been insignificant, it will be an issue to address in the future. Can the O.O.M.s accept the alternatives of economic income these single women desire? And can this social system accept the increased status (and power) that will emerge with such changes? The O.O.M. community is a fluid society. Change is present. Their peculiarity has been their strength. However, the larger society continues to pressure this smaller early 20th century life-style group to evaluate, integrate, and adapt.

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The Pulley Alternative for the Wheel Theory of the Development of Love*

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ABSTRACT

A “pulley” alternative is offered in place of Reiss’, “wheel model” of love and Borland’s “clockspring” alternative of the same model. In the “pulley” alternative suggested here two shortcomings of the first two models are corrected for: (1) a more realistic provision for direction of rotation of the system and its reversal, and (2) a dependent variable of intensity. Reiss’ model seems historically important and useful enough to warrant an attempt to render it more isomorphic with underlying theory.

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Reiss’ wheel model of love, in spite of its antiquity, is still highly respected and has been widely used in teaching and in textbooks to do with the sociology of the family, courtship and marriage. One cannot question the seminal contribution of this model.

The wheel model of love, which Reiss shows can be generalized to apply to any kind of primary relationship, was presented explicitly as heuristic and, as such, indeed as with any model, had many “unnecessary” details omitted and only “essential” features included. However this model is a mechanical model and certain features of it necessary for the real mechanical system, of which it is a model, to work have been omitted as unnecessary details. The purpose of this paper is to make a case for the inclusion of these features.

As a general rule, mechanistic models are not easily, nor appropriately, adaptable to the social sciences. Even putting aside the debatable theoretical suitability of a mechanistic model to represent such a changing and emerging phenomenon as love, the model from a purely mechanistic point of view still requires tightening to make it more isomorphic with the theory as every good model should be.

In Reiss’ model the “wheel” has four spokes set in two pairs whose ends are in diametrically opposite positions on the circumference of the wheel with one pair of spokes at right angles to the other. These spokes, as shown in Figure 1, represent respectively rapport, self-revelation, mutual dependency, and personality need fulfillment. We say “respectively” because Reiss shows they occur in that order.

The theory is that the love relationship is a complex one, comprised of the previous four components which follow each other in specific order. For example, if a couple meet and find each other compatible (i.e., if they are in rapport) then they will most likely begin to reveal confidences about themselves to each other which in turn makes them dependent on each other, over time. In the end, a full-blown love relationship exhibited by mutual need fulfillment may evolve. This process is shown in the model by the fact that an increase in the loading on the rapport spoke will lead in turn to an increased loading on self-revelation which will lead, in turn, to an increase in mutual dependency and finally to an increase in personal need fulfillment. According to Reiss, the wheel rotates in a clockwise direction and the number of rotations represents the degree of development of love. The model also suggests that with a loss of loading on any of the spokes the wheel reverses and rotates in an anticlockwise direction. In effect, the dynamic, developmental nature of the love relationship is expressed.