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**THE ROMANTIC UNCONSCIOUS:
CONFLICT AND COMPROMISE IN THE RESEARCH
OF ROMANTIC LOVE**

by

JOSEPH S. REYNOSO

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Psychology in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of
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ABSTRACT
THE ROMANTIC UNCONSCIOUS:
CONFLICT AND COMPROMISE IN THE RESEARCH OF ROMANTIC LOVE

by

Joseph S. Reynoso

Advisor: Professor Elliot Jurist

Social scientists continue empirically researching the psychology of romantic love. However, there is little attention spent evaluating the direction and nature of this work. In this theoretical study, the author argues that the research literature presents a limited view of romantic relationships. A contributing factor is the relative inattention to the interplay of conscious and unconscious mental processes in empirical models. The author examines the prevalent model of studying relationships for its assumptions about the accessibility of psychological states and the accuracy of participant reports. To support his case, the author reviews research that explores the limits of a psychology based on primarily conscious processes. The argument is made that a more comprehensive investigation of romantic love would involve an integration of conscious and unconscious processing and an expanded notion of rationality (as it pertains to romantic relationships).

In the second part of this study, the author suggests that psychoanalytic thinking can help inform psychological research into romantic love.

Psychoanalytic theorizing is described as having a long tradition of exploring the subjective rationality and meaning that underlies the full range of romantic relationship motivations and experiences. The author presents the usefulness of psychoanalytic ideas, including a dynamic unconscious and object relations, to construct a framework to study love relationships. The study concludes with four guiding recommendations points (conceptual and methodological) for a future direction of romantic relationship research. These suggestions offer a way of understanding how people seek psychological compromise solutions to all their (at times conflictual) motivational aims in their romantic lives. The author's framework allows for investigating how this process not only occurs, consciously and unconsciously, but also intrapsychically, interpersonally and culturally.

PREFACE

... so far as love or affection is concerned, psychologists have failed in their mission. The little we know about love does not transcend simple observation, and the little we write about it has been written better by poets and novelists.

Harry Harlow, at the sixty-sixth Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, Washington, D. C., August 31, 1958

Due to its mystery and prevalence romantic love is one of the most often written about topics from both research and artistic perspectives. The anthropologists Jankowiak and Fischer (1992) examined the folklore, literature and history of 166 cultures, finding evidence of a form of romantic love in 88 percent of them. They proposed that love can be considered a “human universal” phenomenon that should be studied in all of its manifestations. Thus, it is no surprise that researchers from various disciplines have produced countless pages of work on the topic of romantic love and its workings. This proliferation has no foreseeable end.

One reason for this concerns the very illusive, and seemingly contradictory, nature of the subject at hand. The motivation to understand the psychology of adult love is inextricably tied to love’s ability to inspire a wide range of emotions, from excitement, enthrallment, comfort and satisfaction to confusion, disappointment, anger and despair. It inspires and provokes both one thing and its opposite. It unites but can also separate. Love not only delivers the range of affective experience, but does so in a fashion that at once can feel individually

unique, though generalizable to others. In short, the phenomenological experience of romantic love as so particular yet still universal renders it both a perfect and poor subject for scholastic scrutiny.

Given the immense amount of research devoted to the study of love's psychology, it would seem appropriate to evaluate what has been learned up to this point. I began this section with words spoken by then president of the American Psychological Association, Harry Harlow, to those in attendance at the 1958 APA meetings. His words reflect my critical view of the current state of researching romantic love's psychology. Close to fifty years later, a serious assessment of the empirical literature is needed to evaluate just what has been learned.

Upon first approaching the empirical literature, one is quickly confronted with the multiplicity of ways investigators have attempted to answer these questions. The majority of this research is generated by soliciting people's attitudes, thoughts, and feelings about romantic love experiences (usually by means of surveys or interviews). Traditionally, studies have used college student classroom samples since most researchers are academic professors using the most ready-at-hand participants. In the last couple of decades, however, techniques have evolved to study love with a wider-ranged population, through observational means both in experimental and clinical settings. Though the majority of the research into romantic love's psychology has studied a sub-clinical population, there is a growing focus on understanding romantic

relationships along a continuum of health (including observations from the clinical consulting room). The study of romantic relationships has also evolved to follow the course of science to investigate the biological structure of love through brain scanning technology.

It is my view, however, that the expansive wealth of love research is both a strength and weakness. That the empirical literature offers numerous divergent answers to the most basic questions about love is an example of both the variety and uncertainty in the field of relationship science. Depending on the question, one can usually expect to find an assortment of ways to answer it. For example, the question of romantic process has been answered by social psychologists interested in a person's attitudes, behaviors and feelings in love, but also by neuroscientists interested in which regions of the brain are implicated in specific relationship functions. Someone questioning what influences who we love can turn to the romantic attachment literature, the evolutionary psychology research, or even studies that understand love as a form of social exchange. Clearly there are numerous research perspectives accounting for the psychology of romantic relationships. What is not as apparent is how to make sense of all the information provided.

One is faced with the impossibility of finding common definitions in the literature for such central concepts as love, commitment, passion, and relationships (similar observations have been made by Fehr, 1988; Hendrick & Hendrick, 1989). On the surface, one may have difficulty understanding the difference between attachment styles (Hazan & Shaver, 1987) and love styles

(Lee, 1973), and differentiating one model's emphasis on lust (Fisher, 1998, 2004) and another's component of passion (Sternberg, 1986). Accompanying these seemingly semantic differences are the underlying divisions between the various theoretical orientations that guide researchers.

While the majority of the empirical literature can rightfully fit under the umbrella of psychology, there are further subdivisions of theoretical orientations. These range from the evolutionary psychology of David Buss and the social exchange model of Caryl Rusbult to the wide-ranging general psychology of Robert Sternberg and the attachment perspective of Phil Shaver and Kim Bartholomew. There are indeed some overlaps that can be found between some of the romantic relationship research models and respective investigators' theoretical perspectives. Even further, there have been attempts by researchers to integrate various models of romantic relationships.¹ To a large degree, however, the romantic love research field still tends towards relative disconnection and independence amongst its various approaches. This contributes to a disjointed quality of the research literature that represents a larger issue. One is hard-pressed to find a viable way to evaluate the value of a particular study either by itself (that is, how well it answers basic questions about romantic love) or in relation to other models (that is, how does it correspond to other accounts of romantic love). The romantic relationship research literature's

¹ Kenrick and colleagues (1993) have attempted to integrate evolutionary and social exchange theories regarding mate choice, and Babcock and colleagues (2000) have proposed a synthesis of marital observation research and attachment constructs.

lack of evaluative criteria and structural incoherency limit its capacity to provide reliable information about love.

A good portion of romantic relationship research is based on gathering people's reports of romantic relationship experiences, as well as preferences and beliefs about love. The most popular format for research seems to be that of the *survey*, which is done through self-report measures and questionnaires asking people to rate how accurately statements fit their relationship experience. The majority of research studies and models are *correlational* designs based on these surveys. In other words, through these studies, researchers ascertain the statistical relationship between variables suspected or found to play a role in romantic relationships. Once this data is collected, researchers demonstrate the strength and direction of these statistical relationships in order to construct path models that will map out the direction of influence between variables. Guided by some theoretical framework, these researchers then use these models to articulate the psychological processes operative in romantic love contexts.

Researchers have noted the problematic aspects of self-report surveys for decades. Wicker (1969) reviewed the then current empirical literature studying social attitudes, and despite finding few methodological problems, found "little evidence to support the postulated existence of stable, underlying attitudes within the individual which influence both his verbal expressions and his actions." Wicker not only questioned the link between attitudes and verbal expression/behavior, but also the stable and enduring nature of such attitudes. Meehl warned about a tendency of assuming the verisimilitude of a finding based

on the “feeble significance testing” as the “crud factor” of social science research (Meehl, 1990). The “crud factor” points towards the understanding that studies with a large enough sample size can produce statistically significant relationships between otherwise trivial factors of “weak theories.” Meehl observed that to some degree “everything correlates to some extent with everything else” (1990, p. 204); so one must be careful in the degree to which inferential interpretations are made. Relatedly, Bank et al. (1990) referred to high correlations among variables that are obtained using a common method of measurement and one reporter as the “glop” problem.

Subsequent researchers have sought to clarify the reliability of psychological correlational data by reporting that self-reported attitudes can predict behavior under certain conditions. Examples of constraints on the degree to which self-reported attitudes were found to predict behavior were attitude accessibility (Fazio & Towles-Schwen, 1999) and the deliberateness of the behavior (Ajzen, 1985; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Further difficulties attributed to the use of self-report measures include: participants’ interpretations of the questions, recall and awareness problems, self-serving or social desirability biases (all discussed in Brehm et al 2002, p. 53). Even attempts by romantic relationship researchers to use experimental and quasi-experimental, interview and case-study, or naturalistic observation designs are also susceptible of critiques on other grounds, such as translation into real-world applications, lack of establishing cause-effect, and generalizability to other individuals (discussed in Matlin, 1995, p. 37).

Despite the various problems that plague all the different social science measurement approaches, I am not about to espouse the view that romantic relationship researchers should “just pack up and go home” (Matlin, 1995, p. 40). Rather my position is that researchers should acknowledge the limits of scientific understanding and experimental designs in constructing and conducting their studies. This means the incorporation of multiple research tools within single studies to take advantage of particular benefits of individual designs and offset shortcomings. This also points towards continuing the implementation of more varied experimental and naturalistic settings, priming effects, and physiological and neuroscientific measures. Most importantly it means directing romantic relationship research in a way that uses the research methods available to study the most accurate and current models of psychological processing, despite what limitations exist. Despite some creative and integrative attempts, the current state of the psychological literature on romantic love passively reflects these limitations in scientific understanding and method rather than confronts them.

Some of the problems in the empirical literature on romantic love are not particular to this field of research. They involve larger issues of scientific communities and epistemology that are beyond the scope of my current study to address in full. I will instead focus on a more local, but related, flaw in the empirical romantic love literature. This weakness, which I will argue occurs both on an explicit and implicit level, hinders researchers' capability to answer love's most fundamental questions. It is born out of a failure to acknowledge and confront limitations both in scientific understanding and method. This failing is

due to romantic researchers relying on a model that does not fully integrate conscious and unconscious aspects of the mind.

The *Oxford English Dictionary Online* defines the word conscious as an adjective meaning “having the witness of one’s own judgment or feelings, having the witness within oneself, knowing within oneself, inwardly sensible or aware.” The first premise of my argument is that the romantic relationship literature (as it stands as a collective grouping of individual studies) fails to use a model of the mind that sufficiently integrates conscious and unconscious processing. Specifically, researchers have privileged conscious mental functions in their study of romantic love. This is despite little disagreement that the organizing principles, theories, or schemas that guide everyday interpersonal functioning operate on an automatic or implicit level. Automatic, implicit or unconscious processing and thinking can be defined as that which is nonconscious, unintentional, involuntary and effortless (Aronson, Wilson, & Ekert, 1999; Bargh, 1994; Wegner & Bargh, 1998). I contend that the majority of empirical studies on romantic love use a psychology of mind that insufficiently integrates both conscious and unconscious factors. This is reflected in the way that researchers attempt to ask participants to answer questions regarding their romantic experience with little attention to whether psychological aspects in love are accessible² to conscious awareness or how reliable research subjects are as

² Accessibility can be thought of as “the ease (or effort) with which the particular mental contents come to mind” (Kahneman, 2003). Also see Higgins, 1996; Tulving & Pearlstone, 1966).

reports of their experience in relationships. This has implications, then, for the kind of reasoning that takes place in romantic love.

My aim in Chapter One is to review the empirical literature on romantic relationships. I will present a sampling of the various approaches researchers have taken to study the psychology of love empirically. While not exhaustive, I plan to describe the different empirical objectives, methods and findings on the subject, saving much of my commentary on this literature as a whole for subsequent chapters. In Chapter Two, I will lay out my argument that the majority of studies fail to integrate conscious and unconscious aspects of mental life, and, by and large, privilege the former. I will outline how a psychology that privileges conscious processing limits the investigation of romantic love. I will present research that supports this thinking. In Chapter Three, I will introduce my recommendation for a psychoanalytic solution to this predicament. Namely that using insights from a psychoanalytic model of the mind can help understand the interplay conscious and unconscious factors in romantic relationships. I will conclude in Chapter Four by presenting a framework for integrating the current empirical literature and guide future research endeavors. Further I will recommend future paths of empirical inquiry to study romantic love.

Let me offer a few caveats before beginning. If one does a search for romantic love in the American Psychological Association's research database *Psych Info* one will find different efforts to define, limit or articulate its meaning. The term "romantic love" gets associated with constructs such as sexual desire (Gonzaga, et al., 2006), intense passion (Aron et al., 2005), and attraction

(Critelli et al., 1980). While some researchers have focused exclusively on this passionate aspect of relationships, I have chosen to apply a more general understanding of romantic love. For my purposes I understand romantic love as broadly referring to the experience, sensation, thought, feeling, attitude, behavior and overall psychological process involved in what would be identified by one or both partners as a romantic relationship.³

I am also taking a broad view in understanding what constitutes the research of love's psychology. My analysis will focus on research that explores the human experience of romantic love by studying the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors representing, guiding, and underlying romantic relationships. My intention is to present a panoramic snapshot of the current state of the empirical field. However, based on the enormity of the research literature, some credible studies may not get sufficient attention. Though I will consider many empirical issues that necessarily follow from an exploration of the research literature, my analysis will be done on theoretical grounds.

³ My conception of romantic love is limited by an understanding that is largely shaped by the psychology, philosophy and the overall cultural climate of Western academic thought. While I would hope that my findings relate and apply to all forms of romantic relationships, I am cognizant of the predominantly heterosexual and European nature of my intellectual framework.

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PART ONE

CHAPTER ONE: The research ⁴

Love is simply too unruly to be categorized so easily. It means different things to different people in different relationships at different points in time. Only with patient, open-minded exploration of several of the current approaches to love will we have any possibility of developing the overarching theory of love that still eludes us.

Clyde and Susan Hendrick in "Research on love: does it measure up?" (1989)

Love's traits

An early approach to studying romantic love was to attempt to distinguish it from other close interpersonal attitudes, such as friendship. This involved separating out some of the various cognitive, emotional and behavioral aspects

⁴ In choosing to review the romantic relationship research, I have had to limit which studies to discuss. By and large, I have chosen to include empirical approaches to love that are theoretically embedded and have been influential in the field. I have chosen not to directly discuss studies that, in my view, either target variables that are too discrete, general to all relationships or not contextualized in a larger theory. Examples include the connection between perceived similarity and relationship satisfaction across variables such as physical attractiveness, religion, education, age and height among others (Berscheid & Walster, 1974; Hill, Rubin & Peplau, 1976; Huston & Levinger, 1978; Skolnick, 1981). There are also studies connecting positive romantic relationship variables to arousal levels (Dutton & Aron, 1974), proximity and familiarity (Newcomb, 1961; Zajonc, 1968), reciprocity (Worthy, Gary & Kahn, 1969), and barriers (Driscoll, Davis & Lipetz, 1972). Finally, there are studies linking romantic relationship quality to big five personality traits, with the most consistently robust finding that neuroticism is the strongest predictor of relationship dissatisfaction and instability (e.g., Kurdek, 1993; Bouchard, Lussier, & Sabourin, 1999).

of interpersonal relationships in an effort to isolate those belonging exclusively to or that combine together in romantic relationships. Methodologically, researchers asked people to indicate on self-report questionnaires the degree to which certain feelings, attitudes and actions represent their love relationships. Empirical analysis of this data allowed researchers to propose which clusters of thoughts, feelings and behaviors combine to define the experience of romantic love.

Rubin's work (1970, 1973) focused on identifying love as a dichotomous feeling-attitude to be distinguished from other "moderately correlated, but nevertheless distinct, dimensions of one person's attitude toward another person" (Rubin, 1974, p. 166). Simply put, love was treated here as a unitary feeling-attitude that one can experience towards another person. It takes its place on the continuum of positive emotions one can experience interpersonally. Rubin intended to demonstrate the difference between romantically loving and liking another person by isolating essential characteristics of each. Though liking and loving could both be found in romantic relationships, he believed that the latter (as he defined it) would not be found in friendships. Rubin's research, using his self-report measure (Rubin Love Scale; RLS, 1974), speculatively identified the three components to romantic love to be affiliative and dependent need (attachment), predisposition to help (caring), and exclusiveness and absorption (intimacy). The Rubin Liking Scale (1970) had components of favorable evaluation, respect and perception of similarity.

Rubin's work, which tried to distinguish romantic love from other positive interpersonal orientations, produced mixed results.⁵ However, both his dichotomizing of love from liking/friendship and his assumption of a liking attitude involved in romantic love was influential in laying the groundwork for future research. Other researchers followed Rubin's work by constructing measures to further investigate love and its component parts. Wanting to separate out the mixture of passionate and companionate love attitudes from Rubin's construct of love, Hatfield's collaborative studies (Hatfield & Walster, 1978; Hatfield & Sprecher, 1986) attempted to distinguish and measure two different kinds of romantic love. Just as Rubin distinguished love from liking, Hatfield differentiated a separate passionate and companionate love. Hatfield defined passionate love as "a state of intense longing for union with another..." that when reciprocated "...is associated with fulfillment and ecstasy" (1978, p. 9). In contrast to the emotional wildness of passionate love involving the confusion of "tenderness and sexuality, elation and pain, anxiety and relief, altruism and jealousy," companionate love means "friendly affection and deep attachment to someone" (Hatfield and Walster, 1978, p. 2).

⁵ As reported by Masuda (2003), such love researchers as Robert Sternberg, have criticized Rubin's love scale for de-emphasizing sexuality. Subsequently, the Rubin Love Scale has been used more as a measure of companionate love.

Her initial studies led to the development of the Passionate Love Scale (PLS; Hatfield & Sprecher, 1986), a Likert-styled⁶ self-report measure that proposes to tap “cognitive, emotional and behavior indicants of ‘longing for union’” (Hatfield, 1988, p. 193). The cognitive component of passionate love focused on the intrusive preoccupation with the person, idealization of that person, and desire to know the person; emotional indicators were physiological sexual attraction, longing for reciprocity, desire for union, physiological arousal; and behavioral correlates concentrated on actions to determine the other's feelings, studying the person, attempts to be of service to the person, maintaining physical closeness. Hatfield's reading of research correlating the emotions such as anxiety, fear, embarrassment, loneliness, jealousy, anger and grief to heightened experiences of passion (e.g. Clanton & Smith, 1977; Peplau & Perlman, 1982) led her to conceptualize the presence of both positive emotions (such as happiness, joy, contentment, delight) and negative emotions (such as anger, fear, anxiety, depression) (Kim & Hatfield, 2004) in passionate love. She explained further, “passionate love seems to be fueled by ecstasy or misery, whereas companionate love is intensified only by pleasure; any sprinkling of pain

⁶ The Passionate Love Scale (PLS) is a common form of self-report measure in romantic love research. Using a Likert design to rate the degree to which they agree or disagree with a given statement, the PLS employs a 9-point rating continuum (with 1 indicating “not at all true” to 9 indicating “definitely true”) to measure a person's attitudes regarding a current or recent romantic partner. Examples tapping various aspects of romantic experience are:
 (Cognitive) _____ always seems to be on my mind.
 (Emotional) Since I've been involved with _____, my emotions have been on a roller coaster.
 (Behavioral) I feel happy when I am doing something to make _____ happy.

decreases companionate feelings” (1988, p. 207). As a result, the PLS was designed to tap the negative cognitive, emotional and behavioral components of romantic love, as well as the experience of unrequited love, which is associated with separation and accompanying emptiness, anxiety or despair.

Hatfield’s construct of passionate love stresses the uncontrollable and intense emotional feelings towards the object of one’s desire. One can see the distinction made between the powerful emotionality of passionate love and the calm steadiness of companionate love.⁷ While both can be found in romantic relationships, Hatfield and others have been particularly interested in function and characteristics of passionate love. Over a variety of studies, passionate love seeking or involvement has been associated with low self-esteem (Hatfield, 1965), dependency and insecurity (Fei & Bercheid, 1977), and anxiety (Solomon & Corbit, 1974; Hatfield, Brinton, & Cornelius, 1989). Interestingly, as Hatfield pointed out, though passionate love seems to be highly valued colloquially and culturally, little survey or experimental research has been done documenting the delights of passionate love (Hatfield & Rapson, 1993a).

After Rubin’s separation of love from liking was followed by Hatfield’s distillation of romantic love as a combination of passionate and companionate love, Sternberg proposed a Triangular Theory of romantic love (1986, 1988, 1998a, 1998b). The Triangular Theory postulates three distinct, yet related

⁷ As Masuda recently pointed out (2003), Hatfield’s main purpose was in constructing a measure to extract a construct of passionate love from the Rubin Love Scale’s construct of love, which is thought to combine passionate and companionate loves. Hatfield’s PLS measures passionate love, though she did not develop her own measure to measure companionate love.

components of intimacy, passion and commitment. To collect evidence for his theory he devised the Sternberg Triangular Love Scale (STLS, 1986). The STLS consists of 45 statements that a respondent rates (on a Likert scale) both for its accuracy and then importance regarding the person's relationship. Each component (intimacy, passion and commitment) is represented by fifteen items, presented in random and frequently stated in pairs of how one feels about one's partner and how one perceives one's romantic partner feels. Sternberg's Triangular Theory addressed not only love's nature but its course through the lens of theories that account for emotion as resulting from the interruption of familiar and common interactional scripts between partners (Berscheid, 1983). Thus in the beginning of a relationship, when two people are beginning to form their scripts of interaction, one finds great rises and dips of emotion. However, as time goes by this experience appears to level out.

The intimacy component "refers to close, connected, and bonded feelings in loving relationships" (Sternberg, 1988, p. 120). It is felt to represent the emotional texture of romantic relationships that leads to feelings of warmth and mutual rapport. Intimacy develops slowly, "through fits and starts" and is difficult to achieve as it includes, among other things, experiencing happiness with the beloved, being able to count on the other when in need, desiring the greater welfare of the other, and the willingness to share both material and emotional resources (1998a). Manifest levels of intimacy usually lessen in both successful and failed relationships because its latent and observable dimensions that can have different courses. As comfort builds, intimacy can be taken for granted

leading to both positive and negative repercussions. Sternberg himself likened the STLS's intimacy component to what Rubin's Liking Scale measured, however, others have argued that Sternberg's intimacy component is more similar to Rubin's love construct (Acker & Davis, 1992, Masuda, 2003).

In the Triangular Theory, passion is highly dependent on psychophysical arousal and is best characterized by the needs that are consciously felt to drive romance. Not confined to sexual needs, passion involves the more basic motivational drives that people may experience—such as those for self-esteem, affiliation, dominance over others, submission to others, self-actualization, sexual fulfillment and nurturance (1988, 1998a). Passion and intimacy may have complementary, parallel, or opposing trajectories, though the two components usually interact in a love relationship. Sternberg cited intermittent reinforcement as a powerful learning mechanism for continuing or sustaining passion. Thus instead of being fueled by constant reward, passion thrives on periodic and even random rewarding; though one can experience a surge of passion almost immediately upon getting in contact with an arousing person. Sternberg explains the course of passion from the vantage point of Solomon's opponent-process theory (1980) of acquired motivation:

At the peak of arousal, a negative force begins to work in opposition to the passion. This force is important to a person's equilibrium, because it can help prevent a person from becoming hopelessly addicted to either substances or to people. ... At the peak of arousal, the passion you experience begins to

decrease; and under the influence of the negative force, you will gradually reach a more or less stable state of habituation of feeling in respect to the person or the object. (1998a, pp. 39-40)

As Sternberg explains further, once the passion-arousing object is lost, a person does not return to a state of equilibrium, but instead sinks into a distressed state of depression. It is only after the effects of the negative force slowly disappear that the person is able to return to a baseline state.

Finally, the commitment ingredient (also termed decision/commitment) is more cognitively governed and includes the short-term decision of loving another person, and the long-term commitment to do what one can to maintain that love. For Sternberg, this component is what keeps a relationship together and functioning, though commitment alone is not a sufficient condition for what most would think of as romantic love (1998a). Rather commitment “is the extent to which a person is likely to stick with something or someone and see it (or him or her) through to the finish” (1998a, p. 12). Commitment develops slowly and then ideally steadily increases before leveling out. As opposed to intimacy and passion, it has the most predictable course.

For Sternberg, all three components contribute to other forms of human relationships but in different degrees, reflective of the different properties of each ingredient. As opposed to commitment and even intimacy, passion tends to be unstable and fluctuate unpredictably. According to Sternberg, intimacy and commitment are subject to conscious control when a person has awareness of

the feelings that comprise these components. However, one may not exactly know to what degree he feels intimately and committed towards another person. Passion can usually be consciously realized. Due to these inherent properties, as outlined by Sternberg's Triangular Theory, passion seems to be involved in the history of most types of romantic relationships, though it is absent in most friendships and in parent-child relationships. On the other hand, intimacy usually can be high in any of the three.

Subsequently, Yela (1996, 1998) expanded Sternberg's model and divided the passion component into erotic (EP) and romantic (RP) types when he tested the temporal nature of the amended Triangular Theory. Using a cross-sectional design, he suggested that the evolution of the components can be thought of as existing in three main stages in love relationships: "Being in love," "Passional love" and "Companionate love." Being in love is characteristic of the first months of the relationship and:

...is a relatively brief period, in which there is a vertiginous increase of all the love components, especially of [erotic passion], which reaches its maximum point, and of [intimacy], indicating that the person is subject to a wave of new and intense emotions towards the other, both of general and sexual physiological activation and of the gradually satisfied desire to establish a special affective bond with that person. (1998)

Commitment is de-emphasized during this stage. In the Passional Love stage, erotic passion oscillates around its maximum point, romantic passion continues to increase gradually, while commitment and intimacy increase steadily in importance. Finally the diminishing of erotic and romantic passion marks the third phase of Companionate Love, in which intimacy and commitment reach their maximum level, in line with the decrease of romantic passion and especially erotic passion. Yela's study represents one of the few in the field to empirically test the temporal course of romantic relationships.

Love's Taxonomy

Aside from treating romantic love as a unitary construct that can be reduced down to component parts, another way to research its nature has been to investigate it as a variety of types. In fact Sternberg's Triangular Theory allows for researching love like this. He used the components from his Triangular Theory to describe seven types of romantic love relationships based on combinations of each component. Sternberg was careful to say that his types represent extreme examples that are not meant to represent actual relationships found in natural life (1988). Thus it would be rare to find a relationship that consists purely of commitment or passion, and the following types are probably better thought of as containing higher or lower levels of one or more of these components.

Liking is a love high in intimacy alone that is usually found in emotionally close friendships. It is not high in arousal and devoid of long-term plans and hopes. In infatuation there is strong passion as this kind of love is fueled by arousal. It can be asymmetrical, based in idealization and short-lived in nature, with the lover tending to be obsessive and consumed by attraction for the other person. *Empty* love is typified by mainly commitment and denotes a “normal” romance, which has run its course and has burned-out of passion and is low on intimacy. It is often experienced as one-sided, occurs in marriages over time, and can be more normal in cultures that do not privilege intimacy or passion in romantic relationships. *Romantic* love occurs when emotional intimacy mixes with physical attraction with commitment not being a priority. Romantic love, in this model, can be thought of as a mixture of liking mixed with passionate arousal. *Companionate* love occurs when intimacy and commitment combine to form a love that emphasizes mutuality and long-term investment in the couple more as true friends than lovers. Infatuation may drive *fatuous* love, best typified in whirlwind romances that lead to immediate courtships. Passion and a promise of a commitment, which usually winds up feeling shallow, rule it more. Sternberg posited *consummate* love as an ideal kind of love with all three components present to an equal degree. This complete kind of love is not only difficult to attain, but it is equally hard to maintain. *Nonlove* represents the absence of all components, and as Sternberg said, “nonlove characterizes the majority of our interpersonal relationships, which are casual interactions that do not partake of love, or even friendship, in any meaningful way” (1988, p. 129).

Sternberg described how each romantic partner loves with the metaphor of a triangle that represents love for the other. In this model there are ways to represent love that is real, ideal, self-perceived, other-perceived, felt and acted. Greater discrepancies between how one wishes to love and be loved can often lead to dissatisfaction. A love relationship can be more or less characterized by having a greater or less degree of one or more of these three ingredients at any different stage of the relationship.

While Sternberg derived his typology from his reduction of love to the components of intimacy, passion and commitment, and then re-assemblage in combinations, Lee's (1988) work represents a somewhat different approach. Rather than dissect love into different aspects, Lee sought out to think of love more as a plurality than as a single construct. He attempted to descriptively distinguish the different ways in which one loved another person romantically. Interested in individual differences in the experience of love he chose to study love's (metaphorical) many colors and designed his Love Story Card Sort. Subsequently, he built a model of love as a taxonomy of different styles (1973, 1988). Lee's Color Theory of love featured six types of love (three primary and three secondary) that differ in the levels of intensity experienced, commitment to the other, and the desired characteristics of and expectations on the other.

Lee named his styles in Greek and Latin to relate them to their intellectual histories. The first of the primary styles is *Eros*, which involves a powerful physical attraction, where the lover searches for the other who is felt to be ideal (at least physically). It is characterized by an intensity that is sought after by the

lover, as he searches for the other to be his ideal partner. Secondly, *Storge* is an easy-going, friendly kind of love that is found in a slowly developing attachment that leads to a lasting commitment. The storgic lover is not consciously looking for love, as opposed to the erotic lover, and does not consciously pursue a partner who possesses some ideal qualities. Finally, *Ludus* is characterized by a game-playing style of loving, where the lover does not search for a particular ideal mate, but takes a “pluralistic” attitude towards the art of love. The ludic lover may engage in deception (intentionally or unintentionally) in his affairs with multiple partners at once. In short, *Ludus* is a pleasure-seeking uncommitted kind of love.

Lee’s three secondary styles are compounds of primary styles. *Mania* is a love which of obsessive preoccupation with the loved object, requiring repeated assurances of reciprocated affection, and vulnerable to intense jealousy and possessiveness. The manic lover can be said to be demanding in relationships, in love with love itself, to vacillate between intense feelings of pleasure and despair. *Pragma* is a practical and rational love, in which the lover looks for a compatible partner based on reasonably weighing various valued characteristics that the lover esteems. The pragmatic style describes one who pursues love in the form of a sensible partnership with an other with thoughts towards not just the present but the future. *Agape* is a style of selfless and altruistic love that the lover practices as a duty. Little is demanded of the other, as the lover feels the intense need to care for his partner. *Agape* is gentle, patient, and is governed by reason and will more than erotic passion.

Lee's qualitative interviewing and theoretical work led directly to empirical research. While he did not empirically derive his styles of love from his data collection, his Color Theory led to the creation of love scales that sought to validate his theory. The most widely used of these, the Love Attitudes Scale (LAS; Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986), consists of statements on general love attitudes and behavior towards one's partner that are answered in Likert format. It is understood that a person may not display the same love style in each relationship they have, as different partners may evoke distinct ways of relating. Rather than trait-like ways of loving, Lee's styles can be thought of as ways of describing the way an individual currently loves another person within a given relationship. Along this line, a person may love a current partner in a number of different styles over time.

Despite its psychometric robustness, the research stemming from the LAS has been criticized for not measuring romantic love, "but rather some combination of love constructs and non-love constructs" Hendrick and Hendrick (1989). This criticism has been levied specifically when each style is independently measured in relation to other relationship characteristics—for example, *storge* and *pragma* are seldom positively correlated to aspects of romantic love functioning. In response to this charge, the Hendricks have claim that certain of Lee's romantic styles may be less directly involved in the manifest romantic aspects of love, though may be implicated in an individual's approach to love in general. Sternberg has also asserted that, while Lee conceived of his primary styles as being distinct ways of describing the way one loves, *Eros* and

Storge are basically akin to Hatfield's distinction of passionate and companionate love, which are not mutually exclusive and can be thought of as sub-components of romantic love (1987).

Love's attachment

Attachment researchers have understood and measured aspects of love's nature and its determinants. It differs significantly from preceding offerings by virtue of its grounding in a developmental theory, its clinical applications, as well as its singular focus. The importance of this last point will be elaborated further as I describe romantic attachment's features. Rather than a wide-ranging approach to understanding the nature of romantic love, the attachment perspective represents a way to understand how we go about loving and why we love. Attachment researchers go beyond the here-and-now description of the nature and types of love seen in the previous approaches reviewed. They have attempted "to situate love within an evolutionary framework . . . to explore how its infantile and childhood forms might be related to its adolescent and adult forms" (Shaver, Hazan & Bradshaw, 1988, p. 68-9). The findings from this research have helped demonstrate the effect early childhood experiences and relationship histories have on the quality and types of adult care-giving situations and interpersonal bonds.

In order to discuss romantic attachment in particular, it is necessary to provide a sketch of the ideas at the foundation of attachment theory in general.

Bowlby (1973) and Ainsworth (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters & Wall, 1978), were the primary architects of attachment theory. Attachment researchers have used clinical encounters, parent-child observation, and narrative interviewing of adults reflecting on childhood experiences to construct a model of parent-child attachment styles. According to Waters, Rodrigues and Ridgeway (1998), attachment security can be viewed as a set of expectations about others' availability and responsiveness in times of stress, which are organized around a basic prototype or script. Though particularly interested in studying the infant-mother relationship, both Bowlby (1979) and Ainsworth (1989) articulated the need for understanding how attachment processes and internal working models functioned throughout the lifespan and across different types of intimate relationships.

Bowlby originally studied attachment theory in order to understand human reactions to experiences of loss and separation (1969, 1973). Serving as a protective mechanism in times of stress, the attachment behavioral system was to be triggered in order to promote safety and survival. The child perceiving threat is thought to be able to seek the attention and support of a primary caregiver. The ability to seek refuge in another person, who is expected to be available, is thought to create a sense of basic trust of oneself and others in the world. This "secure base" (Bowlby, 1973) can lead to a sense of overall confidence, optimism, and self-efficacy specifically in being able to negotiate times of stress oneself and in being able to seek out others for assistance when needed (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Shaver & Hazan, 1993; Mikulincer &

Florian, 1998). According to Bowlby (1988), then, attachment security hinges on having two interacting representational models: the first is that others are generally reliable, available, and responsive in times of distress, and the second is the self is worthy of care. Bowlby laid out the various ways he believed one's representational models affected one's thoughts, feelings and behaviors throughout life (1973). Representational models guide expectations of the availability and probable responsiveness of others, attributions of the behavior of others in ambiguous situations, and attention and memory (Cassidy, 2000). Though the coloring of one's attachment security is formed in one's early experiences of caregiving, Bowlby believed that other meaningful interactions with significant others later in life would influence one's set of expectations about interpersonal availability (Bowlby, 1988; Mikulincer, Florian, Cowan & Cowan, 2002).

According to Bowlby, insecure attachment can be thought to originate in an early childhood that is characterized by the primary caregiver inadequately assisting the child in regulating affect, thus leaving the child with feelings of incapability when it comes to managing distress. The failure to develop adequate attachment behaviors and inner resources may leave the child at risk in regards to low resiliency and poor coping skills in life (Mikulincer & Florian, 1998). Insecurely attached individuals find it difficult to obtain social support, may alienate others, will feel helpless and guilty about their inability to rely on others, and may feel angry and resentful towards both past and present attachment relationships that were and are experienced as unsatisfactory

(Bowlby, 1973; Rholes, Simpson & Stevens, 1998). Underlying this experience is the belief and fear that others cannot be relied on in times of great need.

Ainsworth and her colleagues (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters & Wall, 1978) translated Bowlby's theory into an experimental situation and eventually articulated three styles of relationships to describe what they observed in their Strange Situation laboratory procedure. In this setup, infants were briefly separated from their caregiver and left in an unfamiliar situation. The resulting patterns of exhibited behavior allowed them to be grouped into three categories. The first group of insecure-avoidant infants did not seek comfort from their mothers upon reunion and failed to respond to and even avoided their mother's attempts to reestablish connection. Infants classified as secure confidently explored the laboratory environment and sought comfort from their returning mothers. Finally, anxious-ambivalent infants explored the environment in a limited fashion, were greatly distressed by the separation, and exhibited a mixture of anger and anxiety with the return of their primary caregiver. Subsequent work to investigate the relationships between infants and their caregivers has used Ainsworth et al.'s threefold typology as the standard model of attachment. However, there have been attempts to extend this model by proposing additional categories, such as Main and Solomon's (1986) D/disorganized-disoriented type.

Ainsworth (1989) believed that intimate attachment relationships in adulthood could be characterized by three principal behavioral systems—attachment, caregiving, and sexual. As Cassidy summarized:

The attachment system involves behavior organized around maintaining proximity to or contact with an attachment figure, particularly in times of trouble; the attachment figure serves as a “haven of safety” during such times. The caregiving system involves the organization of behaviors that provide care to another, again particularly in times of trouble. The sexual system consists of behaviors related to sexual activity. (2000)

Based on this conception of interacting behavioral systems, adult attachment researchers have sought to study how each independently operating system influences the other in the context of an intimate relationship. For example, within a given relationship, one system may take priority over another at a certain stage in the relationship (i.e. the attachment behavioral system develops more gradually over the first two years; Ainsworth, 1989, Hazan & Zeifman, 1994).

Making the leap to romantic relationships, researchers began observing that lonely adults would describe romantic problems in a way that suggested some continuity with dysfunctional attachment in early childhood (Weiss, 1973; Shaver & Hazan, 1989). Hazan and Shaver (1987) and subsequent attachment researchers in their mold addressed the lack of a theoretical framework demonstrated in prominent models of love relationships using taxonomies to explain individual variability. Hazan and Shaver came from the branches of personality and social psychology and wanted to approach this problem by

adopting Ainsworth's classification system to conceptualize the motivations and ways adults behave in romantic relationships.

Hazan and Shaver (1987; Shaver & Hazan, 1988) developed a method of investigation in which subjects were asked to choose from one of three paragraph-long descriptions that would indicate how they typically felt in romantic relationships. These items were meant to reflect Ainsworth's three attachment types modified for adult relationships—secure, avoidant and anxious. *Secure* attachment in this context is described as especially happy, friendly, trusting with the capacity to be accepting and supportive of partners despite their faults. *Avoidant* love is characterized by fear of intimacy, emotional highs and lows mistrust, and dissatisfaction. *Anxious/ambivalent* love involved obsession, desire for reciprocity that is rarely met, emotional lability, and extremes of sexual attraction and jealousy. With their introduction of the first self-report measure of adult attachment and their initial findings, Hazan and Shaver proposed that love styles reported by other researchers (Lee, 1973) could be better explained by their three attachment styles.

Studies comparing attachment styles with some of the prominent love taxonomies outlined above produced modest to moderate results (Levy & Davis, 1988; Shaver & Hazan, 1988). Secure lovers were positively correlated with experiencing all three of Sternberg's (1986) triangular components of love—intimacy, passion, commitment—to a higher degree than avoidant and ambivalent types. The secure style also was associated to higher levels of Lee's eros (passionate love/attraction to physical ideals) and agape (selfless and

altruistic love) and to lower levels of ludus (game-playing loving). Avoidant attachment was linked to high levels of ludus and lower levels of eros. Finally, anxious/ambivalent attachment styles were positively related to high levels of mania (possessive-dependent loving).

From initially focusing on the comparison of close-ended self-report measures assessing people's general attitudes towards love, the attachment field has evolved. Attachment researchers eventually began recruiting romantic partners as subjects (Simpson, 1990) and exploring experiences of relationship break-up (Feeney & Noller, 1992). Moving away from the structured methods of earlier studies, the 1990's saw a trend towards more open-ended approaches to romantic attachment research that asked for unbounded descriptions of oneself and one's partner, indirectly assessed for saliency of attachment issues, and attempted to counteract both experimenter demand and social desirability. For example, attempting to improve on the general trend of correlational models of attachment studies, Collins et al. (2002) attempted a prospective study of attachment. Their goal was to explore whether attachment style measured during adolescence would predict the quality of romantic relationships years later. The avoidant attachment style produced the most robust results, as demonstrated at a six-year follow up that found these individuals to have romantic relationships that were less satisfying than other comparison groups, as reported by both members of the couple. They were also assessed to engage in less adaptive relationship behavior, with specifically male avoidants found to be more withdrawing and aggressive. The anxious-ambivalent group produced

moderate results and seemed to be in the middle between the avoidant and secure groups in terms of relationship quality. Closer analysis of the secure group showed that secure males did not have relationship outcomes significantly better than their anxious-ambivalent peers, in contrast to secure women who had the best overall relationship ratings.

Bartholomew's research (1990; Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991) ushered in major advancements in the romantic attachment field, only a few of which will be discussed here. One development involved her demonstrating that romantic attachment styles in adults could be better explained by two continuously distributed dimensions: 1) view of self versus view of other and 2) positive view versus negative view. Another concerned her distinction between types of avoidant attachment into two groups of "dismissing" avoidants and of "fearful" avoidants (1990). Finally, Bartholomew's methodology included a mixture of multiple forms of measuring attachment. She acknowledged the difference between narrative attachment interviewing (utilized by Main and others; George, Kaplan, & Main, 1985) which concentrates its distinctions on "differences in communicational behavior and defensive style [which] are not necessarily noticed or acknowledged by the people who exhibit them" and self-report measures which "focus on conscious, potentially inaccurate summaries by a person of his or her own experiences and behaviors" (Bartholomew & Shaver, 1998, p. 29-30). Many of her studies would involve a combination of convergent peer and family reports, a revised form of Hazan and Shaver's self-report measure (1987), along with an interview similar to the Adult Attachment Interview

(AAI; George, Kaplan, & Main, 1985) and one focusing on close relationships (friendships and romantic).

Bartholomew's research led to the establishment of a four-category classification scheme (Bartholomew 1990; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991) of four prototypical attachment styles:

Secure - (positive model of self and others) Secure individuals have an internalized sense of self-worth and are comfortable with intimacy in close relationships.

Preoccupied - (negative self model and positive model of others) Preoccupied 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.

Fearful - (negative model of self and others) Fearful individuals are highly dependent on others' acceptance and affirmation however because of their negative expectations, they avoid intimacy to avert the pain of loss or rejection.

Dismissing - (positive model of self and negative model of others) Dismissing individuals avoid closeness because of negative expectations; however they

maintain a sense of self-worth by defensively denying the value of close relationships.

(in Bartholomew & Shaver, 1998, p. 31)

These four attachment types have been understood as being super-imposed on top of two underlying dimensions: a person's view of self (positive or negative) and a person's view of other (positive or negative). A related two-dimensional scheme involves the dimensions of dependence/anxiety over relationships versus avoidance/comfort with closeness.

Using these four categories, the caregiving, attachment and sexual systems (Shaver, Hazan, & Bradshaw, 1988; Ainsworth, 1989) that attachment theorists propose underpin close relationships have been researched. Kuncze and Shaver (1994) constructed a measure to assess the quality of caregiving in romantic relationships. The four factors that were produced were proximity/distance, sensitivity/insensitivity, cooperation/control, and compulsive caregiving. Their study found that while secures reported high proximity and sensitivity, dismissives conversely were found to be low on both these counts. Further, both secures and insecure did not register high on the compulsive caregiving scale, as opposed to preoccupied and fearfuls who also indicated low sensitivity. Marital satisfaction was found to be higher for securely attached spouses and for dyads where there was a high reported level of responsive care (a combination of proximity, sensitivity and cooperation) (Feeney, 1996). Exploring sexual behaviors, researchers found that avoidants were the most accepting towards

casual sex (Feeney, Noller and Patty, 1993), were more likely to engage in “one-night stands,” and endorse the attitude that loveless sex was pleasurable (Brennan & Shaver, 1995). Hazan, Zeifman and Middleton (1994) reported the results of a relatively large study of 100 adults who completed self-report measures of sexual experiences and attachment. They derived sexual styles from their results that paralleled the major attachment classifications. They found secure individuals primarily reported mutually initiated sex within a relationship and the enjoyment of physical contact. Avoidants were associated with sexuality indicative of low psychological intimacy and less enjoyment of physical contact. Finally, ambivalents reported not enjoying sexual behaviors that went beyond holding and caressing, though females did indicate involvement in exhibitionism, voyeurism and bondage.

Empirical testing has demonstrated how a negative model of the self leads to high levels of abandonment anxiety and a negative model of others may lead to avoidance efforts (Brennan, Clark & Shaver, 1998; Scharfe, 1996). In simple terms, dismissing and fearful people have a negative working model of others that results in less comfort with closeness compared to secure and preoccupied responders. Also, preoccupied and fearful persons’ dominant anxiety over relationships may be the result of a predominantly negative model of self. Securely attached individuals, by this scheme have both a positive view of self and others, and are equally comfortable with being close to others and are able to manage anxiety related to such relationships. There is an existing debate in the literature whether these attachment categories should be collapsed onto

underlying dimensions of a positive-negative self-other model or avoidance/anxiety tendencies (Fraley & Shaver, 2000).

The empirical findings of attachment research are too prolific to do justice to in summary form here (Cassidy, 2000; Fraley & Shaver, 2000 offer excellent reviews). In concluding this section on romantic attachment research, however let me be clear and state some assumptions that can be drawn from this literature. In general, attachment researchers presume that internal representational working models of the availability and responsiveness of others and the worthiness of the self are formed in childhood and are carried into adulthood where they play a role in close relationships. Specific configurations of internal working models can be translated into an attachment style that influences relationship outcomes by two general mechanisms (Bowlby, 1980; Collins, Cooper, Albino & Allard, 2002). First, the internal working models (of self in interaction with others) underlying attachment impact on perceptive, affective and behavioral processes in a way that increases difficulties in maintaining satisfactory relationships.

Research supporting this has shown securely attached individuals tend to have more optimistic beliefs about love relationships, were able to positively frame problems relating romantic coupling, and were more likely to be in marriage or cohabitation situations than those of insecure styles (Carnelley & Janoff-Bulman, 1992; Boon & Griffin, 1996; Hill, Young, & Nord, 1994). Of the few longitudinal studies that have been done (Kirkpatrick and Hazan, 1994; Klohnen & Bera, 1998, Crowell & Treboux, 2001) attachment security has been

suggestive of couple and marital stability. Conversely insecure attachment to be linked with a number of maladaptive interpersonal behaviors spanning the domains of general social perception and emotion regulation (Collins, 1996; Feeney, 1999), social support and caregiving (Collins & Feeney, 2000); interpersonal violence (Dutton, Saunders, Starzomski & Bartholomew, 1994), and coping with conflict (Feeney, 1998). Insecurity in attachment has also been related to desiring a greater number of partners in one's life, infidelity and higher frequency of romantic break-up (Simpson, 1990; Feeney & Noller, 1992; Kirkpatrick & Hazan, 1994; Miller & Fishkin, 1997).

The second mechanism of influence involves how these working models shape partner selection behavior. The research supporting mate selection and attachment is not conclusive, but some correlational studies demonstrate that within romantic couples secure individuals pair with other secures (Feeney, 1994) and avoidants (fearful) are matched with anxious (preoccupied) types (Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994). As Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) researched, in general, secure potential partners elicited stronger positive emotions than did any of the three insecure partners. Another consistent finding is that insecurely attached people are usually found to be in relationships with securely attached individuals, rather than another insecure type (Chappell & Davis, 1998).

Attachment research also involves the dissection of love relationships into separate component behavior systems, of which attachment is only one. This way of understanding love, is situated in a developmental bio-evolutionary context that has attempted to understand loving relationships in terms of

biological necessity. By taking a lifespan approach, attachment researchers have also been able to move beyond the documentation of love styles and propose causes for why individuals love across a spectrum of functionality. Also, as stated earlier, while attachment researchers do discuss the interaction of the three identified behavioral systems, their empirical research mainly targets the investigation of attachment behavior within relationships. This will separate romantic attachment studies from other kinds of research that attempt to empirically investigate romantic love more broadly.

Love's evolution

From talking about the developmental context that attachment research places romantic relationships in, it is a shift in scale to discuss the development of love relationships in an evolutionary context. Evolutionary approaches to studying human behavior stretch across various disciplines including biology, ethology, anthropology and various branches of psychology. Evolutionary psychology holds that:

...the human brain, the organ that realises the human mind, is no different from any other organ with an evolutionary function, insofar as the human brain too is a system shaped by natural selection to solve adaptive problems The human brain is largely a system of adaptations: an integrated system of features that evolved because their behavioural effects tended to help

maintain or increase the fitness of organisms whose brains contained those features

(Atkinson & Wheeler, 2004)

Evolutionary psychology occupies a somewhat prominent, albeit controversial place in the landscape of the social sciences. I will not devote much time to these arguments here, and will refer the reader to recent published debates on the merits and problems of evolutionary psychology (Buller & Hardcastle, 2000; Buss, 1995; Caporael, 2001; Davies, 1999; Gannon, 2002; Lloyd & Feldman, 2002; H. Rose & Rose, 2000; Sterelny & Griffiths, 1999). Here I will present the research application of evolutionary psychology to the topic of romantic love.

Evolutionary psychology approaches the topic of romantic love in the context of mating and the propagation of the species. Evolutionary theorists have attempted to fit romantic love into a more overarching scheme of human evolution and adaptiveness (Buss, 1994). Long-term relationships, including romantic ones, are seen in light of their function in aiding the solution of evolutionary problems of reproduction and survival. Thus, some overriding evolutionary concerns that guide mating relationships are the protection of one's potential sexual partners, suitability of mates for procreative reasons and protection of one's offspring (Sternberg, 1998a).

Buss has placed specific emphasis on the possible ways men and women have separately (due to innate differences) negotiated mating relationships within an evolutionary context. He outlined eight evolutionary goals of romantic love: resource display, exclusivity/fidelity, mutual support and protection, commitment

and marriage, sexual feelings, reproduction, resource sharing, and parental investment (1988). These goals, accomplished in the context of loving relationships, are ultimately geared towards increasing the chances for reproductive success. From this perspective, finding and keeping a mate requires one to display the resources they possess to this end. His research has attempted to attribute the distinct sexual strategies that men and women hold to the contrasting minimum obligation of parental investment between the two genders (9 months of gestation vs. one act of intercourse).

One study testing his hypotheses in 37 cultures (across 6 continents and 5 islands) found that men prefer women with the attributes of youth, physical attractiveness, good body shape, chastity and fidelity; while women desire men who exhibit economic capacity, social status, age, ambition, industriousness dependability, stability, compatibility, physical size and strength, good health, and commitment, among other attributes (1989). Buss (1988) also found that these preferences may change depending on whether a person is looking for a long-term relationship versus one more casual and short-term. His explanation is that across millennia females have traditionally looked for males who could provide the resources and support necessary to meet the high costs associated with her reproductive tasks. Men have preferences towards women who seem capable of successful reproduction. The differences Buss found between genders, regarding preferred attributes of a mate, were more apparent when self-report methods were used compared to what their behavior exhibited. Further research has also demonstrated different factors that influence some of the preferred

characteristics, such as the way levels of disease in a geographical area are positively correlated with the importance placed on physical attractiveness (Gangestad, 1993). On the whole, Buss argues that current mate selection preferences and differences he found “reflect sex differences in the adaptive problems that ancestral men and women faced when selecting a mate” (1995).

Buss (1995; Buss et al., 1992) has used his version of evolutionary theory to explain gender differences he found in relation to jealousy—in which men displayed greater psychological and physiological distress when prompted with or finding themselves in situations of partner sexual infidelity, often leading to drastic consequences. Women tended to be more affected by perceived emotional infidelity. Men cognitively were found to preferentially process and have greater memory recall for sexual infidelity, while women had evidenced the same tendency for emotional infidelity (Schutzwohl & Koch, 2004). Relatedly, using a forced dilemma survey Shackelford et al. (2002) showed that men, compared to women, found it more difficult to forgive a sexual infidelity than an emotional infidelity, and indicated that they would be more likely to terminate a current relationship in which a partner was sexually unfaithful than emotionally. For Buss, jealousy can be understood then as an adaptive solution meant to protect a relationship by alerting an individual to threats to a valued relationship. Conceiving infidelity as one of the main threats to romantic relationships, Buss has researched how jealousy adaptively functions to inspire “mate retention behaviors” (Shackelford, Goetz, & Buss 2005). Common examples of these behaviors, which Buss and colleagues measure with the Mate Retention

Inventory, are physical possession signals, emotional manipulation, and monopolization of time.

Because of its wide-ranging scope, evolutionary psychology's to romantic relationships addresses all three of the basic questions of love's nature, determinants and course. In the following section I will evaluate the utility of studying romantic relationships from a point of view of heritable functional adaptation to environmental problems over millions of years in regards to the usefulness of the answers it proposes to love's basic questions.

Love's chemistry

Helen Fisher has conducted a research program over the last decade to specify and locate some of the neurochemical correlates of the experiences of romantic love (2004). She has drawn on evidence from primate studies and paleontology research from diverse cultures to advance a view that the evolution of large-brained, helpless hominid infants brought about the imperative for cooperation in child-rearing between mother and father. Romantic love, typified by the experience of elation, intense labile feeling and obsessive focused attention on a beloved other, can then be thought of as evolving to facilitate a long-enough bond between women and men to conceive children. For Fisher, romantic love may function to usher in the potential development of the attachment drive, characterized by the experience of calm security between couples. She has investigated the biological drives that humans have (as well as some other

animals) to “prefer, pursue and possess specific mating partners” (p.47) and focused on the role of three neurotransmitters—dopamine, norepinephrine and serotonin. Employing functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) techniques, which essentially locate areas of increased blood flow when the brain reacts to particular stimuli, Fisher and colleagues investigated whether the obsessive and passionate nature of romantic love was due to elevated dopamine and/or norepinephrine levels and decreased levels of serotonin. By “scanning the brain” of men and women, involved in tasks, who were either reportedly happy in love or recently rejected by a loved other, she found support for the role of dopamine in the experience of focused attention, energy, concentrated motivation, and elation in romantic love. Her collaboration with her colleagues has also led her to postulate that romantic love be thought more of as a “primary motivational system in the brain—in short, a fundamental human mating drive” (p. 74).

In 2005, Fisher and her colleagues (Aron et al, 2005; Fisher, Aron & Brown, 2005) looked at the link between participants’ responses on the Passionate Love Scale (Hatfield & Sprecher, 1986) and their brain scans while looking at pictures of romantic partners while in an fMRI machine. This resulted in a link between passionate (romantic) love and activation of the subcortical caudate nucleus and ventral tegmental areas of the brain (caudate nucleus activation was correlated with higher Passionate Love Scale scores). These areas of the brain are largely responsible for dopamine transmission and are associated with mammalian reward and motivation. Fisher has interpreted these results as evidence for understanding romantic love as a motivational system, rather than an emotion,

that is distinct from the sex drive (lust). Fisher distinguishes what she calls romantic love, as being connected to two other distinct but related mating drives, lust and attachment. She has proposed studying the neurochemical model of increased testosterone in lust and elevated oxytocin and vasopressin in attachment.

While she has attempted to outline the role and interplay of neurochemicals in romantic experiences, she has admitted that the complex interactions of the lust, attachment and romantic love systems defy complete understanding at the current time. Stating that the relative strengths of the different systems also have to be explored, Fisher suggests that the romantic love drive may be stronger than the other two. Further, Fisher admits that there are a whole host of variables, including one's personal relationship history, developmental experiences, personal likes and dislikes, that combine to influence a "largely unconscious psychological chart" that guides who and when a person falls in love. In other words, these "love maps" and evolutionary imperatives towards finding suitable mates to reproduce with direct one toward the particular loved other. Her research is then an effort to understand the neurochemical underpinnings of what happens when these relationships are formed.

Along these lines, she has tried to understand the trajectory of romantic love's neurochemistry within mainly an evolutionary context. For instance, she postulates that the steady diminishing of romantic passion is correlated to lessening effects of dopamine (either through less distribution, desensitization or counteraction by other brain chemicals—p. 204.). Fisher believes:

This brain circuitry evolved to drive our forebears to seek and find special mating partners, then copulate exclusively with “him” or “her” until conception was assured. At that point, ancestral couples needed to stop focusing on each other and start building a safe social world where they could rear their precious child together (p. 205).

Fisher’s reading of evolutionary theory and related research has her postulate that our ancestral humans (some 3.5 million years ago) paired with a mate long enough to rear a single child through infancy (Fisher, 1992). She has discussed a kind of primitive divorce precedent that has helped evolve brain circuitry for short-term, rather than long-term attachment. Evolutionarily, she believes that ancestral divorce evolved in order to create the opportunity for serial monogamy, which allowed our ancestors to create beneficial variety for their lineage (2004, p. 134). Thus she understands the fickleness of human romantic love circuitry as evolutionarily programmed in order to allow for two complementary reproductive strategies in tandem—to allow for the mating and rearing of one set of offspring, while always being on the look out for potential other reproductive opportunities and resources. It is in this way that she accounts for the common ubiquity of philandering and cheating among monogamous creatures (Daly, Wilson & Weghorst, 1982; Black, 1996; Mock & Fujioka, 1990). As Fisher reiterates, “we were built to love and love again” (2004, p. 152).

Love's calculations

Thibaut and Kelley's interdependence theory (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978) has influenced relationship science by lending itself to empirical researchers who have taken its core ideas and used them to study all sorts of interpersonal processes (Karney & Bradbury, 1995). Interdependence theory assumes that people are bonded to and rely on each other for interpersonal rewards. Dependence can then be thought of as the degree to which an individual is able to rely on another to enable the achievement of rewarding outcomes and the gratification of needs; with commitment the subjective experience of dependence (Rusbult & Van Lange, 1996). A closely related way of thinking about relationships is in regards to social exchange (Blau, 1964; Homans, 1961). It understands personal relationships as involving a series of calculated negotiated exchanges. Crucial to interdependence and social exchange research applications is viewing romantic relationships in terms of rewards, costs, investments and comparison level for alternatives.

Social exchange theory (SET) and its variants have been used to explore close relationships and mechanisms of interpersonal attraction (Brehm, Miller, Perlman & Campbell, 2002, p. 158). SET emphasizes that relationships operate on a model of costs and benefits. It abides by the economic model principle that "how people feel about their relationships will depend on their perception of the rewards they receive from the relationship and their perception of the costs they incur, as well as their perception of what kind of relationship they deserve and

the probability that they could have a better relationship with someone else” (Aronson, Wilson, & Akert, 1999, p. 388). People seek relationships that they think will maximize their rewards while limiting the punishment involved, generally wanting to be rewarded in their areas of perceived insecurity.

One can then think of evidence showing couples’ matching tendencies across attractiveness variables as an application of exchange theorizing in mate selection (Price & Vandenberg, 1979). What is crucial is how an individual actually judges the attractiveness of personal relationships. Brehm et al. (2002, p. 158-161) explained that one criterion involves one’s idiosyncratic comparison level, which denotes the value one believes he deserves in dealings with others. Obviously these expectations are built on variables like past experiences receiving rewards and punishments in relationships. One’s satisfaction in relationships is measured by the standards associated with a personal comparison level. Relationships length is also determined by one’s comparison level for alternatives, which refers to a person’s expectations about the level of rewards and punishments that could be received in another relationship. Since all of these expectations and appraisals are highly subjective and implicit, there are many personal and situational characteristics that will affect these calculations, such as learned helplessness (Strube, 1988) and access to information (Rusbult & Martz, 1995). Also, those who are more satisfied in their relationships may spend less time assessing and attending to possible alternatives (Miller, 1997).

SET's findings have attempted to explain why satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) alone does not decide relationship outcome. When Albrecht and Kunz (1980) described the trajectory of divorce they showed that usually unhappiness is present long before one or both members of the couple decide to end the marriage. What changes is one's perceived accounting of the relationship's outcome (rewards minus costs) and comparison level of alternatives. Comparison levels of alternatives can be influenced by more global factors, such as cultural changes and socio-economic shifts that have little to do with any actions of either partner.

Regarding the fate of outcomes and comparison levels, "people usually fail to maintain the outcomes that lead them to marry" (Brehm, Miller, Perlman & Campbell, p. 174). This can be attributed to increasing lack of effort from both partners, over magnifying costs over benefits, increased intimacy that leads to increased vulnerability and exposure to harm within the couple, and unforeseen surprises (Miller, 1997).

Another factor to consider in one's relationship arithmetic is the level of investment in a present relationship. Using the Investment Model Scale, Rusbult et al. (1994, 1998) showed that one's investments, whether material or psychological, also impacts one's decision to stay in a relationship despite what comparison levels look like. In Rusbult's model, investments are anything people have put into relationships that they perceive they will lose if the relationship ends (1980, 1983, 1991). People's commitment to a relationship will then depend on "their satisfaction with the relationship in terms of rewards, costs, and

comparison level, their comparison level for alternatives, and how much they have invested in the relationship that would be lost by leaving it” (Aronson, Wilson, & Akert, 1999, p. 399).

In one study to test this model, she had undergraduates rate their heterosexual relationships every three weeks on the basis of their satisfaction level, what they thought of alternatives, and their degree of investment (1983). She found that each factor predicted both commitment to the relationship over time, as well as whether the relationship lasted. Van Lange et al. (1997) further tested the importance of Rusbult’s model by finding an association between relationship commitment and willingness to sacrifice for one’s partner that was related to a high degree of satisfaction and level of investment, along with a low quality of alternatives. Additionally, the model has been shown to predict relationship continuance and termination, perspective-taking by partners, and illusions of perceived superiority of one’s relationship over others’ relationships (Martz et al., 1998; Rusbult et al., 1998). A recent meta-analysis of empirical studies using the Investment Model, validated Rusbult’s original premise of the three factors of relationship commitment that lead to breakup decisions (Le & Agnew, 2003).

Taking a different point of emphasis to social exchange models, though originating from the same core interdependency ideas, is equity theory (Walster, Walster & Berscheid, 1978), which focuses on fairness in relationships. Instead of a model of interpersonal relationships in which a person aims to reap the most rewards possible, equity theorists suggest that the most stable and happy state

of a relationship is one in which both partners experience their contributions and benefits to be equal. Unhappy relationships then can be explained by feelings of inequity by one or both members of the couple—whether feeling underbenefited or overbenefited. People will then try to alleviate the relationship-experienced distress by attempting to restore a sense of balance. Individuals thus assess potential partners by estimating and feel increasingly attracted to the other's capacity to give and take proportionately in relationships.

While short-term inequities in love relationships are inevitable, what is particularly of concern is the couple's ability to detect and manage prolonged or sustained inequities. Research has also found the different ways equity principles work in casual and less intimate versus long-term close relationships (Hatfield & Rapson, 1993b; Kollack, Blumstein & Schwartz, 1994). In general, a looser form of accounting is done in the latter (designated as communal) as opposed to the former where a rule of equal ratio equity governs (designated as exchange). Members of familial and romantic relationships tend to be mainly motivated to respond to the other's needs, rather than focusing on restitution (Clark & Pataki, 1995; Mills & Clark, 1994).

Most of the research conducted to investigate the claims of equity theory has involved self-report questionnaires. In this form of relationship cost-benefit math, the traits that appear to be the most salient are: attractiveness, resources, resource (income potential), personality, knowledge and education, values and beliefs, and social status (Critelli & Waid, 1980). Walster, Traupmann and Walster (1978) conducted research with a questionnaire in *Psychology Today*

that tested equity theory in relation to extramarital sex. Their sample of 2000 revealed that feeling underbenefited in relationships is associated to an increased amount of extramarital relations, as compared to those who considered their experience in relationships to be overbenefited or equitable. This finding has been recently supported for wives, but not for husbands (Prins, Buunk, & VanYperen, 1993). Feelings of being underbenefited in relationships have also been associated to lesser sexual satisfaction in relation to the other two groups (Traupmann, Hatfield & Wexler, 1983).

While earlier cross-sectional designs supported the claim that equitable couples were happier and reported less relationships anxiety than their overbenefited and underbenefited peers (Davidson, 1984; Sprecher, 1988, 1992), more recent work using longitudinal and broader methods of inquiry have not supported equity theory as well. Particularly, Sprecher found that overbenefited subjects are not always associated with feelings of discomfort, anxiety, and reduced relationship satisfaction (1998). Buunk and Mutsaers found this to specifically be the case when partners who are now overbenefited once felt underbenefited in the past (1999). Some have contended and produced findings (Cate, Lloyd & Long, 1988) to support the view that “the overall amount of reward that people receive is a better predictor of their satisfaction than is the level of equity they encounter” (Brehm, Miller, Perlman, & Campbell, 2002, p. 179). In general, while equity may be modestly associated with current satisfaction and commitment, it is less able to forecast relationship stability (Sprecher, 2001).

The mixed results from this brand of research may suggest that while judgments of inequity are very important in relationships, there are individual differences that may influence a person's capacity to be more concerned with fairness than others. Thus while underbenefiting is usually related to negative relationship attitudes, overbenefiting is sometimes related to increased satisfaction and other times to relationship guilt and discomfort (Brehm, Miller, Perlman & Campbell, 2002, p. 180). Equity itself may also be more complex and difficult to measure due to the tendency for couples not to attend to its related issues when they are content (Holmes & Levinger, 1994). Also, as studies have shown, the way equity is measured changes as the relationship lasts longer (Sprecher, 2001). Grote and Clark (2001) have proposed a model based on their research that understands that perceptions of inequity initially arise out of feelings of distress and escalate along with it. Future research appears to be focused on understanding the other factors that may influence estimations of equity and inequity.

Love's observation

My review of the literature on married and couples observation will draw on recent published reviews that have focused on the trends and important contributions seen in this area of research over the last couple of decades. It is a branch of observational research heavily influenced by the family systems

perspective. My review will center on quite possibly the most prominent proponent and prolific producer of this brand of research, John Gottman.

To situate this literature, let me say that the empirical observational research on married and dating couples can be viewed as existing in at least a couple of different contexts. First is the cultural context that influences trends in marriage, divorce, monogamy, infidelity and overall relationship stability. While statistics have shown that the majority of people marry in their lifetime (Stewart & Bjorksten, 1984), recent rates of marital dissolution have been found to range between 50 to 66 percent, with subsequent remarriages as likely to fail (Castro-Martin & Bumpass, 1989; Cherlin, 1992). The second context is the clinical setting in which the majority of this research is done. The population that fuels this research is often a self-referred sample of couples reporting some form of relationship dissatisfaction. As opposed to the other forms of romantic love research reviewed previously, clinicians addressing prevention and intervention concerns drive this field's investigations. Thus it is difficult to read the literature from this field without the influence of this bias, for more observations about relationships. However, the limitations of studying couples in crisis for what they can demonstrate about the nature and course of love also presents benefits. The nature of this research is such that subjects represent a love relationship that is always observable (*in vivo*) and is usually more mature than the standard research pool of university undergraduates. Also, this clinical sample provides researchers to observe how relationships are viewed under the conditions of conflict and distress, widening the understanding of how current cognitive and

affective dispositions affect one's view of a love relationship's past, present and future.

One of the ways marriage has been subjected to empirical study is by assessing rates of marital satisfaction. A recent report found that since the 1970's the level of satisfaction in intact first marriages has declined (Rogers & Amato, 1997). To this point, evidence has shown that marital satisfaction, on average, drops significantly over the first ten years of marriage before declining in a more gradual rate (Glenn, 1998). Others have data that suggests that marital happiness takes on more of a U-shaped pattern, influenced in the middle years by the effect of raising children (Levenson, Cartensen, & Gottman, 1994).

Recently, Bradbury, Fincham and Beach (2000) reviewed the methods and findings of this growing type of research centering on both the "interpersonal processes that operate within marriages and the sociocultural ecologies and contexts within which marriages operate" and the measurement of marital satisfaction. They described the shift in marital research to observational studies in the 1970's and the continued effort to understand the micro-processes of couple interaction. One advancement that has been seen in this field over the last two decades is the emphasis on investigating the "less immediately observable aspects of marital interaction." I will review some of the important results.

Over time and with an increase in strain within the relationship, individuals in a couple may become more susceptible to taking less responsibility for their own behavior while becoming more critical of their partners. The accumulated effects

of this tendency can be destructive for relationships. Research has shown that women may be more vulnerable to this negative attributional style (Doherty, 1982). Wives who have tendencies to attribute couples' problems to "undesirable personality traits or negative attitudes were more likely to verbally criticize their husbands in the problem-solving discussion" and have an angrier response style. Other investigations in experimental settings have demonstrated that happier couples more frequently emphasize the dispositional causes of favorable behavior and situational causes for unfavorable events; unhappy couples exhibit the reverse tendency (Fincham & O' Leary, 1983). Also, under observation married couples' happiness tends to be more vulnerable to the presence of negative feelings and behavior, and exhibit a lower ratio of positive to negative interactions (Jacobson, Follette & McDonald, 1982; Gottman & Levenson, 1992). Gottman has done extensive work on the unfavorable effects of poor negotiation and management of negative affect within marital couples (1994).

The incorporating of social-cognitive ideas into the field helped to broaden the definition of marital satisfaction as an attitude that can be assessed independent of the valence of the evaluation (Fazio, 1995). This has helped researchers look at the possible mediating function of attitude accessibility on marital quality ratings. Fincham, Garnier, Gano-Phillips, and Osborne (1995) found that spouses whose marital attitudes can be accessed easily (relative to their spouses) reported more stable marital satisfaction over an 18-month period. Findings concerning marital cognition linked maladaptive interpretations (attributions) of partner behavior to couple satisfaction rates across cultures

(Sabourin, Lussier & Wright, 1991) and marriage deterioration (Karney & Bradbury, 2000). Bradbury and Finch (1992) described a pattern derived from coded marriage interaction videotapes where maladaptive attributions were related to the reciprocation of a partner's negative behavior (i.e., rejecting behaviors, hostility), specifically for wives. Observational, longitudinal and cross-cultural data has been published supporting demand/withdrawal patterns (Christensen, 1987) of marital interaction that are linked to declining rates of marital satisfaction (Klinetob & Smith, 1996; Heavey, Christensen & Malamuth, 1995; Bodenmann, Kaiser, Hahlweg & Fehm-Wolfsdorf, 1998). Bradbury, Fincham and Beach (2000) described a demand/ withdrawal dynamic:

whereby one spouse, typically the wife, criticizes and nags the partner for change, while the partner, typically the husband, avoids the discussion and disengages from the confrontation. According to this view, increased demands lead to increased avoidance, which in turn leads to increased demands for engagement, with the end result being a decline in marital satisfaction

Specifically Heavey et. al (1995) demonstrated that the withdrawal by men and the female-demand/male-withdraw pattern was able to predict the decline in marital satisfaction for the wives 2.5 years later. Observational methods that have been developed have allowed researchers to draw links between supportive behavior and changes in marital quality (Pasch & Bradbury, 1998).

Finally, observational studies of interactional styles have been able to link higher levels of negative reciprocation, anger and contempt to married couples reporting domestic violence.

Studying married couples over time, Gottman and Levenson (1992) were the first to use observational data to predict divorce patterns. Couples' physiological responses (heart rates, finger pulse) during interactions and the higher degree of negativity (versus positivity) exhibited were factors associated with divorce. On this last point, Gottman has described a pattern of how this negativity ensues between partners (1999). He specifically attributed the prevailing insidiousness of negative affect to a failure in the couple's ability to repair an interaction. His sequential analysis of marital videos led him to arrive at a common dysfunctional model in which a spouse will attempt to repair a problem with negative affect, and will be responded to with reciprocated negative affect. Subsequent examination of recorded marital interactions helped Gottman to identify another variable that is predictive of divorce, which is the presence of particular forms of negativity such as criticism, defensiveness, contempt and stonewalling (Gottman, 1993, 1994).

In a comprehensive review of the empirical study of marital processes, Gottman identified the seven patterns that have been consistently found across most of the prominent researchers in the field (1998):

- a) greater negative affect reciprocity in unhappy couples (which may be related to the failure of repair)

- b) lower ratios of positivity to negativity in unhappy couples and couples headed for divorce
- c) less positive sentiment override in unhappy couples
- d) the presence of criticism, defensiveness, contempt and stonewalling in couples headed for divorce
- e) greater evidence of the wife demand-husband withdraw pattern in unhappy couples
- f) negative and lasting attributions about the partner and more negative narratives about the marriage and partner in unhappy couples
- g) greater physiological arousal in unhappy couples

Gottman did acknowledge that what is presently lacking is an overarching theoretical model that would be able to synthesize what is known about these processes, explain how they are interrelated, and account for what is functional in satisfied and happy marriages. Later, in a review of the advances in the field during the 1990's, Gottman and Notarius (2000) highlighted the promising trends in the field, such as cross cultural and international observational studies of marital interaction (Van Widenfelt, Hosman, Schaap, & van der Staak, 1996), the observation of couples in naturalistic settings (such as mealtime, Hayden et al. 1998), and the focusing on positive affect.

Love's social cognition

Over the last two decades there has been an increased output from researchers attempting to understand social behavior from the vantage point of cognitive processes (Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Kunda, 1999). Social cognition has been defined as the study of how people “select, interpret, remember, and use social information to make judgments and decisions” (Aronson et al., 1999, p. 67). Social cognition researchers have combined the methods and insights from cognitive science and social psychology to understand interpersonal relationships and cognitive-affective processes. Some of the established empirically supported concepts, such as attributional processes, from this field have been used to understand romantic relationships. Though this field has not produced a major theory on love relationships, it represents one of the most prominent ways to study interpersonal relationships like romantic love.

Attributional processes in relationships have been studied to understand whether personality styles or characteristics can influence one's tendency to make attributions that harm or enhance the relationship. Attributions refer to the explanations people use understand the causes of their own and others behavior (Heider, 1958). People can emphasize external or internal circumstances in their attributions, and may use different attributional styles in accounting for their behavior versus others. Actor-observer effects and self-serving biases, and are among the attributional processes researched in terms of romantic relationships. For instance Schutz (1999) found that non-distressed married couples account

for conflict in a self-serving manner. Both partners attributed their own behavior to aspects that exonerated them, while blaming the other for starting the conflict. Findings also support the link between romantic partners' satisfaction and attributional patterns. Correlations were found between positive attributions and relationship satisfaction (Bradbury & Fincham, 1990), and conversely neuroticism, negative attributions and relationship dissatisfaction (Karney & Bradbury, 2000). In other words, happier couples tended to evaluate positive actions by partners using internal, stable and global attributions, and negative actions with external, unstable, specific attributions that enhanced the relationship (Brehm & Kassin, 1990). Unhappy couples display the opposite attributional pattern.

Brehm et al. (2002) summarized that social-cognitive research has helped demonstrate that as opposed to striving for accuracy in our relationships with romantic partners, people see in their loved ones the attributes and motives that they expect or want ("or that they want") to see (p.117). Social-cognitive perspectives assume the active role a subject takes in interacting with others and perceiving the environment. Thus, attention has been paid to the way one's personal attributes and motivations can facilitate or hinder abilities to accurately judge and perceive others (Thomas, 2000). Mashek and colleagues (2003) reported on the cognitive overlap that exists when subjects are asked to rate traits of self and romantic partners (versus non-close others). There is evidence that individuals perceive romantic partners to be more similar to them in personality attributes and agree with them more than they actually do (Sillars,

1998; Watson, 2000). This does not necessarily mean that relationship duration does not increase the accuracy of partner perception (Watson, Hubbard & Wiese, 2000). However, what is more salient than relationship duration may be the levels of interest and motivation an individual applies in understanding the loved other (Graham & Ickes, 1997; Thomas & Fletcher, 1997). Another promising way this research is developing is in its attention to a person's motivations in relationships.

For example, Drigotas (2002; et al. 1999) reported on the tendencies people have to shape their representations of romantic partners along particular lines. His Michelangelo phenomena represents an interdependent process in which romantic partners shape or sculpt one another in order to bring each other closer to their respective ideal selves. Key to this pattern is an underlying mechanism of behavioral confirmation, in which one's expectations of one's partner is facilitated by eliciting behaviors that confirm those expectations (Darley & Fazio, 1980; Harris & Rosenthal, 1985; Merton, 1948). In time one's partner's behavior may increasingly approximate and become aligned with one's expectations. A motivating factor in this interpersonal process is the striving towards one's ideal representation of self, which is indirectly enhanced by being in relationship with an ideal other. Using longitudinal designs, Drigotas (2002, et al., 1999) collected self-report data on a variety of couples (married and dating). The information gathered supported this Michelangelo model and linked partner affirmation to movement towards an ideal self-representation and further to positive relationship and personal well-being effects.

There is further research on how people's views of romantic partners depend on various expectation or ideals. This research suggests that relationship quality is improved by the more positive, as opposed to accurate, views of the other. Murray has conducted research on the positive illusions that people have concerning their partners (1999). She has found that faults of loved ones tend to be minimized, while "real" attributes that accord with what the subject would like the partner to be are emphasized and magnified (Murray & Holmes, 1999). According to this line of results, people's judgments of their partners are more favorable than the loved person's self-report estimations (Murray, Holmes & Griffin, 1996a). On the benefits of positive illusions, Murray et al. (1996a) described that these positive beliefs are associated with behaviors that help the relationship. Positive illusions about each other and the relationship may help buffer negatives and difficulties between the partners, and also lead both individuals to act in ways to maintain such idealized views. Idealizing beliefs may also work in a self-fulfilling manner. Murray et al. (1996b, 2000) found that idealization was positively associated with positive judgment of behavior, willingness to commit to a relationship and increases in self-esteem. Contrary to positive illusions, Murray and colleagues (2001) have also researched the effects of negative beliefs of the self on viewing others. Their results concluded that self-doubting and insecure individuals tend to underestimate their partners' affection and interpersonal qualities.

A different perspective on the cognitive processes underlying romantic relationships has investigated the degree to which partners "know" each other.

Swann's (1984; Swann, Bosson & Pelham, 2002) assumption of pragmatic accuracy proposes that social relationships are limited in scope and goals. This means that individuals must only achieve pragmatic accuracy, in accordance with their specific relationship goals, in their understanding of others. Gill and Swann (2004) collected data that showed that romantic relationship partners had greater accuracy understanding the views of their partners that related to specific relationship domains. This was as opposed to reporting aspects about their partners accurately that had less relevance for their relationships. Additionally, this pragmatic accuracy correlated positively with indices of relationship quality. Thus, for Swann, having an accurate view of one's partner is potentially possible, but only in circumscribed domains where there is increased relationship relevancy.

Appraising the empirical literature

My review of the relationship research literature shows the field's overwhelming reliance on self-report measures. Prominent examples of researchers or measures that rely on self-report questionnaires are Sternberg's triangular theory (1986, 1987), Hatfield's Passionate Love Scale (Hatfield & Sprecher, 1986), the Hendricks' Love Attitudes Scale (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986), Rubin's two-factor love and liking scales (1973), Lee's love styles (1977, 1988), romantic attachment styles (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Bartholomew, 1990), investment (Rusbult, 1993) and equity models (Walster, Walster & Bercheid, 1978), and evolutionary studies on jealousy (Buss et al., 1992) and romantic attraction (Fisher, 2000). The fields of marital observation and social cognition also routinely incorporate types of self-report questionnaires. For the most part, the use of these measures rests on certain assumptions about conscious awareness. Of course, it makes practical sense for researchers to focus on behavior and mental states that are readily accessible and observable to research participants. I have less of a quarrel with the employment of these measures, than I do of the way they are used. Their use leads to questions regarding both the *accessibility* of mental states and behaviors in love, and the *accuracy* of first person accounts.

By asking participants to reflect on their experiences in relationships, researchers make two assumptions—that the targeted aspects are accessible to conscious awareness and that people are reliable reporters of their inner life.

Since the first assumption is fairly self-explanatory it requires little clarification. Basically, when Hazan and Shaver (1987; Shaver & Hazan, 1988) presented their research participants with paragraph-long descriptions of ways of relating in romantic relationships, there is an implied assumption that these ways of relating (or attachment styles) were the kind of psychological contents that are accessible to conscious awareness. The same applies for self-report measures on jealousy in relationships (Buss, 1995; Buss et al., 1992), marital satisfaction (e.g., Spanier, 1976), commitment (Sternberg, 1986), and others. Once one assumes the accessibility of psychological states in romantic love, the next assumption of reliability or accuracy of first person reports follows.

To indicate by self-report that one communicates well with one's partner (from Sternberg, 1986, 1987) leaves open the question of this participant's response accuracy. If researchers do not assume the relative veracity of subject responses, they would have to account for the effect of inaccuracy or distortion. An investigator could then either measure these effects (e.g., social desirability measures) or conceptually study the phenomenon of report errors (as certain social cognition designs do). However, the standard in romantic love research seems to be to assume that participants' self-report of mental states as well as behavior is relatively accurate.

To give an actual example from the literature, Kim and Hatfield (2004) had a cross-cultural college sample complete the Passionate Love Scale (PLS; Hatfield & Rapson, 1993b), the Companionate Love Scale (CLS; Sternberg, 1986), the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS; Pivot & Diener, 1993), and the Positive and

Negative Affect Scale (PANAS; Watson, Clarke & Tellegen, 1988). With the Passionate Love Scale, Kim and Hatfield asked participants to think about the person they love most passionately and rating (on a 7-point scale) how true that statement is for them. An sample item from the PLS reads, “I would feel despair if _____ left me.” For this item, the researchers must assume that the person will rate their hypothetical level of despair as accurately as they can. To trust their results, Kim and Hatfield must also assume the relative accuracy of a participant’s conscious self-rating of passionate and companionate love feelings, as well as satisfaction with life and experience of moods. Beck, Bozman, and Qualtrough (1991) used an earlier version of the Passionate Love Scale (Hatfield & Sprecher, 1986) to study the experience of sexual desire. They had participants complete a survey with questions concerning the frequency of sexual desire, sexual activity without desire, desire without sexual behavior, intercourse, and sexual dreams. Of both of these studies, only the second one held that self-report accuracy was a limitation of the study. Their inclusion of a social desirability measure, however, only was used to explain reported sexual behavior and not sexual desire. Thus while the authors suspected a participant’s misreporting of sexual behavior, they assumed accuracy in indications of sexual desire.

This example is just one that shows the tendency for romantic relationship researchers to assume the accessibility of psychological states and the accuracy of first-person accounts of experience. These assumptions are the starting point for the research into love. In these two studies, not much attention is given to

considering that a person may inaccurately report the degree he would experience break-up despair or experiences sexual desire. Even if one grants that a person may not intend to provide a false self-report, isn't there the possibility that one's ability to consciously reflect on topics in the realm of romance and sexuality may lack accuracy? Variability in accuracy may involve the nature of the psychological aspect being targeted (the accessibility of certain mental states and contents), or other motivational reasons that I will discuss later. I am suggesting that the average level of conscious introspection assumed for participants in the majority of romantic love studies is implicitly set at a flawed mark.⁸

The various research approaches to romantic relationships, covered in this chapter, represent an attempt to primarily study the consciousness of love. By ignoring or insufficiently accounting for the role of unconscious processes in love relations, these approaches have limited usefulness.⁹ Many of these studies predominantly rely on self-report questionnaires that assume participant

⁸ Shedler, Mayman and Manis (1993) conducted a well-cited study that speaks to this very point. They found a significant number of participants' self-report measures of mental health did not correspond to clinician's ratings. This group of subjects was associated with significant health risks. The authors concluded that these subjects were illustrating a defensive denial of distress, which led to a kind of illusory mental health related to psychological costs and risk factors for medical illness.

⁹ Let me state here that my use of the term unconscious in this chapter is meant to broadly denote aspects of the mind "not realized or known as existing in oneself" and aspects of one's psychology "which a person is not aware but which have a powerful effect on his attitudes and behavior (*Oxford English Dictionary Online*). I will differentiate additional specific uses of unconscious in subsequent chapters.

responses reflect accurate accounts of psychological processes in love relationships. Relationship researchers have not sufficiently explored the degrees to which psychological aspects of love are even accessible to conscious awareness. Relatedly, this research minimizes the tendency people have to consciously or unconsciously inaccurately report on their thoughts, feelings and behaviors in love. As touched on in the social cognition relationship research (and to be discussed further next chapter), research subjects' reports on romantic experiences may be regularly subject to distortion and confabulation based on the everyday workings of the mental apparatus. The likelihood of this casts doubt on the reliability one can place in the kind of reasoning subjects indicate on questionnaires and during interviews. This is not to say that the reasons people provide for their love relationships in research studies are necessarily incorrect, but rather the current framework for investigating romantic love only allows for partial consideration of mental processes that may, at best, be partially knowable.

This narrowness confines how one can think about the varieties of romantic relationship experiences and outcomes. This can be seen most clearly in social exchange models where people are assumed to not only be consciously aware of their relationship motivations, but further share the similar pursuit of maximum gain. These approaches that people may seek less their maximum relationship benefit and still receive relationship satisfaction. In this cost-benefit model of romantic love, less than optimal relationship outcomes in a given contextual situation result from errors in relationship mathematics. This model differs from

an attachment one, which views secure attachment as the healthy mode of relationships. At the same time this perspective allows for the varieties of insecure attachments that provide less relationship flexibility, but no doubt are prevalent. Equity and investment models are prime examples of relying on a model of the mind that privileges conscious and rational mental life.

This research hardly considers the extent of what is involved in one's appraisal of relationship factors. This is specifically problematic if one considers that a participant's self-report of relationship commitment, benefits, equity and investment are subject to the limits of conscious awareness and rationality. In this category I would list everyday forms of cognitive distortion, faulty reasoning, and biases, not to mention unconscious factors that limit one's interpretive skills in relationships. In Chapter Two, I will discuss research demonstrating that people are limited in their awareness of what influences their evaluative processes and decision-making. In Part Two, I will discuss the dynamically unconscious influences on one's conscious awareness of mental states. For now, let me conclude that this reliance on conscious processes, minimization of unconscious mental life (including affects and conflicting motivations) and narrow conception of rationality and goal-seeking limit these social exchange approaches in their ability to address a range of relationship phenomenon.

Three other approaches that were covered in Chapter One need discussion. All three, like others discussed in this section also are limited in their scope of studying romantic relationships and their incorporation of unconscious processes. The observational studies of married couples, most notably

published by Gottman, have been enormously popular in the mainstream press. This has been partly due to his claims about predicting divorce among newlyweds. In one sense, the multi-modal methodology used is exceptional in its design to observe couples in videotaped interactions, coding for adaptive and maladaptive relationship behaviors. It joins the clinical and research realms in a way that produces empirically viable and experience-near data.

The problem with this approach to studying love is that it is only experience-near in relation to the investigators' point of view. These brief videotaped couple interactions get analyzed in a way that identifies behaviors as positive, negative and neutral from a third-party perspective. I am not raising questions about the correctness of the sequential coding. In the way I understand this research, distressed couples can be differentiated from nondistressed couples by the patterns they exhibit during these interactions. The issue is not whether something valuable is being captured in these taped interactions or, more specifically, in the way Gottman and others code them. The issue is more of understanding how to make sense of the meaning of these coded behaviors beyond categorization of positive, negative and neutral.

While this research is influenced by family-systems traditions, the published studies focus less on understanding such interactions in the context of what is known about couples and family therapy. Further this research does not take an approach that is necessarily exclusive to processes in love relationships. In this way, this research is similar to social cognition approaches that studied romantic relationships on the process level without a larger view of how these processes

function and develop within a more general theory of love relations. This research deals less with how the members of a couple consciously experience or understand such interactions or their antecedents. For this brand of research the issue is not that unconscious mental life is less emphasized, since it does not privilege conscious experience. In some sense, it embodies a behavioral emphasis on observable and quantifiable phenomena. Take for instance a recent publication from this brand of research, which is described as “a mathematical approach for modeling the prediction of divorce or marital stability from marital interaction using nonlinear difference equations” (Gottman, Swanson & Swanson, 2002). While offering a valuable method of descriptive behavioral analysis and relationship outcome prediction, this research has less to offer in understanding the nature, course and determinants of love.

Buss' evolutionary approach of mating is inadequate in its approach to romantic relationships in a variety of ways. This may be because his evolutionary approach clearly takes the long-view of the adaptive forest, and, by and large ignores the trees it contains. His approach is not necessarily fit to be included in this discussion since it is a study of sexual reproduction, via relationships, that may or may not include romantic love. Buss' evolutionary take on mating clearly implies a genetically-driven rationality that determines one's preferences in romantic partners. His studies on the evolutionary roots of mate selection, jealousy, and mate retention lead back to his guiding principle regarding the evolutionarily programmed sexual strategies that individuals use to ensure successful reproduction. Buss' approach has sought to study aspects of

relationships that concern either the entry into relationships or sexual relations or the attempts to keep a partner from leaving (mate retention). His evolutionary account explains the junctures of relationships—what motivates people to get into relationships, why people choose the people they do, and why relationships may dissolve and how people attempt to prevent this. The majority of his studies have been derived from self-report questionnaire data in which he tests certain evolutionarily inspired hypotheses (e.g. that men, relative to women find it more difficult to forgive perceived sexual infidelity than emotional infidelity).

The key to understanding the assumed, or in this case imposed, rationality on Buss' part is that he clearly begins with a stated premise. His mating studies operate under the premise of evolutionarily-supported gender differences in how one chooses, retains or leaves a mate. He assumes these differences in mate relations are consciously accessible and accurately reportable. His program of research can be viewed as an attempt to answer the fundamental question of the nature of love, which for him is reduced down to a means of motivated reproduction and propagation of the species. Similar to what I have said about social exchange models, Buss' model (of *sexual* infidelity threatening a *man's* reproductive interests and a woman's reproductive interests being threatened by a male's *emotional* infidelity) is a viable way of understanding relationships once certain premises, in this case evolutionary ones, are assumed.

Buss' model of mating relationships only works if one assumes two things: first, the optimal relationship goal that all people strive for is reproductive success; second, people must have some conscious awareness of the feelings

and ideas related to this motivation. His questionnaires contain forced-choice scenarios that by nature delimit the context for discussing mating relationships. For example, participants are asked to consider which kind of infidelity (emotional or sexual) is more disturbing. This is as opposed to querying to what degree emotional infidelity is a priority for them. Buss' model, with its emphasis towards reproductive success prioritizes infidelity as a relationship threat to a degree that may or may not be congruent to the average participant. I am not supposing that infidelity is not a threat to relationships, but rather suggesting that Buss' model contains a certain kind of presumed rationality for his participants' relationships. In it, the optimal goal of reproductive success is consciously realized and aspired towards through fairly consistent ways. To not assume this would then have to extend the limits of his investigation, as others have done (DeSteno & Salovey, 1996; Levy, Kelly, & Jack, 2006), to understanding jealousy as related to other factors (attachment, the covariation between both types of infidelity) that are less tied to gender related reproductive strategies.

As has been the case with my critique of other models, one cannot be clear whether Buss' evolutionary relationship motivations are best considered unconscious or conscious. This is not an issue of importance to him, but one would have to assume that he believes that it is an ever-present genetically programmed influence-whether explicitly or implicitly experienced. Reading his studies, one would imagine all relationship dimensions could be reduced to how they affect reproductive potential. However, by relying primarily on self-report questionnaires, one would have to assume that Buss takes for granted that

people have some access to these evolutionary designs and can reliably report on them. In summary, this approach narrows the terms of understanding relationship dynamics, which may be necessary in a wide-reaching evolutionary program. At the same time it limits the degree to which one can consider other salient relationship factors that do not correspond to clear-cut evolutionarily adaptive motivations, as well as unconscious ones.

Also coming from an evolutionary approach, Fisher has directly proposed a model of empirically-based research that would encompass an understanding of romantic love. As described in the earlier section, her tripartite model describes three primary emotion systems of lust, attraction and attachment that correspond to the evolutionarily-prioritized functions of mating, reproduction and parenting, respectively. Her research program has attempted to identify the brain mechanisms involved in each system, and, in a sense, demonstrate the biological underpinnings of the psychological processes implicated in romantic love. While her research has focused particularly on the attraction component of romantic love, her work represents an attempt to subsume some of the other forms of romantic research within the context of her bio-evolutionary framework.

As far-reaching as Fisher's model seems to be in accounting for the different dimensions of romantic relationships, it is best understood as describing the neurochemistry of love. In positing love's three independent affective-motivational systems she has laid out a design for understanding romantic relationships on primarily a biological basis. Fisher, in some sense, leaps from her evolutionary explanation of mating, reproduction and parenting to the

possible underlying brain chemistry correlates. What is ignored, as in Buss' research, is an accounting of how the individuals' supposed evolutionarily adapted agenda is translated into a human psychology.

It may be an extreme characterization of Fisher's approach to say that it attempts to reduce the experiences involved in romantic relationships to their underlying brain mechanisms. In this way, she could be critiqued for upholding the dualistic mind-brain divide. The extraordinary advances in the world of neuroscientific mapping techniques are important for furthering understanding human psychology. However, the terms of investigating and understanding one's psychological experience versus the brain chemistry that produces such phenomena are distinct.

By respecting the different terms of what I believe are different discussions, one can appreciate Fisher's work in terms of its usefulness in identifying parts of the brain that may be implicated in romantic processes. Of course, it is important also to appreciate current understandings of brain science which have moved away from localizing specific parts of the brain as being solely responsible for certain functions. Understanding all of this, Fisher's approach is useful in its effort to further substantiate theorized aspects of love by demonstrating whether such ideas agree with existing knowledge of how the brain works. It only runs the risk of being reductionistic if used to draw conclusions about cause and effect, where one's subjective experience is *only* viewed as the result of neuronal firing. In that way, I can say that Fisher does appear to focus on the brain in

love, rather than the mind-brain, or even more appropriately the “embodied mind” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999).

The same human experience can be studied psychologically and neurobiologically. What is important is establishing and making clear the level at which one intends to study such phenomena, and not losing sight the need to integrate in a unifying framework the various levels at which human experience is investigated. My critique of Fisher’s model is not only her scant view of unconscious processes, but also her slight treatment of the conscious experience of love. The only way that one can conceive of her fMRI studies as studying unconscious processes would be in a radically descriptive and literal sense. Her research would be studying unconscious processes only in the sense that one is not experientially aware of how and when one’s brain hormones and synapses become activated. Fisher’s approach to love is a neurobiological one that studies love’s psychology from a particularly non-psychological point of view. Though her studies have used self-report questionnaires (Hatfield’s Passionate Love Scale) to measure subjects’ level of passion, the main focus of her research strays from the subjective experience of people in love. To be fair, Fisher is not a psychologist (but rather is an anthropologist), and has made no claims to necessarily be targeting the psychology of love. However, she has used the psychological literature as a basis to form her tripartite model motivational drives in intimate relationships.

Fisher’s approach to love is to understand the architecture and workings of the brain in love. In other words, it offers insights into whether the brain is

capable of accommodating the psychological factors of love that have been proposed. In her attempt to demonstrate the neural correlates of romantic love, lust and attachment she has endeavored to display which areas of the brain may or may not be involved and in which ways. It is arguable whether this gets too far away from subjective experience in the quest for mapping the brain in love.

There is a great difference between investigating a person's subjective experience and noticing brain activation when a person looks at relationship words or pictures in an fMRI machine.

Biological structure, to be sure, determines the nature of our conscious and unconscious romantic lives. In 1915, Freud warned against the misguided efforts striving to localize mental activities, or aspects thereof, in parts of the brain (1915b). Referring to his own conception of mental systems, he wrote, "our psychical topography has for the present nothing to do with anatomy; it has reference not to anatomical localities, but to regions in the mental apparatus, wherever they may be situated in the body." To put this in another way that others have discussed (e.g., Eagle, 1984), neurochemistry enters one's psychological world by being represented in thoughts, perceptions, feelings and wants). Fisher is targeting, at the level of brain function, the machinery that makes the mind operate. Her level of investigation is separate from the study of the representational components of personality that are derivatives of the biochemical underpinnings of the mind she researches.

Rather than reducing psychological processes in love down to their biological correlates, I can envision a mutually benefiting relationship between brain

science and social science. The value of researching love at this different level of phenomena may be its potential for “constraining theories of psychological functioning” in love (Westen & Gabbard, 2002a). The psychological registration and management of various aspects of love must have some biological parallel. However, it is a confusion of discourse to think of biological causes in the same sense as motivational reasons. The best future path of love research would involve as many research approaches using the unique insights of each other to mutually inform, guide, explain and limit the extent and range of inquiry and findings. I will further discuss these points later in this paper.

The two last approaches I will now discuss are ones that have researched love by broadening the scope of their psychology inquiry to focus on experiences in love that are not always readily conscious. The social cognition and attachment research offer the best attempts to understanding love in terms of unconscious processes. However, even these two fields of inquiry have questionable aspects regarding both the scope of their approaches to love and the nature of unconscious processes they assume.

The social cognition approaches reviewed do not represent a theory of romantic relationship functioning. They investigate romantic relationships by focusing on discrete forms of interpersonal information-processing. Thus, as informative as this research is, its scope is restricted to the local or micro level. Though in the past social cognitive approaches could be said to rely on cognitive explanations for phenomena (see Westen, 1992), the research on love has demonstrated a further integration of the motivational and affective components.

However, it can still be said that this type of research fails to take a larger view of the history, personality and the psychological world of the person whose social information processing is being studied.

For example, Drigotas has empirically documented unconscious interactional relationship processes by which “the self is shaped by a close partner's perceptions and behavior” (Drigotas et al., 1999). However, his Michelangelo phenomenon, described earlier, is more of a study of a micro-process in relationships. While this process has been contextualized in a particular theory of cognition and motivation (Aron & Aron's self-expansion theory, 1996), this style of research appears less concerned with how these processes fit into a larger understanding of individual and relationship psychology. This style of research is more concerned with documenting that such an interpersonal process like the Michelangelo phenomenon exists, rather than anything particular about romantic relationships. This research insufficiently examines what this process suggests about the nature, course and determinants of romantic relationships. It would seem that this phenomenon is proposed as a normal one found across varieties of romantic relationships. However, there is a minimal attempt to understand if this mutual process of facilitating each partner's move towards their ideal is a fundamental motivation in romantic relationships or across all relationships. Social cognitive research still suffers from its lack of grounding in any particular personality or developmental theory to explain how its rich experimental data of information-processing, occurring on unconscious and conscious levels, corresponds to basic needs. In this way, social cognition

approaches are properly embedding and linking themselves with larger theoretical constructs in order to properly explain the micro-level descriptive research they produce (e.g., self-expansion theory, interpersonal psychoanalytic theories, etc.).

Another limitation about the social cognition approach to unconscious processes in romantic relationships is its purely descriptive focus. In other words, these researchers understand that processes occur outside awareness for non-motivational reasons. This is not to say that researchers have not suggested motivations for processes like the Michelangelo phenomena. However, no thorough rationale is given for which aspects of certain social cognitive processes are conscious and unconscious. Processes seem to occur unconsciously because they are designed to for presumably adaptive efficiency's sake (as Wilson (2002) has suggested).

For another problematic point, while the processes are speculated to be unconsciously occurring, researchers measure them through self-report questionnaires, revealing that subjects are at least somewhat consciously aware of such processes. In the Michelangelo phenomena example, partner affirmation and movement towards one's ideal self are measured by assessing the participant's conscious awareness of these variables. The authors claim, "It is important to note that our measures of partner affirmation tapped self-reported affirmation rather than partner reported affirmation. As noted earlier, we adopted this approach because we believe that partner affirmation frequently results from unconscious and automatic processes" (Drigotas et al., 1999). I question the

degree of inference these authors are assuming. Put another way, it is not entirely clear what type of unconscious process is occurring that allows for conscious reflection.

Perhaps a better test of the unconscious form of the Michelangelo phenomena would be to measure aspects that were not conscious to subjects' awareness that researchers had confirmatory evidence of (videotaped interactions, partner reports). As it stands, the social cognition approach offers a valuable way of targeting romantic relationship processes that occur outside awareness. However, their methods still rely on degrees of introspection and reflection that would assume a certain transparency of mind. Further, while serving as an empirically viable way of understanding discrete interpersonal processes, social cognition models still seem better served when embedded within a larger theoretical paradigm that can satisfyingly explain the micro-level observations being studied.

The second offering from the relationship literature that incorporates unconscious aspects is romantic attachment studies. This approach incorporates the role of internal working models that act as cognitive-affective-motivational schemas in attachment contexts. From the attachment literature it would seem that these models are thought to operate largely outside the realm of conscious awareness (e.g., Bowlby, 1973; Bretherton, 1985; Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy, 1985). While it may be the case that attachment behaviors and strategies are automatically activated in a fashion that would seem unconscious, for the most part internal working models in romantic love have been investigated

through exploring participants' conscious awareness of these mechanisms. Others have paid attention to the differences between the use of semi-structured attachment interviews and self-report questionnaires (Bartholomew & Shaver, 1998). An entire issue of the journal *Attachment & Human Development* (Vol. 4 No 2 September 2002) was devoted to exploring various conceptual and methodological issues between these traditions of measuring attachment. One of the central questions discussed was the potentially different aspects of attachment that these measures target. Some have articulated the difference as being between tapping the "unconscious processes of regulating emotion" (in the case of attachment interviews) and tapping "conscious appraisals of romantic relationships" (in the case of self-report questionnaires) (Jacobvitz et al., 2002).

It has been pointed out that despite claims that proper attachment assessment requires the use of interviews that are able to study unconscious defensive processes, no research exists supporting the superiority of interviews over self-reports in predicting attachment behavior (Bartholomew & Moretti, 2002). Further, there is little empirical evidence showing that attachment interviews tap what can be considered unconscious processes (Bartholomew & Moretti, 2002; Shaver and Mikulincer, 2002). A familiar claim made against the use of self-reports in attachment research is that they are limited by only accessing consciously aware material. Research subjects are asked to endorse various attachment-related statements or to choose descriptions of relationship behavior that best typify them (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Simpson, Rholes, & Nelligan, 1992). I echo this suspicion about the limited scope of self-report

questionnaires along these lines. In response, attachment researchers are quick to point to the wealth of data in which behavioral and observational measures are used to support self-reported attachment behavior (e.g., Collins & Feeney, 2000; Simpson et al., 2002). These studies, some of which occur in naturalistic settings, provide evidence that people who endorsed a particular type of self-reported attachment style will exhibit the predictable corresponding attachment behavior. For example, coded videos of primed participant couples in waiting-rooms showed that avoidantly-attached people displayed more negative emotions, irritation, and criticalness than less avoidant subjects (Campbell, Simpson, Kashy & Rholes, 2001).

Even more salient for my purposes is the way attachment researchers have embarked on the empirical testing of unconscious attachment processes. Over a series of studies, Mikulincer and various collaborators have combined self-reported attachment data (dimensionally measured) and techniques (measuring response times and performance on cognitive tasks, observational, priming, projective measures) aimed at demonstrating unconscious processes. In one study, Mikulincer and colleagues (1990) found that self-reported anxiously avoidant individuals reported low levels of death anxiety when this was directly questioned. However, they demonstrated elevated levels of this same construct of death anxiety, when it was unconsciously measured using the Thematic Apperception Test. This serves as a form of empirical evidence of the avoidant person's tendency to consciously distance from a source of distress that is unconsciously experienced. More related to the present topic, Mikulincer and

Arad (1999) explored the connection between the accessibility of attachment working models on cognitive openness. They found that secure attachment was related to higher cognitive openness allowing secure people “to react to incongruent behaviors of a partner in a flexible and adaptive way.” This is as opposed to the more rigidly accessed and held representations of less-secure people.

In summary, attachment research, conducted primarily through self-report questionnaires, seems to be better at predicting romantic attachment behavior than interview measures (which intuitively seem to be better equipped at taping unconscious attachment schema). Attachment researchers studying romantic relationships have been able to incorporate various techniques (including using subliminal word presentations) to prime unconscious attachment states. They have targeted unconscious processes in order to demonstrate the disconnect between one’s conscious awareness and underlying intrapsychic processes. This is represented in the avoidantly-attached person’s conscious denial of needing love and support on self-reports, while indirect measures (such as projective and physiological) demonstrate the heightened activation of attachment themes (Dozier & Kobak, 1992; Mikulincer, Florian et al., 1990; Mikulincer, Gillath & Shaver, 2002). Even more impressive is the number of these studies conducted in experimental and naturalistic conditions.

Romantic attachment research has produced valuable results and evidence regarding behavioral and emotional regulation in close relationships. That being said, the limitations of this research relates to both the nature and the scope of

the attachment system. In terms of what is being measured, what attachment researchers are demonstrating seems to be preconscious, not unconscious, awareness of attachment. Considering the three major styles of attachment, Secure, Anxious and Avoidant, only a person categorized as avoidant is assumed to have an inaccurate or inaccessible view of attachment needs. Secure types, by virtue of their self-reported attachment ratings, understand that they need not get anxious nor avoidant about attachment-related themes. The anxious type has enough insight to endorse attachment-related items reflecting high levels of anxiety about close relationships. It is the avoidant type that consciously dismisses attachment needs which are nevertheless highly operative and easily activated.

These self-report measures do not tap unconscious processes, but rather thoughts, feelings and attitudes about attachment that are available by effortful degrees of turning one's attention to them. As Shaver and Mikulincer correctly put it:

Social psychologists and others who use self-report measures view them as convenient surface indicators of differences in attachment-related cognitions, emotions, and behavioral tendencies which are partly unconscious, indicators that can be examined *in relation to more direct measures of unconscious processes* to see whether those processes work the way attachment theory leads us to expect. [their italics] (2002)

Attachment researchers are gathering attachment thoughts, feelings and attitudes that are available to the surface of consciousness. In this way, this research is not so different from the social psychological research on romantic relationships (e.g., Sternberg, Hatfield, Lee's models). What distinguishes this research are its demonstrations of the ways that attachment processes are proposed to work implicitly (i.e., can be triggered outside one's awareness). Self-reported attachment data are the conscious indicators or proxies for how one's attachment system works. I believe it is correct to think that attachment concerns are consciously or preconsciously available. The fact that the attachment status is organized around how people consciously report their attachment-related attitudes, thoughts and feelings reveals that individuals are assumed to be more or less consciously aware of their attachment functioning, unless there is reason for them not to be (avoidants).

With research showing that attachment involves processes outside one's awareness, it seems to be an aspect of human life that lies at the intersection of conscious and unconscious mental systems. While this literature has demonstrated the different unconscious ways that emotion-regulating attachment behaviors are triggered, important work still needs to be done investigating the separate but interacting realms of conscious and unconscious attachment. In my judgment, those who register high on attachment-related avoidance have been researched the most along these lines. One may even want to order the three main types of attachment dimensionally at levels of conscious awareness at which attachment needs are operative and knowable. In other words, one could

say that anxiously attached individuals may experience attachment needs consistently at an all-too conscious level, secure types at a preconscious level, and avoidant types at an unconscious level. More research is needed to outline how various attachment-related dynamics become conscious or unconscious, and the differences, if any, between the two systems. In the literature, the conscious and unconscious levels of attachment are not differentiated or integrated enough, except for in the case of avoidants. Only the accounting for the internal dynamics of avoidants, whose attachment needs are defensively relegated unconscious and denied access to consciousness, has demonstrated the complexities of both systems. Is one to think that it is only in the case of avoidant attachment that the unconscious takes on a complexity, not needed in thinking about secure or anxious attachment? This brings up the question of the nature of unconscious processes—are they simple, unsophisticated and unconnected to psychoanalytic conceptions, as some have argued (Greenwald, 1992; Kihlstrom, 1990)?

The other limitation for this brand of research is its scope, discussed by attachment researches themselves. As Fraley and Shaver (2000) discuss there are problems with how attachment theory has been used to research romantic relationships. One such problem involves whether all romantic relationships can be considered “attachment relationships” in the strict sense, the relevancy of proximity maintenance, safe haven, and secure base issues being prevalent. If a romantic relationship does not involve the use of the partner as an attachment figure then this may change the applicability of attachment theory to these

romantic relationships.¹⁰ Thus attachment research has to be viewed as a way to study attachment behavior within romantic relationships, rather than a study of romantic love proper. This brings up the issue of whether the attachment literature is broad enough to study romantic love.

One must only consult reviews from within the attachment literature to see the various difficulties attachment research and theory is confronting in stretching the model to accurately account for the nature, determinants and course of romantic love (Fraley & Shaver, 2000; Stein et al, 1998). Some of the current difficulties faced by attachment researchers seeking to explain romantic love involve: the unresolved distinction between romantic attachment behavior and romantic love; the accessibility of the adult attachment system; the under-researched interplay between attachment and the other behavioral systems of care-giving and sexuality in romantic relationships; and deciding what qualifies as a romantic relationship versus an attachment relationship and what this difference means. I was previously articulated my strongest criticism regarding the further work needed to explain distinctions between conscious and unconscious levels of attachment functioning. The same differentiation would be eventually required to explain the postulated care-giving and sexuality systems; furthermore to explain how they interact with the attachment system in romantic relationships. While I

¹⁰ This raises a more general issue that has not reached any form of consensus in the research literature regarding standards for what is considered a romantic relationship. Many studies impose somewhat arbitrary specifications of the number of months for a relationship to be considered a romantic relationship or a dating relationship suitable for study. Depending on what kind of relationship phenomena one wants to study, it is arguable how to determine which standards can be used to designate what qualifies as a “romantic relationship.”

am aware of some research addressing this (e.g., Mikulincer & Goodman, 2006), more direct investigation is needed before the attachment theoretical claims become further removed from the empirical evidence.

A concluding note

The research I have covered in this chapter represent ways that investigators have sought to study the psychology of love via its biology, evolutionary place, consciousness, and interpersonal observable processes. In addition, love researchers have designed taxonomic systems of love and attempted to demonstrate the implicit aspects of relationship functioning. While these different approaches each have some contribution to make regarding what is involved in people's experience of romantic relationships, each is too limited in scope to serve as a comprehensive framework for understanding love. Some of these drawbacks are due to research approaches taking various degrees of myopic viewpoints. As a result, the literature is confined by researchers operating under the influence of various kinds of reductionistic principles (i.e., evolutionary approaches considering love as a means to survival and reproductive ends).

This myopia of research viewpoints results in the empirical approaches to investigating relationship psychology providing only partial ways of researching all that is involved in adult love relations. Thus the research literature becomes populated with a growing number of studies, which talk past, envelop, repackage, contradict and remain isolated from each other. In the conclusion to a recent volume on the state of the romantic relationship literature field, one of the editors concluded:

...there are still no specific definitions, and there is a lack of a common conceptual vocabulary of love to allow for unambiguous discourse about love. When engaging in such a scientific discourse, it is important to make sure that everybody talks about the same thing and has the same understanding when talking about a certain concept. When people talk about romantic love or attachment love, do they really have the same concept in mind? At this point in the development of the field of love, such clarity of terms does not necessarily exist. It presents one area where more research is needed to reach a convergence.... (Weis, 2006, p. 320)

Despite the lack of coherency and agreement, collective limitations and individual shortcomings, I believe that these studies do provide information regarding the nature, course and determinants of romantic love. Probably the best way to view them is as representing distinct levels of inquiry into romantic relationship phenomena, including, among others, brain function, couple's interactions, social cognitive information processing, and attachment representations.

As I have argued, the level of inquiry that has been the most neglected in research attempts to investigate love is that of the unconscious psychological functions in love. In my estimation, the attachment and social cognition psychological literature on romantic relationships reflect the necessary inclusion of unconscious mental functions lacking in the rest of the research field. While limited in their own ways, they still offer the most promising attempts to address the needed aspects of conscious and unconscious romantic processes.

A study of unconscious mental processes in love represents a needed dimension of research to the present field. The various romantic love models in this chapter lack both theoretical and empirical efforts to structure disparate ends of investigative inquiry. The study of unconscious romantic life is a necessary corrective to this. By offering a more comprehensive understanding of the mind in love, a unified framework can be established to research and conceptualize all levels of relationship psychological phenomena. In Chapter Two, I will discuss research approaches, outside of the romantic love field, that support the general importance of investigating unconscious psychological functions. This will further develop my aim for the end of this study: to articulate a framework for a comprehensive research program studying the interplay between conscious and unconscious romantic relationship psychology.

CHAPTER TWO: The limits of conscious awareness

Only a theory that explained conscious events in terms of unconscious events would explain consciousness at all.

Daniel Dennett from *Consciousness explained* (1991)

I ended the last chapter contending that the romantic relationship empirical literature suffers from too narrow a view of the mind in love. Beginning with a model of the mind as relatively transparent and knowable to conscious introspection can lead to the idea that people correctly know their reasons for loving who they do, why they do and how they do. I do not question whether a kind of rational logic can be used to understand romantic relationships. However, the notion that the factors in love can be reasoned about does not ensure that this kind of reasoning actually takes place in romantic relationships. Nonetheless, the empirical literature consists of researchers asking subjects to indicate preferences and explanations of their romantic relationships based on the assumption that people can do this accurately. The accumulated research that I will review in this chapter, both from within psychology and neuroscience, confirms the limitations of privileging a model of the mind that is fundamentally rational and aware of its own workings.

Lest one think that the investigative neglect of unconscious romantic life is merely an intentional decision by social science researchers, let me offer some thoughts on the impediments to studying unconscious processes. To be sure, the

status of the unconscious has been controversial for psychologists, especially experimentalists (Erdelyi, 1985; Weinberger & Levy, 2005; Westen, 1992). The tenuous place of unconscious processing in academic psychology is contrasted by its long history. One can find strands of empirical research on mental processes occurring outside awareness, while still influencing conscious functioning, throughout the 20th century, if not before. From the pre-Freudian work of 19th century thinkers like William Hamilton, Thomas Laycock and William Carpenter, one can derive the understandings that: lower-order mental processes occur outside of awareness; people can consciously attend to one thing while nonconsciously processing another (divided attention); thinking can become so habitual as to occur outside of awareness; emotional reactions can occur outside of awareness until our attention is drawn to them; and that habits acquired early in life become an indispensable part of one's personality.

Up until the last few decades, unconscious processes were either ignored entirely by psychologists (as with the rise of American Behaviorism) or studied in ways that disavowed links to its psychoanalytic lineage. Though areas of research on unconscious processes, such as subliminal perception (see Dixon, 1971), have surfaced, only recently has it become a viable area of empirical study.¹¹ As recently as a little over twenty years ago, one could find major academic journals in psychology openly doubting and rejecting research submissions on the existence of critical mental faculties occurring outside awareness (Beier, 1985). Aside from ambivalence towards psychoanalysis and

¹¹ Many full-scale reviews exist on the research on unconscious processing (e.g., Bornstein, 1999; Erdelyi, 1985; Schacter, 1992; Westen, 1998).

an outright rejection of its central tenets, methodological dilemmas have also led to the lack of research activity in this area of psychology. It was recently suggested that to empirically demonstrate repression, one would have to construct a methodology that would illustrate: that people are motivated to keep thoughts, feeling, or memories outside of awareness; that the attempt to keep material out of awareness is itself an unconscious process; that people succeed in removing the undesired material from consciousness; that the material, once removed from consciousness, still exists in memory and continues to influence people's thoughts, feelings, or behavior; and that the material is recoverable (i.e., people can become aware of it if the repressive forces are removed) (Wilson & Dunn, 2004). The development of a study for individual components to this recommendation, not to mention all of them together, is quite a formidable task.

Despite the significant challenge in empirically demonstrating types of unconscious processes represents, recent years have seen a resurgence of research into the role of nonconscious mental processes. With specific relevance to romantic love, the main fields of empirical inquiry on unconscious processes have been neuroscience, cognitive science and social psychology (particularly social cognition). This work demonstrates the need to attribute primary status to the connection and disconnection between conscious and unconscious mental life.

In 1987, the cognitive psychologist Kihlstrom published an article in *Science* on the "cognitive unconscious." There he reviewed a long line of research that demonstrated the need for studying cognitive processing that occurs on an

unconscious level outside of perceptive awareness. The processing he was referring to was the type that becomes automated and unavailable for introspection. What he surmised about the limits of consciousness can be encapsulated here: "Consciousness is not to be identified with any particular perceptual-cognitive functions such as discriminative response to stimulation, perception, memory or the higher mental processes involved in judgment or problem solving. All of these functions can take place outside of phenomenal awareness. Rather, consciousness is an experiential quality that may accompany any of these functions... but it is not necessary for complex functioning." Kihlstrom's assertion reflected ongoing shift in cognitive science from an almost exclusive focus on conscious systems to one that included the role of unconscious systems.

The movement towards researching unconscious processes still reflected the ambivalence researchers had to the psychoanalytic lineage of the area of inquiry. Studies in academic journals on unconscious mental functions were (and still are) published using such terms as *implicit*, *automatic*, *nonconscious* to both avoid sounding psychoanalytic, but also to add some needed differentiation. As will be explained, the movement to explore all kinds of unconscious mental processes was also gradual, beginning with the unconscious cognition and memory. One of the prominent areas of empirically studying the unconscious has been implicit memory. This refers to the influence of a remembered experience on someone's behavior without the experience being consciously brought to mind (Schacter, 1992). Types of implicit memory include procedural

and associative memory. The latter is usually investigated in experiments using subliminal priming, where a stimulus is presented outside the subject's conscious awareness. Though the stimulus is presented outside of conscious awareness its effect on the subject is demonstrable (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977). Aside from implicit memory, other cognitive topics of unconscious empirical investigation have been implicit learning (Lewicki, 1986; Reber, 1993) and automaticity (Schneider & Shiffrin, 1977).

More controversial (see Westen, 1999) has been the accumulating evidence for unconscious affective and motivational processes. The empirical basis for believing the existence of unconscious affects and motivations has had multiple sources. Some of the earliest evidence was that of Milner's patient, H.M., whose hippocampal damage impaired his ability to register new explicit long-term memories (Milner, Corkin, & Teuber, 1968). Despite this, he was able to demonstrate the registration of implicit affective leaning, which did not translate to explicit expression or conscious recognition.

Zajonc (1968, 1980) used subliminal emotional priming to study emotional unconscious processes to show that affective judgments may be independent of and precede cognitive operations. His mere exposure effect, in which "repeated exposure of the individual to a stimulus object enhances his attitude toward it," has proved a viable empirical test of unconscious affective processing. Subsequently, Bornstein (1992) showed that the mere exposure effect is stronger when stimuli are subliminally presented rather than freely available for conscious inspection. In other words emotions may be more easily influenced when one is

not aware that the influence is occurring. This type of work has lent support for Zajonc's contention that preferences need no inferences (1980). Taken to an interactional level, Bargh's work (1990, 1992) evidenced that emotions, attitudes, goals and intentions can be activated outside of awareness to influence interpersonal thinking and behavior. Thought of this way, automatically triggered behavior may then lead to a cycle of reciprocated behavior from another person (e.g., racial stereotypes). In Bargh's studies what is critical is a person's lack of awareness of the ways in which the priming stimuli are implicitly categorized and interpreted. That the person is not aware of the stimuli's effect allows it to be unconsciously effective.

Unconscious cognition, motivation and affect have proved also to be involved in aspects of reasoning. An early study which helped demonstrate the effects that the limits of conscious awareness has on reasoning was Nisbett and Wilson's (1977; Wilson & Nisbett, 1978). Their "stocking study" demonstrated that people are often mistaken about the causes of their actions and feelings. They showed that when relevant and believable causes are not available, people will devise their own. In this study, the authors asked people to report on their preferred choice of panty hose among pairs that were (unknown to the participants) identical. Though subjects were able to give reasons for their preference, the significant factor (which went unnoticed) was the position/order the panty hose were presented. Drawing on a number of their own similar studies and other available sources, Nisbett and Wilson suggested "there may be little or no direct introspective access to higher order cognitive processes" (1977).

Further since people are often unaware of what stimuli influences them, attempts to report on cognitive processes are not done on “the basis of any true introspection.” Though people are privileged to special access to the *contents* of their minds, they may not be so well versed with the *processes* (Wilson, 2002). This can be reformulated in terms of unconscious processing as people only having privileged access to the conscious contents and processes of their mind to the degree that unconscious factors (which are inaccessible) are not operative. When unconscious factors are involved people tend to confabulate reasons for their behavior and responses based on a priori implicit causal theories and judgments (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977; Wilson, 2002). Nisbett and Wilson (1977) make an important point that accurate self-reporting will occur when “influential stimuli are salient and are plausible causes of the responses they produce.” In terms of romantic love, this will prove important because it appears that the accuracy of self-reports depends on how salient and plausible the person evaluates potential influences. In other words, I am attempting to make the case that it is difficult to know how to interpret a respondent’s report on attachment status or intimacy importance when the salience and influential plausibility of attachment and intimacy to the person are unknown.

More recently, Wegner’s work (2002) on the “illusion of conscious will” has involved a variety of research studies that have demonstrated that people vary in the reliability of their accuracy in identifying and attributing cause to their own actions (Vallacher & Wegner, 1985, 1987, 1989; Wegner, Fuller, & Sparrow, 2003; Wegner & Vallacher, 1986; Wegner & Wheatley, 1999). He has outlined a

model of a mental system in which unconscious mental processes give rise to conscious mental states (intentions, beliefs) about actions an individual performs. Wegner asserts that, in actuality, it is unconscious mental processes that cause the apparent voluntary action. Consciousness creates the experience of the path between the conscious mental states and the action, which is thus taken to be a person's given sense of *will*: "When we think that our conscious intention has caused the voluntary action that we find ourselves doing, we feel a sense of will" (2000, p. 68). A nonconscious factor (or intention) is the third variable often not taken into consideration in determining causation of an event.

He identifies three primary sources of this experience of conscious will—the reason we don't just experience an event as unrelated to ourselves, but instead feel some sense of agency and causality—which he describes as the priority, consistency and exclusivity of the thought about the action. In other words, "for the perception of apparent mental causation, the thought should occur before the action, be consistent with the action, and not be accompanied by other potential causes" (p. 69). The priority principle indicates that to produce the experience of conscious will the mental states must occur within a "particular window of time" prior to the action. The consistency principle indicates that the thoughts that serve as the potential causes for the action must be meaningfully associated with the action. The exclusivity principle suggests that people feel more of a sense of conscious will when other causes of the action are less available. Without plausible and compelling internal (impulses, emotion, habit) or external alternative causes for the action people are likely to experience that they

consciously caused the action. Wegner argues: “Experiences of conscious will thus arise from processes whereby the mind interprets itself—not from processes whereby mind creates action. Conscious will, in this view, is an indication that we think we have caused an action, not a revelation of the causal sequence by which the action was produced” (2004).

Wegner distinguishes between conscious and accessible thoughts by discussing levels of cognitive activation. Surface activation describes thoughts that are conscious but not accessible—such as the experience of studying subject matter when one is distracted. Full activation occurs when a person is fully engrossed in something and has thoughts about the matter that are both conscious and accessible—thinking of a favorite vacation. Finally, deep activation refers to the realm of unconscious thought that is accessible, but not to consciousness. Wegner supports the idea that thoughts can influence action from all three levels of activation, however only surface and full levels of activated thought will lead to the experience of conscious will. Since actions can have (deep activation) causes that are not accessible to consciousness, because of individuals’ propensity to shift the ways they identify actions (Vallacher & Wegner, 1985), and due to the human tendency to confabulate or misperceive intentions (via cognitive dissonance or perceptual limitations) Wegner argues that conscious will and agency are limited.

In fact he makes a case that since humans are not conscious of every intention of every action, there must be more research into how unconscious processes work to understand the limits of human intending, willing and agency.

He identifies that the idealization of conscious agency “leads us not only to fabricate an experience of conscious will and to confabulate intentions consistent with that will, it also can blind us to our very actions, making us see them as far more effective than they actually are” (2000, p. 186). However, for Wegner, the purpose of conscious will is to act as a guide to oneself that guides both achievement seeking and experiencing, leads to one’s self of confidence as well as responsibility for actions (morality). Wegner links his understanding of illusory conscious will to the work of researchers who have investigated the positive effects of perceived control (Glass & Singer, 1972), locus of control (Rotter, 1966), self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977), positive illusions (Taylor & Brown, 1988) and attributional style (Peterson, Maier, & Seligman, 1993). Thus as important as it is to acknowledge that individuals are limited in regards to their conscious will, it may be equally important to further understand the function of this illusion.

Though some ambivalence can still be seen in how psychologists carefully approach the meaning of “unconscious,” few now dispute the relevance of studying nonconscious processing. Even more recently, some non-psychoanalytic psychologists have begun directly discussing these phenomena in the context of their similarities and differences to the general psychoanalytic understanding of the unconscious mind. Wilson’s recent publications synthesize not only his but others’ research on what he terms the “adaptive unconscious” (2002; Wilson & Dunn, 2004).¹² Wilson contends that there are boundaries to how much people can introspect about themselves and how their mental

¹² This section leans on the summaries provided in Wilson’s book *Strangers to Ourselves* (2002) and his review article with Dunn (2004).

processes work because many parts of the mind are inaccessible to conscious awareness. This inaccessibility is partly due to the nonconscious processing regions of the mind evolving before ones related to consciousness did.

Accessibility, used in this way, refers to the activation potential of information in memory. For Wilson, relevancy and recency of encounter (certain ideas and categories become chronically accessible as a result of frequent use in the past) contribute to determining accessibility. He asserts that aspects of judgments, feelings and motives, not to mention mental processes that operate perceptual, language and motor systems, occur outside awareness for efficiency reasons. Wilson is quick to point out that the unconscious processing occurs on many levels: "Just as the architecture of the mind prevents low-level processing (e.g., perceptual processes) from reaching consciousness, so are many higher-order psychological processes and states inaccessible" (2002, p. 8). Within Wilson's way of thinking, the unconscious characterizes mental processes that are inaccessible to consciousness but that influence judgments, feelings or behavior.

Wilson differentiates properties of the adaptive unconscious and consciousness. Primary in these is the adaptive unconscious being comprised of multiple systems and modules that serve the function of automatically detecting "patterns in the environment as quickly as possible . . . to signal the person as to whether they are good or bad" (p. 50). This is consistent with LeDoux's rendering of humans possessing a nonconscious "danger detector" that crudely analyzes a situation for threat potentially triggering a fear response (1996). A more controlled and closer analysis of the situation is followed in consciousness.

The adaptive unconscious works automatically in fast, uncontrollable, unintentional ways; it is rigid and sensitive to negative information. The inflexibility of the adaptive unconscious serves its purpose of scanning the environment for changes, patterns and potential threats well. The assessment of threat is one way in which conscious and unconscious processes use their independent properties in tandem.

Of central interest are the reasons why mental aspects are kept outside of awareness. The detection of danger seems to work best at the nonconscious level for reasons of evolutionary adaptive efficiency. These limits to what people can apprehend about themselves have been divided across motivational and nonmotivational lines. Among motivational reasons, acts to suppress differ from acts to repress mental contents (i.e., thoughts, attitudes). For many like Wilson (e.g., Crandall & Eshleman, 2003), what distinguishes the former from the latter is the conscious awareness of attempting to keep something outside of awareness (suppression). Empirical research has demonstrated both the ways suppression may work and fail to work (Crandall & Eshleman, 2003; Erdelyi & Goldberg, 1979; Wenzlaff & Wegner, 2000). Repression, which can be thought of as unconsciously intercepting the mental content before it reaches consciousness, has been harder to empirically demonstrate. However Moskowitz and colleagues's work (1999, 2000) suggests that continued engagement in successful suppression of unwanted material may lead to the process becoming automatic, and thus occur outside of one's awareness.

More research exists on the possible nonmotivational reasons why aspects of the mind are kept outside of awareness. Wilson's focus on nonconscious processing led him to describe differences between his "adaptive unconscious" and the psychoanalytic unconscious (2002). His view, which reflects other researchers of nonconscious processing, assumes that "a great deal of mental processing is simply inaccessible to mental scrutiny" for adaptive reasons which are not to be thought of as motivational (Wilson & Dunn, 2004). This nonmotivational reason for the limits to self-knowledge assumes that "the architecture of the mind" is not designed for conscious awareness of all its properties. Rather than something being relegated to the unconscious because it is unwanted or anxiety-provoking, something is nonconscious for efficiency reasons. Examples of this are processes of attention, danger detection, judgment, learning and perception. In this line of thinking, the make-up of the mind has inaccessible aspects that are not "recoverable" or retrievable.

There is a considerable literature demonstrating the independence of conscious and unconscious mental functions including the areas of visual perception (Bhalla & Proffitt, 2000) and motor learning (Gabrieli, 1998). More relevant for my purposes is the research on the apparent dissociation between nonconscious/implicit and conscious/explicit aspects of personality and character. This has been used to show that there are elements of one's personality that do not reach awareness but still influence daily life. There is evidence that comparing self-reported motives and goals with those measured implicitly by projective techniques correlate poorly (Spangler, 1992). Similar

findings exist on the discrepancy between implicitly and explicitly measuring attachment styles (Bartholomew & Shaver, 1998), dependence (Bornstein, 1995), and explanatory style (Peterson & Ulrey, 1994). Social psychological research has found low correlations between measuring explicit and implicit prejudicial attitudes (Dovidio et al., 1997; Fazio et al., 1995)

Researchers have attempted to account for the consequences of discordance between conscious explicit and unconscious implicit aspects of oneself.

Brunstein and colleagues (1998) published results measuring the incongruence between unconscious and conscious goals. They found that congruency between both sets of goals was related to greater emotional well-being.

Robinson and colleagues (2003) found a correlation between incongruent implicit and explicit self-esteem and pleasant affect. The research literature contains at least two prevailing ways of accounting for the dissociation between conscious and nonconscious aspects of oneself, such as attitudes (Nosek & Banaji, 2002).

The first actually involves what would seem to be a motivation to distort or disguise how one feels about a particular thing when asked to express this attitude. The motivation here involves maintaining self-presentation. This has been shown in relationship to areas where there is greater suspected self-presentation motivation to hide implicit attitudes upon expression (racial attitudes) (Fazio et al., 1995). Another explanation of the independence of conscious and nonconscious attitudes describes two systems of evaluation. This dual attitude theory suggests that a person can concurrently have two independent attitudes towards the same object (one implicit and automatic, and

one explicit) (Wilson et al., 2000). These attitudes may be the same or different, but discordance may only be expressed under certain situations of cognitive load or using implicit measures. The difference between this dual attitude theory and the first self-presentation one is that the former allows for two concurrent independent evaluations. While self-presentational concerns are still operative in the dual attitude scheme, it does not assume that either implicit or explicit attitudes are more “real,” or that explicit attitudes are always attempts to distort implicit attitudes.

This collection of research builds towards the understanding of the human personality being split between conscious and unconscious parts. For thinkers like Wilson, the two sides of the human self are relatively independent. One’s conscious and unconscious selves have different functions and predict different types of behavior: “the adaptive unconscious is more likely to influence people’s uncontrolled, implicit responses, whereas the constructed [conscious] self is more likely to influence people’s deliberate, explicit responses” (2002, p. 73). Due to the inaccessibility of aspects of the adaptive unconscious, Wilson concludes that self-knowledge is inevitably limited. In fact, since introspection does not reach the unconscious parts of the self, attempts to reflect on one’s psychology are not only fixed but potentially have negative effects. Wilson’s research (Wilson & Dunn, 1986; Wilson & LaFleur, 1995) has demonstrated that analyzing the reasons for one’s feelings and attitudes can lower people’s ability to predict their own behavior, satisfaction with choices, and the correlation between expressed feelings and later behavior. The reason offered for this is

that people do not realize the incomplete nature of introspection. That is, people often may feel one way but have a difficult time analyzing and accounting for such a feeling because of the role of nonconscious processes. Introspection can then be focussed on unrepresentative or incomplete data causing “people to construct incorrect or incomplete narratives” about themselves (Wilson & Dunn, 2004). As possible routes to increasing self-knowledge, Wilson suggests, inferring behavior indirectly from the reports of others.

Dovetailing nicely with the work of Wilson on the limits of self-knowledge are studies which also demonstrate that one’s awareness of one’s psychology is often flawed, or at least incomplete. Andersen’s work (Andersen & Chen, 2002; Andersen & Glassman, 1996) is an attempt to empirically study transference as a means of social information processing. Using priming techniques with cues presented subliminally she has demonstrated that people will react differently towards strangers if they remind them of a significant other. Participants were more emotionally open when a stranger resembled a significant other versus one bearing little resemblance (Berk & Andersen, 2000). Because significant other representations are chronically accessible they have a special readiness to be activated, even by associated transient cues. In other words people will unconsciously draw on cues from strangers associated with significant others and be influenced by them without being aware. The unconscious aspects of Andersen’s empirically researched transference relate to either the transferred content or the activating cues being kept out of awareness. So a person may not be aware either that an evaluation of a newly encountered other is being based

on similarities to a significant other or what about the new other reflects the significant past other.

Her work has been an attempt not to only demonstrate empirically the ubiquity of transference processes in everyday life in normal populations. Further she has proposed a model that is supported by experimental research, which exhibits how significant other representations automatically spread activation to representations of the self (Andersen et al., 1997). The unconscious activation of positively or negatively affectively-tinged representations of significant others also sets in motion “the affective, emotional and behavioral elements that characterize the self in relation to the relevant significant other” (Andersen & Chen, 2004). She also has findings which indicate that threatening transference reactions may trigger compensatory self-protective and self-regulatory responses (Hinkley & Andersen, 1996). Andersen’s work not only highlights the important aspects of interpersonal interactions that occur outside of awareness, but also the automaticity, effortlessness and lack of control of such phenomena. In this way her work joins the literature on implicit stereotyping (Banaji & Hardin, 1996), mere exposure (Bornstein, 1992; Zajonc, 1968) and primed self-evaluation (Baldwin, 1994).

Of course this literature would not be without its own problems. As difficult as it has been to find agreed upon definitions and criteria for what constitutes love, one can find a similar dilemma in research on conscious and unconscious processes. As mentioned before, even the use of the term “unconscious” still carries with it psychoanalytic connotations that many researchers appear wary

of. As a result, there exists some semantic confusion and disagreement over just what is meant by studying nonconscious or unconscious (or implicit, automatic, etc.) processes. While researchers may tend to agree that qualities of mental functioning occur outside of awareness, there is disagreement over the degrees of conscious access, control, effort and intention involved (Wilson & Dunn, 2004). On the one hand conceptualizing the unconscious in this adaptive non-motivational way has allowed for nonconscious processes to be researched by simply investigating processes outside awareness that influence people's thoughts, feelings and behaviors. However the deemphasis of the conflictual and motivational aspects of unconscious processes (such as repression) also seems to create problems in accounting for the reason for nonconscious aspects of the mind. One seems to have to stretch the argument about the adaptive evolutionary efficiency reasons for certain processes to be outside awareness to be able to cover the extent of nonconscious functions of the mind. The other alternative is a hedging on the definition of what motivation can mean. For example, it seems curious that Wilson and others would consider conditions for the expression of dual attitudes and self-presentation concerns outside the realm of motivation (Wilson & Dunn, 2004). Similarly, Wegner's work (2002) on the illusion of conscious will begs for a thorough exploration of unconscious motivation of thought and action. In the next chapters I will suggest some solutions to these issues by turning to the psychoanalytic literature and returning to the topic of romantic love.

Another important source of research has been the neuroscientific evidence of unconscious affective responses—including Damasio’s on consciousness (1999) and LeDoux’s on emotional learning (1996). Damasio’s findings on patients with hippocampal lesions, resulting in explicit memory failures, demonstrated the ability to register the emotional response of an aversive event outside of conscious awareness. LeDoux’s findings (1985, 1989, 1996) on the parallel pathways of affective processing helped demonstrate how types of emotional responses can bypass conscious remembering. By providing evidence for the existence and independence of unconscious processes from conscious ones, neurological literature on unconscious processing has helped clarify the specific role and limits of conscious awareness and reasoning.

From his work LeDoux has made observations regarding the overestimation of conscious cognitive processing due to the flawed historic privileging of cognition, reason, and thinking over emotion, feeling and passion. The neurological research has evidenced that nonconscious factors, including emotional states, play a crucial role in reasoning processes. Damasio’s research (1994) led him to conclude that emotion directs reason. He postulated that the general function of emotion may be to act as “somatic markers” that are unavoidable reminders of the embodied self’s interests. Gazzaniga and LeDoux (1978) studied split-brain patients and found that they would tend to attribute explanations to situations as if they possessed the introspective knowledge (they did not) into the causes of behavior. From this these authors concluded that “one of the main jobs of consciousness is to keep our life tied together into a coherent

story, a self-concept” (LeDoux, 1985, 1996). Their view suggests that the (left-brain verbally dominated) conscious self may attempt to weave a story together that makes sense of experience even with limited access to relevant information.

Apropos to romantic love, LeDoux has stated:

the inadequacy of any approach to emotion based solely or mainly on introspectively accessible aspects of the mind is apparent [because] much of emotional processing occurs (or can occur) unconsciously, as well as by the fact that people often find their emotions puzzling. Consciously accessible appraisal processes cannot be the way, or at least not the only way, the emotional brain works. Even when we are conscious of the outcome of some emotional appraisal (for example knowing that you dislike someone), this does not mean that you consciously understand the basis of the appraisal (knowing why you dislike the person) (1996, p. 64)

In many ways, this represents my own central critique of the romantic relationship research literature, which relies on what are proving to be the limited capabilities of conscious awareness and reasoning. Due to these limitations and what is still unknown about unconscious processing, research based on studying people’s self-reported psychological observations is bound to be inadequate. In other words, the research focusing on conscious verbal domains can only yield data on those psychological aspects that are consciously accessible and

expressible verbally. This renders academic research into romantic relationships as investigations into the consciousness of love.

More specific to the topic of love, in *A general theory of love* (2001), Lewis, Amini and Lannon lay out a conceptual model based on reviewing a century's worth of neuroscientific research on emotions and attachment. Using MacLean's model of a triune brain (1973, 1990) as a jumping off point, they argue for the primary importance the paleomammalian or limbic system to all forms of love relations. The importance of this for this discussion is that these authors construct a theoretical model of love that focuses on the non-linguistically mediated limbic brain as the "center of advanced emotionality." The limbic system is responsible for recording memories of behaviors that produced agreeable and disagreeable experiences. According to MacLean, the limbic system is concerned with emotions and the most primal instincts having to do with feeding, sex, fighting and bonding. In this scheme, it can be considered the place of origin for many of the value judgments that we make, often at a level outside of consciousness. The limbic brain is evolutionarily designed to orchestrate the congruence between one's internal bodily states and the external environment. It "collects sensory information, filters it out for emotional relevance, and sends outputs to other brain areas" (Lewis et al., 2001, p. 54). These other brain areas include the primitive reptilian or basal brain (the preverbal autonomic center), and the neocortex (which is responsible for higher cognitive functions and modes of complex consciousness. While all three systems of MacLean's Triune brain must interact and communicate to

accomplish even some of the most mundane human behaviors, each have different functions.

Lewis and colleagues synthesize a range of mammalian research, done with hamsters (Murphy, MacLean & Hamilton, 1981), rats (Hofer, 1975) on up to humans (Spitz, 1945) and construct a theory of love based on the limbic-driven capacity to ascertain, orient and connect oneself to the emotional state and motives of others. It is the limbic capacity that allows a human to read the emotion and intentionality of another person and send a message to the neocortical brain, which then leads to a conscious thought about the state of the other person. As the authors point out, it is only the newest neocortical brain that traffics in reason, logic and language. The limbic brain, while responsible for the intuition one uses, “can move us in ways beyond logic that have only the most inexact translations in a language the neocortex can comprehend” (p. 34). Further they argue for the centrality of the limbic brain, in allowing for the social regulatory bond between humans. Relating this to love, the authors use a term, limbic resonance, to describe the capacity for mammals of “mutual exchange and internal adaptation whereby two mammals become attuned to each other’s inner states” (p. 63). Originating first in regards to child-rearing, their understanding of the limbic system of humans necessitates an open-system of bodily self-regulation or “limbic regulation”:

Because human physiology is (at least in part) an open-loop arrangement, an individual does not direct all of his own functions. A

second person transmits regulatory information that can alter hormone levels, cardiovascular function, sleep rhythms, immune function, and more—inside the body of the first. The reciprocal process occurs simultaneously: the first person regulates the physiology of the second, even as he himself is regulated. (p. 85).

All of this mutual regulation occurs very quickly, and mostly outside the awareness of both parties, though is partially accessible to conscious reflection in the feeling one gets when in the company of a trusted partner. The authors explain the time it takes to build up patterned relational regularity in the form of limbic resonance and regulation. In optimal conditions early in life, a person establishes limbic pathways that represent “healthy emotional interaction” with another. These pathways then act as “limbic attractors” that search for a similar emotional feeling with others. Since such states occur, often outside the awareness of the person, they often can be triggered when one’s limbic system senses the emotional resonance of another person. Conscious awareness follows soon after of such a level of limbic attunement; however such states of between two partners can also be lost, leading to states of dysregulation. The authors view limbic resonance and regulation as neural building blocks for love, which operate largely outside of one’s awareness with results that get symbolically transformed into a language of consciousness.

A final form of neuroscientific research worth mentioning is the neuroimaging evidence of Bartels and Zeki (2000, 2004). Their work has targeted the areas of

the brain implicated in the neuro-chemistry of love. I chose not to review this study in the last chapter since it does not as yet represent an overall research program or psychological theory of love. One of the most interesting aspects of this research, utilizing functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) techniques, is what Bartels and Zeki may have revealed about areas of the brain deactivated in romantic love. These authors investigated the neural correlates of romantic and maternal love by scanning the brains of subjects as they looked at pictures of their partners and children, respectively. They found overlapping activation in parts of the brain for romantic and maternal love (specifically in the brain's reward system which contains high levels of the attachment-related neurohormones, oxytocin and vasopressin). Bartels and Zeki's findings also showed that their romantically and maternally loving subjects demonstrated a suppression of neural activity in brain areas associated with: negative emotions, attention, short- and long-term memory, and social/moral/theory of mind tasks (2004).

This last category of deactivations is particularly interesting for how it further supports challenging what I believe are academic psychology's assumptions about the role of conscious reasoning in romantic love. Bartels and Zeki's neuroimaging findings represent another research avenue for demonstrating that "strong emotional ties to another person ... affect the network involved in making social judgments about that person" (2004). The authors tentatively suggest that their findings on the inhibition of the ability to determine other people's emotions and intentions, otherwise known as mentalizing (Frith & Happe, 1994; Happe,

1995), may be due to the decreased need for critical social assessment in close familiar relationships. If aspects of people's critical capacities are subject to even temporary arrest when people reflect on loved others, how can researchers using questionnaires, which demand for social assessment be relied upon? Let me put forth another way of viewing this inhibition of psychological functioning in love that has less to do with a decreased need for critical assessment. These effects to one's social judgment skills can be thought of as defensive restrictions on one's mentalizing capacities in the service of self-regulation.

As I will further outline in Part Two of this study, the academic psychological and brain sciences fields do not currently have a way of explaining why usually operative interpersonal reasoning abilities may become inhibited to some degree, except for positing the lack of need for such processes. For now let me offer a tentative hypothesis to Bartels and Zeki's findings: the kinds of elevated affects experienced in romantic relationships may produce a kind of mental tension state that triggers processes by which psychological contents, processes and states may be restricted to some degree. In Part Two, I will elaborate a framework for thinking of such kinds of dynamic mental processes in love by which psychological functions and states can be inhibited for self-organizing purposes. For now, the point to grasp from Bartels and Zeki's work, along with the other neuroscientific evidence discussed previously, is that studying the mind in love at the level of brain mechanisms further casts doubt on relying on measures of a person's conscious self-awareness and reasoning about love.

Limited awareness leading to bounded rationality

The romantic relationship research field (with all its disparate parts) has been slow to integrate the findings I have reviewed in this chapter on unconscious mental processes. This can be seen in the literature's reliance on self-report measures and focus on participants' conscious reasonings about love relationships. The research I canvassed here demonstrates the limits of being consciously aware of one's thoughts, feelings, behaviors, motivation and reasons. By assuming the accessibility of love's psychology and relying on the accuracy of first-person reports of experience, romantic relationship researchers, by and large, have taken a flawed approach to understanding love. They have minimally considered the degree to which there are aspects of love that evade conscious awareness and bare little or, at the least, a complicated relation to a person's self-report. Instead a general assumption guiding romantic love research has been that the mind is transparent enough to introspection, thus allowing for relatively unfettered access to mental contents and psychological processes.

The assumptions of romantic relationship researchers in regards to reasoning in love relationships lead to a more rational view of love. The research in this chapter has demonstrated that there are profound limits to what people can understand and reflect on regarding their reasons for feeling, thinking and behaving. In addition to failing to incorporate what has been shown about unconscious processing, romantic relationship researchers have largely ignored

the central thesis of the work Simon (1957) and Tversky and Kahneman (1974). This research helps illustrate that everyday decision-making does not normally rely purely on rule-governed logic or abstract reasoning. It indicates that people, wittingly and unwittingly, draw on past strong emotional experiences, implicit understandings, and guesswork based on shortcut biases to solve everyday problems. Though this expanded view of rationality has been applied to economic models, the field of romantic love research has not welcomed its significance.

Simon's (1957, 1972, 1982) work on bounded rationality helped to explain that people are only as rational as they have to be and naturally relax their rationality whenever possible. Simon expanded the general understanding of reasoning in order to explain constraints on rationality that lead to different possible forms of rational thinking. For Simon, rationality is somewhat context bound, as what is rational may differ depending on the individual, cultural and situational factors. Simon's thinking opposed classic economic theories, which featured a view of human striving towards the achievement of optimal goals. These goals are achieved rationally by acquiring as much pertinent information as possible in order to reason the most logical course of action. This kind of rationality involves the consideration of multiple possibilities before a decision is made. Using his concept of satisficing, Simon outlined conditions under which a person would not strive towards an optimal solution or goal, and is satisfied choosing an option, which meets the minimal requirements (March & Simon, 1958). Examples of such conditions are constraints on computational capacities,

knowledge or time. In such cases of constraints, the rational course may not be to consider and calculate all alternatives to the fullest degree, but rather to achieve a kind of compromise.

Simon's work is radical, and was for its time, for its expansion of the ways of thinking about rational thought and behavior. He challenged the then current thinking about rationality in terms of objective rules of logic and reason, and even proposed that having all possible information does not necessarily guarantee the most rational or optimal solution. From his work, one understands that everyday constraints require the use of seat-of-the-pants, instinctive, and experiential knowledge. In fact, at times it might be more rational to not use all the information one has, but rather rely on intuitive decision-making. Part of rationality is deciding which kind of deliberation process to engage in—the experiential decision-making, perhaps involving the quick recognition of patterns, versus solving a problem by formal logic, or some compromise of the two. In this view, a reasonably good solution is good enough most of the time, and may often be even better than the optimal one.

Simon's bounded rationality, which takes into account the limitations of the human mind and situation, teaches that the most rationally intended behavior is still limited by cognitive and contextual constraints. Influenced by Simon's ideas, Kahneman's research (done in significant collaboration with Tversky) has provided empirical evidence to challenge idealized models of everyday judgment and reasoning. Kahneman's work has been described as research on decision-making under uncertainty, or a heuristics and biases approach (Kahneman &

Tversky, 1996). He has studied the way people make predictions about the future, estimate frequencies based on limited evidence, and choose the best alternatives among a variety of topics. The key feature of this approach is the emphasis on cognitive processes that mediate intuitive predictions and judgments. The goal of this work was to investigate the judgment strategies or heuristics, such as representativeness, availability and anchoring that lead to valid and invalid judgments (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). This work has been influential in both psychology and economics, leading to Kahneman's reception of the Nobel Prize in Economics in 2002.

To illustrate some of their research, the availability heuristic is used whenever one estimates probability or frequency based on the ease of being able to think of examples (Tversky & Kahneman, 1973). The availability heuristic factors into the way a person is able to judge himself. Studies have demonstrated that the way a subject views and assesses qualities about himself (e.g., self-efficacy, assertiveness) can be manipulated by making such attributes more available to consciousness (Cervone, 1989; MacLeod & Campbell, 1992). Influencing availability are such factors as the recency and familiarity of a particular mental content. One can imagine how availability might operate in the research into romantic love, with certain aspects (e.g., intimacy, attachment) of relationships either being more accessible to conscious introspection (e.g., passion, lust) or implicitly primed by research designs.

Decisions based on representativeness hinge on how typical and appropriate something seems to a person rather than probability. Representativeness leads

people to ignore how often something actually occurs in the population (known as the base rate). By empirically studying common judgmental and perceptual biases, including neglect of base-rate information, overconfidence, and overestimation of the frequency of events, Kahneman has demonstrated the implicit side of reasoning. It is important to remember that these heuristics do not all lead to incorrect decisions or assessments. Despite its neglect of actual percentage estimations, representativeness can generally be a useful heuristic for making decisions (Kahneman & Tversky, 1972). This research helps demonstrate not the reasoning limitations that lead to judgment errors, but rather the implicit biases underlying all uncertain decision-making and assessment.

Though Kahneman should not really be considered a researcher of unconscious processes, his work represents a significant challenge to models of rational judgment. As opposed to a model that attempts to refute the use of logical reason in uncertain situations, this research expands narrowly unrealistic views of what judgment and decision-making involves. More recently his work has focused on attribute substitution, which occurs “when the individual assesses a specified target attribute of a judgment object by substituting a related heuristic attribute that comes more readily to mind” (Kahneman, 2003). For my purposes, what is important to understand here is the automatic quality of this unconscious intuitive reasoning process, which accompanies conscious reasoning.

Kahneman has recently attributed the intuition-based decision-making processes to a kind of system of processing information that is effortless, emotionally charged, associative, not available to introspection, and governed by habit. This

conceptualization between systems of processing draws on the same literature that Wilson's ideas of the adaptive unconscious did (see Stanovich & West, 2000).

Though Simon and Kahneman's respective research has not focused on understanding the implicit perceptual and reasoning biases that are involved in relationship choices, their challenge to economic models of rational economic man apply to this current discussion of romantic love. Guided by Simon's insights, Kahneman's empirical studies have mainly dealt with probability and frequency decision-making that are fairly removed from a person's romantic life. However, the research field he has helped build has demonstrated the effects of ever-present intuitive biases. I mentioned studies that demonstrated how these heuristic effects potentially could affect one's self-assessment. If operative in relatively abstract impersonal hypothetical situations (involving such things as frequency estimations) and self-assessment contexts, the existence of heuristic biases in assessing romantic relationships would seem probable. One may even wonder how much more operative perceptual and judgmental biases are, when the targeted object for evaluation is the affect-laden associative realm of one's romantic life.

It would seem that psychological researchers of romantic love took their lead from the classic economic model of *homo economicus*. This is the model of human functioning driven by rationality, in order to obtain the most profit in the most cost-effective manner. The romantic relationship empirical literature implicitly overestimates a person's baseline psychological capacities. The

hypothetical person featured in this literature consciously introspects, both within the research situation and in everyday life, with relatively good accuracy about past, present and future relationship motivations, feelings, and thoughts. Just as Kahneman and Simon have done with economic models, it would behoove relationship researchers to understand the role of unconscious processing in the rationality of romantic love.

From a psychological mind to a psychoanalytic one

This chapter has been devoted to presenting research and ideas demonstrating the limits of conscious awareness, the existence and role of unconscious processes and an expanded version of human reasoning. Empirical literature from fields such as neuroscience and social cognition agree that it is difficult to ground psychological research on first person accounts of experience. The human capacity to consciously reflect and organize experience is constrained by the inaccessibility of certain mental processes and contents and the tendency for confabulation in the face of insufficient information. The insufficient information does not just refer to unknown facts about a given situation or object in the environment, but also concerns the obscured aspects of one's mind.

As researchers like LeDoux and Wilson postulate, the role of consciousness may be to create coherency and meaning for an individual in the face of limited information. To state this in terms of internal life, these limitations include the degree to which one can understand the range of affectively invested motivations that influence everyday decisions in multiple ways. Due to the limits of conscious awareness, a person is only partially cognizant of the various motivations that are at play at any given time. As the research in this chapter indicated, relying too heavily on consciousness to provide accurate instruction about one's reasoning may be a wrong-headed approach towards investigating complex phenomena like love.

While the work I reviewed in this chapter represents a vital effort in research psychology to report the less than conscious functionings of the mind, it demands future development. As I mentioned before, the majority of the research in this chapter does not deal with the unconscious mind in love. To be sure, many of the types of everyday decision-making examples presented here undershoot the cognitive, affective, bodily, and motivational complexities of romantic relationships. My purpose in this chapter was not to exhaustively portray the empirical science of unconscious mental processes. It was to gather research data from various fields that have converged around a singular point arrived at and expressed through different means. The varied workings of the brain and mind that effectively total one's psychology are only partially knowable to conscious introspection. This has implications for how to think of the reasoning people offer for their choices, whether movies, political candidates or love partners.

The research in this chapter supports my contention that romantic relationship investigation needs to explore and demonstrate unconscious processes in love. From the emotional priming studies of Zajonc to Wegner's demonstrations of the illusion of conscious will through the neurological work of Damasio and LeDoux, this collection of work raises similar questions as the ones I asked earlier about accessibility and accuracy in self-reporting on mental states. This research also strongly suggests that of further necessity, beyond illustrating the unconscious workings of the mind in love, is empirical evidence and conceptual understanding of the interplay between the levels of mental life.

Despite the limitations in the empirical relationship research, I am convinced that there is much to be garnered from this published literature. A new framework is necessary to make use of the valuable insights from these studies. To my mind, the significance of the empirical research lies in its contribution to illustrating the various levels of phenomenal experience involved in romantic love. I have touched on the problems of having such diverse empirical approaches to love that, at times, seem disconnected and confusing. This multiplicity in perspective, while needed for understanding romantic love, requires a way of organizing itself.

The current structure of the literature features not only different ideas about what love is but distinct ways of studying it. Let me offer a way to categorize the research into different groups. One such group contains biological-evolutionary approaches (the work of attachment researchers, Fisher, Buss), which endeavor to understand the function of romantic love and its physical underpinnings. There are also ways of measuring love's different styles or components, which result in romantic love taxonomies (e.g., Sternberg, Hatfield, Lee, etc.). Finally, there are those studies which focus on romantic relationship process, investigating the way that two lovers explicitly and implicitly interact, communicate and treat each other (couples observation, social exchange and investment, social cognition approaches). To be sure there are overlaps amongst these categorizations, as individual research approaches may also address the issues of another grouping without focusing on them. I chose not to organize the research literature in Chapter One in this schematic way since I do

not advocate this kind of simplification. What is required is a more integrative, albeit complicated, methodology to structuring the research. Complex phenomena, like romantic love, at times breed complex problems that require multifaceted solutions.

Having articulated my criticism of the romantic relationship research, let me offer a first suggestion. A potentially effective way of organizing the existing and future research endeavors is by first understanding the various empirical perspectives as referring to motivational aims in love. From the research literature from Chapter One, one can identify motivational aims in romantic love such as reproduction, survival, caregiving, attachment, sexuality, commitment, intimacy, equity, self-esteem regulation, passion etc. Since most approaches have restricted their inquiry to very few motivations, they have excluded discussion and exploration of other possible aims in love. A framework is then needed to study how motivations in love are psychologically registered and managed. As I have suggested throughout Part One, I believe that this includes conscious and unconscious levels of mental processing.

In asserting that there is a percentage of the mind in love that is not open to direct unencumbered introspection, let me acknowledge that the roads leading to romantic unconscious life can be serpentine by nature. Thus the empirical (and even conceptual) investigation into this quality of psychological life is formidable. What is needed is a way of understanding unconscious mental states and functions beyond those that are categorically nonconscious and implicit by nature and design. The type of unconscious psychology I am suggesting moves

towards a dynamic unconscious mind. A dynamically unconscious mind takes into account factors that lead to aspects of mental life becoming and being transformed out of consciousness for a motivated reason. These ideas have been most cultivated in the psychoanalytic literature.

I believe that psychoanalytic ideas are essential for creating an integrative way to study the interwoven threads of conscious and unconscious processes in romantic love. Psychoanalysts have endeavored to study the dynamically conscious and unconscious mind through theory, case study, and, to a lesser extent, empirical research. In the next chapter, I will navigate through the psychoanalytic literature to present views of the mind that are distinct from the models presented here in Part One. I will then review how psychoanalytic writers have approached the topic of romantic love.

Some of the terms of the discussion in the next chapter may seem radically different from the discourse on love and the mind in Part One, but my aim in Part Two is an integrative one. By the end of Part Two, I will lay out my own original framework for researching romantic love. I am of the mindset that empirical psychology (and related brain science) and psychoanalysis can forge a mutually benefiting relationship. In fact, a comprehensive study of complex psychological phenomena requires a diversity of approaches that are able to inform each other through collaboration and dialogue. With the subject like romantic love, there may be no better example of an area of human life more suitable and in most need of this kind of integrative scholastic endeavor.

PART TWO

CHAPTER THREE: The view from psychoanalysis

But human megalomania will have suffered its third and most wounding blow from the psychological research of the present time which seeks to prove to the ego that it is not even the master of its own house, but must content itself with scanty information of what is going on unconsciously in its mind.”

Sigmund Freud, lecture 19 from *Introductory lectures on psychoanalysis* (1916-1917)

... psychoanalysis enters the twenty-first century with its influence in decline. This decline is regrettable, since psychoanalysis still represents the most coherent and intellectually satisfying view of the mind.”

Nobel-prize winner Eric Kandel, *American Journal of Psychiatry* (1999)

In this chapter I would like to argue that a psychoanalytic approach to the mind can help address some of the problems of the empirical literature on romantic relationships. Since Freud began his work at the end of the nineteenth century, psychoanalysis has grappled with both the knowable and unknowable aspects of everyday psychological life. Psychoanalytic ideas have questioned the extent of both conscious and rational mental processes in an effort towards understanding the psychological experience of the individual. In a certain sense the psychoanalytic literature serves as a counterpoint to the assumptive positions I outlined in Part One. Before reviewing how psychoanalysis has directly dealt with romantic relationships, let me touch on some critical concepts.

It has been argued that the intellectual history of unconscious mental life pre-dates Freud by a number of centuries (Ellenberger, 1970; Whyte, 1960).

However, psychoanalysis is set apart from other attempts with its self-assured conviction in and dedication to studying the functions, manifestations and nature of the conscious and unconscious interplay that informs psychological life. In Chapter Two, I mentioned the “cognitive unconscious,” so let me begin by describing the “psychoanalytic unconscious.” As is the case with many central concepts in psychoanalysis, not to mention in Freud’s own thinking, one would be hard-pressed to find a single indisputable definition in the literature. Tracing the evolution of this concept in Freud’s thinking and subsequent theorists has been a topic that has drawn much attention (Erdelyi, 1985; Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973; Weinberger & Weiss, 1997). In the simplest sense, *unconscious* descriptively refers to that which a person is not conscious of at a given moment. Given what was subsequently demonstrated about the limits of consciousness and working memory (Miller, 1956), Freud appears to have been correct in his assertion: “At any given moment consciousness includes only a small content, so that the greater part of what we call conscious knowledge must in any case be for very considerable periods of time in a state of latency, that is to say, of being psychologically unconscious” (1915b, p. 167). Conceived of in this way, this descriptive unconscious corresponds to current understandings of procedural/implicit and working memory (Kandel, 1999).

As touched on in Chapter Two, this descriptive sense of unconscious is fairly broad and, for the most part, uncontroversial in research science. This categorization can be applied to phenomena that lie outside immediate conscious awareness but still possess some degree of importance for a person.

Thus under the heading of descriptive unconscious can be such varied mental contents as the name of one's first grade teacher, the birthday of one's romantic partner, the value of religion and morality, how one cooks a Spanish omelette, and the complex ways that guide one's social functioning.

For Freud and psychoanalysis, the descriptive unconscious is the veritable tip of the iceberg. What follows are two other more specific and radical renderings of the unconscious mind, accompanying topographical and structural models. In the former, the metaphor of the mind is of a tripartite split between conscious, preconscious and unconscious parts (1900, 1915b). Consciousness is equated with awareness, but now all mental contents that are potentially available or accessible, though not currently, are designated preconscious. The preconscious system (Pcs.) though descriptively unconscious, is more closely aligned with the conscious system (Cs.) in the way it works. In this topographic model, the contents of the unconscious system (Ucs.) are drive or instinctual representatives that are unavailable to consciousness. For Freud, this system unconscious, with its own set of rules, which evade normal logic, constituted the majority of mental life. These rules correspond to a form of more pleasure-driven primary process mentation that is "seemingly disorganized, irrational, illogical, and even bizarre and contradictory" (Meissner, 2005, p. 27). This is opposed to secondary process, which works in accordance with the constraints of reality, is more integrated with other mental operations, and is generally more organized and rational. In this topographic model, primary process is more characteristic of

the Ucs., just as secondary process is more descriptive of the Pcs. and Cs.¹³ A censorship prohibits unconscious contents, wanting release, from entering the Pcs.-Cs., thus dividing those two systems from the Ucs. Accounting for this censorship is a central concept missing from most academic psychology accounts of unconscious processes—the operation of repression.

Along with the way the Ucs. operates (under the sway of primary process thinking), the idea of repression distinguishes the dynamic sense of unconscious from all other forms. In their dictionary of psychoanalysis, Laplanche and Pontalis defined repression as “an operation whereby the subject attempts to repel or to confine to the unconscious, representations (thoughts, images, memories) which are bound to an instinct” (1973, p. 390). In Freud, as well as many psychoanalysts after, one finds a psychology of biological instincts and drives. In large part, much of his modeling and remodeling of the architecture of the mind concerned his attempt to understand how one negotiates the influence and pressure of innately bodily instincts. Williams recently encapsulated this in relation to a psychoanalytic clinical theory: “The construction of flexible defenses is required to manage derivatives of instinct, and if the trajectory of instinct management does not run evenly, or defenses become rigid or overemployed, symptoms can arise” (2005, p. 190).

¹³ Meissner (2005) has pointed out that subsequent years of psychoanalytic theorizing and general psychological research has softened Freud’s original dichotomy between primary and secondary forms of thinking. The two forms can now be thought of as existing on a continuum, with actual examples of “undiluted” forms of either quality of thinking being rare.

The psychoanalytic model of the mind centers on aspects of one's personality that are not only unconscious, but specifically are rendered unconscious. One way of understanding the reason why a person represses and defends against something is in order to reduce the subjective sense of aversive affect related to awareness of such material. So on the one hand, while a person may be moved to have a certain reaction and thought, the anxiety-evoking nature such mental activity may also prompt a defensive response to then obscure such content. Extending this thought, this version of a person's psychology contains multiple layers of motivational forces, many of which remain outside of and are directly untranslatable in consciousness. What makes the dynamic unconscious dynamic is the conflictual interplay of competing motivations, affects and concerns. Even with the subsequent evolution of Freud's topographical model, motivation continues to represent the heart of psychoanalytic theorizing, including its concept of unconscious mental life. Fundamental to psychoanalysis is the assumption that all mental functions, conscious and unconscious, primary and secondary, are motivated. Since every behavior, affect, fantasy and thought can be linked to a reason, an idea of psychic determinism follows. As Meissner has argued, a psychoanalytic psychic determinism "has more to do with meanings and the relations of meanings than with causal connections" (2005, p. 24). Before discussing motivations in a psychoanalytic context, let me move on to reviewing what is unconscious in Freud's structural model.

In 1923, Freud's topographic conscious-preconscious-unconscious model would change to match his clinical insights. In *The ego and the id* (1923) the

system unconscious is redesigned as the id, inheriting the drive-dominated primary process characteristics of the Ucs. The agency of the mind that is more reality-oriented and operates with secondary process is the ego, which takes on much of the characteristics of the former Pcs.-Cs. (Weinberger & Weiss, 1997). The ego has access to both conscious and unconscious material, and on its border with the id it uses defenses (which are unconscious) to manage drive-related impulses (emanating from the id). As Weinberger and Weiss have written, “resistances and defenses thus fall somewhere between primary and secondary process.” The third mental agency of the 1923 structural model is the super-ego. This represents moral and social concerns that are first delivered to the developing child through their parents. Though technically conceived of as part of the ego, the super-ego functions as a combination of primary and secondary processes. As an internalized system of rights and wrongs, its judgmental and demanding nature can result in pressure as unrelenting as those felt from the id. As a result, the ego must mediate between the often-opposing obligations of the id and super-ego. Different from the topographic model, the three systems of the structural model should be thought about less in terms of gradations of consciousness or unconsciousness. Since unconscious processes can be found in all three, Erdelyi has suggested defining each in terms of their goals and functions (1985). The structural model not only alters the way that unconscious processes are understood, but widens the degree to which one’s multiple motivations can not only conflict with each other but also remain outside awareness.

One cannot speak of goals and functions in psychoanalysis without thoroughly considering motivation. For psychoanalysis, this discussion begins with Freud's thinking about primary drives or instincts that seem to be at the root of all forms of behavior. His thinking draws on a 19th-century Darwinistic understanding of fundamental survival instincts that drive human functioning in one way or another. As Eagle stated, "in such theories, all behavior either serves to gratify these primary drives or other drives which have secondarily developed in association with the so-called primary drives" (1984, p. 7). Freud categorized instincts into two types, where the competition between would result in forms of psychological distress. The nature of these instincts evolved from the self-preservative ego and reproductive sexual instincts to the life and death instincts. Subsequent theorists have articulated the need to rethink Freud's scheme of two antagonistic instincts (Brenner, 1982; Holt, 1976; Kernberg, 1992; Kohut, 1977; Lichtenberg, 1989). Instincts, drives, needs and aims are all ways of speaking about motivating factors in life. Some of the alternatives that have been proposed include a human instinct that is object-seeking (Fairbairn, 1952), the need for security and intimacy (Sullivan, 1953), the attachment instinct (Bowlby, 1969), and human aims that strive for self-cohesion, self-esteem, self-organization and vitality (Erikson, 1959, 1963; Kohut, 1977). Lichtenberg has proposed thinking about organized systems of motivation as "based on a recognizable innate need and associated pattern of response" (2001). His five systems respond to needs for: psychic regulation of physiological requirements, attachment/affiliation, exploration and assertion, aversive response through

antagonism or withdrawal, and sensual enjoyment/sexual excitement (1989).

While Freud initially conceived of drives as preceding the conscious-unconscious distinction as he thought of them as lying on the border between what is somatic and what is mental, some of these subsequent alternative motivational schemes do not make such an assumption. It may be more accurate to say that a general psychoanalytic approach looks for conscious and unconscious aspects of all motivations.

As I will discuss shortly, the concept of a psychological object in psychoanalysis is an important one in considering love. In his psychoanalytic dictionary, Rycroft defined an “object” as “that towards which action or desire is directed; that which the subject requires in order to achieve instinctual satisfaction; that to which the subject relates himself” (1968, p. 100). An object usually refers to some aspect of the person, thought to be “the focus of one’s wishes and needs” on an internal, external, part and/or whole level (Zimmer et al., 2005). Kernberg commented that because of the broad spectrum of psychoanalytic object relations theorizing, psychoanalysis, itself can be considered an object relations theory: “all psychoanalytic theorizing deals, after all, with the impact of early object relations on the genesis of unconscious conflict, the development of psychic structure, and the re-actualization of enactments of past pathogenic internalized object relations in transference developments...” (2004, p. 26). These brief definitions reflect how object relations then refers to both how one psychologically, consciously and unconsciously,

experiences and processes relationships with others, and the underpinnings of how one actually behaves and interacts with an other at an observable level.

Fundamental to a psychoanalytic object relations perspective is the psychological realm of fantasy, which has conscious and unconscious dimensions and contributes to a person's conception of self and other in relationship. A person's motivations have fantasy correlates of related wishes and fears of the future of these aims. In other words, a psychoanalytic perspective emphasizes how people organize sets of motivational aims, conflicts and compromises through conscious and unconscious fantasies. The conscious forms of these are reportable as daydreams and unbounded ideational activity during waking hours. Unconscious fantasies are for obvious reasons more difficult to access and thus are realized and re-constructed in derivative form.

For Freud, fantasies represented soothing responses to frustration, attempts to convert negative feelings into positive ones, and rehearsal functions (Friedman & Downey, 2002). His focus on was in part his offering a way of accessing unconscious fantasy. For Melanie Klein and followers, (Klein, 1948; Isaacs, 1948) from the earliest ages phantasy (spelled this way to connote a broadening of this concept) accompanies all forms of real experience and can function in the role of wish-fulfillment, to defend against anxiety, to inhibit instinctual urges, and to fundamentally interpret or transform reality. Less conceived as only an escape from reality, phantasy works throughout life in concert with reality. The two each bear upon each other equally, with phantasy also aiding in one's adaptation to life. Klein moved the psychoanalytic thinking of

phantasy in a way that considered how it functioned not just as a protection against the circumstances of external reality, but also as a defense against internal psychic reality (Segal, 1964).

I have already alluded to another central concept for many schools of psychoanalytic thought—the opposition or conflict between opposing instincts, aims, motivation or mental agencies (id, ego). The emphasis here is not that intrapsychic conflict can occur between a person's basic motives or in relation to one's needs versus those of an other. Rather, the point to be made is that intrapsychic conflict is felt to be inherent to one's basic psychology. Klein pointed out that Freud attributed an inherent motivational force to drives that is "independent of objective circumstances and can take different forms in "seeking its satisfaction"" (1976, p. 168). This sets the stage for certain inevitable conflicts to occur throughout one's development. The very nature of an individual's psychological life, with its accompanying aims and motivations, is ripe for the varieties of conflictual opposition to occur as a person attempts to satisfy basic conscious and unconscious needs in society. The way one resolves one's inevitable conflicts determines aspects of personality and in some cases pathology. In this scheme, the focus is equally on unavoidable conscious and unconscious conflict and the various ways a person manages them.

Two ways of dealing with conflict are through the use of psychological defenses and compromises. As early as 1894, Freud wrote of defenses in discussing the struggle against unpleasurable and intolerable ideas and affects. Defense mechanisms can be thought of as techniques, usually unconsciously

employed, used to avoid unendurable psychological pain by manipulating, distorting or denying aspects of reality (Erdelyi, 1985). In this way a person is thought to actively keep something out of conscious awareness while it is registered unconsciously. Its unconscious registration, bypassing conscious attention, is what allows for its active defensive repudiation. Here, the motivation for defense can be thought of as avoiding unpleasure and maintaining or re-establishing the integrity of the ego (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973).

In the face of conflicting motivations and the defenses used to reduce anxiety and unpleasurable affect, certain compromises must be achieved. As one can see the dynamic tension that characterizes psychoanalytic thought is the push and pull, the interplay and the eventual resolution of various co-existing aims, needs and processes. Though originally used by Freud to describe the creation of such phenomena as symptoms and dreams, the concept of compromise formation can be thought to refer to “any mental phenomenon which is the product of conflict and which partially expresses both parties to the conflict” (Rycroft, 1969, p. 20). Since in certain respects, a psychoanalytic model of the mind features the ubiquity of conflict (of one type or another), some have also asserted that all aspects of the mind and mental functioning can be designated as compromise formations (Brenner, 1994).

In my view, psychoanalytic concepts such as conscious and unconscious motivational conflict, compromise formations, and defense mechanisms are integral to investigating romantic love relations. I have spent the last few pages going over some of the vocabulary of the psychoanalytic perspective I believe

can be applied towards the problems presented in the empirical literature on love. Using a psychoanalytic perspective allows one to view romantic love as involving compromise formations (some defensive and other not) among conscious and unconscious levels of motivations both for an individual and between relationship partners. I will attempt to demonstrate a prospective research model of this in my last chapter. Before that, however, let me review how psychoanalytic thinking has conceived of romantic love.

Psychoanalytic views of romantic love

The topic of romantic love has had many contributors from the field of psychoanalysis. From Freud's initial theorizing about romantic love in his "Three essays on the theory of sexuality" (1905b) through more recent offerings by Mitchell (2002) and Young-Bruehl (2003), psychoanalytic theorists and clinicians have described the dynamics of romantic relationships in various ways. In an effort to limit the scope of my study, my focus here is to depict the approach psychoanalysis has taken in documenting the interaction of unconscious and conscious factors in an individual's romantic life. In the work of the following theorists there will be many implicit disagreements as well as complementary statements. The multiplicity of perspectives however are united in their way of using a uniquely psychoanalytic concentration on the intrapsychic and interpersonal psychological compromises that are made in the realm of love.

In his “Three essays on the theory of sexuality” (1905b) Freud first suggested that the mother is the child’s first sexual-love object. Even rooted in auto-eroticism, the sexual instinct takes its first object (outside the body of the infant) in the form of the mother. However, eventually “the shape of his mother’s breast” becomes lost as a sexual object for the infant due to the auto-erotic nature of this time of life. It is then not until latency (roughly from age 6 to age 13) is completed that this original relation from child to mother is restored. The sexual drive, which splits into its sensuous and tender components during latency, essentially sees itself reconstituted during puberty with a new object replacing the initial maternal one. By this point, all earlier component instincts converge and all former erotogenic zones from infancy are superseded in importance by the genital zone. A new sexual aim emerges in a process that increasingly distinguishes the role of males and females and their individual course of development.

It is in this 1905 essay that Freud set down that “the finding of an object is in fact-the refinding of it.” Though the affectionate tie to the mother is always available, the sexual tie (formerly to the opposite sex parent) undergoes repression during latency in parallel with the Oedipus complex. In adolescence however the sexual current re-emerges, and in normal development, is not fixed towards incestuous aims. To paraphrase, the Oedipus complex is Freud’s theory of children fearing the “same-sex parent’s retaliation for their hostile, competitive strivings, which are, in turn, fueled by the children’s sexual wishes for the other-sex parent” (Bleiberg, 2005, p. 174). Freud did write of the occurrence of

incestuous fantasies, both conscious and unconscious, in puberty. This is due to increasing somatic pressure that must be negotiated and repudiated by the individual, who is also at this time feeling the influence of society's incestuous prohibitions. Towards the end of this essay, Freud delivered this caveat that reiterates the inescapable and enduring impact of early infantile sexuality on the later love relations:

a person who has been fortunate enough to avoid an incestuous fixation of his libido does not entirely escape its influence. It often happens that a young man falls in love seriously for the first time with a mature woman, or a girl with an elderly man in a position of authority; this is clearly an echo of the phase of development that we have been discussing, since these figures are able to reanimate pictures of their mother or father. There can be no doubt that every object-choice whatever is based, though less closely, on these prototypes. ... Jealousy in a lover is never without an infantile root or at least an infantile reinforcement. If there are quarrels between the parents or if their marriage is unhappy, the ground will be prepared in their children for the severest predisposition to a disturbance of sexual development or to a neurotic illness. (p. 228)

The thrust of this quotation shows Freud's early thinking on the role of both infantile and childhood development in serving as both the prototype for normal heterosexual love relations and the root of neurotic and more severe

disturbances in this realm. It is thus in this essay that the regressive and backwards-looking thrust of psychoanalytic perspectives on love was born as Freud explicitly laid down even further in a footnote to the essay added in 1915: “The innumerable peculiarities of the erotic life of human beings as well as the compulsive character of the process of falling in love itself are quite unintelligible except by reference back to childhood and as being residual effects of childhood” (p. 229). Though, as has been documented elsewhere this Freudian notion has its Platonic roots (Bergmann, 1987).

Between 1910 and 1917 Freud wrote three papers, which he later assembled under the heading “Contributions to the Psychology of Love.” In the first of these papers, “A Special Type of Choice of Object Made By Men,” (1910), Freud described a distinct type of pattern in men that he has observed clinically. For these men the only characteristics of woman that are important are that she must be involved in some relationship already and “should be like a prostitute” (here the reference is to promiscuity, questionable reputation and unfaithfulness). The lover is defined in this relationship by his impulse to rescue the beloved, by the high value placed upon the woman, and his experience of intense jealousy. This type of male love, which can endure into a string of such relationships, can be understood by examining the pubescent unconscious fantasies of the boy.

In short, the female love object of this type serves as a surrogate mother figure. For Freud, this particular type of man still harbors grievances towards this mother, since as a boy under the sway of the Oedipus complex and its fantasy components he has viewed her sexual relations with his father as the ultimate act

of unfaithfulness. Thus the persistent unconscious fantasies of this betrayal have dominated this man's ability to form normal love relationships with women. Instead he is fixated on enacting not just the fantasy of finally replacing his father in union with his mother, but also rescuing this mother-like figure as a form of gratitude. Also accomplished in this scenario is the man's continued unconscious fantasy "to be his own father."

In the next paper included in this series, "On the universal tendency to debasement in the sphere of love" (1912), Freud reflected on the causes of "psychical impotence" as seen in the complaints of male patients. This allows him to review his thinking of sexual development in regards to love relationships and expound on the two instinctual currents that must combine in normal adult sexuality. Of the affectionate and the sensual current, Freud postulated that the former is the older of the two and "is formed on the basis of the interests of the self-preservative instinct and is directed to the members of the family and those who look after the child" (p. 180). Though the sexual instincts are proposed to contribute to this more affectionate tie, at this point Freud thought that sexual objects are chosen (in a way that has enduring effects in later life) by virtue of their ability to provide satiation and serve self-preservative needs. After the division of these two currents during latency, they are to next meet after puberty, though the sexual current takes a different form. The new object to be chosen still follows infantile prototypes, but new obstacles like the incest taboo allow for a more realistic object choice.

However, there are certain instances when the energy of the sexual instinct (libido) turns away from reality and while respecting the incest barrier, the person is over-run by fantasies of the first sexual objects that normally remain unconscious. Freud outlined how, in this case, the young man's libidinal development is distorted and the original flavor of fantasy situations that led to infantile masturbatory pleasure becomes admissible to consciousness with only the maternal object concealed. The incestuous tie remains actively strong in the unconscious, but in reality the anxiety from enacting such wishes force the affectionate current to be split from the sensual current in reality.

Freud used this scenario to account for the range of difficulties related to impotence in men. Sexual pleasure and object choice is restricted due to these constraints on full psychological freedom. The sexual current then can only seek satisfaction in objects that are not reminiscent of incestuous figures. Since the maternal figure is also the first affectionate object, the lover is compelled to keep sexual and affectionate aims apart. As Freud succinctly surmised: "The whole sphere of love in such people remains divided in the two directions personified in art as sacred and profane (or animal) love. Where they love they do not desire and where they desire they cannot love" (p. 183). To aid the effort in keeping sensual intentions from objects of affection, these men have a love that is split with the sexual object debased and the maternal figure idealized and overvalued. The debasement of the sexual object becomes a prerequisite of sorts for satisfaction in this realm. Freud noted that this process of the splitting of

sensuous and affectionate currents occurs in children normally as a way to again ease the anxiety of taking the parent as an incestuous object.

Thus in this clinical example of impotence Freud illustrated how a later sexual fixation is related to normal psychological processes gone awry. The final romantic love object is arrived at only in the fusing of two separate currents of mental and physical life. Further, the sexual object of adulthood will always be a surrogate for the original root of both sexual and affectionate aims. Freud concluded his essay by noting that the course of adult love can be viewed as an endless search for the experience of the original relation to the first wished-for parental object and a series of substitute figures that can never fully satisfy our archaic unconscious longings. Aspects of our sexual instinct are thus doomed to remain unsatisfied and subordinated to the demands of civilization and survival of culture.

Freud further developed his thinking on romantic relations in his essay "On narcissism: an introduction" (1914). In theorizing how a primary form of ego-libido gets transferred onto others as object-libido, he describes cases in which people use themselves as a model for love-objects instead of maternal figures. His assumption was that two sorts of object choice are available to people based on the fact that a person has originally two sexual sources of pleasure in infancy—oneself and "the woman who nurses him." The object choice just mentioned that refers back to oneself is termed "narcissistic," and another type which is based on the satisfaction of ego-instincts is an "anaclitic type." This type of romantic object choice is associated to attachment experiences and those

original sources of “feeding, care, and protection,” and is usually based on one’s mother or a substitute caregiver.

Freud understood that tendencies to overvalue the beloved initially are related to the prior experience of the transfer of a child’s original narcissism to a satisfying object. He summarized the two paths to one choosing a person to love:

the narcissistic type may love:

1. what he himself is
2. what he himself was
3. what he himself would like to be
4. someone who was once part of himself

the anaclitic (attachment) type

1. woman who feeds him
 2. man who protects him
- *and the substitutes who take their place

(p. 90)

By this line of thinking, Freud expanded his view of love relations in a way that not only provided another route to ultimate object choice, but also completed a Platonic vision of love. For by positing the narcissistic type, Freud not only had a model of love as a reunion with past experiences and forms (the anaclitic type’s

symbiosis with infantile attachment experiences), but now had a theory that explained how one sought to find some version of oneself in a love object (the narcissistic type's search for the missing part (half) of himself found in the other).

Further in this paper, when dealing with the establishment of the ego ideal as the heir to an individual's primary narcissism, Freud related the process of idealization to love relations. By idealization the object "is aggrandized and exalted in the subject's mind." It must be said that in this 1914 view of romantic relations, being in love is an either-or process of exalting the other or raising one's own self regard:

Further, it is easy to observe that libidinal object-cathexis does not raise self-regard. The effect of dependence upon the loved object is to lower that feeling: a person in love is humble. A person in loves has, so to speak, forfeited a part of his own narcissism, and it can only be replaced by his being loved. In these respects self-regard seems to remain related to the narcissistic element in love. (p. 98)

Here, one can see that Freud linked even normal love relations to a consideration of narcissism, and more particularly primary narcissistic experiences. This paper features a conception of an objectless state of primary narcissism with the libidinal investment of the ego positioned as developmentally

prior to the ability to cathect or invest in external objects.¹⁴ Secondary narcissism, then, was to occur after such an investment of energy could be made to external objects, and then subsequently withdrawn and reinvested into the ego.

Love here is a zero-sum transactional model of first lowering one's self-regard in idealizing and transferring libidinal energies to the other that were formerly invested in oneself. The lover then looks to have his self-regard replenished by a reciprocating love shown towards him, thus restoring self-regard and psychic equilibrium. The love object then functions in relation to the ego almost in parallel to the role of the individual's psychic ego ideal. So in loving the other, the person invests the beloved through idealization with a high amount of regard and seeks to satisfy the other just as he has sought to fulfill his ego ideal. The smiling face of the ego ideal and the loved object is pleasurable. In both the anaclitic and the narcissistic types of loving, the object that is chosen must be suitable for one's idealization along the lines of fitting attachment or narcissistic needs. In more pathological cases, Freud described that in loving the other, the self experiences a depletion, and thus withdrawing one's affection for the other is

¹⁴ Data derived from infant observation (e.g., Lichtenberg, 1983, Stern, 1985) has challenged Freud's idea of primary narcissism. However, for Freud, even reviewers (Pulver, 1970; Auerbach, 1990) who have noted the traces of some ambivalence in his earlier thinking, about positing a primary objectless state, do not dispute that his later writings carry a definitive statement on the subject. On the topic of libido and in relation to states of being in love he wrote, "All we know about it relates to the ego, in which at first the whole available quota of libido is stored up. We call this state absolute, primary narcissism. It lasts until the ego begins to cathect the idea of objects with libido; to transform narcissistic libido into object libido. . . . It is only when a person is completely in love that the main quota of libido is transferred onto the object and the object to some extent takes the place of the ego" (1940, p. 150).

the only route to restore psychic stability. Towards the end of the paper he added an interesting note, almost in a passing sense, that: "it is also true that a real happy love corresponds to the primal condition in which object libido and ego libido cannot be distinguished" (p. 100). By this it seems clear that for Freud, the ideal state of romantic affairs involves not just a return to former times but also a certain loosening of one's boundaries and even a de-differentiation of the self that again harkens back to a Platonic vision of two halves separated who are eventually reunited in love.

Freud's next important statement on love came in his 1915 paper, "Instincts and their vicissitudes." In exploring the changes that can befall an instinct, he discussed the transformation into its opposite in the example of love and hate. He starts by offering that love has three opposites: hating, being loved in return, and indifference. Hate is related to experiences of unpleasure and springs from a different source than love. It is derived from the ego repudiating the existence of stimuli from the outside and external world and is fundamentally related to the ego-instinct of self-preservation. Love is originally derived from experiences of auto-erotic stimulation as the ego seeks to satisfy instinctual impulses. Narcissistic at first, love later gets attached to objects that also become sources of pleasure, as the ego attempts to incorporate them. This tendency remains at the root of the experience in romantic love of dissolving boundaries of self and other through oral incorporation. Love later gets joined with the sexual instinct in the complicated fashion that Freud laid out in previous papers, detailed earlier.

According to Freud, hate is always related to that which lies outside the self, while love is first oriented to the self. At later stages of pre-genital development, hate and love become indistinguishable as the object that is sought after as a source of pleasure has an existence outside the self that must be mastered by the developing ego. In later development ego-instincts may still predominate, and hate seems to characterize even the sexual instinct, as seen in sadistic love relationships (p. 139). As later thinkers have commented the nature of these ego-instincts remained an undeveloped concept in Freud's thinking (Young-Bruehl, 2003).

As for the second and third opposites of love, Freud thought of loving and being loved in return as an exact parallel to what happens to an instinct in its transformation into its opposite. He used the pairs of sadism-masochism and scopophilia-exhibitionism as examples of the instinct changing its aim, as opposed to content. They are fundamentally related to narcissistic fixations as the object used in both cases serves the narcissistic function of auto-erotic pleasure. The third antithesis of love—indifference—receives only a slight treatment by Freud, as an instance of love and hate experienced together. Since, he will explain that hate predates love, it follows that indifference is the predecessor to both emotions and may reflect the ego's relation to the external world (p. 136). In exploring love's relation to hate, what becomes clear is that love becomes removed from the realm of the instincts and is thought to belong to the entire individual. He explained that the attitudes of loving and hating "cannot

be made use of for the relations of instincts to their objects, but are reserved for the relations of the total ego to objects” (p. 137).

Freud’s next important statement on love came in a chapter of his “Group psychology and the analysis of the ego” (1921). In chapter eight, “Being in love and hypnosis,” he turned his attention to the question of idealization. Freud described this tendency in romantic relations, which he described as “sexual overvaluation,” by writing: “the love object enjoys a certain amount of freedom from criticism, and that all its characteristics are valued more highly than those of people who are not loved, or than its own were at a time when it itself was not loved” (p. 112). Freud understood this process as the subject relating to the love object as if it were either its own ego or a substitute ego ideal. Thinking in economic terms, “when we are in love a considerable amount of narcissistic libido overflows on to the subject” (p. 112). He wrote that the danger of idealizing the object too much is that too little narcissistic libido may be left for the self. Again, Freud thought that, in love, either the self or the other can experience an increase narcissistic investment. He found this process of idealization normal to a degree that when one falls in love there is a customary loss of critical judgment and greater susceptibility to narcissistic injury.

On the extreme end the subject becomes devoted to the love object to a degree that the other seems to take the place of the lover’s ego ideal. In this case, the object becomes the arbiter of what is right and just and can replace any form of conscience once intact. Freud distinguished identifying with one’s love object in an enriching way versus “bondage” to it that leaves the subject’s ego

impoverished. Thus, to Freud, extreme cases of being in love are quite comparable to states of hypnosis since both are based on similar aspects of subjection, compliance, and a sapping of initiative experienced by the subject in relation to an idealized other who is saved from criticism. The hypnotist acts as the subject's ego ideal, just as the beloved, in the way that both are given the final authority with regards to reality testing.

Freud thought that idealization is driven more so by the sexual instinct and views its fate to be futile when its aims are uninhibited. In general those sexual impulses that are not inhibited experience a grave reduction every time they are even momentarily achieved. The lasting ties of love must be bound by sexual aims that are inhibited to some degree: "It is the fate of sensual love to become extinguished when it is satisfied; for it to be able to last, it must from the beginning be mixed with purely affectionate components—with such, that is as are inhibited in their aims—or it must itself undergo a transformation of this kind" (p. 115). Freud will further develop this idea of sublimated sexual libido two years later in "The ego and the id" (1923). I will end this review of Freud's major thoughts on romantic love with his 1921 work, though as evidenced by a footnote in this section (see footnote 1), his thinking on love and its mysteries continued throughout his writings in various forms.

Theodore Reik envisioned a theory of love based on complementarity based on literature, his clinical and general observations (1944, 1957). He held an idea of love being ultimately a compensatory phenomenon: "a substitute for another desire, for the struggle toward self fulfillment, for the vain urge to reach one's

ego-ideal. The nonrealization of this drive makes love possible, but it also makes love necessary . . . (1957, p. 40). Reik wrote that in romantic love, the ego ideal is exchanged for the loved person, in an unconscious process that involves the projection of one's fantasized ideal image onto the other. What is then central to Reik's conception of romantic love is that the initial state of the lover, prior to falling in love is discontent, dissatisfaction, and ego-deficiency. It is the inner tension that is experienced from this fundamental human condition that impels the person to go from within oneself to find the thing outside and external to the self that will ease this pain via identification processes. Love is one way that the person is able to enrich and improve the ego.

He detailed how an unconscious experience of envy, usually consciously felt as admiration, accompanies the beginning stages of love. The lover meets the love-object and believes that she possesses, in the form of discrete qualities or intangible total essence, what he lacks. Reik made a point that what is lacking is also a matter of perception that is subject to the person's inner conflicts and unconscious fantasies. Thus, what are often claimed consciously as admired attributes in the other rarely represent the total picture of one's psychic needs and wishes.

Reik's theory included thoughts of a wished-for regressed union with the other, which is assumed to be mutual. The lover wishes to be the love-object, and soon envy turns into love. He eventually moves loves into the realm of the ego-instincts when he says: "Love is in its essential nature an emotional reaction-formation to envy, possessiveness and hostility" (p. 66). When one loves

romantically, he essentially has overturned his more domineering feelings and transformed them into tenderness. At this point wanting to be loved is accompanied by the impulse to love and give to the other. The violence first felt towards the other draws its intensity from one's dislike of one's own personality and wish to have what the beloved possesses. The other is idealized in regards certain qualities that actually represent the other's ability to free the lover from isolation and the anguish of one's flaws. Eventually the lover becomes disillusioned with the loved one and starts to de-idealize love's capacity to heal oneself. The person's individual characteristics and conflicts determine whether this period of disillusionment is negotiated in healthy or harmful ways.

In *Primary Love and Psychoanalytic Technique* (1952), Michael Balint challenged the then accepted view of adult love that emphasized the capacity to reach satisfaction through genital intercourse, minimizing pregenital concerns. What he instead contended was that genital love "is a fusion of disagreeable elements: of genital satisfaction and pregenital tenderness" (p. 117). He sought to disentangle genital love from the notion of genital sexuality (or genitality), associating the latter with the capacity to achieve maximum pleasure in sexual relations. In addition to genital satisfaction he described three components usually found in a "true love relation": idealization, tenderness and a special form of identification.

While Balint followed Freud and acknowledged the role of idealization in genital love, he did not consider it "absolutely necessary." He admitted agreement with Freud, who also described the dangers of idealization in the

development of romantic love. Regarding tenderness, Balint preferred an understanding closely aligned to Freud's description of the affectionate current involved in mature love in the paper discussed earlier, "On the universal tendency to debasement in the sphere of love" (1912). Balint emphasized the regressive and even infantile nature of tenderness in love, and used this point to further characterize genital love as a mainly regressive phenomenon. Balint wrote, "...the demand for prolonged, perpetual, regard and gratitude forces us to regress to, or even never to egress from, the archaic infantile form of tender love. Man can therefore be regarded as an animal which is retarded even in his 'mature' age at an infantile form of love" (p. 114). After tenderness, he identified a special form of identification that requires both partners to be able to understand and want to satisfy each other's pleasurable needs. This form of genital identification implies a balanced mutuality where each lover takes into account one's own needs and balances them with an approximation of the loved one's wishes.

In Balint's formulation of genital love there is an inherent tension between the regressive pull aimed towards the infantile pleasures of an ideal symbiosis with the mother, and a forward orientation towards the other that resolves issues of sameness and differences leading to an identification with the beloved who is cherished as important as oneself. Though he discounted the ultimate necessity of idealization, Balint concluded that the "supreme happiness" that can accompany romantic love is in fact based on illusion and "regression to an infantile stage of reality testing." The fantasy in love is then that the other will be

able to bring me (back) to a state where all is right in the world and I am satisfied. Thus for Balint, love involved not just the fusion of genital satisfaction and pregenital tenderness, but the intermittent mixture of reality and regressive unreality or fantasy.

In Erich Fromm's *The Art Of Loving* (1956) he articulated an "active" form of loving that he wished to distinguish from passive metaphors of falling or receiving that usually accompany romantic relationships. Along with being a form of giving of oneself, Fromm detailed love's basic elements of: care, responsibility, respect, and knowledge. He defined that "love is the active concern for the life and the growth of that which we love" (p. 24). His view privileged a loving relationship that is typified by mutuality and reciprocity. Knowledge of the other entails the throwing off of one's illusions about the other and a quest for both partners to move towards an "objective" knowing of the other, free from irrational distortion. He conceded that while complete knowledge of the other is impossible, it is the acceptance of the limitations there are in grasping the loved person that is required in love.

In a way that would be influential for future research into romantic love, Fromm conceived of love as an "attitude" or an "orientation of character," rather than a relationship to a person. He concentrated on the craving for fusion and union in erotic love. Its function, like all forms of love, is to overcome an individual's feeling of aloneness and separateness. Erotic love carries with it the illusion that "the new love will be different from earlier ones" (p. 49). Sexual desire, which strongly tries to distinguish from erotic love, aims at fusion and can

create the illusion of union. Ideally, for Fromm, sexual desire must be coupled with brotherly love, in other words tenderness, to serve the authentic goals of erotic love. For him, erotic love (which I am equating with romantic love), transcends conceptions attached to feelings, and must include an idea of lasting commitment—"it is a decision, it is a judgment, it is a promise" (p. 51).

Fromm was suspicious about idealization in love, and identified its frequent occurrence in idolatrous love. He felt it is the result of a person not having a firmly rooted or mature identity. The person then worships the beloved other, who he projects all of his own attributes and powers that he is "alienated" from. He then loses himself in an other who cannot live up to such expectations of perfection. The intensity of such a love, specifically in the beginning stages, "demonstrates the hunger and despair of the idolater" (p. 90). Fromm understood idolatrous love to be often confused with real love, though cautions against making such an error. Ultimately, Fromm criticized idolatrous and sentimental forms of love as being neurotically tinged, relying on mechanism of projection in a way that obscures the other and precludes a more authentic meeting between romantic partners communicating "from the center of their existence" (p. 93). The way one achieves this kind of love is by overcoming one's narcissistic orientation and moving towards an objectivity that allows one's perception and judgment not be exceedingly swayed by desires and fears. Ultimately the art of loving involves developing the humility, objectivity and reason needed to be able to "see" the other "person's reality as it exists regardless of my interests, needs and fears" (p. 109).

Henry Dicks published a comprehensive offering of the conceptualization and treatment of marital dysfunction from a Kleinian-influenced object relations perspective (1967). He endorsed a view that object choice was predicated on an unconscious search by individuals to find archaic aspects of themselves in the other. Thus through romantic love, the subject seeks to undo what has been done via repression and denial, and the other is recruited unconsciously as a complementary part of the person. Often this wish is expressed in a regressive fantasy that the other will either correct past offenses incurred in childhood or will restore what was relinquished through the course of development (i.e. omnipotence, bliss, dependency). Aspects of control can be understood to be implicated on this as a person may restrict the loved other to abide by fantasized demands, unconscious and conscious, that are not explicitly stated or realized.

In this book, modern marriage was described to contain many inherent tensions that had to be negotiated both on unconscious and conscious levels. The struggle between dependency and autonomy is highlighted as one that can easily spark old unresolved conflicts around aggression. Dicks found that marital partners were often denying this ambivalence and hostility, using idealization and projective identification to manage such intolerable feelings. Unfortunately these defensive mechanisms may only serve to exacerbate strife and discord between the couple. In his study, Dicks showed how idealization, while healthy at certain times in development and within love relations, can ultimately be destructive to married couples when it is used in the service of reaction formation and used to deny aggressive feelings towards the other. In these cases, one's partner is not

allowed to behave in ways that will challenge the subject's idealization of them. Deviation from such controlled behavior leads to intolerable anxieties, which are avoided at the expense of allowing a more enduring love and relationship to evolve.

A further innovation to psychoanalytic thinking and understanding human relationships came in the writings of Heinz Kohut. His work primarily dealt with how dependent one's psychological self is on others throughout one's life. His self psychology (1971, 1977) has a foundation built on an understanding of the development, maintenance and rehabilitation of the self, thought of both as a psychological structure organizing experience and as representative of the person's agentic core (1977, p. 310-311). Originally conceived of as an outgrowth of classical Freudian theory to treat certain types of disturbed patients, his re-envisioning of psychoanalysis involved a de-emphasis of both the sexual and aggressive drives in favor of the self's need for cohesion, vitality and what can be thought of as harmony or fulfillment. Though his starting point was Freud and autoeroticism, Kohut eventually departed from classical thinking on narcissism by separating the developmental lines of narcissism and object love.

Kohut hypothesized that for the child, the normal emergence from primary narcissism eventually brought with it the inevitable failure of his parents to completely satisfy all of his needs. Aware of his vulnerability, the child manages this disruption by building up the two independent structures of normal narcissistic investment, the grandiose self and the idealized parental imago. The parent is then imbued with absolute power and perfection and serves as a

potential merger object for the child in his attempts to regain or retain narcissistic equilibrium. In the context of these two narcissistic constellations the parent then serves the dual function of “mirroring” the child’s need for admiration and approval (facilitating the establishment of the grandiose self) and being available as an object of idealization (facilitating the formation of the idealized parental imago). The developmental line of the grandiose self was thought of as a source of the ego’s ambitions and as contributing to establishment of ego structure and functions. Normatively the idealization of the parental imago combined with the gradual disappointments by the parent would lead to the internalization of this structure and the subsequent idealization of the superego and ego ideal.

His writings and case illustrations emphasize the use of others (as self-objects) to perform mental regulating functions that the person is not equipped to perform for himself. In his theory, during early development and throughout life, self-objects function not as independent subjects for people, but as part of the individual’s self. Early in one’s life, self-object needs that are intense and absolute must be satisfied to facilitate self-cohesion and the development of the child’s own self-regulatory mechanisms. Eventually, in proper development, the person becomes able to regulate self-esteem instead of exclusively requiring the help of others. For Kohut, the character of some of these early self-object needs are revealed in the course of spontaneously developing transference relationships with patients in analytic treatment. His clinical experience led him to identify three major transference constellations: the mirror transference, idealizing transference, and the twinship/alter-ego transference. The mirror

transference involves the reawakening of patient's childhood needs for a "source of accepting-confirming 'mirroring,'" the idealizing transference refers to "a need for merger with a source of 'idealized' strength and calmness," and the twinship/alter-ego transference is one in which the patient yearns for similarity and kinship in a way that "will confirm their belonging to the human community from which they have remained alienated" (Kohut and Wolf, 1978; Ornstein, 1998). These transference relationships serve as ways for the self to preserve its original narcissism as well as to restore the image of destroyed parental omnipotence.

Despite one's reliance on some forms of self-object relationships throughout life, Kohut did propose that healthy psychological functioning required mature romantic love as necessarily one of its goals (1984). Moreover, in his last writings it seemed clear that he assigned a general importance to the role that love can have in bolstering the self and maintaining self-cohesion. While he did envision the individual as having a psychological developmental task to mature away from the exclusive reliance on self-objects, he also argues that self-objects are not to be completely outgrown. As one review of Kohut's work put it:

In adulthood, the spouse, friends, and careers may be self-objects. In addition to broadening who or what may serve as self-objects, the healthy individual develops reliable consistent, and endopsychic structures which assume many of the functions that were previously required of external self-objects. The person becomes more internally

competent, less externally needy, and more flexible in meeting remaining self-object needs. (Baker & Baker, 1987)

Thus for Kohut, it is fundamentally human to continue to need self-objects throughout life, as the quality of these relationships move from being characterized by archaic demands to “empathic resonance” (Kohut, 1984). Even earlier in his writings, Kohut viewed even “healthy” love relationships as self-object ones: “I have no hesitation in claiming that there is no mature love in which the love is not also a self-object. Or to put this depth-psychological formulation into a psychosocial context: there is no love relationship without mutual (self-esteem enhancing) mirroring and idealization” (1977, p. 122). So then a normal love relationship in adulthood may inherently be specific kind of object relationship within which one would be able to decipher traces of one’s earliest unmet fundamental needs or grandiosity, idealization and connectedness (in Kohut’s scheme). He understood the idealization that occurs in love relationships as being one in which the individual fantasizes about an ideal love object that unconsciously would serve to correct developmental tasks left incomplete since childhood. One can see the theme here being one of mature love not only being regressive, but also corrective in relation to the early caregiver-child relationship.

Jacob Arlow contributed significantly to psychoanalytic thinking, specifically in the areas of perceiving reality (1969a, 1969b, 1996), issues around technique (1977, 1987) and metapsychology (1975, 1982). I will discuss his work here on

the role of unconscious fantasy in romantic relations. Arlow wrote that unconscious fantasy is a “constant feature of mental life” that accompanies conscious experience (1969a). He made a strong case for understanding the role of ego functions in relation to fantasy, particularly focusing on defensive processes. He thought it fundamental that a psychoanalytic treatment focuses on facilitating the patient’s ability to distinguish fantasy from reality. In other writings, Arlow’s understanding of how unconscious fantasy intermingles with the perception of reality led him to cast doubt on the reliability of memory (1969b):

What we think was real, or what we think really happened, is a combination or intermingling of fantasy with perception of reality. When memory or perception offer material which is in consonance with fantasy thinking, the data are selectively perceived and the memories are selectively recalled and used as material to serve as vehicle for the unconscious fantasy.

For Arlow, fantasy mechanisms were not inherently problematic or exclusively defensive, but rather were universal on both conscious (which has a quasi-visual nature) and unconscious levels. His works elaborated the complex relationship between unconscious wishes, ego defenses, compromise formation, multiple function, and perceptive abilities.

In “Object concept and object choice” (1980) Arlow attempted to clear up many of confusions in the field regarding the use of the concept of an “object.” As is the case with many terms in the psychoanalytic literature, he pointed to the

divergent meanings that the concept of an object had when being used by differing theorists. He reminded readers of the initial usage of object by Freud and its development through the decades following its original conception. To Arlow, what was not to be lost was that as originally defined, the object is a mental representation that “grows out of a mnemonic image, a recollected set of sensory impressions accompanied by a pleasurable feeling tone which, according to the dominant pleasure principle, one wishfully attempts to reconstitute as a sensory impression.” In early development, an object may be a part of one’s anatomy or even an inanimate object felt to be part of the child, and later it can represent another person or an inanimate object considered separate from the self. Arlow emphasized that, according to libido theory, an object is a mental representation of something cathected in a process of instinctual discharge.

He highlighted the confusion around discussing part or whole objects by bringing the discussion to the level of unconscious fantasy. For Arlow, it was “the type of unconscious fantasy” that determines how a part of a body or a whole person is regarded. More important than understanding whether an individual relates to an other as a part or whole object is the nature of one’s unconscious fantasy. As he said: “in such fantasies the mental representation of a breast may be foisted upon the image of a real external person or, conversely, one’s whole body in an unconscious fantasy may be conceived as a representation of one’s own or someone else’s penis, breast or feces.” By appreciating that objects are confined to the realm of inner psychic reality, Arlow pinpointed the tendency to

confuse discussions of one's object relations with that of an individual's interpersonal relations. Not identical, one's quality of forming objects is shaped by unconscious fantasy, which then affects a person's ability to relate to others (i.e. interpersonal functioning). Psychoanalytically, objects are not people, and Arlow demonstrated this by describing the occurrence of transference in which "the person in the real world is confused with a mental representation of a childhood object, a mental representation of what once was either a person or a thing." He argued that it is not wise to infer directly from observations of one's interpersonal interactions about one's object relations. As with the example of early caregiving history, it is how one manages, remembers, draws on and defends against his experiences with objects that influences future development. He maintained that this issue of objects versus persons is not one of semantics, and rather is crucial to how one views development, pathology and love.

For Arlow, object seeking and choice involved the earliest infantile memory traces of pleasurable or painful sensations connected to an external person. As cognition develops, the child is eventually able to fuse "seemingly disparate mental representations of objects having identical sensory impression" and relate this to a person. However, Arlow did not reduce patterns of romantic love to a universal wished-for regression to infantile times of symbiotic fusion. He also cautioned against views of loving that privilege and idealized the role of "mature" object relations in romantic love. He instead made a case of the divergent patterns individuals may take in the course of seeking out and attaining love, citing that all romantic love involves aspects of both primitive and mature object

relations. Drawing on his analytic experience, he accented the influence of one's unique person history and sets of unconscious fantasies on whom and how one is able to love. The nature of love, then, involves the interplay of "identification, defense, object relations, and instinctual gratification" both in the context of the person's history and their present. The past as well as the present affects object relations as the individual interacts and adapts to his given environment. He stated:

Love relations integrate complex needs of individuals who come together in keeping with conditions operative at various phases of their lives. These needs may change in time for many reasons, altering the relationships between the partners, and this is what leads to instability or rupture of the relationship or to the search for a new love. In finding a new object, the individual may or may not repeat the old pattern. To a large extent what happens is determined by the nature of the unconscious conflict which the individual is trying to resolve at that particular time of life. (1980)

Arlow elevated the individual's unique path to love in this paper. Cautioning against generalizations about optimal forms and patterns of romantic love, he disputed models of loving, like those involving an idealization of the loved object, that suggest one standard form. Instead he espoused a view of psychoanalytic inquiry that respects divergent histories, routes and possible cultural influences regarding how one loves.

Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel has understood one's relation to a loved other in terms of its intrapsychic correlation to the ego's relation to its ego ideal. For her, the ego ideal is less a model the individual tries to emulate but a temporal representative of a lost narcissistic time when the ego was its own ideal (1985). She attributed an origin to the ego ideal that is linked to primary narcissism, and thus is independent from and prior to the formation of the superego from Oedipus complex. One's ideal can take many ephemeral forms, but these are secondary in nature to the fact that one's ideal represents one's lost narcissism that is forever missing to the individual both in terms of time and space. The search for the ego ideal is ultimately futile, as it is less of a thing to be possessed or a time regained, but more a spatial-temporal amount to be reduced. Through the mechanism of idealization the person embellishes some object (or instinct, in regards to perversions) with exalted attributes that are not inherently of its nature in hopes of bringing oneself closer in relation to one's own ideal.

In regards to normal love relations, Chasseguet-Smirgel used Freud's thinking of love involving the projection of the ego ideal onto the object as a starting point to offer her model. Instead of the lover's ego being depleted in the instance of loving the other, the very act of loving itself exalts the lover, no matter what the response of the intended is. She wrote: "It seems to me that in love—from, indeed, the very first instants, from the moment of choice—subject and object represent the objectivization of the relationship between the ego (the subject) and the ego ideal (the object)" (1985, p. 55). It is then through the very anticipation of bringing oneself closer to one's ego ideal (as symbolized by the

future relationship with the other) that the individual experiences the joy of ego expansion. Understood this way, the decrease in self-esteem that is concurrent with the other being invested with heightened idealized properties may be more reflective of reactivated unconscious Oedipal insecurities and guilt.

For Chasseguet-Smirgel, in the process of romantic love, we can see the internal dynamics of the mind externalized in the interplay between lover and beloved. Like Freud thought, the loved other stands in for the ego ideal. Her thinking is contrary to Freud's in cases of normal love when the subject's ego is not consumed in an all-encompassing sort of way. She wrote that in this merging of the ego with one's ego ideal "it is indeed the radiance of the object (of the ego ideal) that falls on the ego" (p. 55). There is a difference between an immature kind of romantic love that seeks to project one's ego ideal onto the other only in hopes of merging regressively in a primary narcissistic fusion. It is only in pathological cases that loving diminishes the subject's ego. In mature forms of loving, the longing for one's ego ideal in the form of the beloved must take into account the psycho-sexual developmental gains of post puberty sensual desires.

According to Chasseguet-Smirgel, in mature loving the individual's narcissism must seek reunion with the sexual instincts in the pursuit of the love object. All forms of genital love must bear the imprint of Oedipal times, and the wounds of disappointment. Importantly, post-puberty, the individual resolves to find a love object that is reminiscent of both primary object and Oedipal object. Chasseguet-Smirgel followed Freud in acknowledging the futility involved in

attempting to satisfy one's unconscious wishes and instincts in relationship with one's love object. For no matter what level of happiness is reached and can endure in a love relationship, "the oedipal injury will not be removed . . . any more than the gap between ego and ideal will be filled" (p. 70). There is an acceptance of the uncrossable gap that exists between one's wishes and satisfactions, and includes as illustrative of this the distance between ego and its ideal, synthesis of instincts, and complete attainment of its pre or post oedipal primary object. However, still compelled to reach these unreachable destinations and accepting fleeting contentment as reward, people are to some degree unconsciously governed by a certain level of illusion in their day-to-day pursuits.

Chasseguet-Smirgel envisioned an ego ideal that is sought after in love relationships with a tolerance of an imperfect solution. By the time of adulthood, the individual should have then sufficiently adapted the mental capacities to allow the pursuit of the ideal in love to give way to reality considerations. As she summarized: the attempt to rediscover the primary sense of "at-oneness" will not be dependent on incestuous unconscious fantasy, sexual satisfaction will strengthen the ego and by this diminishes the ego ideal, "the partner will be loved with his or her limitations and vulnerabilities and not for an illusory perfection," and attachment to the new love object will provide the main way of gratifying primitive wishes linked to the pre-oedipal and oedipal object of memory (pp. 72-73). Thus in mature forms of love, idealization and the projection of one's ego ideal are toned down as reality considerations guide one's relationships with others and attempts to enhance oneself by way of the other.

Otto Kernberg, writing from an object-relations perspective, heavily influenced Melanie Klein and American ego psychology, has proposed a view of mature sexual love (1974, 1995). He described it as 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 deep commitment to the other and to the relationship
- 5) The passionate character of the love relation in all three aspects: the sexual relationship, the object relationship and the superego investment of the couple (1974)

Kernberg has accentuated the enduring presence of unconscious fantasies of an Oedipal nature within a couple's relationship (1976). These fantasies feature the individual experiencing himself as part of two concurrent triangles. One is a recapitulation of his childhood Oedipal dynamics with mother and father, and the other is a vengeful recast of this. In this scheme, the fantasy of Oedipal defeat is

at the root of the fears (and the fantasies) of the death one's self and one's partner, and the abandonment by one's lover. Interestingly, the reactivation of Oedipal fantasies within one's current love relation may heighten passion and excitement due to intrapsychic sources of danger. Often this danger is related to both the feared attack of or aggression towards one's fantasized Oedipal rival. Though there is a spectrum on which triangulation fantasies may occur (from more pathological to more healthy), for Kernberg they are ubiquitous in romantic relationships and indicative of the centrality of managing aggression within the couple.

Also universal to normal love relations is the capacity to link idealization with erotic desire on the road to the establishment of an intimate relationship with a romantic partner filled of depth. Kernberg wrote about the essential idealization of one's partner's anatomy or surface of the body in erotic desire:

I am suggesting that in both genders, and despite the differences related to the different history of their sexual development, idealization of body surfaces, a central aspect of erotic desire, is a function of the availability of primitive internalized object relations. And the personal history of a love relation becomes symbolically inscribed in aspects of the loved object's anatomy.
(1995, p. 27)

In support of this idea, he cited the work of Meltzer and Williams (1988) on the infant's idealization of the mother's body and the infant's internalization of the mother's reciprocating idealization of her baby. They linked this to the development of one's earliest sense of aesthetic value and beauty. The infant's idealization of the mother's body is also a defense against the aggression feared to be coming from the mother. Under the sway of primitive splitting, it also serves to protect sexual attitudes towards the mother from being overcome by the child's inherent aggression.

Later, idealization helps the child navigate through the Oedipal crisis and even serves to help separate the affectionate and sexual current during latency by enforcing the prohibition against sensual longing for the idealized Oedipal object. It is as if the use of idealization in early development serves as a model for integrating sexual and tender feelings in mature romantic relationships. Modifying Chasseguet-Smirgel's work, Kernberg wrote that in romantic love relations "it is not the ego ideal that is projected but ideals that stem from structural developments within the superego (including the ego ideal)" (p. 39). He also pointed out that these projected ideals must correspond to a fully differentiated and integrated ego and superego structures. Throughout Kernberg's theorizing on love, one finds the link between romantic love, the superego, society and morality concerns.

The beloved is idealized for values, which are first perceived through a process of identification. What the lover identifies with is mainly a projected sense of his own ego ideal. The attachment to the love object includes an

attachment to this part of the self, invested in the other. This unconscious ego ideal is reflective of the intersection of the individual's own goals and the internalized principles of the culture that the person accepts. The other is idealized as being symbolic of these cherished ideals; in other words "the coming alive in external reality of a desirable, profoundly longed-for ideal" (p. 98). Thus the love relationship transcends itself in referring to the dominant modes of morality and ethics in society. Through idealization and fantasy the boundaries between self and other are loosened on an unconscious level that contributes to the experience of self-loss and the ecstatic quality of being on love.

For Kernberg, successful romantic relationships must use idealization in ways that facilitate growth, commitment and depth. The joint idealization of each other and of the couple as a unit indicates the ascendance of superego functions that ensures a level of protection against infantile regression and the capacity for mutual concern and care: "the importance of this joint superego structure resides in its implicit function as a "court of appeal," a kind of last resort when one partner has inflicted a grave lesion in their jointly established value system" (pp. 98-99). The projection of one's ego ideal onto one's partner and the shared unconscious idea of themselves involved in a dyadic ego ideal implies a standard that each must live up to and a promise of the commitment to live up to such principles. Transgression against such implicit values then is experienced as a signal danger to the couple's stability.

Idealization is also important to the emotion of gratitude that is experienced within a romantic couple. Continuing a note first sung by Klein (1957), Kernberg

has described that guilt not only reinforces gratitude but it increases idealization. Specifically, the mature superego of the individual and the couple is capable of stimulating idealization processes as a reaction formation against guilt. However, as Kernberg has drawn from Dicks' work (1967), this type of idealization that results in gratitude also runs in contrast to further tasks involved in the maintenance of a romantic relationship. The reemerging adolescent task of the couple to integrate eroticism and tenderness usually is accompanied by formerly dissociated past internalized object relations. These conflicts (some oedipal in nature) not only present a challenge to the developing couple's stability, but also bring an end to the reliance on idealization to stimulate gratitude and care, as the capacity for forgiveness becomes more important.

Kernberg extended his work to realm of psychopathological love relations. In his thinking, dysfunction in romantic couples can also be linked to difficulties regarding idealization. Central to this psychoanalytic model of object relations and their role in pathology is his emphasis on the importance of integrating good and bad object representations of the other in relation to the self. The radical splitting of all-good and all-bad internalized object relations indicates a person's reliance on primitive idealization as a defense mechanism. This quality of idealization does not facilitate mutuality within the relationship and is vulnerable to the normal conflict and aggression is inherent in loving relations.

As mentioned above unhealthy forms of idealization can be operative in many forms of couple dysfunction. In the case where one member of the couple has narcissistic pathology there is a danger of idealization being restricted to the

physical and sexual realm, prohibiting a fuller idealization of the partner as a whole person. For the narcissist, this shaky form of intense idealization may be quickly followed by a severe denigration of the other for not living up to one's fantasized ideal. Gratitude and concern do not develop in these cases, and the love object becomes viewed as a conquest. To understand the root of relationship problems, Kernberg has theorized about the unconscious fantasies are underlying many forms of romantic difficulties. He cited the work of Anzieu (1989) on the "skin" of a couple's relationship, referring to the demand for complete intimacy and continuity between both partners. Such phenomena may signify the existence of the unconscious fantasy to choose a love object that can be used to complete oneself either homosexually or heterosexually.

Equally important are the unconscious fantasies that accompany triangulation patterns. Direct triangulation occurs when one or both members of the couple unconsciously fantasize about an idealized excluded third person that is of the same sex as the subject. This essentially repeats the Oedipal configuration and ushers in feelings of insecurity in the relationship. These fantasies occur during sexual intercourse quite often in the context of masochistic pathology. Reverse triangulations also repeat Oedipal dynamics but in this case the fantasized third party takes the form of an idealized person of the same gender as the subject's partner. Here, the unconscious fantasies involves repairing the Oedipal wound by situating oneself as the sought after object. Triangulation fantasies, for Kernberg, are on the one hand universal enough that he even proposed, "there are potentially, in fantasy, always six persons in bed together: the couple, their

respective unconscious oedipal rivals, and their respective unconscious oedipal ideals” (1995, p. 88). However, they can also be destructive when there is either the conscious or unconscious collusion by the dyad to recruit this third party in reality. These relationships become rife with jealousy and insecurity and eventually may lead to “desperate efforts to destroy or devalue the partner who has become totally identified with the oedipal parental image” (1988, p. 74).

Rather than staying on the conscious level of experience and stated worries and needs in relationships, Kernberg’s work operates in a way that expands one’s critical lens. By investigating a range of unconscious fantasies and patterns, Kernberg not only grants fantasy a level of primacy that is needed to understand complex intimate relations, but he also paints a picture of the mutual interaction that takes place on this plain of functioning. His model of love relations is one that involves the delicate tension between what one consciously and unconsciously dreads and desires and the delicate interplay between two people’s conflicting and complementary ideals, identifications and histories.

Ethel Person has written extensively on the subject of romantic love and its fantasy components (1988, 1991, 1995). She has challenged biases in academic and popular culture that implicitly or explicitly privileged the exclusive role of reason in one’s life. Rather than taking the side of irrationality, she has argued that fantasy and imagination dominates and shapes human life just as much as our reasoning capabilities. Though one’s fantasy life may not be out in public display, she has understood it to be omnipresent in mental life. Although there is a degree to which one appreciates and indulges one’s fantasy life, there

is a built in opacity that an individual will not be able to fully penetrate. Whether obscured by the inconsistencies of consciousness or the force of repression, our fantasies and their meanings are rarely as transparent as they seem. They have an ability to frighten and excite us to an extent that is often outside of awareness. Person's work helps in understanding their function and how they directly may influence our interpersonal relations. Specifically, it is clear to Person that conscious and unconscious fantasies play an integral role in close love relationships, whether on the cultural or individual level.

In *By Force of Fantasy* (1995) she described that the surface content of a fantasy is "always a compromise between wishes and the prohibitions against them" and to get at their meaning they must be translated back into our native "language of desire." The unadulterated form of fantasies, mixing images and memories from different levels of the mind, are often too anxiety provoking partly because they are governed by the unfamiliar logic confined to our unconscious system. In Person's view, they act to provide pleasure, safety or control via covert means. Since often what we desire may have a distressing component, fantasy must work in a way that deceives our mind: "it acts to prevent one part of the self from knowing what another part wants. Through disguises one fools the repressive part of the personality into overlooking the hungry, desiring part" (p.17). Because of these innate mechanisms of protective self-deception, Person described how so much of fantasy remains unrealized but operative in the unconscious. Due to the nature of the unconscious, its contents may only be glimpsed in bits and cannot be directly observed. However, since our earliest

and most powerful memories, experiences and sensations shape our unconscious fantasies, they in turn profoundly exert influence throughout our lives, in a way that our conscious fantasies can only hint at. Person offered a definition conscious fantasy:

It is a daydream that surfaces in the stream of consciousness, a narrative compounded of emotion, thought, internal dialogue, and (predominantly visual) sensory impressions. Sometimes highly schematic and abbreviated, sometimes minutely articulated and detailed, it is shaped by the imagination to coalesce ultimately around wish-fulfillment, emotional regulation, assurance of safety, containment of unpleasant emotions, working through of trauma, crystallization of perception, or aspirations for the future. The goal of fantasy is to achieve an overall change in state—a change in how one feels.
(p. 38)

Waking fantasies draw on our memories, unconscious wishes and feelings, and our current life situations, wants, displeasures and conflicts. According to Person, fantasies can take on a pleasurable or dysphoric quality, can be fleeting or repeating, be substitutive or preparatory, and have content related to securing self-esteem and narcissistic gratification.

She also explored the function and origin of sexual fantasies, which are commonly discussed in relation to romantic love relationships. Person has used the term sexprint to refer to the “specific sexual fantasies we invoke as a means

to arousal in masturbation and often as an ancillary or obligatory aid to intercourse and other kinds of interpersonal sex” (p. 75). Our sexprint is a condensation of our historical information, fantasies and desires. The specific repeating erotic fantasy of our adult lives, a retread of early childhood masturbatory sources, crystallizes into a final form by adolescence (Laufer, 1976). Sexual fantasies are fed by the totality of all of an individual’s developmental experiences, incorporating the earliest experiences of erotic and sensual life. While individual characteristics may contribute to our central erotic fantasy, what is of dominating importance is how one comes to resolve the Oedipal crisis. I will return to this subject shortly. In short, because of their ability to draw on an individual’s first moments of life, sexual fantasies have an ability to represent a diverse set of wishes and serve various functions (from management of anxiety to restoring self-esteem). Once ideas of sublimation are considered, one can also understand how sexual fantasies are able to influence seemingly nonsexual parts of the personality.

Person’s approach fantasy demonstrates a psychoanalytic method of unpacking multiple levels of human experience and relationships. Historically Person places our current conception of romantic love within the Western culture dating back to eleventh-century Provence. With an appreciation of the equal contributions of the cultural and personal unconscious, she defined romantic love: “Not a primary affect, then, but a powerful compound passion in which emotions and thoughts are intertwined, romantic love is an act of the imagination, a creative synthesis in which many diverse fantasies, wishes, feelings and

impulses crystallize to focus on one person alone, the idealized beloved” (1995, p. 209). She has distinguished passionate romantic love (which is her focus) from its strictly carnal form or attachment-driven affectionate bonding cousin.

She has described love on the phenomenological level as experienced by lovers (1988). Consciously, lovers, at first, feel swept away as they are obsessively consumed with thoughts of the loved object. There is a uniqueness that is felt about the other, the lover himself, and their relationship. The lovers experience a certain kind of timelessness as both seek to transcend realities and boundaries in their union with the other. Often, one feels vulnerable as the dangers involved in depending on and exposing oneself to the other are realized. If romantic love progresses, an eventual mutuality brings the reciprocated urge both lovers feel to please the other and have their love felt. Each tries to validate the other, but also a new creation that is born as the couple more fully identify as a joint entity, a “we.” The excitement, happiness and urgency that lovers feel are also accompanied by what can be never-felt-before conscious desires for merger and transcendence.

For Person, imagination and reality are not contrary but play out a divine tension in the course of romantic love. At romantic love’s core “is the lover’s idealization of an yearning for an Other, as revealed through the urgency to be with the beloved” (1991). Since its aim is to quench the need for an idealized other by way of union, in one way it is both driven by idealization and seeks its end. Its birthplace is early childhood, and in its present form it harkens back to archaic wishes of a perfect and unceasing love and devotion from one’s mother.

Happiness is not love's goal, but rather the idealized other whose function is to restore and maintain one's perfect self-esteem. Love is fundamentally object-related, as it is through the other that the lover hopes to gain that sense of perfection never realized since infancy. Thus, for Person, love is backwards seeking in its unconscious attempt to repair the narcissistic wounds incurred throughout normal development. However, romantic love is equally forward seeking in its unconscious hope for function to deliver the lover to a state of permanent bliss.

Inclined to look beyond the surface of reported experience and feelings, Person has tried to understand the underlying mechanisms and first causes of love. As she writes, romantic love is simultaneously experienced on multiple conscious and unconscious levels (1988). Presently occurring, it seeks to bring what was into what is now, to ensure what will be. She praises Freud for recognizing the continuities of the human emotional life, and how our most intimate adult relationship must be an expression of our most intimate first relationship: "it was his genius to understand that all the lover's unfulfilled yearnings, dating from earliest life, are carried over to the beloved, who is, by virtue of this transference, experienced as the source of all good—hence the enormous importance of the beloved for the lover" (1991). Person strongly argues that mutual passionate romantic love's aim is transcendent union with the other, and its tools are fantasy and imagination. She distinguishes the blurry lines that separate romantic love from the short-lived passion of sexual carnality, the reliable safety and warmth of affectionate bonding, the one-sided self-

aggrandizement of vanity love, the conventionality and sympathy of mannered love, and the dependency-fuelled neediness of neurotic love.

Person looked to Freud to account for the urgency and priority given to romantic love. Following his work on narcissism (1914), and the subsequent contributions of Reik (1944) and Chasseguet-Smirgel (1984, 1985), she cited narcissistic restitution and its component of idealization as a primary nonsexual source of our sense of love's emergency. Using Chasseguet-Smirgel's reinterpretation of oedipal dynamics in light of the ego ideal, Person has written that in romantic love: "the ego ideal finally achieves satisfaction through the granting of the incestuous wish (itself the product of a wish for narcissistic unity) by way of union with the beloved (a displacement of the original incestuous object)" (1991). Then working both on a conscious and an unconscious level, romantic love serves as a way to make things right, reversing disappointments, and gratifying wishes that have been experienced throughout the lifespan.

Along one specific line, what romantic love allows is the fulfillment of the wished-for Oedipal victory to be realized in fantasy. The consummation of a romantic love relation can be experienced in fantasy as the reversal of the Oedipal humiliation, as the lover now is able to fully identify with the parental childhood rival and victor. While oedipal fulfillment is not the ultimate goal in normal love relations, Person is definite that romantic love must truly tap into the individual's earliest yearnings and infantile cravings though on an unconscious level: "for only when love's humble origins are obscured from consciousness by that mysterious creative process that makes the very old seem entirely new, can

one overcome the old taboos and give in to love's power" (1988, p. 113). In the loved object, the lover identifies with "his best self," but within the present romantic couple he simultaneously identifies with his re-working of his role in two additional dyads—the mother-child and the parental. Thus as she will also show in her thinking about the mutuality in love, there is an inherent role-shifting that each lover take in the romantic dyad. It is through a new romantic love relation that the lover is able to unconsciously rework, make sense of and enact understandings of the earliest forms of love he has experienced, has been excluded from and has wished for.

In the love relationship, the lover imagines that his wishes will be gratified and he will be delivered to a place of fulfillment. Person's writings, like Balint's, stress the importance of a reciprocal identificatory process within loving couples. Just as the lover believes he will be gratified, so too does he wish to gratify his partner. She roots this in the origins of the sought-after bliss of the mother-infant experience. The lover's image of the beloved draws on an internalized representation of the actual or imagined "good" mother. Such an identification with an internalized image of a bountiful good mother figure insures that the capacity and desire to take an active, and not just a passive role in love. Importantly, while this image of "the good mother" may be one of only fantasy, it is nonetheless operative in the unconscious. In fact the image of such a figure may be stronger because of its imaginary nature—the lover will more intensely seek to find what has always evaded him. Once found, both lovers will seek to sustain such a relation. In this mutuality of love there is a cyclical dynamic with

both partners wishing to ensure their own gratification and fulfillment by gratifying and fulfilling the other.

Aside from the fantasies of merger based on past infantile prototypes, wishes for narcissistic restitution, and loving reciprocity what is also inherent to Person's view of romantic love are its forward-seeking creative elements. Romantic passionate love empowers the lover to become a new self in a way that almost resembles a new developmental level. Contained within every merging experience in love is the promise of an eventual separation that the lover is emboldened to endeavor towards. In this way, Person links romantic love to issues of self's assertion, power and will: "love propels the lover's move to new commitments, and away from old ones" (1988, p. 131). Romantic love can be seen as recapitulating separation-individuation drama in favor of higher organization and differentiation.

In Person's broad view of love, it is essentially transformative as it works both on the past and in the future through fantasy to restore wounded narcissism and retake lost sense of one's omnipotence. Though the heightened effects of a new love relationship may be fleeting, Person is very clear to underline the lasting changes (even structural) that romantic love can initiate. She articulately expressed this in a long passage:

Successful love is not only a re-edition of the past but, often, a permanent renunciation of the past Love has the power to break old ties to family and friends, alter religious and ethnic affiliation, change social class and

political preference, and in the case of those lovers who discover by the way of their beloved their life's work or mission bring new purpose and meaning to life. At the most minimal level love may simply result in an expansion of interest; she may discover basketball, he ballet; he may instruct her on the intricacies of politics while learning something of the joys of literature from her, and new interests may survive the departure of the one who introduced them. But regardless of whether any of the external interests or circumstances of one's life undergo alteration' love even transient, unsuccessful love, can cause profound inner change. (1991)

Through the other and the mechanisms of fantasy and imagination the individual is able to break free of the boundaried constraints and limitations of the self.

Though the content and structure of the fantasies that guide romantic love may change its aim towards transformation and growth do not. Idealization may not be as intense as in the beginning of love, but this does not necessarily mean that the other, the couple's love or new identity as a "we" are radically de-idealized. Though particular aspects, qualities and features (even physical) may be articulated by the lover as idealized parts of his beloved, what is truly idealized is the other as a representative of love's power. Enduring passionate love though uncommon finds ways to make use of imagination and idealization. Just as love serves different functions and can mature into different transformations so can its corresponding fantasies in the minds of the lovers it hold.

In detailing the sustained function of idealization throughout the course of romantic love, Person discusses its changing form and role in the breakdown of a couple's relationship. For her, the capacity for idealization is not only a prerequisite for falling in love can be used to fuel passion can be sustained beyond the "falling in love period" (1988, p. 185). She contended that idealization comes about equally as a function of the imagination and "authentic appraisals and perceptions." However the sustained coupling of romantic love's passion and heights of idealization may not be the norm in most relationships. Drawing on her clinical experience and popular culture examples from novels and film, Person describes the process of de-idealization and the often accompanying unraveling of one's loving feelings.

Contrary to popular opinion, idealization is not subject to definite diminution as reality grips a hold of a person. Rather it has multiple fates and may be "preserved, modulated, diminished or utterly shattered" (1988, p. 187). She opposes static conceptions of idealization that have the lover thinking absolute positive thoughts about his lover at all point of the day. She instead describes the ebb and flow of idealization in the most successful of love relationships:

The lover feels waves of hostility towards the beloved, sometimes entirely irrational, sometimes in response to the most insignificant of transgressions. These usually take the form of fleeting de-idealizations, flashes of negative, possibly even degrading feelings and thoughts about the beloved. In happy

love, these thoughts, though momentarily unsettling, are usually quickly dismissed. (p. 187)

The nature of de-idealizations lies in the very nature of love and the mechanism of idealization itself. According to Person, de-idealization may serve as a form of natural defensive protest against the enthrallment and engulfment of love. Common to all love relationships, by moments of de-idealization the lover is able to reassert his own existence apart from the other in service of balancing reality testing, and also is able to express the latent aggression in all intimate relationships.

Idealization is based in fantasy and the imaginative capacities of the individual. One's idealization of one's partner may only go as far as his imagination will carry him. Person explains that it is because of this that the substance of a person's idealizing is very specific to the person and his personality organization. For those that can be generally described as neurotic, idealization is usually notably exaggerated in the beginning of a relationship, thus leaving it subject to rapid decline by the slightest provocations. The ambivalence that is underlying this pattern of oscillating affections can be linked to anger towards earlier love objects or to a shakiness of narcissism that is invested in the other. Somewhat related to this latter point is the common scenario of one's own self-devaluation influencing both his choice of a love object and in his subsequent denigration of lovers who must be truly deficient if their own right to chance their love on him. Those of a narcissistic type may have also established

weak idealizations in the beginning of relationships that are telling of their underlying narcissistic motivations in the sphere of love. For these individuals, idealization is sure to be extremely vulnerable to any frustration to the lover's ability to feel admired, sustained and nurtured within the relationship.

On the other side of the more pathological circumstances, Person appreciates the "real changes" that may occur in one's life that would render partners who were formerly targets of idealization less worthy of such exaggerated splendor. She offers examples of developmental changes in young adults who see their lovers differently as they mature in age and change in values, over-arching cultural changes such as the women's movement, or even increased a person's insight (achieved perhaps through therapy or psychoanalysis) that results in an ability to see through the motives of past idealizations. Other "real life" influences on the stability of the couple's status as an idealized "we" unit are cases of illness, changes in the social regard of the couple, having children, economic stress, and unequal or incompatible professional development. Again, these factors are not seen as ushering in idealization's or love's doom, but rather having some effect on the course of these matters.

Returning to a topic that was discussed in regards to Kernberg, Person has also written on the role of fantasy and triangulation patterns in love relationships. Though with relatively the same structure of Kernberg in describing the forms of direct and reverse triangulations, she added a different perspective that is important. The rivalrous triangle recasts Oedipal elements and is accompanied by feelings of jealousy, anger and even increased intensity of overall affect

charge within the relationship. Person described that what may be a rivalrous triangle for one party is experienced by the other partner as a split-object one at the same time. The primary feeling here may be guilt as the latter party feels torn between two love objects. Often this split-object triangle, with the subject being the recipient of the affection of two people, may have a motivated purpose and then can be considered the reverse triangle that Kernberg described. Again, here the underlying dynamic is to undo the humiliation of the Oedipal defeat and enact revenge on two other parties in the present.

Person described how rivalrous triangles originate in fantasy and take the form of obsessive preoccupation with the rival and the relationship one finds oneself excluded from. Here one can see primal scene residues that are often at the core of sexual conflicts. This serves as a reminder that one's sexual life is often shaped by these unresolved primal scene fantasies from early life, in which the child feels excluded from parental sex that is imagined to be occurring behind closed doors. Anxiety and sadness are experienced, though anger is sometimes quickly recruited to defend against such feelings. Jealousy and envy follow, with the betrayed wishing for some retaliation usually on the rival. Person, however, also warned that hostility may not only be directed towards one's rival, and may also be experienced towards the object of one's affection. These triangles then are hardly ever what they appear to be. She described that even when victory is achieved and Oedipal honor reclaimed, the exhilaration of feeling may be short-lived. Specifically when Oedipal conflicts are persistent in adults, rivalrous triangulations may be frequent, with victory resulting in self-defeating or self-

destructive behavior due to unconscious guilt. Rivalrous triangles may also serve an unconscious purpose to stave off forbidden impulses. One's attraction and affection gets directed towards a safe unavailable object, thus protecting the lover from actually entering into a passionate love affair, which can be feared to be overwhelming.

Person also explored the underlying motivations and fantasies of split-object triangles. Here, both in fantasy and reality, the lover splits affections between two relationships. Usually found in the form of adulterous extra-marital affairs, the new affair is sought after and idealized while the old relationship is denigrated in some form. Specifically interesting is her description of imaginative split-triangles, where the monogamous person already in a relationship holds on the "belief (sometimes articulated, sometimes not) that they are still deeply in love with someone with whom they once shared a great love" (1988, p. 231). Though different in nature most of these split-object triangles reflect a certain degree deep ambivalence and self-protected vulnerability on the part of the subject. In regards to reverse triangles, unconscious aggression and anger towards former love objects seems to be a motivating factor.

Drawing on her clinical experience, Person detailed the frequency by which men come to therapy with a specific kind of split-object triangle. In these cases, there is a marked absence of guilt and the fantastic transformation of formerly beloved wife into demonic "ogre." This variant of triangle is different from the "Madonna-whore" split, since, here, the once loved is a devouring, demanding, all-powerful mother-figure. To the man's dismay, even upon breaking free from

the tyrannical partner and committing to his mistress, he finds a similar transformation taking place. Despite the awareness of this pattern, the man is unable to effect change in his life, ignorant to the underlying psychological need “to idealize and ultimately betray his lover.” She elaborated on this tendency:

Usually, such a person has felt betrayed himself (whether actually or in mere fantasy, recently or in early life), identifies with the aggressor, and is prepared to disrupt the lives of successive lovers in order to seek reparation for past wrongs. (The original betrayal that later converts the person into a betrayer is most often a legacy of childhood.) (1988, p. 232)

The apparent solution of the split-object triangle is usually short lived and unfulfilling as the lover often suffers eventual debilitating guilt or dissatisfaction that ruins the enjoyment of subsequent love affairs.

Another unhappy course of love that Person discussed is that of unrequited love. Even Person finds that in this instance imagination oversteps its bounds. Always the advocate for the healthy tension between fantasy and reality in the course of romantic love, for this misled lover there is too great a proportion of one:

The lover distorts reality in order to preserve his dreams. He infers nuances and finds ambiguities, small omissions, or quirks in communication that allow him to hold on to the fantasy that mutual love will be restored. He prolongs

his agony by tormenting himself with false hopes. Even after rejection is made explicit, he mishears and misconstrues, inferring promises where none were intended. (1988, p. 300)

For the rejected lover, mourning awaits. His self-esteem plummets and his fantasies are now filled with confirmations of his abject baseness and inadequacy. Imagination may even work to distort memories of the past with one's rejecting partner, turning once prized memories into vacant ash.

When romantic love has run its course, it ends in a fashion that is a mirror of its beginning. Fantasy runs wild with flourishes of positive and negative thoughts, wishes and memories. The intensity of affect and vulnerability once positively experienced with excitement and exalted danger may be replaced by equally intense feelings, now of the dysphoric type. Just as there are hopes as to what will be at the outset, there are rueful wonderings of what might have been at the close. The self, once whole, now feels in pieces and exposed. Though the lover may have chosen to end the relationship, he will still mourn such an outcome and have doubts about its correctness. In most cases, love will be mourned and nostalgically remembered until the lover is once again able to love again.

Consistent in Person's thinking about romantic love is the thought of love as progressive and expansive. Though it may be intermittently filled with and end in pain, she ultimately views romantic love as transformative. It is as if love looks at the past only to then be able to leap forward into the future. One foot in reality, love also glides in fantasy. Though filled with its paradoxes, love serves a kind of

individual evolution as it seeks to help the person adapt for better future. The fantasies, identifications, projections and idealizations inherent to romantic love relations serve the self in making it better equipped for life.

Stephen Mitchell's *Can Love Last?: The Fate of Romance Over Time* (2002), represents a relational view of psychoanalysis. Written in a way that speaks to both those within the field of psychology and the layperson, Mitchell's last book was "about romance and its degradation." One of Mitchell's main premises was that despite the irreducible fact that human nature and experience is "in flux" and in "perpetual motion and change," people gravitate towards and preserve illusions of safety facilitated through acts of imagination. He wrote of the human tendency towards the predictable and the known, and how this can be seen as running antithetically to the novelty and excitement that fuels desire. Love entices by its promise of future security, however love is always changing and the equilibrium between desire and love we seek (and fleetingly imaginatively attain) is never permanent.

Romantic relationships, of the long-term kind, then, contain this inherent tension between love's attachment, safety and security concerns, with passion, excitement and adventure being on the other side of desire. However, the human capacity for imagination and subjectivity contribute to the fact that danger and safety are relative to the position of the person, and thus can each be illusory. Thus to some degree even what are held to be personal certainties are illusory. Romantic love embodies the paradoxical tension of human life that Mitchell tried to describe:

romance is filled with longing; intense desire always generates a sense of deprivation. The precondition of romantic passion is lack, desire for what one does not have. Yet romantic promise entices us with the security it seems to promise: if only the lovers could find each other, be together, live happily ever after, then they would be safe and happy. So it is in the very nature of romantic passion to strive to overcome the lack it generates, to seek a wholeness that is rent by desire.... (p. 56)

Mitchell's three dimensions of romantic passion are sexuality, idealization and aggression. Each aspect contributes in its own way to the destabilizing nature of love. In dissecting the implicit realms of romantic love, Mitchell concurrently tried to expose the more unconscious levels of human experience, including the fuzzy distinction between sameness and otherness. This fundamental connection between sameness and otherness is implicated in an understanding of how notions of opposition are rarely as opposing as they seem, specifically within the context of romantic love: "much of the futility so prevalent in romance derives from the way sameness often masquerades as otherness. We believe we are escaping ourselves, redressing our pasts, but the partners we choose as accomplices in these would-be acts of freedom, announcing themselves as different and new, are often, in fact, not so different, not so new" (p. 82). By this, Mitchell recapitulated the oldest psychoanalytic challenges to conceptions of conscious motivation, and questioned an individual's ability to understand the nature of partner selection completely.

In a chapter entitled, "Idealization, fantasy, and illusions," Mitchell posited that sexuality generates the energy that drives romantic passion, and idealization provides its directionality in pointing to the object of that desire. He held that the popular notion of idealization, originating with Freud, is of something regressive and childlike, and it would follow that if romance is based on idealization then it too must be something only meant to be fleeting and built on illusion. However for Mitchell, Freud's notions of idealization contain his overall Enlightenment view of rationality that looks for "objective value," with the concept denoting a literal overvaluation. Mitchell critiqued what he believes is the logical extension of Freud's theories that imply that "the other person" as someone to be objectively and "really" perceived. Only if this Enlightenment view is held, then must one believe that fantasy is negatively valenced and should fade.

Though Mitchell's model of romance referred more to falling in love than being in love, he emphasized the enduring quality of all of romantic love's components. In this way he interrogated the conventional view that love cannot last over time reflects the natural state of affairs. He instead attributed the erosion of love to processes of fear and anger that are born out of the tension one feels in relation to the intense insecurity of romance. Sexuality is at the heart of much of the destabilizing nature of romantic love, as it drives one towards the other and to the limits of the boundaries of self and other. Mitchell continued the psychoanalytic concentration on the centrality of sexuality in discussing the human personality. He described that human sexuality can get coupled with feelings of indecency and shame for many reasons, but argued that it fundamentally is defended

against because it represents the risk of exposing not one's basest most carnal self, but possibly one's truest self. The varieties of ways that long-term love can degrade can then be understood as compromises people use in order to protect themselves from the more anxiety-provoking unstable aspects of love.

Not only should the more intense components of love endure, but Mitchell also attributed an enduring role to the fantasy. While consistent with many psychoanalytic views (like Freud's, Person's, etc.) this runs contrary to models that propose a diminishing function to fantasy, as reality is assumed to take a firmer hold on both lovers. While this may be in accordance with many couples' experience, Mitchell reasoned that the diminishment of fantasy in favor of reality is in part defensive. According to this, love's fantastical aspects not only have a purpose but also should not subside as reality takes hold. A core piece of romantic love that is fantasy-fueled is the belief that the beloved other is unique, and what fosters this is the process of idealization. Mitchell offered a contrasting view to the traditional thinking on this topic which held "for someone to become an object of desire requires an imaginative transformation, in which perception is spiced by the illusions of fantasy to create a sweeter offering" (p. 104). He took issue with the connotation attached to idealization as an artificial form of perception in relationships. Further he identified a bias in psychoanalysis towards a passive form of perception in which reality is a thing to be taken in and received. As evidence, he cited the centrality of "reality-testing" in psychoanalytic thought and its accompanying notion that fantasy and imagination mainly serve to contaminate the individual's "direct perception of how things really are" (p.

105). Mitchell applauded the opposition to such a view of fantasy as solely based in wish-fulfillment and illusory, and cited Hans Loewald's work (1980) as championing this cause in his description of the potential of reality to interpenetrate with one's fantasy life in a normal, healthy fashion.

Mitchell questioned the certainty one may feel in perceiving daily life, in knowing oneself, and within loving relationships with others. Rather than espousing an ultimately relativistic approach to knowledge, Mitchell seemed to support a shift in the importance one places in seeking ultimate static truth. If humans construct their perception of reality actively rather than passively receiving it, and knowledge of oneself is multi-leveled, then "the conviction that we really know the other, in a dependable, predictable, certain fashion, is a dangerous illusion" (p. 110). Our knowledge of the other in romantic love is driven by a desire that may obscure aspects about the beloved or may mislead the subject about the nature of his longing.

In contrast to opposing fantasy and reality, Mitchell inched towards regarding idealization as a form of accurate perception and asks: "might we regard idealization as, sometimes, a process of bringing alive features of the other that are hidden and masked in ordinary, everyday interactions?" (p. 112). Since idealization is motivated by one's desire, Mitchell positioned it as a destabilizing mechanism. In a certain way it provides the individual with too open an access to his desires, which can be overwhelming. The human proclivity towards stability and safety would then run in opposition to the idealizing thrust of imagination. The failure of idealization is not that it does not pass the test of

reality, but rather the risk and danger it presents in exposing one's wishes and hopes to an other who may not accept and reciprocate.

Mitchell did make a somewhat ambiguous distinction between ideals and pseudo-ideals, saying that some idealizations may be closer to their targets than others. Trying to provide some way to evaluate the "health" of idealizations he says, "It matters a great deal whether the source of idealization is at least partially in the other... or purely a figment of the fantasy life of the lover" (p. 113). He viewed the latter as being the result of projecting one's needs in actively creating a representation of the other that is fundamentally exploitive. In this attempt to sort out useful and harmful idealizations, he said "a lover's idealization tends to be more fertile when the qualities chosen correspond to ways in which the beloved enjoys idealizing herself" (p. 113). Despite the felt dangers involved, Mitchell advocated mutually idealization within the romantic dyad. What seems clear, but is not articulated by Mitchell, is that despite his stated attempts to explore the implicit realms of human experience, his treatment of idealization and fantasy (while having functions that are outside awareness) mainly applies to conscious and accessible forms of fantasy, as opposed to unconscious ones.

Mitchell's view of fantasy and idealization in relationships, was that they do not always dissipate in relationships. Instead, new information about the other and self in relation to the other is learned, changing the nature of the relationship so that the romance becomes "riskier." As opposed to fantasy eventually being undercut by the heavy weight of reality, he proposed that romantic idealization may ultimately dissipate, not naturally, but due to the human demands for

security and predictability. By investing in the illusion of certainty, people are able to protect themselves against the emotional vulnerabilities involved in being intimately related to others, such as the fears of loss, the fears of attack, depression and unreciprocated feelings. He described that couples may come in to treatment because they inhibit their mutual excitement and appreciation for the other:

They tell themselves they know the other better now. What they know now is that the features they once idealized in the other are not all there is to the other, that the other is also disappointing, and therefore that their passion cannot be a steady state. So they use what they know of the other as a defense against the surrender of idealization. The adored features of the other may not have been illusory at all; what was illusory was the guarantee they sought against disappointment and perpetually regenerated solitude. (p. 115)

In the course or deepening romantic love, the other becomes someone that needs to be depended upon. The entrance of dependency and disappointment jeopardizes the ability one has in resting in total idealization of the other. Mitchell contended that one cannot always live in the surrendered position of desiring fantasy, specifically in present relation to another person, so instead it becomes safer to fantasize about what one lacks. Fantasies of sex with strangers or outside one's relationship serves the purpose of banishing fantasy out of "actual" lived life into a form that one can control. The degradation of idealization and

fantasy in love relationships, for Mitchell, is just another ironic form of this drive towards illusioned control, safety and security.

Mitchell used *Can Love Last?* to explore the paradox of human psychology that what is craved is also often feared and what is loved is also easily hated as the individual seeks to preserve itself. Mitchell was able to describe this tension in love relationships by illustrating that just as the sexual component of romantic passion requires the other, it is “the very otherness of the other that defines the limits to one’s own omnipotence and creates the vulnerability, often the experience of helplessness, that accompanies desire” (p. 141).

Elisabeth Young-Bruehl has contributed to psychoanalysis on a variety of topics from prejudice, child abuse, and feminism. Elaborating and extending her ideas of a growth principle, articulated in her book *Cherishment: a Psychology of the Heart* (Young-Bruehl & Bethelard, 2000), *Where Do We Fall When We Fall in Love* (2003) reinvestigated and continued a modern Freudian formulation of Freud’s deserted efforts on understanding conceptualizing the ego instincts. While it is mainly her opening chapter that I will discuss here, it is important to contextualize her argument.

Young-Bruehl describes in her preface to this book that though Freud initially posited two groups of human instincts—the self-preservative ego instincts and the species-preservative sexual instincts—he failed to sufficiently elaborate the nature of the former. In fact, he tended to subjugate them to the latter form, even describing them as being derived from one’s sexual aims. Though Freud at one point posited that object choice is first predicated on self-preservative aims, he

did not further explore the nature of these ego instincts, also described by him as the individual's affectionate current (1912). By the time of "Beyond the pleasure principle" (1920) and the inception of the dual instinct theory, the ego instincts were a thing of the past, subsumed under the sexual instincts in the form of "self-preservative sexual instincts" (p. 55). Affection became thought of as aim-inhibited sexuality, according to Young-Bruehl. In "Civilization and its discontents" (1930), one could see the change in Freud's thinking as he replaced affectionate love, whose prototype was formerly the mother-child relationships, with erotic love as the common manifestation of human happiness. Affectionate love was then thought to be a rarely attained form of aim-inhibited sensual erotic love.

Young-Bruehl's argues for a reconsideration of the ego-instincts, and offers one that draws on the work of the Japanese psychoanalyst Takeo Doi (1971). He proposed a universal primary state during infancy of ego-instinctual relatedness one's environment. Young-Bruehl incorporates his idea of the child's primary "expectation to be indulgently loved," which is a rough translation of the Japanese *amae*. The ego-instinct can then be thought of as "the instinct aiming for provision of elementary food and shelter and safety or security needs . . . an instinct for provision of a need to be loved" (p. 33). The ego-instincts are then both constitutional and ultimately relational; they refer to the ego's aims of maturation and development, and tie to the objects of nourishment. This need to be loved, or cherishment in Young-Bruehl's terms, is related to her understanding of the ego being defined by a fundamental growth principle. In her promotion of

an amae or cherishment core she lays the groundwork for an understanding of human receptivity that guides all other human endeavors (p. 35).

Young-Bruehl criticized approaches like those of evolutionary psychologists, touched on in the previous section, that tend to reduce the experience of love to its hard-wired biochemical ebbing and flowing. According to her, these and other sociobiological explanations for love, obscure the very nature of sexual passion and romantic emotions as they are experienced in all their humanly tragic and glorious forms. Her understanding of love is placed within a Freudian metapsychology, though with some revisions.

For Young-Bruehl, the sexual instincts are primarily narcissistic in their self-reproductive nature: “the sexual instincts can eventually have as their object another, but only after the fall, or beyond the fall, does that other become more than just a mirror or a means” (p. 8). What the ego-instincts can do, in part, is bring the individual beyond narcissism and into the world of others, who are established as outside the self. The conflict between the ego and sexual instincts is determined by their opposing natures. Sexual instincts are less related to an other, than they are to the self and its reproduction, defined broadly. Ego instincts aim to preserve the self, though with the help on an object outside the self. The ego-instincts are related to that which is beyond the self, other people and the environment.

The two can work in harmony though with attachment preparing the way for the sexuality and vice versa. For Young-Bruehl, both instincts can oscillate in dominance throughout an individual's life. The two combine to form an

individual's romantic ideal, which is sometimes an uneven admixture of "sex and love, passion and attachment, pleasure and security, upheaval and serenity, the pull to repeat past excitement and the pull of the future" (p. 12). A romantic ideal reflects the ongoing interplay of the instincts' struggle for sexual objects and ego interests. Healthy romantic love would then aim towards "promoting growth beyond narcissism" and be "founded on acknowledgment or recognition of the expectation to be loved and of the loved and loving other as a person with his or her own wishes" (p. 12). Romantic love is an updating of the ego-instinctual infant-caregiver bond that rests on mature adult principles of mutuality and reciprocity.

Mental health in relation to romantic relationships can then be understood as the ability to manage the ongoing oscillation of the two instincts without remaining being subject to the object choice of either dominant pole. When the sexual instinct predominates one may be limited, unconsciously, to seeking narcissistically-enclosed relationships with others, in which the beloved is invented in regards to one's own needs, wishes and fantasies. On the other hand, the full weight of the ego-instincts may be too intolerable and anxiety provoking, leading the person to defend against expectations to be loved.

In her writing it is suggested that the aims of the sexual instinct result in the formation of the superego, while the ego-instincts lead to the establishment of the ego ideal. An important psychic mechanism involved in both is idealization. She described its two different functions in romantic love that reflect the different legacies she proposes the instincts have:

There is, on the one hand, narcissistic idealization, which I presented as rooted in the sexual instincts and which, I would now like to suggest, chiefly functions to assuage the superego's guilt for oedipal trespass or oedipal triumph. On the other hand, there is idealization stemming from the expectation to be loved, the essential ego instinctual manifestation, which functions to protect us from the frustrations and disappointments of attachment. This idealization regulates our good feeling about ourselves, our self-esteem, which grows initially in the context of cherishing love.

(p. 20)

The initial states of falling in love reflect the ecstasies of narcissistic idealization, as the other is idealized, as Freud suggested, for being a more perfect version of ourselves. This beginning form of idealization also reawakens memory traces of the Oedipal defeat, but now the new loved object represents an attainable union with the other that is not prohibited by the superego. Young-Bruehl communicated the message of this narcissistic exhilaration experienced in meeting the loved object: "this is not your mother, your father, and not your siblings whom you love—it is you" (p. 20).

The other form of idealization stems from the ego-instincts and does not concern the regulation of guilt that is involved with narcissistic superego idealizations. In love, this idealizing tendency responds to feelings of shame related to fears of being unlovable. What is of importance here is one's relation to their ego ideal, which in this scheme can be thought of as an "internal vision of

how they might be cherished” (p. 21). This is a view of the ego ideal as not merely a projection of one’s ideal state of being, but more so as the remembrance of a lost relational condition of being-loved. For Young-Bruehl, the ego ideal is not a transformation of primary narcissism, as it was for Chasseguet-Smirgel, but of “primary love.” The ego ideal is then an agency that attempts to restore one’s primary state of being-loved in relation to an other, rather than one’s state of omnipotence. The shame at falling short of one’s ego ideal is then related to one’s experience of inadequacy regarding being worthy of love. The superego and ego ideal have different but equally important functions in romantic love relationships. The former regulates sexual instincts, while the latter agency is in charge of the ego-instincts. In love, individuals idealize the beloved other’s potential to help the self fulfill each instinct’s aim.

Bridging the gap between psychoanalytic theory and empirical research

It was important for me to review the psychoanalytic literature on love in order to demonstrate a way of understanding romantic relations in the context of developmental issues, sexuality (thought of in terms of pleasure), the role of fantasy, and a dynamic model of the mind that manages intrapsychic conflict. These are aspects of love that are not given much attention in the research literature presented in Chapter One. Consequently, these psychoanalytic writings on romantic relationships serve as a counterpoint approach for the empirical literature I detailed in Chapter One. I will not try to comprehensively synthesize these two distinct literatures. For example, my goal is not to try to make Sternberg's Triangular Theory of love (intimacy, passion, and commitment) fit with a psychoanalytic understanding of Oedipal dynamics. Nor will I try to square Kernberg's thinking about aggression in love relations with Gottman's observational work on marital conflict. My approach is one of stepping back to explore the possibilities of finding meeting points of integration, complement and overlap (and contradiction).

While I have been advocating that psychoanalytic ideas inform empirical approaches to love, I am not blind to the deficiencies of psychoanalytic perspectives. Some of these problems go beyond the lack of empirical support and models of psychological processes that have not been thoroughly updated to reflect the findings of psychological research (e.g. ideas of primary narcissism, psychosexual stages, etc.). Psychoanalysis' estrangement from psychology

disciplines has led to theorizing that is not always bound appropriately enough by what empirical investigation has proved about cognitive-affective capacities at various stages of life. Importantly, psychoanalysis has been slow to appreciate the influence of diversity (whether it pertain to sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, etc.) and the multiple identities that people assume. Future investigations on love must begin by questioning the value of the romantic relationship perspectives represented by different disciplines. These inquiries require a suitable framework to pose and answer these questions. My aim is to present recommendations for this kind of interdisciplinary framework.

Since I believe that the romantic relationship theoretical and empirical perspectives, I have reviewed, conflict to some degree, I would like to suggest ways for compromise. I have grounded my suggestions in previous psychoanalytic attempts to address both inconsistencies and contradictions within psychoanalysis, as well as with other scientific disciplines. Some of these ideas target the substantial gap existing between an empirical approach of investigating love (academic psychology) versus one that relies on clinical observation and is primarily theoretical in nature (psychoanalysis). The psychoanalytic research literature is still in an early stage of finding ways to systematically demonstrate some basic foundational concepts (like those described earlier in this chapter). The fact that this research is still in its infancy reflects a traditional, but still present, ambivalence from within about positioning psychoanalysis as a science (see Kernberg, 2004, on “resistances to research in psychoanalysis”). However, the last few decades have seen an increase in

psychoanalytically informed research (though little specifically on romantic relationships).¹⁵ While some have attempted to demonstrate methods of compromise by research examples, others have tackled the interdisciplinary conflicts conceptually. My present effort joins this latter grouping. I will now discuss some of the writings that have informed my own approach to the psychoanalysis-empirical psychology conflict.

The psychoanalyst G.S. Klein carried out empirical research on such topics as perception (1942) and cognitive control (Klein, et al., 1962). A feature of his posthumously published writings (1976) concerned the questioning of various inconsistencies and incompatibilities in psychoanalytic metapsychological and clinical theory. Klein's reworking of psychoanalytic theory involved a focus on incompatibilities in human experience. As he wrote, "what makes psychoanalysis a dynamic theory is the attempt to establish and specify the terms of incompatibility, its genetic context, its structured representations that constitute a "psychical reality," the strength of its components, and the forms of its resolutions" (p. 165). As I will discuss in the following chapter, understanding human behavior in Klein's way as reflecting "efforts to synthesize and resolve incompatible tendencies that produce crises of integration" (p. 165) may be a fruitful way of researching romantic love.

Klein emphasized Freud's early focus on the etiology of physical symptoms (in hysteria) as a resolution unconsciously wrought through the compromise solution of incompatibilities. When the compromise achieved is maladaptive it

¹⁵ In Chapter Four, I will reference some of these studies as they serve as models for integrating the existing psychoanalytic and empirical research on love.

can produce symptomatic behavior. Klein reiterated Freud's idea that though the location of conflict is psychological, attempts at resolution can encompass all forms of thought, feeling and behavior. In the way Klein read Freud, the resolution of incompatible wishes, motives, social prohibitions, etc., becomes a "general principle of human development" (p. 167). All conflict can be understood then as involving incompatible aims. For example, the Oedipus complex can be understood as "a series of propositions concerning the dynamic interplay of such persistent wishes and counterwishes in relation to fantasied consequences, and concerning the manifestations of this interplay in motives" (p. 170).

For Klein, what was uniquely valuable in psychoanalysis was its overt study of the complex layers of human intentionality. He was critical of psychoanalytic theories that move away from focusing on "the aims, motives, and goal of behavior, their conscious and unconscious aspects, their epigenesis in a lifetime, in connection with life's tasks, problems, conflicts and crises, and their consequences in psychopathology" (p. 158). Klein supported thinking of motivations as not inherently conflictual, but rather viewed conflict as being the result of the fulfillment of an aim or goal being linked to a perceived threat to one's psychological integrity or security. As Eagle has suggested (1984), Klein's views rightfully belong along side those models that emphasize the importance of an experiential self (e.g., Kohut). Rather than conceiving of conflict as occurring between the aims of various proposed mental agencies inherently oppositional drives, Klein changed the terms of the discussion to that of ego organization. He elevated to super-ordinate status the ego's integrative and synthesizing functions

and self-protective motives. He understood psychic conflict in the context of incompatibilities in relation to a self-structure: “the person always strives to function as a unit; that is, action proceeds from a sense of identity which signals compatibility or incompatibility. The possibility of inner conflict is therefore ever-present” (p. 176). This suggests a basic psychological motivation towards resolving incompatibilities of the self that are consciously and unconsciously experienced in varying degrees of anxiety and distress.

Some have raised concerns about the scientific status of psychoanalysis in trying to grapple with the empirical applications of psychoanalytic theory. For instance, Erdelyi has written about the “overburdened” nature of the psychoanalytic unconscious (1985). He endorsed the position, taken by many in academic psychology, of equating what is psychologically unconscious to what is psychologically inaccessible. In this way, in empirically documenting the psychologically unconscious one does not have to grapple with the issue of why something becomes or is unconscious. For Erdelyi, the issue becomes problematic when one has to consider distinguishing unconscious inaccessible from unconscious repressed/defended against. Aside from broadening the concept of unconscious to allow for clarity and empirical investigation, Erdelyi has also discussed widening the concept of defense to denote a kind of unconscious “biased processing” done in the service of avoiding or reducing mental pain. On this important point, I take the position that one must be cautious in accepting the losses that accompany defining unconscious as simply consciously inaccessible. What I think is called for is reserving the ability to

designate what is unconscious in at least two ways—a larger descriptive sense and a dynamic one. In this way, there is a broader more inclusive definition of descriptive unconscious (with degrees of accessibility), and under this category a more restrictive sense of a dynamic unconscious, which relies on psychoanalytic notions of defensive processing.

Both through theoretical argument and empirical research, Westen has offered consistently thought-provoking appraisals of psychoanalytic thinking, with an eye specifically towards integration with academic empirical psychology. I will mainly focus on some of his theoretical points here, as they have informed my own way of applying psychoanalytic thinking to researching love. In a pair of collaborations with Gabbard (2002a, 2002b), he explored how advances in cognitive neuroscience could impact aspects of psychoanalytic theory and practice. For Westen (and Gabbard), psychoanalytic observation and cognitive research can be thought of as having complementary strengths and weaknesses (2002a). The psychoanalytic concern with affect, conflict and motivation can be coupled with the systematic investigation of perception, memory and cognition from the cognitive science fields. While a psychoanalytic framework can lead to hypothesis-generation regarding observed phenomena, hypothesis-testing must adhere to the rigors of the scientific method.

In his collaborations with Gabbard, Westen has joined the cognitive science use of connectionist or parallel distributed processing models (Kunda & Thagard, 1996; Olds 1994) with psychoanalytic ideas of motivation, conflict, affect regulation and compromise formation. Connectionist models assert that:

information-processing occurs in a parallel and simultaneous fashion, representations are distributed throughout the brain, “knowledge lies in the connections among nodes in a network,” a node in a network acts like a hypothesis about reality that is either supported or not by incoming perceptual data, frequency of patterned activation creates attractor sites, and that the brain works under a property of constraint satisfaction. I will not elaborate much on these points that Westen and Gabbard reviewed. However, an important bridging point to psychoanalysis is how unconscious compromises underlie even the simplest forms of information-processing. For instance, the mechanism of perception also involves an unconscious process in which the brain perceives the various features of a simultaneously and reaches a tentative conclusion as a matter of “best fit” compromise. In connectionist models the majority of all of this information-processing occurs unconsciously, in the descriptive sense. Westen and Gabbard’s suggestion is that psychoanalytic thinking can extend the framework provided by connectionist models to incorporate the notion of a dynamic unconscious. They clearly explain the possible convergence of both ways of thinking in a passage I will quote at length due to its relevance to what I will propose about romantic love:

Both assume that multiple psychological events occur simultaneously, in parallel, and that processes active below the threshold of consciousness can conflict and combine to produce compromise solutions. Whereas connectionist models emphasize the cognitive constraints that influence these

equilibrated solutions—that is, the data that ultimately leads to one conclusion rather than another—psychoanalytic models of conflict and compromise emphasize affective constraints—wishes, fears, and emotional reactions—that similarly influence thoughts, feelings, symptoms, and actions. An integrated model suggests that the “decisions” people implicitly make...are constrained not only by the data but by the constraints imposed by the emotional significance of different “choices.” This is simply another way of saying that a compromise formation reflects multiple affective and motivational pulls activated outside of awareness, tempered by the constraints imposed by reality that prevent us from believing whatever we want (Freud’s hypothesized wish fulfillment).

A variety of empirical studies, some by Westen himself, have demonstrated the usefulness of understanding many forms of information-processing as compromise formations involving degrees of cognitive and affective constraints (John & Robins, 1994; Westen et al., 1999;; Westen et al., 2006). Westen’s recent studies of this kind, have looked at how political reasoning involves a

compromise of affective and cognitive components.¹⁶ Further his research has shown how a person's politics can be driven by an unconscious motivation to regulate negative and positive affect states related to one's implicit interests. In other words, despite the cognitively based explanations people may give for certain political attitudes and decisions (including voting), many of these are determined by strong affective dispositions; "where affects are strong cognitions will typically follow" (Westen & Gabbard, 2002a).

Related to his bridging of psychoanalytic and cognitive science views of psychological compromise formation under constraints, Westen has also addressed the topic of motivation (1999). On this subject, he has revised classical psychoanalytic conceptions of motivation that focus on two contrasting forces (eros/thanatos, self-preservation/sex, etc.). In his thinking, theorizing about a couple of master motives that influence all types of behavior limits the complexity of human functioning and does not accord with a century's worth of research. Instead of placing various motivational systems under the umbrella of one or two superordinate motives, Westen has proposed understanding systems

¹⁶ Drew Westen (2006) investigated how political partisans resolve incompatibilities of conflicting information, on the level of brain function. When faced with a contradictory information, distress circuits show activation. The orbital frontal cortex (emotional processing) as well as memory retrieval systems are activated in attempts to resolve contradiction. What isn't active is the part of the brain involved with cognitive reasoning. Reward centers are activated after subjects use personalized, emotion-driven reasoning to resolve the conflict before them. Westen suggests that since this occurs on an unconscious level, people will report reasoning through political positions, without the awareness that they have arrived at a compromise resolution most likely not based on the reasoning they suppose. This research shows that ideas and mental states are approached and avoided ideas just like external stimuli.

of motivations that are not inherently contrasting, but get activated under specific conditions.

In his thinking about motivation, Westen has connected the work of psychoanalytic affect theorists, like Kernberg (1992) and Sandler (1989), to evolutionary biology in positioning affects centrally. In his model, affects are evolutionarily useful for selecting from behaviors (in aggregate) that were used by ancestral generations. An affect is defined as an “evaluative response that typically includes physiological arousal, subjective experience, and behavioral or emotional expression” (2002, p. 370). Affects, which begin very basically as experiences of pleasure and pain, develop and become more varied and complex. They become linked to associative representations of self, other and the environment and stored in memory. People learn to regulate affective responses on the basis of subjective experiencing of pleasure and displeasure. This can be understood both psychoanalytically in terms of defense mechanisms that ward off various forms of unpleasant affect, or through an intuitive conception of operant conditioning applied to reinforcement of on a mental level (Westen, 2002).

Bringing the discussion back to motivations, Westen’s model involves a person’s comparison of actual, wished-for or feared states. The discrepancies between a person’s perception of reality, his desire and fear leads to an emotional response that activates various mental and behavioral responses to again regulate the pleasant and unpleasant feelings. What a person desires and

fears has to be understood in terms of biologically, environmentally, evolutionarily and culturally influenced “goal-states.” As Westen wrote:

People can respond to the affects entailed by these discrepancies with behaviors aimed at changing reality (and hence minimizing the discrepancy between reality and a desired state or maximizing the discrepancy between reality and a feared state). Alternatively, they can use defenses or conscious coping strategies whose function is either to alter the perception of reality so that it matches more closely the goal state, or to ameliorate the emotion directly (as is the case with isolation of affect). (1999)

Thus affect regulation can include the management of discrepancies of feared, desired and states. In a certain sense, a person is always attempting a compromise solution between various motivational systems and the affects associated with the perceived distance from what one fears and desires. An important point to be stressed is that desires, fears, affects and motivations have to be thought about in multiplicity. In relation to romantic love, one may need to find a compromise between a sexual attraction towards another person, which may represent a desired state and the other desired state represented by this same person's marriage. This is complicated by the possibility of simultaneously activated feared states, such as not acting on one's sexual attraction or ruining one's marriage. In this case a person will be moved to pursue or not pursue his sexual attraction based on the (often unconscious) compromise reached

between these different affectively-charged representations of wished for and feared states.

For Westen, people are always driven to satisfy various motivations as best they can in a way that regulates the discrepancy between actual, desired and feared states. This idea has been empirically demonstrated in the cognitive literature, for example in research on the emotional and physical health consequences resulting from the perception of discrepancies between actual, ideal and ought selves (Higgins, 1987, 1999; Strauman et al., 1993). This should, however, not be understood as implying that all motivations are aimed at discrepancy reduction. Not only are there times when a person may be motivated to increase the difference between certain self-representations, but people also are motivated towards variety and novelty in self-experiences in terms of sensation-seeking (Zuckerman, 1990). Asked and answered in Westen's discussion is the issue of whether the "regulation of affect states (seeking pleasure and avoiding pain) is an underlying mechanism involved in all motivation" or an entirely independent motivation in its own right.

In his paper on motivation, Westen argued for the first position. He made the case that affects can direct certain types of behavior not rigidly controlled at the subcortical level. Since they can be used to select for the retention of certain mental and behavioral responses, affects act as motivators that serve evolutionary adaptive goals. However, through experience, affects become associated with representations of various self and other states, and can be flexibly used to shape other human motivations both at a conscious and

conscious level. Research has suggested that conscious and unconscious motives are not just expressed differently but may develop along different paths. McClelland and colleagues (1989) showed that unconscious motivations are more predictive of long-term outcomes, as opposed to those available to consciousness, which are more related to immediate, short-term events. Since affective responses (and subsequently aspects of motivational structures) are stored along associative networks, they are connected to and can be triggered symbolically by cognitive representations. For Westen, the activation of a network of associations (including wishes and fears) can both be inhibited and facilitated by affects (Westen & Gabbard, 2002a). Thus one's motivation to propose marriage and enter into a more committed status of relationship may be inhibited by a stronger affective motivation that is associated with a terror of engulfment fears. Both may be operative at an unconscious level and result, along with other factors, to a compromise solution of one's involvement in long-term romantic relationships that never lead to the feared state of engulfment in marriage. This example, while simple, illustrates Westen's argument that the "driving" force in human motivation is the regulation of affect, in the service of minimizing unpleasant feelings and maximizing pleasant ones (1999). Westen's work creates a very usable framework for understanding and researching romantic love in the context of mental processes that a dynamically rendered unconscious in the service of affective regulation.

Another example of the intersection of psychoanalytic theory and empirical research (specifically cognitive science) is the work of Bucci, who has carved out

an area of study she has termed referential activity (1997, 2000, 2005). The referential process concerns the cognitive function of “organizing nonverbal experience and connecting it to words” (1997, p. 185). Referential process is studied by assessing discourse samples for the degree to which the language reflects an integration of nonverbal experience, which includes imagery, bodily and emotional experience. Bucci has recast seminal concepts in psychoanalysis in the context of her multiple code theory. Her information-processing model can be understood as “addressing the central question of how disparate representational systems are connected in an integrated, goal-directed self, functioning in an interpersonal world” (1997, p. 264). By updating aspects of psychoanalytic theory to meet the advances of psychological research she has been able to argue for the reciprocally informative relationship of cognitive science and psychoanalysis.

One such modification is her re-conceptualization of psychological organization in terms of three types of information-processing systems: subsymbolic nonverbal, symbolic verbal and symbolic nonverbal. This is meant to replace ideas of primary and secondary categories of mental processes, of which the former is lacking a distinction between subsymbolic and symbolic nonverbal forms. As opposed from the symbolic, the subsymbolic mode describes an implicit level of sensory, motoric and somatic processing (1997, 2000). Emotional information processing, which occurs primarily on an unconscious level, relies on subsymbolic mechanisms. In this scheme, part of the work of psychoanalytic treatment targets the integration of systems of

thought, which “requires repairing disconnections and building new connections—between subsymbolic and symbolic elements within the nonverbal system, and between symbolic nonverbal representations and words” (1997, p. 269). The threat of painful emotions at the subsymbolic level is what leads to the turning away from and warding off of symbolization. This form of defensive dissociation and desymbolization, for Bucci, allows for a modern understanding of a dynamic unconscious. Painful affective memory traces are denied symbolic registration and are avoided in consciousness, though they continue to operate at a subsymbolic level (without comprehensible emotional meaning and capacity for symbolic regulation).

Bucci’s model of the normally functioning mind is one that stresses the integration of disparate mental processes and representational formats. All defensive mechanisms, like repression, refer to the disconnection or dissociation of referential links between subsymbolic and symbolic components. As she wrote: “The distinct formats must be interconnected to allow integration of functions, organization of goal-directed behavior, and establishment of a unified sense of self. On the most obvious level, there must be integration of systems to enable us to talk about what we experience and to connect the words of others to what we know and feel” (p. 178). The referential mechanism involves the transformation of information from the subsymbolic mode to the nonverbal and then to verbal. By integrating psychoanalytic thinking into a cognitive science framework, Bucci has been able to design a research program that can identify each stage of the referential process by linguistic indicators. She has viewed her

efforts as an attempt to establish a discipline of psychoanalytic psychology “whose domain of investigation includes the integration of processing systems as these operate in adaptive functioning, as well as their dissociation in pathology” (2000).

As a final point, Fonagy, Gergely, Jurist and Target (2002) have explored a framework that can aid in conceptualizing how motivations are guided by processes of affect regulation and maintaining the integrity and continuity of the self. For these authors, affects, experienced both subjectively and unconsciously, can be regulated at different levels. Affect regulation can occur at a basic largely unreflective level in regards to biological homeostasis and equilibrium, as well as at another symbolic level that hinges on the capacity to consciously experience as well as attend to (and act upon) one’s emotions. As a child experiences mental states (which include affect states) being read, modulated and reflected back by primary caregivers healthy and robust mentalization capacities develop. Mentalization, first accomplished through the interpretation of others’ minds, facilitates one’s introspective abilities. Affectivity plays a crucial role in mentalization as in its basic forms it means naming and modulating affective experience, and at a more complex level distinguishing and refining the meaning of affects. Affectivity is not merely the exercising of cognitive control over affective states, but an inward and outward exploratory process of “how current (and future) affects are experienced through the lens of past experiences, both real and imagined” (Jurist, 2005). Mentalized affectivity

denotes a process of mind that contributes to the differentiation, integration, regulation and understanding of one's of mental life.

In their model, since affect-regulation is crucially linked to the development and maintenance of one's self-concept, "self-regulation can be considered as a higher kind of affect regulation," though self-regulation does not necessarily have to concern affects (p. 95). Mentalized affectivity represents an empirically testable developmentally-based method of understanding a process of self-regulation through reflecting on and reevaluating internal states. Fonagy and colleagues have designed a measure of Reflective Function through the coding of attachment transcripts (Fonagy, Target, Steele, & Steele, 1998). Applied to romantic love, the internal self-mediation they describe is crucial for thinking about the possibilities of identifying, distinguishing, modulating and refining the range of affects experienced in relationships. For my purposes, Fonagy and colleagues' work is important for establishing a framework for understanding how one's self-reflexive representational activities can impact one's emotions, self-experience and motivations in romantic love.

My view of love

My canvassing of these distinct literatures has led to my own integrative psychoanalytic psychological approach to studying romantic love. Though informed by psychoanalysis, my perspective differs from traditional Freudian views of inherently contrasting drives, sex and aggression, and is more in line with the psychoanalytic psychological motivational views (e.g., Lichtenberg, 1989).¹⁷ Allowing for a range of various discontinuous and continuous motivations, both innate and learned, occurring on different levels of consciousness and are relatively flexible (i.e., are displaceable and malleable), enables a greater chance of integration of psychoanalytic and scientific perspectives. Further, allowing for some malleability among the multiple motivational systems allows room for conceiving of the impact of culture and learning. It best serves integrative purposes to adopt a conception of human functioning that is not constrained by too narrow a view or by too few basic motivations.

Psychoanalytic writers have slowly come to realize the importance of conceptualizing motivational structures in a framework other than that which

¹⁷ I will not try to distinguish, here, the differences between biological and psychological needs, or between psychoanalytic conceptions of instincts and drives. I am aware of the arguments devoted to exploring this terrain (for a recent discussion, see Kernberg, 2004, Chapter 3). I have already discussed my approach for focusing research on how needs get psychologically represented. I will say that it seems scientifically impossible to categorize motivations in such a dichotomous fashion between biological instinct and biological-psychological drive, especially if one believes in a multiple function principle.

corresponds to a dual drive theory (Lichtenberg, 1989; Westen, 1999). More recently, Pine (2005) has identified multiple motivations within such areas as object relations, ego functioning, self-experience, drives, agency and developmental needs. Conceptualizing motivations in a broad manner allows for points of overlap and juncture with the primary motivations fundamental to other psychological perspectives. These perspectives include motivations for survival, reproduction and maximal inclusive fitness (evolutionary; see Buss, 1999 and Hamilton, 1964), innate and learned drive reduction (behaviorist; Hull, 1943, 1952), competency, autonomy and relatedness to others (cognitive self-determination theories, Ryan & Deci, 2000), existence, relatedness and growth (adopted from Maslow's hierarchy of needs, 1962, 1970). As opposed to thinking of motivational systems as inherently conflictual, I am assuming the view that conflict develops from experiences of incompatibility of co-occurring aims. People develop conscious and unconscious compromise solutions to decrease psychological conflict (Brenner, 1982). Thought of in this way, compromise formations occur on a range of adaptive health based on the durability of the solution forged.

One can argue that the conscious and unconscious compromises I am referring to reflect attempts to maintain the ego's integrity, the self's temporal continuity (including constituent self and object representations) and one's subjective sense of agency. This emphasis is rooted in psychoanalytic theories that identify conscious and unconscious needs of self-coherency, self-continuity and agency as constituting forms of motivation (e.g., Kohut, G.S. Klein). Aside

from psychoanalytic origins, it is also a basic evolutionary idea that demonstrates a survival instinct in psychological life. Thought of in this way, one can posit a self-preservational motivation as underlying the unconscious and conscious striving towards a consistent, patterned, predictable and stable subjective sense of self. Variants of this form of thinking appear in empirical psychological research efforts documenting self-consistency motives (Pinel & Swann, 2000; Swann, 1990).

Though one may argue that psychological life is motivated by aims towards coherency and continuity, it seems wrong-headed to think of these as constituting a master motivational system. There is no question that one's ability to function, not to mention thrive, is dependent on a certain basic sense of one's biological-psychological-social continuity and cohesiveness. The degree to which one does not feel (physically, mentally, socially) stable, real, safe, strong, active, continuous, authentic and integrated affects one's ability to engage in life, work and relationships. However, as noted by others (Eagle, 1984; Westen, 1997), the elevation of self-integrity motivations to superordinate status commits the same errors as those theories, psychoanalytic or otherwise, which try to reduce all psychological phenomenon down to one or two basic causes. Errors of this type reduce the complexity of human psychology by viewing all sorts of diverse behaviors and motivations as simpler disguised forms of narrow sources.

An investigative aim for psychological research then involves understanding how a person manages simultaneous aims and motives that are not inherently oppositional, but rather can become conflictual on various levels (intrapsychic,

interpersonal, cultural, etc.). To a certain extent, I am suggesting moving or at least expanding the focus of inquiry from the level of content to process. This follows in the spirit of what Eagle wrote on the subject of superordinate or underlying motivations:

We are, so to speak, stuck with the more complex situation of a multiplicity of specific motives and aims interacting with each other in various ways. The uniformity underlying the surface diversity will be found, not at the same level as the very surface phenomena to be explained (that is, at the level of motives and aims), but at another level of discourse (at the level of processes and mechanisms). (1984, p. 202)

I am endorsing a psychological research view to study romantic love in terms of how conflict between motivational aims arise, and further how one forms compromises and resolves incompatibility between motivations occurring on different levels of awareness. Using this framework allows for understanding love in relation to how romantic partners negotiate compromises and incompatibilities that are both intrapsychic and interpersonal, unconscious and conscious.

Since I do not take the view that motivational aims are inherently conflictual, I understand inner conflicts as resulting from the unpleasurable affect (e.g., anxiety) caused by incompatibilities of simultaneously occurring motivational aims or derivatives of these. Psychological research needs to study the self-organizing and self-regulating processes of intrapsychic and interpersonal

compromise that occurs consciously and unconsciously. I am using “unconscious” less in an inaccessible sense, but more importantly in a dynamic sense—i.e., something that is affectively intolerable that gets rendered unconscious and denied attentional access. In a certain sense, psychological compromises can be considered as adaptive or defensive solutions in the service of affect regulation.

At the end of Part One, I introduced that a potentially useful way of understanding the disparate strands of the empirical literature was to view the models in terms of the motivational aims they emphasize. My proposal for investigating love will focus on what contributes to the tension between motivations, the varieties of compromise solutions available and employed by people, and the intersubjective interplay, which serves as the setting for these conscious and unconscious negotiations. I am suggesting that relationship research move beyond just empirically demonstrating the consciously rational dimensions of love and towards designing methods of documenting what gets rendered unconscious, how this happens and why— that is, exploring the role of a dynamic unconscious in romantic life. This will expand how the field conceives of romantic relationship reasoning by studying the factors that lead to a bounded rationality, constricted by limits to self-knowledge of simultaneous aims.

Psychoanalytic perspectives can contribute a way of thinking about what aspects of romantic life may be kept out of awareness and why this is so. However, academic research psychology approaches offer expertise in operationalizing and measuring the process by which one is able to access

romantic mental states. Psychological empirical research and psychoanalysis should inform each other by using the unique perspectives included within each discipline. The psychoanalytic research perspectives, exemplified by Bucci, Fonagy and colleagues, and Westen, provide guiding models for understanding a dynamic unconscious in a way that bridges psychoanalysis with empirical psychology.

My present effort to integrate psychoanalytic thinking with a more general psychological empirical approach to studying love would be lacking if I did not spend some moments discussing the most important form of research in psychoanalysis. Since Freud's early work on hysteria (1905a), an in-depth case study has historically been the means by which psychoanalytic writers have shared their observations about conscious and unconscious dimensions of psychological functioning. Since these observations are derived from a therapeutic setting, single-case reports have served as a method for examining processes of psychological change and the nuanced complexities of mental life. Apropos the argument I have been making for understanding romantic love complexly, the in-depth analysis of a small number of cases provides, quite possibly, the best venue for the steady demonstration of the derivatives of conscious and unconscious mental functioning that are not easily reproduced experimentally.

To be sure, the main advantages of case studies (whether based on therapy sessions or in-depth interviews and observations) center on the freedom and flexibility that a one-to-one encounter allows for in opening up the avenues for

expression of an individual's unique life story. Even a relatively structured interview session allows for greater range of interaction and interpretive possibilities than methods based solely on self-report questionnaires. However, though the loosening of methodological restrictions allows additional space for unconscious psychological functions to be observed, these benefits are countered by the limitations of this approach. Case studies are subject to "the vagaries of memory, repression, motive" that affect what one is "capable of noticing and willing to report" (Bornstein & Masling, 1998, p. xxii). Aside from the participant-observer perspective bias, case studies are limited by the inability to replicate findings based on the particularities of a researcher/therapist-subject dyad. Unless one systematizes an in-depth case study, thus losing some of the advantages of its loosened explorative structure, it is difficult to ensure the conditions that would allow for the replication of findings. In other words, while providing potentially useful information about the manifestations of unconscious thought in love, one would not be able to confidently make claims about the generalizability of such observed phenomena.

Let me not get further into the debate that has occurred between those psychoanalysts disregarding the need for scientific exploration of the unconscious mind via controlled studies and those discarding the usefulness of insights about mental processes gained from the clinical encounter (recorded in case study fashion). Instead let me begin to offer a kind of middle position, as has been articulated by Kriegman (1998). He wrote about the use of clinical

case material and quantitative experimentation as methods of learning about the mind's workings:

... they are both forms of empirical evidence each with enormous problems. The former is plagued by subjective, individual interpretation with enormous bias and self-deception while it retains the power of the ability to perceive complex mental states in the context of intimate relationships using our highly evolved empathic accuracy.... The latter is plagued by the fact that much of the complexity and meaning of human experience is lost in the attempt to operationalize and atomize human experience while it retains a much greater degree of control (but certainly not complete) over the human tendency to bias and distort experience. Both are empirical approaches, each with tremendous advantages and disadvantages. (p. 198)

I am in favor of incorporating the unique advantages of as many different research methodologies to serve in concert to demonstrate how the mind consciously and unconsciously negotiates love. As I will describe further in Chapter Four, I am advocating a multi-method research approach that would support the inclusion of case studies to aid both with hypothesis-generation as well as confirmation of findings from a large sample.

Up to this point I have mentioned various types or categorical versions of unconscious mental processes. I described the cognitive unconscious, which refers to certain forms of information-processing (e.g., implicit or procedural

memory). Kandel (1999) recently distinguished a related form of unconscious mental life, the procedural unconscious, which was a marriage of psychoanalytic thought and neuroscience. For Kandel, the procedural unconscious is the “unconscious part of the ego that is not conflicted or repressed” and corresponds to brain functions grouped under the heading of procedural memory” (2005, p. 72). As I have described, what distinguishes psychoanalytic models of unconscious mental life is the notion that people may be motivated at times to transform and maintain aspects of their psychological life unconsciously. This represents the psychoanalytic dynamic unconscious, which can be thought of as a radical extension to the cognitive and procedural forms of unconscious mental processing. In the next chapter I will set out a framework for both conceptualizing and researching the psychology of love that focuses on this dynamic aspect of what I will term the romantic unconscious.

CHAPTER FOUR: Future directions towards a romantic unconscious

Love consists in this, that two solitudes protect and touch and greet each other.

Rainer Maria Rilke from *Letters to a Young Poet*

My aim in this chapter is to offer suggestions towards a more comprehensive way of studying love. As I have stressed, there are currently too many models of love that exist in relative isolation from each other, whether within the differing schools of academic psychology, the related brain science fields and psychoanalysis, or between these disciplines. In this chapter, I would like to articulate some ideas towards building a framework to understand the existing literature, as well as recommend future methods of future study. In this undertaking, I espouse the spirit of intellectual integration in the service of providing a complex way to research romantic love. Studying the minds, behaviors, mental processes and inner lives of those in love requires a way of employing the unique strengths of disparate disciplines. In this pursuit, a mutually informing dialogue needs to be established between the parties that have contributed to the psychology of love. Romantic love has to be defined broadly as a starting point, to allow for a range of inquired study that might capture its complexities. I now offer my definition of romantic love. Romantic love is *a culturally conceived construct used to encompass and describe the*

various components (sexual, attachment and otherwise) of an intimate relationship between persons.

In this study, I have restricted my focus on the division between academic psychological (and the related brain sciences) and psychoanalytic approaches to romantic love. To a certain degree, my explanation of the underlying assumptions of the various approaches to love reflects the more general assumptions within these fields of study. Some of these larger epistemological and methodological differences have roots and manifestations that are beyond my scope to discuss (see Barron, Eagle & Wolitzky, 1992 for a treatment of this subject). These differences have persisted for far too long, across too many generations of psychologists and psychoanalysts, that both sides, at best, appear to be reluctant interlocutors. As with the example of romantic relationship research, this gulf is unfortunate because it has prevented a potentially mutually informing relationship.

As I have articulated, the body of literature on the psychology of romantic love contains serious flaws, partly due to assumptions about the accessibility and accurate reporting of mental states related to love. By advocating a model of the mind privileging conscious and rational thought processes, these flaws have limited the usefulness of the contributions of the literature as a whole. This version of mental processing and reasoning does not accord with advances in psychological and brain research that have emphasized the importance of forms of unconscious information processing. That the diversity of empirical romantic love models does not reflect a more complex version of reasoning, integrating

cognitive-affective conscious and unconscious processes, allows for only a partial rendering of romantic love's psychology. This severely limits the explanatory breadth and depth of empirically derived romantic relationship investigations.

It has been my contention that the psychoanalytic literature can provide useful ways of thinking about mental processes and romantic love. Psychoanalytic ideas that focus on the interplay of conscious and unconscious mental life can be used to link aspects of the existing empirical literature and guide future investigations. With its clinical foundations, based primarily in consulting room observations and theoretical scholarship, psychoanalysis has long lacked the rigorous empirical methodological standards of psychological science. Rather than simply viewing psychoanalysis as a solution to the problems of the academic psychology research into love, I am endorsing a more mutually beneficial relationship between the two sides. In this chapter, I will propose guiding points to foster such a rapprochement in the psychoanalytic psychological approach to romantic love.

The romantic unconscious is my way of describing the various unconscious aspects of mental life that contribute to the nature and course of one's love relations. In Part One (Chapters One and Two), I reviewed the empirical literature and identified limitations in the research, including an overreliance on conscious experience. Despite the diversity of methods and explanations in the literature of studying romantic love, this research body does not offer a cohesive way of understanding its many parts. Each romantic love model does not easily

connect to another; at times, the theories contradict, envelop or talk past each other explicitly or implicitly. One way I proposed to link these models was to view each in terms of the motivational components they refer to. In Chapter Three, I introduced the value of utilizing psychoanalytic ideas about mental functioning and love relationships for the purpose of more comprehensively investigating love. Among the central psychoanalytic ideas I highlighted that are without counterpart in romantic love research are: a dynamic unconscious; intrapsychic conflict amongst motivations; defensive functions that serve self regulating purposes; the management of self and other representations infused with degrees of fantasy; the role of sexuality; and the importance of contextualizing one's developmental history.

My ideas for conceptualizing and guiding romantic relationship research will focus on the interplay between conscious and unconscious factors across intrapsychic and interpersonal dimensions. Central to this is considering how romantic love involves a person's compromise solutions to simultaneously occurring, at times conflicting, motivations.¹⁸ I place particular focus on mental processes that serve self-regulating functions. While I do not assume a superordinate motivational hierarchy, nor an inherent antagonism of aims, an investigation of underlying self organizing processes (including affect regulation)

¹⁸ I am aware of the psychoanalytic literature on compromise formation, most prominently used in Brenner's work (1982). Coming from a perspective that is informed by psychoanalytic thinking but not adherent to specific models of drive theory or ego psychology, I am using a broader definition of compromise formation and compromise solution, akin to Westen's: "the solutions people develop to maximize fulfillment of conflicting motives simultaneously" (2002, p. 406).

can serve as a unifying framework for understanding conflict and compromise in romantic love. Instead of researching the antagonisms between motivational systems, I would recommend a process focus of understanding how motivational aims are negotiated.

In a set of four guiding points, I will outline conceptual propositions that can guide the future thinking and researching of romantic relationships. Since the subject of my study is the empirical investigation of love, my theoretical recommendations will be accompanied by methodological suggestions. My framework is integrative by nature in its attempt to pull together strands of psychology and psychoanalysis (as well as individual perspectives within each). I seek to expand the current understanding of how and what kind of reasoning occurs in relationships. After outlining my four interlocking propositions, I will conclude this dissertation with suggestion as to how to approach the rationality of romantic relationships.

The reasoning used in romantic love involves conscious and unconscious information processing of both emotional and cognitive factors. However, this reasoning does not follow formal rules of logic, but rather is bounded by limits to one's self-knowledge and the existence of simultaneously occurring multiple motivations. In other words, I am arguing that a person in love does not have one identifiable goal that he, through rational analysis, finds the most effective means to achieve. The nature of love is too multifaceted to allow for such a

static linear reasoning process to be of use.¹⁹ In this way, my thinking about romantic love runs contrary to academic psychological models that privilege conscious experience and imply formal rationality and logic in relationships. The process of forming compromise solutions to the problem of conflicting aims in love is constrained by various conditions such as a person's subjective experience and life history, personality, constitutional and cognitive factors, intrapsychic and interpersonal motivational concerns, and cultural and environmental situations.

While departing from the academic mainstream view, my framework attempts to integrate the various research and theoretical perspectives currently in the romantic love psychological literature. It is broad enough to understand the different points of emphasis represented in the literature's evolutionary, attachment, social cognitive, systemic, personality accounts of love as standing for potentially distinct dimensions of relationship aims and motivations. My recommendations are meant to guide conceptual and empirical research by supplementing existing models. In other words, my model is not meant to replace recent investigations, but rather to aid them by expanding or sharpening their focus. In a truly integrative spirit, these points are broad enough to meld with theoretical claims and methods of particular branches of psychology as long as boundary lines are relaxed to allow for learning from different perspectives.

¹⁹ Though I will not explore it here, I am aware of the similarities, at least in spirit, between certain aspects of my view and work on applying non-linear dynamic systems theory (Thelen and Smith, 1994) to psychoanalysis (Seligman, 2005).

These propositions for a psychoanalytic psychological (Bucci, 2000) framework for investigating romantic love serve as individual recommendations for further research. However, taken together, these four points contribute to a theoretical and empirical approach to relationship rationality that focuses on the interplay between conflict and compromise in intrapsychic and interpersonal processes occurring on conscious and unconscious levels.

One of the challenges faced in this type of study is posed by the requirements of the task. An integrative project requires something beyond just an understanding of each of the many perspectives included. One needs a kind of intellectual empathy in order to reconcile these multiple viewpoints without endangering the integrity of the original set of ideas. At the same time, one must seek points of meeting in order to open up possibilities for integration. The task involves the dangerous attempt to soften some of the conceptual edges without dulling them to such an extent that the distinct characters of the original models are lost. To create the bridge towards a psychoanalytic psychological study of romantic love, dialogue must occur between different perspectives allowing for certain points of view to be debated, verified, rejected, accepted and compromised. Just as my way of viewing romantic love centers on compromise solutions of conflict, so too must the same occur between psychology and psychoanalysis. This represents my attempt at such a compromise.

Recommendations for the psychoanalytic psychological research of romantic love

1. Object relations

In psychoanalytic theorizing, object relations can correspond to the intrapsychic management of potential objects of instinctual gratification. Kernberg emphasized that object relations refers to the internalization of the relationship between self and other, “in the form of a self-image or self-representation interacting with an image or object representation” (2004, p. 27). Westen (2002) has defined object relations as the “behavioral patterns in intimate relationships and the motivational, cognitive, and affective processes that produce them” (G-11). I would like to propose the usefulness of this framework for studying romantic relationship psychology. Part of the utility of an object relations perspective is its ability to serve as a bridging concept to empirical research. Masling and Bornstein (1994), in their edited volume of object relations research, described the relative ease of operationalizing and quantifying this way of thinking. They attribute its ability to connect psychoanalysis and psychology to the focus object relations theories pay to ego development and the construction of one’s self-concept.

Despite the connotation and Freudian origin of the term object, I do not mean to suggest that romantic partners conceive of each other as just serving as means to a motivational end. Nevertheless I do believe that all close

relationships involve some processes of using the other, and that this ability to serve a loved other is an end in itself. Rather than for its gratification associations, the term object is important in a psychological sense that is not captured in other terminology. To think of romantic partner aspects and components in terms of psychological objects suggests the mental work involved and done on one's representation of self, other and relationships. This much needed object concept that accounts for the psychological work and processes involved in managing representations related to interpersonal life cuts across all disciplines.

My use of an object relations paradigm is not restricted to the narrow motivational boundaries posited in specific psychoanalytic object relations theories.²⁰ Framed in a simple way that allows for interdisciplinary integration and research, object relations are the underlying cognitive-affective-motivational psychological correlates that guide interpersonal functioning. The make up of one's object relations has conscious and unconscious dimensions, though can be best thought of as dynamically operating at an intrapsychic level. Object relations can be thought of as underlying such interpersonal constructs as social cognition, relationship schemas and social skills/intelligence. I am proposing that

²⁰ I am not going to focus on the theoretical assumptions that separate object relations thinking from other schools of psychoanalysis. This is a discussion that involves a movement from the primacy of drives and a motivation towards tension reduction to theories that minimize the role of drives (for the most part) and elevate an inherent motivation towards contact with a psychological object. This subject has received much attention in such publications by Greenberg and Mitchell (1983) and Summers (1994).

researchers can address current deficits in the empirical literature of romantic relationships through the study of object relations.

Commonly, empirical researchers ask subjects to rate the degree to which they are able to depend on, share with, get close to, commit to partners, etc. They are also asked to evaluate partners for commitment, passion, personality attributes, frequency of relationship behaviors, etc. Aside from not reaching what is rendered and kept outside one's conscious awareness, investigations of this sort do not try to understand the various psychological paths that lead to a response. The current empirical literature does not provide a useful framework of understanding the pathway that leads to one's ability to take someone as a love object. It does not answer questions such as: What about my unique psychology allows me to respond to certain characteristics of this other person in a romantic way? What about this person, the way I see him and the way we relate to each other, contributes to the passion I experience in our relationship? What prevents this long-time friend of mine from becoming more attractive emotionally in my embodied mind's eye? What in my psychology makes me see him as novel and exciting and thus contributes to my ability to relate to him as a sexual partner? What makes this person an unsuitable attachment in my eyes? What allows me to see this person as someone to commit to, when I had previously not valued commitment in relationships? In other words, one's rating or accounting of a loved other (on these measures) does not give information about how this response is formed and what it means for the responding person.

A framework that integrates conscious and unconscious aspects of cognitive-affective motivational dynamics is needed to provide a more comprehensive description of the way one psychologically understands self and other in relationship. Romantic love research studies the psychology of interpersonal relations as a collection of static constructs of schemas, attitudes and appraisal patterns. However, romantic relationships are anything but static and require an approach that does not treat romantic representations of loved others as readily-accessible and accurately apprehended and attended to. A person's responses on an average research questionnaire should not be treated as accurate representations of events (relationship behaviors), mental states (thoughts, feelings, etc.) and processes related to romantic love. Such responses are, at best, approximations of a person's feelings, thoughts, and behaviors in romantic relationships. They are best conceived as likely indicators of a person's perceptual, interpretive and evaluative process in love.

A research balance needs to be struck between partners' self-reported perceptions of romantic experience, the actual observable correlates of this experience (which can be accomplished by observational methods such as videotaped interactions) and the psychological process that underlies both. It is this third area, of psychological process, that is shockingly lacking in the research literature. The advances in the study of romantic love's psychological mechanisms have come primarily from attachment and social cognition studies, which study the processes and internal working models that influence people's romantic perceptions. However, these fields do not adequately deal with

dynamically unconscious factors, which I will address in a later point. They operate from a model of the mind and reasoning that relies too heavily on conscious introspection and awareness of one's psychology.

According to research findings from attachment and social cognition research, a person's anxiety of relationship intimacy, use of one's partner to regulate self-esteem, idealization of one's partner and insecurities around partner's availability are all readily accessible through direct questioning. There is no doubt that people can be aware of some degree to which they experience such relationship states, but this awareness is hardly complete. This research does not reflect the incorporation of kinds of mental processes involved in the registration and management of interpersonal motivational concerns. I am particularly talking about the mental mechanisms (i.e., defenses) that are aimed at obscuring aspects of relationship motivations and experiences as a function of affect regulation. These processes occur on an intrapsychic level and require a conceptual framework specifically able to account for dynamically unconscious functions.

An object relations framework provides a way of conceptualizing how motivations within romantic relationships are managed in a dynamic way involving a person's negotiation of intrapsychic conflict and compromise. Across all object relations theories is a central notion is that the psychological self is formed from the vicissitudes of object relationships (Summer, 1994). In this light, one can understand intrapsychic conflict and compromise as related to the anxiety of a threat posed to the psychological self (or self-representation). Since

the building blocks of the self are object and self-representational units, perceived danger to these can result in intrapsychic conflict. Differentiating this object relations take on conflict from a traditional drive-ego model, Kernberg wrote, “unconscious intrapsychic conflicts are never simply between impulse and defense; rather, both impulse and defense find expression through certain internalized object relations” (2004, p. 45). The object relations focus on how a person consciously and unconsciously manages relationship motivational experiences may be the most important point that psychoanalysis has to offer the romantic love conversation. It adds a possible window for viewing what and how aspects of a person’s motivational history in relationships impact the way romantic love is felt and lived.

Examining one’s intrapsychic world of object relations can reveal how one manages motivational aims. In an object relations model a person’s motivations take on a historical quality, in which continuity and discontinuity of development are considered. A person’s salient motivations in a romantic relationship evolve through a process of psychological conflict and compromise throughout one’s life, dating back through one’s earliest object relationships. A person forms an object relationship with an other through an active psychological process. From a young age, one consciously and unconsciously internalizes aspects of the other which function for the person in needed ways. A principle important to object relations theories is the way that a psychological self structure forms through the internalization of early relationships which serve care-giving and attachment functions (Summers, 1994). Through the average expectable

maturational process, given the availability of appropriate emotional supplies needed to survive and thrive, the person is eventually able to relate to an other on a level that is not restricted to the other serving only as an object or function for the person. The person is then related to as more of a whole object, though is still psychologically construed with degrees of fantasy driven by a person's motivational orientations (including related fears and wishes). A person does not lose this dependence on important others to structure, regulate and maintain one's psychological self, but becomes less reliant on external sources in managing such functions for oneself. This is an aspect of human psychology and relationships that features more prominently for some object relations theories (e.g., self psychology) than others. Applied to romantic love research, this object relations level of viewing interpersonal relations can further explain the intrapsychic dimension underlying other models of close relationships.

As described in Chapter One, the attachment literature has provided evidence for the connection between a person's attachment to early caregivers and romantic partners. This indicates the continuity of attachment motivations, not to mention conflicts and compromises involved—not to mention the repetition of attachment behaviors. However, the attachment literature deals with a person's conscious (or, at most, preconscious) experience of attachment. An object relations paradigm includes ways of thinking about one's states of mind in relation to attachment that are defensively rendered dynamically unconscious.

A broadly-conceived object relations paradigm can add a method of inquiry about the processes, both conscious and unconscious, that one undertakes in

psychologically registering and managing attachment-related relationship experiences. An object relations framework emphasizes the role individuals' unique psychology in interpreting and then internalizing the experiences of motivational satisfaction and frustration in relationships. A person's history of motivational satisfaction and frustration creates conditions for repetition in relationships as people continue to seek out relationship experiences to meet motivational needs. In an object relations framework, one can consider a person's romantic relationship strivings, experiences, and behaviors as not necessarily aimed towards achieving optimal relationships satisfaction. The very ideas of what is optimal and what is satisfying take on a different sense than in, say, social exchange theories that adopt rational economic principles of optimal outcomes.

An object relations paradigm explores how people seek to stabilize self and other (and self-with-other) representations. Based on people's unique motivational histories in relationships, which lead a series of conflicts and compromises, they learn basic ways of operating and negotiating their interpersonal worlds. They learn ways of thinking about, ignoring, transforming and achieving needs in relationships. In romantic love this involves a learning of ways to manage self-other representations that are subject to degrees of intense affective investment. A person consciously and unconsciously finds psychological methods to regulate the amount of affect associated to potential romantic love objects. This may include a degree of fantasy and defensive distortion, by which, for example one unconsciously sets the terms that such

attachment-related memories and states can be activated. Repetition patterns in a person's romantic relationship history indicate self-regulatory processes used to manage the affective quality of object relations.

Bowlby, at least in part, worked on attachment theories to act as a corrective to the psychoanalytic privileging of intrapsychic experience at the expense of "real" and "actual" events. As reflected in the current state of the empirical study of love, the pendulum has swung the other way and it is now imperative that a model for thinking about the role of dynamically unconscious psychological processes be re-introduced. One must take into account a person's reported experience of "real" romantic relationship events. However, one must not neglect the role of intrapsychic and unconscious factors, centered on motivational conflict and compromise, in the registration, maintenance and recalling of such events. The study of romantic love's psychology should concern itself with how relationship experiences are psychologically manipulated and preserved, and under what conditions.

This raises another point to emphasize for object relations theories, namely, that this process of psychologically internalizing important aspects of relationships with others is an active one that involves a person's interpretation of the other as opposed to a passive taking in or reception. Applied to a study of romantic love, an object relations perspective offers a window to view what a person psychologically "does" with relationships. An object relation is not a ready made link between people but involves construction through personality, constitutional attributes and, of course, motivational history in relationships. A

person forms object relationships based on their motivational configuration at a given time. This is a different picture of romantic relationships than one would find in the empirical literature, where researchers treat subjects as passive recorders of relationship experiences. One would be hard pressed to find much attention paid to the influence that motivational, defensive and adaptational needs have on subject responses (aside from the attachment and social cognition literature, the limitations of which I have discussed).

Romantic partners' interpretative and evaluative engagement occurs on a conscious and unconscious psychological level. Involved in this interpretive process is a determination of sorts, informed by cognitive-affective reasoning and subsymbolic states of mind that loved objects can be related to in a way that allows for a romantic relationship. Romantic love, when required, is a process by which both partners interpret that the other can be related to in a way that is mutually benefiting, though not always in ways that are similar for both persons. An object relations concept is necessary for capturing partially unconscious psychological interactional patterns. For example, one may think of Sandler's ideas about "role responsiveness," in which one externalizes fantasized aspects of self-object relations in interpersonal relationships (1976). In other words, one can understand romantic partner's behavior as directed towards inducing the other to act or respond in ways that fulfill fantasized object relationship motivations. A research application of this could lead to focusing on what some psychoanalytic writers have discussed as the capacity to be open to the transference of the romantic other. This includes the ability to tolerate the

fantasy projections of a loved other, as well as identifying with aspects of one's partner. This speaks to a capacity of consciously and unconsciously loosening one's psychological boundaries (Fonagy, 2006).

Including and aside from the work I reviewed in Chapter Three, there is a psychoanalytic literature outlining the role of fantasy in romantic love that fits into an object relations perspective (Bergmann, 1987; Kremen & Kremen, 1971). Some of these writings focus on ideas of transference and idealization. In clinical psychoanalysis, transference refers to "the patient's emotional experience of and fantasies about the analyst, which, though they may be based in part on actual perceptions of the analyst, recapitulate experiences and fantasies about important objects in the patient's childhood" (Zimmer et al., 2005, p. 561). Westen defined transference as a more general psychological phenomena occurring in everyday life: "the process whereby people experience similar thoughts, feelings, fears, wishes and conflicts in new relationships as they did in past relationships" (2002, p. 562).

Involved in the transferring of feelings and thoughts about a person's past to a present romantic partner are the mechanisms of idealization (discussed in Chapter Three). In an object relations perspective, an idealizing transference in one's romantic relationships is focused not only on a transfer of attributes but on a transfer of a past object's function into a present object relationship. In other words, what is central is not the attributes of the other, but how the object relationship was experienced, how it functioned and what motivations the person has to continue seeking out (or avoiding) similar ones. As Freud posited

(described in Chapter Three), in a new love object a person may be unconsciously seeking to re-find or avoid re-finding a version of an older one.

More recently, social cognitive researchers have researched not only transference processes, but also interpersonal mechanisms used by people to actualize an ideal representation of themselves in romantic relationships. Some of this literature was covered in Part One, in regards to Andersen's social cognitive study of everyday transference (Andersen & Chen, 2002; Andersen & Glassman, 1996) and the Michelangelo Phenomenon (Drigotas, 2002; et al. 1999), and further research on ideals exists (Fletcher, Simpson, Thomas, & Giles, 1999; Knee et al., 2001). While these represent a valuable incorporation of such concepts into empirical research, these perspectives could benefit from a conceptual object relations framework (both to guide hypothesis generation and data explanation). This would allow for investigating how romantic partners may attend to or recruit aspects of each other to invest with fantasy in accordance with motivational needs within a relationship. One can again think of Sandler's role responsiveness, discussed earlier. Current research offerings lack ways of explaining the dynamic function of transference and idealizing mechanisms and treat them as occurring as preconscious, or at most, implicit processes.²¹ As a result, there are few intellectually satisfying ways of making psychological sense of the inaccuracies people demonstrate in their perceptions of romantic partners

²¹ Without a conception of dynamically unconscious processes, one cannot even approach more sophisticated psychoanalytic constructs such as the role of triangulation and Oedipal dynamics in romantic love. I will develop this further in my next guiding point.

and aspects of relationships. The existing literature understands these as deficits in psychological perception in relationships. However, this way of understanding the situation neglects any conflictual and dynamic roots to the gaps in awareness in how people psychologically attend to and manage self and object representations in romantic love.

A place of future investigative interest for the field is exploring what is entailed in the way romantic partners transform each other and become desired objects of love. By researching how loved others are psychologically represented by and function for each other, one is able to further ascertain the aspects about the members of a romantic couple that allow them to serve as psychological love objects. An object relations perspective searches for this information in lovers' historical pasts. By historical, I mean that an object relations viewpoint emphasizes the roots of one's motivational history in relationships, including past ways of dealing with conflicts and compromises. Further, it opens up additional avenues for thinking of repetitive dynamic conscious and unconscious motivational configurations in romantic relationships. Missing from current research treatments of love is the discussion of why people search for certain kinds of relationships (whether defined by attachment styles, love styles, etc.).

Empirically speaking, the attachment research has done the best job in explaining why certain relationships are repeatedly sought after and entered into instead of others. It has yielded evidence to show how people seek the stability of object representational patterns that reflect familiar ways of regulating the intense affect of romantic relationships. Excluded from this conversation,

however, is the complex range of psychological processes that people use to mentally comprehend and manage the necessary aspects of love relationships. Research questions guided by object relations hypotheses can attend to the range of psychological compromises people establish to handle intrapsychic conflict.

Finally, an object relations perspective, as I have broadly conceived of it, can offer a way of thinking about both continuous and discontinuous motivations in romantic relationships. Put another way, allowing for a range of simultaneously operative conscious and unconscious motivations requires a way of understanding why certain aims persist while others seem less salient. I will develop these ideas in the guiding points that follow. However, for now, it is important to say that an object relations perspective opens up avenues of thinking about and researching the fate of motivational aims originating early in life, and those which are learned later in life. Specifically, motivations related to intimacy, care-giving and attachment security have correlates in early relationships with parental caregivers. How one's early object relationships satisfied or frustrated these aims, contributes to an individual's psychological structure for object relations. The way these experiences are psychologically registered and managed will influence how these motivations function in current romantic relationships. There is a way of thinking of idealization as unconsciously carrying out the function of elevating the importance of the romantic object, in terms of how they could potentially fulfill a much sought after

object relationship (related to a perceived continuous need, deficit or motivational aim) (Reik, 1957).

The role of research is in investigating what aspects of potential romantic others allow them to be unconsciously and consciously perceived as able to fulfill certain object relationship functions. This could translate to a study of what conditions allow for a romantic relationship to form between two prospective partners. One could come away from the empirical literature thinking that there are certain absolute variables that would lead any two people to become lovers. My contention is that this is not the case and that the necessary conditions that would allow a romantic relationship to occur have to be understood at an object relations level. Further, as demonstrated in couples observational research on conflict management, it will be a fruitful endeavor to study how romantic partners' object relations motivations interact in manifest behavioral form. As I will suggest shortly, this involves studying simultaneously occurring interactional patterns of fantasy, transference, idealization and projection. Studying romantic love at the object relations level involves recognizing the mutuality of such ubiquitous processes that occurs at least partially outside of awareness.

Implications for Research Design

- Object relations concepts have provided psychoanalytically-informed researchers a method of empirically studying the way a person represents close relationships. Descriptions of self and significant others get scored via the Object Relations Inventory/ Object Representations Inventory method, which assess representations across dimensions of qualitative-

thematic content, cognitive-structural conceptual level of organization, and differentiation-relatedness (Blatt, 1974; et al. 1979; 1988; Diamond, Blatt, Stayner, & Kazlow, 1991). It is particularly this last way of scoring that is useful in its ability to provide a gauge of how a person's representations of loved others can range from being characterized by boundary confusion and idealization/denigration to a more nuanced intersubjective quality. This method does not just allow a glimpse into the quality and structure of a person's romantic object representational world, but also a person's representations of parental figures. This research by itself can provide a way of gauging how subjects' representations of romantic self and other relate to a larger constellation of past important objects. In other words, researchers may be able to get a sense of the continuity of object relations themes by eliciting descriptions of important past romantic partners, parental figures, as well as people's representations of themselves (both presently and in past relation to these objects). The utility in a research method like the ORI is in it being an indirect measure of object relations, as researchers score a person's descriptions based on content, as well as structural organization. In other words, this is not just a measure driven by affective tone or coloring; scoring is based on quality not just content. One can infer from ORI ratings the degree to which one's interpersonal relationships are characterized by fantasy-fueled distortion and projection that remain detached from reality. The ORI method would ideally be

combined with other relationship measures, including those currently existing or the kinds as I have suggested above.²²

- Research needs to move beyond the traditional psychoanalytically-informed measures, like ORI and projective measures (like the Thematic Apperception Test and Rorschach). Andersen's research (Andersen & Chen, 2002; Andersen & Glassman, 1996), described in Chapter Two, on everyday transference, while from a social cognition perspective, represents a model of research where experimental manipulation can demonstrate repetition of object relations patterns from past significant other to strangers. This style of research allows for investigators, within a laboratory setting, to witness the unconscious importance of object relations organizing themes for people in the way they perceive and process otherwise neutral interpersonal situations. I would advocate the use of other methodological tools, such as adapted versions of California Q-set (Block, 1961), which could be used to have romantic partners assess each other and past loves across various personality attributes. Q-sort methodology is generally underutilized in romantic love investigations, and if adapted to also reflect object relations concerns could be an empirically viable way of accessing unconscious romantic organizing

²² In one known dissertation example of this method (Ebenstein, 2005), the ORI was used along with various attachment measures with married couples. Results indicated that husbands and wives within each couple had a similar level of differentiation-relatedness. However, there was no significant relationship between mental representations and attachment status, nor was a significant relationship found between satisfaction with intimacy and the capacity for differentiation and relatedness.

configurations that are operative in a person's life. This then could be used in an Andersen-like experimental setting to demonstrate how people interact with strangers who resemble consciously and unconsciously familiar others.

- I would also advocate the development of semi-structured interviews whereby a researcher would be able to investigate representational tendencies, relationship aims and experiences over the course of a person's romantic life, and outside of romantic relationships (parents, siblings, friends). In this way, one could qualitatively look for consistency and discrepancy across romantic relationships and between other relationships and romantic ones—persistence of needs, relationship themes and patterns, etc. Conducting these interviews with romantic partners would be specifically informative in providing data about what sort of patterns frequently occur, and to what degree of awareness. Having couples speak about their relationships experiences both together and about past loves, in private and then possibly together can lead to opportunities for confirmatory and contradictory data. A design could be created that would have partners attempt to answer various questions about each others' relationship psychology (this would include inquiries about motivations, ways of managing affective conflict, issues of compromise, development of patterns, etc.). Then a videotaped session can be arranged where partners then have to reveal answers. This would allow an interesting multi-method forum for understanding how partners

psychologically make sense of their lovers (as opposed to just a static representation). Further, the feedback session would not only provide a videotaped observation of couples interacting in a relationship task (which then can be coded for nonverbal behavior and Gottman's behavioral analysis of conflict management), but also serve as a way of assessing gaps in one's knowledge about oneself. One could extend this and add a second videotaped session, where couples are then asked to reflect and comment on both of their experiences of the first videotaped task while watching it. This could provide useful data concerning how they understand their interactions upon review and their capacity for using feedback from researchers. Wilson has suggested (2002) that inferring behavior indirectly from the reports of others is a viable route to increasing self-knowledge and indicating unconscious defensive processes.

- The purpose in the kind of research I am proposing here is not assuming a similarity or complementarity hypothesis of couples object relations profiles. This kind of view to relationships, I believe, is a far too simplistic guiding hypothesis to apply to romantic love that has lingered in the research literature for far too long. Research investigations into love, while not devoid of hypotheses, should approach the investigation of romantic object relations allowing for various kinds of relationships between partners' object relations histories and current relation to each other as romantic objects. If one is to take seriously the role of dynamically unconscious processes as serving self-organization, then one

would have to allow for various kinds of ways in which romantic partners internalize, manage and maintain cognitive-affective representations of the other. Apropos some of what the psychoanalytic literature teaches, object relations research open up an avenue to understanding the multiple ways people, consciously and unconsciously, represent romantic others in their minds. A main area of inquiry that may prove related to relationship satisfaction is the openness someone has to being represented in all sorts of shifting ways for a romantic partner. Researchers can assess this through interviews that elicit descriptions of relationship mental states and behavior. This would include the capacity for people to be able to reflect on being a potential object of use, adoration, aggression, tenderness, mutual care, etc. in the mind of their loved other. It is unclear to what degree this relationship aspect is related to such empirically tested constructs as psychological mindedness or Reflective Function (RF) (Fonagy, et al., 1998). One could imagine a connection that then can be investigated by correlating relationship quality factors with reflective function scores on romantic attachment interviews. At this point, RF has mainly been used as a research tool in the realm of parent-child attachment. I would recommend that this scoring system would have to be adapted particularly to assess the kind of mentalized affectivity involved in romantic relationships.

2. A dynamically unconscious psychology

As I have discussed earlier, what has been sorely undervalued in the empirical literature of romantic love is a consideration of unconscious mental life. Though there has been a gradual movement in academic psychology to research the existence of processes, occurring outside of awareness, that influence behavior, thought and emotions, this area of study has not satisfactorily made inroads into romantic relationship investigation. I would like to broaden this research to include an understanding of the dynamic processes by which aspects of mental life are rendered unconscious as serving the function of self-regulation.

In terms of research, a move of this sort means going beyond just demonstrating that aspects of mental life occur outside of one's awareness but still remain influential. In the current academic research way of thinking, what occurs outside of one's awareness is functionally unconscious for a variety of reasons. One reason involves the role of brain regions (e.g., limbic) or functions (e.g., procedural, implicit memory) that are not directly accessible or cannot be translated into consciousness. Some, like Wilson (2002), have argued that unconscious processes developed evolutionarily for adaptive efficiency reasons. While this contention was made in reference to a descriptively unconscious mind, dynamically unconscious processes can also be thought of as serving evolutionary adaptive purposes in a broad sense.

I am suggesting that there are functions of the mind that occur outside of one's awareness both due to the nature of certain processes and also in the

service of self organizing purposes such, as affect regulation. Further, similar to the way that certain processes (like the “how to” skills of procedural memory) become unconscious for adaptively efficiency reasons, other psychological functions may become unconscious for affective regulatory reasons (which may also be adaptively efficient). In other words, because of some affective quality (intensity or otherwise) that is to some degree intolerable, aspects of one’s mental life may be pushed outside of conscious reach and rendered unconscious. A psychoanalytic conception about dynamically unconscious processes can be a useful framework of understanding how this aspect of human psychology exists on a continuum of adaptiveness. This kind of thinking, however, is under-researched and undervalued in the empirical literature on love. This current state exists even despite some of the empirical evidence, outside of the romantic love field, described in Chapter Two, that showed how aspects of reasoning are informed by affective processes that are excluded from awareness due to their intolerable nature to a person.

I think it serves the purposes of cross-discipline integration better to extend not only the academic view of unconscious as inaccessible, but even to re-characterize the psychoanalytic dynamic unconscious as defined by repression. Repression can get bogged down in psychoanalytic metapsychology that is not only difficult to research but also appeals to narrow motivational systems that I have argued are not as useful for interdisciplinary endeavors. As I discussed last chapter, while there is not a satisfying way to create a master motivational hierarchy, it is probably most agreeable (as suggested by Eagle, 1984) to adopt

a framework of linking all motives by underlying self-regulatory and self-organizing processes. This can potentially transform the idea of a dynamic unconscious into a more translatable construct for other disciplines of psychology to empirically explore with applications to romantic love.

One may argue that understanding a dynamic unconscious as a way of understanding self-regulatory processes (and more specifically affect-regulatory) may be diluting the conceptual strengths of its psychoanalytic roots. However, not only is it necessary to broaden its scope and re-interpret a characterization of the dynamic unconscious as the product of repression, but this follows certain trends in psychoanalysis as well. Aside from the focus on growing centrality in psychoanalysis on affect regulation (Fonagy et al., 2002; Jurist, 2005; Schore, 2003a, 2003b; Sugarman, 2006), this move joins earlier attempts to reformulate dynamically unconscious mental contents and properties. These efforts attempted to reformulate what was traditionally thought of as dynamically repressed to: not-me experiences dissociated from the self-system (Sullivan, 1953, 1956); incompatible split-off cognitive affective aspects of the self (Klein, 1976); disavowed, disclaimed and disowned wishes and aims (Eagle, 1984); broken or blocked referential links between subsymbolic and symbolic systems (Bucci, 1997); and unformulated experiences (Stern, 1997). Thinking of dynamically unconscious mental life in the context of self-regulation opens up avenues of viewing such regulatory processes by tracking the course symbolizing and desymbolizing processes. The latter can be conceived as

movements towards inhibited insightfulness in order to manage associated aversive affective states.

Understanding repression and associated defensive processes in the context of affect-regulation and then self-organization may also help to correct what Eagle has identified as the traditional conception of the unconscious as a “seething cauldron” (1984). He relates this to the coupling of unconscious realm of mental life with an id that is the source of primitive, unadulterated libidinal and aggressive instincts. This is certainly evidenced in versions of unconscious mental life used by psychologists as a starting point to reject in a reformulation of the unconscious as being characterized by those cognitive processes that by nature are already inaccessible (Kandel, 1999; LeDoux 1996; Wilson 2002). The departure from an id-ego model, where the former is associated with unconscious instinctual content and repressed impulses and the latter is seen as the agency of control, will allow for a broader conception of the regulatory processes.

This movement would help change the inadequate spatial metaphor of a singular kind of unconscious mental life and replace it with a more active process model with various functions and properties. One must realize that thinking about the unconscious as a place originated within psychoanalysis with Freud’s early ideas of the unconscious system being governed by the pleasure principle and primary process. Though his ideas eventually changed to extend the unconscious throughout the mental apparatus including portions of the superego and ego, the id retained many of the most primitive characteristics of the

unconscious system. The hard dichotomizing of primary and secondary processing across lines of conscious and unconscious mental functioning is an idea that is not well supported by research (Meissner, 2005). I am in general agreement with the academic psychological view that conceives of unconscious mental processes as being different, but not necessarily more primitive and archaic than conscious thought (Wilson, 2002). These differences cannot just be speculated about and observed in clinical consultation, but must be further explored and demonstrated through empirical observation.

Let me be clear, there is little value in thinking of an unconscious as a region of the mind (or brain) that is separate, more primitive, cruder, and malevolent from a conscious more rational one. The research I canvassed in Chapter Two not only mandates a rethinking of the rational processes privileged in the romantic relationship research, but also a psychoanalytic departure from rigid ego-id, conscious-unconscious, primary-secondary process divisions. Not only must we get away from spatial metaphors of unconscious and conscious mental life, but we must also move to understanding qualities of information processing as occurring on a continuum. Freud changed his views to extend the unconscious across his different agencies of the mind. In the same way, researchers must come to acknowledge that there is not one unconscious, but a range of unconscious processes (ranging across all aspects of mental functions) that cannot be singly characterized by a primitive quality.

Westen (1997) has argued that unconscious be used adjectivally rather than nominally in order to properly allow for the different functions and properties that

can be accurately characterized as unconscious. I am in fundamental agreement with him in this assertion, and in thinking that it would best serve both psychoanalysis and the psychological and brain sciences to be careful in definitively attributing properties to unconscious mental life. There is no doubt that psychoanalysis has offered the longest and most sustained study of unconscious psychology; however its clinical observations and theoretical assertions must be bounded by research evidence. The same holds for academic research evidence that neglect clinically informed psychoanalytic observations of disclaimed but operative aspects of mental functioning. If those outside psychoanalysis find it hard to give credence to such psychological operations, a mutually informing dialogue would require alternate explanations. Currently the separation between academic psychology and psychoanalysis does not allow for collaborative research activity, from hypothesis-generating to finding theoretical constructs to make sense of research data.

My review of the empirical literature in Chapters One and Two showed first how the romantic love research privileges one's conscious reasoning about love and then explained the limitations of this approach. Psychoanalytic ideas of a dynamic unconscious are able to provide a conceptual framework to understand why certain thoughts, feelings and motivations in love may be disavowed though still remain highly activated or operative in relationships. That which is psychologically disowned but still influences one's romantic life cannot just be theorized about, clinically observed and then generalized. It will take empirically-

based systematic investigations to more completely ascertain what is involved in forms of dynamic unconscious regulation.

It is far too speculative to say, for example, that that Oedipal longings for the opposite sex parent, narcissistic self-object needs, tenderness or aggressive impulses have a high likelihood to be rendered dynamically unconscious in the context of romantic relationships. What the psychoanalytic literature provides are additional ways (to those that can be derived from the empirical literature) of hypothesizing what sorts of things can and may get psychologically split-off from consciousness. However, the actual frequency of occurrence and the ways this process works are research questions that have yet to be properly posed, and answered.

As I will discuss in a later point, what gets dynamically disowned in romantic love has to be understood in the context of a whole host of factors that are pertinent to the person and romantic couple. The psychoanalytic and relationship research literatures can be used to identify some of these factors that could be important variables in romantic love, and further research can then be initiated to demonstrate under what kinds of conditions does something become affectively intolerable enough to be dynamically rendered unconscious. I do believe that the key to this level of understanding will be conceiving of such affective regulatory processes as being linked to motivational concerns. In other words, thoughts, feelings, representations and impulses that get dissociated from one's experiential self and conscious awareness in love should be understood for motivational components (and compromises between them)

Just as I do not support the idea of inherently antagonistic drives, instincts and motivations, I do not advocate characterizing unconscious mental life as inherently consisting of those aspects of people's inner life that are too repugnant to own as part of oneself. It is a research question to answer what sorts of things can be experienced and understood as affectively intolerable to one's conception of self in relationships (and in one's general self-representation) to need to be made alien from oneself, pushed outside of consciousness, while remaining reactive to activation in romantic situations. Conversely aspects of one's romantic partner may elicit an affectively aversive response that necessitates unconscious acts of distortion or denial. Here is where another important psychoanalytic concept needs to be brought into this discussion, that of defense mechanisms.

Defenses can be used to describe automatic, unconscious mental processes (that occur on a range of adaptiveness) that a person uses to regulate uncomfortable affective states (Westen, 2002; Zimmer et al., 2005). Defenses can be employed by romantic partners in a couple in the service of regulating their affective responses to aspects of the other or of their relationship. As I will describe subsequently, defensive processes lend themselves to empirical study and are a viable way of investigating the psychological work that can be done on an unconscious level to transform, modify, and deny one's inner states in relation to motivations. In the notion of something being dynamically unconscious, the dynamic aspect refers to the combination of processes (conflict, defense, compromise) that operate to render and maintain something as unconscious.

Let me explain by way of an over-simplified example. One may derive a certain level of comfort and satisfaction in a particular love relationship that resembles Lee's storgic type (quiet and companionate). This could indicate a heavily positively valenced motivation towards stability and consistency for a person that is being fulfilled in this relationship. However, this same person may have another motivation for passion and sexual excitement that she does not find in this current relationship. To the degree that the two motivations are in conflict with one another, a compromise may be made. Of course a compromise between sexual passion and stability in relationships can be made at the conscious level, specifically if one is valued to a greater degree than the other. What if this is not the case, and a relationship aim of sexual pleasure is closer in importance as stability concerns? Then, in a relationship, where one's sex life does not fulfill passionate aims, what must one do with such needs?

Such conflicts can be managed by compromise formations in which certain aspects of one's romantic motivations are rendered unconscious (through defensive processes). In order to allow one set of motivations to be experienced and possibly fulfilled in less obstructed ways, aspects of the other may need to be kept unconsciously defended against. This does not necessarily mean that a complete motivation is kept outside of one's awareness. Aspects of a motivation (affective intensity, ideational components) that prove incompatible with one's self-organization may be disowned and rendered unconscious. By the terms of this compromise, by rendering motivational components unconscious, one reduces the affective discomfort of being consciously aware of such a conflict

(i.e., simultaneous aims not being fulfilled). Not only do aspects of motivation move outside of awareness, but also the conflict between such motivations and the process of unconscious transformation itself. However, this does not eliminate such a conflict, but rather leaves it less accessible to direct introspection.

The conflict between stability and sexual passion in this hypothetical relationship may be resolved by an unconscious defense that minimizes one's conscious experience of sexual impulses. This is not to say that one will not be sexually responsive, but rather may unconsciously dampen down activities leading towards sexual aim in order to experience the achievement of the stability of her relationship. This compromise can be made at an unconscious level, so that she consciously experiences sexual dissatisfaction to a lesser degree while being able to satisfy stability needs. Of course, this is an overly simplified example that does not take into account the range of contextual factors that allow for such a situation of conflict, defense and compromise to take place. I will develop this idea further in a later point addressing the importance of contextuality.

The point is that a conception of dynamically unconscious processes allows a broad framework to consider how almost all motivational aspects of psychological romantic life can be thought of as potentially affectively intolerable—whether aims of competition, reproduction, agency, tenderness, attachment, companionship, or sexuality. In my next guiding point, I will discuss further the importance of investigating romantic love in terms of managing multiple

motivations in relationships. I am proposing that psychological organization can require a dynamically unconscious process of affect regulation, which resolves conflict by defensively closing off conscious access to certain mental processes, states and representations.²³

Implications for Research Designs:

- Research must attempt to demonstrate that psychological aspects, influencing how one loves romantically, may operate outside awareness, and to link these aspects to some level of a person's affective discomfort. A first general research point is that psychoanalytic researchers have already attempted to operationalize dynamically unconscious processes. For example, I propose Bucci's measures, which track the phases of referential process through computerized narrative analysis, are relevant to the present discussion (1997, 2002). As described in Chapter Three, her measures of Referential Activity assess the degree to which a person's language is connected to nonverbal experience including imagery, bodily and subsymbolic emotional experience. Applied to

²³ Outside the general scope of my study, but important to be mentioned is a psychoanalytic approach to the pathological forms of such defensive closings of symbolic mediation. Assuming a starting point of mental organization existing on a parallel series of somatic-symbolic, nonverbal-verbal, action-reflection continuums, one can state the aim of psychoanalytically informed treatments is the movement towards possibilities of fluid integration of such self-states (Bucci, 1997; Freedman, 1980; Sugarman, 2006). After allowing for the role of dynamically unconscious mental life, researchers will be able to investigate and demonstrate the variety of ways rigid separation of self-states impacts romantic relationships.

romantic love, it may be fruitful to measure shifts in RA as a person speaks about aspects of romantic relationships. Particularly because it can serve as a window to track dissociation from affective experience, RA could be a potentially useful measure to investigate the role of affect regulatory dynamically unconscious processes around motivational conflict and compromise. The inference here would be that affectively aversive topics related to romantic love require elevated degrees of regulation that may, in fact, lead to defensively dissociative mechanisms. RA provides an empirical measure to track the ebb and flow of symbolizing and desymbolizing activity, with the latter implicated as a dynamic means to inhibit conscious awareness of romantic mental states.

- Along these same lines, I suggest the incorporation of already established measures on defenses (e.g., Cramer, 1996; Haan, 1977; Perry and Cooper, 1989) into romantic love studies. One could investigate the relationship between measures of a person's overall defensive style or defensive maturity level to any of the existing relationship scales for commitment, satisfaction, passion, investment, etc. Further, researchers could relate these measures to reports from subjects' partners about different relationship domains. The goal here would be to assess how defensive mechanisms (the types and quality employed) influence a subject's awareness about various aspects of a romantic relationship that are reported by one's partner. This is not to say that partner confirmation is needed to grant the validity of one's self report. However, to illustrate

the role of dynamic unconscious processes, one could attempt to demonstrate that a person with a certain defensive profile denies or distorts aspects of a relationship, which are affectively aversive. For example, a subject might identify that displaying affection and behavioral indicators of caring are important in relationships (on a self-report questionnaire). While the subject may consciously report this, high levels of defensive denial (as measured through a defense measure) may not allow one to realize that this is actually desired more from romantic partners and dreaded on one's part. Through a rating form filled out by or an interview with a romantic partner, it is revealed that the subject begrudgingly displays any affection and expects it to be given in an unsolicited fashion. There is no doubt that this subject's romantic partner also has a defensive profile that is operative. However, one can take this person's report as evidence that the subject has limited awareness about a relationship domain while endorsing a certain defensive profile. One explanation for this as an example of a dynamically unconscious process is that the subject is motivated to receive care in relationships without reciprocation. It is intolerable not only for the subject to give care, but also affectively aversive to be aware of this motivation (as measurable physiologically). The subject denies the awareness of this through a form of defensive reaction formation, which allows endorsing the opposite motivation, which is displaying care. The incorporation of a defense

measure allows for the inferential explanation of an operative dynamically unconscious process.

- Attachment interviews, discussed in Chapter Two, while still developing a tradition in romantic love research could also serve as a useful model for studying affect-regulatory defensive processes. This would require the development of coding systems, similar to Main and Goldwyn's attachment security coding (1994). However, in this case I would suggest moving away from categorizing of someone's romantic attachment style. Rather, I would focus qualitative discourse analysis on discrepancies, consistencies and non-coherencies in the way a person discusses and acknowledges motivational themes. For instance, if a person answers an interview question defining romantic relationship priorities and needs, these responses should be reflected in later portions of the interview during which one is asked to specify examples of how these needs are operative in current relationships or have been in past ones. Another further point of attention are consistent relationship motivational themes that emerge in the course of an interview as being operative across relationship, but are not explicitly "claimed" by the person as a salient factor.

The discourse analysis of these interview methods would target a person's level of defensive functioning around relationships. One could operationalize defense as instances when a person exhibits a lack of awareness or consistency in the way one discusses motivational concerns

in relationships. Rather than supposing that the average research subject is psychologically minded or insightful, an interview would not require a person to articulate any kind of elaborate rendering of his psychological process in love. Discourse analysis would target contradictory statements, denials of previously reported content, and implicit descriptions of romantic motivational themes that the person does not explicitly acknowledge or identify. Researchers should allow for people to not be aware of how much a certain factor or component influences their love relationships. However, the way to establish that a factor is operative can be by probing about other relationships (not just romantic ones) in which the person has engaged. If a certain factor or theme emerges across a subject's various relationships, one can infer that despite a person's lack of acknowledgement, it plays an operative role. Another task is to provide opportunities for a person to display conscious, or especially unconscious, strong affective responses to such denied elements of relationship life. This could add evidence for the process of defensive denial for the purposes of regulating affect. This could be accomplished through priming tasks or physiological measures (for facial muscle movements or brain wave activity).

- As a more general point, the incorporation of multiple research methods is most important in demonstrating the existence of unconscious romantic processes. For example, the use of diary tasks, videotaped observation of couples engaged in a conversation or activity, physiological measures of

arousal, or the use of multiple sources of information (comparing subject's self-assessment with partner's assessment of subject) can help researchers overcome relying solely on self-report questionnaires. There is also a neglect of coding systems for projective measures specifically developed to assess unconscious and implicit motivational themes (e.g. McClelland, Koestner & Weinberger, 1989). The purpose of multi-method designs is to demonstrate the discordance that can exist between what one consciously acknowledges as constituting his psychology of romantic love, and what is evidenced through other means. For example, one can compare diary entries to information acquired through interview or self-report, or monitor (unacknowledged) affect through physiological measures of arousal and video-taped observations of nonverbal behavior.

3. Multiple motivational systems

This recommendation focuses on the interplay of a variety of motivational systems, such as I have discussed in my first two points. A multiple motivational psychology is a departure from various schools of thought. In Chapter Three, I discussed the limits of an approach that reduces the complexity of human aims to one or two motivations (see Westen, 1999). The degree to which romantic love researchers focus on motivations in relationships vary, with biological-evolutionary models doing this more explicitly. Researchers may discuss

romantic relationship dimensions, components or facets, but I have argued that many of these empirically-investigated aspects can best be understood in a motivational context.

To make this point clearer, let me go back to Chapter Two where I reviewed the different research investigations into love. Amongst the models I canvassed, one can discern motivational dimensions in romantic relationships including self-preservational, reproductive, affiliative, sexual and pleasurable arousal, attachment, care-giving, reciprocity, self-reward, homeostasis and self-consistency. Adding to this is the psychoanalytic contribution of motivations such as sexual, aggressive, self-preservational, relatedness, self-coherency, and self-esteem/agency. The psychology of romantic love should not be viewed as solely belonging to or dominated by the concerns of any single motivational system. Romantic love results from conscious and unconscious compromise solutions to a variety of aims, fears, goals, needs and wishes related to different motivational systems. This means that researchers would be wise to avoid explaining romantic relationship behavior as under the influence of a few motivational systems. The narrowness of explanatory motivations in relationship research is reflective of one's particular research or theoretical orientation values.

Expanding the range of motivations that can be used to explain behavior allows for greater freedom and potential interdisciplinary research. Rather than explaining a person's romantic relationship life in terms of attachment, evolutionary, self-consistency, Oedipally-based libidinal aims, all of these factors should be taken into account. I am proposing is that romantic relationship

research investigate the processes involved in negotiating multiple motivational systems. This means starting with the assumption that one enters into and engages in romantic relationships, as in all relationships, with a variety of motivations. Some motivations may seem less directly related to obvious relationship goals. A person's motivations impact one's romantic relationship life whether or not they originate romantically or interpersonally. All that is necessary is evidence that such motivations become activated in the relationship, origin and eventual desired goal notwithstanding.

A simple example of this would be one's motivation to feel like a responsible family member to his family of origin coming in conflict or informing his caregiving and attachment aims in his romantic relationship. One can also imagine autonomy, dominance and achievement motives influencing one's romantic relationship aims. Rather than reducing these seemingly non-romantic motivational aims to superordinate evolutionary or sexual and aggressive drives, there is more utility in another approach. This would involve researching them as aims in themselves that consciously and unconsciously affect one's romantic relationships, while not being directly romantically derived.

The danger of using a narrow motivational approach is that it forces one to reduce a range of complex relationship thoughts, feelings and behaviors to a underlying hierarchical system of goals. For example, a model's explanatory power is limited when one is forced to reduce repetitive unfaithfulness only to attachment or evolutionary reasons. While it may be empirically expeditious, it is intellectually unappealing to be constrained to use certain theories or disciplines

to understand certain relationship behaviors and not others. An integrative multi-motivational approach allows for each romantic relationship behavior to be understood complexly as a result of the interplay of a variety of possibly salient motives. Research should offer a range of motivational factors in romantic relationships, with the valence of motivations coming from research subjects. Research subjects can be presented with a range of motivational options that they will be responsible for granting both importance to and demonstrating evidence to show how such aims are negotiated, if at all.

Of course, a researcher should have the ability to limit an investigation to certain motivational confines of his choosing, but this should be done in an informed way that acknowledges the restriction of salient variables. One possible way to constrain the range of motivational possibilities is by using neuroscientific research to ground one's assumptions. For example, using Panksepp's (1998) identification of the "basic-emotion command systems" of: SEEKING, RAGE, FEAR and PANIC and related subsystems, is a way of understanding if theoretical motivational constructs can be accounted for in brain architecture. This is not to say that one should only consider motivations that have a direct identifiable neurocorrelate, since the literature on brain systems is still in its relative infancy. However, the fact that motivational systems implicated in sexual arousal, lust, social bonding, and parenting can be grounded in neuroscientific evidence supports existence of such aims. It also suggests another level of investigation to study how these systems interact and function. Advances in neuroscience should help inform and constrain the degrees of one's

theoretical speculations, just as one's conceptualizations can refine the way brain research is undertaken to map out motivational structures in the brain.

A psychoanalytic perspective can help frame how the empirically researched romantic love variables (from Chapter One) are among a host of other potentially simultaneous operative factors. The adoption of a multi-motivational perspective becomes even more important when one seriously considers the ideas of dynamically unconscious mental life and intrapsychic processing, as just previously discussed. As psychoanalytic theory has presumed and empirical research (described in Chapter Two) has demonstrated, there are limits to one's awareness of operative motivations. A focus on unconscious motivations that influence romantic relationships would then involve an investigation of how one manages various intrapsychic tensions and conflicts.

Though its origin is in a psychoanalytic model of different mental agencies, the idea of intrapsychic conflict does not necessarily need to adhere to this original formula. To apply the idea of intrapsychic conflict to research applications of romantic, one must only think of the tensions that arise, on both conscious and unconscious levels, when a number (at least two, but possibly more) motivations are simultaneously activated. This again entails a departure from classical psychoanalytic theory, as I am not starting with the assumption of inherently conflicting motivations (as does Freud's dual instinct theory). I do not believe certain universal antagonisms between motivations should be assumed, no matter how intellectually probable they may be (i.e., aggression-affiliation/attachment). A direction for research should be the investigation of

which motivations tend to cause tension for partners in a romantic relationship, how this can develop, be maintained and get resolved.

Rather than investigating the inherent properties of motivational aims and systems in love, researchers would be wise to move the brunt of their inquiry to the process by which motivational aims and systems interact in relationships. In this sense, social-cognition researcher may prove helpful with its emphasis on interpersonal processes. If I, as a researcher, am trying to understand why a couple is reporting increased relationship satisfaction across a period of eight years, I should not have to choose between social exchange explanations of equity and investment, marital observational approaches of couple interaction style around conflict, or psychoanalytic ideas about how the couple balances unconscious aggression towards each other while still remaining dependent on each other. To a certain degree all of these approaches may be useful as they all speak to different motivational currents. The goal for research should be to identify which are the salient motivations that are frequently activated within a particular romantic relationship and the process by which each member of the couple (and the two as a unit) manages these different aims.

An inherent tension for social science research exists between the particular and general, and this is, of course, the case in romantic relationships. I am not advocating investigation of salient variable configurations at the ideographic level at the sake of nomothetic applicability. Rather, I am endorsing a view that allows for a potentially broad range of motivational configurations, with a focus on the process level of how romantic partners, individually and together, manage

conflictual aims through sets of compromise. This entails a back and forth process between ideographic and nomothetic interests, concentrating first on content (which motivations become activated and come into conflict in romantic relationships) and then, and more importantly, on process (what avenues are available consciously and unconsciously to manage such aims). As I will explain further in a later proposition, a benefit of a model that includes learned, malleable motivational systems is that it allows understanding relationship aims, compromises, incompatibilities and conflicts in the context of one's culture.

In this view, it is wrong-headed to assume the primacy of certain motivations over others in romantic relationships. Allowing for unconscious aspects of romantic life, not to mention such psychoanalytic principles as multiple function, overdeterminancy, and sublimation, grants that even those motivations that are assumed to be primary are the result of compromise formations of various other component aims. For example, understanding Sternberg's prominent triangular theory of love in this way would necessitate exploring his component of commitment not just for related affiliative, reproductive or attachment needs. Commitment would also have to be understood for its potential compromise between other motivations such as excitement/arousal exploration, agency, self-coherency. These motivations are not inherently antagonistic to commitment-related motivations, but rather have the possibility to contribute to motivational conflict that manifests in romantic relationships.

Staying with this example, imagine a person for whom commitment also holds the meaning of settling down and having a family with someone who would serve

as a secure base. Say for this same person that he also has motivations to be a success in his profession that would require a lot of traveling to foreign countries and 80 hours of work a week. It is not only for logistic reasons that this person may experience some degree of conflict at some level. His anxiety around commitment in a romantic relationship could then be understood as being due to conflicts around these sets of motivations. This is only a relatively surface understanding of what this person's motivational profile is, and it is one that is maybe too easily dichotomized into work and love concerns. Remaining in the realm of simply defined relationship motivations, one could imagine this person having conflicts about romantic attachment to a person, if the rewards (social exchange models) aside from attachment are minimal, with potentially better alternative relationships available, and with the couple having an unsatisfying sex life. Entered into this equation is that the couple have a fairly healthy conflict management style, and they both consciously and unconsciously feel that the other fulfills certain emotional and self-regulatory needs that they have lacked previously in their life. With these sets of competing motivational factors some level of compromise must be reached whether a person stays in this relationship or decides to end it. At any given time in a romantic relationship, a host of motivations will not be satisfied at the same time that others are. Research into love should aspire towards demonstrating the adaptive and less adaptive intrapsychic and interpersonal processes of motivational compromise.

It is possible to think that psychological compromises associated to relationship satisfaction are those in which motivational conflict is of a tolerable

degree. Relationship behavior that can serve multiple cross-motivational purposes may also potentially lead to romantic satisfaction. For instance, one can imagine a relationship, which serves evolutionary goals (self-preservation and reproduction), while also achieving attachment, sexual, care-giving, reciprocal reward receiving and self-continuity. In this same relationship, a person can feel that novelty-seeking/exploration and aspects of his more powerful self do not get a chance to be expressed. For this person, the former set may prove to outweigh the latter and lead to a series of compromise solutions. However, this may only last for a certain amount of time, before the person becomes dissatisfied and seeks to achieve agency goals in the context of a relationship that does not allow for it. At this point, the compromise terms must be re-negotiated if the relationship is to continue proving satisfying.

Obviously, other factors aside from the content of current motivations involved are important to consider here, including the history and development of one's motivational life, personality structure, and a range of situational variables (length of relationship, one's relationship history, whether the couple has children, availability of alternatives, etc.). As psychoanalysis teaches, motivational conflicts occur not only because of intrapsychic, relationship/interpersonal, or cultural factors, but because of the interplay of all three (not to mention other dimensions that influence psychological life).

I must take this opportunity to include one sub-recommendation within this larger one. Though I have mentioned it as a focus of both psychological and psychoanalytic models of romantic love motivations, let me also make the plea

for a more rigorous study of sexuality as a motivational force in romantic love. In Chapter One, sexuality was featured as: a part of various researchers' passionate love construct (Hatfield, Lee); one of Fisher's tripartite motivational systems (lust); as a component of Sternberg's triangular component of passion; as a primary evolutionarily programmed behavioral system within Buss' work; and as a main motivational system for attachment researchers alongside care-giving and attachment. However, in all of these models and throughout the literature, it was the least developed on a psychological level.

As some of these researchers have noted, the underdevelopment of a psychological theory of sexuality (Fraley & Shaver, 2000) has ramifications for romantic love models. It is often treated at the behavioral level or in regards to physiological arousal, rather than also including the psychological dimensions of sexuality as a motivating force and component of romantic relationship life. Rather than just measuring how one values and has sex, research needs to focus on how sex is psychologically registered, represented and organized. Sequestering sexuality off to the "passionate" beginning stages of romantic relationship does a disservice to a thorough understanding of romantic life. This implicitly positions sexuality as an example of a romantic compromise one makes, as other presumably more stable, aspects of romantic life emerge and become primary (attachment, commitment, care-giving).

While sexuality may be a difficult area to research due to problems finding the appropriate means to solicit participants' private reflections and attitudes about the subject (Hatfield & Rapson, 1996), one may wonder whether methodological

issues are responsible for the current underdeveloped state of the research. Looking at the psychoanalytic literature, it is interesting that despite its roots in Freudian theories of psycho-sexuality, some have noticed a similar trend in a gradual de-emphasis on sexuality (Fonagy, 2006; Green, 1995). These writers have asserted the elevation of relational and interpersonal factors at the expense of more traditional concerns with the embodied mental life, which includes an understanding of the bodily roots of psychological experience.

This minimization or neglect of psychological dimensions of erotic life serves as a curious example of the compromises made at a scholarly level (perhaps more reflecting American cultural biases) in the study of romantic love relations. Of the various motivational aims that should be included in all researchers' investigation of romantic relationship conflict and compromise, psycho-sexuality deserves inclusion and exploration. As opposed to the prominent academic treatment of sex as primarily a means for reproduction captured in evolutionary accounts of relationships, the study of romantic love could use a reinvigoration of the psychoanalytic coupling of the reproductive and pleasurable aspects of sexuality.

The range of motivations that come to bear on one's romantic relationship will have degrees of connection to what can be considered relationship aims. The empirical study of romantic love has concerned itself with identifying various factors (which can be conceived as motivational) that are salient in romantic relationships. However, I have argued that it inadvisable (not to mention difficult) to separate "relationship" motivations from a person's "individual" motivations.

With an understanding of multiple motivational systems, when one is in a romantic relationship, or even when one is not, research should consider a person's motivations in total. It should be a research question to investigate how one negotiates a whole range of motivations in a romantic love context.

Implications for Research Designs:

- There are already current research models that study motivations by investigating people's representations of ideal standards (and discrepancies) in regards to self-other representations in intimate relationships (e.g., Overall, Fletcher, & Simpson, 2006; Simpson, Fletcher & Campbell, 2001). In addition, Sternberg (1988) measures a person's ideal conception of the levels of commitment, intimacy and passion in romantic relationships to demonstrate discrepancies between actual and ideal relationship representations. I am proposing that romantic relationship research continue to integrate what has been learned about self-representation discrepancy processes (Higgins, 1990; Strauman, 1992). As a suggestion for future research, an area of study could focus specifically on eliciting open-ended descriptions of a person's ideal prototype of self, romantic other, self in a romantic relationship and romantic couple.

Some researchers (Fehr, 1988; Aron & Westbay, 1996) have already applied a prototype perspective (Rosch, 1975) to studying romantic love. This approach shifts the emphasis to how a person conceptualizes and

understands which characteristics describe love better than others. A more open-ended interview approach could further examine romantic relationship descriptions for ideal prototypes that influence one's experience in love. These descriptions can be coded for certain themes that seem reflective of motivational aims. Further "actual" descriptions should also be collected, along with a person's understanding of how this has changed across time (e.g., ideal romantic other of five years ago).

The method may assess a person's ideals across various self-other-romantic couple categories (which can serve as a proxy for motivations). Aside from assessing the discrepancy between actual and ideal representations, motivational changes across time can be demonstrated. This type of research would combine methods of qualitative semi-structured interviewing and self-report ratings. Subjects can be asked to describe various past relationships and rate them for how they were able to achieve the ideals/ motivations they generated. A potential finding from such research would be information about how aware a person is of what motivations they have in romantic relationships, and in general, how they go about seeking them (what kinds of relationships do they get into, do they match motivational aims in this subject's view).

- As I have explained, there are various romantic relationship models that reduce love to its components. These components should be transformed to motivational variables and given to a person to rate how they evaluate the importance of such aspects of their current relationship, and one or

two specific past romantic relationships. The question would have to be posed in terms of importance of relationship components, rather than how much the relationship provided such aspects. For example, a grouping of relationship components transformed into motivational aims could include: commitment, intimacy, passion, attachment security, sex drive, attraction, fairness, self-consistency, self-esteem, mate-retention, care-giving, reproduction/family-building, resource gathering, companionship, etc. Obviously these terms could be renamed, offered as a set of statements or as a description. For example, resource-gathering could be defined as a relationship motivation to find a relationship that has potential to provide financial or material security in the future. To fully accord with my multi-motivational view, I would also suggest having subjects rate a group of motivations that may not seem directly related to relationships but may still be operative. These could include achievement, power, mastery, independence, self-coherency, etc. Subjects can also be asked to generate what they would consider their salient motivational factors, if not provided. After filling out such questionnaires, subjects can then rate past and present relationships for satisfaction, happiness, and achievement of relationship/motivational goals. A component of this design would be to study how these ratings may change as a person gets older and has different motivational experiences and successes. This rating process could then include a longitudinal component of following people over a number of years. A semi-structured interview could also be used to

directly address how someone discusses and views potential overlaps and conflicts between relationship motives, and methods of achieving resolution.

The point of this research, which would require a self-report questionnaire method, would be to assess how important empirically-generated constructs in romantic love are to people's everyday psychology of romantic relationships. Also, this type of research could demonstrate more motivational factors than the two or three that most love models propose. Further, it may be that the romantic motivations most frequently identified do not work in the proposed ways. For instance, if a subject identifies intimacy as the most important factor in a current romantic relationship, it should be looked at in relation to where other motivational aims rank in importance—leading to information about compromise. Intimacy should not be thought of as the most important motivating factor, but in context of other motivations and what conflict and compromises might have occurred. Seeing how people rate motivations achievement in relationships would of course also provide information at the nomothetic level in terms of the various motivational conflict and compromise patterns would be evidenced.

- Aside from ideals, relationship motives can be investigated on the level of “wishes,” “fantasies,” and “fears.” The whole realm of relationship fantasies, wishes and fears has not been thoroughly mined in psychology. In this way, the discussion can be steered towards a study of motivations

either towards a desired state, self-representation, or relationship, or away from a feared/dreaded state, self-representation or relationship. I envision a semi-structured interview format that asks questions about a person's relationship fantasies, fears and wishes. Questions could include distinguishing wishes and fears that are based on the future repetition of an event that actually occurred. It would also be important to explore what a person does to manage their wishes and fears. What are the relationship behaviors that result from their wishes and fears? If a person dreads abandonment, does this person then compensate by clinging behavior or avoidance of relationships? Alternatively, due to the private nature of this area, I can imagine a diary/journal method being useful. It is also an area of the burgeoning field of social neuroscience and fMRI research that has not been explored (at the time of this writing). I imagine the utility of mapping the neurocorrelates of the brain as a person is in a wishful state, feared state and fantasizing, both in connection to relationships and generally speaking. Physiological measures of arousal during interviews would also be helpful in tracking the affective quality attached to such relationship fantasies, fears and wishes. Framing sexuality in the context of fantasies, wishes and fears may also be an excellent avenue to explore these motivations in relationships, which has been researched mainly in behavioral ways.

This poses the motivational question in a different light, as one can understand someone's identification of companionship as an organizing

motivation in relationships as a desire for affiliation or as a dreaded avoidance of isolation or solitude. Soliciting relationship fears and wishes may be the best approach to accessing the complex conscious and unconscious interplay that leads to a motivational conflict and compromise. Through semi-structured interviewing, people can talk about relationship wishes and what has stood in the way of their pursuit.

- Finally, I have also discussed the continued need for theoretical speculation to be constrained by empirical observation, and vice versa. In this spirit, it could be fruitful for future research to continue to explore how motivational systems interact with each other on the neurochemical level of brain processes. Some of Fisher's work (2004), as well as Bartels and Zeki (2000, 2004), have already begun to investigate the interplay of various proposed brain systems (i.e., those associated with attachment, sexuality, mentalizing etc.). However in reviewing the early conclusions from this research, I propose that the focus be moved from finding the inherent antagonisms between various systems and allow for possibilities of shifting conflicts and compromises. While I am not arguing against such findings as the proposed biochemical separability of attachment (oxytocin) and sexuality (testosterone) systems, I am questioning whether this mutual antagonism between motivational systems is best conceived of as statically as these early findings report. While my suggestion may need to await certain technological advances in brain mapping techniques, it would seem necessary to advance to a stage where researchers could

study the neural correlates of the “conflicted” mind in love. More important than learning how the brain responds when aroused with certain romantic stimuli, is investigating what shapes these brain responses. In other words, one should wonder, what leads certain relationship stimuli to activate and inhibit particular brain responses, how malleable is this process, and how disconnected it is from consciousness.

4. Contextuality²⁴

This last guiding point I will offer has, in some ways, been implicit throughout the three preceding ones. It involves the necessity of investigating what I will term contextualizing factors. In my three previous recommendations, I have been arguing to ground romantic love relations, and the research already accumulated on this topic, in the context of multiple motivational systems, dynamically unconscious processes and object relations.

I am now proposing the principle that motivations within romantic love have to be situated as occurring simultaneously in various identity contexts. I am encouraging something further than acknowledging the setting and circumstances that surround a romantic relationship. Similar to how I discussed multiple motivational systems, I do not think it is useful (from a research

²⁴ I share a related general spirit that has been articulated by Stolorow and Atwood (1992) and colleagues (Stolorow, Atwood & Orange, 2002) in publications on phenomenological intersubjective contextualism. However, I am not asserting any direct adherence to their model of clinical understanding.

respective) to assign which identity contexts are important. Part of my point is that this should actually be a research question. Further, it is the responsibility of researchers to not just acknowledge and identify such identity contexts, but investigate how these influence aspects of romantic relationship psychology.

There will, of course, be reasons to study one set of factors within the context of another (i.e., social exchange processes in the context of couples who report low sexual satisfaction in their relationships). However, the bi-directional shifting influence of contextually motivating factors should remain an open research question. This, of course, should not be a surprising thought to empirical researchers doing correlational work, as correlation does not equal causality and the directional influence of variables is always an open question requiring conceptual grounding. Thus even in my proposal for an interest in investigating the object relations level of romantic love, a principle of contextuality considered with a multiple motivational systems view would allow for evolutionary concerns to envelop object relations motivations and vice versa. As I discussed earlier, my framework for studying love does not assume a superordinate motivational system, and in fact allows for shifting motivational concerns. It is a research question to investigate which motivational concerns or contextual factors are bearing on one's romantic relationship at any given time or in a more persistent way.

Let me illustrate how one needs to think about adding rings to the interlocking structure of concentric circles that should be the contextualizing study or romantic love. For example, evolutionary and personality factors have been

used to explain motivations in love relationships. In a sense, one can say that personality factors can be understood in the context of evolutionary concerns about reproduction and self-preservation (and vice versa). Further, Sternberg's passion, intimacy and commitment variables in love can be studied in the context of attachment, just as the role of sexuality can be understood in the context of neurobiological processes. The term "context" suggests that something is occurring within a surrounding factor or set of factors. I think it is important that researchers resist the temptation to assign static positions to various contextual identities. The factors involved in romantic love relationships should be investigated for their potentially shifting importance throughout the course of a person's life.

The topic of shifting motivational concerns brings up one important area for contextual exploration, that of a temporal quality for romantic relationships. This is one contextual area that I propose should be incorporated into any romantic love model. A conceptualizing principle attributes a much-needed quality of dynamism to the study of one's romantic psychological life. One's motivational profile includes, not only, the persistence of certain motivational aims but also the changes and adaptations that take place. The role of one's self-consistency or reproductive objectives may surely be different at age 20 than at age 50. There are motivational directives that seem to dominate a person's psychological life and drive them towards or away from certain romantic relationships. It is a research question to discover the terms of motivational persistence and flux in the context of development and lifespan issues.

Though I also discussed the importance of conceptualizing motivations in a developmental context in my discussion of object relations, I can by no means assert that psychoanalytic perspectives have espoused the spirit of contextualization that I am advocating here. Notable areas of regrettable neglect throughout psychoanalysis have been in the area of gender, queer studies and cross-cultural research. Advances have occurred to improve the research scholarship of the complex interplay of gender identity, sexual identities and orientations, and ethnic-cultural factors in romantic love and interpersonal relations. However, both the psychoanalytic literature and romantic love empirical literature still have deficits in understanding the contextual identities people assume that require urgent attention and remedying.

For example, a good portion of cross-cultural studies on the subject of sexuality and love approach the topic with the goal of identifying similarities and differences between cultures, relationship norms within cultures, and societal factors of influence (e.g., Doherty et al., 1994; Goodwin & Findlay, 1997; Hatfield & Rapson, 1996; Ingersoll-Dayton, et al., 1996; Shibazaki & Brennan, 1998). Some extract one supposed construct of a culture (e.g., Japanese interdependence, Asian individualism-collectivism) and look for its ability to predict certain types of relationship styles. This is a beginning attempt to contextualize how culture impacts romantic love. It is far too static and does not adequately address the complex interactions of individuals living in a certain society with a particular cultural climate. It imposes categories of relationship

styles and cultural variables from without rather than attempting to gauge this from within.

Staying with the example of ethno-cultural factors, I would propose a research framework that allows for identifiable salient variables in love relationships to be contextualized within cultural identities. This would mean attempting to understand how people's motivations in love develop in a way that is culturally situated and derived. This approach would tap people's ideas on determining factors for romantic relationships within their particular identified culture. I would recommend a change from the usual practice of researchers defining which cultural variable needs to be studied and then supplying the relationship factor it may be most related to. Instead, I would propose a first step of drawing on subjects' perceptions of which cultural aspects most affect certain parts of their relationship lives.

So while there was some merit in a study that investigated the Chinese notion of yuan ("relational fatalism") in relation to Lee's love styles, the terms of this investigation were limited from the start (Goodwin & Findlay, 1997). The alternate goal I am suggesting would be to explore a person's perspective on where they stand in relation to dominant cultural romantic values and variables in an open ended fashion. Rather than beginning with the premise of how yuan functions in romantic relationships, I would suggest that the research begin with exploring where yuan is situated in the range of Chinese cultural variables that may influence love relationships. In other words, the research question before investigating the effects of yuan on love relationships, should have been whether

and how much yuan impacts people's love relationships as opposed to other Chinese cultural variables.

I have been using the example of culture as defined by ethnicity to discuss my ideas of contextuality in romantic love research. However aside from gender, sexual identifications and orientations, I can imagine contextual identities related to class and religion as viably important spheres of influence also deserving attention. Of course, I do not mean to equate one's religion with one's gender identity, nor one's sexual orientation. Research into each of these contextual factors would have to find the relevant investigative dimensions that would provide a complex enough understanding of the conscious and unconscious intrapsychic and interpersonal processes involved.

The thrust of my principle of contextuality is that romantic love relationships cannot be studied in a vacuum of ideal or abstract categories or variables. Romantic love relationships are not thought experiments but are embodied experiences that occur on a phenomenologically, pragmatically, worldly plane. Evolutionary, attachment, intimacy, passion, commitment, sexuality, attraction, equity, investment, companionate, self-consistency, object relations concerns occur in shifting configurations of concentric circles of contextual influence. I am advocating including important factors such as gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion and class to any consideration of salient variables in love relationships—joining personality and biological levels of inquiry. It should be a research priority to understand how to investigate these variables of

importance and to demonstrate how they function simultaneously in the nature, course and determinants of romantic love.

Contextuality must be considered as a guiding principle in order to integrate all current and future investigative levels of salience in romantic love relationships. In other words, one's self-reported elevated need for merger experiences in romantic love must be then understood in relation to one's personality, family experience, gender identity, sexual orientation, object relations concerns, ethnic heritage, etc. I am not promoting an endlessly exhaustive (and obsessive) approach to studying every possible variable that could have any meaningful and less meaningful impact on how and who one loves. I am suggesting the expansion of such variables to include dimensions of experience and influence that contribute to one's psychology of romantic relationships. It is a research, rather than just a conceptual, question, to understand and demonstrate how these elements interact and function in a person's psychology of romantic love.

In many ways, what I am broadly advocating concerns content and process domains that require exploration through research. Despite my comments about the neglect that psychoanalysis has paid to rigorously considering cultural and other contextual identities, a psychoanalytic perspective can aid in contextualizing romantic love. It can do so by providing avenues of thinking about a person's subjective unconscious and conscious processes of appraisal, evaluation and interpretation of relevant contextual factors. The first step of applying the principle of contextuality to romantic love research is by expanding

the content domains of investigation. The second step includes an investigation of the psychological processes related to how one manages simultaneously occurring motives occurring within spheres of contextual influence. This area of research involves an understanding of how certain motivations and contextual factors become more psychologically invested than others.

To describe this further, there is no doubt that romantic relationships and motivations sought within can be looked at within a range of contextual factors. Psychological research should focus on an understanding of the process by which certain contextual spheres of influence take on a greater meaning for people and influence their motivations in romantic relationships more than others. This level of investigation involves unpacking, for instance, how one consciously and unconsciously develops and manages romantic motivations that may run contrary to dominant cultural beliefs. This kind of inquiry would explore how one negotiates motivational conflict and compromise when the incompatibility is experienced at the level of one's relation to one's cultural context, as well as intrapsychically.

For instance, one can imagine a woman who struggles with first-time sexual feelings in an intimate relationship with another woman in a contextual setting of a culture that disapproves of homosexual relationships. This woman's attachment and sexual aims for this other woman may then come in conflict with her culture's dominant prohibitive attitudes towards homosexuality. However, factored into the romantic math of this equation is this woman's more unconscious motivation for self-consistency and predictability, which also conflict

with her growing sexual feelings for this other woman. Let us now take into account that this first woman is married and though she did not want to have children, had them to please reproductive aims of her husband. However, she is understood and feels more agentively powerful with this woman she is attracted to than ever before. I could add more conflicting motivational factors into this picture. However, it is important to understand that she may report her culture's prohibition against sexual feelings for another woman and her responsibility to her children as her main motivations to not pursue this extra-marital relationship. However what does not get reported, and what research must find a way for ascertaining, is the role of her own unconscious motivations for self-consistency and regularity that may have driven the compromise between such competing motivational aims. By this example I am not trying to paint a portrait of cultural factors as only being recruited to serve as conscious reasons for dynamically unconscious compromises (though this can be the case). The point of this example was to illustrate the possibilities of such complex motivational configurations that must all be considered as salient contextual variables.

Returning to a point I made before, aims that are played out in romantic relationships can be understood as occur within a developmental context. Research should conceive continuity and discontinuity of motivational conflict and compromise, occurring at conscious and unconscious levels in relation to under what conditions these aims may change across time. Previously experienced motivational conflicts can resolve for a variety of factors including changes in physiology, life events, the achievement of an aim, or the shifting of

subjective valuing of an aim. A psychoanalytic perspective teaches that motivational conflicts and compromises are not to be thought of as static constructs but rather are consistently kept operative on some level of mental life.

Psychologically forged compromises require some level of intrapsychic attention to accommodate changes with one's satisfaction with such compromises that can be the result of shifting contextual factors. This then necessitates rearranging self-other representational dyads within a couple. A psychoanalytic perspective contextualizes romantic love motivations in terms of a tension between continued development through adulthood in relation to life events (Levinson, 1978) and core aspects of psychic structure and functions. This speaks to the inherent tension between motivational continuities and discontinuities, as there are limits to the compromise formations that one can make as one grows older and grows more rigid in conscious and unconscious domains of information-processing. Certain factors external to an individual or romantic couple (e.g., changes in social mobility, the addition of children) may require a shifting of psychological priorities that limit opportunities to seek out motivational aims in relationships or lessen the affective loading of conflicts.

Research will be of assistance in first investigating which contextual factors are identifiable as influential in one's romantic life, and at what level of awareness. Secondly, it will be important to focus on the psychological processes involved in one's organization of motivations across various identity contexts. This depends on whether a person situates motivations in the context of a particular relationship, ethnic culture, gender identity, class distinction,

sexual orientation, religious set of beliefs, etc. The multiple combinations of salience (e.g., the intersection of class and race as a contextual surround in love) and lifespan changes are also other levels of complexity that need empirical exploration. In espousing a principle of contextuality, I am clearly advocating a stance towards complexity, to even a degree of over-complexity for empirical research. I feel aspirations of this type are needed to approach a topic such as romantic love.

Implications for Research Designs:

- The principle of contextuality applied to the future direction of research should have a focus of investigating how people arrive at relationship attitudes. In many ways, some previous research suggestions implicitly included a principle of contextuality, including researching one's motivations in romantic relationships in the context of other competing motivations. Another way of doing this would be to accompany existing romantic love measures with a semi-structured interview to explore if self-reported relationship attitudes and feelings indicate the kinds of romantic processes the researchers intended them to study. This would mean asking research subjects how they understand certain relationship constructs that the self-report questionnaires feature. For example, it would be useful to get information about how individuals define intimacy, support, trust, attraction, excitement, anxiety, avoidance, etc., in their own subjective way. It is not enough to have a research result that suggests

that attraction is important. Researchers should aim to know how subjects' understand the nature of attraction, its roots, and how it works. For example, one can imagine a scenario in which a person endorses the importance of physical attraction in relationships, but through the course of a follow-up probing interview he reveals more. He is attracted to extremely physically attractive women (in an "objective" sense), but when this leads to relationships, he finds himself ultimately unsatisfied. What if he described a repetitive process of privileging superficial features as the expense of (or a defense against) intimacy? How then would this make one think or re-think about the value of physical attraction, or any other relationship characteristic (stability, companionate feelings, etc.), that is not explored for how it functions in a romance? The purpose of this research would be finding the middle ground between personal definition and general meaning—investigating how general constructs are invested with meanings that are contextually determined by factors.

- The next step in this sort of research could then be constructing self-report measures to have subjects' rank a range of contextual factors for level of influence for particular relationship attitudes, feelings, behavior.

Researchers could either have subjects rank such contextual factors over time, or through a forced-choice model have them select which contextual factors exhibited influence at different points in their lives. This area of research would involve an understanding of how certain motivations and contextual factors evolve and become more psychologically valenced than

others. Conflicts between motivations and contextual factors, and between contextual factors themselves also are viable areas of research interest. One could imagine a design of pairing questions currently found on many relationship self-report measures about sexuality with inquiries about what one attributes such sexual attitudes/behaviors to (family, culture, religion, etc.).

- Instead of plainly using forced-choice questionnaires, in which subjects are made to choose which descriptive paragraph reflects some aspect of their relationship functioning, researchers could add a free-writing component. This component would allow for people to supply their reasoning for selecting a certain item as being reflective of them. This would provide information about contextual influences, which could further be used to generate contextual variables for future research. Further, a free-writing section would allow research subjects to express the opinion that none of the choices adequately reflects them in romantic relationship and explain why. For example, how would one explain, from an evolutionary perspective, a response in which a woman indicates that she is not motivated to ever have children— that, in fact, procreation is not important, nor is monogamy in relationships? Would one have to look to other evolutionary explanations for this response or consider that it is evidence contrary to evolutionary hypotheses? By allowing subjects opportunities in research to indicate what contextual factors influence their

response (e.g., dismissive attachment style), researchers can gather more direct information about romantic relationship psychology.

- Probably the most promising and already established method of applying a principle of contextuality to the future research of romantic love is the use of single-case study methods. As touched on previously, since Freud's work on hysteria (1905a), the case study method has been an important method for observing complex processes of the mind. A textured and multi-leveled a phenomenon like romantic love requires an approach of inquiry that captures how various identity contexts impact one's relationships. A case study approach allows for one to witness and document the most directly accessible manifestations of the interplay between conscious and unconscious psychological functions.

As psychoanalysis has taught, much about a person's private psychological life can be best made apparent through intensive case studies. This is the situation, when these in-depth reports are derived from individual psychotherapeutic treatments (where one may talk freely about one's romantic life), couples' sessions (where partners demonstrate their processes of making sense of their romantic other), and even detailed study of multiple pieces of information provided by an individual (structured interview, self-report questionnaire, projective testing, videotaped observation, life history data, etc.). To remedy the empirical literature's reliance on self-report data, which assumes the accessibility of mental states and accuracy in self-reporting, it is necessary to study an

individual's psychology of love via a method that allows, as much as is possible, for the expression of a person's natural mental proclivities. A case study method permits investigators of romantic love's unconscious workings to access a fuller range of how one feels and thinks about love unfettered by the constriction of forced-choice pre-designed questions currently utilized in self-report studies.

There is a place for the coupling of single-case designs and quantitative procedures with a general, as opposed to only a clinical, population (Kazdin & Tuma, 1982). Many of my research suggestions throughout this chapter have already implicitly endorsed a modified case study approach. The combining of existing and modified self-report questionnaires with semi-structured interviews, videotaped sessions, and other techniques can provide an in-depth method of studying the romantic lives of individual research participants culled from a larger sample. I further envision an exploration of motivational aims, conflicts and compromises in one's relationship history through the kind of qualitative interviewing I have already proposed throughout this chapter. Single case reports of romantic partners, followed throughout points in their relationship from the inception, could also provide valuable insights. Through a single-case format one can descriptively analyze patterns of object relations themes and dynamically unconscious defensive processes that would otherwise be obscured on a self-report measure. I do follow Westen's recommendation that the intensive study of individual cases,

selected at random from a larger database of research subjects, is most useful at “either the beginning or end of a series of studies that employ quantitative methods with larger samples” (2002, p. 42). The complexity and richness that a case study method provides can most benefit empirical researchers at the earliest stages of hypothesis generation or to further analyze and clarify the meaning of questionnaire-generated findings, specifically in regards to the various layers of contextual influence.

A concluding note on relationship rationality

In this dissertation I have argued that the empirical research of romantic love's psychology focuses on conscious mental processes. The privileging of these aspects of psychological life has resulted in models of relationship reasoning that adhere to a kind of Enlightenment-period rationality. By this I simply mean that approaches to studying romantic love reduce it to certain absolute components, which can be arrived at through conscious introspection and reasoning. Further, this literature on romantic relationships suggests that people are generally aware of their motivations and experiences in love. Since people are assumed to be accurate observers and reporters of their relationship objectives, romantic love research models take a more rational form than may exist in everyday life.

This narrow view of the psychology of love is curious as there have been advances within empirical social science research regarding the existence of unconscious information processing. This research on unconscious processes has expanded ways of thinking about how people "actually" reason, and has been applied to economic theory in notions of bounded rationality and satisficing. Efforts like these have led to alternative ways of understanding how the reasoning of everyday life departs from formal logical processes and includes an integration of conscious and unconscious cognitive-affective biases. However, these revised models of reasoning have not been employed in the investigation into the kind of rationality featured in love.

To address this deficit in the empirical literature on love, I have called for a renewed interest in psychoanalytic models of the mind. Specifically, I have advocated a way of broadly using psychoanalytic principles to create a framework to help integrate existing models of love, as well as guide future research investigations. This resulted in my proposal of four conceptual guiding points, accompanied by suggested research applications.

I first endorsed an object relations framework to approach romantic relationship investigations. Grounding research in object relations conceptualizations offers a way of studying the interpretation, internalization and management of relationship aspects on a level of self-other representations in a motivational context. The second point offered an understanding of unconscious processes in love as serving dynamic affect regulatory purposes. I suggested that associated aversive affect might render many of the motivational conflicts and compromise solutions in love to become rendered at least partially outside awareness. In this scheme, romantic mental states are not originally unconscious but are transformed in the service of maintaining the organization and regulation of the psychological self. I then argued for a multi-motivational view in which researchers would investigate romantic love as involving the negotiation of simultaneously occurring aims (that at times conflict). Researchers can derive salient motivational aims from both the existing psychoanalytic and empirical literature on love. My final point supported a principle of contextuality that emphasized an exploration of the factors of shifting influence that impact one's motivations and experiences in romantic relationships. This somewhat

broad principle is meant to remedy the neglect of diverse developmental, cultural and identity issues in studying how one subjectively forms, implements, maintains and adapts a psychology of love relations.

My efforts have targeted the variety of problems currently found in the academic empirical study of love. I have attempted to present a psychoanalytic psychological approach to relationship research, that while addressing issues of underlying process and mechanisms, analyzes love at the level of reasons, motives and meanings. My work has meant to expand and complicate the current academic psychological treatment of romantic relationship research. I have used the psychoanalytic literature to support a position that teaches that human reasoning is constituted by the interplay between conscious and unconscious processes. Based on this model of the mind, people's acknowledged reasons for loving will always be partial and incomplete. This leads to a different kind of relationship rationality than is currently assumed in the research literature.

Reasoning in love involves the consideration of multiple motivations that may or may not be consciously evident due to the processes of psychological compromise formation. Unconscious mechanisms manage aversive affective states that are related to motivational conflicts and tensions in love relationships. This being the case, more creative and complicated research methods and designs are needed to access and demonstrate the influence of factors outside people's romantic awareness. Further, an expanded view of relationship

reasoning is required to properly investigate the range of cognitive-affective-bodily-sensory experiences that love demands.

The way two lovers psychologically experience and conceive of each other is subject to varieties of motivational pushes and pulls. People's reasons for loving each other will have both articulatable and unarticulatable components. The latter may reflect aspects of one's psychological life rendered unconscious to maintain psychic organization. These disowned bits of one's motivational life may then manifest (in influence) in relationship behaviors or subsymbolic mental life that are beyond the direct grasp of verbal expression or conscious awareness. The conscious aspects of romantic love, just like the conscious reasons for one why loves, are constrained by one's unconscious mental life leading to a bounded rationality of romantic love. Romantic partners' capacity to act reasonably towards each other depends on their individual and joint abilities to manage unconscious dimensions of their relationship. In other words, one's conscious reasons in love are held in check by those aspects of mind that remain operative though beyond direct introspection.

This idea of a bounded rationality of romantic love needs further elaborating to be useful. The empirical romantic relationship research assumes that people have the capacity to introspect about themselves in a more complete way than seems accurate. It assumes that people not only know what influences love relationships, both at a general and at a personal level, but further, that people would know how to act to then pursue and maintain varieties of valued relationships. This is where psychoanalytic theory, being informed by clinical

practice, approaches the subject differently. Psychoanalysis, by taking as its premise a model of mental life that is only partially available to introspection, assumes inherent limits to rationality. With this way of understanding psychological life, gaps in one's romantic reasoning occur on a continuum of adaptiveness. In my reading of psychoanalysis, it does not teach that people aim to or even are capable of fully knowing the reasons behind their romantic pursuits in any sort of accurate way. People aim for accurate enough knowledge of their romantic reasoning that will allow them to minimize cognitive-affective conflict between motivations using compromises accomplished through conscious and unconscious means.

The kind of multidisciplinary research approach I am advocating could expand the meaning of generally held relationship ideals, such as mutuality or reciprocity. Since a psychoanalytic psychology would assume only partial awareness of oneself in love, this would also have to extend to one's knowledge of the mind of one's loved other. A revised understanding of relationship mutuality would go beyond the shared equitable qualities of two persons' romantic relation, and towards the recognition of each others' rights to have motivations in love that are similar, different, private, overlapping, conflicting, unformulated (Stern, 1997) and unthought but known (Bollas, 1987). I believe that the psychological processes that facilitate and undergird the kind of reciprocity that allows lovers to hold each others' needs as important as their own is a research question worth investigating.

As I conclude, let me take a moment to discuss how psychoanalysis' clinical foundations shed another needed light on the topic of romantic understanding in love. If the psychology of romantic love, as depicted in the empirical literature, is based on an understanding of mind as rational, then psychoanalysis represents an alternative view of the mind only as rational as it is irrational. As Jurist recently stated, "this does not mean that it is impossible to be rational, but it does suggest that rationality cannot prevail over irrationality..." and further "...psychoanalysis must be able to describe how irrational and rational forces intermingle and coexist" (2005). As primarily a clinical theory, psychoanalysts have based most of their theoretical suppositions on observations made in consulting rooms. Here, clinicians have witnessed patient displays and accounts of love realized, repudiated and relinquished. Often a patient's engagement in therapy may be to specifically begin the process of reorganization due to a romantic love, past, present or future. One can think of the position of the analyst as being on the side of helping the patient's irrationality and rationality seem approachable, tolerable and understandable. Psychoanalysis and psychological research share a joint responsibility to foster the identification, evaluation, appraisal, and acknowledgment of unconscious romantic life. Only after achieving these steps can a person who is troubled in relationships be open to the reinterpretation of mental states in love that allows for tolerance, acceptance, or change. It is under these conditions, both within and outside of treatment, that a person is in the best position to live a romantic life with relative freedom and flexibility.

The study of the embodied mind in love, from the psychoanalytic perspective I am carving out, should examine the conditions that lead to divisions and harmonies between what is psychologically owned and disowned, claimed and disclaimed, integrated and dissociated, deemed personal or impersonal (Eagle, 1984). The inclusion of the psychoanalytic perspective to the psychology of romantic relationships allows for the making sense of what is otherwise distanced, felt to be outside one's self-experience, judged irrational or only lived unconsciously.

The clinical foundation of psychoanalysis provides a way of studying romantic relationships on a continuum of adaptive health understood in people's unique subjective contexts. For psychoanalysis, the question extends from whether a relationship is satisfactory or unsatisfactory (and on which factors this should be based), to the array of intrapsychic motivational compromises people employ to achieve relationship outcomes. These compromises are understandable and researchable for their terms (advantages and disadvantages), affective qualities, and the psychological processes entailed to maintain them.

Psychoanalytic notions of the mind allow one to treat the irrationality of relationships as an equally important subject for research as one's conscious reasonings in and for love. In many respects, one may reframe the rationality of love as bound inextricably to the negotiation of the irrational. Along with adopting the psychoanalytic spirit to forge ways of integrating what is conscious and unconscious, romantic relationship research needs a commitment to the bridging of what is rational and irrational. My articulation of a framework to conduct

romantic relationship research within embodies this spirit of opening up access to certain psychological functions previously disavowed in the empirical literature.

My aim in this present work has been to help lay the groundwork for the rigorous kind of conceptualization, data gathering and research that needs to be done.

My psychoanalytic psychological approach to conceptualizing and researching romantic love is one that espouses to bridge the, at times, too rigid distinctions between conscious and unconscious, cognition and emotion, mind and body, and rational and irrational. It is a way of researching love as both forwards and backwards looking, a multi-motivational phenomenon that occurs simultaneously on dynamically different mental levels, involving a multitude of people beyond the partners involved across a variety of ever-shifting identity contexts. It is inherently a view of the mind disposed towards being just rational enough, and the mind in love as being conscious enough of its reasons.

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