People organize their worlds in terms of positive and negative splits—good and bad, right and wrong, heaven and hell, friends and enemies, good guys and bad guys, virtue and sin. Research over the last century has shown consistently that in people's organization of concepts, emotions, perceptions of self and others, and most other things, this split defines the first, most fundamental dimension organizing human experience and conception, an evaluation dimension involving positive and negative or approach and avoidance (Mahler, Pine, & Bergman, 1975; Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957; Shaver, Schwartz, Kirson, & O'Connor, 1987; Stern, 1985; Sullivan, 1953; Wundt, 1905/1907).

Despite the importance of this dimension, scholars have largely neglected it in analyzing the forces shaping developmental pathways. Studies of emotional development have mostly focused on a particular emotion such as anxiety or love or a small set of basic emotions, but not on the dimension of positive and negative evaluation (Campos, Barrett, Lamb, Goldsmith, & Stenberg, 1983; Izard, 1977; Malatesta, 1988; Stroufe, 1979). We hypothesize that positive and
negative valence are fundamental organizers of development and that both normal development and psychopathology are centrally molded by positive and negative experiences.

Biases or constraints growing from positive and negative experiences organize action and thought from birth and thus shape development (Fischer, Shaver, & Carnochan, 1990). One of the most obvious ways that the evaluation dimension organizes behavior is affective splitting, in which a person separates two events, people, objects, or aspects of a situation into positive and negative, even though to another observer the things are neither truly separate nor simply positive and negative (Fischer & Pipp, 1984; Harter & Buddin, 1987). Examples of splitting from our observations illustrate how splitting occurs naturally in young children. A 2-year-old boy split his mother into good and bad. She had left him at his grandparents' for a few days so that mother and father could have a brief vacation. When she called him on the telephone, he spoke to her affectionately, but he also told her that there was a "bad Mommy" who had left him at his grandparents. A 4-year-old girl, asked if she can be happy and sad at the same time, split her emotions: "No way! I've only got one head." A 5-year-old boy split a social encounter as he described an interaction he had observed in which two children were simultaneously mean and nice to each other. He split the one interaction into two: "First, Jason was mean to Kyle. He hit him, and Kyle wouldn't play with him. Then a long time later, Jason and Kyle played together and were nice." Another 5-year-old portrayed the same interaction by simply dropping the nice part and acting out how the children were mean to each other.

These examples illustrate normal affective splitting in young children, but splitting is also important for development of psychopathology, and in cases of abuse and other trauma it can pervade an individual's personality organization. Recent work in the area of trauma and psychopathology supports a connection between the repeated trauma of abuse and a pervasive array of changes in thinking and emotion that produce serious disturbance (Cole & Putnam, 1992; Herman, 1992; Ten, 1991). Symptoms include basic fragmentations in a person's sense of self and malignant feelings of inner badness at the core of beliefs about self and world. The case of Marilyn van Derbur illustrates one type of fragmentation.

A young girl living in a proper middle class family, Marilyn was sexually abused by her father at night for a number of years during grade school and early adolescence (Van Derbur Atler, 1991). During this period she acted like a different person during the day and at night, splitting herself into a day child and a night child. Here is her description:

In order to survive, I split into a day child, who giggled and smiled, and a night child, who lay awake in a fetal position, only to be pried apart by my father. Until I was 24, the day child had no conscious knowledge of the night child. During the day, no embarrassing or angry glances ever passed between my father and me... because I had no conscious knowledge of what he was doing to me.

... The more degraded the night child became, the more the day child needed to excel... from skiing on the University of Colorado's ski team, to
being a debutante, to graduating with Phi Beta Kappa Honors, to being named Miss America. I believed I was the happiest person who ever lived. I truly believed that.

The day child was bright and socially skilled, a good student with lots of friends. The night child was anxious and panicky, experiencing frequent night terrors and numbing. The abuse stopped when she went away to preparatory school, and she did not remember it for years. At age 18 she began to experience disturbing dreams and periods of sudden anxiety “for no reason,” especially at night and on dates. At 24 years, she remembered the abuse and the night child and gradually brought together her split experiences.

Our developmental analysis of these kinds of splitting builds upon a broader framework, dynamic skills theory. In the course of the chapter we will describe key aspects of skills theory that explicate development of splitting in normal and maltreated children. More extensive elaborations of the theory are available elsewhere (Fischer, 1980; Fischer, Bullock, Rotenberg, & Raya, 1993; Fischer & Farrar, 1987; Fischer, et al., 1990). Within the skills framework, development involves a person’s construction of progressively more complex control systems called skills. A skill is a property of not just the person but the person and situation together, because it is literally composed of both the person’s activities and the context or situation in which the activities occur. Action and thought occur in situations composed of tasks, events, other people, and culture; and all these situational factors are part of the skill. Cognitive and emotional development flow together from these changing control systems. Emotions are more than internal experiences (feelings); they are adaptive reactions arising from the control systems: People evaluate how a situation relates to their goals and concerns, and they react emotionally based on that evaluation (Barrett & Campos, 1987; Frijda, 1986; Lazarus, 1991; Shaver, et al., 1987). These emotional reactions bias or constrain activity to certain action tendencies or scripts for the particular emotion. In this way they mold both immediate activity and long-term development, as when short-term anger produces immediate aggression and efforts to dominate, and recurrent, long-term anger produces emphasis on power, dominance, and assignment of blame.

Development moves through successively more complex levels of control systems (skills), thus producing more complex cognition, emotion, and psychopathology. Unlike traditional views of development, however, there is no simple progression up a uniform ladder of stages. Instead, skills develop through richly varied, diverse pathways, molded powerfully by emotions as well as many other dynamically interacting influences (Fischer, Knight, & Van Parys, 1993). Unlike traditional views of psychopathology, most mental illness does not involve either fixation at an early stage or regression to that stage. Instead, psychopathology develops increasing complexity with age or time, in a manner similar to more ordinary skills. The complexity creates new, more sophisticated skills that are usually adaptive in the person’s particular world, where they are based in experience. Outside that world, these same skills can produce sophisticated forms of difficulty rather than straightforward adaptations (Fischer & Pipp, 1984; Holt, 1976; Noam, 1990; Silvern, 1984).
People develop simultaneously along many strands, building a developmental web like that shown in Figure 1 (Bidell & Fischer, 1992). Each strand involves distinct control systems that progress to higher levels of complexity but are largely independent of the other strands. Dynamic skills theory provides tools for analyzing the complexity of control systems and thus predicting the sequence along a strand and comparing complexity across strands, as we will demonstrate later for several pathways. Many factors interact dynamically to affect what strands a person constructs and how he or she constructs each one. In the affective organization of social interaction, for example, strands commonly include nice interactions, mean interactions, and those that are both mean and nice. The forms of these strands vary with context too, so that for example mean interactions with adults take a different form from mean interactions with peers. One goal of this chapter is to describe several strands for development of psychopathology arising from maltreatment, especially repeated physical assault (physical abuse) or sexual exploitation (sexual abuse). These several strands provide examples of the diversity of development that we believe is commonplace in normality as well as psychopathology, although most prior cognitive developmental research has used methods that precluded the detection of such diversity in pathways (Case & Edelstein, 1993).

Within the weblike structure, there is an additional characteristic not specified in Figure 1: As people develop along each strand, their activities do not occupy one point or step on the strand but instead vary across a range (Brown & Reeve, 1987; Fischer, et al., 1993). That is, a person acts in ways that vary in complexity and so occupy a section of a strand, as illustrated in Table 1. In stories about mean social interactions, a 7-year-old girl tells or acts out stories that differ in complexity, varying across steps in a section of a strand. She does not tell all her stories at the same step or point on the strand. In one set of conditions, for example, she tells or acts out stories at Step 4 and all the lower steps in Table 1. There is presumably order in this variation, but until recently there has been little research to uncover the order.

One principle of order that we have found in the variation is what we call developmental range, defined by the difference between optimal and functional levels in Table 1. Both optimal and functional levels specify systematic limits on activities, but they differ in degree of contextual support, often controlled or provided by another person. When a child is trying to tell a mean story and an adult or skilled peer provides support for the child by explaining an appropriately high-level story, then the support helps the child to act at her optimal level, the upper limit on her performance under optimal conditions, such as Step 8 in Table 1. When the same child is trying to tell a mean story but has no such support, she acts at her functional level, the upper limit on her spontaneous performance, such as Step 4 in Table 1. A child's functional level is usually much lower than her optimal level. These limits are consistent and reliable for a particular domain. Also, optimal and functional levels show different growth curves. Functional levels typically show slow, continuous growth. Optimal lev-
As the many strands in the developmental web imply, the mind is naturally fractionated, with many distinct control systems that are not strongly connected with each other, not coordinated or integrated (Fischer & Pipp, 1984). Contrary to the assumptions of many models of the mind, including Piaget's (1957; 1975), people do not have integrated, fundamentally logical minds. Instead, we have many control systems that are naturally separate, although potentially we can develop coordination and integration of many of them.

Task and domain differences are an especially well documented source of fractionation, with hundreds of studies demonstrating that distinct tasks intended to measure the "same" ability produce different behaviors at different developmental levels. In the study of cognitive development, these findings are summed up in the conclusion that décalage (unevenness) is the rule in development (Biggs & Collis, 1982; Flavell, 1982). For example, many 7-year-olds...
understand conservation of liquid amount—that when a liquid such as orange
juice is poured into a container of a different shape or size, the amount of liquid
remains the same. The same children asked about conservation of area, such as
the amount of field covered by a set of farm buildings in varying locations, will
not generalize the liquid conservation skill to this new task. The notion of con-
servation begins not as a general concept but as a particular one tied to the task
and domain where it is learned. Consequently, there are separate developmental
strands for conservation of liquid and conservation of area.

Many other factors produce separate developmental strands too, including
context, emotion, and meaning, with the result that fractionation is inevitable
and pervasive. Differences in context lead to separate strands. In the classroom,
children learn one skill for addition, while in trading marbles on the play-
ground, they learn a different skill for addition (Rogoff, 1990). Emotions pro-
duce distinct strands, as already illustrated for affective splitting. Even meaning
leads to fractionation: When a child treats an event as an instance of one con-
cept, such as conceiving of pouring a glass of orange juice in terms of conserv-
ation of amount of liquid, she will seldom integrate that event with a virtually
identical one treated as an instance of another concept, such as pouring another
glass of orange juice as a way to help a thirsty friend. These two instances can
be related, but the coordination is not automatic and requires a specific effort.

Because of the pervasiveness of fractionation, people often do not even rec-
ognize elements that go together in the world. When we encounter a task that
is complex or confusing for us, we simplify it by dropping out components or
splitting it into separate tasks. The examples of affective splitting described ear-
lier demonstrate this process. When a 2-year-old was upset with his mother, he
split her into two separate mothers, one good and one bad. When two 5-year-
olds attempted to explain a story in which people acted simultaneously nice and
mean to each other, they showed different kinds of simplification and splitting.
One child split the story into two separate pieces, one story about a nice inter-
action and a separate story about a mean one. The other child omitted the nice
part of the story, portraying the interaction as simply mean.
Splitting is not limited to emotion. A process analogous to affective splitting occurs in many situations with no powerful positive and negative emotions when people separate related components of a task. In conservation of amount of liquid, for example, children split amount into two separate quantities—height and width (Piaget & Szeminska, 1941/1952). Sometimes they respond in terms of just height, sometimes in terms of just width, and sometimes they vacillate between the two.

Although splitting and other forms of fractionation are pervasive, they need not be permanent. People develop from fractionation toward integration in particular domains, constructing specific coordinations among previously separate skills. Coordination is one of the most important processes in development and the foundation for more complex, sophisticated control systems (Bidell & Fischer, 1994; Fischer & Rose, 1993b). Vacillation or co-occurrence of separate skills is often a sign of developmental progress, a step along the path to integration. When a child vacillates between two skills or shows them both in tandem, a process called shift of focus in skills theory, he or she is often in transition to a new coordination. Research from various laboratories shows that the capacity to activate two related skills in parallel or in alternation is often a sign of transition to a new understanding, a new coordination (Goldin-Meadow, Alibali, & Church, 1993; Gottlieb, Taylor, & Ruderman, 1977; Roberts, 1981). For example, splitting an integrated nice/mean story into two sequential stories, one about being nice and one about being mean, demonstrates the shift-of-focus capacity and indicates progress away from total splitting toward integration.

Passive and Active Splitting and Dissociation

Splitting is a special case of the more general category of dissociation, in which elements are separated even though according to some external criterion they should be coordinated. Affective splitting involves separation along the positive/negative evaluation dimension, or more generally between opposites. Dissociation refers to separation of elements along some dimension(s), including ones other than positive/negative evaluation. The natural fractionation of the mind means that splitting and other forms of dissociation are pervasive in human activity and experience.

In work on psychopathology, the terms dissociation and splitting are often used more narrowly to refer to motivated separation, such as dissociating a feeling from the thought where it originated, dissociating the self into multiple personalities, or splitting family and friends into good and bad people (Breuer & Freud, 1895/1955; Kernberg, 1976; Noam, Powers, Kilkenny, & Beedy, 1991; Putnam, 1989; Putnam, Helmers, & Trickett, in press). Clinical analyses, especially those based in Freud (Freud, 1917; Freud, 1923/1961), typically assume that dissociation and splitting are actively controlled, usually in some unconscious way. If a person does not connect two skills or experiences that the psychologist sees as related, then he or she is assumed to be striving to separate them through an unconscious motive. Yet if the mind is naturally fractionated, this assumption
must be questioned: Splitting and dissociation occur normally, and they occur routinely simply because a person has not coordinated skills or experiences that are naturally separate (Feffer, 1982). Often they are not driven by any specific motive.

On the other hand, splitting and dissociation can be motivated. Motivated dissociation and splitting are like many of the other mental phenomena Freud postulated, such as unconscious processing of information and mental conflicts leading to slips of the tongue: They are special cases of more general characteristics that are not usually motivated (Marcel, 1983; Motley, 1985; Weiss, 1990).

Understanding the development of splitting and dissociation requires distinguishing between the frequent separation that comes from natural fractionation and the controlled separation in motivated dissociation and splitting. The reaction of 8-year-old Shirley to sexual abuse illustrates how dissociation can be motivated and controlled, as well as adaptive (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1990). Shirley was repeatedly raped by her father in her bed in the basement of her home, and when she resisted his advances, he beat her up. To cope with being raped, she focused on a small hole in the wall above her bed, concentrating so intensely on the hole that she felt that she put herself into it. When she was in the hole, she dissociated her experience from the ongoing rape, and she could get through the trauma without major distress. One day when her mother was out shopping, her father raped her upstairs instead of in the basement. Without the normal context, especially the hole in the wall, she could not dissociate, and she began screaming and fighting her father. He became enraged and knocked her unconscious and then continued with the rape. This sort of situation in abuse and other kinds of trauma leads children to develop skills of dissociation (Cole & Putnam, 1992; Famularo, Kinscherff, Fenton, & Ayoub, in press; McCann & Pearlman, 1992; Terr, 1991; van der Kolk, 1987).

In this way, people can develop controlled dissociation and splitting, in addition to the natural, passive fractionation produced by tasks, contexts, emotions, meaning incompatibility, and other organizing influences. Dissociation and splitting thus vary along a dimension from active to passive (Fischer & Pipp, 1984). In active dissociation, people purposely (consciously or unconsciously) keep two experiences, activities, or characteristics separated. Some disorders, such as multiple personality, are founded in active dissociation. Many defense mechanisms are types of active dissociation, such as repression, where one part of the mind acts to keep a thought or feeling out of awareness of another part of the mind. Besides many cases described in the psychopathology literature, experimental research has clearly established that repression and other forms of active dissociation occur, not only in pathology but also normally, especially for hypnosis, dreaming, and religious spirit possession (Erdelyi, 1985; Foulkes, 1982; Hilgard, 1977; Mischel & Mischel, 1958; Orne, 1959; Vaillant, 1986).

Active dissociation is a developmental “accomplishment” when viewed from a dynamic skills perspective. A person must create a coordination in order to actively dissociate, coordinating several skills so as to keep at least two components separated. By 4 to 6 years of age, children first become able actively to dissociate a few components from one another, as when Shirley put herself in the hole in the
wall in order to separate her experience from what was happening to her body during rape. With development, people can construct more and more complex and sophisticated types of dissociative coordination, separating multiple components in complex relations (Freud, 1936/1966; Haan, 1977; Noam, et al., 1991; Vaillant, 1977). We hypothesize that the strong forms of active dissociation that are often described in psychopathology first develop during adolescence, with the capacity to build complex abstract skills coordinating many components of action, thought, and feeling.

In this chapter, we will describe three developmental pathways that vary along the dimension from passive to active dissociation. Normal affective splitting is based primarily in passive dissociation, developing from a state of uncontrolled splitting induced by an emotional bias: Older children and adults can construct skills to coordinate across the affective split, but the splitting tendency remains throughout life. It can be limited but not eliminated. In contrast, people who develop multiple personality use a strong form of active dissociation, co-conscious dissociation, in which co-conscious mental agents, usually called “personalities,” are kept separate from each other and can act upon each other. These active dissociations seem to arise from severe trauma, such as repeated sexual abuse, which leads children to learn dissociative skills for coping. Active and passive dissociation are interwoven in situations of hidden family violence, where parents rigidly separate the physically and emotionally abusive private world of the home from the well-behaved public world of school, church, and community. In this situation, children develop isolating dissociation, in which development moves along two dissociated pathways, one for public, “good” self in more conventional and distant interactions and a second for private, “bad” self in intimate interactions within the family. This dissociation is originally based on environmentally supported, passive dissociations tied to children's experiences in public and private contexts. With time, it develops toward more active dissociation, in which older children and adults seek to keep their private and public worlds completely separated.

Development of Normal Affective Splitting

Normal affective splitting arises from the natural fractionation induced by positive and negative emotions, and it moves through a developmental course toward integration as children become able to see beyond the immediate limitations of their emotional biases. At the same time, developmental pathways for splitting vary as a function of emotional experience, with different experiences biasing development in different directions.

Positive versus Negative

Affective splitting is pervasive in human activity and experience because emotions are such potent forces for fractionation, acting as biases or constraints
### Table 2  Prototypic Script for Adult Anger

**Antecedents: Illegitimate Interruption, Violation, or Harm**
Something or someone violates the person's wishes or expectations, obstructs or interferes with the person's freedom of movement or goal-attainment, hurts or insults the person, ignores or demeans the person's status.
This interference or harm is perceived as illegitimate, as something that should not happen and should not be allowed to happen.

**Responses: Vigorous Protest, Attack, Retaliation**
The person becomes energized, and mentally and behaviorally organized, to protest or fight or retaliate, thereby restoring justice, freedom of movement or passage, proper recognition, etc.
The person looks and sounds angry (e.g., face red, brows furled, voice raised) and moves in an emphatic, threatening, or exaggerated way.
The person is preoccupied with the anger-inducing situation and repeatedly insists that he or she is right, deserves better treatment, etc.

**Self-Control Procedures: Suppression and Redefinition**
The person may try to suppress or hide the anger or redefine or remove the situation so that anger is no longer called for.

Fischer et al. (1990); simplified version of results reported by Shaver et al. (1987)

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that organize action and thought into particular social-emotional scripts (Fischer, et al., 1990; Lazarus, 1991; Malatesta, 1988; Shaver, et al., 1987). Under the influence of one emotion, such as anger, a person naturally follows a given script, perceiving events as unfair or illegitimate, becoming energized, and tending toward aggression or verbal attack, as shown in Table 2, which portrays a prototypical anger sequence for interactions of self and other. Under the influence of another emotion, such as joy, the person naturally follows a different script, interpreting events optimistically, becoming energized, and relishing other people's company, as in Table 3. There are, of course, many emotion scripts besides anger and joy, and among them all, the bias toward fractionation is especially potent when one script is negative and the other positive. Moving beyond the split requires construction of a higher order skill to coordinate them.

In research to investigate the development of positive and negative splitting in interactions, we have used new, sensitive research methods for analyzing how activities order developmentally and how emotions constrain these orderings. The studies involved children's stories, actions, and explanations about positive/negative splits, such as nice/mean and good/bad interactions, as well as adolescents' characterizations of themselves in close relationships as depicted in interviews (Calverley, 1993; Elmendorf, 1992; Fischer & Elmendorf, 1986; Fischer, Hand, Watson, Van Parys, & Tucker, 1984b; Harter & Buddin, 1987; Hencke, 1991; Kennedy, 1991; Raya, 1993). With new scaling techniques for detecting developmental webs (Fischer & Rose, 1993a) and with both cross-sectional and longitudinal data, these studies have produced maps of develop-
PATHWAYS OF AFFECTIVE SPLITTING AND DISSOCIATION

Table 3 Prototypic Script for Adult Joy

Antecedents: Desirable Outcome, Achievement, Affection, Esteem
The person receives or attains something wished or strived for; receives esteem, praise, or affection (is accepted, liked, loved); has surprisingly good fortune or receives a benefit that exceeds expectations.

Responses: Smiling, Laughing, Communicating Good Feelings, Positive Outlook
The person smiles, laughs, is warm and sociable, communicates and shares the good news and good feelings, is optimistic and less vulnerable to worry, feels and acts energized or excited, jumps up and down, hugs others, is kind and generous toward others.

Self-Control Procedures: Not a Salient Issue
(Although suppression of joy in the interest of decorum or avoidance of envy is possible, such self-control efforts are not prototypical.)

Fischer et al. (1990); simplified version of results reported by Shaver et al. (1987).

mental pathways for positive and negative interactions from 1 to 20 years of age. Subjects have included volunteer middle class participants and maltreated children and adolescents.

A number of the studies have involved the development of mean and nice interactions, which are closely related to the scripts for anger and joy. Many children followed the model developmental pathway (web) diagrammed in Figure 2, which shows developmental orderings based on complexity and positive/negative splitting for a series of stories for mean and/or nice interactions. The tasks on the left of the web involve nice interactions, those on the right involve mean interactions, and those in the middle coordinate nice and mean. Table 4 provides definitions and examples of the tasks in Figure 2, as well as additional tasks tested in the research. (The tasks in Table 4 and Figure 2 also represent the steps shown earlier in Table 1.)

Development of affective splitting starts with a basic separation of positive and negative, as shown at the top of Figure 2, where nice and mean are independent (no developmental ordering and no coordination). Throughout the web, positive and negative strands continue to be partly independent.

Levels of Coordination of Positive and Negative

As children build more complex control systems, they move gradually toward integration across the positive and negative split. In general, children start with the developmentally primitive state of splitting into mean and nice or good and bad, and they move gradually toward integrating these opposite emotional valences. The integrations range from a primitive coordination by shifting early in the sequence (Task 3) to a partial integration (Tasks 4 and 7) and finally a strong integration (Tasks 8 and beyond).

The main developmental levels in this progression are shown in Table 5 for the period from 2 years to early adulthood for nice-mean stories. (Earlier levels
Figure 2: Developmental Sequence of Mean and Nice Social Interactions Based on Complexity and No Affective Bias

Note: Conventions for the skill formulas are described in Table 5. In Tasks 1 and 2, the number 1 after the words NICE or MEAN indicates that there is only one action or characteristic in the category—one instance of nice or mean behavior. The absence of any number indicates that the category includes multiple, flexible actions or characteristics.
### Table 4: Tasks for Assessing Development of Understanding Mean and Nice Social Interactions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rpl:</td>
<td>1 N; M</td>
<td>Active agent: A person performs at least one action fitting a social-interaction category of mean or nice.</td>
<td>Child pretends that one doll hits another doll (&quot;mean&quot;) or gives another doll candy (&quot;nice&quot;).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Single Representations</td>
<td>2 N; M</td>
<td>Behavioral category: A person performs at least two actions fitting an interaction category of mean or nice.</td>
<td>Child has one doll act mean to another doll, hitting it and saying, &quot;I don't like you.&quot; The second doll can be passive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 N &amp; M</td>
<td>Shifting behavioral categories: One person performs at least two actions fitting the category nice, as in Task 2, and then a second person performs at least two actions fitting the category mean.</td>
<td>Child has one doll act nice to a second doll, giving it candy and saying, &quot;Let's play.&quot; A third doll enters and acts mean to the second one, hitting it and saying, &quot;Give me your ball!&quot; In both cases, the second doll can be passive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rp2: Representational Mappings</td>
<td>4 N; M</td>
<td>One-dimensional social influence: The mean actions of one person produce reciprocal mean actions in a second person. The same contingency can occur for nice actions.</td>
<td>Child has one doll say mean things and hit another doll, who responds by hitting and expressing dislike for the first one. The second one's action is clearly produced by the first one's action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 N &amp; M</td>
<td>Combination of opposite categories in a single person: One person performs actions fitting two specified opposing categories, such as nice and mean.</td>
<td>Child has one doll act nice to a second doll, saying &quot;Let's be friends,&quot; but at the same time, the first doll shoves the second and takes away his blocks, saying that he wants to build something for the second one. The second doll can be passive throughout.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Task</td>
<td>Skill</td>
<td>Examples</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 N; M</td>
<td>One-dimensional social influence with three characters behaving in similar ways: Same as Task 4 N or 4 M, but with three people interacting reciprocally in a mean way (or alternatively, in a nice way).</td>
<td>With three dolls, child has one tease the others, while a second one hits the others. The third doll rejects both of the first because they are mean.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6 N &amp; M</td>
<td>Shifting one-dimensional social influence: The nice actions of one person produce reciprocal nice actions in a second person. Then, in a separate story, the mean actions of a third person produce reciprocal mean actions in the second person. (Or a reciprocal mean interaction can occur first, and then a reciprocal nice interaction).</td>
<td>With three dolls, child has one act friendly to a second one, who responds nicely. Then, a third one hits the second, who responds meanly.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 N &amp; M</td>
<td>One-dimensional social influence with three characters behaving in opposite ways: The nice actions of one person and the mean actions of a second person produce reciprocal nice and mean actions in the third person.</td>
<td>With three dolls, child has one act friendly to a second, while a third one hits the second. The second doll responds nicely to the first doll and meanly to the third.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rp3: Representational Systems</td>
<td>Two-dimensional social influence: Two people interact in ways fitting opposite categories, such that the first one acts both nice and mean, and the second one responds with reciprocal actions in the same categories.</td>
<td>Child has one doll initiate friendship with a second doll but in a mean way. The second one, confused about the discrepancy, declines the friendship because of the meanness. The first then apologizes and makes another friendly gesture, to which the second one responds positively.</td>
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9 N & M  Two-dimensional social influence with three characters: Same as Task 8 but with three people interacting reciprocally according to opposite categories.

With three dolls, child has one doll act friendly to a second one, while a third initiates play in a mean way. The second doll acts friendly to the first one and rejects the third, pointing out the latter's meanness. The third then apologizes for being mean, while the first does something new that is mean. The second doll accepts the third one's apology and rejects the first one, pointing out the change in his or her action.

10 N & M  Single abstraction integrating opposite actions: Two instances of interactions involving opposite actions take place as in Task 8, and the relations between the two interactions are explained in terms of some general abstraction, such as that intentions matter more actions.

With three characters, child has one act friendly to a second, while a third initiates play in a mean way. The second character responds to each accordingly, but then learns that the nice one had mean intentions while the mean one had nice intentions. The second character then changes his or her action to each of the others to match their intentions and explains that he or she cares more about people's intentions than their actions.

11 N & M  Shifting abstractions, each integrating opposite actions: First, two instances of interactions involving opposite actions are explained in terms of an abstraction such as intention (as in Task 10). Then two other instances of interactions involving opposite actions are explained in terms of a different abstraction, such as responsibility. What matters is whether people take responsibility for the harm they do.

First, child performs a story like that in Task 10. Then child shifts to a second different story, such as the following: With three characters, child has two of them act mean to a third. The first one takes responsibility for the action by admitting his or her blame and accepting the consequences. The second one takes no such responsibility. The third one forgives the one who took responsibility and refuses to forgive the one who did not take responsibility, because she cares about whether people take responsibility for the harm they do.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Task(^1)</th>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A2: Abstract Mappings</td>
<td>12 N &amp; M</td>
<td>Relation of two abstractions integrating opposite actions: Two instances of interactions involving opposite actions are explained in terms of the relation of two abstractions, such as intention and responsibility: People who have a deceitful intention can be forgiven if they take responsibility in a way that undoes the deceit.</td>
<td>With three dolls, child has two of them act nice on the surface to a third, both with the intention of deceiving him into doing their homework. When the deceit is discovered by the third character, the first one takes responsibility for his or her deceit by admitting the intention and thus re-establishing his or her honesty. But the second one does not show such responsibility. The third character forgives the first, but not the second, because he or she cares about whether people take responsibility for deceitful intentions and undo the deceit.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The designations for skill level follow the standard forms from dynamic skills theory (Fischer & Farrar, 1987).

\(^1\)The letters following the number indicate different versions of the task: N for a task about nice interactions, M for one about mean interactions, and N & M for one about both nice and mean interactions.
are described elsewhere; see Fischer and Hogan, 1989.) Each level produces a qualitatively new type of skill for controlling nice and mean interactions, marked by a period of discontinuities (abrupt changes) in activity under optimal conditions (Fischer & Farrar, 1987). Although there are no general skills allowing a level to be instantly applied broadly, the levels do apply to children's movement along any strand in the developmental web as they construct successive skills in a context or domain. The steps between levels are constructed by microdevelopmental transformation rules for building skills within a level, as illustrated by the majority of steps in Figure 2. In addition, the levels themselves show a higher order, called tiers, in which they cycle through structures from single sets to mappings to systems to systems of systems, which start a new tier. This structure is evident in the representational and abstract tiers in Table 5.

The general pattern of progressive coordination with development is evident in the diagrams in Table 5, with each level showing a new type of relation of component skills. Because skills progress through the levels in each domain, development in any domain can be predicted and analyzed in terms of skill structures like those in Table 5. We will illustrate the levels and tiers for coordination across an affective split, and later we will describe other pathways that show levels for types of dissociation arising from maltreatment.

Early in the nice/mean pathway, 2- and 3-year-old children organize behavior in terms of single concrete representations for agents, people or animate objects that carry out concrete actions and have concrete characteristics (Level Rp1, Tasks 1 to 3). At this level, splitting is pervasive. Children represent a doll or person doing nice things, as in \( \text{ME}_{\text{NICE}} \), or separately they represent a doll or person doing mean things, as in \( \text{YOUM}_{\text{MEAN}} \). At this level there is no real coordination of nice and mean, but at best sequential co-occurrence, first one representation and then the other (Task 3), which is called shift of focus in dynamic skills theory:

\[
\text{[ME}_{\text{NICE}}\] > [YOUM}_{\text{MEAN}}\] (1)

Most 2- and 3-year-olds can do no better than this type of juxtaposition, which involves elementary splitting of me and you. They also can shift between positive and negative representations of one person, including themselves:

\[
[\text{ME}_{\text{MEAN}}] > [\text{ME}_{\text{NICE}}]\] (2)

Because of the phenomena of developmental range (Table 1) this level continues to be prominent for several more years, at least until age 5 or 6. An example is the 4-year-old girl who said that she could not be happy and sad at the same time: "No way! I've only got one head."

Gradually, children build more complex control systems that integrate components, including positive and negative, in higher level skills. At about age 4, representational mappings emerge, in which children coordinate a few representations in a single skill (Level Rp2, Tasks 4 to 7). At this point, most coordinations maintain splitting, coordinating components that have the same valence. For example, they relate \( \text{YOU}_{\text{MEAN}} \) with \( \text{ME}_{\text{MEAN}} \) to produce an un-
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Representational</th>
<th>Abstract</th>
<th>Examples of Skills</th>
<th>Age²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S4/Rp1:</td>
<td>[YOU_MEAN] OR [ME_NICE]</td>
<td>Relations of sensorimotor action systems to produce concrete representations of objects, people (agents), or events: Child pretends that doll is hitting someone. Child says, “Doll mean.”</td>
<td>18–24 mos.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rp2:</td>
<td>[YOU_MEAN — ME_MEAN]</td>
<td>Simple relations of representations: Child makes one doll’s mean actions produce reciprocal mean actions in the other doll. Child makes two dolls act as Mom and Dad in parental roles. Child understands that self knows a secret and the teacher does not know it.</td>
<td>3.5–4.5 yr</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rp3:</td>
<td>[YOU_MEAN \leftrightarrow ME_NICE]</td>
<td>Complex relations of subsets of representations: Child makes two dolls interact in reciprocally nice and mean ways. Child makes two dolls act as Mom and Dad as well as doctor and teacher simultaneously (two reciprocal roles). Child understands that to prevent teacher from learning a secret, he or she must hide signs of it in own actions.</td>
<td>6–7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Single Abstractions

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{YOU1} & \leftrightarrow \text{ME} \\
\text{YOU2} & \leftrightarrow \text{ME}
\end{align*}
\]

Relations of representational systems to produce abstractions (intangible concepts) about objects, events, or people (personalities):

Person explains that intentions matter more than actions: In dealing with others, intention is more important than action, so that positive intention is not only better than negative intention but also overrides negative action.

Person sees Dad as having general personality characteristics, such as conformity, emotionality, or secretiveness.

Abstract Mappings

\[
\text{INTE}_{\text{NEG}} \longrightarrow \text{RESP}_{\text{POS}}
\]

Simple relations of abstractions:

Person relates intention to responsibility, indicating how a particular intention such as deceit behind a harmful act determines the responsibility for remedying the harm.

Person sees a personality characteristic of Dad and a characteristic of Mom as complementary (or as incompatible).

Similar for self and friend.

Abstract Systems

\[
\text{DECEIT} \leftrightarrow \text{RESP} \quad \text{FLAW} \leftrightarrow \text{HELP}
\]

Complex relations of subsets of abstractions:

When harm is inflicted on someone, two types of intention (deceit and unintentional harm) are related to two types of responsibility (dealing with the flaw in one's character and helping the person harmed) so that one's specific intention determines the nature of one's responsibility.
### Table 5 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Representational</th>
<th>Abstract</th>
<th>Examples of Skills</th>
<th>Age²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A4:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Person sees several personality characteristics of Mom and Dad as complementary (or as incompatible), defining their special relationship. Similar for Self with friend or lover.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>General principles for integrating systems of abstractions: Person understands moral principle of justice, integrating several types of relations between intention and responsibility. Person uses a general principle to integrate characteristics of Mom’s and Dad’s relationship as it changes across situations or over time. Similar for Self with friend or lover.</td>
<td>23–25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Systems of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abstract Systems:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹The specific formulas shown are for the first example at each level, which involves nice and mean interactions. Formulas for the other examples at each level follow the same general format.

²Ages given are modal ages at which a level first appears based on research with middle-class American or European children. They may differ across cultures and other social groups.

³Representations grow from coordinations of sensorimotor systems, but for simplicity that relation has been omitted from this table.

⁴The skill structure shown for Level A4 is a system of abstract systems, which is also a principle. The principle that emerges from this structure could be designated by a separate structure, such as P, but because there is no evidence for later levels beyond A4, we have not included the separate structure for P.

Note: In skill structures, each word or letter denotes a skill component, with each large word or letter designating a main component (set) and each subscript or superscript designating a subset of the main component. Italic designates representations, and outline letters designate abstractions. Lines connecting sets designate relations forming a mapping, single-line arrows designate relations forming a system, and double-line arrows designate relations forming a system of systems. Examples of additional representational skills and their components are elaborated in Table 4 and Figure 2.
understanding of negative social influence or contingency— I will be mean to you because you were mean to me (Task 4M):

\[ \text{[YOU}_{\text{MEAN}} \rightarrow \text{ME}_{\text{MEAN}}] \] (3)

Or they can construct a similar skill for nice contingency— I will be nice to you because you were nice to me (Task 4N):

\[ \text{[YOU}_{\text{NICE}} \rightarrow \text{ME}_{\text{NICE}}] \] (4)

Real integration begins with a few mappings coordinating opposite-valence components for the same person or context. For example, a 4-year-old girl relates \( \text{ME}_{\text{NICE}} \) with \( \text{ME}_{\text{MEAN}} \) to understand that she can be nice and mean at the same time (Task 4 N&M):

\[ \text{[ME}_{\text{NICE}} \rightarrow \text{ME}_{\text{MEAN}}] \] (5)

Similarly, 4-year-old Seth explained to his father one day, “You know, Daddy, I’m mostly happy, but right here [pointing to a place on his head] I’m a little bit sad.” This coordination of opposite emotions occurred several years earlier than reported in most other research (Donaldson & Westerman, 1986; Harris, 1985; Harter & Buddin, 1987; Stein & Levine, 1989). Assessments in those studies have used complex tasks rather than the very simple tasks that we have administered, and in addition, the studies usually have not included high-support assessment conditions to elicit optimal-level performance (Fischer, et al., 1993; Fischer, et al., 1984b; Lamborn, Fischer, & Pipp, 1994).

At 6 or 7 years, integration becomes more powerful with the development of representational systems, control systems relating multiple representations in a single skill (Level Rp3, Tasks 8 and 9). Children coordinate two mappings to produce a skill where two or more people interacting can both show related positive and negative activities, as in two-dimensional social influence—I will be nice to you because you were nice to me and at the same time mean to you because you were mean to me:

\[ \text{[YOU}_{\text{NICE}} \rightarrow \text{ME}_{\text{NICE}} \rightarrow \text{ME}_{\text{MEAN}}] \] (6)

By 9 or 10 years, as these skills are gradually consolidated and made routine, children can commonly integrate across an affective split, which is why most research finds evidence for integration by this age. On the other hand, when children have strong positive or negative feelings, they still show splitting most of the time, using skills that maintain the split instead of those that integrate across it.

According to dynamic skills theory, development moves not only through levels but also through large-scale reorganizations called tiers, at which new combinations of components are consolidated to produce a new kind of unit or chunk. A new tier emerges at 10 or 12 years, when children coordinate their skills in a new way that moves them from representations to abstractions. They coordinate several representational systems to form a system of systems, which in
its consolidated form is a single abstraction, simultaneously Level Rp4 and Level A1 (Task 10 in Table 4). In Table 5, the coordination of representational systems is diagrammed in the column for representations, and the abstraction emerging from that coordination is indicated in the column for abstractions.

For example, to coordinate several systems for combining positive and negative in social interactions, an adolescent constructs an abstraction such as intentionality or responsibility (Fischer, Hand, & Russell, 1984). For positive intentionality, a 12-year-old girl evaluates how two other people have interacted with her, indicating that whether each of them actually harmed her (were mean) is less important than whether they intended to be helpful or nice: Intentions matter more than actions.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{YOU1}_{\text{NICE}} & \rightarrow \text{ME}_{\text{NICE}} \\
\text{YOU2}_{\text{MEAN}} & \rightarrow \text{ME}_{\text{MEAN}} \\
\end{align*}
\]

\[= \text{INTEPOS} \]  
(7 and 8)

For negative responsibility, a girl evaluates how two people have taken responsibility for problems they cause for other people, coordinating the two interactions so as to judge negatively the one who did not take responsibility. The coordination of two systems for interactions thus results in a new abstraction for negative responsibility:

\[
\text{[RESP}_{\text{NEGA}]}\]

In both of these cases, the abstraction moves beyond the specifics of representing concrete actions to the less tangible generalities of abstract characterizations of the "real" meaning underlying actions. Put simply, adolescents move from conceiving people as agents to conceiving them as personalities.

The emergence of abstractions provides the potential for new, more powerful and less concrete types of evaluation, including sophisticated splitting. The intentionality example shows how with single abstractions the positive/negative dimension continues to organize people’s actions, producing more refined splitting and coordination of positive and negative. Different nice and mean aspects of actions are compared, and the ultimate evaluation of the person is made in terms of the aspect judged to be more important—who was truly nice and who was truly mean. In this way, the new capacity for abstraction produces a new kind of splitting, with nice versus mean or good versus bad replaced by less tangible splits, such as benevolent versus malevolent or intended good versus intended evil. The limitations of early levels of abstraction are similar in many ways to those of early levels of representation: Young adolescents cannot yet coordinate multiple abstractions just as young preschool children cannot yet coordinate multiple representations. Adolescents are therefore prone to affective splitting of abstractions, as in shifting between treating someone with a negative intention as "really" bad or malevolent and treating someone with a positive intention as "really" good or benevolent:
Abstractions develop in many different domains, in which children move from representing things in terms of their concrete characteristics to conceiving them in less tangible terms based on more subtle properties—abstractions. In personality, adolescents move from construing people as concrete agents to conceiving them as personalities, with complex, hidden or inferred characteristics, such as conformity, inconsistency, emotionality, conservatism, partnership, secretiveness (Harter, 1983; Kennedy, 1991; Lamborn, et al., 1994; Nucci, 1993; Rosenberg, 1979; Selman & Schultz, 1990). Even the concept of personality itself requires an abstract conception of a person. Other domains where the development of abstractions have been described include law, morality, mathematics, and epistemology (Adelson, Green, & O'Neil, 1969; Colby, Kohlberg, Gibbs, & Lieberman, 1983; Fischer, et al., 1984a; Kitchener, Lynch, Fischer, & Wood, 1993). Later in the chapter, we will show some of the shapes that abstractions take in the development of active dissociation.

 Adolescents develop abstract mappings at about age 15, in which they coordinate two single abstractions in a single skill (Level A2, Task 12). In the example in Tables 4 and 5, negative intentionality, is coordinated with positive responsibility, to produce a judgment that a negative intention can be undone by taking positive responsibility for the bad intention:

\[ \text{[INTELNEG] > [INTEPOSG]} \]  

A skill example that is especially important in social-emotional development is coordinating one personality conception or identity with another, as people often do in close relationships. Two adolescent best friends or romantic partners will spend many hours getting to know each other so that they can each map some part of their two personalities together. For example, 16-year-old high school students Paul and Elaine met in their church's youth group and became good friends, spending many hours talking about their religious beliefs and how they bring religion into their everyday lives. They found important differences in the specific activities they did but a common concern with altruism—helping less fortunate people in their community, each in an arena where they had special interests. Paul volunteered to help serve dinner to the homeless once every week, while Elaine preferred being a Big Sister to a younger girl from a poor family. Their shared understanding involved a mapping of their conceptions of their two personal altruistic commitments:

\[ \text{[ELAINE --- PAUL]} \]  

Similarly, adolescents use mappings to make other personality comparisons. They analyze how some personality characteristics of their parents are complementary (or perhaps incompatible). They apply these analytic skills to themselves, comparing and evaluating their own internal personality characteristics. With this capacity to compare comes an emotional consequence—an upsurge in perceived conflicts in their own personalities as well as conflicts with their parents (Harter & Monsour, 1992; Kennedy, 1991; Lamborn, 1986).
At approximately 20 years, young adults develop abstract systems, in which they coordinate several abstract mappings to form a system combining multiple abstractions in a single skill. For example, they can relate several types of intention and responsibility to each other simultaneously, specifying how one type of intention requires taking responsibility in one way while another type of intention requires taking responsibility in a different way:

\[
\begin{pmatrix}
\text{DECEIT} & \rightarrow & \text{PLAW} \\
\text{INTE} & \rightarrow & \text{RESP} \\
\text{HARM} & \rightarrow & \text{HELP}
\end{pmatrix}
\] (13)

In social relationships, two friends or lovers can coordinate several aspects of each other's personalities or identities in a single skill, relating for example professional and parental identities of both partners. Paul and Elaine continued their relationship as well as their religious commitments, and by age 21 they had fallen in love and built mutual understandings about how their individual conceptions of their future professions and parenting shared their altruistic commitment:

\[
\begin{pmatrix}
\text{PARENT E} & \leftrightarrow & \text{PARENT F} \\
\text{ELAINE} & \leftrightarrow & \text{PAUL} \\
\text{PROF E} & \leftrightarrow & \text{PROF P}
\end{pmatrix}
\] (14)

Or a person can analyze how several characteristics of his or her parents fit together to define their special relationship.

Finally, the highest documented level of skill development emerges at about age 25 with the development of systems of abstract systems, which are principles (Level A4). Since we first postulated this level, several studies have supported its existence (Fischer, Kenny, & Pipp, 1990; Kitchener, et al., 1993). By their mid-20s, many people develop coordinations of diverse perspectives about knowledge through the principle of reflective judgment. Some people develop coordinations of diverse moral interests through the principle of justice (Colby, et al., 1983), which can involve relations between different types of intention and responsibility:

\[
\begin{pmatrix}
\text{DECEIT} & \rightarrow & \text{PLAW} \\
\text{INTE A} & \leftrightarrow & \text{RESP A} \\
\text{HARM} & \leftrightarrow & \text{HELP} \\
\text{INTE B} & \leftrightarrow & \text{RESP B}
\end{pmatrix}
\] (15)

In close relationships, a person can explicate changes in the relationship over time or situation, understanding how at different times it has involved distinct but related connections between the partners' personal characteristics.

Note that even with the great complexity and sophistication of this highest stage, the evaluative dimension behind splitting continues to potently organize action and thought. Evaluations about what is right or wrong, good or bad, healthy or sick pervade human activity at every level.

In summary, splitting of positive and negative emotions is a powerful force in development. Positive and negative pathways are partly independent, and as
children advance cognitively, they usually became capable of coordinating positive and negative under progressively more circumstances. Splitting does not disappear suddenly in development, but it comes and goes as factors such as contextual support and emotional state push an individual up or down a developmental sequence (strand). While splitting may become less common with development, it remains prevalent even in adults, especially when they are emotional or when they have little contextual support for integration across a split.

Diversity in Normal Development of Splitting

The developmental web in Figure 2, complex as it is, is only one of the pathways for normal splitting. There is great diversity in development both between and within individuals. That is, different children show different pathways in the same assessment situation, and a given child shows different pathways with variations in context or emotional state.

One source of variation is degree of social-contextual support for integration of positive and negative, which causes a child to move up or down in her developmental range in a matter of minutes. As a result, splitting comes and goes in the same child. When the immediate context provides social priming for, say, a story integrating mean and nice behavior, a 7-year-old girl can control a high-level skill integrating mean and nice, as in Tasks 8 or 9. A few minutes later, without such social-contextual support, the same girl typically shows splitting, as in Task 4 (N or M version). In this kind of variation, the general shape of the web may remain the same, but the child's location in the web varies with context.

Webs of different shapes are produced by variations in emotional state. Anger facilitates control of complex mean interactions, and happiness facilitates control of complex nice ones. Each emotion evokes a preemptive social script that biases the person toward a certain kind of interaction during the emotion, including a certain interpretation of other people's behavior. An anger script biases the individual toward taking offense at another person's actions, and therefore toward seeing someone else as mean and in turn acting mean. On the other hand, a joy script produces the opposite effect, a bias toward the positive, including a tendency to interpret actions as nice and in turn to act nice.

Children who are shy or behaviorally inhibited (as Kagan, 1989, calls them) show such a bias toward the positive in the mean and nice stories. In an ongoing longitudinal study of inhibited and outgoing children, highly inhibited children have shown a bias toward nice and an avoidance of mean, especially when the stories involved a self character acting mean (Hencke & Raya, 1993; Hencke, 1991). This avoidance occurred even when the children were specifically asked to imitate a story about mean interaction. It was evident both in the children's emotional reactions and in their relatively slow development of understanding of mean stories (including those integrating mean and nice). The delay was specific to negative stories and was not present in other developmental measures. In other words, shyness seemed to lead to increased affective splitting, with a predominance of the positive, especially in representing the self. In terms of developmental pathway, the shy children showed a shift in the web in Figure 2.
that favored the positive (left) and delayed the negative (right). Figure 3 gives our best estimate of the shifted developmental pathway that these shy children show. The shift is predicted to be especially evident for representations of self, where negative evaluations are rigidly shunned; this bias in self development may relate to what Block (1980) has called ego overcontrol.

Indeed, there are probably few individual children who exhibit the developmental balance between positive and negative represented in Figure 2, which shows no differences between relative positions and orderings for positive and negative. Figure 2 represents the form development would take if children were influenced by only splitting and task complexity, with no general bias toward positive or negative. Many studies contradict this assumption, suggesting that most children evidence a general bias toward positive (Connell, 1991; Harter, 1983; Harter & Monsour, 1992; Ruble, 1983).

Even the hypothesis of a uniform positivity bias probably does not hold, however. At early ages, negative may develop ahead of positive (Elmendorf, 1992; Hand & Fischer, 1989; Hencke, 1991). For most children with no known history of maltreatment, stories about social interactions seem to show a bias of negative over positive until at least 3 years, and then somewhere between 4 and 6 years the pattern seems to reverse. Of course, this negativity bias does not hold for shy children, who show the positivity bias in Figure 3 from an early age. Young children who are not shy seem to enjoy negative stories acted out in the safe environment of the preschool classroom or laboratory playroom. They prefer mean stories and understand them better. By 4 to 6 years, most children shift toward a positivity bias, especially for stories about the self. According to the social-perception research literature, this positivity bias is pervasive in adulthood (Greenwald, 1980). Most children and adults prefer primarily positive interactions, demonstrate a richer understanding of positive interactions, and characterize themselves in predominantly positive terms. This positivity bias can be considered a relatively mature form of affective splitting, based in the natural tendency toward positive representation of self: There is a positive/negative split, with emphasis on positive and deemphasis on negative; but there is also consideration of both positive and negative, at least some of the time.

Experience seems to play a major role in producing these diverse developmental pathways, even with temperamental characteristics such as shyness (Kagan, 1989). A shy emotional makeup appears to lead to recurrent experience of strong emotional reactions to mildly negative interactions or attributions about the child, producing an emotionally mediated positivity bias. We expect that many other kinds of emotional experiences affect developmental pathways. One of the most potent is recurrent maltreatment, which seems to radically shift the shape of development.

Growing Up Abused

A thesis of this paper is that recurring, extreme emotional experiences caused by maltreatment can fundamentally alter social-emotional development, inducing changes in how people organize themselves, especially along the positive/
Figure 3 Developmental Sequence of Mean and Nice Social Interactions with Positive Affective Bias

Note: Conventions for the skill formulas are described in Table 5. In Tasks 1 and 2, the number 1 after the words NICE or MEAN indicates that there is only one action or characteristic in the category—one instance of nice or mean behavior. The absence of any number indicates that the category includes multiple, flexible actions or characteristics.
negative dimension and in terms of social-emotional dissociation. Among the most important changes are a predominant negativity in representing self and social relationships and an elaborate, sophisticated splitting and dissociation of self and others. Research indicates that the repeated traumas of maltreatment often produce a cluster of fundamental changes in personality that include malignant feelings of inner badness and basic fragmentations in self (Breuer & Freud, 1895/1955; Buchsbaum, Toth, Clyman, Cicchetti, & Emde, 1992; Cole & Putnam, 1992; Famularo, et al., in press; George & Main, 1979; Herman, 1992; Putnam, 1993; Terr, 1991; Westen & Cohen, 1992). The most psychologically destructive patterns of maltreatment seem to be both ongoing sexual abuse and physical abuse coupled with emotional maltreatment.

Our approach to analysis of development of maltreated children is based in the new interdisciplinary science of developmental psychopathology, which has crystalized over the last two decades. This approach is grounded in the belief that an integrative theory of development across the life-span encompasses both normative and clinical populations, with the body of knowledge about one population informing that about the other. Of particular importance is the relation of normative and pathological developmental pathways, understanding of which we hope to enhance through our work with maltreated children.

Developmental psychopathology assumes a dynamic, organizational perspective, in which many factors in children's lives interact in dynamic ways to determine the etiology and intergenerational transmission of child maltreatment (Cicchetti, 1989; Cicchetti & Schneider-Rosen, 1984). Factors such as parent history and characteristics, family organization, child attributes, social stressors, and community environment all mutually interact to influence children and determine occurrence and effects of maltreatment. From this perspective, Cicchetti and Rizley (1981) define four types of risk factors in maltreatment: vulnerability factors, challengers, protective factors, and buffers. Vulnerability factors are long-term, enduring influences that increase the likelihood of maltreatment and so affect the child's developmental pathway. Challengers are short-term conditions and stresses that confront families and may increase the likelihood of maltreatment in the predisposed parent. Protective factors are enduring attributes that contribute to decreasing the risk of maltreatment or its transmission across generations. Buffers are transient compensatory factors that may protect a family from stress, such as a good job, improved financial conditions, or a child's move to a new developmental level.

The developmental trajectories of negativity and dissociation described in this chapter are set in motion by severe, short-term challengers or long-term vulnerability factors producing child maltreatment. As children attempt to cope with the extreme dangers of repeated sexual, physical, or emotional abuse, they organize their thought and action in ways that are adaptive in dealing with the abuses, helping them to survive. These patterns can become integrated into the fabric of a child's personality, and then they often prove to be maladaptive for coping with more benign, day-to-day interactions. Although the maladaptive patterns generally share the characteristics of negativity bias and predominance of dissociation and splitting, they vary in important ways with type and severity of maltreatment, as well as with the timing of the trauma, its recurrence, and a
child's emotional reactions to maltreatment. Consequently abusive experiences produce diverse developmental pathways, including the two that we are focusing on—multiple personality and hidden family violence—as well as borderline and narcissistic personality disorder and psychopathy.

Two Key Characteristics: Negativity Bias and Dissociation

Although research is only beginning on the developmental pathways of abused children, there are data available to guide an initial sketch of the pathways produced by abuse, some of which we have already reviewed briefly. In our own research in progress, we are assessing abused children's constructions about positive and negative interactions, relationships, and self-representations (Ayoub, Willett, & Robinson, 1993; Calverley, 1993; Fischer, 1991; Raya, 1993), and other researchers have collected relevant data as well.

Research to date indicates that in severely maltreated children and adolescents, the normal positivity bias in representations disappears at a very young age and is replaced by a reverse affective split, a negativity bias. Instead of biasing their representations of self and important social relationships towards the positive, maltreated children bias them toward the negative: Their emotions are often dominated by the negative, and they endlessly act out and talk about predominantly negative representations of events and interactions. From an early age, when maltreated children focus on positive interactions, they seem to represent relationships in a conventionalized, rigid, stereotyped manner. Representations of negative interactions, on the other hand, tend to be rich, dynamic, involving, and often frightening for people around the children and sometimes even for the children themselves. As the children grow older, they often make an effort to inhibit negative expression in certain contexts, particularly when they sense danger from a powerful adult or older child (Ayoub, Raya, & Fischer, 1993).

In addition to this major transformation to a negativity bias, abuse seems to produce increased splitting and dissociation in representation of self and others. Patients with dissociative pathologies such as multiple personality and borderline personality show a remarkably high incidence of severe maltreatment (Fagan & McMahon, 1984; Putnam, 1989; Westen & Cohen, 1992). Diverse research with preschoolers and older children suggests that maltreatment leads to prominent dissociation and splitting at an early age, which seem to develop from the foundations of abusive relationships (Calverley, 1993; Raya, 1993). Crittenden (1988) reported that some maltreated toddlers displayed "false positive affect." Vondra, Barnett, and Cicchetti (1989) found that young school-age children who had been maltreated tended to overrate their competence. Cicchetti and Beeghly (1987) noted that maltreated children used proportionally fewer words about internal states, attributed their internal states to fewer social agents, and were more context-bound than their counterparts who were not maltreated. Cicchetti (in press) proposes that maltreated children attempt to control their anxiety and fear by modifying their language to exclude certain aspects and contexts associated with maltreatment: They do not talk about certain topics or use certain kinds of language. This specific affective splitting en-
hances unrealistic views of self and others, leading eventually to adult characterological disorders such as narcissistic and borderline personality (Kernberg, 1975; Kohut, 1971).

In reacting to the recurrent trauma from maltreatment, children experience an intense struggle for control and competence. Judith Herman (1992) points out that the traumas “destroy the belief that one can be oneself in relation to others.” Previous research suggests that the trauma of maltreatment is associated with delay in the development of self and in the ability to get along with and understand others (Aber, Allen, Carlson, & Cicchetti, 1989; Mueller & Silverman, 1989), but we will show how maltreatment often produces not simple developmental delay but a shift to a different developmental pathway characterized by a negativity bias and the use of splitting and dissociation to organize self and relationships.

These results do not mean that only abused children show emotional splitting. Splitting and dissociation are normal processes shown in all children and adults under many circumstances, as we illustrated earlier. But abuse leads to new kinds of dissociation and splitting, such as a negativity bias, a positive-conventional versus negative-dynamic split, and a sharp dissociation between different parts of close relationships.

Abusive Relationships

We assume that the developing organization of action and thought is shaped fundamentally by close relationships in the family, so that child and adult come to relate to other people (and social organizations) in ways based in their family relationships (Shapiro & Carr, 1991; Stern, 1985; Sullivan, 1953). Close relationships are fundamental to the child’s personality development (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978; Bretherton & Waters, 1985; Crittenden, 1993; Vondra, Barnett, & Cicchetti, 1990) and may be the primary source of environmental influences on personality development (Waller & Shaver, 1993). From the start, a child’s organization of these interactions is naturally split into positive and negative, including good and bad self, good and bad parent, nice and mean peers, and good and evil forces in the world.

Severe, continued maltreatment in the family or other close relationships dramatically alters the ways that children organize positive and negative in close relationships and interactions and thus transforms their developmental pathways. From the initial bias toward splitting the world into good and bad based on affect, children who are not maltreated gradually move toward integrating these opposite emotional valences and often focusing on the positive. Maltreated children, on the other hand, develop different pathways in which relationships and experiences are severely split and dissociated and the direction of organization is shifted to predominance of negative over positive. By adolescence and adulthood, many of these children have constructed fundamentally negative views of themselves and their worlds, what Westen (1992) calls melevolent self-concepts instead of benevolent ones; and they have developed advanced, sophisticated ways of dissociating events, people, and experiences.
Some fortunate children find healthy relationships that help them grow out of abusive pathways, but even they seem to show consequences of the abuse (Cicchetti, 1989).

The conflict for children in close, abusive relationships is fundamental—between attachment to a caregiver and experience of that caregiver as a dangerous power without mercy (Herman, 1992). Child victims are caught between their need to protect attachments and their regular experience of injury, malice, threat, or other kinds of maltreatment. Instead of developing the usual core self, with a positivity bias and a tendency to gradually integrate self and others across emotional splits, maltreated children learn to split themselves along emotional lines, to react in terms of the shifting affective tones set by the adults they are close to.

Different patterns of maltreatment coupled with the child's ways of adapting to abuse appear to lead to different developmental pathways involving distinct types of splitting and dissociation, such as multiple personality disorder and hidden family violence. Both pathways include a negativity bias and a predominance of dissociation and splitting, but the pathways are otherwise very different. In hidden family violence, children grow up in a family that rigidly separates a private, violent world from a public, benevolent one. They gradually internalize or appropriate this separation and construct their own dissociation based in it (Fischer, et al., 1984b; Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978). In multiple personality, children grow up in a less predictable world, in which they are subjected to severe, repeated, uncontrollable abuse, often of multiple varieties. Instead of dissociating their world into private and public, they dissociate themselves into different agents organized around distinct emotional experiences, especially those arising from the abuse. In this way, they develop the capacity to form multiple distinctive, dissociated "personalities."

We have used three sources of data in inferring these two pathways: clinical case studies from our own experience, case studies and research findings from the published literature, and our ongoing research with abused preschoolers and adolescents (Ayoub, et al., 1993b; Calverley, Fischer, & Ayoub, in press; Raya, 1993). In portraying pathways for multiple personality and hidden family violence, we will provide clinical descriptions based on real cases to illustrate developmental levels in each pathway, including both adult and child cases.

**Multiple Personality Disorder: Development of Co-conscious Dissociation**

In multiple personality disorder a person constructs distinctive agencies or co-consciousnesses (usually termed "personalities") for organizing different affective realms of his or her life, thus producing one of the most extreme and complex dissociative skills. The extremity and clarity of the dissociation, as well as its genesis from severe maltreatment in childhood, make the disorder a natural for developmental analysis. For many years, multiple personality disorder
was in disrepute as a diagnostic category and was often confused with schizophrenia and schizoid disorders (Bliss, 1980; Rosenbaum, 1980). Recent research has demonstrated both that it is a distinct disorder and that it is closely tied to childhood trauma, especially abuse (Fagan & McMahon, 1984; Putnam, 1989). The disorder is also remarkable for the distinctness of the dissociated personalities, with not only different emotional responses and personality profiles but even different physiological reactions, handedness, and other biological indicators of personality (Henninger, 1992; Putnam, 1989). Although the co-consciousnesses are not fully separate personalities, they are separated in many ways, and their separation develops through a specific pathway, usually linked to trauma and maltreatment in childhood.

Skills for Co-conscious Dissociation

In our model of development of multiple personality, the multiple agencies are built through co-conscious dissociation (Fischer & Pipp, 1984). The natural dissociation that arises from intense emotional experiences during trauma produces the beginnings of two or more co-conscious agencies that have different dominant emotions and function independently without affective coordination or interference, at least some of the time. With development a person builds a dissociative coordination between the agencies, so that he or she can switch between two (or more) largely incompatible self-organizations, with only one in dominant control at a time. Because of the agencies' independent functioning, they can develop separate skills to high levels of complexity. Once this dissociative strategy for dealing with stress is established, it can lead to a proliferation of co-consciousnesses to deal with different situations. In fact, often the multiple personalities are not stable over long periods but change systematically.

The agencies are not truly independent, of course. They have three kinds of connections, each of which requires a set of skills that need to be constructed. First, they are actively dissociated—not only defined in contrast to each other but actively kept separate. Second, the person can switch from one agency to another, which requires a skill relating the two. Third, in limited ways they can act on each other, with one affecting activity, memory, or experience in the other. At any moment, one co-conscious agency controls the body (or most of it, at least), yet at some point in development another one becomes able to affect the experience of the one in control, preventing or inducing an activity or feeling. This co-conscious repression and induction often relate to fears that the co-consciousness in the background will somehow be harmed by a particular experience or action of the co-consciousness in control. For example, in the famous case of The Three Faces of Eve, the co-conscious agency Eve Black had access to many of the memories of Eve White and sometimes interfered with Eve White's activity and experience, preventing her from remembering something or inserting a thought or feeling into her awareness. These kinds of repressive and inductive connections lead to dissociative experiences such as depersonalization and hearing voices.
Here is a clinical case that illustrates some of these properties of multiple personality, including the foundation in trauma and the existence of independent co-consciousnesses:

At age 30, Ms. L came to therapy complaining of anxiety attacks and headaches. She worked adeptly as a computer programmer, but she had difficulty talking with the people for whom she worked. She indicated that she found herself unable to remember some periods of time, she sometimes found herself in unusual and embarrassing dress, and she occasionally experienced feelings of depersonalization. As a child, Ms. L had been physically abused in a sadistic way by a stepfather and an older brother, and the brother had also subjected her to sadistic sexual activity.

After 2 years, she was diagnosed as having multiple personality disorder, with an elaborated system of co-conscious personalities. In her therapy, at least four separate co-conscious agencies have presented to her therapist: (a) Lois, the host personality, who is depressed and isolated and has low-self-esteem, (b) Helen, a stern mother of three children who insists that she be obeyed, (c) Joyce, a sexy 27-year-old, and (d) Samantha, a 6-year-old girl. The three women agencies each appeared to function as adults, with adequate understanding of high-level abstractions such as personality conceptions. The child agency seemed to function cognitively like a child of age 6 or 8, showing at least a beginning understanding of two-dimensional social influence (Task 7 or 8 in Table 4 and Figure 2).

The capacity to produce separate co-conscious agencies is a developmental accomplishment, one that takes many years to construct and consolidate to the degree evident in Ms. L. This high-level dissociative capacity seems to be similar in some ways to the more ordinary adolescent and adult capacity to relate one's own personality to someone else's (as described in Table 5). The central difference is that the relation of agencies in multiple personality in Ms. L is dissociative within a person, while the more ordinary relation of personalities in different people is often integrating across people. According to this analysis, construction of the full array of multiple-personality skills requires at least abstract mappings (Level A2 in Table 5), in which several abstractions are dissociatively coordinated:

\[
\text{[PERSY}_A \quad \text{---} \quad \text{PERSY}_B] 
\]

With specific skills of this kind, the person can keep several co-conscious agencies separate, switch between them, and have one act on or influence the other (the three types of connections among co-conscious agencies).

Also, each co-conscious personality can develop separately along its own pathway, constructing relations among personality traits, motives, and the like in a manner partly analogous to the way a person without multiple personality develops his or her personality. However, co-conscious personalities are often fluid, changing so much with differing life circumstances that one personality
disappears over time and is replaced by others. A single, long-term, continuous pathway for each personality cannot be assumed, but we do posit a long-term, continuous pathway for the development of the dissociative skills in multiple personality.

In our model, multiple personalities emerge in adolescence and develop further into adulthood. But that is only part of the story. Dissociation of full-blown "personalities" may await adolescence, but simpler forms of dissociation—concrete co-conscious agents—develop at a much earlier age. They define the beginnings of the developmental pathway for co-conscious dissociation in multiple personality.

First Tier of Dissociation: Co-conscious Agents

In the development of dissociative coordination, children show a much simpler type of skill than adults. Their dissociative skills coordinate representations rather than abstractions, and so they have co-conscious agents rather than co-conscious personalities. Throughout this chapter, we use the term co-conscious agencies to include both agents and personalities. Agents control concrete actions or characteristics, while personalities control intangible motives or personality traits. Gradually, the co-conscious agents of children become the co-conscious personalities of adolescents and adults (Table 6).

Fluent control of independent agents first appears in normal development at about 2 to 2½ years, when children can pretend that a doll is walking, talking, playing, or hitting, and can speak sentences that describe the same actions in dolls, people, and other agents. The representations of nice or mean actions shown in the stories for Level Rpl of Table 4 are one set of examples, and there are many others in the research literature (Bretherton & Beeghly, 1989; Fischer et al., 1984b; Piaget, 1946/1951; Rubin, Fein, & Vandenberg, 1983; Watson & Fischer, 1980; Wolf, 1982). At this point children can shift between mean and nice representations, as described earlier:

$$[ME_{\text{MEAN}}] > [ME_{\text{NICE}}]$$ (17)

They can also use this capacity to shift in order to build their first crude skill for dissociation. For example, if they perceive being mean as dangerous, then when they think of being mean, they can try to deny that state and shift instead to the opposite, being nice.

$$\text{not } [ME_{\text{MEAN}}] + [ME_{\text{NICE}}]$$ (18)

The shift symbol with a thick line through it indicates a dissociative relation; the skill to the left is the one defended against, as indicated by the not, and the one to the right is shifted to as the desired state. This dissociative strategy can only be used easily when the context supports the representation that is being
shifted to, in this case $\text{ME}_{\text{NICE}}$. If the context supports the opposite representation, $\text{ME}_{\text{MEAN}}$, children will have great difficulty sustaining the shift. They need the stronger dissociative structures that develop at higher levels to impose dissociations successfully without strong contextual support.

A couple more years are required for the child to build fluent relations between two agents in representational mappings (Level Rp2) at about 3½ to 4 years. According to our model of multiple personality, the emergence of mappings brings the first development of genuine (but simple) dissociative coordination. For two agents to actively dissociate from each other requires at least a simple mapping between two representations. The process is similar to the mapping of two agents in one-dimensional social influence (Tasks 4N and 4M in Table 4) and the mapping of opposite emotions in a single agent (Task 4N & M). This first co-conscious dissociative coordination is essentially a mapping of two agents with different defining emotional states. The thick line in the middle of the mapping relation indicates dissociation.

\[\text{AGENT 1} \quad \text{AGENT 2}\]

The limited evidence on development of multiple personality indicates that it does indeed emerge about 4 years of age (Bliss, 1980; Fagan & McMahon, 1984; Kluft, 1985). In addition, clinical evidence indicates that repression (a defensive mechanism using active dissociation) also first appears at about this same age (Freud, 1936/1966; Vaillant, 1977).

The case of Carrie Smith, a severely abused young girl, illustrates the early development of co-conscious agents in the preschool years, starting before full dissociative coordination has appeared:

At age 3, Carrie Smith was removed from her home because of allegations of physical abuse, neglect, and sexual abuse by her mother and two "fathers" who lived in their home. She and her two siblings were locked in a dark bedroom for a month, repeatedly sexually abused by all three adults, and physically abused by one of the "fathers."

When Carrie Smith arrived in her foster home, she was prone to lengthy tantrums and periods of crying, did not talk in sentences, often screamed in her sleep, and was both self-destructive and aggressive to others. At age 4, after a year in this new home, she functioned with less anxiety, had developed basic routines for eating and sleeping, and was much more controllable.

Along with the improved general behavior, however, came dramatic changes in her personality organization. According to her foster mother, she began to have night terrors in which she seemed to reenact her abuse in her dreams, particularly the sexual abuse by adults. She did not remember these terrors and activities the next morning.

At the same time, her daytime behavior also changed. She began to switch her mood and behavior quickly in ways that showed consistent patterns of affect, food preference, and activity—patterns that seemed to reflect separate agencies. For each pattern, there was one dominant affect, and during different episodes Carrie sometimes called herself by different names. For example, she would suddenly assert that her name was Carla (her mother's name) and that she was pregnant (as her mother was at the time of Carrie's removal). She did
Table 6 Levels of Development of Dissociative Coordination in Multiple Personality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Representational Tier</th>
<th>Abstract Tier</th>
<th>Examples of Dissociative and Non-dissociative Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S4/Rp1:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Single   | not                    |               | Single concrete representations of people as agents:
| Representations | [AGENT 1] | [AGENT 2] | When child is expected to be nice and she thinks of being mean, she shifts abruptly to a nice representation, to avoid being mean (active dissociation). Child pretends that she is her mother Carla hitting someone and saying mean things, and then she shifts to pretending that she is Carrie hugging a baby and saying nice things (not active dissociation). |
| Rp2:      | [AGENT 1 —→ AGENT 2]  |               | Simple relations of representations: 3.5–4.5 yr
| Representational Mappings | M               | N             | When she feels threatened, child switches from agent nice Carrie to agent mean Carla, and she switches back when she feels comfortable again (act. dissoc). As Carla, child acts mean in response to actions by someone else (not act. dissoc). |

Notes:
1. Dissociative Skills
2. Age
3. Single concrete representations of people as agents:
   - When child is expected to be nice and she thinks of being mean, she shifts abruptly to a nice representation, to avoid being mean (active dissociation).
   - Child pretends that she is her mother Carla hitting someone and saying mean things, and then she shifts to pretending that she is Carrie hugging a baby and saying nice things (not active dissociation).

Example:
- Child pretends that she is her mother Carla hitting someone and saying mean things and then she shifts to pretending that she is Carrie hugging a baby and saying nice things (not active dissociation).
Complex relations of subsets of representations:
Child switches from agent Carrie to agent Carla, with each agent having several key concrete characteristics that determine when switching will occur (act. dissoc.).
As Carla, child acts both tough (mean) and seductive with a man, whom she expects to be tough and sexual in return (not act. dissoc.).

Relations of representational systems to produce abstractions (intangible concepts) about people (personalities):
For one agent (#1), person coordinates several specific relations with other agents (#2 and #3) in terms of an intangible characteristic, motive, or the like, thus forming a co-conscious personality (Personality A) with that characteristic (act. dissoc.).
Within each agency, person develops abstract personality concepts and motives, thus beginning to form separate "personalities" instead of mere agents. No coordination of agencies as personalities, only as concrete agents (not act. dissoc).

Simple relations of abstractions: 14-16
Person relates two personalities, not just concrete agents, so that Personality A can influence the activity or experience of Personality B (act. dissoc).
### Table 6 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Representational Tier</th>
<th>Abstract Tier</th>
<th>Examples of Dissociative and Non-dissociative Skills</th>
<th>Age²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A3: Abstract Systems</td>
<td>[PERSY A &lt;-&gt; PERSY B]</td>
<td>Complex relations of subsets of abstractions: Person relates two personalities so that Personality A can influence the activity or experience of Personality B along several dimensions simultaneously (act. dissoc.). Within each personality, person relates complex set of personal characteristics in multiple dimensions, such as several types of intentionality and several types of responsibility as part of agency Helen's concern for morality and obedience (not act. dissoc.).</td>
<td>18–20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
General principles for integrating systems of abstractions:
Dissociative strategies can be remarkably sophisticated, with switches and influences between personalities being determined by subtle relations reflective of some system-wide organization (act. dissoc.). However, effects of dissociation may mean that this level often produces only the capacity for facile switching and influence among many personalities, as opposed to systematic integration. Within each personality, person can understand general principles, such as moral principle of justice, integrating relations between types of intention and responsibility (not act. dissoc.).

The skill structures in the diagrams are examples of skills showing the simplest general form of a dissociative structure for a given level and are described in the first example, which in each case involves active dissociation. The second example is an instance of a more ordinary skill at this level and therefore does not fit the dissociative structure in the diagram; instead it shows a type of structure that is characteristic of the level but lacks the dissociation. In general, at least three kinds of dissociative skills can be built: After Level Rpl, children can build skills for keeping the agencies separate and distinct and skills for switching from one agency to another. Skills whereby one agency intervenes in another's ongoing activity or experience require higher levels, probably level A2 abstract mappings and beyond. Examples of other dissociative skills are described in the text of the chapter.

Ages given are estimates of modal ages at which a level first appears based on cognitive developmental research described elsewhere (Fischer & Farrar, 1987; Fischer et al., 1993; Kitchener et al., 1993). They may differ across cultures and other social groups.
1 Representations grow from coordinations of sensorimotor systems, but for simplicity that relation has been omitted from this table.

2 The skill structure shown for Level A4 is a system of abstract systems, which is also a principle. The principle that emerges from this structure could be designated by a separate structure, such as P, but because there is no evidence for later levels beyond A4, we have not included the separate structure for P.

Note: In skill structures, each word or letter denotes a skill component, with each large word or letter designating a main component (set) and each subscript or superscript designating a subset of the main component. Italic designates representations, and underline letters designate abstractions. Lines connecting sets designate relations forming a mapping, single-line arrows designate relations forming a system, and double-line arrows designate relations forming a system of systems. An arrowhead without a line (>) designates a shift of focus between two skills. A dark rectangle in the middle of a line or arrow indicates that the relation is dissociative.
not say that she was acting like Carla but that she was Carla. In this pattern, she was highly seductive as well as mean and angry at everyone. She was verbally abusive to her foster mother, speaking in an adult tone and swearing frequently. She also engaged in sexually explicit behavior.

Carrie would then abruptly change to a different pattern, in which she called herself Carrie, who was a good, parentified girl. Now, when asked about Carla, she said that Carla was her mother and denied acting like Carla. In this pattern, she was obedient and concerned over the young children in the foster home. She liked to care for babies and worried about their diapers.

To keep our referents clear, we use “Carrie Smith” for the patient, “Carrie” for the (nice) girl agent, and “Carla” for the (mean) woman agent.

Carrie Smith demonstrates concretely how the early development of dissociative skills can occur. Our hypothesis is that when she began to act as the two agents, mean Carla and nice Carrie, she was showing the beginnings of active dissociation: She kept the two agents separate and changed from one to the other as a defense when she was frightened or in some other way motivated to be in a different emotional state. This capacity to switch between agents and keep them separate even without a clearly supportive context involves a representational mapping for dissociation.

At age 3, when she was in her mother’s home and then first entered her foster home, she had separate representations for her mother Carla and herself (Level Rp1). When her mother was mean (a common state) 3-year-old Carrie Smith represented her as another person (a you, not a me) who was mean: YOU-CARLA_MEA,? When Carrie Smith was playing or fantasizing, she sometimes represented herself as mean Carla, and other times as nice Carrie, but she could not coordinate these two agents except by shift of focus:

\[
\text{ME-CARLA} \, \rightarrow \, \text{ME-CARRIE}
\] (20)

As Carrie Smith developed dissociative skills in order to cope with her trauma and anxiety, she gradually constructed a representational mapping for dissociative coordination of herself as both Carla and Carrie (Level Rp2):

\[
\text{ME-CARLA} \rightarrow \text{ME-CARRIE}
\] (21)

By age 4 she could often control whether she was Carrie or Carla, keeping the two agencies dissociated and switching to whichever one she needed affectively.

---

1 The designation of who is “me” and who is “you” in these dissociative skills is tricky. From an observer’s viewpoint, both Carla and Carrie are organizations of the same person ("me," Carrie Smith), but from the viewpoint of one of the agents the other one is “you.” By this argument, each dissociative skill diagram could readily be changed to two (or more) separate skills, one relating ME-CARLA to YOU-CARRIE and a second relating ME-CARRIE to YOU-CARLA. There are parallel differences in process too: When Carrie Smith is organized as agent Carla, she would seem to use a different skill for dissociating from agent Carrie than she uses when she is organized as agent Carrie and dissociating from agent Carla. Nevertheless, for simplicity, we have diagrammed only one dissociative skill for these relationships.
at the moment. She mapped mean Carla and nice Carrie together, in a manner similar to the normal mapping of two agents with different affects in children's pretend play (Task 4 in Table 4). By 5 and 6 years, she had become skilled at making such switches and could even describe her experience of switching:

At age 6 years Carrie Smith reported that "the girl inside of me" called Carla would take her to another place to get away from things that scared her. When asked by the therapist how Carla got Carrie Smith to another place, she replied, "She hears someone yell at me and then she would do something. I'd be saying, 'I'm scared, and I can't move', but I'd be running because that's Carla's legs doing that, but I couldn't stop it. I couldn't feel it when my Mom grabbed my arm, not until after when Carla goes back in and then my arm is my own arm. Then it starts hurting."

Besides dissociative skills, Carrie Smith also developed more ordinary mappings for social contingencies based within only one agent, with no obvious dissociation. For example, she could have Carrie act nice to someone who was nice to her,

\[
\text{[ME-CARRIE} \text{ YOU \text{ NICE}}\text{] (22)}
\]

or have Carla act mean to someone who was mean to her,

\[
\text{[ME-CARLA} \text{ YOU \text{ MEAN}}\text{] (23)}
\]

Note, however, that when Carrie Smith was actually using the dissociative skill, her optimal level would set a limit on the complexity of skill she could use at that moment, according to our skills model. If the dissociative skill (formula 21) was at her optimal level, then her developmental limit would prevent her from controlling a social contingency (formula 22 or 23) at the same time: When she was using her mapping capacity to control the dissociative skill, she would have no capacity left over to simultaneously control a social contingency. Doing both dissociation and social contingency simultaneously would require developing a more complex mapping or a skill at the next level, representational systems.

As Carrie Smith continued on the pathway of development of dissociative coordination, her next major advance involved representational systems (Level Rp3), where she moved beyond the limits of mappings to relate several aspects of the agents Carla and Carrie in the same dissociative skill. As a result, the two co-conscious agencies became much more textured and flexible—two-dimensional instead of one-dimensional—because her new optimal-level limits allowed her to expand each agent beyond one dimension during dissociation. For example, Carla could be simultaneously mean and seductive, while Carrie was simultaneously nice (pleasant) and parental, taking care of a baby:

\[
\text{SEDUCTIVE} \text{ CAREGIVING}\text{[ME-CARLA} \text{ MEAN} \text{+ ME-CARRIE} \text{ NICE}}\text{] (24)}
\]
Besides shifting between agents, another common skill of co-conscious dissociation is removing oneself from the body that is being abused, as described earlier for Shirley, who put herself into a hole in the wall whenever her father raped her. A co-conscious agent removes her experience from the body, which she treats as another person, a "you." Carrie Smith described how her agent Carrie removed herself from her body, which became an object of observation:

At 11 years of age, Carrie Smith talked about a recent episode of abuse by her mother that occurred during a visit home. She said that her mother put her on a table, tied her up, and left her there for hours. She described herself as "not minding" because she "wasn't really there." When asked what she meant, she said that she felt herself (Carrie) looking down from the ceiling onto the child Carrie Smith tied up on the table. Although she acknowledged that she was that child, she also stated that during the experience she was not the child. Instead, she was looking at the child on the table, thinking "Poor girl, she must be scared and small." When asked the identity of the person looking down, Carrie Smith said, "Why, the one who takes care of me when I get scared or afraid," which is the agent Carrie.

This dissociative coordination required at least a representational system, with which Carrie could build a complex concrete relation between co-conscious agent Carrie and the child herself Carrie Smith (or at least her body):

\[
\text{SMALL CAREGIVING}
\begin{align*}
\text{YOU-CARRIE} & \quad \text{ME-CARRIE} \\
\text{SCARED} & \quad \text{NICE}
\end{align*}
\]

(25)

Consolidating these representational systems relating a number of characteristics of concrete agents requires several years. Then, children can build on the consolidated systems to begin development beyond co-conscious concrete agents, to build dissociative skills involving coconscious personalities.

Second Tier of Dissociation: Co-conscious Personalities

Table 6 sketches the developmental pathway that we propose for dissociative coordination in multiple personality, starting with development of concrete agents like Carla and Carrie. This general outline portrays the general form of skills for co-conscious dissociative coordination that are common to many individual pathways. Of course, the outline does not capture the rich variations that individual people show in their specific pathways, but the case examples provide some examples of that variation.

At about age 10 to 12, the emergence of abstractions produces the developmental transition from agencies to personalities. Just as a young person can integrate two representational systems to produce a moral abstraction such as intentionality or a personality concept such as conformity, he or she can dissociatively coordinate two representational systems like those in formulas 24 and 25 to produce a co-conscious personality. For example, a person can coordinate a system for switching between two given agents with a second system for switching between one of them and a third agent, as shown in Table 6 (Level
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This coordination produces a new type of agency, a "personality" based in the coordination.

Carrie Smith built an abstract skill for the co-conscious personality Carla, through which Carla could enact her wish to control other people—in this case two other co-conscious agents, Carrie and Mom. She could coordinate a representational system for switching between Carla and Carrie with a second system for switching between Carla and another agent that she had developed, Mom. The co-conscious agent Mom occupied the role she was named for: She was good at dealing with children and giving people advice about them. When Carla wanted a nice, conventional person, she could call upon Carrie. When she wanted someone to deal with a child, she could call upon Mom. This coordination produced a skill that subsumed how agent Carla (Agent 1 in Table 6) controlled and switched to both nice Carrie and child-expert Mom (Agents 2 and 3):

In this way Carla became a co-conscious personality with a specific motive structure, a wish to control others. Through her coordinations with other agents, concrete agent Carla became motivated co-conscious personality Carla. This process is analogous to the way that an abstract personality characteristic or value such as intentionality or conformity develops from the coordination of interactions among concrete agents (Table 3). Of course, motives are present at earlier ages, but they are not coordinated and controlled the way they can be with an abstraction.

A new skill level not only leads to new dissociative skills, but it also improves the flexibility and generalizability of skills from the previous level (Fischer & Farrar, 1987). When Carrie Smith described her observation of her own body being tied to the table, for example, she was 11 years of age, old enough to be capable of single abstractions. From our case material, it is difficult to tell whether she was using a representational system or a single abstraction. But if she were using an abstraction, she would have been able to coordinate a representational system for agent Carrie with another system for the body of Carrie Smith, thus producing a more fluid and better controlled version of the dissociated observing skill than with a single representational system. A detailed skill analysis of her actions could discriminate whether she was using a representational system or an abstraction (Granott, 1993; Kitchener, et al., 1993).

The skill for an (abstract) co-conscious personality produced by this new developmental level is still severely limited, however, because the young person
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cannot yet control relations among personalities except by reducing them to concrete agents (representational systems within an abstraction). For both Carla and Carrie to be dissociatively coordinated as co-conscious personalities instead of as concrete agents, Carrie Smith must build an abstract mapping (Level A2), which 10- to 12-year-olds are generally not capable of.

At about age 15, when abstract mappings begin to emerge, people can coordinate one abstraction with another, and thereby one co-conscious personality with another. This coordination of personalities allows intangible personal characteristics to be dissociatively related in the two personalities. One co-consciousness (Personality A in Table 6) can evaluate what is occurring in the activity or experience of another and intervene to change an activity or thought in the other (characteristic W in Personality B in Table 6), as when Eve Black intervened in Eve White’s activity while Eve White had primary control of the body. This sort of complex relation between agencies is probably not possible with anything less than a mapping, which is why earlier we described multiple personality as requiring at least abstract mappings (as in the cases of Ms. L and The Three Faces of Eve).

Carrie Smith illustrated this kind of relation in her description of the relation between Carrie and the co-conscious personality Mom:

After Carrie Smith had a child (a boy named John), her co-conscious personality “Mom” took responsibility for most childrearing decisions and gave advice whenever Carrie was anxious about how to care for son John or needed guidance with him. For example, Mom told Carrie what to do for John when he was crying or needed to be fed or have his diaper changed. At times, Mom directly took over taking care of John instead of just advising Carrie. Carrie described Mom as a motherly woman in her 40s who “knows all about children.”

The personalities Mom and Carrie relate to each other, apparently even having conversations. The relationship is well defined in terms of one dimension of personality, Mom’s skill at parenting and Carrie’s naive need for help at parenting:

\[
\text{[CARLIE \text{NEED} \rightarrow \text{MOM \text{SKILL}}]} \quad (28)
\]

Within each co-conscious personality, a person using abstract mappings can also build non-dissociative personality skills involving several related abstractions, as described for normal development in Table 5. For example, Carrie could build an understanding of how intention relates to responsibility in a mapping, so that a negative intention could be corrected by a positive act of responsibility:

\[
\text{[INTENTION} \rightarrow \text{RESPONSIBILITY]} \quad (29)
\]

Such a skill built by one personality, such as Carrie, may not function with other personalities, such as Carla or Mom.

Level A3 abstract systems begin to emerge at about age 20, when young adults can coordinate several abstract mappings together to produce complex relations among multiple abstractions. This sort of capacity produces a new power
in relating co-conscious personalities, including more fluid skills by which one personality can influence several aspects of ongoing activity or experience in another (Personality A influencing characteristics W and Y in Personality B in Table 6). Here are examples of how these skills functioned in the case of Carrie Smith:

By her early 20s Carrie Smith had developed a number of complex co-conscious personalities. Carrie, her core personality, shared conscious access to some other personalities, but she did not know about others. An example is the co-conscious agency Carla, who had developed into a seductive, self-centered party-girl personality who used drugs and was seductive with men. Carla sometimes spoke to Carrie and baited her about her abstinence from drugs and her prudishness about sex. One New Year’s Eve when Carrie Smith went to a party, Carrie remembered that Carla had been speaking to her, but then she remembered nothing else until she woke up in the room of a man she did not know. Carla took control unbeknownst to Carrie and drank lots of alcohol, used cocaine, and went with a man to his room. Carla began to seduce the man and then “left,” baiting Carrie by returning control to her. Carrie screamed and tried to run away. Later she reported that she had been raped and did not know how she got to her assailant’s room.

These fluid connections among co-conscious personalities Carrie and Carla are much more complex than the earlier connections between Carrie and Mom, with not only changes in who is in control but also complex conversations at some points and blacking out at others. This sort of activity requires the complexity of Level A3 abstract systems, in which several aspects of the two personalities can be coordinated, such as Carla’s and Carrie’s attitudes about sex and drugs. Carla is sexually promiscuous and freely uses drugs, and she baits Carrie about her sexual prudishness and her abstinence from drug use.

Finally, systems of abstract systems begin to appear at about age 25, when adults can coordinate several abstract systems in terms of a general principle. With such a structure, dissociative strategies can be remarkably sophisticated. Because the coordinations are based in dissociation, however, the sophistication may show itself primarily as a remarkable facility at switching among co-conscious personalities and having them influence each other. Here is an example expressed in terms of general personalities instead of the specific agencies of Carrie Smith.

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This skill uses coordination to enact sophisticated co-conscious dissociation, but the same sort of skill without the dissociative blocks is used to produce powerful integrations across roles and contexts in normal personality development, such as coordination of moral or epistemological activities around a general principle (Colby, et al., 1983; Kitchener, et al., 1993). The focus on dissociative coordination in multiple personality may preclude or minimize these sorts of integrations. Carrie Smith's experience illustrates how the coordination process can be used to move toward replacing dissociative coordination with integration:

By her late twenties Carrie Smith had entered treatment, where she began work on identifying and integrating her personalities. As she became more comfortable with her diagnosis and her therapist, she developed a process of "talking" to Mom, Carla, and several other adult and child personalities. Her therapist focused on a technique called "talking through," talking to the personality system as a whole. Carrie Smith began to be able to assemble some whole memories from fragments and in this way consciously began to integrate material from the past held by a number of separate personalities. She also learned more about who "came out" when she was frightened, tired, or in a parenting role. As she learned to anticipate these happenings, she was also more able to integrate them and stay in consciousness as the host while she heard other personalities talk to her and even argue over taking control. The new integrations helped her to gain flexibility from combining the complementary strengths of the various personalities and compensating for their individual weaknesses.

Of course, integration is also possible at much earlier ages in simpler forms.

In summary, in the development of multiple personality, co-conscious dissociation and splitting grow out of abuse or other types of trauma and develop into remarkably sophisticated, complex levels of dissociative coordination. The intense, uncontrollable affective experiences arising from maltreatment and trauma induce dissociation at an early age, and some children then pursue dissociative coordination as a means of coping with the strains and demands of their stressful social lives. Multiple personality does not primarily involve developmental delay or arrest but instead involves a type of dissociative coordination that produces an unusual developmental pathway.

Hidden Family Violence: Development of Isolating Dissociation

Another pattern of maltreatment, which we call "hidden family violence," produces a second unusual developmental pathway based in a different kind of dissociation, grounded in isolation more than coordination. In our experience a number of abusive families follow this pattern, sharply splitting their public and private lives in a way that encapsulates violence in their private relationships while maintaining strongly positive public relationships (Ayoub, Grace, Para-
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dise, & Newberger, 1991). Children growing up in these families develop along
two dissociated and split pathways—the benevolent self in public relationships
and the malevolent (abusive or abused) one in private relationships. There is
little or no integration between these two domains, which are kept isolated from
each other.
A cluster of contextual and emotional factors produces these split pathways,
starting with passive dissociation of public and private from early childhood.
With time and development, the dissociation becomes more active as children
internalize the separation and become motivated to maintain
the mechanism they use is largely isolating dissociation, which occurs through shifting
from public to private or vice versa, supported by contextual and emotional fac-
tors promoting passive dissociation. By adulthood, people developing along this
pathway can have great skill at sustaining the separation.
In public settings, such as on the job, in the shopping mall, or at church,
people in these families are well behaved, even outstanding citizens. There is no
public sign of abuse or violence at home. In fact, many of these adults are cham-
pions of moral causes and are often highly critical of anyone who does not con-
form to their norms and beliefs. Often times they search out strong, specific,
and concrete rules of conduct, such as devout religious belief or intense com-
mitment to a social or ethnic group or club.
When these people are asked about maltreatment, they strongly reject it. In
many cases, the denial does not seem to be simple lying: The adult appears to
believe it and is highly consistent in maintaining it in the public setting. Ac-
cording to our model, these adults maintain such a powerful split between public
and private truths that in public they seem to have no access to knowledge
about the malevolent world they perpetuate at home. In many maltreating fam-
ilies, simple lying undoubtedly occurs, but we are not describing them.
The distinction between public and private is not limited to maltreating
families, of course, but is pervasive in human cultures. Families everywhere
clearly distinguish between what is appropriate in public and in private. In
some nations such as Japan, the distinction is remarkably strong and sharp,
while in others it is more flexible; but the distinction seems to be universal
(Heider, 1991; Kantor & Lehr, 1984; Morsbach & Tyler, 1986; Wallbott &
Scherer, 1994). What distinguishes hidden family violence is not the distinc-
tion itself, but the way the distinction is defined emotionally, including isolat-
ing dissociation. In these families, the private world is marked by abuse,
tyranny, and a focus on power. The public world is marked by a prosocial stance,
stereotyped positive images that are often prescribed by strong external value
systems, and an inability to talk about or publicly acknowledge the nature of the
private world.

Skills for Isolating Dissociation
Both multiple personality and hidden family violence begin with dissocia-
tions caused by affective experiences associated with trauma, usually in impor-
tant relationships. In contrast to multiple personality, however, hidden family
violence is built around a rigid social-situational structure that maintains a sharp dissociation between public and private domains. As a result, the child growing up in this situation develops not dissociative coordination between separate, related co-conscious agencies but instead isolating dissociation, in which public and private worlds are kept separate without coordination. The support of the many contextual and emotional factors marking public versus private leads to a natural passive dissociation that isolates the domains from each other. Children learn mostly to shift from one domain to the other based on these factors, and they do not coordinate the domains. They use the mechanism of shift of focus, the simplest kind of association between two skills, requiring no true coordination (Bidell & Fischer, 1994; Fischer, 1980).

In our own research with toddlers and preschool children, a number of the children show affective splitting as an adaptation to their maltreatment as early as the first half of the second year. The splitting is especially pronounced in children who have been not only physically threatened and abused but also emotionally berated. These toddlers begin to actively inhibit or avoid some negative emotional expressions, particularly involving activities or characteristics of their caregiving parent. They display conventional but faked (ingenuine) positive affect, or they adopt a caretaking or parentified stance that expresses their negativity bias but with them in control or with the negativity sublimated (Ayoub, et al., 1993a). Other studies describe similar avoidance and false positive displays in young maltreated children (Cicchetti & Beeghly, 1987; Crittenden, 1988) as well as sequelae in adulthood (Main & Hesse, 1990).

These toddlers and preschoolers also show another kind of splitting that is based on their perceptions of the power of others. With adults whom they perceive as powerful and threatening, they often defer and inhibit negative affect; but with peers and adults whom they perceive as less powerful, they are often aggressive.

In early development the several factors that conspire to produce and reinforce this public/private dissociation include context, task, secrecy, helplessness, punishment, emotional experience, and affective splitting. Children experience sexual, physical, or severe emotional abuse at home and not in school or other public places, so context produces passive dissociation. Also, at home the tasks or activities that children do are typically different from those done in schools, stores, churches, or other public places. Parents in hidden-violence families reinforce this separation by being secretive about their life at home and forbidding their children from talking about it, especially with outsiders. Violating this prescription can lead to severe punishment. In addition, children's emotional experience with their family in public is distinctly different from that in private, which promotes affective splitting: Outside the home, the parents are polite and overtly kind to their children, while inside the home they are often abusive tyrants.

The case of Marilyn van Derbur mentioned in the introduction illustrates the pattern, although the abuse in her case was primarily sexual and not physical. Her father abused her secretly at home at night. During the day and in public he was a prominent, respected citizen and showed no signs of being abusive. The result was that Ms. van Derbur developed two dissociated worlds—that of the
successful, respected, good public child of the day and that of the secret, ashamed, bad private child of the night.

The kind of hidden family violence that we have encountered most frequently is characterized by private physical and emotional abuse. Our developmental model will focus on that pattern, which is illustrated by the case of Mr. M:

Mr. M was a 37-year-old successful businessman, a church elder, and a respected community leader in a small New England town. In his business he owned a fleet of ice cream trucks, which drove through family neighborhoods ringing their bells to bring children and adults to buy ice cream. Mr. M said that he did not have any close friends, but his family was what was important to him and it was good, close, and widely respected in the community. He talked a lot about his successful business, its role in making children happy, his family's regular attendance at church, his children's consistent school attendance, and his position in the church. He told everyone that his marriage was wonderful and his wife was the perfect woman for him. In public he appeared to be the model husband and father, gracious and attentive to his wife and children.

At home Mr. M was dominant, ruling with an iron fist and needing to be correct in all things. He was routinely degrading and physically abusive to his wife. He would read her the Bible, selecting passages that according to his interpretation, admonished her that she was "a whore" and should repent. He would then physically assault her, telling her that she must obey him as the scripture demands. He was often sadistic in his punishment of the children as well. It was this physical abuse of the children that his wife, under great stress, eventually reported, thus bringing him to the attention of the Department of Social Services.

When asked about his own childhood, Mr. M described it in idyllic terms, but with no recollection of details. He said that his father was a good provider and a respected citizen. Other evidence from family friends indicated that his father was a stern disciplinarian who was harsh with all his children, including the young Mr. M.

Mr. M consistently denied that he was violent or tyrannical at home. His children also denied that he abused them and claimed that their injuries came from accidents at home, on the playground, or in sports, although the evidence was strong that they had been physically abused. When Mr. M's wife and children were able to "escape" from their home and feel safe in a shelter, they were able to relate information about their private abuse. Even after allegations were made and confirmed with physical evidence, Mr. M denied them.

Mr. M kept his public and private worlds completely separate. In the public world, he was an outstanding citizen and community leader, but at home he was a tyrant and expected his children and wife to obey his every command. In his conversations with community members and social workers, there was not a hint of his negative private life. When the question of abuse was raised, he denied it, and when questioning persisted, he became indignant. It seemed that in the public realm he truly believed that he was not an abusive man.

Mr. M's was a strong case of isolating dissociation between public and private worlds. The developmental "accomplishment" here is very different from mul-
multiple personality, in that there is no sophisticated coordination of the two "personalities." Yet there is still advanced development. In hidden family violence, the two worlds can each develop to high skill levels with remarkably little connection: in the public world, the person is conforming and respected, and in the private world, he or she is bad and tyrannical (like Mr. M) or victimized (like his wife and children). Along with the isolating dissociation of public and private, there are some minimal coordinations between the worlds, but these mostly seem to involve ways of maintaining the dissociation, such as skills for shifting to the private domain when one is in a public place. As we describe the development of isolating dissociation in hidden family violence, we will illustrate the coordinations along with the dissociations.

Just as with normal affective splitting and multiple personality, dissociation in hidden family violence develops through a series of levels, moving from representations of concrete agents in social interactions to abstractions of intangible personality and motivational characteristics. Early in this development, the public/private split in young children is maintained by the contextual supports provided by their family's separation of public and private worlds and by the distinctive organizing emotions in the two worlds. These supports for splitting are not enough, however, for them to keep the worlds apart consistently. Here is an example of young Johnny's early struggles with hidden family violence:

While he was alone in a corner of the daycare classroom, 2½-year-old Johnny enacted a story about his father being mean to him. First, he said, "Johnny, you bothered me, come here you little brute!" He then dropped the father doll and grabbed the boy doll directly, shaking his fist and saying, "Don't you be bad, you dumb boy! How many times have I told you? Don't bother me!" He then hit the doll in the face and threw it across the room.

Later, when Johnny went to preschool, his teacher became concerned because he picked on other children, particularly when he thought she was not watching. She called a conference with his parents, at which the father became upset when he heard that his son was disruptive. He told the teacher that he would take care of the problem at home. For the next few days at school, Johnny was very quiet and withdrawn and would not play with anyone.

These child victims of hidden family violence, caught between their need to protect attachments and their regular experience of physical injury, malice, and threat, become performers who do not know they are performing. Instead of developing an integration of public and private, they live like chameleons, learning to shift colors based on the demands of the adults around them. As the children grow, they incorporate a sense of badness based on their private lives, and at the same time they begin to identify with the aggressor to meet his or her needs and eventually, in many cases, to take on his or her role as they grow up. This is an etiology for an abuser who portrays a good face to the public while being sadistic, controlling, and abusive in private.

First Tier of Dissociation: Isolating Agents

This pattern of hidden family violence develops through a sequence of levels of isolating dissociation, according to our model, as outlined in Table 7. First,
children develop isolating agents, which are coordinated within each domain, public or private, but not across domains. Gradually the isolating agents of children become the isolating personalities of adolescents and adults, and the dissociation becomes highly skilled.

When fluent control of individual agents first develops at 2 to 2½ years, isolating dissociation starts with the shift-of-focus process described for the beginnings of multiple personality (Table 6, Level Rpl). Children become anxious when, for example, they see their father getting angry in a way that reminds them of previous abuse. Because they typically attribute negativity to themselves, \( ME_{\text{mean}} \), they attempt to shift from that negative representation to what they believe their father wants instead, \( ME_{\text{nice}} \). This sort of shift of focus occurs normally in most children when their caregivers become upset. For example, when 2½-year-old Jonathan heard his mother sounding grumpy, he started to jump around, laughing and trying to get her to play. He attempted to shift the polarity of affect from negative to positive:

\[
[ME_{\text{mean}}] > [ME_{\text{nice}}] \tag{32}
\]

But when parental upset leads to abuse, children often dissociate the two poles, maintaining vigilance for the slightest hint of negativity and then shifting unconsciously to the positive, such as \( ME_{\text{good}} \), and so avoiding the negative, \( ME_{\text{bad}} \).

\[
[ME_{\text{bad}}] \nRightarrow [ME_{\text{good}}] \tag{33}
\]

In this first crude skill for dissociation, a child defends against \( ME_{\text{bad}} \) and unconsciously shifts to \( ME_{\text{good}} \) provided that the context supports the latter. If the context supports the opposite representation, \( ME_{\text{bad}} \), children will have great difficulty sustaining the shift at this level.

Normal children at this age also begin to distinguish between how to act in private and in public—between, for example, dealing with their family at home and visiting a neighbor's house or playing on the community playground. They thus learn to shift between representations of the two worlds and so begin to appropriate or internalize differences in their private and public worlds. In public, they try to maintain a focus on \( ME_{\text{good}} \), reserving \( ME_{\text{bad}} \) mostly for private settings (as parents can attest), although they are still able to shift back and forth.

\[
[ME_{\text{private bad}}] > [ME_{\text{public good}}] \tag{34}
\]

When maltreated children can distinguish private and public, they begin to dissociate the two. For example, when they are on the playground, they must not act in terms of their private world, but instead must be good and proper, not acting out the private \( ME \)s that relate to abusive interactions at home.

\[
[ME_{\text{private bad}}] \nRightarrow [ME_{\text{public good}}] \tag{35}
\]
Table 7: Levels of Development of Isolating Dissociation in Hidden Family Violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Representational Tier</th>
<th>Abstract Tier</th>
<th>Examples of Dissociative and Non-dissociative Skills</th>
<th>Age³</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>When child is expected to be good and he thinks of being bad, he shifts abruptly to a good representation to avoid being bad (active dissociation). Child pretends that he is his father hitting someone and saying mean things, and then he shifts to pretending that he is a good boy, playing nicely by himself (not active dissociation).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Representations</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[ME-PRIVATE BAD]</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[ME-PUBLIC good]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rp2:</td>
<td>private</td>
<td></td>
<td>Simple relations of representations:</td>
<td>3.5–4.5 yr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representational Mappings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>When child is in a public setting, he avoids acting out his private family role of being bad with an adult, shifting instead to his public role of acting good with an adult (act. diss.). When child sees his mother beginning to act mean, he tries to move her attention to something she likes, such as a present he made for her (not act. diss.).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ME — YOU — BOSS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[ME BAD public]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[ME good YOU good]</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

1. Dissociative Skills
2. Examples of Dissociative and Non-dissociative Skills
3. Age range
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Representational Tier</th>
<th>Abstract Tier</th>
<th>Examples of Dissociative and Non-dissociative Skills</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A2:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Simple relations of abstractions:</td>
<td>14–16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Person shifts between coordinations of personalities in dissociated private and public domains, relating (for example) tyrant and victim personalities in private and separately, competent and satisfied personalities in public (act. diss.). Within each domain, person relates several abstract personal characteristics, such as public moral concern with need for obedience from followers and children (not act. diss.).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mappings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A3:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Complex relations of subsets of abstractions:</td>
<td>18–20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In dissociated private and public domains, person coordinates personalities along several dimensions simultaneously. In private, lover/loved one is coordinated with tyrant/victim; in public, prosocial/gratified with competent/impressed (act. diss.). Within each domain, person relates complex set of personal characteristics along several dimensions, such as two types of intentionality and responsibility as part of public concern for morality and obedience (not act. diss.).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Complex relations of subsets of representations:
Child shifts between two dissociated role relationships: In private, he is usually the obedient follower who is punished when bad, but sometimes he takes on the demanding, punishing boss role. In public, he is usually the good obedient child; but sometimes he may take on the commanding, friendly adult role (act. diss.). In lying, child coordinates the lie with his knowledge of the other person's information and beliefs so as to deceive more effectively (not act. diss.).

Relations of representational systems to produce abstractions (intangible concepts) about people (personalities):
Person coordinates several concrete role relationships in terms of intangible personality characteristics to form dissociated personalities by domain. He shifts between tyrant (or victim) for the private domain and competent person for the public (act. diss.). Within each domain, person coordinates concrete behaviors and characteristics to form various abstract personality concepts and motives, thus establishing separate public and private personalities instead of mere agents (not act. diss.).
General principles for integrating systems of abstractions:
Dissociative strategies can be sophisticated, but they are still based in maintaining strong separation of private and public domains rather than coordinating them. Within each domain, person shows full-fledged, complex adult personalities, but simultaneously the dissociations produce rigidities and stupidities at times because of the inability to integrate across domains (act. diss.).
Within each domain, person can understand general principles, such as moral principle of justice, integrating relations between types of intention and responsibility (not act. diss.).

4The skill structures in the diagrams are examples of skills showing the simplest general form of a dissociative structure for a given level and are described in the first example, which in each case involves active dissociation. The second example is an instance of a more ordinary skill at this level and therefore does not fit the dissociative structure in the diagram; instead it shows a type of structure that is characteristic of the level and of the hidden-family-violence pattern but lacks the dissociation. The text of the chapter describes examples of other skills as well.
4Ages given are estimates of modal ages at which a level first appears based on cognitive developmental research described elsewhere (Fischer & Farrar, 1987; Fischer et al., 1993; Kitchener et al., 1993). They may differ across cultures and other social groups.
4Representations grow from coordinations of sensorimotor systems, but for simplicity that relation has been omitted from this table.
4The skill structure shown for Level A4 is a system of abstract systems, which is also a principle. The principle that emerges from this structure could be designated by a separate structure, such as P, but because there is no evidence for later levels beyond A4, we have not included the separate structure for P.
Note: In skill structures, each word or letter denotes a skill component, with each large word or letter designating a main component (set) and each subscript or superscript designating a subset of the main component. Italics designate representations, and outline letters designate abstractions. Lines connecting sets designate relations forming a mapping, single-line arrows designate relations forming a system, and double-line arrows designate relations forming a system of systems. An arrowhead with a line (> or >) designates a shift of focus between two skills. A dark rectangle in the middle of the arrowhead indicates that the relation is dissociative.
This isolating-dissociation mechanism allows \textit{ME-PUBLIC} to be sustained over \textit{ME-PRIVATE} only if the context generally supports the public representation. The same limit was present for the simpler isolating shift from \textit{ME_{BAD}} to \textit{ME_{GOOD}} (formula 33). Single representations provide little power to overcome strong context effects and are therefore not very effective. It is relations between representations that give children the capacity to direct their own activities effectively. Firmer dissociation requires the stronger structures that develop with coordination of representations into mappings and beyond. Recall the case of Carrie Smith, who showed only unstable dissociation until age 4, when she developed the ability to coordinate two co-conscious agencies in a mapping and switch between them.

Normally the development of mappings at about 4 years and older leads to all kinds of new social skills involving other people (Fischer, et al., 1984b). Children subject to hidden family violence use these skills extensively in their private lives. For instance, social contingencies (Table 4, Task 4 and beyond) help children to cope with negative emotions in their families and friends. When 4-year-old Jason’s mother started scolding his father at the dinner table, the boy began to draw attention energetically to the nice drawing he had done earlier that day (which was taped on the wall near the table). The switch to a positive topic was so abrupt and obvious that his parents immediately recognized his attempt to change their interaction to positive. This is not merely a shift of focus (like formula 32) because the child was not only trying to do something positive with Mom; instead, he was attempting to move her attention to something that she was happy about:

\begin{equation}
[MOM_{MEAN} ~ MOM_{NICE}]
\end{equation}

At the same time, children begin to understand many common social role relationships, such as mother to father, mother to child, and doctor to patient (Fischer, et al., 1984b; Fischer & Watson, 1981; Watson, 1984; Watson & Getz, 1991). These new understandings allow children in abusive families to start to develop clear separation of public and private roles, which is necessary for strong isolating dissociation of public and private. For example, they can sometimes maintain a public style of interaction even in situations that do not provide strong contextual support for it, such as acting out \textit{ME-PUBLIC} when playing on a playground with their father, with whom their private relationship is one of abusive boss interacting with bad child:

\begin{equation}
\text{not} \quad \frac{\text{private}}{ME_{BAD} \quad DAD_{BOSS}} \not< \frac{\text{public}}{ME_{GOOD} \quad DAD_{GOOD}}
\end{equation}

By 6 or 7 years children begin to construct representational systems (Level Rp3), which give them more flexible control over public and private dissociations. For example, on the playground or at school, they can shift between public and private interactions depending on who is present and who is more powerful. The case of Roger illustrates this developmental step: In his behavior, Roger showed a sharp distinction in both affect and action between public and
private modes of interaction, and he attempted to impose the private mode on other children whom he thought he could dominate. The emotional tone of the interaction shifted abruptly when he changed between public and private modes.

At age 9 Roger was a boy of average intelligence who made a conscious effort to please his teacher and participate in class in order to obtain her approval. He often succeeded in being charming. When being watched by adults in the classroom, Roger was a model student. He also helped certain teachers by preparing materials for them or offering to monitor class when they had to leave the room for a short time. However, when out of sight of the teacher and other adults, he was a ruthless bully, frequently threatening other children to get their possessions or to force them to help him with his homework. Roger was also overtly condescending to the girls in his class. Roger's relations with his peers were based on his assessment of power and status. When approached by an older, stronger boy, Roger yielded in deference. If the boy threatened him, he would often begin crying and begging not to be harmed.

When asked about his family, Roger stated that they were a good family and listed his father's virtues—a business, money, and respect within the community. He did not mention that his father, Mr. S, was a strict and unpredictable man, and his mother was passive, distant, and visibly sad. The father expected the children to respond quickly to his every request. Mr. S's anger was often triggered by what outsiders would have seen as unimportant acts, although of course outsiders did not witness them. In private Mr. S often told his children that they were worthless and would grow up to be misfits. He also routinely degraded his wife, criticizing her ethnic background and physically abusing her. She often cried in silence.

From these examples, it is clear both that Roger's home environment followed the hidden family violence pattern and that his dissociation of public and private was already pervasive. It appeared not only in distinctions between public and private settings but also in his relationships at school. In public at school (with teachers watching), he was a good boy who obeyed the teacher and sought her approval. In private at home he was a submissive child (a follower or victim) who obeyed his father's demands and was punished when he was bad. At school, the private domain also came to the fore when there were no teachers watching: Roger would take either the follower or the bully role, depending on his assessment of the other child's power. These relatively complex social relationships involved (a) both public and private representational systems (Level Rp3) coordinating several roles and (b) an isolating shift of focus between public and private systems:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{GOOD public} \\
\text{ME-STUDT} \\
\text{Obey} \\
\end{array} 
\quad \leftrightarrow 
\begin{array}{c}
\text{LIKE} \\
\text{YOU-TEAC'R} \\
\text{Command} \\
\end{array} 
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{BAD} \\
\text{ME-FOLL'R} \\
\text{OBEY} \\
\end{array} 
\quad \leftrightarrow 
\begin{array}{c}
\text{DEMAND} \\
\text{YOU-BOSS} \\
\text{Punish} \\
\end{array} 
\]

(38)
In this skill, Roger took the roles of follower and student, ME-FOLLOWER and ME-STUDENT, but in appropriate contexts he also could switch which role he adopted, acting as boss or teacher (ME-BOSS or ME-TEACHER) to someone else as follower or student (YOU-FOLLOWER or YOU-STUDENT), respectively. Depending upon the context and affective tone, he could be either follower or boss, student or teacher.

Presumably when Roger was younger—or still now when he was functioning low in his developmental range—he also used simpler versions of this skill, such as mappings of the same relationships with one dimension deleted from each (Level Rp2):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{[ME-FOLL'R} & \begin{array}{c}	ext{private} \\
\text{BAD}
\end{array} \quad \text{YOU-BOSS}] \\
\text{[ME-STUD'T} & \begin{array}{c}	ext{public} \\
\text{GOOD}
\end{array} \quad \text{YOU-TEAC'R}]
\end{align*}
\]

At Roger's age, most children become skilled at deception and lying (Lamborn, et al., 1994; Saarni, 1984; Saarni & Lewis, 1993). Of course, deception is central in hidden family violence because individuals lie to both others and themselves. Purposeful lies require relating at least two representations to each other, the truth and the falsehood. To understand that they are lying, children must coordinate the two representations in their own minds:

\[
\text{[TRUTH} \quad \text{LIE]}
\]

Children thus develop purposeful lies by using representational mappings and then go on to master them with the next level of skills, representational systems. For example, Roger stole a toy from another student named James and then "helped" James by telling him that the least popular child in the class, Colin, had stolen it. This kind of lie required coordinating at least several potential states of James' knowledge (such as about Roger helping and Colin stealing) with several potential claims or actions on Roger's part (such as Roger stealing the toy and blaming Colin):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{[STOLE} & \begin{array}{c}	ext{lie} \\
\text{I}
\end{array} \quad \text{ROGER HELP} \\
\text{BLAME COL} & \begin{array}{c}	ext{COL.} \\
\text{STOLE}
\end{array} \quad \text{JAMES}
\end{align*}
\]

Second Tier of Dissociation: Isolating Personalities

Over the next several years, Roger made the transition to the next developmental tier, moving from representational systems relating concrete agents to abstractions for people as personalities. His isolating dissociation became much more effective, because his new understanding of motivation and personality made him more skilled at both deceiving people and maintaining the separation of public and private relationships. By coordinating representational systems into abstractions as described earlier (Level Rp4/A1), he moved beyond com-
plex concrete interactions to build abstractions for his general characteristics in either public or private (separately). For example, in private, he coordinated two representational systems for abusive bossiness, one in which he acted as boss to some other victim and a separate one in which he acted as victim to some other boss. We call the resulting general personality characteristic "tyranny" because his goal was to be the tyrant:

Separately in public and private domains, he built such abstract personality characteristics and continued to use isolating dissociation to keep them separate:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{ME-FOLL'R BAD} \leftrightarrow \text{YOU1-BOSS PUNISH} \\
\text{DEMAND} \\
\text{ME-BOSS PUNISH} \leftrightarrow \text{YOU2-FOLL'R BAD} \\
\end{array}
\]

Roger seems to be constructing abstract mappings that coordinate the personality characteristics of victim and tyrant in the private domain and those of competent student leader and impressed or satisfied authority in the public domain:
This skill structure puts Roger in the roles of victim and competent student leader, but he is also able to reverse the relationship to take the role of tyrant in relation to someone else as victim, as illustrated by his treatment of girls, younger students, and his mother:

It is unclear whether he could reverse the public relationship so as to take on the role of satisfied authority, since he tended to be bossy and tyrannical.

As Roger moved into adulthood, he developed these skills further and used them to begin to establish himself in his community. At the same time, he also began to look for a wife. His affective splitting became especially evident in the way that he treated the young woman he courted.

At age 24, Roger was continuing to show his competence and good qualities in public. He joined the local church and was asked to be on the church board. He became a member of the Young Republican Club and attended anti-abortion rallies at the Community Center. He offered to do volunteer work promoting his town’s business for the Chamber of Commerce. He started to build his own real-estate business.

A few months earlier, he began to date a 17-year-old young woman named June, who had just completed high school. They met when she came to work for him as a temporary secretary. Roger was most attentive to her, sending flowers to her almost daily and buying her expensive gifts including a sapphire ring and diamond earrings. He repeatedly told her how special she was and denied that she could have a single fault.

As their relationship developed, Roger became exceedingly possessive, controlling, and domineering. He insisted on accompanying her to the hair stylist “to help the stylist know how I like your hair.” He told June to throw away the clothes in her closet and accompanied her to pick out new clothes. When they were alone, Roger repeatedly needed to show superior knowledge in all areas. He also insinuated that June was not a good cook, did not know how to dress, and could not be out alone because of her naivete.

Roger was building more complex skills in both private and public domains, perpetuating his split between positive competence in public and negative tyranny in private. In his relationship with June, where he was attempting to build his own family, he showed an unhappy combination of love with tyranny. His efforts were directed at bringing her into his isolating dissociation, placing her in his private world and not letting her be part of his public one except as a stereotype (the perfect wife). In his public world, on the other hand, he combined his general competence with a prosocial orientation, doing good for the community through church and Chamber of Commerce. In these ways, he constructed abstract systems (Level A3) for continuing his isolating dissociation of these two worlds:
Eventually Roger will construct still more sophisticated skills of isolating dissociation, separating his private and public worlds into separate systems organized by principles for integrating abstractions, as diagramed in Table 7 (Level A4). The sophistication and complexity of these skills is clear, even while they are also obviously pathological and dangerous.

Unfortunately Roger is establishing a pattern of hidden violence in the family he is planning, as evidenced by his actions with June. His developmental pathway resembles that shown by Mr. M, as described earlier. Here is a description of Mr. M's outrageous efforts to control his wife, which can be seen as an extreme extension of the way Roger treated June.

Mr. M, a 37-year-old successful businessman and respected community leader, married his wife when she was only 18 and he was 35. He initially lavished her with gifts and said she was the perfect woman for him.

As the marriage progressed, he found that she often did not do what he told her to do: He wanted her to stay at home, and she wanted to continue working. In public, he continued to be the model husband, and at work he continued to tell his fellow workers how wonderful his marriage was. But at home he became angry and critical and attempted to control more and more of her life. He began buying all her clothes and make-up and would not let her go grocery shopping. Eventually he locked her in their home, and when she became pregnant, he attempted to control her even more. He insisted on taking graphic pictures of every stage of labor and delivery, despite her protest. After delivery he tried to breastfeed the baby himself, despite the biological impossibility.

During the time of these bizarre behaviors, he maintained his highly respectable roles in the community as church board member, respected businessman, and community leader.

The bizarreness of Mr. M's behaviors did not preclude his continuing skill at maintaining separation of public and private. He had so mastered and extended isolating dissociation throughout his activities that overlap between domains was rare. Here are some of the ways that he maintained the isolation:

Mr. M was a deacon in his church and the treasurer of the church board. The other parishioners saw him as a good business man who could also organize events. He was also seen as generous because he made many donations to the church. He ruled over the church budget with an iron fist, maintaining complete control over the finances, including the exclusive right to handle the money and disperse funds. When challenged about church financial matters, he became indignant and rigid, but his role was not often questioned because of his skill at handling the finances and his confidence in his abilities.

In his food business, Mr. M showed similar skills, including sophisticated wholesale purchasing practices, effective business management techniques, and successful sales activities (such as using ice-cream trucks and drivers that
were very appealing to children and their families and so led to strong sales in family neighborhoods).

The parishioners at his church and the employees at his business knew little about his family interactions. Although his wife and children attended church with him regularly, they did not offer their opinions nor did they independently attend functions or participate in church activities. He and his family were widely admired.

The parallels are remarkable between the cases of Mr. M and Roger—and among many others in our experience. That is why we have given the pattern its own name, "hidden family violence," and outlined a model of its development. The pattern begins with a maltreating family that sharply dissociates their public, proper world from their private, tyrannical one. Children growing up in this family are abused physically and emotionally, and sometimes sexually as well. From this contextual and affective splitting, the children develop contextual dissociation that isolates public from private, and eventually their maltreatment promotes more complex dissociation as well. Children learn to dissociatively shift away from one world into the other one, depending on context and affective state. In the extreme children come to be literally unable to coordinate their two worlds, not only treating them as distinct but being unable to psychologically access one world while they are in the other. Isolating dissociation thus produces a different developmental pathway from co-conscious dissociation, because the latter involves dissociative coordination rather than isolation. On the other hand, the two developmental pathways are similar in that they both produce not developmental delay or arrest but instead movement to advanced developmental levels involving skills of great complexity in dissociation.

Conclusion: Psychopathology Is Not Developmental Immaturity

In conclusion, our dynamic analysis of development of normal affective splitting and abnormal co-conscious and isolating dissociation calls into question the traditional view that psychopathology typically involves developmental immaturity or regression. Development does bring the potential for integrating across splits and dissociations, but it also brings the potential for construction of more and more powerful types of splitting and dissociation. Much psychopathology is characterized by advanced skills for splitting and dissociation, not simply by immature or regressed development.

On the one hand, splitting of positive and negative emotions is a powerful force in development, leading to affective splitting and dissociation that is especially strong in early childhood. With development, normal children and adults become capable of integrating positive and negative in many arenas and more generally of integrating many activities that are naturally dissociated as a result of context, affect, and other organizing influences.

On the other hand, splitting and dissociation can take advanced forms, based on the sophisticated capacities that develop naturally in human beings. Maltreatment in childhood often produces such advanced forms of dissociation and splitting. It promotes severe active splitting and dissociation and reverses...
the polarity of affective organization so that the negative (malevolent) becomes central to important parts of self and others in relationships. With development, maltreated children develop increasingly sophisticated skills for adapting to their abusive relationships.

Multiple personality disorder and hidden family violence are two patterns of dissociative development arising from maltreatment (and often perpetuating it in the next generation). In multiple personality, children develop dissociated co-conscious agents and then personalities that are organized around the affects from maltreatment as well as the children's adaptive needs. In hidden family violence, children develop dissociatively isolated agents and then personalities that are separated into two distinct worlds—a negative, tyrannical private world and a positive, altruistic public one. The skills that people eventually construct as they develop along these pathways are remarkably complex and sophisticated, easily paralleling the complexities of normal development.

The main reason that most scholars and practitioners studying psychopathology have failed to see this complexity is that they have not analyzed development from the viewpoint of their patients. Analyses of normal development have often suffered from a similar limitation, with the observer often forcing his or her viewpoint on the subjects of study (Bidell & Fischer, 1992; Bronfenbrenner, 1993; Cole & Scribner, 1974; Fischer, et al., 1993; Noam, 1988). In addition, patients are often observed in situations that minimize their level of functioning because of stress and absence of contextual support.

For both multiple personality and hidden family violence, observers can easily classify people as developmentally immature by using frameworks that assume "normal" developmental pathways instead of the strange pathways that these people actually follow. To conclude, we will illustrate how a sophisticated dissociative skill can easily be made to seem developmentally immature when it is subjected to this kind of misguided analysis.

In developing multiple personality, Carrie Smith constructed a number of complex, sophisticated skills for co-conscious dissociation among her various "personalities." For example, in early adulthood she constructed a complex abstract skill (Level A3) relating Carla and Carrie, evidenced by Carla's acting in ways specifically designed to bait Carrie by offending her sensibilities. This kind of skill does not develop until about age 20 at the earliest in normal development (Fischer, et al., 1990).

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Carla} \rightarrow \text{Carrie} \\
\text{Always} \rightarrow \text{Always} \\
\end{array}
\] (48)

Recall how Carla used drugs and began to have sex with a man at a party and then withdrew, leaving Carrie to find herself in a dangerous and objectionable situation, which included what Carrie experienced as rape. If this scenario is analyzed not in terms of the sophisticated adaptations of multiple personality but instead in terms of the simplistic descriptions given by the confused, upset
Carrie, the skill involved seems minimal: Carla had talked to Carrie at the party, tempting her to be promiscuous, and then she suddenly found herself being raped. All that is required for these simple descriptions is a representational mapping relating simple concrete actions, a skill that is characteristic of 4-year-olds:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{[ME-CARLA TEMPT]} & \quad \text{[ME-CARRIE RAPEO]} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Similarly for hidden family violence, Mr. M and Roger built the sophisticated skills required to dissociate their public and private worlds, acting as highly skilled businessmen and community members in one world and tyrants or victims in the other. Here is the kind of abstract system (Level A3) that they constructed for coordinating personalities in each world and isolating the two worlds from each other:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{[LOVER \quad PRIVATE]} & \quad \text{[LOVED \quad VICTIM]} \\
\text{[TYRANT]} & \quad \text{[SILC]} \\
\text{[PERSY A1 \quad PERSY B]} & \quad \text{[PERSY C]} \\
\text{[PERSY A2 \quad COMPETENT]} & \quad \text{[PERSY B \quad GRATIFIED]} \\
\text{[PERSY C \quad IMPRESSED]} & \quad \text{[PERSY C \quad COMPENT]} \\
\end{align*}
\]

At the same time, when a public person such as a church member or a social worker asked them to describe their private world, none of this complexity was evident. Instead they gave impoverished answers demonstrating only minimal skills. Roger stated simply that he was a good man and that he loved June, at best a representational mapping that could have been produced by a 4-year-old:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{[ME \quad JUNE]} & \quad \text{[LOVED]} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Mr. M provided an even more vivid case of impoverished descriptions of his family. When asked about his daughter, he gave only stereotyped, simple, concrete descriptions, even though he showed no overt signs of anxiety or distress. He said that his daughter was "a good girl," and when asked to elaborate, he said, "She does the sorts of things that good girls do. She goes to school. She wears pretty clothes." Throughout the discussion, he never once used her name. This response required only a single representation, a cluster of characteristics of a good girl, an answer that many 2- and 3-year-olds could produce:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{[GIRLGOOD]} \\
\end{align*}
\]

The impoverishment of Carrie's, Roger's, and Mr. M's descriptions of their close relationships was certainly real and should not be ignored. At the same time, these low-level descriptions do not demonstrate developmental delay or regression. Everyone shows low-level responses some of the time, especially when dealing with dissociated, split topics in difficult situations. Scholars and therapists make a serious error when they take these impoverished descriptions to reflect a generally low level of development.

Understanding the development of troubled people like these requires analyzing their adaptations to the strange, abusive worlds where they live. In those
worlds, they develop remarkably sophisticated skills that generally parallel the skills of normal development, but that are built on the devastating dissociations that arise from their unfortunate lives. They do not fail to develop, but they develop strangely, in the ways demanded for adaptation to abusive relationships.

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Disorders and Dysfunctions of the Self


