

7. Romantic Views: Toward a Theory of Adolescent Romantic Relationships

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ROMEO: But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?

It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.

Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,
who is already sick and pale with grief
that thou, her maid, art far more fair than she.

Be not her maid, since she is envious.

Her vestal livery is but sick and green,
And none but fools do wear it; cast it off.

It is my lady! O, it is my love!

O that she knew she were!

Romeo and Juliet, Act II, Scene 2

Even before the time of Shakespeare, playwrights and poets wrote of adolescent love. Today many of us can still remember the name of our first boyfriend or girlfriend. Although we may now feel that these early romantic relationships were merely crushes, they were central in our social lives and emotional experiences as adolescents. For example, the quality of romantic relationships has been found to be associated with socioemotional adjustment during times of stress and nonstress (Furman, 1987). Moreover, these early romantic experiences are believed to play a pivotal role in both identity and intimacy development (Erikson, 1968) and may

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shape the course of subsequent romantic relationships and marriages in adulthood (Erikson, 1968; Sullivan, 1953). Certainly, the rising problems of teenage pregnancy, date rape, sexually transmitted diseases, and AIDS underscore the importance of understanding early romance and sexual behavior.

Despite the seeming importance of romantic life in early and middle adolescence, scientific research on the topic is surprisingly limited. The extant work primarily consists of demographic studies of dating patterns—many done a decade or two ago (e.g., Hansen, 1977; Wright, 1982). Surprisingly little research exists on the characteristics or development of romantic relationships during early and middle adolescence (vs. late adolescence or adulthood). Some investigators have studied opposite-sex friendships (Blyth, Hill, & Thiel, 1982; Sharabany, Gershoni, & Hoffman, 1981), but they did not distinguish between platonic and romantic ones. Similarly, other investigators have used the quality of romantic relationships as one of several indices of intimacy or identity status, but they did not focus on the romantic relationship per se (Orlofsky, Marcia, & Lesser, 1973; Paul & White, 1990).

Certainly, much important work has been done recently on adolescents' sexual behavior (see Miller & Moore, 1990), but this work cannot substitute for research on romantic relationships. Some adolescents are not sexually active, and for those who are, their relationships involve more than sex. Certainly, parents of adolescents hope so! Thus we know how often different adolescents date and have intercourse, but we don't know what their encounters or relationships are like.

Particularly absent is a theoretical framework to guide research on adolescent romantic relationships. In this paper we outline a behavioral systems conceptualization of romantic relationships that we believe is an important step toward such a goal. Our focus is on heterosexual relationships, but we believe that most of the ideas are applicable to gay and lesbian relationships as well.

ROMANTIC ATTACHMENT THEORY

Our theoretical framework was strongly influenced by attachment conceptualizations of love relationships (Ainsworth, 1989; Shaver & Hazan, 1988). An important shift in the nature of the

attachment relationship to the parent is hypothesized to take place in adolescence, due to the hormonal changes brought on by puberty (Ainsworth, 1989). These changes push the adolescent to search for a peer, usually of the opposite sex, with whom to establish a relationship. This partner is assumed to become the new principal attachment figure, replacing the parental attachment figure as uppermost in the attachment hierarchy. Drawing from evolutionary theory, Shaver and Hazan viewed romantic love as an adaptive biological process that facilitates attachment between adult sexual partners, resulting in parenthood and reliable care of the infant (Shaver & Hazan, 1988; Shaver, Hazan, & Bradshaw, 1988). They recognized, however, that adult romantic attachments differ from infant attachments. First, adult romantic attachments are reciprocal, with each partner being attached to the other and serving as an attachment figure to the other. Second, they involve sex. To accommodate these features, Shaver and Hazan hypothesized that romantic love involves the integration of the attachment, caregiving, and sexual/reproductive behavioral systems.

Following Bowlby (1979), Shaver and Hazan argue that there is a strong causal relation between an individual's experience with parents and later capacity to make affectional bonds. They argue that individual differences in how romantic love is experienced and manifested are due to differences in past attachment history. In particular, they propose that three main types of love relationships exist that parallel the three main infant attachment classifications: secure, ambivalent, and avoidant.

More recently, Bartholomew (1990) extended Shaver and Hazan's (1988) and Main, Kaplan, and Cassidy's (1985) ideas and proposed four adult romantic attachment types. She suggested that people develop positive or negative models of others and positive or negative models of themselves. Those with positive models of others and of themselves are secure individuals who are comfortable with intimacy and autonomy. Those with positive models of others but negative models of themselves are described as preoccupied, a category equivalent to Hazan and Shaver's ambivalent. Those with positive models of themselves and negative models of others are called dismissing individuals in that they minimize the importance of needing others. Finally, fearful individuals have negative models of both themselves and others and hence avoid intimacy. Bartholomew suggested that the fearful category was similar to

Shaver and Hazan's avoidant group, whereas the dismissing category was similar to Main et al.'s dismissing group.

Romantic attachment researchers believe that the attachment system lays the foundation for the caretaking and reproductive systems because it is the first socially relevant system to emerge (Shaver & Hazan, 1988). Thus variation in the functioning of the caregiving and reproductive systems can be attributed to variation in the attachment system. The mechanisms for the continuity of relationship character across relationships are the internal working models of self, other, and relationships built up during childhood.

This approach has a number of conceptually appealing features. First, romantic relationships are placed within an evolutionary perspective so that the adaptive nature of the relationships can be understood. Second, when conceptualized as attachments, love relationships can be classified and the origins of differences in love relationships explained. Third, this approach accommodates both healthy and unhealthy love relationships in a single conceptual framework. The attachment approach has received some encouraging empirical support (Bartholomew, 1991; Brennan, Shaver, & Tobey, 1991; Collins & Read, 1990; Feeney & Noller, 1990; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Simpson, 1990), but is limited in several respects.

First, although both are appealing, traditional attachment theory and adult romantic attachment theory are not identical, conceptually or empirically. For example, dismissing or avoidant individuals were originally conceptualized as individuals who have insecure, negative models of self, but who may present themselves positively as a defensive strategy (Cassidy & Kobak, 1988; Main et al., 1985). Bartholomew (1990), however, argues that dismissing individuals have positive models of self. Moreover, Bowlby would expect a high degree of concordance between models of self and models of others, but Bartholomew's framework suggests that the two types of models are quite distinct from one another, if not oppositional. In fact, approximately one third of the individuals in a college sample had discrepant self and other models on a self-report measure of Bartholomew's classification system (Brennan et al., 1991). Similarly, sex differences are not commonly found in infant attachment types, but they are found with Bartholomew's system (Brennan et al., 1991). Finally, the traditional attachment classifications and adult romantic attachment classifications do not correspond completely. For example, Brennan et al. (1991) suggested that fearfals

may be conceptually akin to Main's disorganized "D" category, but the percentages of such individuals (32% male, 43% female) seem too high for this to be the case. Moreover, Bartholomew's fearful individuals have organized working models in which the self and others are seen negatively, whereas "D" infants have disorganized attachment strategies that may stem from frightened or frightening parental behavior (Main & Hesse, 1990). Similarly, the "U" or unresolved category derived from coding the Adult Attachment Interview reflects unresolved, disorganized, or disoriented states of mind with respect to experiences of loss or trauma (Main, DeMoss, & Hesse, 1989). Thus as these examples illustrate, traditional attachment theory and romantic attachment theory cannot be completely equated.

Second, the comparative literature suggests that the attachment system is not the sole basis for adult pair bonding (MacDonald, 1992). Attachment is ubiquitous in primates, but only 17% of these species have monogamous pair bonding arrangements (Hardy, 1981). Promiscuity or polygamy are more common reproductive strategies than monogamy.

A third limitation is that romantic attachment theory has not fully taken into account the fact that romantic relationships are egalitarian ones that originally develop within the context of the peer group. Characteristics such as collaboration, affiliation, and symmetrical interchanges are central features of romantic relationships that cannot be readily explained in terms of attachment and caretaking. Even when attachment and caretaking are reciprocated between individuals, the interactions that reflect the activation of these systems are asymmetrical in nature; that is, in most specific interactions, one person serves as the caretaker or secure base for the other person who is seeking care. At other times the roles may be reversed, but the particular interaction will still be asymmetrical.

In a related vein, attachment theorists clearly recognize the significance of other relationships to development (Sroufe, 1988), but they have only focused on the continuity between parent-child relationships and love relationships and have not given much attention to the potential impact that friendships or other peer relationships may have on the development of romantic relationships. Ainsworth (1989) has stated that positive relationships with peers are evolutionarily adaptive, functioning to provide members of the social system with additional protection and increasing the success of some endeavors like hunting, but it appears that she and other attachment theorists believe that the individual's capacity to form

intimate relationships is primarily affected by the parent-child attachment relationship. We believe that parent-child relationships lay the basic foundation for the ability to be close to and intimate with another, but we will argue that peer relationships, particularly friendships, also make a critical contribution. Specifically in friendships, children develop the ability to be intimate in a reciprocal and mutual fashion.

Finally, adult love relationships are the endpoint of a developmental process. Full-blown attachments to romantic partners do not just appear overnight. Unfortunately, little has been said about how particular relationships may develop into attachment bonds or how past romantic experiences in adolescence or early adulthood may affect the development of such bonds. As Waters, Kondo-Ikemura, Posada, and Richters (1991) so aptly put it, we have "a theory of infant attachment, a theory of adult attachment, and a great deal in between left to the imagination" (p. 227). What is needed is a broader theoretical perspective on social development that takes into account the developmental tasks of childhood and their impact on development. Wedding Sullivan's (1953) theory of social-personality development with attachment theory provides such a theoretical framework.

SULLIVAN'S THEORY

Basic to Sullivan's (1953) theory is the notion of social needs. He felt there were five basic social needs that motivate people to bring about certain types of interpersonal situations that once obtained, decrease unpleasant affective tensions and promote positive emotional states. These needs are (a) tenderness, (b) companionship, (c) acceptance, (d) intimacy, and (e) sexuality. According to Sullivan, development progresses through six stages (see Figure 7.1). At all but the last stage a new social need emerges that is added to the existing needs. Sullivan also felt that at each stage there is a key relationship that is crucial for the fulfillment of the stage's need.

The first stage in Sullivan's theory extends through the infancy period, from birth to about 2 years of age. The need of this stage is for tenderness. If provided, feelings of security occur; if not provided, the infant feels distressed and fearful. The need of this stage and the resulting feelings are very similar to those conceptualized in attachment theory.

In the childhood stage, ages 2 to 5 or 6, "the need for adult participation is added—that is, a need for the interest and participation of a

				SEXUALITY
				romantic partner
				romantic partner
				same- or opposite-sex friend
				crowd
				friendship gang
				romantic partner
				same- or opposite-sex friend
				romantic partner
				same- or opposite-sex friend
				romantic partner
				same- or opposite-sex friend
Infancy (0-2 yrs)	Childhood (2-6 yrs)	Juvenile era (6-9 yrs)	Preadolescence (9-12 yrs)	Early adolescence (12-16 yrs)
TENDERNESS				
parents	parents	parents	same-sex friend parents	
COMPANIONSHIP				
parents	compeers	same-sex friend	parents	
ACCEPTANCE				
peer society	friendship gang			
INTIMACY				
	same-sex friend			

Figure 7.1 Neo-Sullivanian Model of Emerging Social Needs and Key Relationships

SOURCE: From Buhrmester, D., & Furman, W. (1986). The changing functions of friends in childhood: A neo-Sullivanian perspective. In V. J. Derlega & B. A. Winstead (Eds.), *Friendship and social interaction* (pp. 41-62). New York: Springer-Verlag. Copyright 1986 by Springer-Verlag New York Publishers. Reprinted with permission.

significant adult in the child's play" (Sullivan, 1953, pp. 290-291). It has been argued that this need continues through the life span as the need for companionship (Buhrmester & Furman, 1986). This social need may also be equivalent to the "need" or set goal underlying the affiliative behavioral system of attachment theory. Thus Sullivan believed that early parent-child relationships served two main functions for children—the provision of security and the opportunity for companionship.

The third stage, the juvenile era, begins with the entrance into school and involves two changes from the previous stage. First, the transition between these stages involves a shift in the primary object of the companionship need from parents to peers. The ability to play successfully with other children demands that the child master egalitarian exchange relationships. Second, as children move into the peer world

they become aware of the differences among them, and these differences are used to determine the desirability of children as companions. Thus the emerging need of this stage is for acceptance by one's peers in order to avoid feelings of ostracism and exclusion.

The fourth stage, preadolescence, extends from about 9 years of age to puberty. Here, the need for intimate exchange emerges motivated by the desire to experience love and avoid loneliness. The need for intimate exchange results in the establishment of a new type of relationship, a "chumship." A chumship is a collaborative relationship; that is, it involves "clearly formulated adjustments of one's behavior to the expressed needs of the other person in the pursuit of increasingly identical—that is, more and more mutual—satisfactions" (p. 246). Such relationships are based on extensive self-disclosure and consensual validation of personal worth. They are also seen as the prototype of adult friendships and as a foundation for romantic and marital relationships (Berndt, 1982; Buhrmester & Furman, 1986).

The last two stages of Sullivan's theory cover the entire adolescent period, extending from puberty through young adulthood. Early adolescence, which begins with puberty, sees the emergence of true genital interest or lust. There is also a change in the object of the need for intimacy. That is, there is a growing interest in the possibility of achieving intimacy with a sexual partner that is similar to that of the intimacy of preadolescent chumships.

Once this shift has been made, the task of early adolescence becomes one of discovering one's sexual identity and preferred way of relating to a romantic partner. Sullivan sees this as a trial and error process but says little else about it. This task is complicated by the fact that the three main needs of this stage, the needs for security, intimacy, and lustful satisfaction, must be coordinated to negotiate this stage successfully, and yet they often are in opposition. For example, sexual experimentation can result in feelings of embarrassment, which conflict with the need for security. The balancing of needs can also be viewed as the coordination of the newly emerging sexual/reproductive behavioral system with the attachment and affiliative behavioral systems.

The final stage is that of late adolescence, which begins when a pattern of preferred genital activity is established. The task of this final stage is to establish a network of mature interpersonal relationships, one of which is a committed love relationship.

Sullivan's theory has several appealing features. Specifically, it provides a developmental framework for conceptualizing the emergence of social needs and the impact that such changes may have on relationships. Although he only focuses on key relationships in different stages, his theory explicitly recognizes the contributions of both parent-child and peer relationships. On the other hand, Sullivan's descriptions of the stages of development in late adolescence and adulthood are more sketchy. In fact, the theory is generally not presented very systematically, and some topics, such as the origins of caretaking, receive little attention. Moreover, although the theory is frequently mentioned by investigators, it has received remarkably little empirical attention.

A BEHAVIORAL SYSTEMS CONCEPTUALIZATION

We believe that the insights of adult romantic attachment theory, traditional attachment theory, and neo-Sullivanian theory can be integrated into a behavioral systems conceptualization of romantic relationships. We believe that such a conceptualization can avoid some of the limitations of particular theories and provide a promising framework for understanding some of the central aspects of romantic relationships.

In the sections that follow, we will outline a series of key points in this conceptualization. Specifically, we will propose that the affiliative behavioral system, as well as the attachment, caretaking, and sexual/reproductive systems, is central to romantic relationships. Then we will describe our conceptualization of romantic views, which are conscious and unconscious perceptions of particular romantic relationships. Next we will discuss the links among different relationships. Finally, we will outline a series of hypothesized developmental changes in these relationships.

Four Behavioral Systems

Central to our conceptualization is the idea of a behavioral system, which is a goal-corrected system that functions to maintain a relatively steady state between the individual and his/her environment (Bretherton, 1985). A behavioral system includes an appraisal

process that indicates if the set goal of the system is being met or not, emotions elicited by this process when the set goal is met or not, and emotion-related actions and action-tendencies that correct the system when the set goal is not met (Shaver & Hazan, 1988). For example, the set goal of the attachment system is to maintain some degree of proximity to an attachment figure (Bowlby, 1969). Individuals have only one behavioral system of each type (e.g., attachment, sexual/reproductive, affiliative, and so on), but the operation of a particular system may entail interactions with different people in their social networks. For example, one may develop a hierarchy of attachment figures to be turned to at times of distress.

Our first key idea is that romantic partners become major figures in the functioning of the attachment, caregiving, affiliative, and sexual/reproductive behavioral systems. The attachment and caretaking systems have received considerable theoretical and empirical attention, but the affiliative system has only been periodically alluded to by attachment researchers (Ainsworth, 1989; Bretherton & Ainsworth, 1974). We believe that initially parents are the key affiliative figures, but that peers, particularly close friends, become the key figures for most of the course of development. Early on, the behaviors relevant to the affiliative system may simply consist of play with others. However, in egalitarian relationships with peers, the affiliative system evolves into a complex behavioral system that entails more than play behavior. In particular, we believe that the affiliative system may underlie the collaboration, cooperation, reciprocity, and coconstruction that Sullivan described as characteristic of preadolescent chumships.

Thus prior to adolescence, parents and peers are the key figures for the attachment, caregiving, and affiliative systems. As romantic relationships develop and become more central, however, romantic partners become key figures for these different systems as well as for the sexual/reproductive system with its emergence in adolescence.

A Biological Perspective

The present model proposes that romantic relationships are biologically based in part. That is, the four behavioral systems are thought to have evolved because they increased survival during the course of evolution. The proposition that there are underlying biological processes may seem incongruent with the evidence of

marked cultural variability in romantic relationships, but we think not. Traditionally, anthropologists and historians had thought that romantic love was an invention of relatively recent Western society, but recent evidence suggests otherwise. Jankowiak and Fischer (1992) report finding evidence of romantic love in at least 88% of the 166 cultures they surveyed, including many cultures where prearranged marriages are the rule. Of course, marked cultural differences exist in the specific nature of these relationships, but contemporary sociobiological theories not only acknowledge but explicitly incorporate cultural factors in their formulations (MacDonald, 1988, 1989). That is, the specific manifestations of biological processes vary as a function of environmental or cultural factors. A biological perspective provides an explanation of the ultimate cause of behavior in our evolutionary past, but does not deny that there are simultaneously many proximate causes of those behaviors (Buss, 1988).

Affiliation, attachment, caretaking, and reproduction are hypothesized to be discrete or independent systems. In contemporary Western society, romantic partners are key figures for all four behavioral systems, but in other cultures different individuals may be involved in the functioning of the different systems. For example, it appears that in classical Grecian society, males turned to their wives for the purposes of reproduction, but were more likely to turn to other males or upper class prostitutes (hetaira) for affiliation (Pomeroy, 1975).

Views

A second key concept in our model is that of views. By *views* we mean conscious and unconscious perceptions of a particular relationship, the self in that type of relationship, and the partner in that relationship. Views of a particular relationship are shaped by the nature of interactions and experiences in that relationship, by past experiences in similar relationships, and finally by past experiences in other relationships. This conceptualization of views resembles attachment theory's concept of working models, but it differs in several important respects.

First, attachment theorists have talked about a general working model of relationships, or at least attachment relationships, but we believe that individuals have distinct views for each relationship. Views are thought to be influenced by experiences in other relationships, but views of different relationships are not expected to be

identical because they are strongly influenced by experiences with a particular person. For example, if you had been repeatedly rejected or mistreated in a romantic relationship, it seems likely that you would develop insecure views about this relationship even if you had secure relationships with parents and friends.

At the same time, people do not enter each new relationship as a *tabula rasa*. Instead, they enter with some preconceptions or expectations of what the relationship is apt to be like, based on their past experiences in similar types of relationships and secondarily on their experiences in other types of relationships. For example, if one has been able to turn to romantic partners at times of distress in the past, one is likely to enter a new relationship with some expectations of being able to turn to the new partner. Such expectations will shape one's perceptions and behavior and thus may lead to a self-fulfillment of expectations (Snyder, Tanke, & Berscheid, 1977). On the other hand, if the expectations are not met, the expectations may gradually be altered.

One important issue is the degree of consistency in views of different specific relationships. An impressive body of longitudinal studies has documented links between early attachment status and competence in subsequent relationships with other adults, peers, and friends (see Elicker, Englund, & Sroufe, 1992). These findings suggest that as a result of early interactions with primary caretakers, a child develops a general working model of relationships that guides subsequent interactions with others.

Yet little consistency has been found in attachment status with different figures. For example, Fox, Kimmerly, and Schafer's (1991) meta-analysis of 11 studies revealed only a modest degree of concordance in the security of attachments to mothers and fathers (60% agreement vs. 55% chance, $kappa = .12$; 3% of variance accounted for). Similarly, relatively little or no concordance has been found between attachment status with a parent and that with either a day-care center teacher (Goosens & van IJzendoorn, 1990; Howes & Hamilton, 1992) or a kibbutz metapelet (Sagi et al., 1985). The low concordance has been appropriately interpreted as evidence that the Strange Situation or other attachment measures assess the quality of a relationship rather than temperamental or other characteristics of the child. The low concordance also suggests that a child develops different working models for different relationships because these models are expected to be based upon relational experiences.

At first glance, the literature on the longitudinal predictiveness of early attachment status and the literature on the low concordance of attachment classifications with different figures would seem to lead to different conclusions. However, the strength of the observed longitudinal relations should not be overstated; although certainly important, the links are usually moderate in size, with attachment relationship history typically accounting for 5% to 15% of the variance. Thus the existing findings suggest that there is modest, yet noteworthy, consistency across different types of relationships.

We believe that the consistency of views may be greater within each particular type of relationship, such as romantic relationships. That is, people may have general views of a type of relationship and specific views for each relationship. Both guide behavior. In the sections that follow, we will refer to "romantic views," "views of friendships," and so forth when referring to these general views.

Another distinguishing point is that we believe that views are not views of attachment per se, but instead are views of all behavioral systems. That is, there are not separate views for each of the different systems; rather, views reflect a composite picture of the functioning of different systems in each relationship. For example, dismissing views are not only reflected in rarely turning to the partner as a secure base, but also in not wanting to provide care to the other, seeing sex as primarily an opportunity for experimentation and self-gratification, and valuing the activity rather than the companionship of the other. Similarly, preoccupied views may be manifested in terms of going along with the other's wishes (vs. expressing one's own), providing too much or poorly timed care, and using sex as a means to enhance one's own esteem as well as in terms of being quite concerned and worried about the other's availability at times of distress. Certainly, attachment experiences in relationships will be critical in the development of views, but we do not believe that they are the exclusive determinant of views. All of the systems play an important role and are integrated in views. Although each of the systems is reflected in views, it is important to recognize that a particular relationship may be more salient for one system's functioning than another. For example, close friends are likely to be more salient in the functioning of the affiliative system than the attachment system.

Finally, views are conceptualized as incorporating two distinct components: (a) conscious styles or perceptions of relationships and (b) unconscious or internal working models, which reflect more automated processing in social relationships. Styles can be assessed by self-report measures, whereas working models can be tapped by techniques, such as adult attachment interviews (Main et al., 1985). By their use of self-report measures, adult romantic attachment theorists seem to want to equate conscious styles and unconscious working models of relationships, but the existing data suggest that the two are only moderately related at most (Bartholomew, 1991; Crowell, Treboux, & Waters, 1993). We are not simply saying that conscious styles do not correspond on a surface level to unconscious models. Attachment theorists, as well as ourselves, recognize that individuals who have experienced rejecting experiences from a parent do not necessarily consciously acknowledge such experiences, and instead may protect themselves from these emotionally distressing experiences by developing defensive strategies, such as denigrating the importance of the relationship. Our conceptualization of styles goes further, however, in that we believe that conscious styles not only reflect defensive strategies that emerge from unconscious working models, but also are influenced by other variables, such as sex roles and cultural factors. For that matter, unconscious models may be influenced by other factors as well. Of course, conscious styles and unconscious working models are expected to be related to each other because they influence one another.

It is important to emphasize that our intention is not to denigrate the significance of conscious styles. To understand the phenomenology of romantic love, both components of views—conscious styles and unconscious internal working models—need to be examined because each seems to be associated with distinct facets of the romantic experience and perhaps adjustment (Kobak & Hazan, under review).

Cross-Relationship Links

We have proposed that there is a relatively high degree of consistency in views of specific relationships of one type (e.g., different romantic relationships) and a moderate degree of consistency in views of different types of relationships. As adolescents establish

romantic relationships, they are likely to be influenced by their views of and experiences in other types of relationships. That is, when the different behavioral systems are activated, adolescents are likely to be predisposed to respond to romantic partners as they have in other relationships. For example, if an adolescent has tended not to turn to others as a secure base, she or he may tend not to turn to romantic partners as well.

Because the parent-child relationship is most central to the development of the attachment and caregiving systems, attachment experiences with parents are expected to have a stronger influence on the use of romantic partners as attachment figures than attachment experiences with other individuals. On the other hand, peers are the key figures for the affiliative system, and thus affiliative experiences in peer relationships, particularly friendships, are expected to be a stronger predictor of the affiliative aspects of romantic relationships than experiences in other relationships are.

At the same time, a simple recreation of past relationships is not expected for two reasons. First, the qualitative features of romantic relationships typically differ in some respects from those with friends or parents. The different features of the relationships lead to different experiences in the relationships. Second, the specific partners are obviously not the same in the different relationships. Clearly, the partners, as well as the adolescent, will shape the course of the relationships. Thus we expect views of different types of relationships to be moderately related—not highly related and not unrelated. Working models of different types of relationships may be more related to one another than the different styles are because unconscious perceptions may be less open to new information and thus may change more slowly.

Certainly, attachment theorists recognize that working models reflect present as well as past conditions (Sroufe, Egeland, & Kreutzer, 1990), but we believe that the current framework places more emphasis on the specificity of views of particular relationships. Attachment theorists emphasize continuity unless there is a major change in general life circumstances or new relational experience, such as successful therapy or having a good marital partner. In the present conceptualization, views of a particular relationship always develop because they are strongly influenced by the ongoing experiences in that relationship.

A DEVELOPMENTAL PERSPECTIVE

As developmental psychologists, we think that one of the most interesting aspects of romantic relationships is that they are not static but evolve over adolescence and adulthood. Developmental changes may occur both within the course of a particular relationship and over the course of a series of relationships. Moreover, developmental changes can be seen in a number of different respects, which include: (a) changes in the hierarchy of figures, (b) changes in the behavioral systems, (c) changes in dating life, and (d) changes in romantic views. Each is discussed subsequently.

Changes in the Hierarchy of Figures

The social context of the development of the attachment and other behavioral systems in adolescence or adulthood is fundamentally different from that in infancy. In early infancy at least, one can talk about the development of the first or primary attachment relationship. In adolescence or adulthood, however, there are preexisting attachment, affiliative, and caretaking figures that differ in their importance as sources of attachment, affiliation, and caretaking. A key idea in our conceptualization is that the romantic partner becomes part of this hierarchy of figures and then moves up in importance in the hierarchy of figures. Thus as a relationship with a romantic partner begins to develop, an adolescent starts to turn to this person as an attachment and affiliation figure and starts to serve as a caretaker to him or her. Moreover, if the relationship develops further, the adolescent is expected to become increasingly likely to turn to this person rather than to other individuals. One would expect the partner to reach the top of the hierarchy by at least the time of a marriage or a potentially permanent arrangement. This pattern is also hypothesized to occur over the course of different relationships. In early adolescence romantic partners probably do not move up very far in the hierarchy, but as the adolescent gains more experience in romantic relationships, romantic partners are likely to move up the hierarchy more quickly and occupy a higher place in the hierarchy. This hypothesized general normative trend may not, however, hold true for particular adolescents if their past experiences have been relatively negative—a point elaborated on in

the subsequent section on views. Some support for the hypothesized common pattern, however, is provided by our finding that the romantic partner's place in the hierarchy of perceived support figures goes from fourth in the 7th grade to third in the 10th grade, and then to first in college (Furman & Buhrmester, 1992).

Changes in the Behavioral Systems

One of the reasons that developmental changes are expected to occur in the hierarchy of figures is that changes are hypothesized to occur in the skill and frequency of the acts involved in the functioning of a behavioral system. For example, once part of the hierarchy, a romantic partner may sometimes serve as a secure base to turn to in times of distress. As an adolescent learns how to use a partner as a secure base, he or she is likely to do so more frequently and more skillfully. Not only may these changes occur over the course of a long-term relationship, but they are also likely to be apparent over the course of a series of relationships. That is, some of the learning about what does and does not work may carry over to subsequent relationships. Certainly, most of us feel more comfortable and skillful in our interactions with current romantic partners than we did as early adolescents!

During the course of a particular relationship, a romantic partner is expected to emerge as a sexual figure and an affiliative figure before becoming an attachment figure or recipient of caretaking. This order is expected to be relatively consistent across particular relationships, but the attachment and caregiving systems are expected to become more salient in relationships in late adolescence or adulthood as ties with parents are transformed and the push to find a new primary attachment figure increases. Typically, it is not until mid- to late adolescence that a romantic partner becomes a relevant figure for all four behavioral systems.

Changes in Dating Life

In studying romantic relationships in modern Western cultures, one must also take into account dating life and its development. Feinstein and Ardon's (1973) and Dunphy's (1963) observations suggest a four-step sequence in heterosexual dating. With the onset of adolescence there is a new interest in opposite-sex peers brought

on by puberty and the emergence of the sexual/reproductive system. Unfortunately, adolescents have not yet had an opportunity to develop basic skills for interacting with opposite-sex peers and must first develop a sense of comfort interacting with them, which often occurs within the context of the crowd (Dunphy, 1963). As an adolescent develops comfort and skill in these Simple Interchanges, she or he may move to Casual Dating. Here, affiliative behavior and sexual experimentation may occur in a number of short-term relationships. Romantic partners are not expected to emerge as attachment figures or recipients of caretaking until an adolescent begins to develop Stable Relationships—exclusive, longer term relationships. In fact, their full emergence is not likely to occur until the appearance of a Committed Relationship, a long-term relationship, which, if everything goes well, is likely to become a marriage or potentially permanent arrangement—a step that typically does not occur until late adolescence or adulthood. As the romantic partner becomes a more salient attachment figure and the self becomes a more salient attachment figure for the partner, the length of relationships is predicted to increase. Relationship commitments, both short and long term, are ventures into being consistently available and responsive to a romantic partner much as one has been with chums and as one's parents have been to oneself.

Distinctions among the four steps are important not only in terms of understanding the developmental course of romantic relationships but also to ensure that appropriate comparisons are made. For example, differences in how secure two adolescents' romantic views are could occur because of differences in past relationship histories, but they could also occur because one adolescent is casually dating and the other has a stable relationship. We believe that this clouding of comparisons may have led to potential underestimations of links among relationships in past research.

The Development of Views

Romantic views are not static traits of the individual. As noted previously, we expect that one's views of romantic relationships are influenced by experiences in other types of relationships. Importantly, romantic views develop further as a function of their romantic experiences. With the accumulation of experience, they become more elaborated and ultimately less prone to change.

A thornier question is whether romantic views typically become more secure, remain consistent, or perhaps even become less secure with development. All three paths are likely to occur in specific instances. For example, as an adolescent becomes more skillful in providing care or seeking attachment, affiliation, or sexual gratification, she or he is likely to be more successful and thus to develop more secure views concerning such a relationship. On the other hand, some individuals may re-create the insecure relationships they expect consciously or unconsciously. For example, dismissing individuals may tend to select partners or establish relationships that reinforce a dismissing view. Such a person may become more skillful, but more skillful in developing relationships characterized by dismissing patterns. Finally, less secure views may develop as a result of a series of negative events or relationships. Certainly, date rapes or other forms of sexual assault seem likely to lead to insecure views.

Is one path more likely than the others? Interestingly, in the study we describe subsequently the proportion of high school students endorsing Hazan and Shaver's description of a secure style (46%) was lower than typically found in college samples (55% to 60%), which in turn is lower than that found in a married sample (72%) (Kobak & Hazan, 1991). Perhaps the increase in skill and the selection of appropriate partners lead to a moderate increase in secure styles. Whether such changes will occur in underlying models remains to be seen, although the ideas of increased skillfulness, partner selection, and the potential impact of styles on working models would suggest it could. Whatever proves to be the case, the key idea is that views are affected by romantic experiences and in turn affect romantic experiences.

Timing

Although we have discussed a series of developmental changes that are at least somewhat normative in nature, it is important to recognize that the timing or onset of romantic life is likely to vary widely from individual to individual. Similarly, some may date more frequently than others. Consistent with the work on sexual behavior (Miller & Moore, 1990; Smith, 1989), it is expected that the timing of the steps to Simple Interactions and to Casual Dating are strongly influenced by family norms, peer norms, peer prestige

variables, and psychobiological maturity (McCabe, 1984; Smith, 1989), and not strongly related to relational experiences with parents or friends. Similar predictions are made for the frequency of dating.

The steps to Stable Relationships and particularly Committed Relationships are, however, more likely to be related to relational experiences, particularly romantic ones and particularly as one gets older. For example, late adolescents or young adults who are dismissing of romantic relationships may be less likely to establish Committed Relationships. Moreover, the length of these relationships and the nature of their termination is expected to be related to romantic views. In particular, adolescents or adults with secure views of romantic relationships are expected to have had more lasting relationships than those with insecure views (Davis & Kirkpatrick, in press). Dismissing adolescents are expected to be more likely to terminate their relationships, whereas those with preoccupied views are more likely to have their partners terminate them.

Although we have proposed some links between views and dating history, the preceding comments should also make it clear that the concept of views or other indices of relational quality should not be equated with the quantitative indices of onset and frequency of dating life that have been the primary focus of research to date. With few exceptions, less-than-optimal developmental experiences, such as insecure attachments to caretakers, do not arrest development, but rather direct it along a less desirable path. Thus for the majority of children, regardless of past relationship history, the entrance into adolescence will lead to the search for romantic partners. The timing of that search will be influenced by family norms, peer norms, peer prestige variables, and psychobiological maturity and not by the quality of the past relationships. Past relational experiences with romantic partners and other individuals are likely to have their impact on the quality of the romantic relationships that emerge, when they do emerge.

A TEST OF THE CONCEPT OF VIEWS

Recently we tested some of our key ideas concerning views in a study of 165 middle adolescent females in the 10th to 12th grades. A self-report measure, the Behavioral Systems Questionnaire, was developed to assess adolescents' conscious styles or perceptions

concerning attachment, caregiving, and affiliative behaviors in their relationships with their mothers, fathers, closest friends, and romantic partners. Separate scales assessing Secure, Dismissing, and Preoccupied styles were derived for each behavioral system in each type of relationship.

First, we tested the idea that perceptions of attachment, caregiving, and affiliation are significantly related to one another within each type of relationship. Consistent with our expectations, we found that the corresponding attachment, caregiving, and affiliative scales for each of the three styles were significantly correlated with one another in each of the four relationships (mean $r = .51$). This pattern suggests that the functioning of the three systems within a particular type of relationship is coordinated, and that one can fruitfully refer to general relationship styles. The correlations among the corresponding scales assessing the different types of behaviors were not, however, as high as the internal consistencies of the scales. Thus there is also some variance associated with the functioning of particular behavioral systems that is not accounted for by a general relationship style.

Next we tested the idea that styles are specific to the type of relationship. General style scores for each type of relationship were derived by averaging the scores across the attachment, caretaking, and affiliative ratings for each relationship. Consistent with our expectations, the correlations were moderate in size (see Table 7.1). Moreover, the magnitude of correlations was more varied across relationship pairs than one would expect if the styles generalized across types of relationships. Thus the results suggest that romantic styles or other styles are influenced by the experiences within particular types of relationships. At the same time, there are moderate links among the styles for different relationships. Particularly noteworthy were the correlations between friendships and romantic relationships. Clearly, an account of romantic relationships will need to include the role of friendships as well as parent-child relationships.

In the initial study, we only examined the pattern of relations among perceptions of types of relationships. In a small follow-up study, however, we examined the relations among specific relationships of one type. In particular, 20 college students completed four versions of the Behavioral Systems Questionnaire—one that referred to close friends in general and three others, each of which

Table 7.1 Across-Relationship Correlations for General Relationship Styles

<i>Relationships</i>	<i>Secure</i>	<i>Dismissing</i>	<i>Preoccupied</i>
Mother-Father	.29**	.35**	.39**
Mother-Friends	.14	.25**	.28**
Mother-Romantic	.02	.01	.23**
Father-Friends	.16*	.25**	.26**
Father-Romantic	.07	.18*	.08
Friends-Romantic	.25**	.35**	.40**

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

referred to a particular friendship. To reduce carryover effects, the administration of the four versions was interspersed over a 6-to 8-week period.

General stylistic perceptions were highly related to corresponding perceptions of specific relationships (mean $r = .58$), supporting the idea that a general view may influence or be influenced by views of particular relationships. Additionally, perceptions of dismissing and preoccupied styles in one friendship were related to corresponding scores for another friendship (mean $r = .42$ and $.47$, respectively), but secure scores were not (mean $r = .02$). The difference in consistency fits with the idea that insecure styles reflect rigidly held beliefs that are less open to new information. The results also provide some very preliminary evidence that the degree of correspondence for at least insecure scores may be greater within a particular type of relationship.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The preceding sections underscore the complexity of the issues involved in studying adolescent romantic relationships. Conceptualizing romantic relationships as attachment relationships was a useful first step, but does not completely capture the richness of these relationships. We have tried to make the next step by noting the importance of the affiliative behavioral system and peer relationships, introducing the idea of views being specific to particular relationships and only relatively concordant within types of relationships,

distinguishing between conscious styles and unconscious internal working models, and providing a developmental perspective.

Even with these additions, we do not believe that the picture is complete. The different behavioral systems and their manifestations at different developmental periods require further attention, both theoretically and empirically. Similarly, we need to further articulate how the manifestation of these systems may change over the course of the development of a relationship.

Up to this point, we have not addressed the issue of whether chums or close adolescent friends serve as secondary attachment figures. The literature contains several discussions of which relationships should be conceptualized as attachments. For example, Weiss (1991) argued that romantic pair bonds and some relationships of patients to therapists are likely to be attachments, whereas most friendships, work relationships, and kin ties are not. Hazan and Zeifman (in press) have argued that intimate physical contact, such as that between caregiver and infant or sexual contact between lovers, may be needed for attachment formation. Although their argument has some appealing features, it does have difficulty accounting for any attachment relationships with therapists.

More importantly, we believe that the question of who is and who is not an attachment figure misses the point. The close relationships individuals have with various people have some similarities and differences with one another. We need to develop models that can account for the processes underlying such similarities and differences. For example, if one wants to argue that most friendships are not attachment relationships, one still has to account for the proximity seeking, emotional support, and other "attachment-like" features that characterize these relationships. Conversely, if one argues that they are attachment relationships, one has to account for the differences between these and other attachment relationships. Similarly, we need more detailed accounts of how developmental status of the individual, the nature of the relationship, and the context within which a behavioral system is activated may alter the manifestations of attachment, affiliative, or caregiving behaviors. Thus further conceptual and empirical work is needed to understand the role of different behavioral systems and relationships in adolescents' or adults' social world.

It is important to remember that we have primarily focused on a theory of romantic views and the four behavioral systems. Although

we believe that romantic views and the four behavioral systems are central components of romantic relationships, that's not all there is to romantic relationships or love! Romantic relationships serve other functions than attachment, affiliation, or sex, particularly in adolescence. For example, the relationships may serve as a means of status grading and status achievement (Skipper & Nass, 1966). Such functions are likely to influence the nature and significance of these relationships.

Another topic that needs to be addressed is whom one selects as dating or romantic partners. In the adult romantic literature, investigators have found some concordance in the attachment styles of dating and marital partners (Senchak & Leonard, 1992; Simpson, 1990), but it is not clear if such matching would be found in adolescent romantic pairs. In any case, it is unlikely that the concordance in views would be high. Interpersonal attraction, the selection of dating partners, and one's status in the dating world involve much, much more than one's romantic views. A comprehensive theory would need to include a consideration of the other factors that are predictive of partner selection. Romantic views may be more predictive of the nature of the relationship than whom the relationship is with. For example, the adult literature has found that certain pairs, particularly secure-secure ones, are more likely to have satisfying and enduring relationships (Senchak & Leonard, 1992; Simpson, 1990). An important task for investigators is to identify the impact of romantic views on patterns of interactions.

Although an attachment or behavioral systems perspective may seem to focus primarily on the characteristics of individuals (vs. relationship characteristics), such is not actually the case. The romantic views of individuals are thought to be important because they are expected to affect the patterns of interactions. Moreover, one of the key features of the current conceptualization is the emphasis on the role of relationship history on the development of romantic views.

Finally, this formulation has focused on biologically-based features that we believe are typically characteristic of romantic relationships. There is much diversity in romantic relationships that also needs to be acknowledged. As noted earlier, we need to remember that romantic relationships, like all relationships, occur within a particular historical and cultural context. The role of cultural factors and their interface with biological ones requires further

attention. Similarly, the literature on romantic relationships is replete with gender differences (Buss & Schmitt, 1993; Peplau & Gordon, 1985). Such differences have in fact been found in attachment styles (Brennan et al., 1991), but as yet the bases for such differences is not clear.

We believe, however, that the preceding points do not detract from the appeal of a behavioral systems perspective. They simply point out the complexity of the task we still face. It is hoped, however, that our effort to integrate the insights of the attachment and Sullivanian theories can move us toward a theory of the mysterious phenomenon of adolescent love.

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