitude of the correlations found in our study. Although we found numerous correlations and significant differences between attachment groups for different sexuality variables, most of the reported data is significant but not strong. The sample in this study was composed by 78 female subjects. Therefore, it is possible that our reduced sample size is responsible for the limited strength of the associations between variables.

Furthermore, it is possible that other factors and variables compounded for the variability of the results. Particularly we believe that presence of trauma, neglect and loss, and presence of psychopathology strongly affects different aspects of sexuality functioning. Particularly, empirical evidence has shown that childhood maltreatment of various kinds has significant consequences for adult attachment organization. Similarly, numerous studies have found that the majority of subjects who have a personality disorder (most markedly Borderline Personality Disorder BPD) have an insecure attachment style characterized by fear of abandonment and distrust of others (Levy, 2005). Particularly it has been found that BPD is associated with insecure attachment, regardless of the method for assessing attachment. Most markedly, unresolved and fearful attachment styles are most common among BPD patients. Because in our sample 54% of the women report an insecure attachment and a significant proportion (26%) reported a fearful attachment, we argue that these subjects sexuality may have been influenced by personality factors such as level of organization and quality of the self and object representations, as well as the presence of elevated negative emotions in intimate relationships.

Further, the presence of a negative sense of self has been related to depression in women (Blatt, 1992). Depression by itself is a strong predictor of sexual dysfunction in women; Extensive empirical

evidence has characterized depression by loss of interest, reduction in energy, lowered self-esteem and inability to experience pleasure. In this regard, irritability and social withdrawal may impair the ability to form and maintain intimate sexual relationships (Baldwin, 2001). Unfortunately, as noted, we did not measure the presence of AXIS I psychopathology. Thus, it is impossible to identify the presence of mood disorders in this sample of women.

Lastly, there are other variables that can affect sexual functioning in women that we did not assess. In this regard, women's sexual dysfunction can arise from conflicts over daily life stressors and issues such as health, money, schedules, or relatives or may result from traumatic experiences such as illness or the death of a relative. Similarly, research has shown that women frequently have difficulty with sexual arousal or spontaneity because of a partner's health status or sexual problems. In our study, unfortunately we did not include partner's variables.

Sample Size

Sample size may have also affect the overall study when conducting analyses using subgroups. Particularly because we wanted to look at the differences between attachment groups, we decided to divide the 78 subjects into 4 attachment categories, which included different n's that ranged from 34 (secure) to 9 (dismissing). These are small groups and thus it is possible that we did not have enough power to find significant results in the analyses when groups were compared with each other. Therefore, it is possible that our study did not have enough power to find differences between the groups for the variables of sexual satisfaction, and mutuality, capacity for integration of love and sex, capacity for sexual fantasy and capacity for sexual pleasure on the IRIS.

Moreover, the study found small effect sizes for the differences between the groups on some areas of sexuality functioning such as permissiveness on the Hendricks, and arousal, drive and fantasy

on the Derogatis. It is possible that these effects sizes are small because there are other variables explaining the sexual dysfunction in these women. Effect sizes are useful to determine the degree to which the phenomenon is present in the population. The higher the value, the greater the degree to which the phenomenon under study is manifested (Bakeman, 2005).

Generalizability

Another limitation pertains to the fact that the sample is entirely made up by female students and female young adults from the community. In light of documented gender differences in sexual functioning and sexual attitudes, the generalizability of the current findings to men is uncertain. More specifically, because women develop a more emotional-interpersonal orientation toward sex than do men, their sexual functioning may be more influenced by internal working models of interpersonal relationships. Consequently, it is possible that women's heightened relational reactions to sexual interactions may be more pronounced among women than men.

Moreover, the study is also limited to young highly educated females. While findings from the study may be important in understanding attachment patterns, and sexual attitude and behaviors for this group of individuals, the results may not be generalizable to clinical samples or samples that are more heterogeneous in regards to education and level of psycho-social functioning. In addition, all participants were single and not involved in romantic relationships. Although, this study controlled for the variable of age, one may question whether women involved in relationships would be also exposed to the detrimental effects of attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance on sexual functioning. In other words our study is limited because it is difficult to know if the effects of attachment insecurity in women are less pronounced in the context of more established relationships.

Moreover because our sample lacked some variability, in that it was mostly composed by young single college educated women, it is possible that we did not have enough heterogeneity to detect the effect of covariates (socio-demographic variables) in the dimensions of attachment and sexuality functioning. Lastly, the study included a sample composed by a majority of heterosexual women (97%) and a small percentage of bisexual women (3%). Hence, further studies of lesbian and bisexual women are needed to establish if the results found in this study can be generalized to these populations.

Setting

An important limitation of the current study that must not be understated was the use of a sample that was recruited via fliers. The interested participants were contacted by phone and the questionnaires were mailed to their preferred address. As a result, researchers had no control over the environment in which participants responded to the measures (e.g., are surveys taken at home or at work, in the presence of someone else, first thing in the morning or late at night, in one sitting or over a span of several hours).

5- Implications of findings

a- Future research directions

Future work aimed at investigating the nuances of insecure attachment and their relationship to different aspects of sexuality can improve by incorporating a number of variables. Firstly, future research should include the careful measurement of AXIS I and AXIS II psychopathology in order to determine if the sexuality dysfunction is compounded by personality variables or the presence of clinical symptom disorders.

Similarly, it is important that research explores the connection between attachment styles and different use and modes of sexual fantasy. Specifically, it may be important to look in detail to the

themes of sexual fantasies among the different groups of insecure attachment. Extensive literature states that sexual fantasy helps achieve mastery of trauma, obtain gratification for unfulfilled wishes, revise patterns of attachment or even rework developmental milestones. In this regard, it is possible that different attachment patterns lead to different employments of sexual fantasy.

Along the same vein, future research should investigate whether there are psychological processes by which sexuality alters or influences adult romantic attachment. For instance, previous research indicates that sex promotes the development of a stable relationship early on, whereas mutuality and the integration of love and sex make more of a difference later in a relationship (Birnbaum, 2010). However, little is known about the influence that sexual satisfaction, integration of love and sex and capacity for mutuality has on adult romantic attachment over time. For example, no studies have indicated if optimal or gratifying sexual functioning buffers the effects of attachment insecurity over time. No evidence has indicated if a good integration of different aspects of sexual functioning by virtue of psychotherapy or other factors, can promote security of attachment.

Future research should also include the idea that sexuality in women is more malleable than sexuality in men. In this regard, research should focus on determining whether attachment highlights certain aspects of women's malleability in sexual behavior. This study found some evidence that suggests that attachment processes may be activated in insecure women under a variety of social, including sexual circumstances. Particularly, it appears that insecure women use sexuality to fulfill their attachment needs. This explanation is consistent with the argument that women's sexuality is generally more malleable/plastic than men's in response to situational, internal and environmental circumstances. In other words, research efforts should be made to investigate if attachment anxiety or avoidance compounds to sexual malleability in women.

Lastly, there is limited empirical evidence that speaks of how attachment affects sexual attitude-behavior inconsistency in women. In this study, it was found that attachment anxiety is related to some

discrepancies between attitudes and behavior. Attachment anxiety relates to one's fears of being abandoned and the desire to be close to partners, therefore this may drive people to change their attitudes and behaviors more frequently.

b- Theoretical implications

One of the most novel contributions of the present study is demonstrating the importance of looking at the concept of self and the other when addressing sexual functioning. Many of the findings seem to support Bartholomew's theory regarding the influence of internal working models of adult attachment on adult relationships. At the same time, these findings propose a bridge between attachment theory and object relations theory by suggesting that it is in the context of a secure attachment and positive mental representations of self and other that different aspects of sexuality are integrated successfully.

In this vein, our findings suggested that attachment security is correlated with different indexes of sexuality functioning including sexual satisfaction, tendency to have sex within a committed relationship, the capacity for stability of sexual relationships, mutuality and optimal sexual functioning in the three stages of sexual response which include excitement, arousal and orgasm.

In contrast, preoccupied, fearful and avoidant attachment are thought to reflect a combination of negative and positive working models of self and of others. Presumably preoccupied/anxious women have a negative view of self and a positive model of other and therefore show greater interest in building and enhancing emotional connectedness with their sexual partners. Because these women try to avoid abandonment from a desired love object, areas of functioning that are central to pleasurable, mutual and reciprocal sexuality are hampered. By subordinating sexual activity to the attachment system, the hyper-activation of the attachment strategies cause anxious women to use sex as an indicator of their partner's feeling toward them.

Conversely, in the context of attachment avoidance, the negative mental representation of the other and a positive sense of self results in avoidance of intimacy, and the tendency to experience sensual and sexual experiences for relatively self-enhancing, relationship-irrelevant reasons. In line with these findings, an interesting premise generated by the present study is the primacy of attachment anxiety as a compounding factor for overall sexual dysfunction and the seemingly lesser importance of attachment avoidance in the dysfunction of aspects sexuality functioning that entail behaviors and physiological responses. In this regard, we found that avoidant/dismissive women were more likely to report good sexual functioning in areas such as arousal, sexual excitement and desire.

Furthermore, avoidance in connection with the negative view of the others is related to more infusion of aggression, polymorphous perverse sexuality and casual sex. On a similar end, this study suggests that fearful attachment is related to sexual dissatisfaction as well as tendency to use more sexual fantasy. Thus, a negative view of the self and others is associated with withdrawal from relationships, generalized sexual dissatisfaction and the use of fantasy to avoid closeness.

This study also sheds lights into an overlap of different behavioral systems including attachment, caregiving and sex. That is, romantic partners are motivated to seek care and/or provide protection and comfort to a significant other who acts as an attachment figure. In particular, our findings lead us to suspect that attachment security not only allows for the integration of passion, sex and attachment over time, but also serves as the foundation for the development of a mutual, responsive and stable romantic bond. Comfort with closeness creates the foundation for a positive sexual engagement, where effective caregiving and optimal emotional regulation allow a secure individual to be relaxed and be free of worries that interfere with enjoyable and pleasurable sex. In this vein, we argue that a secure individual may be able to maintain a relationship based on mutuality by perceiving the partner's interests accurately and by providing caregiving in times of distress. In turn, alleviating distress and restoring felt

security may reaffirm the adaptive advantage of closeness and strengthens affectional and sexual bonds with a romantic partner.

Lastly, our findings allude to the relationship between the capacity for mentalization and the three behavioral systems (caregiving, attachment and sex) in the context of adult romantic relationships. Supporting Fonagy's (2008) theory of mentalization and sexuality, our findings shed light into the precept that the ability think about the other's mind is essential in having enough confidence to provide caregiving and to gratify one's own and the partner's sexual needs. Mutuality is the foundation of sexual pleasure when an individual is able to playfully envision and explore the other's mental states in terms of intentions (capacity for mentalization). Sensitivity to one's mental states includes attunement and accurate interpretation of the other's needs. In addition to the capacity to experience reciprocity with one's romantic partner, a mentalizing stance is predicated by the ability to envision oneself and the other as both attachment and sexual objects, and to integrate the disparate mental states related to both experiences (Diamond, 2007). The capacity to integrate closeness and connectedness with the enjoyment of the other's arousal leads to the integration of sexual passion, caregiving and attachment.

c- *Implications for clinical practice*

Current literature on couple's functioning posits that secure lovers are attuned to each other, sensing each other's inner states and responding to each other's gestures. Like mother and infant, romantic partners are able to integrate sensual and relational aspects of sexuality into their relationship by virtue of a secure attachment (Stern, 2004). Thus, it is in the context of a secure relationship, that emotional responsiveness, sexual satisfaction and erotic playfulness can come together. Moreover, secure attachment is the basis for the exploration of one's mind and the mind of the other.

In this regard, by better understanding the impact of adult romantic attachment patterns on sexuality functioning, it is possible to create a more effective model of psychotherapy for both the

treatment of sexual dysfunctions and attachment disorders. Specifically, in clinical practice therapeutic interventions may take the form of exploring patients internal working models of attachment, as well as expectations, attitudes and affects associated with their romantic relationships. Providing insight into how the negative models of the self or the other hamper the integration of different aspects of sexuality may at the very least help patients understand how their perceptions influence their expectations and behaviors towards romantic relationships. On the same end, the exploration of the overlap between sexuality and the internal working models may help patients overcome sexual and relational difficulties. Moreover, practice should integrate the idea that a negative model of self and others, and the incapacity to have an integrated view on sexuality, will hamper an individual's capacity to think about the partner's mind in a way that a mutuality and pleasurable relationship is possible and may also influence the attitudes, cognitions and behavioral responses a person has towards sex.

Appendixes

Appendix A

General Information

M F Please circle "M" if you are male, "F" if you are female.

_____ How old are you? (Place your age on the response line.)

Yes No Are you currently living with a sexual partner?

_____ Current status:
1 = Married, legal
2 = Married, common-law
3 = Living with a partner
4 = Single
5 = Separated (includes both legal and common-law marriages)
6 = Divorced
7 = Widowed

_____ What is your religious affiliation? (Place number on line.)
1 = Jewish 2 = Protestant 3 = Catholic 4 = Buddhist 5 = Muslim
6 = Other: _____

_____ What is your ethnic background? (Place number on line.)
1 = Hispanic/Latino 2 = Caucasian/European 3 = Black/African/Caribbean
4 = Asian 5 = Other: _____

_____ What is your primary sexual orientation? (Place number on line.)
1 = Heterosexual 2 = Homosexual/Lesbian/Gay 3 = Bisexual
4 = Don't Know/Uncertain

_____ What is your level of education? (Place number on line.)
1 = Less than high school
2 = GED
3 = High school graduate
4 = Some college
5 = College graduate
6 = Trade school graduate
7 = Graduate school graduate

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The next series of questions will focus on the <u>past five years</u> of your life.

_____ During the past five years, with how many partners of the *<u>opposite</u>* sex have you engaged in sexual activity?

_____ During the past five years, with how many partners of the *<u>same</u>* sex have you engaged in sexual activity?

_____ Are you:

1 = Dating more than one person, or not dating one person on a regular basis

2 = Not dating (includes persons who do not date, but do live with a partner or spouse)

3 = Dating one person on a regular basis

_____ Which of the following relationships describes you and your primary sexual partner over the last five years?

1 = Married, legal
2 = Living with someone
3 = Separated or divorced
4 = In a steady relationship
5 = Single
6 = One or both partners married to someone else
7 = None of these
8 = Don't know

_____ With how many partners have you had sex only once in the past five years?

_____ With how many partners have you had sex from 2 to 10 times in the past five years?

_____ With how many partners have you had sex more than 10 times in the past five years?

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Appendix B

INTIMATE RELATIONS INVENTORY OF SEXUALITY (IRIS)

Pamela A. Foelsch, Laura Bartocetti, William Deal, & John F. Clarkin
IRIS2000 Version

Instructions: The following questions ask you to provide information about your sexual behavior and relationships. We ask that you try to answer every question. Your responses will be kept confidential and not identified with you, so please answer as freely and accurately as you can.

The possible responses will change from question to question, so please read and respond carefully. When a question asks about your "partner," you should answer about your current or most recent sexual partner, unless otherwise specified. Please read each question carefully before answering.

None of the material presented implies what you should or shouldn't be feeling, thinking, or doing. This is merely a survey to determine what you actually feel, think, and do. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers, and there is a wide variation in sexual expression.

Thank you for filling out this questionnaire.

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Instructions: Using the 1 - 6 key listed below, please respond to each statement by circling the number to the right that best describes your experiences over the past 5 years.

1 = Always (100% of the time)
2 = Often (more than 50% of the time)
3 = Sometimes (less than 50% of the time)
4 = Rarely (less than 5 - 10% of the time)
5 = Never (0% of the time)
6 = Not relevant (does not apply) or Uncertain (don't know)

1 Always	2 Often	3 Sometimes	4 Rarely	5 Never	6 Not relevant/ Uncertain

1. I think about sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Thinking about sex makes me feel guilty.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. I start sexual activity with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Planning for sexual activities leads to good sexual experiences with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. I like my partner to take responsibility for directing our sexual activity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. I feel free to talk with my partner about ways to make our sexual relationship more satisfying.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. I enjoy sexual intercourse.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. I enjoy sexual activity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. I enjoy kissing, touching, and romantic seduction.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. I enjoy foreplay.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. During sexual activity, my partner is attentive to my physical responses and what makes me feel good.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. My thoughts or fantasies about sex involve complete images, pictures, or stories.	1	2	3	4	5	6

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1 Always	2 Often	3 Sometimes	4 Rarely	5 Never	6 Not relevant/ Uncertain

13. I enjoy when my partner starts and directs our sexual activity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. I enjoy when I start and direct sexual activity with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. I am able to say "no" to my partner's sexual advances.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. In sexual relationships, I lose interest in my partner over time.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. When I love someone, having sex increases the love that I feel.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. I prefer to have sex with people with whom I'm in love.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. I prefer to have sex with people with whom I am not in love.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. When I have sex, it strengthens the relationship and makes me feel closer to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. It is important for me to feel emotionally connected to someone before getting involved with him/her sexually.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22. My thoughts or fantasies about sex involve other people.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23. My thoughts or fantasies about sex involve a detailed story.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24. I fantasize about having sex with someone other than my current partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6
25. If I <u>am</u> in love with my sexual partner, I don't get pleasure when we have sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6
26. I have difficulty getting sexually excited with a person I love.	1	2	3	4	5	6
27. I fall in and out of love easily.	1	2	3	4	5	6

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1 Always	2 Often	3 Sometimes	4 Rarely	5 Never	6 Not relevant/ Uncertain

28. I enjoy changing sexual partners rather quickly.	1	2	3	4	5	6
29. I am able to become sexually aroused.	1	2	3	4	5	6
30. I get sexually excited easily.	1	2	3	4	5	6
31. I am able to experience orgasm.	1	2	3	4	5	6
32. I find sex disgusting.	1	2	3	4	5	6
33. During sex with my partner, I am able to achieve orgasm.	1	2	3	4	5	6
34. I have difficulty achieving orgasm during intercourse with a person I love.	1	2	3	4	5	6
35. I change partners rather quickly when my sexual interest fades.	1	2	3	4	5	6
36. I enjoy masturbating.	1	2	3	4	5	6
37. I am not interested in sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6
38. I have had sex with one person, while I was in love with someone else.	1	2	3	4	5	6
39. I can't feel sexual desire for the person I love.	1	2	3	4	5	6
40. Being emotionally mistreated in a relationship "turns me off" sexually.	1	2	3	4	5	6
41. Being emotionally mistreated in a relationship "turns me on" sexually.	1	2	3	4	5	6
42. I am unable to enjoy sex even though I love my partner deeply.	1	2	3	4	5	6
43. I enjoy imagining having casual sex with many different partners.	1	2	3	4	5	6
44. I enjoy having casual sex with many different partners.	1	2	3	4	5	6

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1 Always	2 Often	3 Sometimes	4 Rarely	5 Never	6 Not relevant/ Uncertain

45. I can't enjoy sex with a person I'm in love with.	1	2	3	4	5	6
46. I have been in love with more than one person at a time.	1	2	3	4	5	6
47. Fantasies about hurting my partner during sex add to my excitement.	1	2	3	4	5	6
48. I have ongoing sexual relationships with several persons.	1	2	3	4	5	6
49. I enjoy having sex with multiple partners at the same time.	1	2	3	4	5	6
50. I am attracted to people who are mentally or emotionally abusive.	1	2	3	4	5	6
51. I need to take total control over my sexual partner in order to reach orgasm.	1	2	3	4	5	6
52. I enjoy having other people watch my partner and me have sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6
53. I enjoy having other people watch me masturbate.	1	2	3	4	5	6
54. I have had more than one sexual partner during the same period of time.	1	2	3	4	5	6
55. I find myself being in love with several persons at the same time.	1	2	3	4	5	6
56. I enjoy oral sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6
57. I enjoy anal stimulation.	1	2	3	4	5	6
58. During sexual activity, I feel like treating my partner roughly.	1	2	3	4	5	6
59. Hurting my partner during sex adds to my excitement.	1	2	3	4	5	6
60. My own physical pain during sex adds to my excitement.	1	2	3	4	5	6
61. Fantasies about being hurt, whipped, or humiliated during sex add to my excitement.	1	2	3	4	5	6

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1 Always	2 Often	3 Sometimes	4 Rarely	5 Never	6 Not relevant/ Uncertain

62. I must be in circumstances of physical danger to be "turned on."	1	2	3	4	5	6
63. I enjoy exposing myself or parts of my body to excite people.	1	2	3	4	5	6
64. I get excited by seeing the fright or shock of others when they see my exposed genitals.	1	2	3	4	5	6
65. I am driven to expose my genitals despite the fact that I could be arrested.	1	2	3	4	5	6
66. I enjoy secretly watching others undress.	1	2	3	4	5	6
67. I seek out voyeuristic opportunities to watch others undressing, naked, or having sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6
68. I am driven to seek voyeuristic opportunities despite the fact that I could be arrested.	1	2	3	4	5	6
69. I am more "turned on" by watching others undress or engage in sexual activity than I am by having sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6
70. I enjoy allowing strangers the opportunity to anonymously watch me undress or engage in sexual activity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
71. I am "turned on" by watching animals have sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6
72. I am "turned on" by fantasies about having sex with animals.	1	2	3	4	5	6
73. I use objects (such as leather, rubber, etc.) to increase sexual excitement.	1	2	3	4	5	6
74. I have to have certain objects to achieve sexual excitement and/or orgasm.	1	2	3	4	5	6
75. I have to dress as the opposite sex to become sexually excited.	1	2	3	4	5	6

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1 Always	2 Often	3 Sometimes	4 Rarely	5 Never	6 Not relevant/ Uncertain

76. I am "turned on" by dressing as the opposite sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6
77. I am "turned on" by sexually touching unsuspecting strangers in a crowded public place.	1	2	3	4	5	6
78. I experience strong impulses to hurt the people I am attracted to sexually.	1	2	3	4	5	6
79. I need to humiliate my sexual partner in order to reach orgasm.	1	2	3	4	5	6
80. I am "turned on" when touched sexually by a stranger in a crowded public place.	1	2	3	4	5	6

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Appendix C

INDEX OF SEXUAL SATISFACTION (ISS)

Name: _____ Today's Date: _____

This questionnaire designed to measure the degree of satisfaction you have in the sexual relationship with your partner. It is not a test, so there are no right or wrong answers. Answer each item as carefully and as accurately as you can by placing a number beside each one as follows.

1 = None of the time
2 = Very rarely
3 = A little of the time
4 = Some of the time
5 = A good part of the time
6 = Most of the time
7 = All of the time

---

1. ____ I feel that my partner enjoys our sex life.
2. ____ Our sex life is very exciting.
3. ____ Sex is fun for my partner and me.
4. ____ Sex with my partner has become a chore for me.
5. ____ I feel that our sex is dirty and disgusting.
6. ____ Our sex life is monotonous.
7. ____ When we have sex it is too rushed and hurriedly completed.
8. ____ I feel that my sex life is lacking in quality.
9. ____ My partner is sexually very exciting.
10. ____ I enjoy the sex techniques that my partner likes or uses.
11. ____ I feel that my partner wants too much sex from me.
12. ____ I think that our sex is wonderful.
13. ____ My partner dwells on sex too much.
14. ____ I try to avoid sexual contact with my partner.
15. ____ My partner is too rough or brutal when we have sex.
16. ____ My partner is a wonderful sex mate.
17. ____ I feel that sex is a normal function of our relationship.
18. ____ My partner does not want sex when I do.
19. ____ I feel that our sex life really adds a lot to our relationship.
20. ____ My partner seems to avoid sexual contact with me.
21. ____ It is easy for me to get sexually excited by my partner.
22. ____ I feel that my partner is sexually pleased with me.
23. ____ My partner is very sensitive to my sexual needs and desires.
24. ____ My partner does not satisfy me sexually.
25. ____ I feel that my sex life is boring.

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1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 12, 16, 17, 19, 21, 22, 23.

ID#: _____
Date: _____

Appendix D

Sociosexual Orientation Inventory

Please answer all of the following questions honestly. For the questions dealing with behavior, *write* your answers in the blank spaces provided. For the questions dealing with thoughts and attitudes, *circle* the appropriate number on the scales provided.

1. With how many different partners have you had sex (sexual intercourse) within the past year? _____

2. How many different partners do you foresee yourself having sex with during the next five years? (Please give a *specific, realistic* estimate)

   _____

3. With how many different partners have you had sex on *one and only one* occasion? _____

4. How often do you fantasize about having sex with someone other than your current dating partner? (Circle one)

   1. never
   2. once every two or three months
   3. once a month
   4. once every two weeks
   5. once a week
   6. a few times each week
   7. nearly every day
   8. at least once a day

5. Sex without love is OK.

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

   I strongly disagree I strongly agree

6. I can imagine myself being comfortable and enjoying "casual" sex with different partners.

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

   I strongly disagree I strongly agree

7. I would have to be closely attached to someone (both emotionally and psychologically) before I could feel comfortable and fully enjoy having sex with him or her.

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

   I strongly disagree I strongly agree

ID#:_____
Date:_____

Appendix E

Hendrick Sexual Attitude Scale (HSAS)

INSTRUCTIONS: Using the following scale, please rate each item and record your response on the space next to that item.

1 = Strongly agree
2 = Moderately agree
3 = Neutral
4 = Moderately disagree
5 = Strongly disagree

_____ 1. I do not need to be committed to a person to have sex with him/her.

_____ 2. Casual sex is acceptable.

_____ 3. I would like to have sex with many partners.

_____ 4. One-night stands are sometimes very enjoyable.

_____ 5. It is okay to have ongoing sexual relationships with more than one person at a time.

_____ 6. It is okay to manipulate someone into having sex as long as no future promises are made.

_____ 7. Sex as a simple exchange of favors is okay if both people agree to it.

_____ 8. The best sex is with no strings attached.

_____ 9. Life would have fewer problems if people could have sex more freely.

_____ 10. It is possible to enjoy sex with a person and not like that person very much.

_____ 11. Sex is more fun with someone you don't love.

_____ 12. It is all right to pressure someone into having sex.

_____ 13. Extensive premarital sexual experience is fine.

_____ 14. Extramarital affairs are all right as long as one's partner doesn't know about them.

1 = Strongly agree
2 = Moderately agree
3 = Neutral
4 = Moderately disagree
5 = Strongly disagree

_____ 15. Sex for its own sake is perfectly all right.

_____ 16. I would feel comfortable having intercourse with my partner in the presence of other people.

_____ 17. Prostitution is acceptable.

_____ 18. It is okay for sex to be just good physical release.

_____ 19. Sex without love is meaningless.

_____ 20. People should at least be friends before they have sex together.

_____ 21. In order for sex to be good, it must also be meaningful.

_____ 22. Birth control is part of responsible sexuality.

_____ 23. A woman should share responsibility for birth control.

_____ 24. A man should share responsibility for birth control.

_____ 25. Sex education is important for young people.

_____ 26. Using "sex toys" during lovemaking is acceptable.

_____ 27. Masturbation is all right.

_____ 28. Masturbating one's partner during intercourse can increase the pleasure of sex.

_____ 29. Sex gets better as a relationship progresses.

_____ 30. Sex is the closest form of communication between two people.

_____ 31. A sexual encounter between two people deeply in love is the ultimate human interaction.

_____ 32. Orgasm is the greatest experience in the world.

1 = Strongly agree
2 = Moderately agree
3 = Neutral
4 = Moderately disagree
5 = Strongly disagree

_____ 33. At its best, sex seems to be the merging of two souls.

_____ 34. Sex is a very important part of life.

_____ 35. Sex is usually an intensive, almost overwhelming experience.

_____ 36. During sexual intercourse, intense awareness of the partner is the best frame of mind.

_____ 37. Sex is fundamentally good.

_____ 38. Sex is best when you let yourself go and focus on your own pleasure.

_____ 39. Sex is primarily the taking of pleasure from another person.

_____ 40. The main purpose of sex is to enjoy oneself.

_____ 41. Sex is primarily physical.

_____ 42. Sex is primarily a bodily function, like eating.

_____ 43. Sex is mostly a game between males and females.

Appendix F

RELATIONSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE

PLEASE READ THE DIRECTIONS!

1. Following are descriptions of four general relationship styles that people often report.

Please read each description and **CIRCLE** the letter corresponding to the style that *best* describes you or is *closest* to the way you generally are in your close relationships.

A. It is easy for me to become emotionally close to others. I am comfortable depending on them and having them depend on me. I don"t worry about being alone or having others not accept me.

B. I am uncomfortable getting close to others. I want emotionally close relationships, but I find it difficult to trust others completely, or to depend on them. I worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others.

C. I want to be completely emotionally intimate with others, but I often find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I am uncomfortable being without close relationships, but I sometimes worry that others don"t value me as much as I value them.

D. I am comfortable without close emotional relationships. It is very important to me to feel independent and self-sufficient, and I prefer not to depend on others or have others depend on me.

2. Please rate each of the following relationship styles according to the *extent* to w
you think each description corresponds to your general relationship style.

A. It is easy for me to become emotionally close to others. I am comfortable depending on them and having them depend on me. I don"t worry about being alone or having others not accept me.

B. I am uncomfortable getting close to others. I want emotionally close relationships, but I find it difficult to trust others completely, or to depend on them. I worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others.

C. I want to be completely emotionally intimate with others, but I often find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I am uncomfortable being without close relationships, but I sometimes worry that others don"t value me as much as I value them.

D. I am comfortable without close emotional relationships, It is very important to me to feel independent and self-sufficient, and I prefer not to depend on others or have others depend on me.

	Not at all like me			**Somewhat like me**			**Very much like me**
Style A.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Style B.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Style C.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Style D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

RSQ

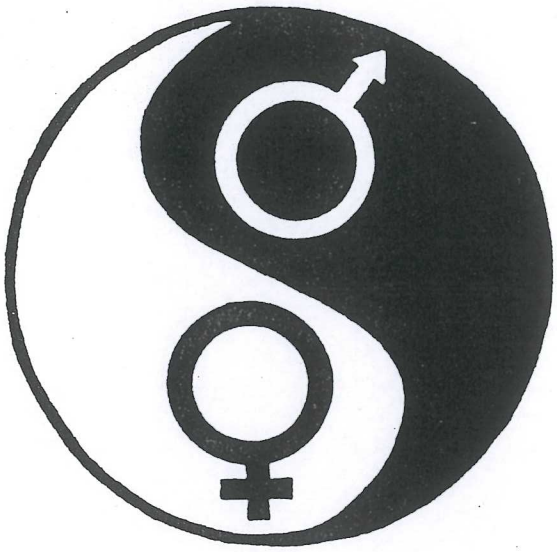
Please read each of the following statements and rate the extent to which you believe each statement best describes your feelings about close relationships.

		Not at all like me		Somewhat like me		Very much like me
1.	I find it difficult to depend on other people.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	It is very important to me to feel independent.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I find it easy to get emotionally close to others.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I want to merge completely with another person.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I worry that I will be hurt if I allows myself to become too close to others.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I am comfortable without close emotional relationships.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I am not sure that I can always depend on others to be there when I need them.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I want to be completely emotionally intimate with others.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I worry about being alone.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I am comfortable depending on other people.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	I often worry that romantic partners don't really love me.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I find it difficult to trust others completely.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	I worry about others getting too close to me.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	I want emotionally close relationships.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	I am comfortable having other people depend on me.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	I worry that others don't value me as much as I value them.	1	2	3	4	5

		Not at all like me				Very much like me
17.	People are never there when you need them.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	My desire to merge completely sometimes scares people away.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	It is very important to me to feel self-sufficient.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	I am nervous when anyone gets too close to me.	1	2	3	4	5
21.	I often worry that romantic partners won't want to stay with me.	1	2	3	4	5
22.	I prefer not to have other people depend on me.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	I worry about being abandoned.	1	2	3	4	5
24.	I am somewhat uncomfortable being close to others.	1	2	3	4	5
25.	I find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like.	1	2	3	4	5
26.	I prefer not to depend on others.	1	2	3	4	5
27.	I know that others will be there when I need them.	1	2	3	4	5
28.	I worry about others not accepting me.	1	2	3	4	5
29.	Romantic partners often want me to be closer than I feel comfortable being.	1	2	3	4	5
30.	I like to take care of people and to help them by listening, giving advice, and solving their problems.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix G

DISF-SR



DEROGATIS INTERVIEW FOR SEXUAL FUNCTION

(Female Version)

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DISF - SR (F)

NAME: _____ DATE: _____ LOCATION: 162

AGE: _____ EDUCATION: _____ ID NO: _____ VISIT NO: _____

INSTRUCTIONS

Below you will find a brief set of questions about your sexual activities. The questions are divided into different sections that ask about different aspects of your sexual experiences. One section asks about sexual fantasies or daydreams, while another inquires about the kinds of sexual experiences that you have. You are also asked about the nature of your sexual arousal and the quality of your orgasm. There are also a few other questions about different areas of your sexual relationship.

On some questions you are asked to respond in terms of a frequency scale, that is **"how often"** do you perform the sexual activities asked about in that section. Some frequency scales go from **"0 = not at all"** to **"8 = four or more times a day"**. Other frequency scales range from **"0 = never" to "4 = always"**. In the case of other questions, you will be asked to respond in terms of a satisfaction scale. This type of scale tells how much you enjoyed, or were satisfied by the sexual activity being asked about. Some satisfaction scales range from **"0 = could not be worse"** to **"8 = could not be better"**. Other satisfaction scales go from **"0= not at all satisfied"**, to **"4 = extremely satisfied"**.

In every section of the inventory the scales required for that section are printed just above the questions so it will be easy to follow. Although it is brief, take your time with the inventory. For each item, please circle the scale number that best describes your personal experience. If you have any questions, please ask the person who gave you the inventory for help.

SECTION I - SEXUAL COGNITION / FANTASY

During the past **30 days**, or since the last time you filled out this inventory, **how often have you had thoughts, dreams or fantasies about:**

8 = 4 or more per day
7 = 2 or 3 per day
6 = 1 per day
5 = 4 to 6 per week
4 = 2 or 3 per week
3 = 1 per week
2 = 1 or 2 per month
1 = Less than 1 per month
0 = Not at all

1.1	A sexually attractive person	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.2	Erotic parts of a man's body (e.g., face, shoulders, legs)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.3	Erotic or romantic situations	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.4	Caressing, touching, undressing, or foreplay	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.5	Sexual intercourse, oral sex, touching to orgasm	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

[ ]

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SECTION II - SEXUAL AROUSAL

During the past 30 days, or since the last time you filled out this inventory, **how often did you have the following experiences?**

8 = 4 or more per day
7 = 2 or 3 per day
6 = 1 per day
5 = 4 to 6 per week
4 = 2 or 3 per week
3 = 1 per week
2 = 1 or 2 per month
1 = Less than 1 per month
0 = Not at all

2.1	Feel sexually aroused while alone	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2.2	Actively seek sexual satisfaction	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2.3	Feel sexually aroused with a partner	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

4 = Always
3 = Usually
2 = Sometimes
1 = Rarely
0 = Never

2.4	Have normal lubrication with masturbation	0	1	2	3	4
2.5	Have normal lubrication throughout sexual relations	0	1	2	3	4

[ ]

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SECTION III - SEXUAL BEHAVIOR/EXPERIENCES

During the past 30 days, or since the last time you filled out this inventory, **how often did you engage in the following sexual activities?**

8 = 4 or more per day
7 = 2 or 3 per day
6 = 1 per day
5 = 4 to 6 per week
4 = 2 or 3 per week
3 = 1 per week
2 = 1 or 2 per month
1 = Less than 1 per month
0 = Not at all

3.1	Reading or viewing romantic or erotic books or stories	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
3.2	Masturbation	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
3.3	Casual kissing and petting	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
3.4	Sexual foreplay	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
3.5	Sexual intercourse, oral sex, etc.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

[ ]

SECTION IV - ORGASM

During the past 30 days, or since the last time you filled out this inventory, **how satisfied have you been with the following?**

4 = Extremely
3 = Highly
2 = Moderately
1 = Slightly
0 = Not at all

4.1	Your ability to have an orgasm	0	1	2	3	4
4.2	The intensity of your orgasm	0	1	2	3	4
4.3	The ability to have multiple orgasms (if typical for you)	0	1	2	3	4
4.4	Feelings of closeness and togetherness with your partner	0	1	2	3	4
4.5	Your sense of control (timing) of your orgasm	0	1	2	3	4
4.6	Feeling a sense of relaxation and well-being after orgasm	0	1	2	3	4

[ ]

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SECTION V - DRIVE & RELATIONSHP

5.1 With the partner of your choice, what would be your **ideal** frequency of sexual intercourse?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

8 = 4 or more per day
7 = 2 or 3 per day
6 = 1 per day
5 = 4 to 6 per week
4 = 2 or 3 per week
3 = 1 per week
2 = 1 or 2 per month
1 = Less than 1 per month
0 = Not at all

5.2 During this period, how interested have you been in sex?

0 1 2 3 4

4 = Extremely
3 = Highly
2 = Moderately
1 = Slightly
0 = Not at all

5.3 During this period, how satisfied have you been with your personal relationship with your sexual partner?

0 1 2 3 4

4 = Extremely
3 = Highly
2 = Moderately
1 = Slightly
0 = Not at all

5.4 In general, what would represent the best description of the quality of your current sexual functioning?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

8 = Could not be better
7 = Very Good
6 = Good
5 = Above average
4 = Adequate
3 = Somewhat inadequate
2 = Poor
1 = Very poor
0 = Could not be worse

[ ]

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Appendix H

Experiences in Close Relationships Inventory

The following statements concern how you feel in romantic relationships. We are interested in how you generally experience relationships, not just in what is happening in a current relationship. 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:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree	.....	.....	*Neutral/*	.....	.....	*Agree*
Strongly			*Mixed*			*Strongly*

___ 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.

___ 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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