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The latent structure of the Adult Attachment Interview: Large sample evidence from consortium data

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The Latent Structure of the Adult Attachment Interview

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The Adult Attachment Interview (AAI)

III. SECURITY IN INFANCY, CHILDHOOD, AND ADULTHOOD: A MOVE TO THE LEVEL OF REPRESENTATION

MARY MAIN AND NANCY KAPLAN

University of California, Berkeley

JUDE CASSIDY

University of Virginia

Traditional AAI coding system

Classification	Description
Autonomous	Coherently discuss childhood caregiving experiences
Dismissing	Idealization of caregiver(s), insistent lack of recall of attachment memories
Preoccupied	Anger toward caregiver(s), passivity of speech
Unresolved	Lapses in monitoring speech or reasoning when discussing experiences of childhood abuse or loss

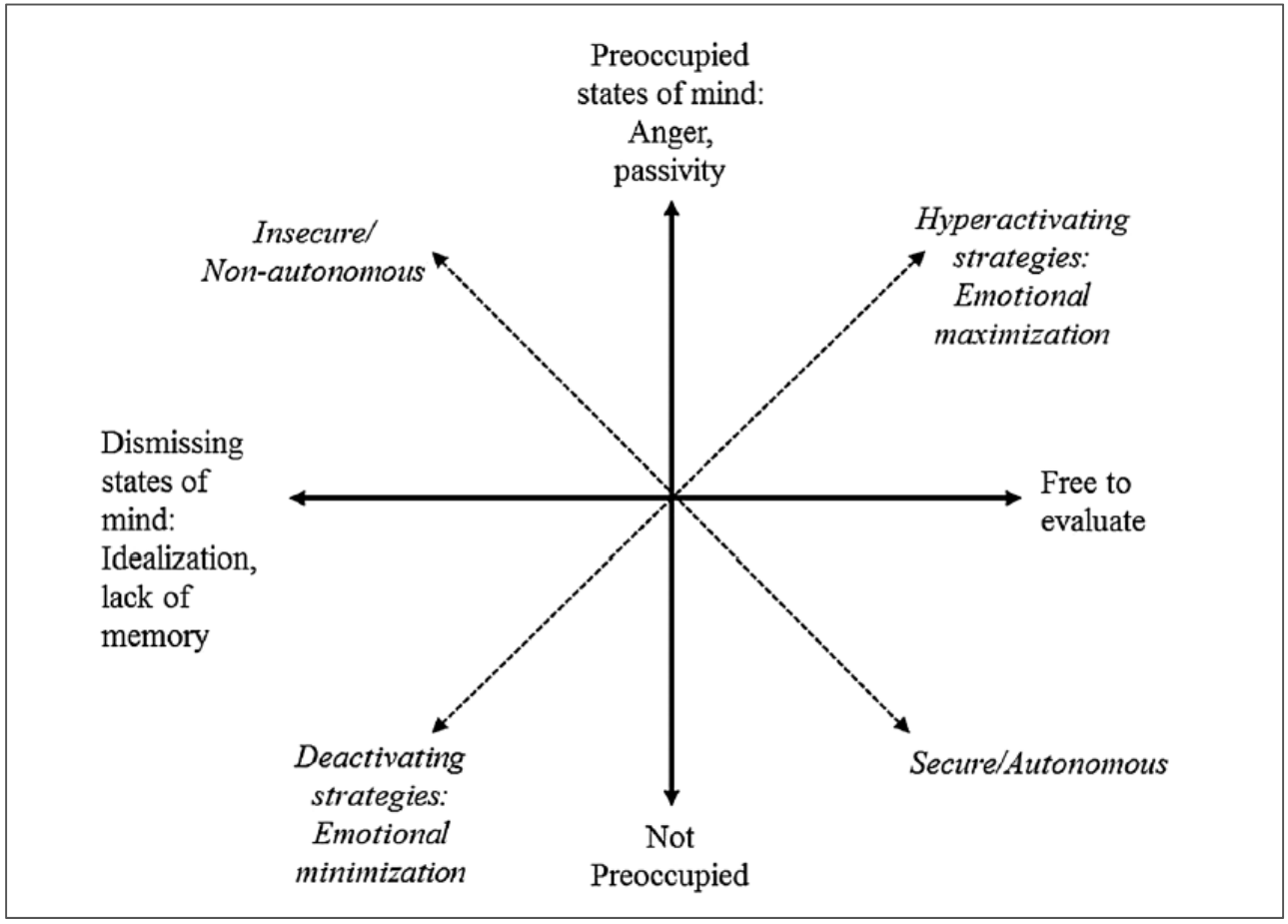
Two embedded assumptions about the latent structure of the AAI

1. The number of latent constructs.
2. Variation in attachment states of mind is distributed categorically.

These are distinct questions.

These are empirical questions.

Prior evidence for a 2 dimension model



Haltigan, Roisman, & Haydon (2014)

Aims of the present study

1. Evaluate whether unresolved and preoccupied states of mind are distinct constructs

2. Test whether individual differences in attachment states of mind are categorical or dimensional using large-sample data

Collaboration on Attachment Transmission Synthesis (CATS)

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Child Development, November/December 2018, Volume 89, Number 6, Pages 2023–2037

The title for this Special Section is **Meta-analysis and Individual Participant Data Synthesis in Child Development**, edited by Glenn I. Roisman and Marinus H. van IJzendoorn

Examining Ecological Constraints on the Intergenerational Transmission of Attachment Via Individual Participant Data Meta-analysis

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University of Wisconsin–Madison

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Edith Cowan University

Karl-Heinz Brisch
Dr. von Hauner Children's Hospital and Paracelsus Medical School

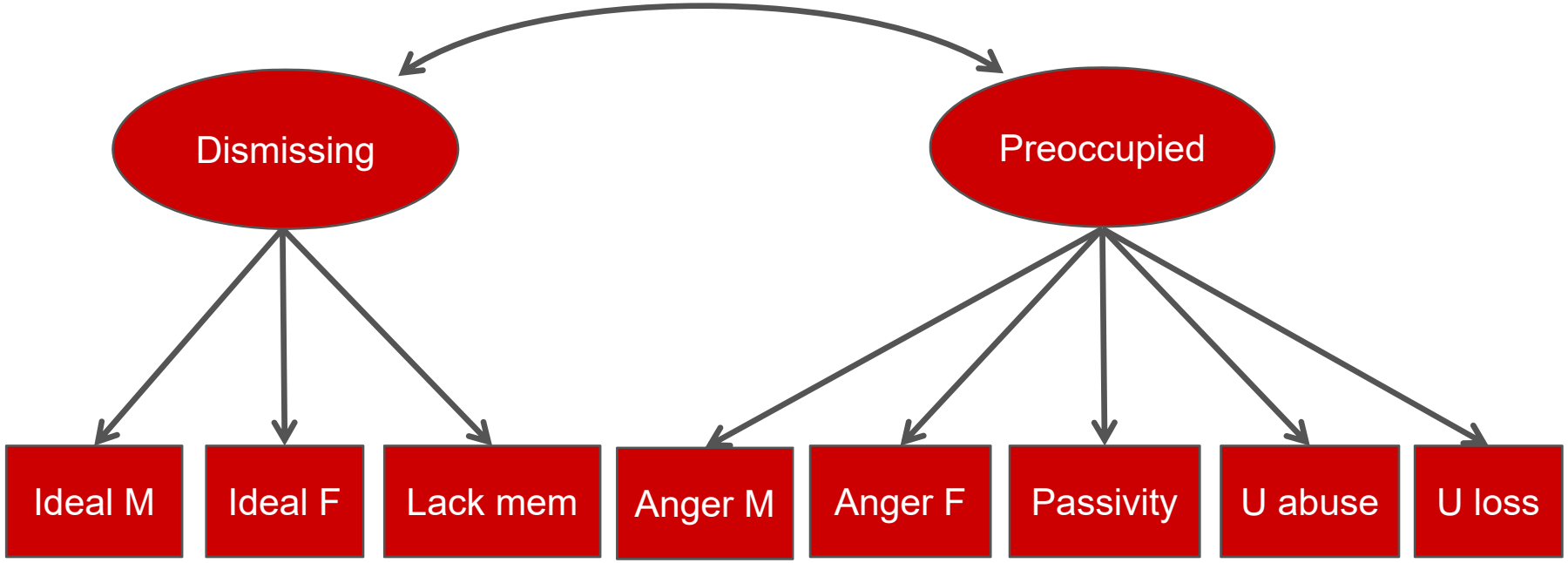
The Collaboration on Attachment Transmission Synthesis

- N = 3,218
- K = 40
- 10 countries

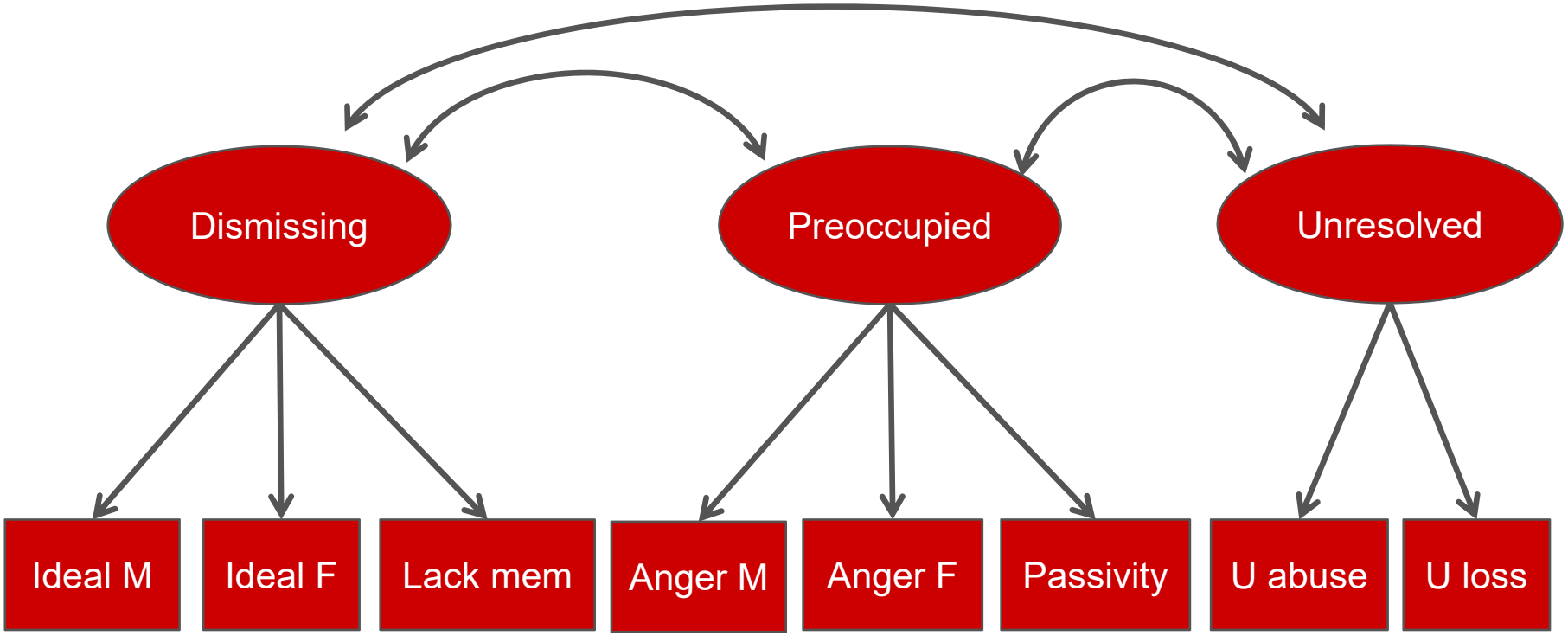
Question 1: How many constructs underlie the AAI state of mind ratings?

- We evaluated the 2-factor and 3-factor models with a set of confirmatory factor analyses

The 2-factor measurement model

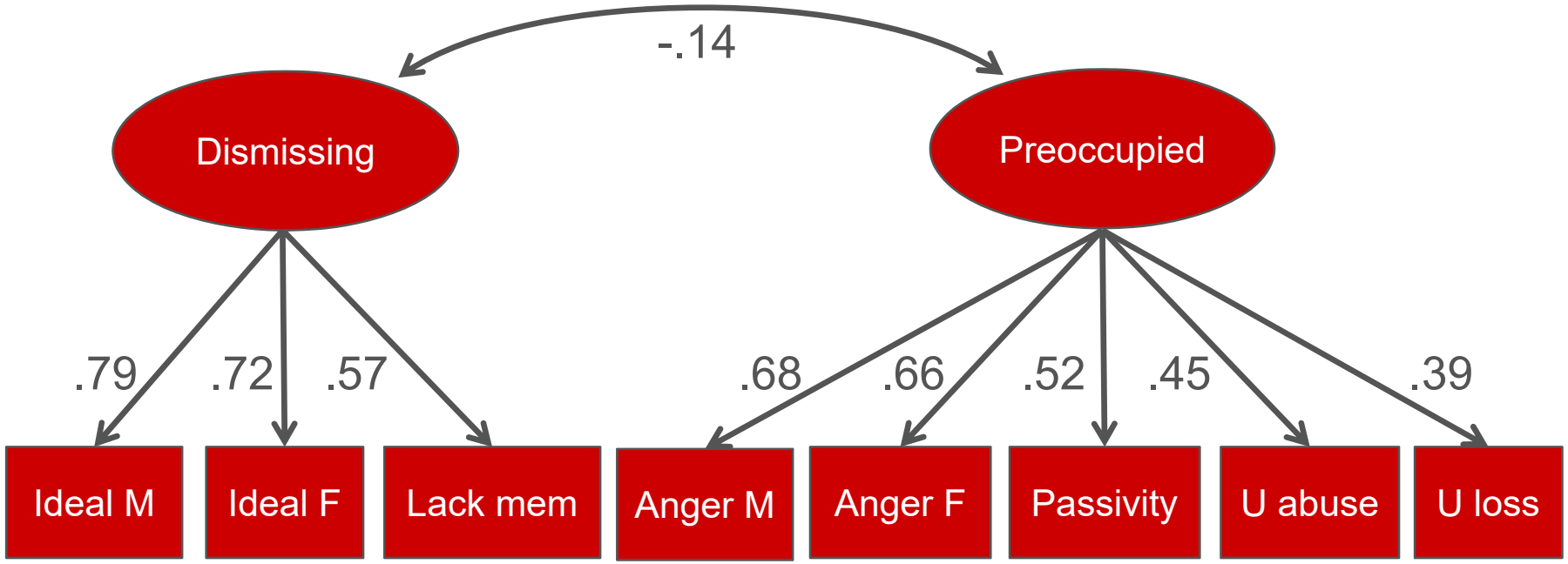


The 3-factor measurement model



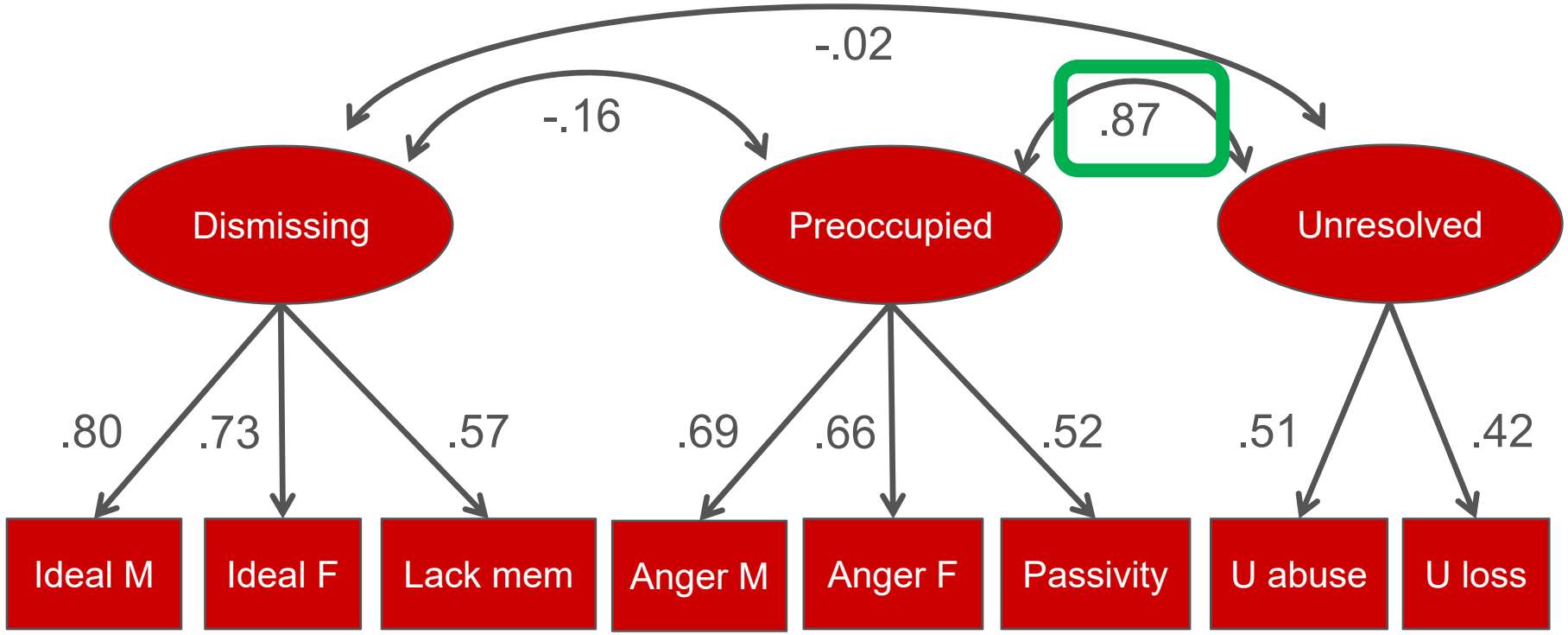
2-factor model was an acceptable fit:

$\chi^2(17) = 44.74$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = .032



3-factor model *also* was an acceptable fit:

$\chi^2(15) = 37.70$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = .031



Comparing the two models

- Results of the tests were not consistent
  - χ^2 difference test favored the 3-factor model
  - BIC values favored the 2-factor model

- In the 3-factor model, the correlation between the preoccupied and unresolved factors was large (r = .87).

Question 2: Categories or dimensions?

- 3 taxometric techniques were used
- Each technique generated a CCFI value that could range from 0 to 1
  - Values between .00 – .40 indicate a dimensional model
  - Values between .60 – 1.00 indicate categorical model
  - Values between .40 – .60 are indeterminate

Question 2: Taxometric results

	CCFI	CCFI average
Dismissing		0.41
MAXEIG	0.36	
L-Mode	0.35	
MAMBAC	0.52	

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Preoccupied/Unresolved (2-factor CFA)		0.33
MAXEIG	0.28	
L-Mode	0.22	
MAMBAC	0.52	

Question 2: Taxometric results

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MAXEIG	0.28	
L-Mode	0.22	
MAMBAC	0.52	
Preoccupied (3-factor CFA)		0.33
MAXEIG	0.32	
L-Mode	0.17	
MAMBA	0.49	

Conclusion: Two or three factors?

- Evidence for both
- 2-factor model is a parsimonious explanation for the AAI.
- Results did not rule out a 3-factor model.
  - The large correlation between the preoccupation and unresolved factors indicates substantial empirical overlap

Conclusion: Categories or dimensions?

- A dimensional model provides a more plausible explanation than a categorical one.
- Individual differences in attachment states of mind reflect differences in degree, not kind.

Future research directions

- Examining unique developmental precursors of these dimensional measures
- Testing whether there are distinct clinical and interpersonal outcomes
  - Especially the ability to predict attachment security in the next generation

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COLLABORATION ON ATTACHMENT TRANSMISSION SYNTHESIS

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