

Psychodynamic Studies of College Adjustment

Robert Shilkret

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(Acknowledgements, appendix) I'm going to describe a program of work that derives from a psychodynamic theory, the one known, somewhat unfortunately, as control-mastery theory. This work tries to relate adjustment and adjustment difficulties during the college years to certain family historical variables. First, I will give you an overview of the control-mastery theory, a theory of psychotherapeutic change, but one that includes a distinct theory of the development of psychopathology. It also has, I think, important implications for normative development, as I'll outline. Then, I'll describe briefly each of two family historical variables, parenting style and attachment status, why they're important, and how they're assessed among college students. Each of these variables can be, and has been, related directly to college adjustment. For example, others as well as us have found that insecure attachment among adult college students is related to poorer adjustment during the college years than security of attachment with other people. Likewise, it has been shown by others, particularly Laurence Steinberg from nearby Philadelphia, that good parenting, technically called authoritative parenting, is related to better adjustment in college, and that other, less ideal, styles of parenting are associated with decrements in adjustment. This research often stops there. A family historical variable is shown to be related to an adult outcome. Since these particular variables "make sense," there usually isn't much impetus to go further. Yet, showing the expected relationship is really just the beginning of understanding why it works this way. From a psychodynamic viewpoint, it seems too "easy" almost, too facile, simply to stop there. We want to understand "why"—why these relationships are found. Thus, I am going to describe very briefly this psychodynamic theory first, to give you an idea of why I think it's important and how it works to understand these relationships between one's interpersonal experiences and later adjustment.

Guilt and Control-Mastery Theory

What has come to be called control-mastery theory was formulated by Joe Weiss and Hal Sampson, two San Francisco psychoanalysts; the theory has stimulated many publications and books, and a research program of nearly 30 years now. By the way, the theory is called control-mastery theory because it assumes that people have considerable unconscious control of their mental lives; and that patients come into therapy desiring to master their problems. The original focus of the work was on understanding the process of psychotherapy, how psychotherapy works (which is the title of Joe Weiss's latest book, in fact). Early on, in the 1970s the research focused on long-term psychoanalytic treatments; in the 1980s the work extended to short-term treatments (and always treatments from several schools of psychotherapy were studied). The work has now been extended to other areas, such as understanding various psychopathologies from its point of view, and Michael Bader has a terrific new book on sexual fantasies from a control-mastery point of view. But the focus of the work is still on psychotherapy process.

The work I will describe is one of the few programs, and maybe the only one, to use the theory in a normative sense. I begin with the assumption that the theory has something important to say about adjustment and adjustment difficulties. Control-mastery theory emphasizes the role of trauma and unconscious guilt in the development of psychopathology. We assume that motives for mastery and self-control often take precedence over other motives, including motives for drive gratification. And we also believe that the child's real experiences and real relationships are crucial in determining psychological development. In these ways, our views are quite compatible with many ideas in object relations theory, as well as with many interpersonal approaches. These views are also compatible with recent research in normal infant development, and also with recent research on children's prosocial behavior and the early origins of guilt.

We assume the importance of trauma in the etiology of all psychopathology. Some traumas may be chance events, such as the illness or death of a loved one. Due to the child's relative egocentrism, she may assume that the unfortunate event is due to her own occasional negative feelings toward the loved one. But even lacking such feelings, the child may come to infer that she has no right to a better life than a suffering family member. Other traumas derive from the interactions between the child and her loved ones. Let me give an example here. If a particular child's goal is to develop close peer relationships but that goal happens to be threatening to a needy father who demands that the child be exclusively interested in him, then the child may renounce the goal of developing close peer relationships. That is, the child needs help and encouragement to accomplish important developmental goals; and the younger the child, the more parental help is needed to accomplish such goals. If such assistance is not forthcoming, the child may infer that the parent does not wish her to develop in that direction. And given the young child's understanding of cause and effect, she may even infer that it would be threatening to her relationship with the parent. She thus may renounce the goal in order to preserve the relationship with the parent. She, of course, is usually not aware of the reason for her new lack of interest in making friends; she simply experiences the loss of desire to make friends and becomes content to hang around the house and do more things with her needy father. This is not a high-intensity trauma, but it is a trauma, as we see it, nonetheless. Often these things are not single, high-intensity events; rather, they are persistent patterns of interaction of moderate intensity—the dense texture of everyday life, so to speak.

To return to the example, the problem, unfortunately, doesn't disappear once a goal has been renounced. In the child's mind, the connection may have been made between a developmental striving and someone else or the self being hurt. The child has now developed what we call a pathogenic belief (here, about her power to hurt her father), and this unconscious belief could continue to exert great force. She might not be interested in making friends. She might develop a school phobia. Or, she might have great difficulty leaving home to go to college.

A pathogenic belief is a grim, constricting idea that the person has formed from real experience. It includes the thought plus all affects connected with the thought. Pathogenic beliefs can develop for any normal motive that a child can have. Young children are particularly vulnerable to the development of pathogenic beliefs because of their relative cognitive immaturity and lack of experience with other relationships with which to

compare their current situation. In the example of the girl whose father seemed to get upset by her wanting a friend, it's possible that if that young child had a close relationship with another adult, she would not be so vulnerable to being traumatized by her father's reaction. She might know from her relationship with her mother or grandmother, or whomever, that not all adults felt that way about her desire to make friends. Although we look to early childhood for the origins of many pathogenic beliefs, a pathogenic belief can develop at any age if the circumstances are traumatic enough. This is understandable if you read the literature of Holocaust survivors. Here were people who were not severely disturbed as children, and yet the extreme horror to which they were subjected often led to the development in adulthood of pathogenic beliefs such as, "Because others in my family have died, I do not deserve to live."

The theory also emphasizes the role of guilt in the development of psychopathology. Here, "guilt" is used to refer to the anxiety developed from the potential of developmental strivings to have harmful consequences to self and/or loved ones. And we think of guilt as fundamentally being of two different kinds:

The first is separation guilt, well-known among college students. For many students, an important developmental goal involves not simply physical separation, but, more importantly, establishing autonomy. Achieving autonomy usually occurs relatively smoothly if one's parents have responded in an encouraging or at least unbothered way to earlier moves toward independence. But if a parent has, for example, consistently seemed upset or threatened by the child's autonomy bids, the child may have developed the unconscious belief that his or her own independence endangers the parent or the child's relationship to the parent. If sufficiently strong, such a belief may interfere with the student's success in college; the student may, in effect, renounce the developmental goal of succeeding in college without realizing that the failure is an attempt to protect the parent.

Students may also suffer from survivor guilt, or anxiety about making parents or other loved ones feel surpassed or outdone, often coupled with the belief that one's success comes at the expense of a loved one. If a child's earlier accomplishments are met with praise and encouragement, success is accompanied by pride and a sense of satisfaction. But if earlier accomplishments or attempted initiatives have been discouraged or shamed, the child might develop the belief that her success is dangerous to her parent's well-being and to the relationship. Later, if success is experienced in college, it might be accompanied by a vague sense of anxiety, minimization of success, or even undoing of the accomplishment or failure in other aspects of life. Survivor guilt dynamics are often clear in the case of students whose parents did not have the opportunity for a college education themselves. Some students are painfully aware of having moved into a world foreign to their parents, who perhaps have made considerable sacrifices for the child. They may believe they do not deserve the opportunities they now have; and they may be so endangered by unconscious beliefs about how these opportunities may threaten parental relationships that they are unable to take advantage of opportunities at college.

Let me tell you a little vignette from my days as student academic dean. Very early on in my stint as dean of studies, the student academic dean at MHC, I was confronted during orientation period by a student on academic probation. It was unusual for such a student to come in so early—before classes had even started. This young woman, whom I'll call

Marsha, appeared with her mother, from a distance of some 300 miles, and the mother insisted on sitting down with us and going over the student's upcoming courses with me. (Never again would I allow a parent into a student meeting with me! That's another story.) I tried to engage the student in the conversation, but she was content to sit on the sidelines. I noticed that she was observing carefully this drama unfolding between me and her mother. Marsha's mother wanted to know what I knew about each of her daughter's new professors, how hard they and their courses were, and so on. I brought the discussion between the mother and me to a reasonably quick conclusion, and asked the mother to wait outside while I talked alone with Marsha. The mother was somewhat surprised, and I later learned when I was alone with the student that it was the common practice of another dean with whom Marsha had worked in the past to involve the mother in many aspects of the work of advising and deaning. On leaving, the mother informed me she would expect me to keep her posted by regular phone calls she would make to me on how her daughter was doing, just as a previous dean had done, and this was especially important since her daughter was on academic probation from her prior semester's failures. I calmly and straightforwardly informed the mother that I would not do this, and that I was sure her daughter was perfectly capable of keeping her up to date on her work, if the daughter wanted to do that. I thought I noticed the first sign of animation, a slight smile, on Marsha's face, as the mother left unhappily. From this vignette and other evidence I became aware of in my work with her, we can hypothesize that Marsha had developed a firm pathogenic belief that her leaving her mother was harming her mother by leaving her behind. If valid, this is a good example of separation guilt. Now, unfortunately, this story did not have a happy ending, as this student did indeed have to leave the college two years later. All my deanly attempts, and a colleague's independent therapeutic attempts, to encourage Marsha's greater diligence in her studies and independence were no match for this mother's intrusiveness. Eventually, this bright and capable student arranged things so that she would fail unquestionably and have to return to her mother. I had the distinct feeling that the puzzling poor performance we saw all her semesters with us could actually have been the highest point of her life—a time she was more independent than she would subsequently be able to be. Fortunately, my work as dean with many other students did have happier outcomes.

I've used a couple of different methods to assess students' separation guilt, and other forms of guilt, in a research context. One method, relatively easily accomplished, is a questionnaire instrument developed by Lynn O'Connor and her colleagues of our San Francisco group. This is a 67-item self-report Likert-type assessment of guilt (overhead, appendix), as conceptualized by control-mastery theory. On this instrument, and the others I will describe, participants rate themselves as to how closely each item corresponds themselves, from very much unlike me, to very true of me. The Interpersonal Guilt Questionnaire (IGQ), as it is called, correlates moderately with other measures of guilt, suggesting that our concept of guilt is similar to other notions of guilt, but it is different too. The measure is composed of 4 subscales: (1) Survival Guilt, that is, guilt about accomplishments, about outdoing others, and harming them in some way, and so on. The Survival Guilt subscale contains such items as: "I conceal or minimize my successes," and "I feel uncomfortable when I feel better than other people." (Other items are projected on the screen.) (2) Separation Guilt, or guilt about leaving loved ones, about being critical of parents, and about having different ideas or values than parents. It

includes such items as: “It makes me uncomfortable to have critical thoughts about my parents,” and “It is difficult to see my parents’ flaws.” (3) Omnipotence Guilt, or a feeling of excessive responsibility for others, containing such items as: “I often find myself doing what someone else wants me to do rather than doing what I would most enjoy,” and “It is very hard for me to conceal plans if I know the other person is looking forward to seeing me.” Omnipotent responsibility guilt can be seen as a version of survival and/or separation guilt and often involves excessive worry about leaving others out or being independent. (4) Self-Hate Guilt, containing such items as “I do not deserve other people’s respect or admiration,” and “I feel I am being punished for bad things I did as a child.” Of the four subscales, I think this one is most like traditional measures of (poor) self-concept and psychopathology, and it does correlate highly with measures of symptom expression. The reason we see it as a guilt measure is conveyed in part by that item “I feel I am being punished for bad things I did as a child.” Another way to understand self-hate or low self-concept as a guilt issue is to think about compliance with a parent’s criticism or berating of a child, or continual expression of disappointment with a child with little expression of encouragement or love. A child who needs the relationship even with a parent who has a very poor view of her will often come to accept that appraisal as her own self-concept in an attempt to maintain the relationship with the parent.

Now this measure of guilt, the IGQ, correlates consistently in the direction you would expect with college students’ adjustment (that is, higher adjustment is associated with lower guilt, but, interestingly enough, the correlations are only low or moderate in magnitude. I will make some comments on the limits of this measure of guilt later.

Before I go on to give you the results of our studies of guilt and adjustment, let me describe briefly the adjustment measure we use. This is the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ), developed by my former graduate school professor and now close colleague, Robert Baker, now retired, from Clark University (overhead, appendix). It has excellent psychometric properties and is probably the most widely-used measure of adjustment during the college years. The SACQ is straightforward and it is composed of four subscales, and the real value of this instrument is this multifactorial aspect: (1) Academic Adjustment, including such items as, “My academic goals and purposes are well defined,” and “I really haven’t had much motivation for studying lately” (see other items on screen). (2) Social Adjustment, with items like, “I feel that I fit in well as part of the college environment,” and “I am satisfied with the extracurricular activities available at college.” (3) Personal/Emotional Adjustment, including both physical and psychological items: “I have been feeling in good health lately,” and “I have been getting angry too easily lately.” (4) Finally, the Goal Commitment/Institutional Attachment Scale assesses attachment not in the attachment theory sense, but in the sense of commitment to the particular institution and to graduation from college. It was designed as a measure of attrition, and includes such things as, “I expect to stay at college for a bachelor’s degree.”

Let me show you the results of four independent samples of college women, totaling some 700 participants (overhead, appendix). These were not studies only of the relationships between aspects of adjustment and types of guilt; there were other variables in these studies. But I’ve pulled out just the guilt and adjustment findings here, to make some things clearer. Here, you see the types of guilt from the IGQ arrayed down the

vertical axis and the types of adjustment from the SACQ arranged along the horizontal axis. Correlations for each of the four samples are given in each cell. You'll notice pretty good consistency across studies. For example, look at the first set of rows, at the top, and you see that Survivor Guilt scores are pretty consistently related, moderately so and negatively, with adjustment (that is, the higher the survivor guilt, the lower the adjustment, as we'd expect). The highest correlations (in the negative .40-.50 ballpark) were obtained between Self-Hate Guilt (the fourth set of rows) and adjustment, with pretty remarkable consistency between self-hate guilt and academic adjustment (all within -.41 to -.45). Again, Self-Hate guilt on the IGQ is the subscale most similar to a measure of poor self-concept.

But one of the most striking and perhaps counter-intuitive findings here is the lack of a relationship between Separation Guilt scores and college adjustment. And this is despite others' findings that Separation Guilt generally correlates with measures of psychopathology such as the Beck Depression Inventory. Look at Academic Adjustment in particular. Correlations there are so low as not even to be significant (from -.11 to -.02). These are significantly lower than other correlations in this table. What's going on here? I think this lack of correlation is due to the fact that the college years are ones when separation from family, achieving autonomy, and thus the effects of separation guilt are focal for many, but certainly not all, students. For many, it's a time of active developmental change regarding this issue. The lack of correlation means, I would suggest, that some students have mastered their guilt and are free to do well (low guilt-high adjustment) while other low separation guilt students, perhaps those who have never felt guilty about separation, do poorly for other reasons. Other students have not mastered guilt around separation and it's impeding them considerably (high guilt-low adjustment). But other higher-guilt students do well because they find a lot of social support for separation issues from peers who are experiencing similar stresses. Still others are in the process of resolving these issues and are at the midpoints. These various patterns could yield the strikingly low correlations. Of course, it could be that the two underlying variables, separation guilt and college adjustment, are truly not related psychologically, but I'd prefer not to come to that conclusion quite yet.

Looking at other variables might help clarify this finding, or, rather, nonfinding. Another way to go about exploring this would be a more intensive study of individual students. Interview methods and qualitative analyses can help clarify these relationships, and we have done one study like this, and I will mention it briefly later. But let me turn first to other variables we have studied using large samples.

Parenting Style

I'm now going to describe some results of studies of parenting style and adjustment. Parenting style has a venerable history in developmental psychology, stimulated by Diana Baumrind's research over many years. Baumrind conceptualized differences in parenting style as related to two underlying variables: (1) the degree of demandingness or explicitness of expectations the parent has of the child; and (2) responsiveness-nonresponsiveness of the parent toward the child. Using careful observational techniques of parent-child interactions, Baumrind articulated three, now famous, parenting styles. Very briefly, the authoritative parent is one who has high expectations for the child, but also explains reasons for these expectations and for discipline, thus valuing the child's

own views, as long as they are expressed appropriately. This would be considered high demandingness and high responsiveness, and it's been found to be related to all sorts of good developmental outcomes by many investigators. In contrast, the authoritarian parent, high in demandingness but low in responsiveness, values unquestioned obedience to authority and sees little need to explain why she does what she does. They tend to assert power through discipline, including physical punishment and threats of punishment. Children of such parents tend to be moody, unhappy, fearful, withdrawn, and indifferent to new experiences. If parents are also hostile and inconsistent, the child often uses assertive, even hostile, methods to deal with their peers. When such attitudes leads to antisocial acts, they are often rejected by peers. In Baumrind's and others' work, children of authoritarian parents had the poorest developmental outcomes. Third, the permissive parent is one who is nondemanding and has few expectations of the child. These parents impose little consistent discipline, often giving in to the child's ever-escalating protests. This excess of freedom leads to intermediate outcomes, such as low self-reliance and self-control. But children of permissive parents are more cheerful and sociable than the conflicted and irritable children of authoritarian parents (from Steinberg and Meyer, 1995).

There has been a great deal of research on the effects of parenting style on developmental outcomes in childhood and adolescence, but relatively little on later life, including the college years. We've used parenting style in three studies now, and looked at the relationships between parenting style, guilt, and adjustment in college. We've assessed parenting style by modifying a good questionnaire measure of it developed by John Buri, called the Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ; overhead, appendix). Buri's measure derives directly from Baumrind's three parenting styles described earlier. We have modified it to include a fourth style. Our modification follows from an idea worked out in the developmental literature earlier by Eleanor Maccoby. The permissive group is seen as composed of two subgroups. The first might be considered a democratic style, often well-thought-out and explicitly justified by the parents themselves, and quite child-centered. In the original Baumrind system, these parents would be thought to have relatively high expectations and low demandingness. We called this reconceptualized category IndulgentPermissive. Rethinking the permissive category in this way allowed us to reconceptualize some of the original Buri items and add several new ones to define a fourth parenting style category, parents who are low in expectations and low in demandingness. While this seems similar to the original Baumrind definition, it now defined a different kind of parenting style, one that is quite uninvolved, and more neglectful of the child than the original Baumrind permissive parent. We call this style Neglectful-Permissive, and you can think of highly narcissistic, or self-involved parents as often falling into this group.

Our measure of parenting style, thus derived from Buri, is a questionnaire in which college students report their parenting experiences. One could also assess parenting more directly (as it has been done in the child literature) by studying the parents themselves. But the more important thing really is how the child, here an adult child, has experienced her parenting over many years. So, even if there were to be a discrepancy between what the college student reported her parents to be like and what the parents report they did and do, a serious question would arise regarding the differential validity of such a discrepancy, with our view being the student's experience should have precedence.

Our parenting style measure consists of four subscales, of ten items each, one for each of the four parenting styles just described (overhead, appendix). It's administered separately for mother and father. The Authoritativeness scale consists of items such as, "As I was growing up, my father directed the activities and decisions of the children in the family through reasoning and discipline." The Authoritarianism scale has items like, "Whenever my mother told me to do something when I was growing up, she expected me to do it immediately and without asking any questions." The new Indulgent-Permissiveness scale has items like, "Most of the time as I was growing up my father did what the children in the family wanted when making family decisions." And the really new Neglectful-Permissiveness scale includes items such as, "As I was growing up, my mother was uninvolved in my life and she took little notice in what I did," and, "My father was more interested in his own concerns than in my concerns."

We have found that authoritativeness correlates moderately and positively with adjustment variables, especially with academic adjustment and personal/emotional adjustment, while authoritarianism correlates negatively especially with these two aspects of college adjustment. This is pretty much what you would expect. Social adjustment in college is correlated little with parenting styles. Neglectfulness, like authoritarianism, correlates consistently negatively with adjustment, again, particularly academic and personal/emotional adjustment.

When we have broken out the subject group into those with parents of one style or another, and those with parents of a similar style (the majority of our samples) rather than those with parents with different styles, we find that, as expected, authoritativeness leads to good adjustment outcomes, authoritarianism to less good ones, and neglectfulness to the worst outcomes. Interestingly, students who report their parents as indulgent (but not neglectful) did have somewhat poorer academic adjustment than students with authoritative parents, consistent with the theme of a lot of prior literature or earlier development. But indulgent, non-neglectful parenting also was associated with as good social and personal/emotional adjustment as even authoritative parenting. This supports the validity of separating the original permissive parenting group into those two subgroups, and the adjustment outcomes are understandable ones.

When we look at the relationships between parenting style and guilt, we find some very interesting results. Both authoritarianism and neglectfulness correlate positively with self-hate guilt, as you would expect (high neglectfulness - high self-hate, or low self-worth). But separation guilt was the real surprise here. In separate samples, separation guilt has correlated significantly (approximately .30, consistently) but negatively with neglectfulness (high neglectfulness – low separation guilt, and vice-versa). Remember that our measure of guilt, so far, is one of conscious guilt, how much the respondent is aware of or experiences guilt of one type or another. We think that neglectful parents are actively disliked and leaving them is relatively easy, since it is relatively conflict-free. That is, the child of such a parent often seems not to experience a conscious conflict about leaving the parent. The child of such parents wants to get away. In contrast, parental authoritativeness is positively correlated with separation guilt, and to about the same extent (+.30). Having an authoritative parent thus may be associated with overt, conscious conflicts in college about being different from parents, developing different ideas, and so on. And this might be more difficult for such children than for children with

neglectful parents, who perhaps have consciously questioned their parents' values prior to college. We must keep in mind, however, the better adjustment outcome for the children of authoritative parents than those with neglectful ones. That is, neglectful parenting may not be associated with conscious separation conflicts or difficulties, but there seems to be a price paid in poorer adjustment nonetheless, perhaps due to unconscious separation issues or conflicts of other kinds.

To reflect back on the earlier finding of no correlation between separation guilt and college adjustment, the parenting style the student has experienced seems to account for this, in part at least. Some students, those with neglectful and to some extent those with authoritarian parents too, have lower separation guilt than those with better parenting. In contrast, those with authoritative and indulgent parents have higher separation guilt during the college years. Overall, it is when all parenting styles are combined, the result I showed you earlier, that we see the near-zero correlations between separation guilt and adjustment I discussed originally.

Survivor guilt relates very moderately, but positively, with authoritarianism and neglectfulness too. I think the positive relationship (high authoritarianism–high survivor guilt) reflects the possibility that the very demanding and authoritarian parent is often quite brittle, using power assertion techniques to discipline the child and getting upset when the child disobeys or things go wrong. Sometimes physical force is used. Children with this sort of parent can come to see the parent as weak, not strong—that is, as not being able to control his or her own feelings and behavior and as chronically unhappy with the child's behavior. And such a pattern can make it difficult for the child to surpass the parent because the child might come to think the parent might well experience the child's success as a humiliation, a kind of comment on his or her own failures in life. Again, using this measure of guilt, the correlations are low (but positive and significant). But clinically, we certainly see clients who idealize a parent initially but then come to view their parents more realistically (and less positively) in treatment. What we often see in such cases is an authoritarian, brittle parent, or a narcissistic, and again brittle parent, one with low self-esteem but perhaps a valiantly positive false sense of self, who has neglected the child in some way in his self-preoccupation. Such clients often take a long time to be able to overcome their guilt about success, out of imagined loyalty to a parent.

Attachment Style

The final variable I'd like to discuss briefly that we've begun to look at in these larger-scale studies is attachment style. Attachment theory and research is probably the most important influence on psychodynamic thinking from mainstream developmental psychology in the past 30 years. The key work of Mary Ainsworth in the 1970s stimulated a blizzard of work on attachment styles of infants and young children with their primary caregivers. We now know a great deal about the mother-child relationships that are precursors to her famous resistant/ambivalent, avoidant, and secure attachment styles. We also have a wealth of information about the developmental sequelae through adulthood of these relational styles early in life. In an important sense, this program of work has supported the old psychodynamic proposition regarding the importance of early relationships with parents on subsequent socioemotional development. This is somewhat ironic, since John Bowlby, the originator of this model, began his work in opposition to the object relations views of his day, especially the work of his supervisor, Melanie

Klein. Yet, he always believed, against the tenor of his times in a behavioristic world, in the importance of early relationships and of security and love on understanding normality and pathology.

Ainsworth's student, Mary Main, made the link to adult styles of attachment. She outlined states of mind regarding adult attachment; she and many others now have demonstrated the robustness of the distinction between two insecure states of mind with regard to attachment issues in many areas of personality and behavior. Fundamentally, attachment theory articulates a style of a pervasive discomfort with intimacy and closeness, called avoidant attachment in infancy and "dismissing of attachment" in adulthood. This is distinguished from another insecure style involving a chronic fear of interpersonal rejection and abandonment; this is called ambivalent/resistant attachment in infancy and childhood, and "preoccupied with attachment" or "entangled" in adulthood. Secure/autonomous attachment, about two-thirds of non-risk samples, can be thought of as low levels of both ambivalence/preoccupation and avoidance/dismissingness. Mary Main also articulated a fourth attachment style, called disorganized/disoriented attachment, which is the lack of a consistent pattern of coping. This style is now being very actively investigated in many studies, including several longitudinal ones, in developmental psychopathology. I won't mention this fourth style again because we haven't yet looked at it in our beginning studies of normative adjustment in college. However, it does seem to be related developmentally to more severe forms of psychopathology, and is now considered a risk factor in itself in early childhood.

The ur-measure of adult attachment is Mary Main's Adult Attachment Interview (AAI), and it's particularly valuable for clinicians. It's a structured interview centered around attachment issues, ones of loss and separation, and thoughts and feelings about such experiences. It pays more attention to how the story is told than to the events of one's life themselves. Lapses in coherence, illogic, and failures of evidence to support general statements all are indications of insecurity in Mary Main's system. But the AAI takes a good deal of time to learn and to administer and score reliably. Therefore, several questionnaire measures of adult attachment have been developed. Ones that we have used are a simple self-report measure used by Hazan and Shaver that asks participants, in our modification of it, to rate themselves (on 9-point scales) according to how closely they fit each of three attachment style paragraphs. The short paragraphs themselves convey again the attachment styles described earlier, and so I'll read each of them:

Secure/Autonomous: I find it relatively easy to get close to others and am comfortable depending on them and having them depend on me. I don't often worry about being abandoned or about someone getting too close to me.

Avoidant/Dismissing: I am somewhat uncomfortable being close to others; I find it difficult to trust them completely, difficult to allow myself to depend on them. I am nervous when anyone gets too close, and often, love partners want me to be more intimate than I feel comfortable being.

Ambivalent/Preoccupied: I find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I often worry that my partner doesn't really love me or won't

want to stay with me. I want to merge completely with another person, and this desire sometimes scares other people away.

We've also used a good questionnaire measure of attachment style developed by Feeney, Noller, and Hanrahan (overhead, appendix). This is a 40-item questionnaire and has a factor structure related to the three attachment style categories. The security scale consists of items such as "I find it relatively easy to get close to other people," and "I feel confident about relating to others." The avoidance/dismissing scale includes such things as, "I am too busy with other activities to put much time into relationships," and "I worry about people getting too close." Finally, the ambivalent/preoccupied scale includes, "I worry a lot about my relationships," and "Sometimes I think I am no good at all."

We've found that attachment style correlates with adjustment in pretty much the way you would expect. We've gotten moderate but highly significant positive correlations between security of attachment and all adjustment variables, and highly significant negative correlations between both avoidant and ambivalent attachment styles and adjustment variables. Further, the correlations are generally higher for social and personal/emotional adjustment than for academic adjustment (both in the positive and negative directions, depending on the attachment style category). You might wonder why there would be expected to be any significant correlations between attachment style and academic adjustment, since attachment style would be expected to be most relevant to social adjustment and personal/emotional adjustment, with their more obvious interpersonal aspects. But attachment is presumed, from Bowlby on, to include the development early in life of "internal working models of attachment"—sort of unconscious templates of expectations of what relationships will be like, what one can expect of relationships, how to behave in relationships, and so on. If the internal working model is secure, this provides a "secure base" from which the infant and child, and ultimately the adult, can move out into the world, beyond the realm of the original attachment figure or figures. The correlations between attachment style and a more non-personal aspect of adjustment, academic adjustment, are thus not surprising, and it's not surprising that those correlations are somewhat lower than the more interpersonal aspects of college adjustment. The negative correlations between the ambivalent style and adjustment are higher than the negative correlations between the avoidant style and adjustment (in the .40-.50 range). Perhaps this reflects the active struggle and conflict that many ambivalent/preoccupied people seem to be undergoing.

The relations between attachment style and guilt are even larger, again in the expected directions (i.e., generally negative correlations between security of attachment and guilt variables, and positive ones between guilt and the insecure attachment variables). Some of the highest correlations we've seen are between Self-Hate Guilt and Security of attachment (-.57), Avoidant attachment (+.50) and Ambivalent/Preoccupied attachment (+.70). It is interesting that these attachment styles are so highly correlated, in themselves, with Self-Hate guilt, which might be seen as a sophisticated measure of self-concept. By the college years, attachment styles seem to represent a coupling of views of the self with views of other people.

Attachment theory has great power and robustness, as shown in this research, and it's obviously relevant for clinical work. Despite this, there are limitations of the theory that are now being aired in the psychoanalytic literature. The categories are sometimes thought to be too static in the sense of allowing for change over time. Against this, some recent studies have shown the change from insecure to secure attachment (termed "earned security") as a function of close involvement with a secure partner or having a good psychotherapy. Further, some critics have noted that attachment is more complex than thinking of a single rather global style for each individual. This, too, has a way of being addressed within the attachment framework by looking at within-individual differences in attachment to different close others in their lives. We've done a study on this, and generally have found, as have others, that inter-object consistency of college students' styles regarding parents and peers is rather high (in the 70% ballpark). But that that other 30% of inconsistency is important too, and warrants further investigation. My point is not that these criticisms of the attachment paradigm are unwarranted; they are quite interesting criticisms and have stimulated further research. It seems to me that, so far at least, the kinds of criticisms I've mentioned can potentially be addressed within the attachment paradigm itself.

I've only sketched a few of the findings of these studies, some of the highlights. There are many other findings that I just don't have time today to summarize. We've done some regression analyses in most of these studies, and some causal modeling. Consistently we've found that the guilt variables account for a significant part of the variance in adjustment, beyond the variables of attachment style and parenting style. And this is true, even though for one form of guilt, there are counter-intuitive findings for one subgroup's separation guilt, the children of authoritative parents. Modeling seems to confirm thinking of guilt as a kind of mediator between parenting style and adjustment outcome, as we would expect it to be developmentally; such a model is more valid than models viewing it in other ways.

Assessment of Unconscious Guilt

To return to the concept of guilt in control-mastery theory, I should note that the way we have assessed guilt in these larger-scale studies has been by using Lynn O'Connor's Interpersonal Guilt Questionnaire. This is a very interesting, psychometrically sound, and easily-administered measure, but it does have certain obvious limits. The main one is that it deals only with conscious guilt—as a self-report questionnaire, it addresses only feelings the responder is conscious of. It isn't necessary for the responder to think of her feelings on all the items in terms of guilt, as we do, but the person does have to be aware of her feelings and reasonably articulate about them.

We've done one study with college students attempting to assess unconscious guilt (this was Ellen Nigrosh's Ph.D. dissertation at the Smith College School for Social Work). It's much more difficult to assess unconscious guilt than conscious guilt. The study and assessment of unconscious content has a very long and controversial history in personality research. The most common way unconscious content has been assessed has been using projective tests. You're probably familiar with some of the controversies surrounding the use of the Rorschach, for example. Are people who see mouths or images with food content on the Rorschach "oral characters," or more dependent, than people who don't? We used a different method, one I think is more valid because it is more

similar to the kinds of inference-making that clinicians do in their everyday work. It's based on the Plan Formulation method that is done in control-mastery psychotherapy research. This method was developed by George Silberschatz and John Curtis from San Francisco. It involves getting experienced control-mastery clinicians to make inferences from the first few psychotherapy hours about what are the patient's likely unconscious goals for therapy and unconscious pathogenic beliefs. The Plan Formulation method also generates inferences about what specific tests the patient is likely to present in therapy and what traumas, even ones the patient isn't currently aware of, might have occurred in childhood to lead to the difficulties the patient is experiencing now. The method is typically used with a very small number of patients because each one requires careful study and validation of the inferences.

In our modification of this method, we assumed that students come to college with a "plan for college." Parts of this plan are conscious (for example, most students will say they want to get good grades in college, at least at a place like Mount Holyoke College). But other parts of the student's plan may be unconscious. For example, the student I described earlier may have had the goal of using college to develop a life for herself independent of her mother. I never heard anything like this in all my deanly discussions with her, but I do believe it was an important goal for her, one that, unfortunately in her case, was not accomplished. I would further speculate, not too far from the behavior I described to you in this particular case, that her mother had, over many years, given her daughter the idea that her being independent and on her own would be very harmful to her mother and would threaten their relationship.

We modified the Plan Formulation method to try to get at this sort of thing, not with a group of students who were at risk or in academic trouble, but rather with a randomly selected small number of students. Of course, we didn't have psychotherapy hours to work with, so we developed a structured interview that would likely elicit discourse around developmental strivings and impediments to reaching goals. This required a separate study in itself. The final interview included questions about college experiences and family relationships; many areas asked for the student's description of her mother's and her father's thoughts and reactions to her particular choices at college. Some questions asked for siblings' feelings; and grandparents and stepparents were included too if they were important to a particular student. Examples of areas asked about included choice of this particular college; relationships with friends; choice of a major; postcollege aspirations, the importance of grades, the nature of ongoing contact with the family; cost of college; and so on. A second part of the interview asked about several aspects of the student's family as she was growing up. Questions were designed to permit inferences about the following themes: (1) Development of autonomous thinking and behavior (e.g., questions about earlier disagreements with mother and father); (2) Potential envy, competitiveness, and survivor guilt (e.g., "What was mother's/father's life when she/he was your age?" "What was mother's/father's greatest accomplishment?" "...greatest disappointment?" "How does mother/father feel about supporting you in college?"; and (3) Potential separation guilt (e.g., questions about each parent's own goals in relation to the student's and about the general affective tone of the family while the student was growing up, how things might have changed at home once the student left for college).

Twelve students were interviewed. Four experienced clinicians then read the verbatim transcript of each interview. For each interview, each clinician judge generated a list of possible unconscious goals the student had for her college years, as well as a list of possible obstructions she was struggling to overcome or would have to overcome to meet her goals. Each clinician did this independently of the other three judges. In a second phase of generating the unconscious plan for college for each student, several months after the judges' work on the first, or item-generation phase, the four sets of lists for each student participant were combined into master lists for that student. The four judges were asked to read the interview transcript again and to rate each item of the combined master list of goals and obstructions in terms of how relevant each item was for that student. We included several "filler" items randomly on each of these lists. Filler items were drawn from other students' lists; they were all plausible items and they were quite relevant for the student from whose list they were drawn, but seemed of low relevance to the student for whom they would be filler items. This was done to ensure that our judges could discriminate items relevant for a particular student from other plausible items. Discriminability between real and filler items was quite high for all judges. Intrajudge reliability of judges' ratings of all items was acceptably high (intraclass correlations from .71-.75). We included only those items rated as highly relevant for each student in that student's final inferred plan for college.

The lists of goals and obstructions for each student constitute a kind of case description of that student by a panel of independent experienced clinicians. For each student, some items, particularly goals, were stated directly or nearly directly by the student herself (e.g., goals of "To go to a top law school;" "To learn to budget [her] time"). But the majority of goals involved some degree of inference (e.g., "To make an independent career decision;" "To be truthful and direct with her family"). The majority of goals were tied to specific unconscious, inferred obstructions (e.g., "She drives herself, because she believes that she has no right to feel satisfied with how much she's done when neither of her parents does;" "She acts flighty because she believes that if she takes herself seriously it threatens her father, whose self-esteem depends on seeing men as superior to women;" "She moderates her career goals because she believes that if she aims high she harms her father by competing with him"). Unlike an ongoing psychotherapy study of an individual case, we didn't have a way of showing the validity of each inference for each student using this Plan for College method. But we did ask judges for severity ratings for each item as well as relevancy ratings. And the correlations of those severity ratings with college adjustment was quite high (e.g., $-.76$ for Full Scale SACQ scores) as well as with GPA ($-.78$).

We then did a content analysis of the obstructions across all 12 participants to highlight themes. I can't summarize all the findings here, so I'll just mention a couple of things. One less obvious theme had to do with concerns about parental weakness, which were most poignant when the student was directly worried about a parent's perceived depression, anxiety, fears, or some other difficulty. For example: "{Alison} suppresses her ambitions because she believes that being independent causes her mother to feel depressed"; "[Gail] is unable to think critically about relationships because she believes that if she does not accept the family myth of absolute happiness, her mother's tenuous emotional stability will unravel"; and "[Kathy] limits her enjoyment of life by anticipating disaster, because she believes that if she felt secure, she would be

abandoning her mother to her fears and paranoia.” Eight of our 12 students had such an obstruction about a mother; far fewer (2) had one about a father. Thus, perception of parental weakness seems to be a major area for some students to overcome during the college years. Other themes that emerged from this content analysis included academic work and careers, closeness to others, independence, marital problems of parents, idealization of parents, and sibling relationships. In our sample of college women, for many of the content categories, the mother appeared more frequently than the father as an object of concern.

In summary of this study, we were able to articulate the struggles for autonomy of these young women. As they struggled for autonomy, they were concerned, both consciously and unconsciously, about the effects of their autonomy on their loved ones. They were particularly concerned about the effects on their mothers, and this concern seemed most acute when they perceived their mothers as being weak or needy in some way.

New Directions

Before finishing, I’d like to describe briefly two new directions we’re exploring now. First, we’ve been developing a measure of parental intrusiveness during the college years, which can be thought of as another kind of potentially negative parenting style. The trick is to differentiate intrusiveness from appropriate concern. We think of intrusive parenting as imposing the parent’s own needs and desires to be involved in the daughter’s life, rather than fostering a more reciprocal relationship, or even allowing the daughter to initiate and significantly control the interaction. We expect this to have detrimental effects for the adolescent’s experience and achievement of separation, and on her adjustment in the college environment. Among other things, a parent who needs to be excessively involved in a child’s life might lead the child to believe that separation and autonomy would be harmful to the parent. In contrast, we expect that the parents’ involvement in less invasive ways could have even positive effects on development of autonomy and adjustment.

In a first study of this variable with college women, we developed a scale of Intrusiveness (here, of the mother in the daughter’s life). One of the tricky issues involved in working on this issue is that some things that most students would regard as intrusive a few would regard as appropriate concern. That, in fact, is not simply a psychometric problem in the development of an assessment instrument, but an issue worth studying in itself. I’m sure that the student I called Marsha earlier regarded much, even all, of her mother’s continual involvement in her life at college from afar as helpful and appropriate. This, we think, is a manifestation of separation guilt—Marsha had the belief that to do things on her own would leave her mother out and upset her greatly. Yet, most others would have regarded Marsha’s mother’s behavior as intrusive. So, we tried to derive a number of items that most students would regard as intrusive, such as, “My mother tells me how to feel about things before I have said anything on the topic;” and “My mother gives me unsolicited advice about my relationships.” Our Appropriate Concern scale had items like, “My mother inquires about my social activities at college;” and “My mother asks to read papers I have written at college.” (We are currently modifying the wording of such items to be more neutral: e.g., “My mother is happy to read papers I have written at college.”) We found that maternal Intrusiveness was correlated negatively with Academic and Personal/Emotional Adjustment, whereas Appropriate Concern was not negatively

related to adjustment. Intrusiveness was also positively related to Self-Hate Guilt, as expected. It is likely that parental intrusiveness is coupled with criticism—or at least implied criticism—of the child. We didn't find the expected relations between separation guilt and these variables, but we think that refinements in the measures (as suggested above) will show these relationships.

A second new direction is the investigation of resilience in a college population from a control-mastery point of view. Liz Anderson is working right now on a detailed questionnaire measure assessing the degree of trauma in students' histories, one that can be quantified. Resiliency, then, can be thought of as an outcome that is more positive than might be expected from a poor history, or one laden with a good deal of trauma and difficulties. In a group of 136 college women, 20 of them showed high trauma histories (one standard deviation above the mean on our risk-factor questionnaire). We used the SACQ adjustment measure as an assessment of outcome. Resiliency, therefore is defined as high trauma but high adjustment outcome; lower resiliency is thought of as high trauma but low adjustment outcome. Of these 20 students with high trauma in their backgrounds, about a third (7) were higher than average in adjustment scores (high in resilience), and about two-thirds (13) lower than average (low in resilience). This rough distribution is similar to that noted by others—about a third of those with trauma in their backgrounds manage in some way to overcome the expected negative outcomes of such experiences. Interestingly, our high resiliency participants had significantly lower Separation Guilt scores than the low resiliency participants. Although this analysis is based on a small sample size, it does provide some encouragement for our idea that resiliency is coupled with mastery of guilt. John Bowlby once noted that of all trauma that one can experience, it is trauma at the hands of a loved one that produces the most negative effects. Given the way separation guilt was assessed here (with heavy emphasis on thoughts about harm to family members), our results are congruent with that idea too.

What can we conclude from this line of work? Well, if you're a small child and thinking of going to college someday, you should pick your parents carefully. If you're a parent, try to be an authoritative one—high expectations but also warm and supportive. We know that authoritative parenting is associated with all sorts of positive developmental outcomes, and we can add college adjustment to that list. It's almost impossible to be authoritative all the time, so if you must wander, do so toward the permissive-indulgent side (sometimes called democratic parenting), rather than the authoritarian or neglectful directions.

We think that the reason parents' behavior has the later effects it does is because of inferences the child comes to make about the consequences of her or his success and autonomy on the parents' well-being. Parents can protect their children from the potential negative effects of guilt by adopting a supportive attitude toward the child's autonomy bids and a calmly optimistic attitude regarding a child's failures and successes. This might be called "parenting by attitude." Be interested in your child, but don't over-burden the child with your own worries and concerns about yourself, your own regrets and life failures, in an attempt to help your child avoid such mistakes later. And if you can't do all these wonderful things, there's always the thought of a good therapy later.

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EXAMPLES FROM MEASURES

Interpersonal Guilt Questionnaire (IGQ) (O'Connor, et al., 1997) 67 items, rated on 5-point Likert scales

Survival Guilt (about accomplishments; 22 items)

I am uncomfortable talking about my achievements in social situations.

It makes me very uncomfortable to receive better treatment than the people I am with.

Separation Guilt (being different from parents; 15 items)

I feel that bad things happen to my family if I do not stay in close contact with them.

It is difficult to see my parents' flaws.

I am very reluctant to express an opinion that is different from the opinions held by my family or friends.

Omnipotence Guilt (excessive responsibility for others; 14 items):

I worry about hurting other people's feelings if I turn down an invitation from somebody who is eager for me to accept.

I worry a lot about the people I love even when they seem to be fine.

Self-Hate Guilt (about being worthy; 16 items):

I deserve to be rejected by people.

I feel there is something inherently bad about me.

Interpersonal Guilt: Sum of Survivor Guilt, Separation Guilt, and Omnipotence Guilt.

Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ), Baker & Siryk, 1989) 67 items, rated on 9-point Likert scales.

Academic Adjustment (24 items):

I have been keeping up to date on my academic work.

I have not been functioning well during examinations. (Reverse scored)

Getting a college degree is very important to me.

I am very satisfied with the professors I now have in my courses.

Social Adjustment (20 items):

I am very involved with social activities in college.

I have several close social ties at this college.

Lonesomeness for home is a source of difficulty for me now. (Reverse scored)

I am satisfied with the extracurricular activities available at college.

Personal-Emotional Adjustment (15 items):

I have been feeling tense or nervous lately. (Reverse scored)

I have been having a lot of headaches lately. (Reverse scored)

My appetite has been good lately.

I have been feeling in good health lately.

Goal-Commitment/Institutional Attachment (15 items):

On balance, I would rather be home than here. (Reverse scored)

I find myself giving considerable thought to taking time off from college and finishing later. (Reverse scored)

Lately I have been having doubts regarding the value of a college education. (Reverse scored)

Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ, after Buri, 1991, Modified by Shilkret, Vecchiotti, and Edwards)

10 items for each of 4 parenting styles, rated on 5-point Likert scales, separately for mother and father

Authoritativeness:

My mother always encouraged verbal give-and-take whenever I felt that family rules and restrictions were unreasonable.

As I was growing up, my father directed the activities and decisions of the children in the family through reasoning and discipline.

Authoritarianism:

Whenever my mother told me to do something when I was growing up, she expected me to do it immediately without asking any questions.

As I was growing up I knew what my father expected of me in the family and he insisted that I conform to those expectations simply out of respect for his authority.

Indulgent-Permissiveness:

My mother has always felt that what children need is to be free to make up their own minds and to do what they want to do, even if this does not agree with what their parents might want.

Most of the time as I was growing up my father did what the children in the family wanted when making family decisions.

Neglectful-Permissiveness (some of our additions):

As I was growing up, my mother was uninvolved in my life and she took little notice in what I did.

My father was more interested in his own concerns than in my concerns.

Attachment Style Questionnaire (ASQ, Feeney, Noller, and Hanrahan, 1994)

Secure:

I find it relatively easy to get close to other people.

I find it easy to trust others.

I feel confident about relating to others.

Avoidant/Dismissing:

Achieving things is more important than building relationships.

I am too busy with other activities to put much time into relationships.

I worry about people getting too close.

Ambivalent/Preoccupied:

I worry that I won't measure up to other people.

I worry a lot about my relationships.

Sometimes I think I am no good at all.

Correlations Between Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) Subscales and Interpersonal Guilt Questionnaire (IGQ) subscales for Four Samples (Murray, 2001; Shilkret, 2000; Edwards, 1997; Shilkret & Vecchiotti, 1997)

SACQ	Acad	Soc	Pers/Emot	Attach/Goal	Full
<u>IGQ</u>					
<u>Survivor</u>					
Murray	-.30**	-.23*	-.25**	-.01	-.32***
Shilkret	-.27***	-.19***	-.40***	-.13*	-.32***
Edwards	-.20**	-.07	-.34***	-.02	-.22**
Vecchiotti	-.23**	-.17	-.42***	-.11	-.29**
<u>Separation</u>					
Murray	-.11	-.20*	-.33***	-.12	-.21*
Shilkret	-.02	-.15*	-.10	-.06	-.10
Edwards	-.10	-.19**	-.18*	-.19*	-.21**
Vecchiotti	-.10	-.23**	-.23**	-.18*	-.27**
<u>Omnipotent</u>					
Murray	-.33**	-.21*	-.11	-.14	-.31**
Shilkret	-.17**	-.08	-.35***	-.05	-.21***
Edwards	-.24**	-.18*	-.49***	-.10	-.35***
Vecchiotti	-.17*	-.14	-.43***	-.09	-.25**
<u>Self-Hate</u>					
Murray	-.45***	-.31**	-.36***	-.25**	-.50***
Shilkret	-.41***	-.27***	-.58***	-.19**	-.47***
Edwards	-.41***	-.33***	-.56***	-.21**	-.52***
Vecchiotti	-.44***	-.48***	-.64***	-.37***	-.58***
<u>Interpersonal</u>					
Murray	-.30**	-.28**	-.29**	-.12	-.35***
Shilkret	-.21***	-.19**	-.36***	-.11	-.27***
Edwards	-.22**	-.17*	-.41***	-.10	-.31***
Vecchiotti	-.34***	-.36***	-.59***	-.27**	-.47***

*** p < .001; ** p < .01; *p < .05

Notes: Murray (2001), N = 109; Shilkret (2000), N = 296; Edwards (1997), N = 156; Shilkret & Vecchiotti (1997), N = 141